



Raising voices against the perpetrator of violence helps prevent human tragedies in the future.



Combatting Human Trafficking through Collective Action

Sanjog, West Bengal

Utthan is a programme developed by Sanjog which conducts research, development and training programs on child protection, gender equity, human rights and social justice. It helps build capacities in the areas of research, programming and advocacy, program and project management and organisational development.

Through EdelGive Foundation's support, the organisation is strengthening, empowering and imbibing leadership qualities amongst 120 survivors of human trafficking in North and South 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal.

Madhura [name changed] was 16 when she was taken away from her village to Mumbai by a man she had fallen in love with. She was in for a terrible shock and horrific ordeal, as the man turned out to be a trafficker. It took her three years to run away and eventually return home.

Nine years later, she is married and lives with her three children and aged parents in the village of North 24 Paraganas. While her case against the trafficker has been going on for many years, she has received constant threats from his family and thugs hired by them. In spite of her ordeal, village members acted as mute spectators and blamed her for eloping with a trafficker.

Utthan is a group of survivor-leaders that works to increase awareness about the problem of human trafficking and the collective role that communities play in protecting their daughters and sisters so they don't fall prey to it. They decided to support Madhura by organising a village-level meeting with her family, neighbours, local youths and police officials, as well as community members who were not on her side. Listening to her openly recount her problems and realising that Madhura was nothing but one more in a long line of faultless victims, one of her neighbours who had remained silent volunteered to be a witness to the attacks on her family. Galvanised to take a stand in Madhura's favour and fight against the larger crime of trafficking, the community has helped strengthen her case.