

# Indian government hails agency working with Geneva Global

Philadelphia, Pa., March 13, 2008 – The Indian government has honored the leader of a community-based organization that is participating in a Geneva Global Initiative to fight sex slavery in Mumbai (Bombay), India.

Triveni Acharya received the Stree Shakti Award for outstanding achievement in women's empowerment from Sonia Ghandi, Indian National Congress president and widow of former India Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, at a ceremony on March 8 in New Delhi, India. Acharya was hailed for her work as president of Mumbai-based Rescue Foundation, which received 300,000 rupees (about \$7,415) as part of the honor.

Since 1999, Rescue Foundation has been rescuing women and girls from Mumbai brothels, reuniting them with their families and helping them find safe jobs. Many of the prostitutes Rescue Foundation helps are girls from rural families, whose parents have been tricked by human traffickers. Parents are told their daughters are getting well-paid city jobs, rather than being sold to brothels to work as sex slaves.

Rescue Foundation, which also works in Delhi and Pune, is one of 10 grass-roots nongovernmental organizations participating in Geneva Global's Mumbai HIV/AIDS and Human Trafficking Initiative, which is designed to measurably improve the lives of 24,000 people over three years. The Initiative rescues girls and women from being forced to work as prostitutes and helps them find safe, income-generating activities. It also provides HIV prevention and care, and educates vulnerable girls and their families about the risks and consequences of human trafficking.



**Sonia Ghandi (right), Indian National Congress president, presents Rescue Foundation President Triveni Acharya with an award for rescuing prostitutes from Mumbai's red light district.**

“My husband, Balkrishna Acharya, started this humanitarian work in 1996,” Acharya says of Rescue Foundation’s roots. “I was employed by a prominent daily [newspaper] as a journalist, and during my free time, I used to assist my husband during rescue raids and coordination with police from those days. ... On May [12] 2005, Balkrishna ... passed away in a car accident while returning from Surat. ... Although his life was short, it was spent for a rare humanitarian cause. His vision and deeds were virtuous. I then resolved to continue his unfinished task of rescuing these unfortunate girls and help[ing] integrate them with respectable society. As I took over the reins of Rescue Foundation as president, I realized unbearable pity for the suffering mankind. I realized that too many children, girls and women live in conditions unworthy of their dignity as human beings. ... Rescuing trafficked, unfortunate girls from the evil clutches of brothel-keepers is a very ominous and pious duty. ... When I look at the eyes of these girls, I cannot help tears rolling down from my eyes, but at the same time, I realize that in order to be really helpful to them I have to efficiently and tirelessly continue my duties.”

The Indian Ministry of Women and Child Development honored a total of 15 leaders of Indian organizations for helping empower Indian women, in recognition of International Women’s Day.

“Geneva Global first researched and recommended funding to Rescue Foundation in 2006, for a project to free 100 women and girls from sex slavery in Mumbai, and provide them with legal aid, shelter, healthcare, counseling and vocational training,” says Dr. Saji John, Geneva Global’s Regional Director for Asia, based in Hyderabad, India. “We are proud to have connected philanthropic investors with such an effective, grass-roots organization. We also are pleased that the Indian government has officially recognized the importance of Rescue Foundation’s work.”

Geneva Global clients have invested \$3.97 million in 49 projects that fight slavery and human trafficking in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The projects are forecast to measurably improve the lives of 190,527 people. To date, 13 of the 49 projects have been completed and have improved the lives of 53,851 people.

## About Geneva Global

Geneva Global Inc. is a philanthropic advisory firm headquartered in suburban Philadelphia, Pa. Founded in 1999, Geneva Global provides independent research, advice and grant management to philanthropic investors. Through advisory services and research teams around the world, we assist clients in cutting through the complexities of international giving to connect the best community-owned solutions to humanitarian needs. We provide world-class philanthropic advisory services, helping each client make effective and exciting investments for lasting change in the world’s hardest places. We have managed more than \$60 million in philanthropic investments, placing clients’ funds into more than 1,400 projects in 110 developing nations and bringing measurable Life Change to more than 5.8 million people.

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