

The Influencer bulletin

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When we welcomed you to the Influencers journey to empower the disempowered, we had promised that your support and voice will enable millions of nameless, faceless women to access social justice and equal opportunity. This issue at the dawn of a New Year features updates from our grassroots coalition partners Jan Sahas and Breakthrough who have launched nation-wide initiatives in the realm of women's rights, and bring you highlights from recent studies by our partner IT for Change on gender-based cyber violence in Karnataka.

Freedom from Discrimination and Violence



The nationwide call to action against perpetrators of sexual violence against women, the **Dignity March** organised by **Jan Sahas** traversed Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhatisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; its voice growing louder and bolder as citizens shared their stories of being victimised by violence, and engaged with communities and Government stakeholders on the change envisaged.

A testimony to the March's impact was the unanimous support it received. Educational institutions and NGOs like our partner Association for **Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI)** in Lucknow officially welcomed and hosted its arrival. The Minister for Education and Social Welfare Krishna Nandan Prasad Verma, Patna and the Deputy Inspector General of Police Pondicherry welcomed the March.



The members of the **Dignity March** and **Jan Sahas** submitted memorandum to the District Collector, Erode, advocating for the elimination of the Sumangali practice in Tamil Nadu. They also met with Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath who publicly announced that the state will form a special police unit and fast track courts for speedy justice for survivors of sexual violence.

#ShametoSupport

Systemic Change for Sustainable Impact

Breakthrough India launched two new campaigns aimed at incentivising individuals to contribute actively to the movement towards a gender just society.

In partnership with Breakthrough, the Department of Women and Child Development and Twitter launched the **Web-Wonder Women Campaign** to celebrate the exceptional achievements of women who have influenced and impacted society through social media.

To promote and increase sensitive coverage of issues in women's rights, Breakthrough has also announced the **ReThink Media Award Gender Sensitive Journalism** for journalists in Jharkhand and Bihar. The cash award/fellowship is aimed at encouraging journalists to explore, research and publish stories/essays related to the value of the girl child, early marriage, dowry, violence and discrimination against women and girls.

"Having a voice is crucial and the ability to tell your story to a critical audience online is even more so. But if our voices are not heard then that impacts our right to self-determination, of participation, of life," says Sohini Bhattacharya, President & CEO, Breakthrough, on the importance of bringing stories from the fringes to the mainstream.

#WebWonderWomen
#TeamChange



In the News



Our NGO partner working on policy advocacy **IT for Change** launched a blog series, to share the findings from its exploratory research project '**Righting Gender Wrongs**': A Study of Law Enforcement Responses to Online Violence Against Women'. Read below an excerpt from their blog Masculinity, Femininity and Equality which shares highlights from focus groups discussions with college students that explored and exposed the role of digital platforms in cementing gender norms.

The men betray a deep discomfort with the visibility of women in online spaces, especially in cases of image based self-representation, a decidedly agentic exercise. As a consequence, when women post selfies or pictures, they are inevitably sexualized, and blame associated with sexual expression is evoked to deride the violation of gender scripts. [Read more](#)

#cyberviolence