



# RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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RELEASING SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, DELHI,  
KOLKATA, AND FORBESGUNJ (BIHAR)

## MY DAUGHTERS WILL NOT HAVE MY DESTINY

By Maryam Sheikh

**Kidderpore, Kolkata:** We used to live in Bhubandanga, near Shantiniketan My father was an alcoholic and now so is my husband. Most of the days we had nothing left to eat. I used to beg from a very early age to feed my family. I have never had good food.

I was 12 years old when someone sold me. One of our relatives took me to Calcutta, brought me here and has dumped me in this HELL. My elder sister used to live in Lakhur Math. We all thought at that time that my sister was married to a man who lived there. But now I understand that she had been sold like me.

Later, I fell in love with a man and married him, but I was a minor so he sent me back to my village to live with my parents. But my parents never approved of the marriage and so I fled. But my mother-in-law never accepted me. Deserted by my family, now I am beaten and abused both by mother in law and husband.

My husband has a job; he is a driver for a doctor. The day before yesterday he came home drunk. I covered his food so that it would remain safe. But he was so drunk that he could not find it. I was cooking. He kicked me and beat me so much that I have bruises on my face.

Sometimes I feel like running away. But I have three children and two of them are girls. When I cry my daughters tell me, "Why do you have to tolerate so much? Why don't we run away from this place? We will work and feed you." But I know that I have to get them educated! I am sending them to the Apne Aap classroom. That is most important, so that they will not have to have the same destiny as me.

## MY FATHER DOES NOT PULL US OUT OF THE HOSTEL SO OFTEN

By Shahana Khatoon, 12

**Forbesgunge, Girls' Hostel, Bihar:** I have always wanted to study, but there was no environment at home to study. All the time, there have been drunken brawls in the house. My mother used to get beaten up by my father every day. The police used to come to extort money from my sisters and this was always followed by quarrels. When the buyers used to come, we had to play out on the streets. So, even if I wanted I could not finish my homework for the Apne Aap School.

Then my mother got me admitted in the Apne Aap hostel. But my father used to take me and my sister out of the school at the slightest pretext. For the last four months we have regularly been in the hostel. My father does not pull us out of the hostel so often.

As Bakr-Id is coming, I am afraid that my father will pull us out of the hostel and not allow us to come to the hostel again. But this time I have decided to tell him that I don't want to be left behind in my class due to him. I want to come back after the two day's festival leave.

## THE WORLD OUTSIDE

### **SHOP OWNERS ASK US ABOUT OUR SISTERS**

*By Md. Anwar, 19 years*

**Uttari Rampur Community Centre, Bihar:** I have learnt carpentry at Apne Aap centre. I have learnt how to design and make chairs, tables, finishing of Almirahs. Sean sir has taught us all that.

Then we have started working under Christoff sir. We were staying at the Apne Aap Kidderpore centre and were also studying. We used to have our tutors coming on Saturday evening and Sundays. He told us to make our passports and would take us to France for learning machine carpentry.

But then we have heard of the flood in Araria and we all had to come back. We tried to find work in Araria to help our families. My parents told us it was no use, we would not get work in our locality. But the carpenters working here are all from Barhai caste and they don't want us as apprentices. Even if we start working somewhere, shop owners ask us about our sisters, if they can visit them for free. We don't see any scope here. So we want to go to Kolkata again and start working under Christoff sir.

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### **SOMETIMES I HAD TO SELL MY BLOOD TO EARN MONEY**

*By Rinki Ansari*

**Kidderpore, Kolkata:** I had a child at 18. Then my husband left. My mother in law kicked me out with the child. I had to put the child in an orphanage. I never saw her again.

I worked as a house servant. I was given only bad food, dirty laundry and old clothes. Another person wanted to marry me. But I was not ready to get married again. My first marriage was so bad.

I decided I had to join a brothel. Before I went on the line, I came to the red light district alone. I had seen the red light area with girls in the neighborhood. I saw them in street sex with taxi drivers, tea garden workers, porters and sailors.

But I found that whatever I earned was all given to owner. A street sweeper told me not to give all the dollars to the owner. I was surprised at what he taught me. I was so innocent. But I began to do that-to keep some of the money for myself. Life was very hard. Sometimes I had to sell my blood to earn money. I did that twice.

One time the police, a group of them, maybe nine, wanted to have sex without paying me. I beat them out with a broom. I fought them off. They left. I won.

I would see married couples. I wanted such a life. Someone I could share my feelings with. I found a man I liked. He proposed. I said, "No, let's just live together." I didn't think he would stay with me because I had been in the business. He did, for 16 years. We built trust. We have just got married. I take up to 20 children to live in my house. All the children are mine, mine, and mine.

**DIARY****WHEN MUMTAZ BEGAN TO LEAD A WHOLE TEAM***By Sahana Dasgupta*

Topsia Kolkata: It was late 2003. Apne Aap was planning to start its first community centre in Kolkata. We were doing our needs assessment in Topsia. The strategic importance of Topsia was because it was situated near Park Circus, which is perhaps the most densely populated and underdeveloped region in Kolkata. Park Circus is intersected by a rail line connecting South and North 24 Parganas which acts as one of the most important station where most of the handovers in cases of trafficking occurred. Topsia is predominantly inhabited by lower caste Muslims who used to work in tanneries and found themselves jobless after the relocation of tanneries outside the city. Topsia was so (in)famous for organized crime, trafficking, drug dealings etc. Those days, we have been doing our needs assessment surveys in the shanties spread along both sides of the rail lines. The women and children were mostly rag pickers and the men don't do anything but live off the earnings of the women, drink, gamble and beat their women black and blue. None of the children go to school, the girls are married off at a very early age and by 18-19, she is abandoned by her husband with three to four children to feed. Many a times, with little or no skills or formal education and three five-six mouths to feed, the women were left with very little options, but to be prostituted.

When we started our work there, as a matter of formality, we informed the police. However, the police told us that the area being the most dangerous one, they rather discourage us to proceed. But we started.

Initially, the community people took us with apprehension as except CINI-ASHA, no other NGO

**MY DREAM****WE NEED A MAN***By Rumana Sheikh*

**Kidderpore, Kolkata:** We need a man! Only when we have a man we can run away from this business. We do not know anything. We do not have an education, we can only live here. For us the world ends here. So only when we fall in love with a man, and then he rescues us, will our life change.

We need a man for emotional support. Loneliness is a big feeling. We desire to find someone (man) to call as our own. We are helpless; we do not know the outside world.

**I ALSO WANT TO BECOME A POLICEMAN***By Qurban, 13 years*

**Uttari Rampur Community Centre, Forbesgunge, Bihar:** I study at Apne Aap Uttari Rampur school. I love to study and want to be like Kalam sir when I grow up. I also want to become a policeman. They have so much power. They can help the people most if they want to. I also want a Boy's hostel, one like our girls stay at. I think if we stay at a hostel we can study with more concentration. Why don't you open up a boy's hostel?

has ever intervened in that area. They were all the more apprehensive because we used to talk to the women mostly. I used to sit on the railway tracks and chat with the women about their daily lives. As days passed by, I befriended most of the women in the area, especially the older ones. They have gradually become convinced about our intentions and purposes.

When I used to talk to the women, /I always used to notice a young married girl of 15-16 listening intently to what I was saying with her widened eyes. One day, she suddenly came to me and said, "Didi, ask me what you are asking them." I told her that I was collecting data about women's name, age, livelihood etc. While I have been talking to her a man surged out of the room and yelled at her and pulled her inside the shanty. From then on, I always used to feel that her eyes were following me and whenever, /I used to look up at her, I used to feel that she wanted to say something to me.

The other day, I was returning to the office after having a group meeting with the women, I was returning to the office she blocked my road and

started telling me, "My husband is fast asleep...today, you have to tell me what do you discuss in those meetings with the women. I want to know too." Suddenly the same man rushed out of the room, grabbed her by her hair and started beating her and abusing her: You bitch...Did I not warn you not to talk to that filthy old woman? I will kill you today."

I was pleading everyone to intervene and stop him. But nobody paid any heed and they told me that it is better if I don't intervene too. The man was a noted criminal in the area and because the girl dared to talk to me she would be beaten black and blue. I was very upset. The next day, when I went to the area, she saw me and ran away. I resisted myself from talking to her because I remembered her fate the previous day. After a couple of weeks, I did not find her there. When I enquired about her, I met with stony silence. A few days later, I saw another young girl there.

It would take two more years of intensive work in the area when Mumtaz will lead a whole team of community women to rescue young Minara who has been trafficked to Bihar by a Nautanki troupe.

### THEY BEAT US AND TORTURE US

*By Roshan Bibi*

**Forbesgunge, Bihar:** I used to sow rice and harvest paddy. The load was heavy and we had to travel far. It became impossible. After the harvest, we have to travel back to glean the excess. It is tough work and what we brought home was insufficient for the children.

After long days of starvation, we didn't have any hay to cover the roof. We were driven away if we begged from someone. I started a tea shop but no one came to buy. They used to hate us because we are Nats. My husband got jaundice. We had to starve. Finally I was pulled into prostitution. We did not choose prostitution. Nobody chooses prostitution. I had to force my daughter and her sister into prostitution.

Ever since we started talking to you, we felt we could stop this injustice. If the government helps us, we could get out. The men who come are so abusive. They beat us and torture us. We started hating every moment of our lives. We have decided it is better to starve than to continue. I could run any kind of stop, like for shoes, clothes.

## THE POLICE ARREST THE GIRLS

By Reshma Mondol

**Kolkata, West Bengal:** I want to tell my story so that people know about HIV and become aware of it. I was born in Murshidabad but we came to settle at Gangasagar. My father was a local shaman and he used to collect goosefeathers and sell in the market. We were four sisters and three brothers.

We were very poor. So I never had a chance to go to school. We really had nothing to eat at home. Father used to drink and whatever he earned was spent on that. So when I was 9 or 10 years old I started begging. Whatever I earned were spent on buying leaves to roll tobacco (bidi leaves).

Mother never liked the idea of my begging, especially when I reached puberty. I too felt that begging is not a proper way to live. But I did not like to live in the house either, as there was nothing to eat and both of my parents used to beat me black and blue. Since I was the eldest among the children I had to bear the brunt of their anger and frustration.

Because I used to beg people started maligning me and my father was so angry that he sometimes even kept me chained. I used to escape at the slightest opportunity. One night while my mother went to her father's house, my father tried to kill me under the spell of alcohol. That day I finally fled home.

I used to roam around the village roads. I became violent. Once the Police of Kakdweep P.S. caught me and kept me chained inside the P.S.

After my release, I fled again and this time, I was spotted by a man at Kakdweep and those were perhaps the best years of my life.

### FACTS IN FOCUS

#### **70% OF WOMEN SUFFERED RAPE IN PROSTITUTION**

A number of authors have documented and analyzed the sexual and physical violence which is the normative experience for women in prostitution, Silbert & Pines (1981, 1982b) reported that 70% of women suffered rape in prostitution, with 65% of prostitutes having been physically assaulted by customers; and 66% assaulted by pimps.

Vanwesenbeeck (1994) reported that 60% of prostituted women in the Netherlands suffered physical assaults; 70% experienced verbal threats of physical assault; 40% reported sexual violence; and 40% reported having been forced into prostitution and/or sexual abuse by acquaintances (Vanwesenbeeck, 1994).

After reviewing a number of studies, Weisberg (1985) concluded that most juvenile prostitutes had been abused or beaten by both pimps and customers.

**Source: Prostitution: a critical review of the medical and social sciences Literature** Melissa Farley and Vanessa Kelly

He was very kind and he took me to his home. But by that time, I started disliking being confined to any single place. So I fled again and this time I was spotted by one of our relatives who informed my parents.

My father finally decided to abandon me and one day he sent me to Kolkata with one of our relatives and as pre-planned, she abandoned me at the Burdwan Railway station with Rs. 120 in my hand. A woman spotted me there and she brought me to Delhi and sold me to a Delhi brothel.

But somehow I managed to escape from there after sometime. I came to the Delhi station and with the help of the Railway Police I came to Kolkata again. But as I had nowhere to go, so I used to loiter around the platform and one day a woman came to help me. She was a vendor and I started selling vegetables with her.

After seven or eight months she took me to Kolkata on the pretext of visiting one of her uncle's. She took all the little money I had earned by selling vegetables. We came to Dharamtolla and we ate in a hotel and two men and a woman also joined us. They looked very poor and simple. They took me to a Mumbai brothel. They took me to several brothels and finally sold me for Rs 25,000.

I had to entertain 10-12 customers per day. No question of using condoms. I even did not know much about it. However, once I asked for it and the customer I was entertaining at that time, retorted, "Why should I use condom? Am I not paying you? Then masturbation would have been a better method."

Most of the customers behaved more or less well with me. But once I was beaten black and blue because I did not comply with his demand for kinky sex. We had to drink beer with the customers. Apart from drinking, I used to chew tobacco (gutka). There were a few Bengali customers who wanted to hear my stories also.

There was one particular Bengali girl who was very kind and one day when the police came on

a raid, and as usual I was being pushed in a secret chamber inside the house. She informed the police about the hideout.

I was rescued and brought to the Liluah Home. After we underwent the compulsory HIV test (at that time, whoever was rescued from Bombay, had to undergo compulsory HIV test, which is no longer prevalent now after long negotiation by NGOs and women's organizations). Three among the five of us who were rescued during that raid, were found HIV+. The ill-treatment we received from the Liluah Home after we were found HIV+ was comparable to any previous torture. The officials never used to touch us. We were kept in an isolated place and they used to throw food and medicine at us. All the time, we were addressed in abusive language.

I was suffering from TB at that time and got treated in a hospital. Now I get food, I get love, I get care and love. I am more at peace now.

**APNE AAP IN ACTION**

**REQUEST FOR ARREST OF TRAFFICKERS TO BIHAR CM AND RESTORATION OF 8 GIRLS FROM HOME BASED BROTHELS**

Shri Nitish Kumarji

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar

**Subject:** Way forward and action on 17 girls of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay, Forbesgunge Araria Bihar

Dear Shri Nitish Kumarji

We would like to thank you very much for investigating the case of the young girls in Forbesgunge, Araria Bihar due to lack of cooperation by authorities. We request action on the following:

1. Arrest of the male guardians of the 4 young girls who were pulled out of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay (KGBV), Near Customs office, Block Forbesgunge, Araria District, Bihar -857318 (Details of the guardians and the girls are enclosed) and prostituted.
2. Action against the legal guardians of the 8 girl students who have been pulled out of KGBV and are being kept in extremely dangerous circumstances in a red light district to be prepared for prostitution (Details of the guardians and the girls are enclosed).
3. Reimbursement of rent that our NGO Apne Aap Women Worldwide has paid for the last 3 years because the hostel building allotted to it under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan did not exist and Apne Aap Women Worldwide had to run the hostel on rented accommodation (Photo of the platform for proposed construction of the hostel and letters submitted requesting for reimbursement of rent).
4. Request for allotment of building at the teacher's training college at Forbesgunge (Araria) for KGBV hostel of 100 girls due to its safety, proximity to running school and suitability as per UNICEF guidelines
5. The current construction work going on in Simrah, Araria District for KGBV hostel be done as per UNICEF guidelines to ensure safety and best care of children
6. Investigation of the municipal school in Simrah, to ensure that classes are being conducted properly

- 7 Police protection of KGBV Madya Balika Vidyalay, Near Customs office, Block Forbesgunge, Araria District, Bihar -857318

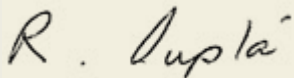
Please find enclosed the following documents for reference:

1. Current status of children and complete details of guardians and home address
2. Letters for rent/cooperation
3. Photo of the Simrah School

Thank you once again for your support and prompt action.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further clarifications.

Yours truly



Ruchira Gupta  
Founder

Apne Aap Women Worldwide  
[www.apneaap.org](http://www.apneaap.org)

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION 'SPLIT OFF'

Prostitution is not wanted sex, it is unwanted sex. Although the women are agreeing to sexual activity in order to survive, provide for their children or fund a drug addiction, this is unwanted sexual activity. Many women are under the control of pimps or traffickers who may use violence to coerce women into prostitution. Women in prostitution report that in order to be able to do it, they need to learn to dissociate ('split off' in their head). Dissociation can cause lasting psychological harm. Women who are not able to 'split off' will use drugs and/or alcohol to achieve the same effect. This is why women will start to use drugs, or their substance use will rapidly escalate, irrespective of why they first became involved in prostitution.

**Source:** Feminist coalition against prostitution ([www.fcap.btik.com](http://www.fcap.btik.com))



**I WANT THE CRIMINALS WHO RAPED ME TO BE ARRESTED**

By Nisha Nat

**Forbesgunge, Bihar:** I am Nisha Khatun. I read in class six in the Apne Aap-Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya. I live in "Light Area" –a Muhalla of the prostituted. My father is very sick, he has Epilepsy. My mother is dead. I was born in this Muhalla. My mother died four years ago. I have two brothers and two sisters....We are three sisters altogether and I have an aunt, she has a daughter, younger to me. My sister is married in Rampur.

Some criminals abducted me from home. They beat up my father. First they came inside our house. My father kept asking them where are you people going to? Then they beat him up.

They were three of them and the main one raped me. I don't know him. He threw some money on the bed afterwards and from the next day onwards, he started coming to my house every day.

Initially he gave Rs 5000 and after that every time he used to visit, he used to give Rs 500 rupees and we used to survive on that. I was not prostituted, I have been raped. (They) used to come to me every day and if any one tried to resist them, they used to abuse them and force me. I don't know them, but I can recognize them if I see them.

My grandmother (naani) came. I told naani about all these things. Naani took me away. I did not use to do it in naani's house....then after some time I returned...the day I came here the police raided my house and brought me to the police station. The police got me in the way they get the criminals arrested. We were asleep, suddenly police raided our house and brought us in the way they bring the criminals.

I stayed in police station for one night and then I was brought to the Kasturba...from then on, I started living in Kasturba. I like to be in Kasturba. I want to learn and become someone.

They teach Karate, crafts, study. I like all these. I like to learn everything and I will get a job based on the skill which I would acquire the best. I like Karate

I don't remember what the criminals did...but they raped me. They came to our house looking for me. I resisted and told them I don't do all this and they said, "But, we saw you standing here." I asked them if they were crazy. In the meantime my father came and resisted and they beat him up and forcefully took me away and raped me.

Two men would come one after another. I want that they get arrested-criminals who raped me.

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