

# INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION®

## Alisha's Story



KOLKATA, INDIA – Alisha\* was only 12 years old when she was brought from Nepal to India – trafficked across borders – and sold to a brothel. The first time a customer paid to abuse Alisha, she tried to resist. But the man was stronger, and she was assaulted.

Overnight, this became Alisha's world: a brothel in the middle of Kolkata's notorious red-light district. The brothel madam told Alisha that she would have to work like the other girls for her food and her rent. If she refused to service a customer, she would not get any food. Alone in a foreign city, Alisha had nowhere else to go. For five years, she was trapped inside the dark nightmare.

Police led an anti-trafficking operation to rescue girls from the brothel, but tragically, Alisha was not found that night. Then, she was transferred to another brothel a few hours outside the city. One of the walls in the new brothel was lined with Ziploc bags. Each one held a ledger book with the name of a girl who was for sale. Once the girl was sold, the manager noted the transaction in the book. This was Alisha's reality – she was treated like she was property, tracked in a ledger book.

But three months later, everything changed. IJM had been documenting evidence in that very brothel for months. Acting on this evidence, police rescued Alisha and 16 other girls who had been trafficked.

At first, Alisha was afraid and unsure who to trust. But with patient support from her IJM social workers and the aftercare home where she lived with other trafficking survivors, Alisha slowly started to open up. She shared that she was pregnant, and today she is a vibrant and dedicated mother. IJM helped Alisha and many of the other girls return to their home country of Nepal. Alisha and her child settled into a long-term aftercare where they can also visit with Alisha's supportive family.



*Once confined to the dark rooms of a brothel, Alisha now lives in freedom and pursues activities she enjoys, like making jewelry.*



*\*A pseudonym has been used for the protection of this IJM client.*