

# hope

News for Friends of Asha Issue 108 | April 2026



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## 02 Director's Message

### When a Mother Weakens, a Family Begins to Break

Dear Friends of Asha,

As a doctor, there is one reality I have seen again and again. When a woman's health begins to fail, everything around her begins to give way.

In the slum communities where we work, many women are living at the very edge of survival. They are raising children alone. Some have been abandoned. Some are widowed. Others carry the burden of illness, disability, or addiction within their families. In almost every such home, the woman eats last, and often there is very little left.

Day by day, her body weakens. Malnutrition sets in. Anaemia follows. Her strength quietly slips away. And yet, she continues. She works, she cares, she carries her family, until one day her body can no longer keep going. By the time many of these women reach us, they are already exhausted and unwell. Sometimes, they have reached a point where recovery becomes difficult. And when a mother begins to collapse, her children feel it first, and most deeply.

This is why we cannot wait.

I am heartbroken at what I am seeing, and I feel an urgent call to act. We are preparing to begin a **Women's Nutrition and Health Care Programme**.

Through this programme, each woman will receive a freshly prepared, nutritious meal, along with health care and essential supplements, consistently and free of cost. She will be followed closely, so that her decline is not silent and not ignored.

But there is something more. Each woman will be known. She will be received with dignity. She will be cared for personally, consistently, and with compassion. These are the values at the heart of Asha.

When care reaches a woman in time, something begins to change. Strength returns, slowly but surely. Energy comes back. She begins to stand again, for her children and for her family. This change is not instant, but it is real and life giving.

This is the moment to act.

In this newsletter, I invite you to stand with us. Help us bring this programme to life without delay. Help us reach these women before it is too late. When you restore a woman's health, you restore her family. There are hundreds of such women waiting to be reached. The cost of providing a daily nutritious meal and health care is just **\$3.50** a day, approximately **£2.80** or **AUD 5.30**. Over an entire year, this comes to just **\$1,275**, or about **£1,020** or **AUD 1,935** for one woman.

It may seem like a small amount, but for a woman who has spent her life eating last, it can mean the difference between quiet decline and the chance to stand again with strength and dignity. It can mean the difference between a mother fading away, and a mother who is able to care for her children and hold her family together.

I invite you, from my heart, to consider supporting one woman for a day, for a month, or for an entire year. And if you are able, to carry more than one. Each woman you support is a life restored, and a family given hope again.

**The donation details are found on the last page of the newsletter.** Thank you for your continued trust, and for walking this journey with us.

With gratitude and warm regards,



Dr Kiran Martin



## 03 Reshma's Fight to Survive

In the narrow lanes of many slum communities, a woman's day begins before sunrise and ends long after everyone else has rested. She keeps the household going, finds ways to feed her children, and carries on even when her body is close to giving up. Her struggles remain unseen, and her suffering unheard.

Thirty-year-old Reshma is one of them. She lives in the Lal Bagh slum community with her alcoholic husband and four children, in a small shanty made of sackcloth and plastic.

She came to Delhi after her marriage nearly 20 years ago, hoping for a better life. That hope slowly faded. In its place came years of hardship, hunger, and fear. There are days when there is no food in the house. Many nights, Reshma and her children go to sleep after just one small meal, their hunger carried quietly into the next day.

Every morning at 4 a.m., she steps out to collect scrap and firewood. It is backbreaking work. After hours of labour, she earns barely ₹200 a day, around \$2 or £1.50. It is never enough to feed a family of six.

Her husband finds work only during festive seasons as a drum player. At other times, he remains at home. Much of what he earns is lost to alcohol and gambling. The home is filled with tension, fear, and uncertainty. Reshma has lived through repeated violence. She has been beaten, pushed out of her home, and left with nothing. Once, the assault was so severe that one of her eyes was badly damaged. She tried to seek help, but was threatened into silence. With nowhere safe to go, she stayed, holding her children close and doing everything she could to shield them from the life around them. Even the little she earned did not stay with her. Her husband sold whatever he could find to support his drinking. One by one, their belongings disappeared. Hunger became constant. Loss became normal.

When the Asha team first reached the Lal Bagh slum community a year ago through its mobile health service, they found Reshma in a condition that was deeply distressing. There was almost nothing left in her home. No food. No savings. Bare walls. Children waiting. And a mother trying, with all her remaining strength, to hold her family together. When they saw the injury to her eye, she was immediately referred to a government hospital. With support, she was able to receive treatment.

But the greater damage could not be seen so easily. Years of poor nutrition, stress, and unrelenting strain had taken a severe toll on her body. She is often weak and dizzy. Her blood pressure remains low. Some days, she struggles even to stand, yet she continues to work because her children have no one else. There are still nights when all of them sleep hungry.

Recognising the urgency of her condition, the Asha team will enrol Reshma in the Women's Nutrition and Health Care Programme. Through this programme, she will begin to receive regular nutritious meals and basic health care. Slowly, this support will help her regain strength that has been lost over many years.

For Reshma, this is not just support. It is a lifeline. It is the difference between a body that continues to weaken each day, and one that can begin to recover. It is the difference between constant hunger, and the possibility of being able to stand, work, and care for her children with strength again.



## 04 Lalita: A Chance Before It Is Too Late

Like Reshma, Twenty-year-old Lalita is also trying to survive in the Lal Bagh slum community. She lives with her husband and her three-year-old child in a small shanty made of discarded materials, covered with a thin tarpaulin. During the rainy season, water seeps in, turning the floor damp and making even the simplest daily tasks difficult.

Lalita was married at the age of 15 in her village, as her family could not afford to feed everyone. From childhood, she has known hunger. She says she has never seen a full plate of food in her life.

Her husband works as a drum player during festivals, and at other times goes door to door selling lemons. Lalita joins him whenever she can. Some days, they earn a little. On many days, they return with nothing, and there is no food to cook. Even in this uncertainty, Lalita always puts her child first. She makes sure her child eats before she does. Many times, she survives on very little. Some days, she goes without food completely. Slowly, her body has begun to weaken. Her husband also struggles with alcohol addiction and is often unable to support the family, adding to her burden.

Each morning, Lalita leaves home early to collect scrap and anything she can find in the garbage to sell. It is dirty, exhausting work, and often unsafe. After hours of effort, she earns only ₹150 a day, around \$2 or £1.50. It is never enough. Over time, she has lost a significant amount of weight, and her health has deteriorated due to a lack of proper nutrition.

During a visit, the Asha health team noticed Lalita's condition. She was visibly weak and malnourished. Immediate support was arranged. She was started on supplements, and plans were made to include her in Asha's Women's Health and Nutrition Programme.

For Lalita, this is not just support. It is a chance to recover while there is still time. Even one proper meal a day is not a small thing. It is the beginning of better health, the return of energy, and the strength she needs to keep going for her child.



## 05 Gulshan: A Mother Carrying Everything Alone

Gulshan is 35 years old. She lives in the Zakhira slum community with her three daughters, carrying the full weight of their lives on her own. She came to Delhi after her marriage fifteen years ago, hoping for stability. Instead, her life has been marked by hardship, abandonment, and constant struggle.

Born with blindness in one eye, Gulshan has lived with poor vision since childhood. As she grew up, she faced judgment and rejection, which slowly broke her confidence. But nothing prepared her for what came after marriage. She gave birth to two daughters, now 13 and 9.



Soon after, her husband became violent. The home that was meant to protect her turned into a place of fear. There were days when there was no food. Nights when Gulshan and her daughters went to sleep hungry, trying to ignore the pain. When she asked her in laws for help, no one stood by her. Then one day, her husband left. For nearly four years, he disappeared without a word, leaving Gulshan to raise her daughters alone. No income. No support. No safety. Still, she did not stop.

She began working in a utensil polishing factory, doing exhausting work for very little pay. When her husband returned, it brought no relief. After the birth of her third child, another daughter, he left again. This time, he chose another life, leaving Gulshan to carry everything alone once more.

Today, she works wherever she can, as a domestic worker and as a helper at a petrol pump. She earns about \$85 or £65 a month, barely enough to cover rent and food. With no one to care for her youngest child, she often takes her along to work.

Years of hunger, repeated pregnancies, physical labour, and emotional strain have worn her down. She is often weak. There are days when she has no strength left, yet she keeps going because her daughters depend on her. She always feeds her children first, leaving whatever is left for herself. Often, there is nothing left.

When Asha met Gulshan, it was clear that her body was failing under the weight of everything she had endured.

She needs help, not later, but now.

## 06 When Even One Meal Is Uncertain

Thirty-five-year-old Rubi lives in the Chanderpuri slum community in Delhi with her three children. Every day is a struggle to keep her family together. Like many girls, she once believed marriage would bring a better life. Instead, it brought years of fear. After her marriage, she moved to a small town in Uttar Pradesh. Her husband was violent. Her in-laws treated her harshly. The home she entered became a place of pain. Though her husband earned as a truck driver, most of the money was spent on alcohol. Very little was used for the family.

There were days when there was no food at all. For Rubi, the hardest part was not her own hunger, but watching her children cry for food and having nothing to give them. She kept hoping things would improve. They did not. Her husband's drinking worsened. He lost his job. The situation became unbearable. With no other option, she called her brother in Delhi and came away with her children, hoping for a fresh start.

But even in Delhi, life did not get easier. Her husband began driving a rented rickshaw. He earned around ₹400 a day (about \$5 or £4), but after paying ₹300 as rent (about \$3.5 or £3), almost nothing was left. Soon, he stopped giving money at home. He returned drunk, day after day. Violence followed. He beat Rubi. He beat the children. At times, he even sold the utensils in the house to buy alcohol. Slowly, everything they had disappeared.

Today, Rubi is raising her three children almost alone. Her 11-year-old daughter, her 6-year-old daughter, and her 3-year-old son depend entirely on her. To survive, she works long hours cutting threads. It is exhausting work that pays very little. For 100 pieces, she earns only ₹70 to ₹80 (less than \$1 or about £0.70). Even her children sometimes sit beside her to help. Yet despite all her effort, two meals a day are still not certain.

The Women's Health and Nutrition Programme will change this reality for Rubi. It will mean that she is not facing this struggle alone. It will give her the strength to keep going, and a real chance to rebuild her life.

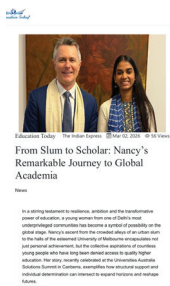


# 07 News at Glance

## Asha in the Media

We are proud to share that the work of Dr. Kiran and Asha was featured across several national newspapers following a speech by the Honourable Jason Clare, Minister for Education of Australia, at the Universities Australia Solutions Summit 2026.

The speech also highlighted the inspiring journey of Nancy, an Asha student from the Peeragarhi slum community in Delhi, whose story reflects the impact of Asha's work. Nancy has now begun her Master's in International Relations at the University of Melbourne under the Melbourne Scholars India Equity Scholarship, which covers her educational and living expenses for the full course. She is the first Asha student to pursue a Master's degree at the University of Melbourne.



## Irish Delegation Visits Ambedkar Community

On 17 March 2026, Asha had the honour of hosting Rossa Fanning, Attorney General of Ireland, along with Kevin Kelly, Ambassador of Ireland to India; Raymond Mullen, Deputy Head of Mission; and members of the Embassy of Ireland at the Ambedkar slum community.

The delegation spent time with Asha university students, listening to their journeys of education and growth, and encouraging them to remain focused as they move forward in their academic and professional paths.

Their visit was a meaningful exchange, and their words of encouragement left a lasting impression on our students.

## A New Home for a Family in Need

A new home in the Savda Ghewra relocation colony was built by Tony and Peter from Ballymena Builders, with the generous support of many people from Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

The home was built for a family facing severe financial hardship, who had lived for years without a proper roof over their heads. After losing their home and belongings during the 2006 demolitions in Delhi related to the Commonwealth Games, they were relocated to Savda Ghewra with Asha's support. Since then, they had been living under fragile plastic sheets, enduring extreme heat, heavy rains, and cold winters, unable to rebuild due to financial constraints. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Tony, Peter, and everyone who contributed to making this possible. Their generosity has brought lasting change to a family in need.



## 08 Transforming Lives: Support Our Cause

### You Can Help us begin a Women's Nutrition and Health Care Programme

For many women, even the most basic care remains out of reach. Without support, their health continues to decline, and the impact is felt by every child and family member who depends on them.

This is a moment where your support can make a real and immediate difference.

- £3,750** – Daily nutritious meals and comprehensive healthcare support for five women for one year
- £750** – Daily nutritious meals and comprehensive healthcare support for one woman for one year
- £375** – Daily nutritious meals and comprehensive healthcare support for one woman for six months
- £185** – Daily nutritious meals and comprehensive healthcare support for one woman for three months

**If she is able to stand strong, her family will survive. Your support can make that possible today.**

#### Find us at:

- [www.asha-india.org](http://www.asha-india.org)
- [www.facebook.com/ashasociety1](https://www.facebook.com/ashasociety1)
- [www.twitter.com/ashasociety](https://www.twitter.com/ashasociety)
- [www.youtube.com/ashasociety](https://www.youtube.com/ashasociety)
- [www.instagram.com/ashasociety](https://www.instagram.com/ashasociety)
- [www.linkedin.com/company/asha1988](https://www.linkedin.com/company/asha1988)

## Friends of Asha (Great Britain)

If you would like to contribute to the lives of poor slum dwellers in Delhi, then you can become a Friend of Asha. Friends of Asha (Great Britain) aids our activities through donations, fundraising events, volunteering opportunities and raising awareness of the work we do.

**For more information, contact:**  
**Dr Richard Hogben, National Coordinator,**  
**Friends of Asha GB**  
[foasha.richardhogben@gmail.com](mailto:foasha.richardhogben@gmail.com)

### Donations

If you would like to make a donation to Asha, and you are a UK taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your donation. Download a form from the website or request one from the Coordinator. Friends of Asha GB (Charity Registration No. 1085071) can collect an extra 25p for every pound you donate.

**1. To donate online directly from your Bank** Make a payment to The Lloyds Bank account of Friends of Asha (GB)  
 Sort Code 30-96-31; A/c No. 01899891

### 2. To donate online

Send your contribution to Asha by visiting our website at  
<https://asha-india.org/get-involved/donate/great-britain-donations/>

### 3. To donate by cheque:

Make your cheque payable to "Friends of Asha (GB)" and mail to  
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