



Dear Communication,

*International Women's Day has been observed since 1975 when the United Nations recognised it. But the roots of this day can be traced way back to 1908 when 15,000 women marched in the United States demanding voting rights, better pay and shorter working hours. In 2020, more than 100 years later, can we say women are treated equally without discrimination? Although this fight is a long haul, we are changing the world one person at a time with the hopes of leaving a better world for the women of tomorrow.*

*To mark this Women's Day, here are some success stories of women from our communities .*



### *Freedom from violence and discrimination*

Mallika's\* mother worked as a housekeeper in the red-light area of Mumbai. Their family suffered greatly from poverty. Mallika was married at a very young age of 13. Her husband was unemployed, an alcoholic and was very abusive towards her.

At just 14 years of age, Mallika had her first baby and was subjected to abuse by her husband because the first born was a girl. However, she continued to live with him for the next 2 years. When Mallika's mother found out about the abuse, she brought her daughter back with her. Later, she joined Oasis' tailoring and beautician course in the drop-in center at Grant Road. Mallika wants to finish her course, go back to her village and start a small tailoring shop there. It took her many years to heal from the pain of the abuse but she wishes that her daughter will have a great life.

When a woman is free from violence and discrimination, she can not only have a peaceful life but also create a violence free environment for her children.

\*name changed

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Equal economic rights  
& opportunities



Sandhya is a part of our social enterprise, a livelihood programme for women at Basin Bridge. She says, “My husband lost his job and was at home for the past 6 months. Since I was part of Oasis' social enterprise, I was able to take care of my family with the salary I received from stitching products. I also have an industrial machine at home with which I stitch blouses and kurtas for others. We were fortunate to not suffer from my husband’s unemployment only because my skill empowered me to be financially independent. I love that I have this opportunity and I would like for all girls to never stop learning or working. They should learn to be independent even after they are married.”

Like Sandhya, women with equal economic rights and opportunities are an inspiration for girls growing up around them.

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Access to sexual health  
and rights

Asmitha\*, a 19-year-old from Kolkatta, ran away from home and came to Mumbai. She lived in a hospital where she met Rohit who promised to marry her. With hopes of a better life she trusted him but soon enough she found that he was already married. She ran away again after which she faced big challenges in her life.

Asmitha was looking for a place to stay when a woman promised to give her shelter. She took Asmitha to the red-light area and forced her to take up customers. Many women who are sold into trafficking face sexual and physical violence from the pimps, husband or customers. The trauma is still present in Asmitha and she refuses to talk about it to anyone. Our staff met with her during outreach, following which she moved to Nirmal Bhavan, our rehabilitation home for women who leave the red-light area. Asmitha successfully completed the tailoring course at Oasis. She is now working, independent and strong.

Empowering sex workers with the knowledge of their rights and creating an awareness to seek help encourages them to stay alert and safe.

\*name changed

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## Access to reproductive health and rights



In Bangalore, we work across Hallegudadahalli hub to create a safer community for all women. Our new initiative was to support women in getting easy access to health services. We collaborated with Vitamin Angels, a global non-profit working to provide health care for pregnant women and infants by distributing free vitamins. Shankari, a pregnant mother in her trimester, was advised by the Doctor to take vitamins tablets. When our team distributed the vitamin tablets to her, she said, "I am glad that this care has been extended to me and I know that this will be of great help to many women in improving their health while pregnant."

Pregnant women in the communities often suffer from malnourishment and at times do not have the means to buy vitamin tablets. This initiative has helped in giving women easy access to health care and has created awareness on the importance of the same.

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*Equal participation in  
decision-making*

Suganya, one of our self-help group members from Basin Bridge recently received an award from One Life, a non profit for 'Young Women Creating Change in the Society'. Suganya's husband and her children were also a part of this event held on Women's Day, cheering her on. She could not have received this award if not for her supportive husband who empowered her to make decisions to be a part of the self-help group at Oasis, learn jewellery-making and to teach that skill to others like her. Many women in our communities are forced to stay at home depending on their husbands financially and are often nonparticipants in major decisions taken at home. When you are encouraged to take decisions, you become empowered. Suganya is empowered and is empowering those around her.

Women who equally contribute to decision making in a family and are supported through their personal growth are not only successful, they also improve the standard of living of their families.


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**WHAT DOES  
RS.500 A MONTH  
MEAN TO YOU?**

For those in our communities, it means

- education for a child
- restoration for a trafficked woman
- employment for underprivileged youth
- an empowered community



**MAKE YOUR 500 MORE MEANINGFUL.  
JOIN THE 500 CLUB.**

[www.oasisindia.org](http://www.oasisindia.org)

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