



# RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

## My Dream Mithhi Khatoon, Bihar

**Bihar:** My name is Mithhi Khatoon and I am now a student of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Aavasiya Vidyalaya Simraha. My mother's name is Chandani Khatoon. My native village is Utti Ramur Red Light Area near about Forbesganj. I wanted to study and become a doctor and help all the poor and support all my villagers and relatives to get out of the flesh trade. When I heard about the KGBV I forced my mother to meet Sanju Di and Praveen Sir. They admitted me in the school and I received different skills like sports, Karate, Craft, Computer education from our teachers. All the teachers loved me. We enjoy the hostel life. We studied very hard to succeed in achieving our dreams. I am very happy here and need the support of the organization Apne Aap Women Worldwide to support me in higher study and encourage me to get the success in my life and also support me to become me a doctor and help the poor. Thank You Sanju Di, Tinku Aunty, Praveen Sir and Thank You Apne Aap to support me..

*Dictated to Praveen Kumar*

## *I participated in three National Netball games, Delhi - Varsha*

**Delhi:** I am Varsha from Delhi. I am studying at Shanti Gyan International School. There are a lot of activities organised by our school. Many extracurricular and sports activities are also a part of our routine.

**We have very good infrastructure for sports. I started playing many games when I joined the school.** I developed a liking for Netball. I started playing for fun but then I took it more seriously. I practised along with my friends in school.

My school then gave me the opportunity of participating in national level netball championship. I got the opportunity to travel to different states and play there which would have been impossible otherwise. I met so many wonderful players during the tournaments. There were various competitions organised at different levels. **I travelled to Bihar and Bharatpur in Chattisgarh. We even had a competition in Delhi itself.**

*(Continued on page 6)*

## *KGBV received sports equipment from the regional District Magistrate - Savitri Kumari/ Translated by Praveen Kumar*

### **Bihar:**

My name is Savitri Kumari and I am a student of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Aavashiya Vidyalaya, Simraha run by Apne Aap Women Worldwide, Forbesganj, Bihar. I study in class VIII. I live in the hostel here with my 99 colleagues. It is a residential school. I belong to a very poor Schedule Tribe family. I live in a near by village called Saifghanj Parwajha. My father's name is Shree Bablu Baski and he is an agriculture labour. I was admitted in class VI on 24th April

2016 and I continue my study with hard labour.

**On 20th December 2018 a meeting was called by the district magistrate of Araria Mr Himanshu Sharma with the wardens of KGBV.** He wanted to know about the sports activities conducted by the KGBV in their premises.

*(Continued on page 7)*

**Sweet success after a life of struggle: Girls from red-light areas make a mark themselves**  
**Chandreyee Ghose , The Telegraph**

**Little Russel Street:** Life's been a bitter struggle for 18-year-old pastry chef Soni Khatoon - for education and justice, against traffickers and early marriage. Tuesday held for her a sweet surprise when she landed a job with a city hotel, right after she had spoken about her journey in front of a select audience.

**Born in Bihar's Araria district to a mother who was in the sex trade, Soni had only one dream - to study and see the world.** But her family members belonging to the marginalised Nat community had other ideas.

Fighting for education and convincing her parents to send her to a government-aided boarding school was Soni's first achievement.

**"I made them realize that a boarding school would protect me from the volatile environment at home. I was home-sick, yet I stayed on,"** she said.

It was at this school that Soni met activist Ruchira Gupta, the president and founder of Apne Aap Women Worldwide.

The young chef was speaking at a Women's Day lunch hosted by Apne Aap, an NGO that works with trafficking survivors, at Kenilworth Hotel. In the audience were 35 entrepreneurs, artistes, consul generakiju7ls and celebrities.

"My father's death, violence in a red-light area, manipulative relatives - these are some of my early memories," said Soni, whose mother landed in jail soon after her father's death.

Soni's second milestone came when she walked out of home and a life of prostitution. "I took the help of Apne Aap to continue studying in another boarding school. I had to give up on my family for the sake of education," she recalled.

Ruchira remembers a 12-year-old Soni approaching her for help after an uncle tried to sell her off to a trafficker. "She was brave enough to go to the cops and file an FIR. Thanks to her ef

fort, some traffickers were arrested," Ruchira said.

After Class X, Soni came to Calcutta to learn the baking at Kenilworth Hotel. "I want to work and study. I am already preparing for my Class XII from an open school," she said.

Sharing the stage with Soni was Juhi Khatoon, 19, who hails from the same district. A student of arts at St Xavier's College, Juhi hopes to be a lawyer one day. **"My mother always wanted me to study, something she could not do herself. I hope to be a lawyer and make vulnerable women and children aware of their rights, she said.**

**My father's death,  
violence in a red-light area,  
manipulative relatives -  
these are some of my  
early memories**

*This article was originally published in the Telegraph on 7, March 2018.*

## Diary of a Social Worker

*Mamta Tanwar, Delhi*

**Delhi:** My name is Mamta Tanwar. I am from Delhi. I have been working with Apne Aap Women Worldwide since more than ten years. I live near Dharampura. Our field is also in Dharampura now. I worked as a field worker initially. There are three communities we work with. One is Perna community, the second is Sapera community and the third one is Singhi community. Perna community practices intergenerational prostitution. They prostitute their daughter-in-laws. The marriages are fixed very early in their lives. Child marriages are very common among the Pernas. The marriages are fixed in families only. The boy's family pays money to the girl's family to fix the marriage. Once the girl enters adolescence, she is sent to her husband's house. Young girls are supposed to bear children within a few years of her moving to her in-law's house. Once the first child is born, they are sent for prostitution.

The women are burdened with earning money for the family and also with the responsibility of raising children, house chores etc. When I first started going to the field, the women didn't talk to us. They always said that they didn't have time. We devised a strategy to make contact with them. We sat with the women and started helping with the house chores. We helped them cut vegetables, look after children and once they started opening up, we talked to them. We mostly listened to what they had to say. They told us about the kind of exhaustion they feel.

They go out at night and spend the long nights on the roadside. Then once they're back in the morning, they have to look after their children, their husbands and the household. They have very little time to sleep. No woman in the community looked well rested. By the time they finish their housework, it's time to go out again. The money they earn is given to the man of the house. The men do not work at all. They gamble all day. There is a lot of alcohol consumption in the community among men. Most of the women face domestic abuse at the hands of their husbands. Earlier they didn't think this was a problem but after continuous interventions from Apne Aap, they have begun to identify violence. Earlier they thought it was a part of life because it happened to everybody but now they can see the problems.

The women of the community have become friendly with us. They contact us if they face any problem now. They even ask us to intervene if there are fights in the family. We have developed a bond with the women of the community and it will help me to better their life.

## 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

### *International Women's Day celebration with Munshiganj women and girl, Kolkata*

**Kolkata:** My name is XXX. I live in Munshiganj. I have lived here since many years. I have been associated with Apne Aap Women World Wide since past five years. I visit the centre regularly every week. I have been taught many things at the centre. The centre also teaches kids around our area and puts them in good schools. The centre also celebrates different festivals and days with us. We are told the importance of each festival and also why certain days are celebrated.

On 8th of March, 2018, Apne Aap Women World-wide celebrated International Women's day at the Sashtithala Centre. Khushboo didi from Delhi office of Apne Aap was with us to celebrate the day. She told us that this day is very important in history. Women all over the world fought for rights to be given to us. She explained to us that women were not given same position as men in the society. They couldn't vote or have property. Then many women protested against this injustice and were successful. Mothers and girls from Munshiganj and Sonagachi red light area were part of the celebration. We discussed about women's political, economic and social

achievement over the decades. We also explored the significance of women's right. We were told the importance of rights to live a better life. Women need to exercise their voting rights because our vote is important in making the government. We were also informed about the right of a woman to hold property. This was also given after many women fought bravely for it.

We also discussed Apne Aap's tough fighting against sex trafficking in Kolkata, Bihar and Delhi. Khushboo didi also talked about different programmes that the organisation has taken up in different centres. Mothers from Sonagachi and Munshiganj spoke about the work that Apne Aap has done for prostituted women of the red light areas and their children. They shared their empowering and inspiring stories with us. The women shared how different trainings that they get at centers run by Apne Aap have helped them to develop new skills and also hone their existing ones. Many women and girls shared with us the skills in computer they learned. They have shown their love and gratitude towards Apne Aap's admiration for their well-being. We ended the day with joyous singing.

#### **Get yourself involved! Be a part of the campaign!**

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.

## “I learned to keep my teeth clean and healthy”

**Kolkata:** My name is XXX. I live in Kiddhirpore. We were taught at school that hygiene is important if you want to remain fit. Oral hygiene is most important because the dirty mouth is related to various problems in the body. Oral hygiene cleanses the mouth causes pain other complications (such as bad breathing) dental hygiene, and tooth cleaning It is important to keep oral hygiene in order to prevent arthritis and mouth odor The most common forms of dental disease include dental caries (tooth caries, tooth caries) gum disease coetaneous healing. Oral hygiene is often neglected in urban and rural areas due to the lack of awareness. Brushing two times a day is an important practice to keep our teeth healthy. I will always keep this in mind. Among other things regular visit to the dentist is also important part of maintaining healthy teeth.

At Apne Aap Women Worldwide, Dr Minakshi Roy conducted an oral screening camp for women & children at Khidderpore centre. The doctor was a delightful woman. I was very scared at first because all the tools at her table were scary. They were pointy things I thought will hurt. The doctor assured me that nothing will hurt. She made me very comfortable. She checked my all my teeth. She advised me to brush my teeth twice a day and also gargle after I eat to make sure nothing remains in my teeth. She explained that left over food in the teeth will rot my teeth.

The doctor told us that she was delighted to come here as it gave her a chance to interact with Apne Aap beneficiaries for the first time. The dental camp tuned out to be a success and a great opportu-

nity to gain some knowledge on maintaining a good oral hygiene. Apart from the standard oral examination we were instructed on the correct usage of toothbrush, toothpaste and brushing techniques. We were also told about foods that keep the teeth healthy. Children should have milk because it strengthens the teeth. I also got to know that drinking too much tea spoils the teeth. I learned a lot of new and interesting things at the camp. I will follow them to keep my teeth healthy.

**Brushing two times a day is an important practice to keep our teeth healthy. I will always keep this in mind.**

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## My First Day at Apne Aap:

—Aditya

**Delhi:** I am a law student in Delhi. During my winter break I decided to join Apne Aap for a three week internship. I came to know that fact that shows their sensitivity towards the trafficking and prostitutions issue. I was told how we have to be careful of the language we use to address prostituted women because violence often gets normalized in language. Then it filters to our everyday lives and becomes a part of society. First thing we have to teach ourselves is that they are being forced to such works, it's not their choice. I was extremely impressed by this degree of sensitivity towards a vulnerable class.

During the orientation, I was explained the different vulnerabilities of women who end up being trafficked. I came to know a important logical fact that any business need skill and skill grow with the time, but in this profession (if you consider it one) by the time women reaches the age of 30-35, they are useless. So it can be a skill. It is just a silent violence and exploitation of a woman body until it become

useless.

To my surprise, I came to know to that there are communities where the males (head) of the family engage their girls / sister/ wife in this profession. And this practice prevalent in these communities from many generations.

After a quality conversation we have been offered coffee and tea. Then I was given a tiny research work. After completing the works we got the permissions to leave.

So in totality, the first day experience was splendid as expected. And eventually, after a month, I end up doing a meaningful internship. Thanks to Apne Aap Women World.

### *Continued from page 1*

I was nervous about playing in different states. The competition was really tough and the players were very skilful. I also went to Himachal Pradesh for a match. **In the Delhi National Netball tournament, our team won a bronze medal. We also won a cash prize of 6000 rupees.** Winning at a national level tournament felt really good. I now am working towards winning a gold medal at the national level.

I also won many participation certificates in these competitions. These will also help me while choosing a college and applying for admission after my class 12<sup>th</sup>.

These competitions have really helped y develop my overall personality. They have become integral in shaping my skills. It has motivated me to be active and strives for a fit mind and body. I have become healthier as a result of my training. Apart from teaching us about the sport, I also received knowledge about how to eat right. A healthy lifestyle is an essential part of becoming an athlete. **All this**

wouldn't have been possible if I didn't have such an amazing school and I have Apne Aap to thank for it. I love my school and I am proud of it.

**I got the opportunity to travel to different states and play there which would have been impossible otherwise.**

**I met so many wonderful players during the tournaments.**

## *Actress backs plea against trafficking, The Telegraph*

**Calcutta:** Activists rallying for the review of a 2017 anti-trafficking bill that is silent on sexual exploitation as a cause for trafficking has won the support of Hollywood actress-activist Ashley Judd.

Ruchira Gupta, the founder of Apne Aap Women's Worldwide, initiated an online petition on March 8 - International Women's Day - to make sexual exploitation and prostitution an offence.

Judd, who visited Calcutta as an Apne Aap guest in January last year, tweeted her support for Gupta's recommendations the next day.

**"I stand with @apneaap and urge #Indian Parliament to review and change the #TraffickingBill NOW to include #SexualExploitation and #Prostitution of others as an offense!,"** tweeted the Divergent actress.

The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2017 that will be up for voting in Parliament soon.

"The bill has several grey areas. It does not mention sexual exploitation and prostitution as causes of trafficking. We also appeal to parliamentarians to decriminalise prostituted women and girls as they had no choice. They are poor, they are female, they are low caste and teenagers, hence vulnerable," said Gupta, who is in Vatican City to deliver a talk on trafficking in a Pontifical academy. She felt "honoured" to have Ashley's support.

"Ashley Judd is part of our advisory board and has often supported us," said Tinku Khanna, director, Apne Aap.

India has over 16 million victims of trafficking, of who 10 million are sexually exploited, according to Apne Aap.

The petition issued on March 8 has garnered over 1,600 signatures.

*Chandreyee Ghose, Originally published in the Telegraph online edition, on March 3, 2018.*

### *Continued from page 1*

After receiving the information, he distributed Carom board, Football, Volleyball, Badminton and Shuttlecock among the wardens for different schools to play for the children. Our warden Mrs. Chanda Kumari also received these materials. **When we heard the news, we were filled with joy and celebrated it among our colleagues.**

When all the materials reached our school, it was properly entered in the register by the accountant Mr Vijay Kumar and also in the sports equipment distribution register for the further delivery to the girls for play.

A routine has been prepared earlier for the distribution of sports materials. We all received the sports materials as per the routine and we put our signature in the register as receiving. We all enjoy it very much.

We all are thankful to our D. M. Mr Himanshu Sharma for the support. We all continued our study here and enjoyed sports too much. Once again thanks to DM sir and thanks to Apne Aap Women Worldwide for support and encourage us to achieve our goals.



*(Savitri Kumari is a class VIII student at KGBV, Simraha, Bihar)*



## Poems

### **The Baby's Dance**

Dance, little baby, dance up high,  
Never mind baby, mother is by;  
Crow and caper, caper and crow,  
There little baby, there you go:  
Up to the ceiling, down to the ground,  
Backwards and forwards, round and round.  
Then dance, little baby, and mother shall sing,  
With the merry gay coral, ding, ding, a-ding,

Preeti Kumari  
Class- VII, KGBV Simraha

### **The Star**

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.  
  
When the blazing sun is gone,  
When he nothing shines upon,  
Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.  
  
Then the traveler in the dark,  
Thanks you for your tiny spark,  
He could not see which way to go,  
If you did not twinkle so.  
  
In the dark blue sky you keep,  
And often through my curtains peep,  
For you never shut your eye,  
Till the sun is in the sky.  
  
As your bright and tiny spark,  
Lights the traveler in the dark-  
Though I know not what you are,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

RituKumari  
Class – VIII, KGBV Simraha



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## **Red Light Despatch**

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