



RED LIGHT DISPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

To be a Doctor
-Vicky Singh, as transcribed by
Khushboo Mishra

Delhi: My name is Vicky. I am 12 years old. I belong to the Sapera community. I live with my parents and two siblings, a sister and a brother. They both are younger than me. My family has lots of monkeys and snakes. My grandmother and grandfather do a lot of care for the snakes. If any family finds a snake in their house or in the fields they immediately call my grandfather. My father also plays drums at the Hindu functions like a wedding or other festivals. My parents do not want me to continue with the traditional work of our family. I want to become a doctor. I know that I need to study very hard. I am also not allowed to skip the school days. I love my mother. Whenever I am sick she cooks my favorite food and takes me to a doctor. I am afraid of injections, especially on my bums (hips). I feel shy. When I will be a doctor, I will not give injection on hips. My friends laugh at me for getting injections on hips. We all make fun of each other. My best friend also wants to be a doctor. We are in the same school and will go to college together.

DNT girl passes Tenth Board Examination
-Rukhsana Khatoon, as translated by Praveen Kumar

Bihar: My name is Rukhsana Khatoon. I live in the red light area of Uttri Rampur in Forbesganj. I started my journey with Apne Aap Women Worldwide at the age of 3. That time I was admitted at Apne Aap in Bal Mandal program. I used to come to the center every day to learn to read and write. I attended many programs at the center. After three years at the community center, Apne Aap enrolled me in the nearby government school for formal education.

I am glad to share this year I completed my Tenth Board Examination with good marks. My family has been very proud. I could see it

in their eyes. At Apne Aap center, I am now a member of Kishori Mandal- a group of adolescent girls run by the organization in Ant Kanya Center of Uttri Rampur, for the empowerment of the very poor, marginalized at risk of prostitution, SC, ST, DNT, and other poor girls. Apne Aap organizes various programs like open mic sessions, legal training, health, and gender awareness sessions, RLD story reading and writing sessions, asset training, exposure visits, etc for the empowerment of adolescent girls and I participated in many of them. I learned many things with the help of regular training and feel more empowered and fearless with the support

I love English Books from Mobile Library,
-Ansh Singh, as transcribed by Rachna Nayak

Kolkata: My name is Ansh Singh and I am six years old. I live in Sonagachi with my sister and aunt. My mother died when I was 2 years old. I don't understand what is HIV Aids but people say my mother died of this disease. My father is handicapped. He does not earn and is dependent on others. When my mother was alive she used to earn for the entire family. So after her death, my aunt took me and my sister to her home. Every night I see men coming to my aunt's room. They give her money on the doorstep when leaving. My aunt has one son. We all eat, play and go to Apne Aap center together.

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I study in class II at Uma Vidyalaya. Every day I come home from school, eat lunch and go to Apne Aap center. Here we are taught various subjects, play carom and ludo, learn dance and paint. We also participate in drawing competitions. At the center, many programs are organized for the children. In the evening we are also given the snacks.

Apne Aap has arranged a mobile library for the children in the redlight area. Every Monday we get many colorful books to read.

Trafficking Survivors Are Being Failed the World Over -by Agnes Odhiambo & Heather Barr

Human trafficking is a booming business. The recent arrest of Jeffrey Epstein in the US on charges of trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls is just one example of an urgent problem that claims an alarming number of victims around the world. The International Labour Organization estimates that worldwide about 16 million people are exploited for labour, and five million are currently being subjected to forced sexual exploitation, the overwhelming majority of them women and girls.

We have met many survivors of trafficking. In March, Human Rights Watch documented the flow of women and girls from northern Myanmar to China. Traffickers lure them with promises of work, then sell them from about \$3,000 to \$13,000 to Chinese families struggling, due to China's large gender imbalance, to find brides for their sons. In the coming weeks, Human Rights Watch will issue a report documenting the journeys of Nigerian women promised well-paid work, often in Europe, then sexually exploited and brutally abused by traffickers. We know from our research that armed conflict often amplifies existing trafficking practices, and exacerbates women's and girls' vulnerability to exploitation by increasing economic desperation, weakening the rule of law, and decreasing the availability of social services and family support.

In northern Nigeria, for example, there has been nearly a decade-long conflict between Boko Haram insurgents and government forces. The armed group abducts women and girls and forces them to marry its members, confining them to a life of domestic servitude, forced labour and sex slavery.

Stopping trafficking of women and girls, and providing victims with the right protection and services, seems to be a low priority for many governments. Effective responses to cross-border trafficking demand effective international cooperation by both law enforcement and service providers, and many governments fail at this.

They are immobilised by coordination challenges, logistical difficulties, language barriers, political dynamics, corruption and apathy about violence against women. During armed conflicts, when resources are thinly stretched and humanitarian needs are many, trafficking survivors are often left out of the scope of available assistance.

Life is extremely hard for trafficking survivors. Women and girls who escape abuse return home to the same desperate circumstances that made them vulnerable in the first place, but now bearing additional burdens. They frequently face stigma or are

blamed for coming home penniless. They have often experienced devastating physical injuries, and mental trauma that can haunt them forever.

Human Rights Watch interviewed a 50-year-old woman who was trafficked from Myanmar to China as a bride in 1986 at the age of 15 and held for a year. She said after escaping she was deeply distressed and almost died twice because she was so depressed she stopped eating. We asked her how long the symptoms continued. "Until now," she replied. "I still feel fear and shock - it's the trauma." Trafficking survivors may need urgent medical care for problems ranging from injuries due to abuse to sexual and reproductive health needs, including abortion for unplanned pregnancies resulting from rape. They need shelter as sometimes they cannot return to families that were complicit in their trafficking. They need legal assistance to ensure that the justice system - which too often lets trafficking victims down - is responsive to their needs for accountability and compensation. Many need financial assistance.

These services are rarely available or adequate where they exist. We have also seen harmful government responses, including treating victims as immigration violators, jailing and deporting them. In some cases, officials confine survivors in locked shelters, forcing them to undergo invasive questioning or examinations, and policymakers make no distinction between trafficking victims and sex workers.

But in Myanmar and Nigeria, we have also seen local groups struggling heroically to assist survivors of trafficking and their families, with painfully few resources. Donors and governments should support groups already making a difference.

There has been increased attention to human trafficking in recent years, with some governments and donors pledging to do more. But trafficking survivors need more than pledges. Governments and donors need to take concrete action and make significant investments to meet the needs of survivors and respect their dignity and rights.

Note: The article was originally published in Al Jazeera.

My Journey in the Red Light Area of Munshiganj -Saptami Das, as translated by Rachna Nayak

Kolkata: My name is Saptami Das. I am forty-five years old and live in Mushiganj area in a small room. I spent my childhood in Murshidabad with my mother and three younger sisters. My mother was a daily wage laborer. She used to work in the fields for other people and earn little money. The money earned was not sufficient to provide us with two times meal and with the passing of the days we were pushed at the extreme level of poverty.

Seeing the daughters sleep without food, my mother decided to marry me off. She thought of saving me from poverty. Little did she know where I would end up. I was married in the next few months and came to Kolkata with my husband. Some days passed and I started to notice a change in his behavior. One morning I woke up and couldn't find my husband. I was sold in Munshiganj red light area for some hundred rupee notes. I tried to escape. It was vain. The brothel owner started to keep me locked in and when I refused to attend the clients they would beat me up and tortured in every possible manner. I gave up and accepted my new life.

I had seen the board of Apne Aap center. One afternoon, I decided to visit the center and found many

poor helpless women and girls like me were getting an education, vocational training, and learning dance and practicing songs. I was inspired and decided to visit the center often. The next day I registered myself in the adult literacy class at Apne Aap. When I was five years old I shared my dream to be a teacher with my mother. She had felt sad about hearing this as despite her willingness she couldn't send me to school. My mother would have been proud to see me learning.

With the help of Apne Aap members, I encourage survivors to come out of the red-light area and start a new life. I also spread awareness in the community for education, health and hygiene, and primary legal rights issues. Apne Aap supported me to raise my voice against the injustice and made me strong to fight for my own and also to fight for others' rights, self-respect, and dignity. I also motivate mothers in the red light area to put their daughters in the school.

Apneap gives me such a wonderful opportunity through which not only me, other survivors are also able to discover their existence in a safe and dignified way.

Did You Know?

In India:

- There are 16 million women and girls as victims of sex trafficking
- 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 71 % 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

Source:

- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-trafficking-brothels/rescued-child-sex-workers-in-india-reveal-hidden-cells-in-brothels-idUSKBN1E71R1>
- <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/01/recorded-increase-human-trafficking-women-girls-targeted/>
- <https://www.bustle.com/p/13-sex-trafficking-statistics-that-put-the-worldwide-problem-into-perspective-9930150>

Workshop on Child Sexual Abuse -Anjali Kumari, as translated by Khushboo Mishra

Delhi: My name is Anjali Kumari. I study in class fifth in MCD Primary School. I live in Dharampura with my parents and two siblings.

Some days back, all the fifth class students were asked to gather in a science club room. Khushboo Didi organizes many workshops for us at the school. There was one more didi in the room, setting the projector and taking out big colorful posters from her bag. We were informed that the workshop is related to Child Sexual Abuse. We were explained in simple terms as a good touch/bad touch or safe touch/unsafe touch.

We were shown three short video clips on the projector and a discussion followed after every clip. I have also heard from my mother and other friends that how little girls are touched inappropriately by other people, especially men. They can be anyone from school staff to uncle to cousins to some stranger on the road or a known shopkeeper etc.

I remember once a girl in my neighborhood came home crying. She was fifteen years old and was a bright girl in the school. She used to score very well in the exams. Later I came across a news that she was married off, exactly after five months she

was spotted crying. My mother tells me that I should never speak to any stranger and should not eat anything given by a random person.

In the video clip, I saw that the girl was my age and her uncle took her in the bathroom to give chocolates. Uncle came out after half an hour from the bathroom and the girl was sitting quietly in the corner. She didn't eat chocolates.

We were also told many stories and how we should respond if anything like this happens to us. They told us to reach immediately to the person we trust most, like a mother, sister, teacher, friends, and others at home or in school. We should never be afraid to share this because it is not our fault. We should speak so that our girls could also be protected.

Uncle came out after half an hour from the bathroom and the girl was sitting quietly in the corner. She didn't eat chocolates.

Get yourself involved!

Be a part of the campaign!

Click a selfie and share it with us on the Facebook Page 'Cool Men Don't Buy Sex' <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cool-Men-Dont-Buy-Sex/624526271001934> with #CoolMenDontBuySex #Selfie #ApneAap.

The Cool Men Don't Buy Sex Campaign is a call to end demand for sex trafficking which highlights the role that men play in fostering the sex industry.



Apne Aap's "Cool Men Don't Buy Sex" campaign was born to draw attention to the demand side of sex trafficking - the traffickers, pimps, and purchasers of sex. Apne Aap advocates for the criminalization of these individuals – they are responsible for maintaining sexual slavery and continue to exploit women and girls every day in India.

Asset Card Training -Rinky Khatoon, as translated by Praveen Kumar

Bihar: .My name is Rinky Khatoon. I live in Gorhare Chowk in Forbesganj with my family. I joined Apne Aap Women Worldwide on 3rd February 2019. I learnt about the stitching training programme organized by Apne Aap at Jagdish Mill Compound for the technical empowerment of the girls and women from poor, marginalized and De-notified caste communities. Some of my friends visited the Apne Aap center and appreciated the patience with which the staff members taught them. They used to say, ‘We don’t feel like students. Apne Aap members are very friendly and polite’.

I expressed my desire to learn stitching to my mother and few days later I got myself enrolled in the stitching programme at Apne Aap center. Initially I came here to learn stitching but later on I learnt the details of the work Apne Aap is doing to dismantle the cycle of sex trafficking by empowering the girls and women living in the red light area and the periphery of the red light area who are the victims and survivors and also at risk of the sex trafficking and who belong to the De-notified caste .

I slowly started attending programs and other trainings at the Apne Aap center in Jagdish Mill Compound. Open mic session, art & craft classes, bridge courses, legal empowerment training, training political knowledge, making posters, taking out rallies, Red Light Dispatch story reading and writing sessions, health session, computer literacy training, stitching training etc are examples of the programs I participated in at Apne Aap.

This month Apne Aap organized an asset training session at the center after the stitching class. I was curious to know more about it. In my batch, we are total twenty four girls. We quickly finished our

work and gathered under the small hut just few steps outside the classroom in the Jagdish Mill Compound itself. We each were given the asset card. Asset card is a tool developed by the organization to measure the level of empowerment for the girls and women. There were ten assets in the Asset Card namely Safe space, Education, Self confidence, Political Power, Govt. ID’s, Govt. Subsidies, Savings and Loan, Livelihood Linkages, Legal Empowerment and Self Employment Groups. These ten assets are further subdivided in smaller achievements.

While I was filling the card I realized that I have achieved majority of the assets like safe space, education, self-confidence, government IDs, government subsidies, savings and loan, livelihood linkages, legal trainings and membership of a self-empowerment group. I understand the value of each asset and how Apne Aap support girls and women in the daily life and save them from the clutches of traffickers and pimps of sex-trafficking.

At the stitching center of Apne Aap, I learnt stitching to stitch the blouse, petticoat, pajama- kurta, frock, patiala, pillow cover and bags etc. I collect the cloth material from my neighbors and stitch them at the center. This is how I am also able to earn little money for my higher education. I am thankful to the organization for constant support.

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



Learning English

-Reshma Khatoon, as transcribed by Rachna Nayak

Kolkata: My name is Reshma Khatoon. I am nine years old. I live with parents under the bridge in Hastings. It is a long and wide bridge. There are other children also who live under the bridge. I study in class III in a Municipal Corporation School. I walk to school with my other friends. My father works as a painter and mother is a house maker. There are total eight members in my family. I am the eldest daughter. My mother says I am a big girl and should take responsibility of the siblings. When I am back from school I feed my younger siblings and then either help mother in the household chores or engage younger siblings in some games so they do not cry. I see how my father often comes home late at night. He works very hard to feed a big family. On some days, when my father earns less, my parents give food to everyone in the family and themselves sleep eating little or nothing. Father is the only earning member in the family; rest seven members are dependent on him for food, clothing, shelter, medicines etc.

I have heard my mother fighting with the vegetable vendor to reduce the price of the potatoes. She mumbles how everything is getting expensive. My

father tries to earn more every month but end up with less than Rupees four thousand. On top, keeping us in the school is also not easy for my parents. I like going to school so that when I grow up I could find a decent job with good salary. There are lot of colorful pictures in my school books. I learnt the English alphabets. I try to read English sentences but find it difficult. My school has lot of chart papers stuck on the walls with drawings, cartoon characters, quotes, prayers etc, in Bengali, Hindi and English languages. I like English language. I ask my teacher at school to talk to me in English so that I learn fast and be able to read the newspapers and novels. I wish to write books in English when I graduate from college.

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participated in many of them. I learned many things with the help of regular training and feel more empowered and fearless with the support of the organization.

On the occasion of Independence Day on the 15th of August 2019, a flag hoisting and cultural activities were organized at the community center by Apne Aap for the children of a regular class, bridge course and the girls of Kishori Mandal. We were very excited and all the children participated actively in the planning and arrangements for the celebration. Apne Aap members; Sanju Di, Meena Di, and Fatima Di encouraged us to take responsibilities. We decorated the community center with flowers and colors and arranged all the things. We also made rangoli with bright colors. The center looked beautiful. We felt very happy. The time of flag hoisting was fixed at 9 am. The flag was hoisted by Sanju Di as she is the in-charge of the center. Once the flag was hoisted, all the participants started singing the national anthem,

followed by national songs. Then we also sang other patriotic songs, recited poems and discussed freedom fighters. There was also a speech by some girls of Kishori Mandal.

Apne Aap distributed prizes and sweets to everyone. The Independence Day Program continued for two hours. We are proud of the nation and Apne Aap. Because of Apne Aap, children from poor families are able to access education. Apne Aap is doing such a great job to empower and uplift the girls via education support, confidence building, skill training, and nutritional support. They teach us to be focused on the aim of life and try your best to achieve it.

**Participated in a National Game for Netball
-by Aarti, as translated by Khushboo Mishra**

Delhi: My name is Aarti and I study in class IX at Shanti Gyan International School. I study and live in a hostel here. My elder sister is also in the same school-cum-hostel. I came here in April 2015. I was very nervous at that time. I had never stayed away from my mother and my home. My other two elder sisters are married; one lives in Uttam Nagar in West Delhi and the other live next to our home in Dharampura. Being the youngest I received abundant love and care. My father died when I was four. My mother sacrificed her life for us.

The faculty at Shanti Gyan International School encourages the students to excel both academically and in extra-curricular activities. They encourage us to play different sports and participate in competitions. My sister played three netball national games. This year I too participated in a national level game for netball. My team couldn't win the game but we still celebrated as this had been the first time I traveled to another state in India. My mother was hesitant to let me go. Since my sister has already traveled to many states, she convinced and assured the mother about my safety. In addition, my coach also assured my mother.

Mothers are always concerned about the happiness and security of their daughters. In my community, girls are not allowed to go to schools or anywhere on their own. They are always accompanied by brothers, fathers, and some older women. However, she is forced to go on the streets to sell her body in exchange of money at night. Sometimes I feel confused about my community. I want all the girls to come out and be able to go to school and college. It is important for girls to get an education.

I like to travel. When we went to the national game, I enjoyed the journey. We were up till late. We ate, sang songs, played games and teased each other so much. Those were the best days. Once I was back at the hostel I called my mother and thanked her to allow me to go. I have decided to put more practice hours in the game so that I could participate in more competitions.

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Continued from page 1

red-light area. Every Monday we get many colorful books to read. We are also allowed to keep the books with us for one week. The children of my age are not allowed to access the library. I am happy that Apne Aap's mobile library is for the children of my age. Everybody thinks we are small and we will tear the books. We love books so why we will tear them. When I get a chance to keep the book from the mobile library with me, I keep it safely in my bag. I read the stories to my sister and my cousin also.

I try new books every week so that when I grow up I could teach my students different subjects. I will also open a big library for the children which they could access anytime and any day. I feel very happy to come to the mobile library every Monday.

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Poems

Snowball

I made myself a snowball
As perfect as could be.
I thought I'd keep it as a pet
And let it sleep with me.
I made it some pajamas
And a pillow for its head.
Then last night it ran away,
But first it wet the bed.

The Rainbow

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier than these.
There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.



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