



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

My Dream: To Provide for Our Family

- Neha and Shivani

Najafgarh: My name is Shivani. I am 12 years old. I used to study in Government Girls Senior Secondary School in sixth grade. I always thought that I will go to college and get a degree, for working later in the big company. My mother works at a construction site and earn Rs 200-250 per day. Providing nourishment for a family of seven people, alone with the income of Rs 200-250 per day was becoming impossible. Hence, I dropped out of school few months back and started to work in an apparel shop. My name is Neha. I am 15 years old and live in Dharampura. I started working in an apparel shop few months back with my younger sister. I used to study in ninth grade in a Government Girls Senior Secondary School but had to drop the school to supplement my mother's income. Running a household of seven members with a low income of my mother seemed a huge challenge. My father is an alcoholic man and does not earn any money. Hence, my sister, Shivani and I took the responsibility of our family, leaving our dreams of education behind.

I am Living in Fear of Being Attacked

- Fatima Khatoon/ as translated by Praveen Kumar

Forbesganj: My name is Fatima Khatoon and I am a member of Apne Aap Women Worldwide. I work here as a spokesperson and am directly attached to the Nat community which is trapped into intergenerational prostitution. I am working in this community and fought against the traffickers to end sex trafficking. At 1 pm of 28th November 2017, some police personnel from local police station Forbesganj knocked my door and when I came out, they asked for my daughter Kajal and her husband Mukes. When I told them that they are not living with us and living near Shiv Mandir in a rental house, the police returned from my house. When I asked about the causes of search, they told that this is only for a simple inquiry into whether they living together in a normal life. On the morning of 29th, I heard a mes-

sage over the phone that police have arrested Kajal and her husband and put them in the jail in the local police station. I reached the police station and meet Kajal. She told that the SHO of the police station gave her an unknown mobile number and asked her to call in this number. When she refused to do that, The SHO said that he received a complaint from a person that she had called him and demanded the exposure money from her mobile number. Kajal has refused all the charges put on her.

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Household Survey in a DNT Community, Bihar

- Madhu / as translated by Praveen Kumar

Forbesganj: My name is Madhu and I am a member of Apne Aap Women Worldwide in Forbesganj, Bihar. I have joined here in July 2016 and working as an IGP trainer and community mobilizer. I used to visit the communities related to Apne Aap's work in this locality. Our main focus to attached the women with the govt. ID's and facilities. We are working there to achieve the 10 X10 asset approach to the women of these communities. After the flood, we were asked to visit and do the survey work of the DNT community situated in the bank of Kothi Haat nahar on the govt. land. I with Meena di reached there on 11 in the morning and

started the survey work there. There are many castes of people living in a same place. They are Dom, Machuara, Badhai, Lohar, Dhanuk and Mushar. There is 17 households and approx 100 of population living together in the govt. land on the bank of Nahar. At first, we started the survey from the Dom family and collected the data as per the need. We were surprised to see that they have not any govt. ID's and not any govt. facilities provided to them by the govt.

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Op-Ed—Demonetization and Sex-Trafficking in India

- *Juanita Kakoty*

We have been reading in the newspapers how demonetization has curbed trafficking in India. Maybe that's one side of the story. What anti-sex trafficking activists have been hearing from the prostituted women in brothels makes for the bigger story, which somehow the media in the country has missed. This is the story of how demonetization has increased the vulnerabilities and exploitation of not only the prostituted women but also women from communities living on the boundaries.

I accompanied Delhi Commission for Women chairperson Swati Maliwal and her team to the brothels of GB Road in Delhi yesterday - brothels housed in buildings with no clue about owners; because in paper, the ownership of these buildings still remain with people who died decades ago.

Climbing up narrow staircases stained with paan stains which took one to an equally narrow and dim corridor, and through that to small rooms without ventilation, we visited about five brothels late in the afternoon. Most women were from Nepal and Andhra Pradesh. A few were from West Bengal and I found one from Assam. They have the same story to tell. Abandoned by families or sold by lovers and uncles and aunts. In two brothels we also found kids with their mothers.

"Because it is afternoon now, you see these women having their lunch and not too many people around," Delhi Commission for Women member Farheen Malick told me. "When we visited the brothels in the night some time ago, about 100-150 men and women came out of each brothel. Can you imagine that?"

It was indeed difficult to imagine that number of people in those brothels. But as we took a tour of the brothels, I realised that it might be true. A little room, in each brothel, where ordinarily about six people can sleep comfortably had about 12 to 15 women standing there with their faces covered as we entered. And this little room had several doors and secret passages that led to other little rooms. When we went, the women were having their lunch. The smell of food filled the stale air inside the brothels along with the stench of tobacco and body odour.

In all the five brothels we visited, the prostituted women revealed that they still have customers. That has not stopped even with demonetization. What has happened though is that they are being paid much less than before. One woman also admitted that some customers are still paying her in the old currency. And when I asked her what she

did with it, she said she sent it home, to her village in Andhra Pradesh.

A few of them did admit that times are difficult with demonetization, but that they will have to stick it out as they don't know of any other way to earn money after all these years. Most of them came to GB Road in their teenaged years.

"It is the common experience of anti trafficking activists all over the world that at times of crisis - be it economic recession, natural disasters, or ethnic conflicts - trafficking increases," tells me anti sex-trafficking activist Tinku Khanna, who is the Director of Apne Aap Women Worldwide. "We have to remember that trafficking is not about a single entry and exit point; it is a chain. Immediate payment of money is not a concern for the trafficker, who knows that the money will be recovered sooner or later," she adds.

Mohammad Kalam, Apne Aap activist from Bihar, tells me, "Women need to pay brothel owners and pimps for their stay and food. So they have to earn money. They have to entertain clients. But what is happening these days is that the customers are paying less, even fifty rupees at times!" This highlights how demonetization has actually increased the disadvantages of the prostituted women manifold than that of the customers, brothel owners or the pimps.

Kalam also says that women and girls from the non-red light areas, most of whom are from the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the denotified tribes, and engage in daily wage labour now find themselves without work. Also, their husbands who are working out of town are now not able to send cash home. Then there are instances of delayed payments, and payments in cheque while most of them don't have bank accounts. Under these circumstances, the women are left with options like negotiating with the thekedars and exposing themselves to exploitation at their hands.

What is required now perhaps is a shift in the demonetization and trafficking discourse. The focus has to shift to the plight of the trafficked and prostituted women, and to the heightened vulnerabilities of women that might result in more trafficking.

Diary of a Social Worker

- Anahita Mir

Forbesganj: On the foggy morning of December I reached Forbesganj via Patna after the last leg of the Three City consultation. My agenda for the stay was mostly planned but little did I know the little town would be full of adventures. On my first day, I visited Apne Aap's community center located adjacent to the homes of the Nat community. Nat community practices intergenerational prostitution. The work is the organisation in the community is praise worthy.

There has been a landslide decrease in the number of brothels in the area. From the community centre, I accompanied the field activists on a Mahila visit to Mela ground. Mela ground is a place where a lot of vulnerable communities live. They had recently hit by a flash flood and Apne Aap was helping them get flood relief from the government. While the women were interacting with the field activists I got a chance to talk to some girls there. The girls were confident and had a goal in their life. They shared their hopes and aspirations. While interacting with the families and the girls I got to know that the girls who want to take up science after their 10th standard are unable to do so and are forced to take up either humanities or commerce. The reason behind this being the distance they need to cover during their exams. The exam center for commerce and humanities is always in the school premises whereas for science streams, they need to travel three hours to reach the exam center.

After the field visit, I realised how vulnerable these girls were to different kinds of oppression and exploitation. They were susceptible to things like eve teasing, stalking, child marriage etc. I then took a class on rights with the girls of the Kishori Mandal. I tried to tell them about the basic rights and laws which will protect them from exploitation. Their enthusiasm gave me strength. The next major challenge in Forbesganj was identifying the worst hit households due to flood.

Some of the households in Apne Aap's field were devastated. Apne Aap's founder president Ruchira Gupta held a meeting with the women of the Mahila Mandal and assessed their requirements. Some of the women became hesitant when Ruchira di demanded them to put a sign board outside their homes announcing their homes are prostitution free. The challenges to the movement were well visible there. I learnt how to tackle situations that can easily turn nasty.

My stay took an unexpected turn when one of our survivor leader, Fatima Khatoon, was attacked by traffickers in the red light area. That day I experienced the reluctance of the government system to help dismantle the system of prostitution. The police officer was reluctant to receive our complaint and sent us back asking us to write a new complaint. In the evening I along with Ruchira di and Fatima di went to the Araria central jail to meet Fatima di's sister who was kidnapped by the Bihar police from Nepal. We were wrongfully confined within the jail premises and physically abused by the police there. It was nothing short of a nightmare

for me. I got to experience what it means to be on the frontline of a movement. It made my resolve to fight trafficking tooth and nail stronger.

I also got a chance to visit Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya which is managed by Apne Aap. I spent a night with the girls and my heart filled with warmth by their hospitality. They were welcoming and lovable. They shared their stories and their ambitions with me. It was a wonderful experience.

Forbesganj was full of excitement and learning for me. It taught me what it means to be an activist and fight when the very people you're fighting for turn hostile towards you. The movement Apne Aap's is leading gets it motivation from the ground and after meeting the last girls so do I.

I Received Building Material to Reconstruct my House

- Dolly Khatton / translated by Praveen Kumar

Forbesganj: My name is Doly Khatton and I am a member of Apne Aap Mahila Mandal run in Uttri Rampur by Apne Aap Women Worldwide. I am 35 years old and living in Uttari Rampur Red Light area with my family. My husband is an auto driver and I am running a small tea shop in front of my house. I used to visit the community center on daily and participated all the activities arranged for the Mahila Mandal there. I have four sons and they all are admitted in Apne Aap community Center's school run for the Nat and DNT community children and also admitted in govt. primary school too. I am very happy now with our family members.

On 13th August a massive flood attach our locality and destroyed my house and shop. We all community members ran away from there and save our lives. For a week we all stayed in the roof of govt. hospital near about our community. After a week when the water goes down, we returned in our community and see the situation. We all are filled with sadness to see our houses. Nothing to left there. We hanged the plastic sheets and start a new journey. After a few days Sanju Di and Praveen Sir came to our community and told us that they want to take photographs of our destroyed houses to arrange some fund to rebuild it. We were filled with a hope to hear it. We all stand in front of our broken house and they took the photographs one by one of all the community members' houses.

After month, One day Ruchira di came here and arranged a meeting with all the Mahila MAndla members in the community center and told that she wants to start the house making of ours and prepare a estimate of materials with the help of mason. She told that she will came here tomorrow and we have to present here with the estimates but she also told that she wants to put a board on the houses **“Sex Traf-**

icking free Home” Prepared by the support of Apne Aap Women Worldwide” on all the houses which is prepared by the support of Apne Aap. On the first day, we all are agreeing, but next day few of us refused to take any support from Apne Aap.

I with other few women came to the center next day on time and meet Ruchira Di and handed over the estimate to Praveen Sir. Ruchira Di instructed him to do the necessary arrangements. Next day on 13th December 2017, we all 4 women received the house making materials by Ruchira Di in the community centre. We all are now very happy and started the house making work. 40% of the work completed now and we hope the rest will be completed within a month.

Thank You Apne Aap team members and Ruchira Di to give us this kind of support. We are proud to be a member of Apne Aap Mahila Mandal. We have taken an oath in front of Ruchira Di to put a board in front of our houses **“Sex Trafficking free Home” Prepared by the support of Apne Aap Women Worldwide”** and support Apne Aap to achieve their mission to end sex trafficking.

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

Receiving Support from Mitsubishi

- *Gunja Kumari / as heard by Rachana Nayak*

Kolkata: I am Gunja Kumari Thakur .I stay at 2/6 P Nitya Ghodh Street, Khidderpore, and Kolkata-700023.Now I am 10 years old. I read in class V in Lajpat Balika Vidyalaya. My father was work as a Driver and my mother is housewife. Number of my family member is 10.I am the Eldest daughter. It is very hard for my father to take care of family members. I am the Eldest. It is very hard for my father to take care of a family member. He is only one person who earns. He hardly gets 6000 per month. Apart from food it is very hard for him to provide us education

From the age of five years I have been associated with Apne Aap Women Worldwide. I have been studying here since the age of five. I started going to school from here only and Apne Aap played a very vital role in getting me admission to school and it helped me to pursue my education without any hindrance. Apart from studying here, I also learned dancing, mime, computer skills, Drawing and spoken English classes. Whenever any workshop was conducted I was a part of it and it helped me in learning a lot. Sometimes we would decide and go outside for visits like to Victoria, Alipore zoo, ECO Park. At the Apne Aap Center something or the other new thing would be taught always to us. Mitsubishi Corporation India Pvt.Ltd has visited the Apne Aap center two times.

Thanking Mitsubishi Corporation India Pvt .Ltd for the support given to the poor children's education, Those who are studding in Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission

(RKVM)and staying in the hostel. We are very grateful to Mitsubishi Corporation for this educational support to the poor children and hope to get more support from them. I would like to thank Apne Aap Women Worldwide which is like a family to me and without Apne Aap I couldn't have been successful today.

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Ashley Judd Asks You to Donate this Christmas. Click [here](#) to donate.

"Hello, I'm Ashley Judd, and I'd like to share with you about Apne Aap. Apne Aap lives on the ground with the poorest of the poor-The Last Girl-who is prostituted because she is often hungry, homeless, doesn't have anyone to protect her and is unable to protect herself. Dirt floors, cracked concrete, rutted pavement, these floors are the ground zero where the Last Girl lives. Apne Aap reaches her with food, friendship, education, legal protection and love.

Your gift supports this grassroots organizations' singleness of purpose: stopping sex trafficking. And Apne Aap does it well. With an incredibly lean budget, Apne Aap's empowerment programs help impoverished lives and defeated spirits access improved circumstances and internal resilience.

I know, because I have been a friend to Apne Aap for almost ten years now, and have visited brothels, red light districts, incredibly modest homes,and happily, drop in centers and schools where the Last Girls can experience bodily safety, mental rest, emotional connection, nurturing, and hope. I have sat in circles with The Last Girls, listening, as they broke their silence against extraordinary odds, and they have helped me break my own silence.

Your gift, however modest, makes a huge impact. So please join me in giving to Apne Aap, and know that when you do, you help The Last Girl stand on her own two feet, right there, in her own circumstances, where she herself becomes the change agent who has the power to change generations of social and cultural norms. Thank you so much for your consideration, and for your love for The Last Girl."



The World Outside

A Class on Rights

- *Nandini Kumari / translated by Praveen Kumar*

Forbesganj: My name is Nandani Kumari and I am a member of Kishori Mandal run by Apne Aap Women Worldwide in community center Uutri Rampur for the adolescent girls. I am 15 years old and living in F.C.I. chowk, near about the community center. My mother's name is Smt. Chanda Devi and she used to do the job of a maid in the houses of other people in the locality and earns some money to run the family. She works very hard to feed us. I have a sister and a brother too. We all living together in a small mud house here in a part of govt. land. I am a member of Kishori mandal and used to visit the community center on daily basis and participated all the programs arranged for the girls there. One day I hear that there is a session on Legal rights arranged for the girls there on 3 pm on 15th December. We all girls from the Kishori Mandal were asked to present in this session. On this date, we all reached on the time there and sit in the training hall. We see that Sanju Di, Praveen Sir Present there with a person wears a black coat looking like a lawyer. At first Praveen sir introduced us with this person and said that He is a lawyer named Pankaj Kumar from SDO court, Forbesganj. We all introduced ourselves one by one to them and the introduction session the training starts on the legal right for the women and adolescent girls. This is a very interesting session and the lawyer gave us knowledge about the legal right for us as per the Indian law. The training conducted for two hours and we all enjoyed it. Snacks were provided to us and the session ended at 5 pm.

Thank you Apne Aap for arranging this kind of training program for us for the growth of our knowledge. We all are requesting to arrange this kind of program once in a month as a refreshment course.

“He is a lawyer named Pankaj Kumar from SDO court, Forbesganj. We all introduced ourselves one by one to them and the introduction session the training starts on the legal right for the women and adolescent girls. This is a very interesting session and the lawyer gave us knowledge about the legal right for us as per the Indian law. The training conducted for two hours and we all enjoyed it.”

(Continued from page 1)

When I meet the SHO, and asked for the case in which he arrested Kajal and her husband, He told that it is for only an inquiry and asked to take Kajal from there and also present when she received any call from the police and support police in the case inquiry.

After a few days, again I hear news that Jogbani police arrested my sister Reena Khatoon in false charges of a bomb case and send her to Jail in Araria. I reached Araria and meet her in the Jail. She told me that police have beaten her badly and she is not in good condition. I meet the DM and SP of Araria and requested them to the further inquiry for the case. They confirm me that they will take all the necessary steps in this case as per the legal requirements and support my sister.

The next day, I meet Ruchira Di, the founder of Apne Aap Women Worldwide organization. She heard the entire story and assured me to support in this case. Next I with Ruchira Di, Anahita a member of Apne Aap visited the Jail of Araria to meet Reena but unfortunately the Jail police who were present there in civil dress, misbehaved with us. Ruchiar di complained against it for the higher authorities of state levels in Bihar govt. administration.

After a few days at night, I have received a call from an unknown number. The person who called me threatened me and asked to not disturb the women of red light area who are in prostitution and if I continue this kind of ac-

tivity, they will murder me on the main road. Form this date, the person call me regularly and threatened me badly.

I was fearful and meet Praveen Sir in Apne Aap's office and told him about the whole situation. He gave support to me and drafted a letter for DM Araria, SP Ararai, DSP Forbesganj, and SHO Forbesganj in this regard and calls them to inform about the whole situations. I have put the name of some traffickers on the complaint. I with my husband visited all the officials and submitted the letters. After a few days the DSP transferred my complain to Mahila Thana Araria. One day Seema Kumari came to community for the inquiry of the case but not any further action taken by the police to give me any protection. I am helpless now and living in fear. But in this situation the people from Apne Aap support me on many ways and gave protection me and my family. Thank You Apne Aap team Bihar for this kind of support.

My First Day at Apne Aap

- Angela Prativiera

Kolkata: The first day I arrived at Apne Aap office in Kolkata I was completely lost. After an exhausting journey from Italy, I was landed in India just three days before and I was way behind getting myself accustomed to the chaotic but fascinating “City of Joy”

Since my very first step into Apne Aap office, I have been very warmly welcomed by all the women and men present in the office. After having had a pleasing conversation with Laboni Basu about the work that Apne Aap is carrying out to end sex trafficking and the positive impact of its approach on the life of hundreds of women and children, I started watching several videos, telling the story of some girls and how Apne Aap helped them. These videos have been done by girls at risk who participated in a film making workshop organized by Apne Aap. Most of the stories told left me speechless: what all these girls were obliged to experience and go through, honestly, shocked me. I knew that the risk of end up in prostitution and prostitution itself were very widespread here but since that moment I have not idea of what really meant. The courage and the willness to get out from a very vulnerable situation that these girls showed in those videos, enlightened me and make me reflect on the kind of help I could have given to them.

In the meantime the main room in the office was filling with children, of all ages, 4, 5, 10, 11. Members of Apne Aap told me that in the office various classes are taught to the kids like English, Math, Computer, to provide an education to those children coming from vulnerable situations. All the children welcomed me with a big smile and a warm good morning. I knew from the beginning that the language would have been a problem in the communication, especially with the kids, but what I sud-

denly realized is that sometimes speaking the same language is not necessary: the smile they showed me and the light that I saw in their eyes made me understand right away that what Apne Aap is doing for them and their mothers was precious and worthy.

Thanks to those children and the experiences showed in the videos, I understood that a way out from the worst situation ever, like prostitution or the risk of that, is possible and I thought how an amazing experience, even tough, would have been for me working there!

(Continued from page 1)

They are totally cut off from the mainstream community. We surveyed all the families living there. The story was same.

After the survey work, we have decided the help the people to get there Govt. ID's. At first we collect the Aadhar card form and fill it as per the requirements. We have arrange a meeting with the ward member of this area and handed over a letter from our office side to help these people. He promised us that he would help them. We now prepare the documents needed for the Aadhar card for the verification of the ward member. When the documents will be completed, then we have to get them verified by the ward members and apply for the Aadhar card because documents regarding age and address proof are needed for Aadhar registration. We are now on the way for support of the vulnerable people and pray to god to support us in the social work. These all things for the social support, we learnt after joining Apne Aap. Thanks to

Apne Aap to providing us this kind of space and courage to support a poor DNT community.

“At first, we started the survey from the Dom family and collected the data as per the need. We were surprised to see that they have not any gov. ID's and not any govt. facilities provided to them by the govt. They are totally cut off from the mainstream community. We surveyed all the families living there. The story was same.”

Poems

Beti

If Son is inheritor, then daughter is a diamond
If son is future, then daughter is present.
If son is honor, then daughter is pride.
If son is body, then daughter is soul.
If son is a practice, then daughter is a follower.
If the son is medicine, then daughter is prayer.
If son is luck, then the daughter is love.

Name: Gunja

Area: Najafgarh

Tiranga

The tri color is spread out today with all its pride
and we got this independence because of the losses
of our soldiers.

We attained freedom after a long fought battle
and sacrifices of lives from lakhs of people.
They came as traders and ruled us through fraud
by using divide and rule policy.

We got our pride back through our self-respect
and we got this independence because of the sacrifices
of our soldiers.

It's a country of Gandhi, Tilak, Subhash, Jawahar
and it always gives a message of "live and let
others live".

We got so much love from our nation that for us
the whole world is smaller in front of its shadow.
We will never bow down in front of violence and
we believe that whole world is our family.

The message of peace started from our country
and we got this independence because of the losses
of our soldiers.

Name: Nita

Area: Najafgarh



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