



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

My Dream To become a pilot -Vinita

Delhi: My name is Vinita. I belong to Perna and live in Saper Basti of Dharampura in Najafgarh. I study in 6th standard at Government Girls Senior Secondary School. I like to see up in the sky when there are aeroplanes flying over our houses. I counted the number of aeroplanes that fly up in the sky. It feels as though the big human carrying machine touches our rooftop. I use to ask my mother that how come so many aeroplanes fly from here and she would answer that they come so that all children of community could say 'hello'. Then, once I was playing in community and aeroplane was going over. I waved t say 'hello'. That day Apne Aap staff told me that there is an airport nearby and so we are able to see so many aeroplanes everyday. Airport is like a bus stop where all aeroplanes stand in queue. To fly in the aircraft, we buy a ticket and it takes us to our destination. It has many seats and a separate cabin for driver. The airhostesses and stewards wear uniform, like we wear in our school. One day, I will become a pilot. I, too, will fly an aeroplane. I will book tickets for my family members and community friends. No one from our community has ever experienced flying in the plane. I will become the first person from our community to fly. For being a pilot, we need to study a lot. And that's why I never miss my school.

Apne Aap girls participate in a stop human trafficking rally

— By Nitu Kumari/ as dictated to Sanju Kumari

Bihar: My name is Nitu Kumari. I am a member of Kishori Mandal run by Apne Aap Women Worldwide in Uttri Rampur. Since the past three years, I am associated with Apne Aap. I visit the centre on a regular basis, and often participate in almost all the activity organized by Apne Aap for the Kishori Mandal girls. I am a student of class VII in Zila high School, Forbesgang. The school is nearby my village.

I belong to Mallah community. We are very poor, living in the government land in Mela ground, Forbesganj.

Once when I was attending the weekly meeting of Kishori Mandal, I heard news from Sanju Di that a caravan from Bangla Natak with his team

members would be visiting us soon. Their purpose of visit was to spread awareness about Stopping Human Trafficking in society by holding a rally.

We were encouraged by Apne Aap to participate in this campaign against human trafficking. It was show our support and solidarity Caravan in their endeavour to spread awareness in redlight area, Forbesganj. It is nearby our centre.

The members from Caravan were in constant touch with Apne Aap staff and coordinated accordingly.

The workers from Caravans reached Forbesganj on April 24th and stayed in Hotel Jyoti, which was arranged for them.

(Continued on page 6)

Celebration of Earth Day

— Kumkum Mishra/ as dictated to Rachna Nayak

Kolkata: My name is Kumkum Mishra. I am 14-year- old. I live in Kolkata. My father work as a security guard and my mother is a home-maker. We are four siblings. It is really difficult for my father to provide formal education to my siblings and me.

We are admitted in a government-run school. We are fortunate enough to be able to go to school at the least. It was really difficult for me to study on my own. The syllabus was so tough especially when our basics are not clear. In the beginning of my class VIII realization dawned on me that without tuition it'll be difficult for me to clear the exam. I desperately needed help. However, my parents do

not have enough money to arrange a private tuition for me. There was no way of getting help from an outsider. Then, one day, my friend mentioned Apne Aap's name. I heard about the work the organization does from them. It was like a blessing for me. I considered my friend's suggestions and approached the organization. I took the courage to ask my parents' permission. And, they had assented. I had no experience of approaching any NGOs before, so when I went to the office. I was bit nervous though. Everything was so new for me. I was wondering how will I get adjusted with others and staff members.

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Op-Ed— ‘Feminism Through Poetry: Bringing a Change Through Words’ published in the She The People

This article on one of the series of Feminism Beyond Boundaries on poetry and human rights was published at SheThePeople.Tv. It was written by Poorvi.

What are we resisting? Who are we resisting and why do we need to resist? Often used interchangeably to protest, they are different forms of showing dissent. When done through art, resistance gets a multi-layered meaning. For long, women’s rights and rights have been at the helm of debate and yet very little has actually been done about it. Violence is ever increasing and the proverbial glass ceiling stays rock solid. Hence, the only way to keep the fire around the matter burning is through constant resistance.

Women’s safety sexuality and liberation were the topics of discourse at a recent event organised by Apne Aap Women Worldwide in Delhi. The organisation works to spread awareness among women in prostitution and those who are at the risk of getting dragged into the flesh trade.

Reciting their work were Anju Sharma, Ashima Kumari, Ashok Pandey, Ngurang Reena, Sanjay Shepherd, Madhu, Aruna Lakshmi Ramu and Dr Sujata.

The event aimed at bringing together poets who talk about women; as a mother who is restricted in her own kitchen, but her voice overpowers all. Another poet talks about women, who are so sexually liberated that they can put an end to wars just by refusing to have sex with the army.

And yet another recites a piece about being under double subjugation, being a north-eastern and a woman in this country. **Ngurang Reena’s** words resonate with everyone who hails from that side of the country regardless of gender. However, what sets these women apart is the extreme sexualisation of their bodies and a pathetic idea that defines their sexual freedom as prostitution in the rest of the country.

The poems brought together a positive vibe that dreams of a future where more and more women will stand and speak up against discrimination and become the Chudails that we dream of. Because only a Chudail has the capacity to set all the wrongs right and make a better world for everyone

Poet **Anju Sharma** started the session by talking about her mother in a poem called “Meri Maa”. The poem talks about how her mother had a soulful voice, but she never heard her sing, because she was never given an opportunity to sing outside her kitchen. The suppres-

sion of the mother’s talent is depicted by the fact that only the teapots have heard her sing and probably a few people in her parental house. But in her husband’s home, her *ghoonghat* (head covering) never slipped and her identity remained wrapped behind it. In Indian culture, the *ghoonghat* stands as a cover for a women’s modesty, honour or shame, she needs to cover her head as a mark of respect for her elders.

अपनीमाँकानाममैंने कभीनहींसुना
लोगकहते हैं
फलानेकीमाँ फलानेकीपत्नी और
फलानेकीबह
एक नेक औरैत थी
किसीकोनहींपता
माँकीआवाज़कैसीथी
मेरे ननिहालके कुछ लोगकहते हैं
माँबहत अच्छा गातीथी
माँकीगनगनाहटने कभीभी
नहींलाँघीथी
रसोईकीड्योढ़ी
बर्तन जानतेथे माँकीआवाज़
चायकोकितनमीठकरतीहोगी
माँकीदस्तकारियँआज भीअधूरीहैं,

Sharma’s poetry brought about the vitality of how a married woman performs in India and the implications of it. A contrasting image to Sharma’s mother was revealed by **Ashima Kumar** in her interpretation of a “*Chudail*” (Witch). Kumari, in her poetry, spoke about all those women the society debar their men get into a relationship with. She is the modern, liberated woman who has the power to intimidate the society and hence she is deemed a witch. She drinks, smokes, etc. like men do and is not afraid of who is going to talk what behind her back. She is unattainable and untamed.

Many poets collectively talked about women’s position in society, which has been kept hidden all these years because it fears the power of a woman. It fears the infinite emotional and mental strength of a woman. The poems brought together a positive vibe that dreams of a future where more and more women will stand and speak up against discrimination and become the *Chudails* that we dream of. Because only a *Chudail* has the capacity to set all the wrongs right and make a better world for everyone.

The feminist movement has never been the one about aggression and war, it has always surfaced through forms of art. Poetry brings a magical strength to it and hence is a very powerful medium to show resistance.

Diary of a Social Worker*Lila*

Kolkata: My name is Lila. I have joined the IGP unit of Apne Aap since the year 2009. I joined as teacher, during that time there were 25 to 30 mothers and nearly 15 girls from the red light area who came to learn stitching. Some girls after taking training, got jobs at places and they are earning money and doing well.

After learning to make jute products, mothers and girls are professionally involved in making ordered products, which are supplied to various organizations for which they are getting remunerations. Some months, we receives huge demand for the products even from abroad.

It is so important to provide livelihood opportunities to the girls and women living in the red light areas and the vulnerable ones.

Some of the important activities with the community girls and mothers are: we are giving loans to mothers from IGP units for emergency purpose like their daughter's marriage or education etc.

Ruchira di is the founder of Apne Aap organization. It is Apne Aap staff members and Ruchira di's initiative in making the red light district mothers be part of mainstream society and lead a normal life, so that they can secure some job and earn money for their maintenance.

I am thankful to Ruchira di for giving me a chance to get involved by teaching the red light mothers and girls in many skills.

Lata Bajoria di is looking after the marketing of IGP unit. She helps the unit by arranging raw materials. I want to thank Lata ma'am for helping our unit by getting the red light district mothers be a part of the mainstream and lead a normal life.

I am also thankful to Rajani Gupta di for helping me in various ways during my initial period of joining the unit. Rajani di's still assisting me whenever I need her help. I am thankful to Usha Kejriwal for her help in IGP unit in all respect. I am thankful to Tinku Khanna and Sahana Dasgupta and all other staff members of Apne Aap for their co-operation.

our IGP unit.

- **Jute fashion bag.**
- **Jute coin pouches**
- **Jute envelop**
- **Jute wallet**
- **Jute wallet**
- **Jute file**
- **Jute wall hanging**
- **Jute marketing bag**
- **Jute table mat**
- **Cotton cloth fashion bag**
- **Silk fashion bag**
- **Bangles**

At present we got an order from Taj Bangal for supplying small jute bags with their logo.

I am a proud member of Apne Aap and for taking care of the WIP group and helping them learn skills, which will help their development. At present, many girls are studying in school. I wish for the success of Apne Aap so that they can continue empowering women!

It is so important to provide livelihood opportunities to the girls and women living in the red light areas and the vulnerable ones.

Some of the important activities with the community girls and mothers are: we are giving loans to mothers from IGP units for emergency purpose like their daughter's marriage or education etc.

We are making the following products in

Children from redlight area counselled on “Good touch and bad touch”

— Sapna Prasad / as dictated to Laboni Basu

Kolkata: I am Sapna Prasad from Munshiganj. I am 12 years old. I have one brother, Amit, he is five years old. I am studying in 4th standard. My mother belongs to Munshiganj community. I have seen a harsh life since my childhood. I joined Apne Aap when I was 5 years old, due to the support of Apne Aap, I am studying.

Recently, Apne Aap organised a counselling session, on the topic: “good touch and bad touch”. That session was extremely useful to me, it was taught through audio visual medium, and at the end of the session we share our views. From that session I learnt that our body has four private parts which should not be touched by anyone without our consent. If any person touches our private areas, we should immediately inform an elder person, who we can confide in. This is extremely important as we should safeguard ourselves from being victims of assault.

The session, taught us a lot of important things regarding good touch and bad touch. For example, when a mother loves her child and touches her child with affection, it is a good touch. However, if any person touches us with a bad intention, it will be a bad touch.

I have had a bad experience. Once my mother passed out after consuming alcohol, I was in the same room as her. One man entered and touched my private parts, I shouted and called my mother for help but she was not in her senses. I was helpless and vulnerable, the man was trying to molest me but at that moment somehow a few people of

my locality and an aunt came to my rescue. They saved me!

I stay at Munshiganj and every day I witness acts of violence in and around my area. I want to move out of this place in order to save my mother and my brother from these averse conditions, but I cannot as I am too young as of now. Although, I will help them and move out once I am old enough.

Apne Aap has always helped me survive. My mother never got respect from anyone in our community, which was disheartening for me. But after joining Apne Aap centre I discovered a new world. The centre treated me with respect and every day I learn new thing through the centre.

I was glad to have attended such an informative counselling session. The session helped me as now I protect myself because I am aware of a ‘bad touch’ and can judge intentions behind someone’s touch. Moreover I can make other girls aware about the same and can teach them to openly speak about any bad experience faced by them. The culture of silence around sexual assault and molestation has to come to an end by more and more girls without fear speaking about it.

I would like to thank Apne Aap for such an informative session, which will empower girls and impact their lives in a powerful way.

Did You Know?

In India:

- There are 2.3 million women and girls in prostitution
- A quarter of 2.3 million are under the age of 18
- There are 1,000 red-light areas

Globally:

- About 58 % of all cases of trafficking detected globally are purpose of sexual exploitation
- About 75 % of all trafficking victims detected globally are women and girls
- About 20.9 million adults and children are bought and sold for commercial exploitation
- About 1 in 10 men in the world have bought commercial sex

Apne Aap organized health workshop among denotified tribes in Dharampura

— *Phulo/ as translated by Khushboo Mishra*

Delhi: My name is Phulo. I am 47 year old and live in Sapera Basti of Najafgarh. I live here with my daughter's family.

My daughter is married and live with her husband and two children- a boy and a girl. My son-in-law works as a local medician and my daughter used to sell toys. She has stopped selling toys since few months and live at home all time, taking care of me and children. My grandson has dropped out of school. He studied till 9th standard but my granddaughter is very intelligent. She study in 6th standard at a government school. She scores well in class and always comes first. These days she is not well. She is suffering from typhoid and chickenpox.

Earlier I too used to sell toys at a temple and on streets. But since few years I stopped doing any work as I was detected with cancer. My cancer had spread much. I met with many doctors at government hospitals. Now I am taking complete medication for my cancer.

I have attended many programmes organised by Apne Aap in past. But due to my health problems I had not been able to attend any since sometime.

Last week, Apne Aap had organised a health workshop in community. All women and young girls were invited for this workshop. Everyone gathered and sat in a circle. There were two girls who came along with Apne Aap staff to take this workshop. They told us how they visited to health care centre in morning, took a round of community, met many women and now would like to take this health related workshop.

In the health workshop, they started with basic hygiene

which should be taken care of in day-to-day life like regular bath, brushing teeth in morning, importance of clean clothes etc. **Our community is always in a filthy condition with huge piles of garbage around and bad drainage system. The girls also talked on the implications of this environment. Every year as the summer starts to approach, the children of our community starts complaining about various infections in eyes, stomach. They also suffer from viral, headaches, fever, typhoid, malaria etc. Summer is the time when all children of the community would surely suffer from various health problems.**

The girls who came to take this workshop also spoke about menstruation and how important it is to be clean during that time. My granddaughter was there listening to all these things, I felt very happy that she at such an early age is gaining all this knowledge which was never told to us even when we were adult. They told everyone the importance of using pads and wearing clean panties.

Next, they also talked about urinal infection and how to prevent it. They told us to immediately contact the doctor at health centre in case of urinal or other infections at private parts. I liked that my daughter and granddaughter attended such an informative session.

Join our campaign to [#QuitChildLabour](#). Sign the petition to revoke laws that enable [#intergenerational](#) prostitution <http://ow.ly/z2zH303xsS1>

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Write to us for any queries or comments at contact@apneaap.org
contact@apneaap.org



The World Outside

—Anita Kumar/ as dictated to Nurani Khatoon

Bihar: My name is Anita Kumari. I am studying in class VI at Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya. I belong to a Sapera community living in Khash Halhaliya Village, Forbesganj Block. My father has passed away and my mother Budhni Devi earned some money as a laborer in the agriculture fields

When my father was alive, he used to visit the villages in our neighbourhood with snakes and took the role of entertaining people with it. He used to earn some money. Sometimes, the villagers used to even give food.

I have two younger sisters and one elder brother. He is 19-year-old and has gone to Punjab to earn money along with other villagers. I live with my mother and younger sisters in our village. My mother toils really hard to feed us.

There were days when we used to sleep without food, especially on rainy seasons, as there is nothing much to do in the agricultural field during that time of the year.

My sisters and I go to the government school in my village. This year, I passed class V from my school. Earlier, I had heard about Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Simraha administered by Apne Aap. My neighbor helped me in connecting with the organization. My mother had contacted and was asked to visit the office. My mother took her documents like Aadhar card, ration card, voter id and passport size photographs.

We reached the Apne Aap office on time. Later Praveen Sir had asked me to fill in the form. I passed the written examination and finally the Apne Aap staff informed me that I got admission in KGBV.

Going to KGBV hostel was a completely different kind of experience. There was an excitement in the air. We went through the formalities. My mother and I went to meet the warden. The warden is a female and she saw our file.

After the verification was over, I was admitted in the school and the hostel. It was a moment of happiness for me. Going through all the struggles in my life being able to stay in a hostel and study was beyond what I could dream. It was my first time going out of my village and staying away from my family members.

In fact, I am convinced that regardless of the hardship I face today, one day I can look back at these days and smile. My hard work will bear a fruit and I will make my dream come true. I will always be grateful to Apne Aap for being with me when I needed it the most.

The organization is doing so much for the marginalized and under privileged children like us. I hope they continue their work for a very long time.

Continued from page 1

The purpose of the program was to organize an awareness rally to stop human trafficking in redlight areas of Forbesganj.

The preparation started the next morning. The Caravan team members arrived at our office. They were 16-members in total including both male and female. The preparations started by putting up the banners, posters in the redlight area. It was followed by distribution of T-shirts to all the participants. The event was conducted by playing songs and shouting slogans related to anti-human trafficking. Also, a film on human trafficking was shown at the open ground by them.

Following the film showing, there was a street play to create about human trafficking. There were more than 600 people gathered to see the street play. It was a powerful performance. We had also asked everyone around to participate in an oath taking to Stop Human Trafficking. Most of the people present there

were gripped and discussing about it even after the program was over.

We tried to send out the message in such a way that directly or indirectly it reaches out to people for whom it is intended to. The awareness program was for three hours.

Later, lunch was arranged for all and also certificate was distributed among the participants from the Bangla Natak. We bid farewell to each other and left for home.

We thoroughly enjoyed during the program and also learnt important details to stop human trafficking. Moreover, being associated with an anti-sex trafficking organization it is important we know the legalities. It is helpful for us.

Such events help to change people's perception a lot. Not immediately, but eventually it will.

Thank you Apne Aap for encouraging us to participate in events as such. I believe that this kind of platform will be the root of change in our society.

My First Day at Apne Aap

— Aritri

Kolkata: My name is Aritri. I am pursuing my MA in Development studies from Azim Premji University, Bangalore. For my summer internship program I decided to work with Apne Aap as my interest and forte has always been in the domain of gender and following the brilliant work done by the organization for the girls and women trapped in prostitution really compelled me to join and be part of this reputed organization.

On the first day, I was warmly welcomed by Leela Ma'am and others. There was Sangeeta di who gave me a brief regarding my work and how I can contribute to the organization. "Di" is the way here the female staff addresses one another just to enjoy the camaraderie while working together. The people in the organization helped me a lot to cope with the working techniques. Its' quite flexible working here as they are not at all stringent and gave me independence to complete my work as I wanted to. The environment is really comfortable here, the people are warm and courteous.

Regarding the knowledge that I gained on the first day I was surprised to collect so much information. Sangeeta didi after giving me a quite vivid description about the organization its challenges and what kind of misery prevails on the purview of the real sector of work namely the red-light areas further explained by showing me various documentaries made by Apne Aap's children. After this and a brief introductory conversation with everybody I started my work by helping them with archiving the documents. Also a brief discussion with

Mumtaz di helped me understand the scenario of the women in Topsia, a part of Kolkata involving many slums where the women are vulnerable enough to get susceptible to fall in the snares of forced prostitution and trafficking.

While archiving the documents I came across various information regarding the launch of a book "The place where we live is called red-light area", the field study on the Nat community in Bihar, among whom inter-generational prostitution still prevails. It was interesting to know that Apne Aap follows the guidelines of UNICEF for one of their working techniques.

The difference I noticed here is that they not only sympathize with the abject conditions of the prostituted girls and women in Bihar, Delhi, and Kolkata, but also tries to empathize with the miserable and marginalized.

The women in such red light areas are compelled by their husband most of the times. The children in such condition are the most vulnerable ones. They not only are devoid of a comfortable environment to grow up but lack the very important human rights like right to education, right to live life with dignity etc. Apne Aap knows this social malady and tries to sew it from the very start of their childhood where it starts to tear up.

All in all, my first day was quite productive and I am glad to work in an organization like Apne Aap.

Continued from page 1

But, everything fell in place so naturally. It was like I always belonged here. Everyone were like friends. I slowly started liking the place and the people around me. The office became like a home to me.

With time, I discovered my inner strength and talent as well. I realized how much I love dancing. I felt as though this talent has been a part of me since long, but only discovered after getting the exposure in Apne Aap. Also, besides studying, there were plenty of extra-curriculum activities. The organization gave me enough confidence in making me realize my dream. I am sure about my goals in life. Also, I am in class IX this year.

One such beautiful memory with Apne Aap was the celebration of 'Earth Day'. It was a day devoted for the mother earth. The day was observed on April 22 every year. It depends on people whether they want to celebrate it before or after the said date.

On April 19th, the Earth Day Network invited different NGOs including ours for the celebration. Earth Day Network also works with the poor and marginalized chil-

dren. From our organization, they had invited total of 20 members. It was difficult for the staff to select among the many children. And I was lucky enough to be among the 20 participants.

Earth Day was observed at Alipure zoo and the programme started at 8:45 AM. The welcoming was so warm. There were little children holding posters, and they were so well so behaved. They took us around to see the zoo. They had a good knowledge about the animals and their food chain. The information was shared with us accordingly.

Following the introductory part, we were escorted to the auditorium. There was a power point presentation on clean earth, more and more plants, save animals, save trees. Later, we participated in a drawing competition. After this humble presentation from them we participate in the drawing competition organized by Earth Day Network. One of my friends from the Apne Aap received a prize.

I along with others were truly glad to get the chance to participate in the celebration and also the competition. We learnt a lot. These information will forever remain with us.

Poems

A winter night

The sky is dark and
The ground is white.
The world is peaceful,
On the winter night.
No one around,
Not a sound to be heard.
Not laughs, not a car,
Not even a bird.
For a moment it's just,
The snow and me.
I smile inside.
I feel so free.

Name– Pooja Kumari
Area: KGBV, Simraha, Bihar

First day at school

I wonder
If my drawing
Will be as good as theirs.
I wonder.
If they will like me
Or just be full of stares.
I wonder
If my teacher
Look like mom or Granny.
I wonder
If my puppy
Will wonder where I am.

Name– Pooja Kumari
Area: KGBV, Simraha, Bihar



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