



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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

2 OCTOBER 2006

NUTT COMMUNITY ISSUES HISTORIC DEMANDS

by Mohammad Kalam

FORBESGUNJ, OCT. 2: In the wake of the recent ITPA amendments, the women of the Nutt community in Forbesgunj, Bihar—nearly all of whom are forced to make their livings through prostitution—have issued a historic petition, articulating their views and demands, to the District Magistrate of their area. Though it has never done so before, the year-old mahila mandal, organized under Apne Aap Women Worldwide, has come forward boldly to say the following:

To the District Magistrate:

Respected Sir,

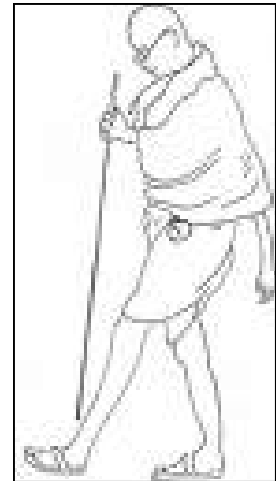
We are the people in the red-light area of Forbesgunj. We have been living here since the times of our fathers and grandfathers. For over 40 years, we

have repeatedly faced displacement, due to which our development and our children's education have constantly been at risk. For our survival, we are forced to travel from place to place; which has had a bad impact on our children's education. We want a better tomorrow for our children. We are struggling hard for our survival. We are constantly facing threats from the local community and government officials. We kept ourselves separate from the main community, but now people from the community have surrounded us and they blame us for being there. How long must we suffer in this way? We do not want our children to be in the same

profession as we are. Even after Independence, our situation has not changed. We have not gotten any government facilities or oil rations. We keep submitting applications under the BPL scheme, but government officials only say to us, "Why do need this?" Every year, our houses are ruined by floods, but we do not get any benefits because officials did not include our names under any scheme. We do not even have toilets in our community.

Due to these circumstances, we are requesting you for the following:
1. We want our children

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IT IS A MATTER OF BITTER SHAME AND SORROW DEEP HUMILIATION THAT A NUMBER OF WOMEN HAVE TO SELL THEIR CHASTITY FOR MEN'S LUST. MAN, THE LAWGIVER, WILL HAVE TO PAY A DREADFUL PENALTY FOR THE DEGRADATION HE HAS IMPOSED UPON THE SO-CALLED WEAKER SEX. WHEN WOMAN, FREED FROM MAN'S SNARES, RISES TO THE FULL HEIGHT AND REBELS AGAINST MAN'S LEGISLATION AND INSTITUTION DESIGNED BY HIM, HER REBELLION, NO DOUBT NON-VIOLENT, WILL BE NEVERTHELESS EFFECTIVE.

-MAHATMA GANDHI

A2W2 Main Office
Himadri Building
22, Ballygunge Park Road
Kolkata—700019

Phone: +91 33 32511503
E-mail: apneap2003@rediffmail.com
www.ApneAap.org

KHIDDERPORE, OCT. 2:
The place where I will settle down in the future is my native place in the Sundarbans. I want to build a house there and live with my parents and grandparents. There will be large trees with fruits. I will plant saplings in the garden in front of my house. Flowers will

MY DREAMS

bloom. There will be a pond a little way from the house. It will be full of lotus leaves and flowers. Ducks will swim in it. Beside the pond, there will be coconut tress laden with fruits and date palms. And I will have a few banana trees behind the house. There will also be a

paddy field. There will be a wide road in front of my house. I will have a parrot, a dog and a mongoose at home. Birds will nest in the trees. A river will flow at a short distance from the house. Fishermen will catch fish. There will be trees along its banks.

by Shehnaz, 13

INTERVIEW

“I FEEL VERY SCARED WHEN DRUNKS COME.” :BEENU (PROSTITUTED WOMAN)

by Tinku Khanna

FORBESGUNJ, OCT. 2: **Q: How long have you been here?** A: Almost three and a half years.

Q: Where were you before this? A: Bhangar, in South 24 Paraganas, with my parents, two brothers and two sisters. My father was a framer. I went to school till the third standard. I didn't like studies. I used to play around. My folks wanted me to study – everyone in my house is literate. And then I was married away...

Q: How did you come here after that? A: I was 13 when I was married and had a child the same year. After keeping house for three years, my husband threw me out. I returned to my parents' place, with my kid. But my parents pestered me to go back to him. Leaving my kid with my mother, I went to Sonarpur because I wanted to work as a domestic servant. There a girl befriended me, made me unconscious with drinks and drugs and brought me here. When I gained consciousness and the effect of the drugs wore off, I realized I had nowhere to go. My parents did not want me, my husband did not want me- I had no education and no skills. I had a son to look after.

Q: Are you able to support him? A: No. I started working the day after I came here. But for the first six or seven months, the girl who brought me here took all the money. About seven or eight men would buy my body per day. Now it has come down to about two. The rate is Rs 50 per ejaculation, and Rs 200 if the client stays for the night. I used to earn a minimum of Rs 200 and maximum of Rs 500. Now I earn about Rs 100 a day. Of this the brothel madam keeps half and I have to pay about Rs 10 for food and then I spend Rs 15-Rs 20 on medicines, tobacco or alcohol. I save about Rs 600 a month, out of which I have to buy clothes and makeup. I can send only Rs 200 a month home for my son.

Q: What kinds of men come here?

A: No one tells the truth about himself, so I don't know. So many different kinds of men. Many drink alcohol before coming here. Some want to have kinky sex. They behave horribly if you refuse, they hit you and bite you. Those who drink too much before coming here, misbehave. Sometimes they come here drunk and create a ruckus.



The tools of the sex trade.

Q: Can you refuse a client if you are very tired? The client is in a drunken state? The client wants you to do something you are not willing to do? A: NO. I will starve or the owner will beat me.

Q: Are you afraid of being murdered or seriously injured by your client? A: I feel very scared when drunks come.

Q: Have you ever been raped? A: No, how can a prostitute be raped?

Q: Can you refuse a client if he doesn't use a condom? A: No. Few people agree to use a condom. And if they don't, I cannot force them.

Q: Have you had any diseases? A: Once I had white discharge. You get it when your body gets heated. You should have cold drinks to cool you down. I've heard of AIDS but I don't know what it is. I know that your health deteriorates and

you lose weight. I am not HIV-positive.

Q: What physical ailments are you suffering from? A: My back and limbs ache – especially before New Moon and Full Moon nights. Previously, I used to suffer from high fever from time to time. I went to the doctor at the TB hospital in Bhangar. I was told I was fine. I was given an ointment and tablets. I took them. I also have diarrhoea. We don't have many addictions. We just drink alcohol. Sometimes I drink alcohol, sometimes I smoke. My health is fine.

Q: What are your dreams? A: I feel frustrated. Previously I used to get this feeling very often that there's no use going on living. Now I don't get it so much. Once, I took poison. The last time I tried to put my head on the railway tracks, but then I thought who would take care of my family if I died? I am not very hot tempered. But earlier, I used to feel angry very often. Now it has subsided. I sit quietly in my room till I cool down. I have seen a few girls here slash their wrists. Then I cut myself twice and saw the blood ooze. But then I thought there was little to gain from cutting myself. Earlier I used to feel very afraid – of lightning, strangers. Sometimes – I wake up thinking who wants to stay on here? But what will I do then? I want to educate my son, so I have to earn money this way. I cannot resume studies; I cannot concentrate for a long time. But it would be nice if I could learn some handicraft.

Q: Do you have any questions? A: Why have you come here?

Note: Within this issue, the names in all personal stories and interviews have been changed to protect the identity of the individual.

ARE WOMEN IN RED-LIGHT AREAS GUINEA PIGS FOR PHARMAS?

From *The Asia Times* with input from Janaki Dubey

KOLKATA, OCT. 2: India increasingly emerges as a preferred destination for outsourcing clinical trials - testing of new drugs on humans - the country may also be heading toward providing the greatest source of human guinea pigs for the global drug industry." By 2010, some estimate there will be two million patients in India on clinical trials. An entire industry has sprung up, specializing in recruiting patients and managing experiments. A BBC investigation into the conduct of these trials has found that some patients are unaware they are being experimented on at all. The drug industry is enrolling unin-

formed, non-consenting people who have few choices in life and many in the country's

"WE JUST SIGN BECAUSE I BELIEVE THE DOCTOR TAKES THE SIGNATURE TO HELP US. THAT'S WHY I SIGN IT."

-AMBU

large poor-patient population are "treatment naive", which means they have never received drugs for treatment - a fact that simplifies patient enrollment and trial management.

The *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* reports that patients are

often unable to distinguish between trials that might benefit them and those that won't. India has huge numbers of sick people glad to test drugs in return for minimal, if any, recompense. The patients rarely mind — to them, experimental health-care is better than none at all — and they rarely complain. According to *Monthly Index of Medical Specialties in India*, an independent pharmaceuticals journal, more than 400 women who had been trying in vain to conceive were enrolled in 2003 without their knowledge or consent to take part in clinical

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MUMBAI COPS ARRESTED IN KOLKATA
From *The Telegraph* with input from Sraboni Sarkar

KOLKATA, SEPT. 14: Seven Mumbai police personnel were arrested in Howrah on September 14 after they failed to explain how one of the six girls they were supposed to hand over to a home in Liluah went missing in transit.

The seven, including four lady constables, have been charged with dereliction of duty and suppression of facts, following a complaint lodged by the authorities of the state-run Liluah Home for Destitute Women.

"After interrogation of the seven, it clearly transpired that they had failed to carry out their duty of bringing back all the rescued girls safely to the home. Besides, they had tried to suppress the fact that one of the girls had gone missing from their custody," said Howrah superintendent of police Neeraj Kumar Singh.

Investigations revealed that the personnel were on their way to Howrah along with the six girls rescued from Mumbai. The magistrate of a court in Mumbai had ordered that the girls, who were staying in a shelter for women in the city, be taken back to the Liluah home from where they had gone missing.

According to the police team, one of the girls said she wanted to go to the toilet as the train neared

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UN REPORT CALLS ON STATES TO TARGET DEMAND

by Ruchira Gupta

NEW DELHI, OCT. 2: The 2nd annual report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Sigma Huda released in 2006 has targeted the most invisible aspect of the trafficking chain, which is the demand.

Prompted by Article 9.5 of the Palermo Protocol that encourages States Parties "to adopt or strengthen measures...to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children

that leads to trafficking," the Special Rapporteur has written a rich report addressing key aspects of the demand. In addressing the demand, she has reminded us that the 3 pillars supporting trafficking are the buyers, the bought and the business, and that all three need to be emphasized in considering the human rights aspects of victims of trafficking.

She is the first special rapporteur who has devoted a broad and comprehensive report to trafficking and its link to prostitution and to the demand for

sexual exploitation.

The 2006 report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking develops the standards enshrined in the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking, Article 6 of the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Others. Each of these treaties underlines that trafficking and sexual exploitation are intrinsically connected. The Palermo Protocol emphasizes "a

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WHO IS THE CRIMINAL?

From the NHRC 2004 report on trafficking

NEW DELHI, 2004: The NHRC's 2004 report details some of the ways in which the victims of sex trafficking become criminals in the eyes of the law.

Use of Section 8 over Section 5 of ITPA

An NHRC study shows that during the six-year period of 1997-2002, Goa had 100 % conviction under Section 8 and nil conviction under Section 5. This means that all the females who were arrested under Section 8 have been convicted by the courts.

The pattern in Kerala is not much different though there is a noticeable improvement. During 1997-98, there was 100 percent conviction under Section 8. During 1999, out of the convicted cases, 83 % were under Section 8. In the year 2002, out of six cases convicted, three were under Section 8 and three were under Section 5.

In Tamil Nadu, the conviction rate is quite high under Section 8. The percentage of cases convicted under Section 8 to the total number of convicted cases during the six year period in Tamil Nadu is as follows: 85 % in 1997, 58 % in 1998, 89 % in 1999, 86 % in 2000, 89 % in 2001 and 90 % in 2002.

Higher rates of arrest for women than men

In Mumbai, cases are registered u/s 110 Mumbai Police Act against persons suspected of various offences like public nuisance, etc. However, a large number of cases registered under this section are against persons on charges of 'soliciting'. During the year 2002, Santa Cruz Police Station had registered 1201 cases u/s 110 Mumbai

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PROTECTING MYSELF

by Veena (Nutt Community)

FORBESGUNJ, OCT. 2: Though I was raised in this place, I have never liked it. I've always resented it. I always wanted to get married and get out of this place. I used to tell my mother, "marry me off to anyone, even the poorest man but do not ask me to join the line." I always dreamt of become a wife and having my own family, but at that time we were very poor and could not save money for my marriage. My mother & my sister, Quresha, insisted that I join the profession. I was 10 or 11.

I told my father that, even if I have to join the line, I will not sell my flesh. I will learn singing and dancing and join an orchestra group. He said OK. I was sent to Saharsa, where lots of people from our community used to live. I started to learn singing and dancing. But my sister-in-law told me that orchestra parties only get seasonal contracts. "What will you do in the other times?" she asked me.

So they started sending clients to my room, even though I never wanted to be in this life. I would plead with the clients and tell them, "I do not like all this. I want to sing and dance." If the clients did not listen to me, I used to run away or rebel against them. But how long can you resist clients in such a place like this?

Then I came to Patna with an orchestra group. There I met a friend of the owner of the orchestra group I used to work for. He was handsome and very different from the others. Soon he fell in love with me and proposed to me. I also fell in love with him, but I was afraid that he would never get married to a girl like me. But he insisted, so we got married in a temple in Patna.

Soon I got pregnant. At that time he was studying, so we had no money. I explained to him that since I was pregnant no one would ask me to perform. I used to sing and

dance at small gatherings. We had a very hard time for 3 to 4 years.

Eventually my husband's parents came to know about the marriage and they forced him to get married to another girl. But the day after he married her, he left her and returned to me for two years.

One day my brother-in-law came to me and said, "You belong to a notorious community, but we are from a respectable family, so we plead with you to leave my brother. He has got married again to a respectable girl. I will give you 20,000 rupees." I told him, "Sir, 20,000 rupees

is a very paltry amount for me. Instead I will give you one lakh rupees, and why don't you get the other woman married off to a nice guy". He was resentful towards me.

Then my husband started saying that "My family is not

lending me any money to start my own business, what should I do now?" I have always tried to save a little portion of whatever I earned. So I gave him 60,000 rupees to start his own business. He started a medical supply business with 60,000 and now he earns lakhs or millions.

Now my father-in-law and brother-in-law have come here and asked me to go and stay with them and live in their house. My husband has also asked me to go and live in their village, but I have said that I will go only on two conditions: 1. You have to get Rani married off in an elegant way, and 2. You have to register 50% of your earnings and your property into my name! I have three children and he has two more sons from the other marriage. If something happens to me, or to him, what will happen to my children? After all, I'm a mother. I have to think about their future. Am I wrong?



A child's view of life in prostitution.

EDITORIAL: THE RIGHT NOT TO BE A PROSTITUTE

by Ruchira Gupta

NEW DELHI, OCT. 2: As an organization, Apne Aap wants women to have the right not to be a prostitute. Apne Aap members reject initiatives that argue for the “right” to be a prostitute, as we believe such initiatives reinforce patriarchy and limit women’s choices. We want women to have a level playing field with men, so that women can have the same career options and economic opportunities as men.

Apne Aap members do not use the term sex-worker, because they feel that this term sterilizes the coercive and exploitative nature of prostitution and makes it easier to ignore the violence, trauma, and degradation that lurk behind the term ‘sex-work.’ They also generally do not use the term prostitute because of the stigma attached with the term. We do not believe that prostitution is a profession. It is a forced occupation. We use the term “women in prostitution” because we believe that prostitution is a condition into which women are forced, and if women have other opportunities, they will exercise them.

Over a period of twenty years, women in prostitution rarely speak about wanting to exercise the “right” to stay in prostitution. Those who do often speak in the context of having no other options and trying to make the best of the situation in which they find themselves.

What follows is the projection, over a twenty-year period, of what life is like for a girl in prostitution. As you may notice,

choice is not a notable factor in these girls’ lives.

The first five years (Age 15-20): In this period, girls who have been kidnapped, stolen, tricked, sold, and lured are locked up in small rooms with barred windows. They are only brought out by the brothel madam to serve up to 15-20 buyers of prostituted sex every night. They are served one meal a day, given some clothes and toiletries, but they are not given any of the money that the buyer



Ruchira Gupta, Founder & Executive Director of A2W2

pays for them. They are in slave-like conditions and have no choice. In every conversation with them, they talk about wanting to go home.

The second five years (Age 20-25): There is a period of socialization within the brothels and the women are taught to become dependent on drugs and alcohol. Brothel madams also make sure that they have one or two children so that the women cannot think about returning home anymore. In this period, the women are allowed by the

brothel madam to keep half of what they earn. Memories of home become hazy due to repeated violence and psychosocial trauma and they begin to suffer from the Stockholm syndrome, where the small mercies meted out by the kidnapper seem of great importance. With children, suffering from depression and diseases, they do not see a way out. At this time, when asked, the women say they want to stay in the brothels and not go back home.

The third five years (Age 25-30): After ten years of physical abuse, malnutrition and drug and alcohol dependency, the earning capacity of the women comes down. Buyers of prostituted sex look for younger girls. They are allowed to keep all of their earnings but earnings go down and the needs of their children go up. At this time, they want to leave prostitution, but don’t have the life-skills or the physical health to do so. They have no choice.

The fourth five years (Age 30-35): In this period, the women have no buyers of prostituted sex, no income; have two or three children and disease ridden bodies. They are thrown out of the brothels and end up on the sidewalk. They cannot afford even one meal or even access to a toilet. They have no options and are forced to die on the streets.

Under such circumstances, the “right” to be a prostitute is the right to a life without choice and a life that de-values the self. There must be more worthy rights for which we can fight.

MOVIE REVIEW: **CHINGAARI**

Adapted from indiafm.com
by Manisha Munshi

In *Chingaari*, her latest attempt, Lajmi travels to the heartland of India and presents the story of a prostitute and a postman. Also juxtaposed with the love story are issues that still plague present-day India, like illiteracy, sexual exploitation, fake god-men et al. *Chingaari* is set in Rangpur, a far and forgotten village in rural India. Lalbatti, a red light den, is the place where night queens crawl out of the dark rooms to make a man's day.

Basanti [Sushmita Sen] is a prostitute, who sells her body but not her soul. Chandan [Anuj Sawhney] is a postman, who along with letters delivers his heart to Basanti. After nights of lust, Basanti finally finds love. Bhuvan Panda [Mithun Chakraborty] is a demon trapped in a man's body. He's less of a priest, more of a beast. Villagers worship as well as fear him. Wicked as wolf and poisonous as snake, Bhuvan extorts money, sex and power. The story takes a turn when Bhuvan gets to know that Basanti and Chandan are in love. Bhuvan eliminates Chandan, thus crushing Basanti's pride. A wounded Basanti declares war...

Director Kalpana Lajmi

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SURVIVORS WELCOME ITPA AMENDMENT

by Ruchi Sinha

NEW DELHI, OCT. 2: In a move that could have far-reaching implications for prostituted women and children, the Indian government recently proposed significant amendments to the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act 1956 (ITPA). The amendments aim to protect prostituted women and children from exploitation at the hands of clients and police.

Two crucial amendments are the removal of Section 8, ITPA, which allows the police to book a prostituted woman on charges of seducing or soliciting customers in public places, and Section 20, which relates to the removal of a prostituted woman and children from "any place". Another significant proposal is the insertion of a new section 5C, which would, for the first, time, punish a person visiting or found in a brothel for the purpose of

sexual exploitation.

The Human Resources Development Ministry's Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) has approved the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2005.

Survivors groups of prostituted women and children have welcomed this move. Fatima, from the Nutt community in Forbesganj, said: "I am born in a community where prostitution is a common practice. I have seen what helplessness and trauma a woman in prostitution faces. I know in which circumstances they die. We fully support the penalization of our buyers, recruiters, and people who profit off our sexual exploitation. Once they are punished, they will know they do not have power over us and we will be free.

Rama, from the red-light area of Kidderpore in Kolkata said, "It is good that the pimps and the customers will be arrested and not us. We are only the victims; we should be protected, not punished. I was 14 when the police rounded me up under Section 8, but I had no choice—the brothel madam would beat me if I did not stand on the street. I am 52 now, but am still scared of the police. When I need help, I cannot go to them. They will punish me.

In Mumbai, says Maili, at least 10 girls are arrested every month under Section 8 - which the DWCD seeks to delete. "It is used extensively to harass prostituted women and children who carry safe sex tools, such as condoms. "This is a welcome move."

KOLKATA, OCT. 2: Workers in the anti-trafficking movement face a number of obstacles in their work. Aside from the personal challenges of tackling the problem of trafficking, workers must face challenges in their everyday work environments.

In destination areas, it is very difficult to intervene in to the community and create a space for anti-trafficking workers, because the women in prostitution (WIP) find it difficult to trust anyone, given their own experiences of exploitation by people they have trusted. Most of these women have tightly wrapped themselves in an emotional cocoon; suppressing their feelings of pain and grief and thinking of themselves as dead.

In addition, the area is often guarded by pimps, brothel owners, liquor suppliers, and other anti-social elements, many of whom have strong connections with the politicians, the police, and the underworld. These anti-social groups

CHALLENGES FOR ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORKERS

by Janaki Dubey

do not want the WIP to become aware of their fundamental rights through NGOs who work in the community, because the balance of power could quickly change away from them.

These anti-social elements are deadly serious in their attempts to control anti-trafficking workers. On the first of September, two girls from Kathmandu were brought and kept at a house on Munshigunj Road, in Khidderpore. Two days later, a police contingent conducted a rescue operation at that house. The police rescued the girls and arrested two female traffickers. On the very next day the pimps of the area threatened an A2W2 worker, saying, "It's better that you all keep silent. Don't be a police informer, or you will face the consequences."

Another challenge in working in the red-light areas is that the buyers of prostituted sex, the pimps, and the dadas of the area often think that the anti-trafficking workers are WIP, and they ask the worker to entertain them. These incidents are not only embarrassing, but also mentally stressful because such men will purposely try to malign the workers. The residents of the area are accustomed to using abusive verbal and body language in their day-to-day lives, but it can become mentally difficult for the anti-trafficking workers to cope with the environment.

Finally, anti-trafficking workers are faced with the physical challenges of working in highly impoverished areas. These areas are dilapidated, dingy, and unhygienic; with no proper drainage system, no toilets or bathrooms are available for the WIP. These

women have one room that must serve all the purposes of their daily lives, so the anti-trafficking workers must conduct meetings and classes in these same places as well. The risk of all types of infectious diseases is very high, and the workers are likely to fall ill.

Anti-trafficking work, which is so important for red-light communities, is mostly done out of concern on the part of workers. It would be irresponsible, however, not to mention naïve, not to acknowledge the very real challenges and risks that such work poses for those who undertake it.

SURVIVOR STATEMENTS: RESPONSES TO THE NEW ITPA AMENDMENTS

BHIVANDI, OCT. 2: We are the women of the Bhivandi red-light area. Here, you mostly find devdasi women. Devdasi is an old tradition which is passed from generation to generation. We have been violated time and time again, so we are now protesting against this tradition. We want our daughters to have lives free from violence. Our children should have a better future. Even though this practice has been banned by the government, you can still find women of the Devdasi tradition in parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Many of us who live in Bhivandi have gotten no benefits from being Devdasis. We want buyers to be punished so that our daughters can feel secure and go to school. Only then can they achieve their hopes and dreams in an independent India. We request that you kindly consider our situation and take positive action.
A2W2 Mahila Mandal, Bhivandi



A drawing by Sapna, of the Bhivandi red-light area, depicting the natural beauty of her surroundings and her hope for the future.

FORBESGUNJ, OCT. 2: The undersigned represent a diverse group including Survivors of Prostitution, Voices of Members of Nutt Community, Forbesgunj, traditionally engaged in inter-generational prostitution NGO's, Judiciary and Academics. They together express their strong support to the Indian government for the amendments proposed to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 recently introduced in the parliament as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2006. As organisations mostly led by survivors of prostitution, which also provide direct services to women in prostitution, we can attest to the violence and harm that are inherent in prostitution, whether legalised or not. We strongly support the Indian Governments goals to strengthen its commitment towards protection of trafficked person thereby strengthening its resolve to the UN protocol.
Survivors
Representatives of the Nutt Community
Representatives of the Justice System/Judiciary
Representatives of NGO
Representatives of Academia
A2W2 Mahila Mandal, Forbesgunj

KHIDDERPORE, OCT. 2: We, the women of the Khidderpore red-light area, recently discussed the recent amendment in the ITPA Bill which was introduced in the parliament, where the buyers of prostituted sex will be criminalized. Women in prostitution have varying reactions: while many of the aged women (those who are no longer in the profession) seem to be speaking in favour of the amendment, the younger generation (women in prostitution) are speaking against the amendment. Women who support the bill strongly feel that the criminalization of the buyer will lead to a reduction of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Some argue that buyers of prostituted sex need to be criminalized but the pimps, the traffickers, madams and the brothel owners should also be penalized. On the other hand, many of the prostituted women, especially those who have children, strongly oppose the amendment. One woman from Khidderpore, who has three children in A2W2 classes, says, "If the buyers are criminalized, then what will happens to me? Who will give me food and shelter? How I will feed my children?...Because of the buyers we are surviving. We have no other options for making a livelihood." Despite these differing opinions and reactions, there is one point of consensus among the women. We strongly feel that, if the law is enforced, then the government must look after the rehabilitation of the prostituted women, and the education of their children.
A2W2 Mahila Mandal, Khidderpore

NUTT COMMUNITY

to be in residential schools, so that they can have a better future.

2. Training for women and girls so that they can be self-sufficient.

3. Boys and girls, ages 14 to 28, should get sustainable employment so that they will not be forced to turn to our profession.

4. We have substandard housing, so we should get the benefit of 'Indira Avas Yojana.'

5. Our mahila mandal should get permission to distribute ration oil.

6. In the last 5 or 6 months, UNICEF has posted an advertisement regarding the building of toilets. We submitted the application to the respected execu-

tive engineer or PHED. We request you to take some positive action.

7. We are living below the poverty line, so we want to benefit from the BPL scheme.

8. We want the benefit of the Antyoday/Annapurna scheme.

9. So that we can start up other work, our Mahila Mandal would like to receive necessary items on credit.

10. We should get government benefits as members of the Nutt community. In all of Bihar, the Nutt community lives in red light areas.

11. We are harassed by the local gundas and bosses, so we are in need of one police chowki for our protection.

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12. If some family wants to get out of this situation, what help will you provide them?

13. The entire city has electricity, except for our village. According to the city, we should come under the city bill. In reality, however, we come under the village panchayat.

14. We want to join in the Nagar Panchayat. From the past two years, we have been working partners with Apne Aap Women Worldwide. All our committee members are equal partners.

We request that you kindly go through our application and take positive action.

Apne Aap Mahila Mandal, Forbesgunj.

Teachers work with children at an A2W2 centre.



MUMBAI COPS

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Bilaspur. The train was moving slowly and she managed to jump out by pushing away one of the lady constables.

The other five girls in the group told one of the state shelter home staff that the missing girl had been raped by one of the constables. They said that the police had probably abandoned her as they did not want her to tell the truth. "We have spoken to the girls and are probing these allegations as well," Singh said.

ASK THE DOCTOR

by Dr. Rakesh Agrawal

What should I do if I have itching or a change in my vaginal discharge? White discharge can be normal, especially before and after menstruation, during pregnancy, and during adolescence. If you feel that your discharge is abnormal (thick, excessive, etc.), it is best to see a doctor, if possible. Wear loose-fitting, cotton clothes; avoid nylon or other fabrics that hold in the body's moisture. To prevent abnormal discharge, try improving nutrition through eating more protein, more calories, and more vitamins (especially iron and folic acid). In addition, practice good vaginal hygiene, especially when menstruating.

CONSUMER HELP

by Manisha Munshi

How do I get a ration card? You must go the Food and Supply Officer (FSO) of your area, and get application form number 1 (50 paise). Application for new ration cards are accepted from 1 to 15 of every month. The head of the family must fill out and sign the form, and return it to the FSO along with 3 passport-sized photographs and one of the following documents: rent receipt, electricity/water/telephone bill, house tax receipt, registered deed, power of attorney, gas connection receipt, allotment letter from the Competent Authority, NOC from the land lord. In case you have but cannot bring any of the documents, the FSO will satisfy himself through spot inquiry. If you need to do anything else regarding your ration card, you can find all the forms you need at the FSO's office.

PHARMAS

trials across India to see if a drug called Letrozole induced ovulation.

A quick survey in red-light areas in Mumbai and Kolkata revealed that many NGOs have participated in the social marketing of drugs and conducted clinical trails on prostituted women and girls of female condoms, certain anti-retro-virals and HIV and AIDS voluntary testing kits. Often the prostituted woman or child did not know they had consented to the trials. "We just sign because I believe the doctor takes the signature to help us. That's why I sign it," says Ambu, in the

Bhiwandi red-light area. "I had constant headaches. I went to the doctor. I was given tablets. I was just told that the drugs were American. They used to give me the tablets and I used to eat them. I am poor and I live in a brothel and I don't understand many things. The doctors are intelligent. They write the drugs for me so I have to take them accordingly."

In early March, the Supreme Court of India hauled up two top biotech companies in India, the Hyderabad-based Shanta Biotech and Bangalore-based Biocon India, for "openly conducting illegal clinical trials of new drugs on unsuspecting patients" after a litigation

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filed by the Aadar Destitute and Old People's Home, a Delhi-based social organization. This non-governmental organization (NGO) alleged that the two companies had conducted improper clinical trials of Streptokinase - a new clot-busting drug used in heart attacks - last November without requisite permissions (of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee), as a consequence of which eight people lost their lives.

WHO IS THE CRIMINAL?

Police Act and arrested 1219 persons, all of whom have been convicted. Though the break-up of the arrested and convicted persons for the entire year could not be obtained, the data received from the DCP, Mumbai, shows that in January 2002, when 124 cases were registered u/s 110 Mumbai Police Act, leading to the arrest of 124 persons, this included 96 women who were arrested as 'prostitutes' for 'soliciting'. This shows that 77.4 % of

the arrested persons were females who had been charged with 'soliciting'. The unusually high percentage of arrests of women is a manifestation of gender bias in law-enforcement.

Higher arrest of children and youth than adult trafficking kingpins

The data received from the states of the NHRC study shows that of the arrested persons, a large number is that of children less than 18 years of age. Crime in India data

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reveals that among the arrested persons those falling under the age group of 18-30, followed by 30-45 years and then 45-60 years account for the maximum arrestees under the crimes listed above. Only Child Marriage Restraint Act and the Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act show a slight variation with 30-45 years taking the lead followed by the age group of 18-30 and then 45-60.

UN REPORT

comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit and destination that includes measure to prevent such trafficking..." The Special Rapporteur's report underlines the responsibility of demand countries, or countries of destination, to discourage the demand -- including by legislative means -- that promotes trafficking. The Special Rapporteur's report addresses a key human rights aspect of protection for victims of trafficking, which is that the burden of proof should

not be on the victim to prove she was forced.

The Special Rapporteur's report underscores that the definition of trafficking in the Palermo Protocol helps insure that all victims of trafficking, not only those who can prove force, will be protected. Art. 3b of the definition of trafficking in the Palermo Protocol states that trafficking can occur with or without the consent of the victim if any of the means in Art. 3a, such as force, deception, or abuse of a person's vulnerability have been used to traffic. The Special Rapporteur's

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2006 report emphasizes that the consent of the victim cannot be used as a defense for traffickers. The report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking addresses the primary reason for which women and children are trafficked, i.e., for prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation. This focus fulfills the Special Rapporteur's mandate, which mentions that the majority of victims are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation.

RED LIGHT AREA

by Usha Uthup

A kaleidoscope of colours in my mind
Colours colours colours you will find
Blue is the sky Orange is the sun
Black and Grey is the crowd
Green is the grass Brown is the earth
Pure white is the snow
But tears have no colours as they fall and flood
My hands, which are red, red is the colour of blood
The place where I live is called a red light area
Do you live in a blue light area?
The place where I live is called a red light area
Have you heard of a green light area?

As I walk down the road, I hear people whispering
Do you know where she lives?
They pass snide comments and they are so rude to me
Should I learn to ignore or forgive?
She lives in that lane, which is really oh so bad
Good people don't enter that place
So I try to run away, hang my head down in shame
As tears start to roll down my face

I wish that people knew that so many of us
Stand under streetlights not by choice
They have no other means to get a square meal
But who would listen to my voice?

I wish I could stop this, get my parents better jobs
I know someday I surely will
Educate my friends, get them trained in so many other skills
Give us a better world I will send an appeal to my honest government
We also need to grow up and live healthy lives in a clean and better environment.

CHINGAARI

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attempts an issue pertaining to womenfolk yet again. Like *Daman* tackled issues troubling women, *Chingaari* travels a similar path, with the woman seeking justice in the end. To give credit where it's due, *Chingaari* has some brilliant sequences and topnotch performances. But where Lajmi falters is when she stretches the story endlessly. The romantic sequences between Sush-Anuj lack fizz, while a few scenes depicting Mithun's evil attitude appear fake. In fact, the film can easily be trimmed by 30 minutes or so.

Chingaari serves as a showreel to showcase Sush's prowess and abilities. An award-worthy performance, Sush's expressive face speaks volumes. The outburst sequence in the second half is stupendous. Mithun Chakraborty is in form after a long, long time. The actor gets a role he can sink his teeth into and comes out with flying colors. Anuj Sawhney is highly competent. He matches up to Sush and Mithun at every step. Ila Arun in first-rate. Anjan Srivastav and Ravi Gosai are adequate.

On the whole, however, *Chingaari* will just remain a spark [*chingaari*], not more.



Usha Uthup, singer and poet

RLD ASKS: WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITES THIS WEEK?

Top 5 Movies

1. Mughal-E-Azam
2. Sholay
3. Pinjar
4. Guide
5. Maherchi Sadi

Top 5 TV Serials

1. Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi
2. Kumkum
3. Bhabhi
4. Kasauti Zindagi Ki
5. Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki

Top 5 Songs

1. Kajra Re (Bunty aur Babli)
2. Lal Dupatta (Mujhse Shaadi Karogi)
3. Dil Ke Armaan (Nikaah)
4. Rang Barse (Silsila)
5. Barbaad Mohabbat Ke (Anmol Ghadi)

WISHES by Kali, 12

BHIVANDI, OCT. 2: My dream is to remove my sister, Tai, from this [red-light] community. This will only happen when I will study hard and be able to stand on my feet. My sister has done a lot of things for me, for my happiness. Now, it's my turn to give back, to make her happy. I know what trouble she has undergone to make me happy. I want to move Tai from this community and give her a nice place to live.