



# RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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DELHI, KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

## My Dreams

“To Become a Teacher ”

-Kasak

**Delhi:** My name is Kasak. I am 10-year-old and I study in Class IV at a government run school in Najafgarh. I live with my parents, and my 11 brothers and sisters, in a small house in Najafgarh, on the outskirts of Delhi. I have been associated with Apne Aap since I was just five years old.

Apne Aap workers often visited my home back then, as they do now, and gradually the organization took me under its wings, to guide me towards a better life.

Whenever people ask me what I want to do in life when I grow up, I tell them I wish to become a teacher. I believe the job of a teacher is very noble. A teacher works very hard every day to ensure that her students study properly, and grow up to be successful men and women. A teacher also has a lot of responsibility on her shoulders because the future of many children is dependent on her.

When I grow up I want to live in a house with a garden. Since I am very fond of dogs, I would also like to keep a little dog. I would equip my house with all the necessary electronics like television and air-conditioner.

I know that for my dreams to come true, I have to be a dedicated student. This is why I like to study. A lot of students think study is a burden. For me, it is a way for me to make my dreams come true.

## Re-enrolment of drop-out RLA girls in govt. school

—Rukhsana Khatoon/ as dictated to Manish Swarnkar

**Bihar:** My name is Rukhsana Khatoon. I am aged 13 and also known as Kajal by my family members. My residence falls in the red light district, Uttari Rampur (Bihar).

My mother Munni Khatoon is a homemaker and father Md. Sultan runs a small pan shop. I have two sisters and two brothers. I am the second among my three sisters. My father runs the family from the income generated from pan shop.

None in my family member got the opportunity to study. My elder brother and sister are not in schools. And withstanding all the problems, my father felt the need to admit me in Madarsa in Urdu medium. I feel blessed. But, by fourth standard, I had to drop out due to some financial problem.

There is no school educated person in my family. Still, my father admitted me in Madarsa for Urdu studying. I have been reading Urdu since childhood. I never got a chance to study in a Hindi or English medium school. My elder brother and sister did not go to schools and my younger sister and brother read in Primary Harijan School. These days I attend a Hindi medium school.

Four months ago, Manish Bhaiya, Sanju Di and Fatima Di visited my home, asking me to join the Kishori Mandal girls' group. However, I couldn't join during that time.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Jobs for Apne Aap boys in private companies

—Dipankar Ray/ as dictated to Sangeeta

**Delhi:** Hello, my name is Dipankar Ray. I live near Khidderpore area with my grandmother. I am 21-year-old, doing my baccalaureate degree in Commerce from Shyamaprasad College, located in Hazra, Kolkata.

When I was about 6-year-old, I along with my mother and five other siblings were abandoned by our father. We were too young to understand that our father was leaving us to feed on our own. He never tried to contact us and I never saw him again in my life.

We were financially and emotionally broken. My grandparents brought us up. I asked my mother the reason behind my father's disappearance. He found another woman

and got married to her, she said. Our life did not stop there. With some difficulty, we were admitted to the government school and since then I never thought of looking back.

Presently, my mother and my siblings have shifted to Delhi, where she works as a clerk in a public school for the past 13-years. But, I still live with my grandmother in Kolkata. She used to pay for my education and other needs from the pension money she received.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Ruchira Gupta delivers a keynote address at NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day/ as transcribed by Alison

Namaste, I am really pleased to be here to represent the voices of victims and survivors of prostitution from my own NGO Apne Aap Women Worldwide in India and also voices of fellow sisters across the world. According to the United Nations office for drugs and crime, there are more than 27 million people enslaved as I speak right now- for child labor, domestic servitude, and primarily in prostitution. Most of them are women and girls. My own journey to address this issue began as a journalist. I was walking through the villages of Nepal, when I came across rows of villages which didn't have any girls from age 15 to 45 and I was really surprised and I began to ask the men who were sitting drinking tea, playing carom, sitting in the sun- where the women were. And the answer was shocking. Because they said: Don't you know, they are in Bombay. And as a good journalist, I began to look for the answer about how so many people could be in Bombay. These villages were at least two hours away from the highway, and 1400 kilometers away from Bombay. To my horror, I found that the sex trade existed in my lifetime, in my generation, in my country.

Then these procurers would take these girls to the big cities of Kathmandu, Biratnagar, clustered together, 3 or 4 girls, and then hand them over to another set of agents.

For three or four days, beat them, starve them, and tell them that they were of no value to their families. And once the spirits were completely subjugated of these girls, they would hand them over to another set of transporters who would take these girls on buses, on trains to the brothels of Bombay, Kolkata, Delhi.

And behind that, after the pimps, the pimps would hand over these little girls to the brothel keepers and the brothel managers and there these girls were locked up for the next 5 years. Raped repeatedly by 8 or 10 customers every night who would pay sometimes 10 dollars and sometimes 30 or 40 cents over the years. And then, over a period of time, when these girls were no longer commercially viable, when they turn into their twenties and their bodies had been used up and completely broken, and they were disease ridden, they'd had a few children, they were dependent on drugs and alcohol to block out this experience of repeated rape.

So as a good journalist, the first thing I decided to do was, I decided to tell their story. And I ended up making "The Selling of Innocents" which then went on to win an Emmy but making the documentary was a life-changing experience for me.

And I call them the last girls, they were the last girls. So they said they wanted to be protected, even when

they ended up in the brothels of Bombay when they ran away, the police would simply send them back home saying this is your home, you are devalued because you have been sexually abused or used. And the other thing justice meant to them was accountability. They wanted those who had brokered away their dreams, and they used these very words, that those who have brokered away our dreams- those who have bought us and sold us, they wanted them to be punished. They wanted the pimps, they wanted the brothel keepers, they want the financiers, the landlords punished. But they also wanted the clients punished. And I asked them, we started to create an organization which would fulfill their dreams. So the first thing we did was that we rented a room in the red light area in a disused municipal school and hired a teacher. And we started preparing the kids for school. As soon as we started enrolling the kids for school, we got pushed back from school principals and parents, who said we do not want daughter of prostitutes in our school. So the women organized as a group just as they had protected me inside the brothels. And they went out with Apne Aap staff to the school principals, cried and begged and said- our children need a future too. And that was their first self empowerment group. So the next time they went to a police station to file a case against a trafficker- the police would have to register the complaint, the judge would have to listen to them, the politician would have to listen to their demands. And in the next twelve years, now Apne Aap is fourteen years old, what slowly began to happen was that the women found a voice, but they also learned the purpose of collective strengths and circles, just as all of you in this room know.

Gandhiji was once asked by a British reporter "Mr. Gandhi, why do you always travel third class?" And he answered "Because there is no fourth class." So similarly, I appeal to UN Women to think about how can we travel the third class when developing policies and agendas because we are all walking this path together and we have equal passions. And with those words, I want all of you to shut your eyes. And imagine the last girl. In Hindi, I call her the Antkanya. She is poor, she's female, she's a teenager, she's a 13 year old in a brothel who's raped by 8 or 10 customers every night. And how can we create laws and policies which she can access, which she can understand. Remember when we create something like a child line, she doesn't have a phone. When we write laws in English, she doesn't know how to access them, she doesn't understand English, it's a hodgepodge of places. Think about her and let us think about how as the consultation proceeds, we can include the last girl.

## Diary of a Social Worker

*Laxmi*

**Mumbai:** My name is Laxmi. I am a native of Lalbaug, Mumbai. I have completed my graduation in Information Technology (BSC-IT).

I got married to a man, who had his ancestral house and business in Kamathipura. Hence, after marriage I shifted my base here. In the initial stage it was daunting. The unwelcome and intense stare from people around was uncomfortable. After all, then it was one of the major redlight district in India-- a hub of pimps, traffickers, wicked customer and many unwilling women in prostitution.

**There were endless problems. Only the name “Kamathipura” was enough for that disdainful look. Also, most of the time leading to rejection of children from getting admission in reputed schools. In time, we have learnt not to mention Kamathipura in the address log, instead we use name of the nearby places, such as Nagpada.**

These days, however, I do not fear that much.

I live here. I have two sons born in this area, aged 9 and aged 12. Both are studying. To be able to bring them up properly, I chose to get myself a job of my qualification. Apne Aap gave me the opportunity to utilise my skills. I am with the organisation as a computer teacher since five years.

We have a centre in the redlight area. Apne Aap started few courses for the children and women, such as tailoring, computer course and para professional course.

For the Computer course, children of the women in the red light area who have passed or failed Staff Selection Commission (SSC) also came to learn com-

puter. With them the poor children of Kamathipura were also taught.

With the help of the organisation, we teach English, basic computer skills, retail and management, also holds personality development courses. The duration of the course is of three months and after that we provide placement opportunities (job) for them.

Earlier, many women who were into prostitution have exited it and joined different developmental sector and work as outreach worker. There are day and night care centres for their children in the area. It includes educating them.

**Since the time, I started teaching in this centres, my heart was broken many a times. It was painful to see my students getting into the trade again. I see them drunk, high on drugs, and standing on the pavements, just like other women in prostitution. And those women, who are already in prostitution, join us for the class and drop out in midterm. Some are beaten up, with bruises and scars of blade cut all over their body. They are shy and hesitate to befriend with women from other locality.**

A lot has changed in Kamathipura. I wish the brothels vanish entirely. I wish we don't have to hide our residential address. I wish girls and women can walk freely out here. I wish I can be free of the thought that the environment around here would not influence my sons to become someone whom I may not like or respect.

### 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

## My First Day at Apne Aap

—Rajeshri Mandloi

**Delhi:** My name is Rajeshri. I am a native of Madhya Pradesh. Being a grass-root practitioner, I have been exposed with various kinds of societal problems, where the basic human rights get violated. I feel that the worst form of that are Human Trafficking and the sexual exploitation.

I have joined Apne Aap Women Worldwide on the first week of April and I feel proud to be associated with this organisation. I have been always keen to work for the uplift of vulnerable women from different sections, not only financially but socially and mentally too.

On the first day, I was assigned some research work on de-notified communities/tribes. Before going into the research, I was advised to go through Apne Aap welcome kit that is meant to orient new joinees and interns. I learnt about the Ten Asset approach of AAWW. I could see the confidence level of the beneficiaries, which is a tremendous achievement. That day, I met little girls, who come from Najafgarh to the head office. They are so loving and full of zeal to carve their niche.

I also learnt about Nat community, one of the de-notified communities from Bihar.

I appreciate Apne Aap vision to transform girls and women's lives by providing them quality education and

giving them opportunity of realizing their full potentials. In this way, it is creating social capital connecting them through various platforms.

Also, I watched "The Selling of Innocents" made by Ruchira Gupta. I could see only the clips in Youtube but it really shook me. I was disturbed after watching the movie. I also got time to see "Ek Ye Bhi Parampara", a documentary made by the girls. It was about the practise of inter-generational prostitution in certain places. Now, I feel that every civil society organization, government and policy makers must have the agenda to eradicate this social evil.

**In my previous jobs, I worked with bonded labourers, educationally deprived and migrant workers as well as with their families in order to give them a dignified livelihood. Even there, atrocities were prevalent, but here you see people being sold. And it is extremely cruel to sell human being.**

End of the day, I was surrounded by some spontaneous thoughts and unpleasant feeling which got along with me till some time. I empathise with those women, who are forced to be in prostitution, when they grow old they do not have any social and financial security to sustain their lives with dignity.

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

Click a selfie and share it with us on the Facebook Page 'Cool Men Don't Buy Sex' <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cool-Men-Dont-Buy-Sex/624526271001934> with #CoolMenDontBuySex #Selfie #ApneAap.

The Cool Men Don't Buy Sex Campaign is a call to end demand for sex trafficking which highlights the role that men play in fostering the sex industry.



Apne Aap's "Cool Men Don't Buy Sex" campaign was born to draw attention to the demand side of sex trafficking - the traffickers, pimps, and purchasers of sex. Apne Aap advocates for the criminalization of these individuals – they are responsible for maintaining sexual slavery and continue to exploit women and girls every day in India.

## Adhar Card for KGBV girls

—*Naz Khatun/ as translated by Mohd Kalam*

**Bihar:** My name is Naz Khatun. I am 13-year- old and I study in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya ( Simraha) . My father passed away when I was little. I was raised by my maternal grandmother, who enrolled me in this school. I am in standard VII.

With the assistance of Apne Aap, I received bank account with ATM facility. Apne Aap deposits my stipend in it. To have a bank account in my name is a big thing in our community. Especially there is hardly any girl of my age who holds an account in our community. They are not issued government identity cards until aged 18.

When I first heard from Praveen bhaiya that we will be given an Aadhar card, I did not know the use of it. Being curious, I asked my class teacher about it and how it is different from other identity cards. My teacher told Aadhar card is a special one. Aadhar is a unique identification card, issued to the citizens of India.

I, along with 76 other girls was taken to the ADHAR office in Forbesganj, which is 18 KM away from our hostel located in Simraha.

Our hostel warden Noorani Aapa had submitted the details of all the girls studying in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, in a big cover letter with application form in it. Like most of the girls here, I don't have birth certificate and residence proof as an evidence to show our identity that we are the citizen of

India. The school administration, however, noted down our age and accepted the residence address as well.

Finally, we were called in one after another. Our eyes were scanned. Finger prints were taken. They sought some information from us, which was again displayed in the screen. I was handed over a paper in the end.

In the evening I went to my village. It was onset of vacation. There, I was happy to share my experience with my friends and family. **They were surprised and couldn't believe that I got the chance to apply for an Aadhar card. My folks believed that it was because I was staying in the hostel that I got the opportunity, else we do not have either age or residence proof.**

I am thrilled to receive a Unique Identification card. It is the first for the all the girls staying in the KGBV.

**To have a bank account in my name is a big thing in our community. Especially there is hardly any girl of my age who holds an account in our community.**

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[contact@apneaap.org](mailto:contact@apneaap.org)**



## The World Outside

— Soni Kumari/ as dictated to Praveen

**Bihar:** My name is Soni Kumari and I am 13-year-old. I am from the village Lahsanganj, Halhalia Panchayat near Forbesganj. I stay in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Simraha, which is supported by Apne Aap Women Worldwide since 2012.

I stay at the hostel and right now, I am studying in class VIII in the Middle School, Simraha. My father's name is Kripanand Pashwan and my mother's name is Guddi Devi. On March 30, 2015, I, with my all classmates, went on an educational tour to Deoghar, Jharkhand with our teacher Noorani Khaton, cook Bibi Sabira and peon Sanjay Ray. It was organized by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Araria (Bihar). A bus was arranged by the school administration for the trip.

We all started our journey at 7 am in the morning for Deoghar. First we reached Purnea and had a light breakfast. After about half an hour, we started our journey and reached Bhagalpur at about 11.30 am. There we saw the holy river Ganga and crossed the river through the famous Vikram Shila Setu. We saw many dolphins in the river. **Our teacher told us that dolphin are on the verge of extinction and the Government has banned hunting of dolphins, announcing all the areas in and around river Ganga as a dolphin protected area.** After crossing Bhagalpur, we reached

Sultanganj. There we took a dip in the holy river Ganga. It was rejuvenating. We again started our journey for Deoghar. The children enjoyed and played games like antakshari, songs and jokes during the journey.

We reached Deoghar at 5pm in the evening. I was very tired after the long journey and then we went to the Hotel to stay for the night. There were five rooms booked for us by the school authorities. We took our dinner and slept off early.

It was a day full of learning and enjoyment. Next day, we visited the famous Lord Shiva temple. We saw many Statues of Gods and Goddess there. There was a river called Shiv Ganga where we saw colourful fishes

We visited many temples that day. Such as, Nawlakha Mandir, Nandan Pahar, Tapovan, Satsang Bhawan, Amansinghai.

**After an eventful day, we left for our hostel in the early afternoon and reached the next day. It was a memorable journey. I am really thankful to Apne Aap and the school administration for this unforgettable trip.**

### *Continued from page 1*

And, when I enrolled myself in Kishori Mandal group. I found that almost all the girls were from our community. I was quite excited and enthusiastic to participate in the regular activities, be it educational or otherwise.

These days I am very regular in Kishori Mandal. And some days when Manish bhaiya asks me to write something I get confused. I don't know how to write that well. But, I have conveyed my concern to Sanju Di.

Initially, they decided to put me in bridge course for three months at Rampur Center. Later, they admitted me in a government-run school. After that I worked really hard to secure admission in a regular school. In the completion of three months, I was admitted in class VII at middle school, Karbala Dhatta.

We are on holiday now. But I am waiting for the school to re-open as soon as possible. I am excited with the thought of continuing my study.

Being the only privileged one to get proper education in my family makes me immensely proud. But, I want to study and reach the success at that level, where I

can help out people in my village and elsewhere to be able to get access to education. Education should not be a privilege. It is the right of every child.

Also, to those people, who believe that the women in our locality are only involved in prostitution, I want to prove wrong to them. There are whole lot of us, who are willing to study and if given a chance, we can become someone someday.

**This is only the beginning. After I clear my matriculation exam, I shall request Ruchira Di to help with my admission in Patna College for higher studies. In the generations to come, I want to set an example as a role model in my family and my village.**

**Also, to those people, who believe that the women in our locality are only involved in prostitution, I want to prove wrong to them. There are whole lots of us, who are willing to study and if given a chance, we can become someone someday.**

**Apne Aap girls and activists in a women's empowerment campaign****—Sunaina / as dictated to Sanjay Verma**

**Delhi:** My name is Sunaina and I am 13-year-old. I belong to a Perna community, from Dharampura Najafgarh. I am associated with Apne Aap organisation from last few years. I am studying in class 5<sup>th</sup> in MCD primary school. Now I have started going to Apne Aap Head office for our evening classes.

I like the work that Apne aap does for the girls and women. We get the chance to participate in different activities organised by didi. For instance, participating in a candle light march in December last year, and when some people come to visit us in our locality and the head office. It was to remember Jyoti Singh. She was brutally gang-raped and murdered that month, that year.

I have been told I am a very bright and active girl. I do not like to sit around doing nothing. So, when ever Apne Aap organises an event I voluntarily jump in. Moreover, I like the issues they take up. For instances, standing up for the right of the Last girl, which includes girls and women of de-notified tribes. My community is considered as a de-notified tribes. My people still does not have access to all the

Recently, we participated in a women's empowerment campaign on International Women's Day at Select City walk mall. It was amazing experience. Over there, we had installed sculptures of five armless female bodies made of human hair. We invited many persons who were in mall to cut a strand of hair and keep it in their pocket to remember and be aware of the countless armless women and girls in India. We believe that each time they think of her they will arm her with their thoughts.

We also gave a dance performance in a public place.

***Continued from page 1***

I joined Apne Aap in 2012 to learn computer. I was advised by a friend that there is an NGO in our locality, who provides different vocational trainings. Sangeeta didi was a great help. I learned a lot from her in the computer class. I also got the opportunities to participate in different activities of Apne Aap like rally, workshop, Cool Men Don't Buy Sex Campaign, drawing and sports competition etc. Also, I received training from "Tata Consultancy Service" through Apne Aap. In years, now I feel like a member of this organisation.

I have been able to establish a unique bond between me and the organization. After associating with it, realization dawned on me that there are people out there, who are going through a worse condition than ours, and who are in dire need for help.

The feeling was overwhelming. People praised our choice of song and applauded for our performance.

**I am a little girl now. But, I try my best to motivate people around me to fight against any kind of gender injustice against them.**

I am thankful to Apne Aap. It gave me the required platform and boosted my self-confidence. Also, it encouraged me to stand for my and others rights. I don't want to be stopped from doing anything because I am a girl. I can and I will continue to live life as every righteous person does.

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In March' 2015, I got a job in PSA (Port Singapore authority), designated as Computer Operator.

It was the happiest day in my life. I am overjoyed for getting this job and also with the thought that now I can look after my grandmother and other family members.

**No matter, where I reach in my life, there will always be a healthy relationship with Apne Aap teachers. I am conveying my regards to all.**

**It was the happiest day in my life. I am overjoyed for getting this job and also with the thought that now I can look after my grandmother and other family mem-**



## Poems

### “LAU”

Main diya ki lau jaisi,  
Jo Kabhi tej to kabhi dheemi  
Who lau jo hawa tej chali  
Par mujhe bujha na saki.

Main lau us prakar,  
Jo sansar ko prakasit karu  
aur andhere ko dur karu.

**Name**– Keya  
**Area**: Sonagachi Kolkata)

### ASHA

Main choti si nanhi chiriya,  
Jo naya sa sapna le kar urti hu.  
Har roz mere liye  
ek naya sabera hoti hain,  
Aur har din ek nayi Pariksha deti hu.

Har roj main neyi uran ke saath,  
Asman ko chune ki  
koshis karti hu  
Din ke ant main, nayi subha ki  
asha karti hu.

Nayi sabere ke saath,  
chote chote pankho ko feilakar ur jati hu.

**Name**– Keya  
**Area**: Sonagachi Kolkata)



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## Red Light Despatch

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*Organizing communities to end sex trafficking—every woman free, every child in school*