



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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

MEENA DIDI TAUGHT US HOW THE GROUP SHOULD BE FORMED

By Janki Devi

Palasi, Forbesgunge, Bihar: We are illiterate. So earlier we always used to think what can we do since we are illiterate? But ever since we have started the Women's Group, we have a sense of unity and purpose. We now think that we have a future together. We want to do something, to move forward. We now know that we are not helpless or weak. We have started relying on ourselves. Forming the group has given us this strength.

Earlier if we needed any money, we had to borrow from the moneylender and pay Rs 10 as interest per Rs 100 taken as loan. Now, we have to pay only Rs 3 as interest and that too to our own group. We can now ask for a loan of Rs 4000 or Rs 5000 as a loan from our group in case of any emergency or if any one falls sick.

Right now we do manual labour and earn daily wages. But we plan to start our own business as a group. Any business must have three aspects: loans must be available, it must give you profit and there must be savings. Yes, savings is the most important so that you can repay the loan.

Initially we had no idea about what a group is, but then Meena didi came and she started talking to us that this is the way the group should be formed, these are the benefits if the

WE FEEL BOLDER NOW

By Biwi Maisoon

Khawaspur, Bihar: Last year in January, when the tribunal took place in Khawaspur, we talked about our plight, how the local criminals from the Kolhaiya caste threaten us, gang rape us and abduct our brothers. After the tribunal the criminals we complained against, have killed one person as punishment because we spoke out. They have threatened us that if we allow any Apne Aap person to enter the community they will kill us and them also.

Apne Aap decided to ignore the threat and decided it would start its community centre anyway. Initially we were very scared and avoided all of the Apne Aap meetings but kept sending our children to the Apne Aap School. Why should the children be deprived of education?

The torture and extortion has stopped to some extent, though some of it continues. We feel bolder now. We have decided that we will continue to speak up and go anywhere we are asked to. We will even meet the CM to stop the torture. We have listened to the Kolhaiya threats all our lives and that did not stop their atrocities towards us. We can't carry on with this violence any longer. We want to live in peace and get out of this hell.

group is formed and we got convinced and formed the group.

We never had any trouble in forming a group. It enhanced our courage. We are not afraid of anyone now. It also gives you strength. We have also started relying on ourselves. Earlier we never used to get out of the house but now whenever needed, we can go anywhere.

We know women are always exploited and this must be stopped. If this happens with one of our sisters today, it can happen to thousands tomorrow. It's not that it can never happen to us.

All the male members of the household go out of the village to other cities and states. You can hardly find any male member now in this village. They all have gone to work. This is why we want to start the business. If there is work in our own village, the men can stay in the village? They don't have to go out.

We have been thinking earlier that we, would form one group but now you see we are 60 members in this area only, so will form more groups...we must congregate.

THE TEACHERS USED TO BEAT US

By Salman Nat

Uttari Rampur, Bihar: I have been studying in Apne Aap School since last three years. Before that my father has got me admitted in Harijan School. But the teachers used to beat us on the slightest pretext and even call us names. They used to tell us that we would not be able to do anything in life but become pimps of our sisters. I felt I could not study there.

Then I started going to the Apne Aap school in our area. This year, my teachers there told me that you have learnt enough, you should go to a proper school now. They talked to my parents also and initially they did not want me to leave our settlement but then they agreed finally. Ravi sir took me to the Forbesganj Boys' Middle school. The Principal took my test and got me admitted in class V. I go to school every day and then come back to the Apne Aap school to finish my homework because I know as soon as I will go home, I will not be able to study because of the quarrels in house.

YOU ARE FORCED TO DO ANYTHING

By Mehrunnesa Nat

Forbesgunge, Bihar: We were very poor. My parents fell into a trap and sold me in prostitution when I was 14 years old. The money went to my parents, I don't know how much. Then they passed away. I decided to leave and got married at 17 to a very poor boy, but by God's will, now even he is no more.

My husband was coming from the toilet, he was crossing the house of a neighbor where there was an altercation going on. He went to inquire about it and someone stabbed him dead. This was last year on 2 February. He died on 4 February in the hospital. I had to borrow Rs 85,000 for his treatment. I had to mortgage the house and am still under heavy debt.

I run a paan shop. Three of my sons are going to school. It's hard to pay for their education. It

takes Rs 25 to 50,000 Rupees to start a business. I hardly make Rs 10 a day. I am 26 years old now. Without help, I will be forced to go back into prostitution. With help, I can raise my children.

I used to live in Khawaspur. I am from the Nat community. People look down on us and we get no government benefits. Mainstream society swears at us, they're prostitutes, why do they need any help? I don't want to remember that past but keep having to recall it. They forced me into prostitution. Now even if you open a shop, you are hungry, you are forced to do anything, even selling your daughter's honor to people who come and use her.

CUSTOMERS TREAT US VERY BADLY

By Kajal Kanjar

Alwar, Rajasthan: I am 16 years old. I stay in Girwaas. I studied until Class Five but I was sent to Bombay after that so I could not study any more. When we are being taught, the teachers don't discriminate against us. The master was very nice to us. We have land. Our mother looks after all money matters.

Now, I stay in a brothel in Paras road in Bombay. My passport is being made right now. I'm going to go to Dubai. I earn about Rs Three thousand a day in Bombay. In Dubai it depends on the girl how much she can earn. In Bombay you earn Rs one lakh in three months. In Bombay the police don't come at all to extort money.

Here the police arrest the girls. The customers treat us very badly. For abortions we have to go to private doctors. I hardly go to the main village but people look down on us just as they look down on Kanjars.

DID YOU KNOW?

CHILD PROSTITUTION HAS INCREASED BY 17 TIMES IN 11 YEARS IN INDIA

A 1991 survey sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board in six metropolitan cities in India (India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development, Report of the Committee on Prostitution, Child Prostitution and Children of Prostitutes and Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children, 1998), estimated there to be 70,000 to 100,000 children in prostitution in India.¹

Praveen Patkar and Preeti Patkar in their Report on Rapid Assessment of Situation of Trafficking and the Children Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking: A Study of Six Districts of Maharashtra, (Mumbai, India, United Nations Children's Fund, 2001), estimates 300,000 to 500,000 children in prostitution in India.²

A study by K.K. Mukherjee on *Girls/Women in Prostitution in India* for the Department of Women and Child Development took the averages of the extent of prostitution from various published and unpublished studies across the country by various sources which included, government officials, including police and State AIDS Prevention Societies, academic institutions, voluntary organizations, organizations connected with prostitutes in the States and territories and available documents on prostitution and concluded that the number of girls/women in prostitution stands at 2,827,534. These figures for the year 2002 when compared to the 1997 report of National Commission of Women, which put the figures at 2,000,000, an increase of about 50% can be seen since.³

I HAVE RENTED OUT MY WOMB IN BOMBAY

By Pinki Bediya

Bharatpur, Rajasthan: I have one child. I am also pregnant. My child went to school but came back half way. I have been in prostitution for the last 3 years. When I was put into prostitution I was 19. The first customer gave a huge amount and a gift.

The police arrest customers but only when they are pressured. Then there is a raid. Sometimes they also arrest girls. Sometimes I earn Rs 1000. Sometimes, I have two meals a day and at other times I just eat something from outside. I have no bank account.

I fall sick all the time. I had a cough and fever last month and I went to the Malkhera hospital. My child was also delivered there. They gave me a tetanus injection.

I have rented out my womb in Bombay. Therefore I am here for the delivery. After the delivery I will go back. My ancestors are from Dhanagazi. First they were nomads and beggars. Now prostitution is their main livelihood.

¹ Responding to Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in South Asia, New Delhi, 10-11 October 2007, report of the UN.GIFT regional event for South Asia (Vienna,2008).

² Responding to Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in South Asia, New Delhi, 10-11 October 2007, report of the UN.GIFT regional event for South Asia (Vienna,2008).

³ Mukherjee K. K. & Mukherjee S., *Girls/Women in Prostitution in India- A national study.*

A Times of India article published on 14th December 2009, quoted CBI statistics estimating there to be 3,000,000 prostitutes in India of which 40% are children. So there are close to 1,200,000 children in prostitution. The same article also quotes figures by Madhukar Gupta the Home Secretary on human trafficking in India which are estimated to be at least 100,000,000 of which 90% is intra-country.^{4 5}

From the above studies an increase of about 17 times is seen in child prostitution over 11 years while and the number of women in prostitution has increased by about 50%.

WE NEED GOVERNMENT PROTECTION

By Sheela Bibi

Forbesgunge, Bihar: We were decent people but by bad luck I had to come here and had to force my daughter into prostitution. I had an operation for an appendix and it went wrong. I have another surgery due. We got into health bondage. I'm a helpless woman. Anyone in a drunken state can come into our home and abuse us, not allowing us to live in peace.

My daughter Rukhsana, now 13, has been in prostitution 3 to 4 years. My whole family of four people is dependent on my daughter, including her brothers aged 19 and 20.

I was widowed and went into prostitution. What was the worst was that 10-20 men came any time, we could never decide what time, some would give money and some would take sex for free. They lived next to the pond over there. They were connected to organized criminal groups. We were terrorized by these people. We are all stuck. We all want to leave. We can't digest our food. We need government protection. We can't live otherwise. If a police camp is posted here it would be very good. It would give us protection. The criminals barge in any time and they don't even pay.

FACTS IN FOCUS

OVERARCHING CONCERN IS FOR THE HEALTH OF THE CUSTOMER

Although at first glance, the public health attention to risk of HIV infection includes the prostituted woman herself; on closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the overarching concern is for the health of the customer: to decrease his exposure to disease. In spite of extensive documentation that HIV is overwhelmingly transmitted via male-to-female vaginal and anal intercourse, not vice versa, one of the misogynist myths about prostitution is that *she* is a vector of disease, that she is ultimately the source of contamination of the 'good wife' through the husband's weak moment. The focus on HIV in the prostitution literature is a variant of this prejudice against prostituted women.

These notions appear to form the basis of the HIV-focused research, with the ultimate goal of making prostitution either governmentally regulated, or decriminalized (Lancet, 1996). Many studies emphasized the education of prostituted women regarding condom and safe needle use (Fajans et al., 1995; Pyett et al., 1996; Wong et al., 1994).

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

⁴ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Legalize-prostitution-Then-why-not-graft/articleshow/5334754.cms>

⁵ http://www.cbi.gov.in/newsarticles/pressclips/dec_2009/pm_20091214.pdf

THE WORLD OUTSIDE

DURING THE RIOT OF 1992 OUR HOUSE IN KHAWASPUR WAS ALSO BURNT

By Saukat Nat.

Khawaspur, Bihar: I was born into Nat community. I was born in a place called Jogabani. My father was a butcher and thus he used to sustain his family. In the year 1988, we lost our homestead as people told us that the land doesn't belong to us and they evicted us from Jogabani. Our home was very close to the Nepal border. We became homeless.

The relatives who used to stay at Khawaspur came to my father and consoled him and told that why lament over this? Come to Khawaspur and we all relatives will stay together. We were quite young at that time. We shifted to Khawaspur, built a new house and started living there.

My father was out of a job and soon both of my parents started working as agricultural laborers. They used to earn hardly around rupees forty or fifty. We were a family of twelve-eight children and my parents and grandparents. It was very difficult to sustain.

Then during the riot of 1992 our house in Khawaspur was also burnt. We were shattered. We had nothing to eat. We didn't get any relief from the govt. Our lives have been shattered. After that, my sisters and my family got into this mess. We saw all our sisters getting into this mess one by one in front of our own eyes.

Then the village head told us that if we do not stop entertaining by nine pm, they would fine us Rs. 10,000. We agreed. After a couple of days, some people came and knocked at the door. We told them that the village head had asked us to close the door by nine.

These people abducted my father when he was going for Namaaz. We cried and yelled but no one came to our rescue. In the morning someone told us to register a case against them but others warned us not to do so. They said that we would not be able to prove anything against them. So we sent someone to the kidnappers to free my father. We were told that we would have to pay ransom to get him freed. We had no option but to pay it and get him freed.

MY DREAM

I WOULD LIKE TO GET INTO POLITICS

By Mira Nat

Alwar, Rajasthan: Every two or three days the Nat girls are beaten by the clients. The police don't do anything. They just take money and leave them. Sometimes the police are also involved in beating the girls. They also arrest us. The police do not behave properly with us. If there is a fight with a client, he keeps beating the girl until some male from the tribe intervenes. The client troubles the girl whenever he has sex with her. The customers are from various backgrounds. It's never written on their foreheads from where they're coming. I have never been arrested but a few times the police have arrested the

women as well as the customers. But then they take some money from both of them and let them go.

There are no elaborate rituals for girls entering prostitution but the customer who pays the maximum amount of money gets the virgin girl. Right from the first customer our lives deteriorate day by day.

I have fallen sick a number of times. Twice I was operated upon for appendix and bladder problems. I had to pay 25,000 for my operations.

I do not go the village. The villagers come here. I am ready to get married. There should be somebody willing to marry me. I would like to do some other work than this. If we want to marry we have to marry within our community. We spent

about Rs 15 to 20 lakhs getting a boy married.

If we do not stand outside the house, customers will not see us. The customers do not come here to get married. They just come here to fulfill their lustful desires. Some of them treat us well but some of them are violent.

I would like to get into politics. I wish that I and the people of my community would be given more respect. If I am in politics I will try to improve the status of my people. I want the support of every member of the society.

We are forced into this either in our villages or in Bombay. The people in the family take the decision about whether a girl should enter prostitution. There is a room near the house where

the customers come. I earn 500 to 1000 a day. I keep all the money with my mother. The girls are brought into this when they are 17 or 18. Since we do not have any other profession, the community forces the daughter to get into this profession.

Some of the women have left this profession after their children have grown up. They started a paan shop or a tea stall. I have no idea about the government schemes. I have never taken any loan. I do not have a BPL card. We have an Anganwadi center but the small children cannot go so far. Nobody from our community is working there. I have not heard anything about NAREGA. I will try that my children are not forced into the profession.

MY LEGS START ACHING WHEN I HAVE TO STAND FOR VERY LONG

By Mira Bediya

Bharatpur, Rajasthan: Our settlement is far from the village. How can it be close to any Kajo (an outsider who is not from the tribe) settlement? I hardly go to the main village. People from there come to us for votes during elections. Outside people look at us in a bad way. They don't say anything to our face but they think the whole community is bad.

Men don't have to suffer what we have to suffer in prostitution. I knew I would never get married according to my choice. So what else could I do? I was 15 when I was put into prostitution. There is no rite of passage. But for the first night my parents were given a good amount of money. The brothels are home-based.

Sometimes my legs start aching when I have to stand for very long so then I sit down. But if I don't stand, then how will I earn even two rupees? The police keep arresting women and customers. Customers are of all kinds. Nobody is left. Customers are interested in sex and we are interested in money. Most girls are put into prostitution when they are 14 or 15 by their own families. This has been done for generations.

APNE AAP IN ACTION**ATTEMPT TO REGISTER FIR AGAINST PIMPING GUARDIANS**

To

The Superintendent of Police

Araria, Bihar

Date: 15th April 2010

Subject: Complaint for registration of case under Sec. 372 of the Indian Penal Code against Mohammed Gyanul, Seema Khatoon, Manoj Yadav, Mohammed Tayyab, Mohammed Shamshir, Mohammed Younus, Mohamed Khwaja, Mohammed Tayyab, who are selling 10-14yr old girls for prostitution

Apne Aap Women Worldwide is a national anti trafficking organisation working to prevent sex trafficking by building the capacity of girls, women and children in red-light areas and slums to get access to education, livelihoods other than prostitution, and safe housing by organizing themselves in small co-operatives. Apne Aap means self help in Hindi.

Apne Aap in collaboration with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of Government of Bihar has been running and managing a girls hostel –Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalay, Near Customs office, Block Forbesgunge, Araria District, Bihar -857318. The school housed a total of 100 girls of which 50 girls are from the marginalized communities of Nats. Parents of girls of 23 came to us to saying that they would want to continue with the education of these girls at home and we consented thinking that it is for the betterment of the future of these girls.

However, when we did a follow up, we found that there was a possibility that these girls could be sold into prostitution and the founder Ms. Ruchira Gupta brought it to the attention of the Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumarji on 10th April 2010.

An action team comprising of Mr. Mahendra Paswan –Director, Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana (Patna) , Ms. Rehmat Fatima-State Coordinator Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Patna) ; Mr. Mohammed Ahsar-District Superintendent of Education (Araria), Mr. Vinod Kumar-Project Coordinator Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Araria) was constituted and sent in by Shri Nitish Kumarji following which 12 girls have returned to the hostel for continuing their education.

However, the following girls have already been prostituted and we have reason to believe that some may be sold. The details are as below:

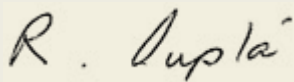
1. Kushboo -10yrs d/o Mohammed Gyanul residing at Khawaspur, ward-3, Forbesganj has been illegally married under the Child Marriage Act
2. Chanda-11yrs old d/o Mohammed Gyanul residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj has been illegally married under the Child Marriage Act
3. Sangeeta-12yrs d/o Seema Khatoon residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj
4. Karishma-13yrs d/o Manoj Yadav residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj
5. Tanuja Khatoon- 13yrs d/o Mohammed Shamshir residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj
6. Phutkuri Khatoon-14yrs d/o Mohammed Younus residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj
7. Shabana Khatoon-14yrs d/o Mohamed Khwaja residing at Khawaspur, ward-3, Forbesganj has been illegally married under the Child Marriage Act
8. Neesa -16yrs d/o Mohammed Tayyab residing at Uttari Rampur, ward- 3, Forbesganj

The parents/legal guardians have admitted before the Action Team and staff of Apne Aap Women Worldwide that they have already sold some of these girls into prostitution.

Some of these parents are trying to hide behind the argument that they have married off these girls, which is a blatant lie and illegal *ab initio* as no one has the right to marry 12yrs old girls. We have good reason to believe that these girls have been sold, or disposed of with the intent that they shall be used for the purpose of prostitution and for illicit intercourse and other unlawful purposes.

We would like you to take immediate action for the safety of these girls, rescue and recover them from the clutches of their traffickers and take any other appropriate action as you deem fit.

Yours truly



Ruchira Gupta
Founder –President

Apne Aap Women Worldwide
www.apneaap.org

SOME BASTARD CUSTOMERS TRY TO PINCH AND TWIST

By Rima Bediya

Kalsara, Alwar, Rajasthan: Sometimes the customers are violent. The police arrest both the customers and the girls. Women have to really struggle and run around to get justice. I was seventeen when I was put into prostitution. Actually our parents don't want us to get married. They want to put us into prostitution. I

was put into prostitution in my village. The brothel is the house. There is no special rite of passage when you're put into prostitution but more money is paid by the first customer because we are virgins. Most customers come from Alwar and from nearby villages. The police arrested me but the brothel manager freed me. One girl had

fallen in love and she got married through a kazi but came back to Kalsara two years later. Some bastard customers try to pinch and twist. I earn about Rs 300-500 a day.

I have no idea about any government scheme. I don't have a BPL card. Sometimes I think I should get married.

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