



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

My Dreams “To Abolish Child Labour” -Sultana Khatoon

Kolkata: I’m Sultana Khatoon, a student of B.A second year in Khidderpore College. Also, I am a member of the Sanitary Napkin Making Unit in Apne Aap Kolkata Centre.

In Apne Aap, I am member of the team to mobilize girls and women against sex trafficking by raising my voice and utilising my gained knowledge. I started in the organisation with sewing training, then I joined Computer Classes, and now I am working with Sanitary Napkin Making Unit.

My mother is working as a help. I’m from economically backward family. I used to be depended on my mother’s salary. Whenever my mother was not well, I used to work as a help in her absence.

I face lots of hardship, but I did not give up on my studies. I aspire to become an art teacher. I live close to Munshigunj which is a red-light area. I want to fight sex trafficking hand in hand with Apne Aap. I believe trafficking of any human being for sexual or other purpose is a crime. Everyday women face different kinds of harassment including sexual but they don’t speak out usually because of family prestige. My dream is to teach and abolish child labour--every child has the right to education. We all are capable of making a difference.

My favourite song is ‘we shall overcome.... we shall overcome someday’.

‘Ek Yeh Bhi Parampara’: Exploitation in the name of tradition

—Jyoti Khatoon/ as transcribed by Praveen Kumar

Bihar: The documentary film ‘ Ek Yeh Bhi Parampara ’ is an outcome of a Mixed Media Storytelling workshop (June 25-28) by students of Apne Aap Women Worldwide in Bihar. The workshop was from 25th June- 28th June, 2015.

The workshop was conducted by Aseem Asha Usman, who teaches New Media and film to women, youth and children from various communities, schools and colleges. He also helps them to built career through Digital Media.

Apne Aap Women Worldwide is a grassroots Indian organization working for empowerment of Girls and women to resist and end sex trafficking. It helps survivor and those at risk of such abuse to asses’ education,

health care, job training and legal voice – breaking the cycle of poverty and discrimination that forces women into prostitution.

This story is based on Nat community traditions that are financially dependent on inter-generational prostitution, narrated by a girl named Jyoti Khatoon from the same community.

I am Jyoti Khatoon. I am from a Muslim community called Nat. We are involve in the occupation of entertainment, Khel – Tamasa (Street Play) singing, dance performances, and prostitution. Girls from the Nat caste are forced into prostitution by their own family members.

(Continued on page 6)

The World Outside

“I became a Prostitute at aged 12”

— Sabina/ as translated by Bhawana Joshi

Bihar: I became a prostitute at aged 12. I was brought to the red light area eight years ago. Initially I was made to do household chores, but on turning 12, I was coerced into prostitution. I was held captive, raped, beaten and starved.

My thoughts and my attitude changed. I was delusional and in denial. I drank a lot and took to drugs to cope with all the physical, mental, and emotional torture.

I was being ritualistically used by men who did not view me as a human being. As a fourteen year old girl, I realized that some men felt an actual entitlement over my body. The nightmare never stopped. I had no

idea how traumatizing prostitution was until I experienced it myself.

We prostitutes have to live with so much pain and hurt every day. We face so much violence. We are forcibly separated from our families, which in itself is extremely painful and disrupts the very meaning of our lives.

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(Continued on page 7)

Activists urge PM to hold public consultation over Child Labour law amendments

This article was aired by newswire PTI, and picked by many leading news daily. Apne Aap, along with other leading organizations have taken an initiative and launched a 'Campaign for Child Protection'. The Cabinet on May 13 had approved an amendment in the 1986 Child Labour Act for allowing children under 14 years to work in non-hazardous industries run by family, including agriculture and home-based work, forest gathering, etc.

Various rights groups have urged the government to hold a public consultation on the proposed amendments to the [Child Labour](#) Bill, which they warned will end up legitimising economic exploitation of children and rob them of their childhood. They have written to Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) seeking a public consultation on the amendments and called for the removal of the provision seeking to legitimise use of children under 14 years as labour in family enterprises out of their school hours and during vacation.

'The Campaign For Child Protection' today held a discussion here on the Bill and its proposed amendments which was organised by Apne Aap Women Worldwide and the Indian School for Women's Studies and Development.

Explaining the concerns, Ruchira Gupta, Founder, Apne Aap Women Worldwide, said, "We work with children of de-notified tribes and other caste communities suffering from intergenerational prostitution, some of whom are traditional entertainers. They are trafficked for nautanki, nautch and cabaret in travelling cattle fairs in northern and eastern [India](#) as well as sexually exploited in home-based brothels. This amendment will give impunity to their traffickers, who will claim 'dancing' is a family enterprise."

The Cabinet on May 13 had approved an amendment in the 1986 [Child Labour Act](#) for allowing children under 14 years to work in non-hazardous industries run by family, including agriculture and home-based work, forest gathering, etc. The amendment also allows children to work in audio-visual and entertainment industry, including advertisements, films, television serials or any other entertainment, which can include traumatic and hazardous situations, without specifying the regulation required for this.

"The amendments will depress the wages of adults, who will be substituted for children and decrease labour standards for both, leading to new forms of slavery," said Kiran Moghe, member of Indian School for Women's Studies and Development.

According to UNICEF, out of 200 million children enrolled, 80 million are likely to drop out before the

completion of elementary education. Over 40% of these dropouts are from the minority communities, backward classes and scheduled castes of India, says the National Sample Survey Organisation.

"The Right to Education of all marginalised children will be diluted as these children will be pressured to work at home or perform in the entertainment industry to increase income for their families," added Malini Bhattacharya, President of All India Democratic Women's Association.

The 2011 Census says that 4.35 million children between 5 to 14 years are working as child labourers. The rights groups claimed that the Bill, along with the Land Acquisition Act, will increase bonded labour, something that will impact children.

Shabnam, a member of the National Alliance of People's Movements, reiterated that the Bill, "along with Land Acquisition Act, will increase bonded labour as displaced people will work for less than minimum wages and supplement their subsistence with the work of the children".

Bharti Ali, founder and Co-Director of Haq Centre for Child Rights, said "The amendments violate the UN's Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), to which India is a signatory, as well as articles of the Indian Constitution." Another round-table consultation today chaired by Swami Agnivesh opined that the proposed amendment attempts to legitimise the economic exploitation of children and rob them of their childhood and their rights.

"These changes are against all of our efforts in past 20 years to ban all forms of child labour up to 18 years, and not in the best interest of children," said P Joseph Victor Raj, National Convener of Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL).

The activists called for the removal of Section 5 of the CLPRA Amendment Bill, 2012, and sought avoidance of the insertion of any equivalent section or clause in the amendment.

They called for formulation of regulatory laws to govern the employment of children between 5 to 14 years and between 15 to 18 years in the entertainment and audio-visual industry with particular emphasis on prohibiting employment in hazardous tasks and traumatic situations.

Reinstating the original longer list of hazardous occupations with regard to the 15 to 18 year-old children and including more hazardous occupations based on assessment of the newly-emerging occupations were the other recommendations.

Diary of a Social Worker

—By Manish Kumar/ Dictated to Anjali Krishnan

Delhi: My name is Manish Kumar. Since the time I was born in Delhi, I did not see or understand the city better until I joined Apne Aap four years ago. I am aged 29. My primary occupation here is that of a driver.

But, I contribute in many other ways including field work, event planning and above all I'm always available to assist the girls that come to the head office every day after school from the community in Najafgarh. Ever since I have started working at Apne Aap, the girls that come to the Centre have taken a special place in my heart.

Before I came in contacts with Apne Aap, I had absolutely no idea about trafficking. After spending time here I have learned so much. To respect women in general. Empowering the girl child. **I especially remember visiting Mangolpuri two years ago with my colleagues from the organization. It pierced my heart seeing the level of deprivation, suffering and disparity between the haves and have not. I strongly feel that the government should focus on the betterment of the most marginalized communities.**

One of my favorite girls who comes to the Centre is Prachi. She is youngest among all and the most innocent out of the group. After working with girls from so many different communities. I strongly wish that little girls and boys, who are devoid of opportunities and resources, come out of their difficult and complex situations and become someone great in their life.

I have helped the girls with their homework and school projects and love taking them to the market to purchase things for the various activities that they have especially during festivals. I have also accompa-

nied them on educational trips organized by the Centre. I'll think fondly of the little moments like taking them to dance classes or different activities and how excited and happy they are.

Since I have joined Apne Aap, I have witnessed the growth of the organisation. My favorite event that I participated in was the distribution of a comic book on rape survivor *Priya's Shakti* at Jaipur Literature Festival 2015. Another occasion that will remain in my heart for a long time is the vigilance held for Nirbhaya following the horrific gang rape. The moment of silence that was observed for her death was extremely powerful. The violence against her has strongly affected me and it has further inspired me to fight for women's rights. None should face this kind of fate and receive justice for crimes committed against them.

I have never worked so long with any company or organization and am truly in love with what I do here. **I love the children that I get to meet at our Centre and will always think of them affectionately.** This love that I have for them will be there even past my time at Apne Aap.

The violence against her (Nirbhaya) has strongly affected me and it has further inspired me to fight for women's rights. None should face this kind of fate and receive justice for crimes committed against them.

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

I Could Not Afford get Education

— *Shambhu/ as dictated to Hindol*

Kolkata: My name is Shambhu. I am 12-year-old boy from Sonagachi, staying with my relatives. It's been four years, since my mother left me with my relative in Sonagachi. I stay with two elder brothers, aunty and uncle.

I don't know the whereabouts of my mother now. She did not contact me ever since. I used to long for her to return, but I no longer know now. I just understood, she never made an effort get me back.

I do get food, shelter and clothes from my relatives. But, I also do some odd jobs in Sonagachi red light area. For instance, if any house in the locality calls me to bring water, vegetables, snacks etc. I am there for them. I get the chance to earn few extra rupees. From this, I purchase exercise books, drawing books, pencils and other necessary items.

I want to study further. I do not receive any monetary support from my relative. I have been taken out of school from my native place and here in Kolkata, my relative didn't allow me to take admission in school. I am a drop out student.

I am keen on learning drawing and even for that I need money to buy colors.

When I started to visit Apne Aap's Sonagachi Centre, I opened up with the workers here that my elder brothers do not support my desire to continue my education. I was beaten up by my brothers many a times for the same reason. Once I ran away from home, as I had nowhere else to go, I returned after three days. I resumed working at different houses. I don't want to continue doing this

for a long time in my life. Hence, I desire to study, so I become a well respected person in a society.

I got admitted in Sonagachi Centre for the NFE sessions and also registered my name for the RILM project. **Last month, I got admission in Oriental school in class IV and also received the books and dresses from school. Also, I am getting tuition support from Apne Aap's centre. I go to the centre every morning before going to school for remedial classes.**

At times, my uncle comes to centre talk to the staffs, as they are also happy that I got the chance to further my education with the aid of Apne Aap.

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Apne Aap's Activities in July

Kolkata:

- Legal Rights Session on Child Labour
- Library and Drama Sessions with the Children
- About 15 students from Ireland (SUAS Education Development) visited Apne Aap

New Delhi:

- One Week workshop with the Theatre Collective
- Comic book making workshop by Ram Devineni
- Learning through photography by Papertree Collective
- Visit to International Dolls Museum
- Story telling workshop

A discussion with school children on 'Bal Mazdoori' (Child Labour)

Kolkata:

On September 14th we organized a session with school children at Shastitala Centre, around 12 P.M. and the topic of discussion was 'Bal Mazdoori' (Child Labour). This session was attended by 10 children namely, Anjali, Amisha, Radha, Jyoti and six others.

Radha: 'Bal Mazdoori' is child labour. Children from poor families are forced to work as domestic labourers, in agricultural fields, at construction sites, at shops, at factories and so on, to feed themselves and their families. This servitude is extremely mentally, physically and emotionally harmful.

Amisha: I think that child labour should be stopped and children should be send to schools instead.

Jyoti: We are not labour, we are child.

Priyanshu: Punish that employer who employs children in their shops

Puja: Every parent should take care of their children, so that they are not forced to be a child labour.

Note: Quotes collected by Rachna Nayak

Delhi:

Sunaina: No children should be force to do hard labour, they should be in school.

Suhana: Children should be allotted enough time to study and play.

Nishita: Kids should not work in a dhaba, this is the time for them to study. Kids should grow up and fulfill their dreams of becoming someone important.

Balma: I have seen my brothers working to get enough money to look after us. But, I don't like it. I wish they don't have to do this and could go to school.

Sneha: They should not do it. Kids should study. Those who make kids work should get punishment. Good education is required.

Kareena: Those who make kids work should be liable for punishment. The government should send the kids to school and educate them for free. We don't need just an education, but a quality education. Different organizations like Apne Aap are there for the kids. Those kids who start working early are barely able to fulfill their dreams, so they should be given an opportunity. The parents should be educated about this, too.

Note: Quotes collected by Anjali Krishnan

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An Award Winning photographer documentation on de-notified tribes in India

David Goldman (davidgoldmanphoto.com) is a New York based award winning documentary photographer and a film maker. He was recently working with Apne Aap Women Worldwide to bring attention to the daily struggles and triumphs of Freed Communities/De-Notified Tribes.



Community: Dom (Freed/ De-notified tribe)

Location: Mangolpuri, New Delhi

Continued from page 1

Girls are neither send to school nor allowed to go outside. Family members of my caste act as pimps. They buy and sell girls. If any girls try to raise objection against prostitution, she is beaten black and blue. The males in our family who are unemployed sell their sister and daughter out of greed for money. It is prevailing since generations, now prostitution has become a tradition in our community.

Generally, in the initial five years, women prostitutes give away their entire earnings either to the pimps or to

One of my friends Soni Khatoon retaliated and broke this tradition. Her father tried to force her into prostitution, but with the aid of Apne Aap Centre, she resumed her study in Purnea while staying in a hostel. Soni is sixteen years old and now studying in class ninth (at present she is in tenth).

the brothel owners. The next five years, women in prostitution start getting half of their earnings. After that these women retain most of their earning. Gainul, a dreaded trafficking kingpin in our locality, has ruined the lives of many minor girls. He has beard and

moustache, and wears sarong and shirt; look like an old man.

A few days ago he and his wife, Madhubani, kidnapped a girl and brought her in their place.

Initially, she was looked after very well. Then they started to coerce her into prostitution. They stopped giving food and water to her. Gainul used to burn her hands with hot iron rod. He even used to tie her with a rope and assaulted her mercilessly. I even heard that he committed sexual assault on her. Then, one day Gainul was arrested and the girl was freed.

Now a day, after the arrest of Gainul, girls living in the red light area of Forbesganj, can walk freely on the road. This year I have cleared my metric exam on high note.

My mother Fatima Khatoon is a social worker. She is associated with Apne Aap centre for the last ten years. She works for the justice and protection of girls living in the red light area.

My ambition is to become a collector and assist my mother in her work “Exterminating the savage tradition of coercing girls into prostitution”.

World day against Child Labour

Kolkata: The Sastitala Centre had organised a drawing competition to honour World Day Against Child Labour. The theme was on abolishing child and creating awareness within the society. The pictures below are drawn by the students.



By Rakhi Shaw



By Rakesh Singh



By Jayanti Shaw

Continued from page 1

I can trust no one and often feel worthless. I have seen my dreams being shattered to pieces.

The police seem to be cracking down on prostitution and men are getting scared reading about prostitution stings and arrests in the news.

We are living an invisible life. There are many people who doesn't want any sort of connection with us.

At times, I wonder, how my life would have if I were not trapped into prostitution. In which world I would have been living. How people would have judged me. Will I be accepted in the society, without the stigma attached to it. I wonder.

However, I am sure, that I would have been an educated woman. Living a life filled with happiness. Name in the society. I would not have been entertaining to any man in my life.

But, I want to tell the society and the law makers of our country, "It is exactly why we need legislation. Dehumanized status of women in general and prostitutes in particular is very unfortunate. Anyone who suggests that a certain class of females should exist to absorb male sexual aggression and violence is simply expressing a misogynistic view."

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I wonder.

Poems

Kam pe kyun jarahe hai bacche?

Bacche kam per jarahe hai,
Hamare samay ki sabse bhayanak pankti
hai yeh,
Bhayanak hai ese vivaran ki tarah
likha jana,
Likha jana chahiye ese sawal ki tarah
Kam par kyun jarahe hai Bacche?

Name– Sojib Hussain
Age: 11 years
Area: Mumbai

Sochna Zara

Aaj kisi se,
Koi kathor bat kahane se pahale,
Sochna zara,
Unke bare mein, jo bol nahi sakate!
Kitna beswad khana bana hai,
Kahne se pahale
Sochna zara,
Unke bare mein, Jinke pass Khane ko kuch
nahi hai!

Name– Arif Sheikh
Age: 13 years
Area: Mumbai



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