



RED LIGHT DESPATCH

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RELEASING SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM DELHI,
KOLKATA, AND FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

My Dreams

Sakina

Dharampura: I am not from a very well to do family. I have three daughters and three sons. My older son is already married and has one daughter and one son. Our daily life is very miserable.

In my childhood days I was thinking about an educated and dignified life, but the miserable condition of family ruined my dreams.

Human beings are the slaves of time and nature and have to act according to that, so we did also. However, in some part of my heart I thought about education and providing economic support to my family and my husband by doing a government jobs, but I am not capable of doing that.

My life has already been spoilt, but I never want this to happen to my children. They should get the best opportunity to lead a healthy life. The nasty caste system and the patriarchal system does not hesitate to exploit the helpless, and thus it is very difficult to lead a healthy life under these circumstances.

In my dark life I got a hope of light from Apne Aap who really provided hands to support me and other Perna women and children who are the victims of human desire. By interacting with the members of ApneAap, I got information about the activities hosted though Apne Aap, such as education, vocational training and information on government schemes. Another fact is that it is necessary to tell about our lives within our community, though now I am thinking of life beyond the community because of Apne Aap. Now my daughter Karina is also learning from the Apne Aap centre.

In the initial meeting, I was also questioning why I should listen to them. However, when I understood the benefit I joined with Apne Aap and now I am in Jwala group. I usually attended the group meetings and learned my to sign my name from Apne Aap members. However, due to my workload, I am unable to visit the centre often. However, I try and send my children regularly. Now I think about all that I could not do in my life, and that my children will fulfill their dreams by the help of Apne Aap. Thus, I would like to thank Apne Aap for the hearty support to us.

Taking the Streets: Protesting Child Marriage, Trafficking & Sexual Violence

Team Bihar

Forbesganj: The 15th December, 2013 was a memorable day for all of us 350 odd women and adolescent girls from the Red Light Area and its adjacent Mela Ground and FCI Chowk took the streets to protest against child marriage, trafficking and sexual violence. Adolescent girls from Babuan (Narpatganj block) also joined in this protest march. This protest march was planned as our response to incidents of trafficking and re-trafficking of a 16-year old girl in the red light area of Forbesganj and a gang rape of an 8-year old girl. The girl who was trafficked and re-trafficked was on both occasion rescued by Apne Aap Women Worldwide and is currently staying at her house and we are also fighting the case of the raped survivor, by moving the court appealing for her free treatment. But we felt the need to come out openly and protest. There were long discussions at our Kishori Mandals and Mahila Mandals on what we could do about the issues. It was then collectively decided that we would have a protest

meeting in front of the Basti Vikas Kendra (located within the red light area) followed by a protest rally across Uttasi Rampur that would focus on the rights violation of a child in cases of child marriage, trafficking and sexual violence. The focus of the protest remained the violation of the four basic rights that AAWW has been working on since its inception – a girl's right to education, safe space, livelihood and legal protection. We began with a welcome song performed by girls of our Kishori Mandals. This was followed by a welcome speech explaining the significance of starting the movement against child marriage, trafficking and sexual violence from this area. Chief Guest Col. Ajit Dutt, reiterated the need for such program and reminded all present of the completion of an year of the Delhi Rape Case (16th Dec) that had stirred such a protest. It was then the girls of the Kishori Mandals who put forward their views on how their rights get violated when they are forced into child marriage, subsequently trafficked and forced

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Diary of an Applique Trainer

Seema

The day I started working with Apne Aap Women Worldwide, I was told that I have to work with the Perna community of Dharampura and Prem Nagar. My job requires me to visit the community and interact with the people, and in the process encourage them to associate them with the organization through various vocational activities.

I began visiting the community and introduce myself as a staff member of Apne Aap and started building rapport with the community people. I showed them the samples of the applique work and patchwork. The samples received good responses from the women and the girls, which in turn would generate their interest in learning the same technique. After sparking their interest, I enrolled the women and girls by having

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Volunteer Journal
Running for Apne Aap:
From New York to Delhi
Sonia Taneja

New Delhi: Held in cities around the world, marathon foot races have become ubiquitous, receiving widespread media attention and the involvement of thousands of runners. Races in Manila, San Francisco, and Barcelona have some of the highest records, boasting over 100,000 participants. In its 43rd year, the New York City Marathon had over 50,000 runners in 2013, while the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, a young race currently in its 9th year, is expected to have over 30,000 in 2013.

While marathons are an understandable calling for seasoned athletes, the “general population” has also demonstrated a strong commitment to running these races. News and public interest platforms are replete with stories like “Youngest teen runs marathons on every continent” and “First-timers win marathons in Savannah.” So

where do we – the “first-timers” and the “normal people” so to speak – fit into these expressions of professional athleticism?

While physical challenge and goal-oriented training is the highlight for many, the charity component of marathons has also given people the agency to fight for causes they believe in, inspiring them to run alongside their professional counterparts. When the platform is a foot race, one does not have to be a wealthy donor, physician, or research professional to help fund cancer research; one does not have to be a teacher, social worker, or policy maker to contribute to an improved education system.

Running in solidarity is also inherent in a marathon – running for a certain issue allows individuals from every walk of life to join together and be a part of a greater movement. For this reason, Apne Aap Women Worldwide has registered as a participating NGO in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon. Almost one year after the brutal gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh Pandey that occurred on December 16th 2012, Apne Aap is running in solidarity against the

exploitation of women across India.

We hope that the Apne Aap team, dressed in “Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex” gear, will inspire other marathon participants and supporters to join our fight against sexual slavery in India. Apne Aap Women Worldwide’s “Cool Men Don’t Buy Sex” campaign was initially bred to draw attention to the demand side of sexual trafficking – the traffickers, pimps, and purchasers of sex. Through this campaign, Apne Aap continues to advocate for the criminalization of these individuals – they are responsible for maintaining the “rape trade” and continue to exploit women and girls every day.

As this is the first year that Apne Aap is participating in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, the Apne Aap team will be comprised of our own “first timers” – our supporters in New Delhi that register with our NGO, the entire staff of Apne Aap Women Worldwide, and most importantly, the girl survivors associated with our community center

Sonia is an intern with AAWW. She is a graduate of Yale University, and is researching on health issues of women in prostitution.

Rising for Justice: Meeting Eve Ensler
Md Kalam

New Delhi: On 13th December 2013, I had the opportunity to meet Eve Ensler and other activists associated with many other movements. I wouldn’t have had this opportunity if I weren’t associated with Apne Aap. When I celebrated 1 Billion rising at our Bihar office with the women and girls of our Self-Empowerment Group, I didn’t know Eve Ensler and knew only her name. But on 13th December, I met her and also got a chance to speak about my struggle and also the struggle of others in my community.

I was very nervous about whether I’d be able to make my points very clear. But Tinku di and Ruchira di gave me the courage and motivation to speak and they told me that I should speak the truth of what my struggle was. So I spoke about how it was to be born in

Nat community and how I fought against the society which won’t accept us and the fight against my own community and the system which exists in it.

Eve heard my whole story very carefully. I was speaking in Hindi and Ruchira di was translating for her but Eve was watching me very carefully and she was trying to pick the emotions on my face. Fatima also spoke about her struggle and how she became part of the anti-trafficking movement. After we finished speaking, she hugged us and congratulated us for the work we do in the field. She said that she sees us as heroes. She also said that there was lot of resistance from different forces during our struggle but we managed to overcome all of those and it wasn’t easy but we still became successful in many

ways.

She extended her support to us and said that she would like to congratulate us, giving an award of \$10,000 each to both of us. I didn’t have words to express my gratitude and the happiness.

One thing I can say is that I will never forget her, for she is a strong personality. When a news reporter asked her to pose for a picture, she insisted that we pose with her saying that she came for us to Apne Aap and so the news report should have a picture of three of us. I was taken away by her words and would always cherish the memory of this event.

Md. Kalam is from Rampur red-light area of Forbesganj Bihar. He hails from the Nat community, who were labeled a Criminal Tribe by the British. He works with AAWW as the Legal Officer at Bihar.

Op/Ed

Why sexuality laws need change : Ruchira Gupta

Some minds continue to remain colonized. They consider some of our own citizens inferior just because our colonizers did.

When Justices G.S. Singhvi and S.J. Mukhopadaya of the Supreme Court passed a ruling upholding Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code that defines homosexuality as an "unnatural offence" with a ten-year jail term as punishment, it seemed that, they too were suffering from a colonial hangover.

After all, Section 377 was enacted one hundred and fifty three years ago by the British colonial government, to control the sexuality of its Indian subjects. On the one hand, the British set up licensed brothels for the sale of disease-free women to British soldiers and clerks under the Contagious Diseases Act and the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), on the other hand, they banned freely chosen same-sex relationships under Section 377 of the I.P.C.

India has been independent for sixty-six years. In pre-British and pre-Mughal India, homosexuality was not considered a sin or a crime. The binary boxes of "masculine" or "feminine," were more fluid, evidenced by the birth of the God Ayappa, born of Har (Shiva) and Hari (Vishnu) or the pre-Vedic god/dess, Ardhanareshwara, who is both male and female. Many of our languages, like Bengali, don't even have "he" or "she".

Yet there has been an unwillingness to change laws around sex and sexuality. As feminists already know, the reluctance of our MPs to prioritize the deletion of Section 377 is based on a basic patriarchal bias against any sexual expression that can't end in conception. There is much similarity among the challenges of LGBT and Queer people and all women - from health care to harassment to discrimination in the workplace.

The impact of criminalization has been far reaching. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and inter-sex individuals, are pushed underground, subject to social stigma, police harassment and sexual assault with no recourse to justice.

Without access to socially accepted dating platforms, they end up isolated, abused and exploited. A few end up purchasing sex, while many end up being sold, bought or secretly assaulted. Their experiences very similar to that of prostituted women and girls, who are raped and beaten repeatedly every night, but fear going to the police against their pimps and customers. These women and girls are defined as criminals under Section 8 of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act. The same Act has very light fines against those who buy, sell or rape them. Both groups also experience an alienation caused by cutting off a natural and instinctive empathy with the very person whom they share sex and a personal space with.

Neither of these groups is exploiting or abusing anyone. But crime is often defined by a society that codifies laws because of prevalent social mores or the needs of the ruling classes. Often, the coded law, influences us into deeming what is "bad" or "criminal" or what is "good" or "commendable". Over a period of time, we begin to accept the definitions as "natural".

Law after law made by the British, for us subjects, has swayed our beliefs of right and wrong, ethical and unethical and legal and illegal. For instance nomadic groups labeled as Criminals Tribes by the British continue to remain cut off from education and livelihoods simply because they are still stigmatized and marginalized as thieves and cheats. ITPA leads us to believe that prostitutes are "bad" people to be kept off the streets, pimps and brothel keepers are service providers, rapists

and customers are "natural", prostitution is "inevitable" and that poor and low-caste women should be sexually available for upper class and upper caste men.

Years of similar conditioning is probably what influenced the two Supreme Court Judges into writing into their judgment that "those who indulge in carnal intercourse in the ordinary course and those who indulge in carnal intercourse against the order of nature constitute different classes; and the people falling in the latter category cannot claim that Section 377 suffers from the vice of arbitrariness and irrational classification".

We know today that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and inter-sex people, are living out real, authentic lives, contributing productively and authentically. Yet access to justice continues to elude them. Their homosexuality is confused with pedophilia even though it is freely chosen sex between adults.

They are now bravely speaking up about their sexual orientation and gender and asking not to be punished for either. Their lives should be celebrated, not questioned. They are part of the full human continuum of identity and expression

Today society defines crime as exploitation and abuse of one person or group by another, not as transgressions against any religion or ruling classes. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Preamble of our own Constitution along with Article 21, all promise the Right to Life and Liberty, including the right to protection of one's dignity, autonomy and privacy. Section 377 IPC denies a person's dignity and criminalizes his or her core identity solely on account of his or her sexuality and thus violates Article 21 of the Constitution.

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Awareness and Issuing of Health Cards through Apne Aap

Sita Devi

Munshigunj: When I was only 15 years old, one woman lured me for a good job and subsequently sold me in the Munshigunge Red light area where the brothel keeper tortured me every day and forced me to take five to six customers per night. Subsequently, with the assistance of one lady in the area, I got one rented room and since then I am here.

After that I heard about Apne Aap, an NGO working for the prostituted women. They provide legal awareness, livelihood options outside of prostitution and also assist with admitting the children of red light area in schools. I joined Apne Aap to protect myself from the violence of the brothel keeper as well as other helpless women or girls who were sold here forcefully. After talking with the members of Apne Aap we formed a group namely Dhobi and I am one of the active member of that group.

We regularly participate in different group meetings, including legal sessions. One of our legal session Fazul da told us about Rashtriya Shasta Bima Yojana which was launched by the Central government. It is supported by state government to the BPL families to get medical treatment free of cost up to Rs. 30,000/ (Thirty thousand).

He also told us that the target group of this scheme beneficiary are largely illiterate and vulnerable sections of the society like us. Hence, the government initiated this scheme without any papers as the community people of red light area generally don't have any government documents. Some of the women are trafficked from different areas and they do not have any documents regarding their identity, although they can avail this benefit of this scheme in anywhere in India by

showing this card to the enlisted hospitals or nursing homes which is a great opportunity for the people like us.

After getting information from Apne Aap, I along with my family members went to the Khidderpore KMC Health Centre where this card was prepared and distributed by the government officials. They also provided us a small book that has a list of the hospitals and nursing homes where RSBY facility is available. On that day I along with other community members from Munshigunge Red light area received this RSBY card and we are very thankful to Apne Aap as they informed us about this great government scheme which is truly helpful for us.

Sita Devi resides in Munshigunge with her family members.

Carnival at New Alipore

Bibha Jha

Kolkata: A Christmas carnival was organized by group of six girls from the J.D. Birla Institute in collaboration with Apne Aap Women Worldwide on Thanksgiving Day. It was organized at New Alipore for the purpose of safeguarding the lives of children residing around red light area. Around twenty children from Apne Aap Women Worldwide and members of Mita self-empowerment group participated in the carnival.

The programme was accompanied by various activities like a dance competition, games, prizes, and a gift exchange. The members of Mita group were given a stall to display and sell the products that were made by us.

We decorated the table with different products of Income Generation Program (IGP) like jute marketing bags, silk fashion bags, coin pouch, cardholders and many other products.

There were different kind of buyers like students, teachers, visitors etc. Some of them bought the products and also praised us for them when they came to know that those products were made by the members of Mita group.

All the children participants and members of Apne Aap were given coupons by which they could participate in different games such as ludo, memory taste, dance competition, musical chair, statue, and also buy.

The food stall was also organized by the students of Institute of J.D. Birla.

Members of Mita and children of Apne Aap enjoyed the whole programme. Selling IGP products and playing games with the children in event of carnival for the whole day was a very good experience.

Bibha Jha is a member of the self empowerment group, Mita Group. She came to ApneAap 5 years ago and has learned stitching, embroidery, and machine work. She earns money to support her family by preparing and selling different IGP products. She feels very good to have had the opportunity to join Apne Aap.

Computer Class

Sapna

Dharampura: One day while I was working in my shop, I met with one of the member of Apne Aap Women Worldwide and she told me about the organization and how they are working with the Perna women and girls.

When I heard about their hard work and dedication, I was inspired and thought that I should also help them in their great work. The women and girls are really socially neglected and also treated badly by their own family. As if this were not enough for them, they are being exploited physically by the men who consider themselves as the socially dignified.

As a woman, I realized that I should contribute a little bit for these women and girls and decided to join ApneAap. For the first time I visited the Perna community on 28th January 2014 to mobilize the girls to join computer class

and I got wonderful response.

In the next day of my job I found that a lot of students came to the class with good spirit of learning. In the initial meeting they all introduce themselves in front of other and I also introduced myself. In the first meeting I also found that some children were not aware of the computer. They felt that this is not for them, only for the children of rich families, but when they heard that they will get free computer course from Apne Aap centre they got excited and promised to come regularly to the class.

In this way my journey with Apne Aap started to educate the girls on computer. After a few classes I found that the girls were more interested in practical than theory, so I try to teach them as per their interest.

Now I feel that this is a fantastic job to

strengthen the educational background of these girls, a lack of which may have forced them into prostitution. I hope by this they will get an alternative in their life, not only will they get economic empowerment but also they will be able to understand what is wrong and what is right and also raise their voice against injustice.

Now as a part of Apne Aap I feel that those who want to be highly educated, their dream may come true through Apne Aap, which is always there to help them fulfill their dream. I hope they will come out of this situation and lead a healthy life as they wish.

Sapna is a computer teacher in Apne-Aap. She has graduated with a Diploma in Computer Application, and has been teaching computer skills professionally for five years.

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them fill out admission forms, and then I helped them form groups among themselves, and eventually start taking classes together.

The number of students increased as time passed by. I used to visit the community as a member of ApneAap and my students used to participate in different activities and programs conducted by the organization in the community. We try to convince the community people that the organization is there for their good and it will help

them to live their lives with dignity and respect. By encouraging the community people this way, we kept them loyal to the group. I developed and follow a syllabus to guide me through the teaching process.

The girls and women are very much interested in learning the applique and patch work. I have 55 students enrolled in my class, 5 of them have also participated in the United Art Fair, which is largest Art fair of its kind in Asia. The girls did a wonderful job by portraying the miseries of their community on a tent with an aim to highlight that such kind of community persists in the national capital where women are still

facing the trauma of a flesh trade. The women need to be uplifted and should be provided with a happy life, which is why ApneAap Women Worldwide has taken this initiative.

Seema has been teaching applique in the ApneAap community center for the past 3 years. She is also doing her B.Sc and has a certificate from the Indian Government as an applique trainer. She loves working with ApneAap and the people of the Perna community.

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The World Outside

Jantar Mantar

Vikesh

Dharampura: I have two children and my husband is always sick and so I am the one who goes out and earns for the family. It's very difficult for me to manage the basic household needs and hence I never get a chance to do something for myself and go out or anything.

I joined the Mahila Mandal of Apne Aap almost a year back and I have been going for various programmes since then, some near my house in the centre and some outside. Recently I went to Jantar Mantar, where I have been earlier to protest last year when a girl was raped by multiple men in order to demand punishment for

them. But this time, I went and saw a "natak" by some artists who are also from caste like us. They did a performance on the discrimination against such castes. It was very moving and I had tears in my eyes. I could feel that as I face such humiliation many a times being a woman from Perna community. Policemen treat us like some unwanted creatures. Throughout the performance I couldn't take my eyes off it.

Apart from that I also felt very happy when a girl from my community, Rita, narrated a poem she had written. I was feeling proud of her. Also Pushpa towards the end of the programme

went and took the mike and started saying slogans which we repeated on women's rights. I felt good about myself when I participate in such events because there were people from foreign countries and other artists and I got a chance to go there.

We also visited Bangla Sahib, which is a Gurudwara in Delhi which was also a great experience. When I come back home, I share these experiences with my children and I could see that they were very proud of me.

Vikesh is a 32-year old woman who lives in Perna Basti in Dharampura.

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protest. It was then the girls of the Kishori Mandals who put forward their views on how their rights get violated when they are forced into child marriage, subsequently trafficked and forced into prostitution. This was followed by a play by the girls of Kishori Mandals where they depicted how child marriage led to trafficking and its impact on a girl child. The play was greatly applauded by the more than 400 people who had gathered by then in solidarity.

We take the Streets...

The call for justice that came out of the play culminated in a huge rally – 150 girls from Kishori Mandal and 200 women from the Mahila Mandals walking the streets to cover a stretch of almost 4 kilometers through the busy market roads of Forbesganj. The girls of the Kishori Mandals led the slogans shouting '*manavta ki yehi pukar/roko nari atyachar*', '*kadam kranti ki nahi rukenge/betiya aur nahi bikenge*', '*bal bibah bandh karo*', '*yon shoshon bandh karo*', '*beti mange siksha ki adhikar*' It was a great moment of protest when mothers joined their daughters in shouting the slogans and distributing pamphlets (these pamphlets were published for the occasion to generate awareness on the issues) to the shop-owners, passerby people and in the cars that were waiting for the rally to cross. Women and girls started the rally from the ground adjacent to the BVK, crossed the red light area and the neighbouring Mela Ground and FCI Chowk, to walk through the Sadar Road, Patel Chowk and finally end at the AAWW office at Jagdish Mill Campus, near the bus stand. During the rally some of our members from the Mahila Mandal also engaged in conversation with different on-lookers who had different queries and even with those who snapped at the roads being blocked for a brief while because of the rally. With

placards in hand, shouting slogans, the women and girls of the red light area and its adjacent Mela ground were perhaps successful in sending across a message to the administration and also to traffickers/rapists that with each such incident they would increase their fight for justice even more.

It was also a great encouragement for all of us that the parents, grandparents and relatives of the 8-year old girl who was gang-raped also joined the rally – taking the streets for justice. The rally ended in the AAWW office premises with the pledge of further intensified protest movements till we could achieve our goals and vision of a world where no girl would be forced into child marriage, where no girl will be bought and sold for prostitution and where every girl's right to education and safety would be fulfilled.

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Diary of a Social Worker

Alok Kumar Panda

New Delhi: From my childhood I have seen the struggle of my elder sister, who fought with poverty and misery to feed a seven member family. By the passage of time, the situation has changed and from that I have developed a feminist ideology. With that thought, I always wanted to contribute towards the feminist movement.

With a hope to take part in the process of change, I joined social work and was very excited when I got an opportunity to join the feminist organization, ApneAap Women Worldwide. My journey started with ApneAap on July 1st 2013.

My first visit to Dharampura exposed me to a different world where women are considered to be commodities, and patriarchy is practiced in the worst form. All this made me silent for a while. As I continued to visit again and again, I found that the women and children of this community also dream of living their lives where no one restricts them from freedom, and they are as free as a bird.

To provide a better understanding of the situation, I would like to cite an example of a girl named Preeti, who is from the Perna community in Dharampura. She is 15 years old and dropped

out of school in the 6th class, though she wanted to further study. When I interacted with her, I saw that she was interested in continuing her studies, but parental constraints prevented her. This was not enough for the family; they decided to marry her against her wishes and before she was of marriageable age. The poor girl couldn't say no; she has no power over her rights.

She was searching for a friend or guide who would help her out of such situation, and so she decided on ApneAap as her instructor to learn about fighting back against her situation and family. She connected herself with ApneAap, but her little effort became futile due to a recent backlash in the community. So again she was forced to do what her parent wanted her to do. This poor girl neither has right over her speech nor over her body. Preeti isn't the only victim of family and her society. There are also other girls and women like Preeti who are being exploited inside the four walls of a room, who never protest this naked truth of torture and exploitation by their counterpart.

As a part of a feminist organization I would like to contribute my effort and dedication for the benefit of this last

girl in the society and also hope the people will understand the approach of ApneAap for these marginalized girls. I would also like to mention that we should focus more upon the economic empowerment as well as political development so that they will lead their own movement to end violence.

From that example I would like to say even if in the 21st century, women are not safe and free. In a country like India, women have still not received freedom after six decades of independence. This situation is an example of a girl who was born to be exploited and dominated by the men and her family. For this serious cause in our society, not only women and feminist organizations should fight but also the men and government agencies and especially the political leaders should raise their voice against this injustice in the society. Then there will be no inequality in our society and women will get equal opportunity like men.

Alok Kumar Panda has a MSW from Visva-bharati University and works with AAWW at the Dharampura and Prem Nagar centers

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It's time that the law was deleted, but through a proper debate in Parliament over the nature of sex and sexual exploitation, not merely through a short cut in Court. The Bench made a valid point when it said: "While parting with the case, we would like to make it clear that this court has merely pronounced on the correctness of the view taken by Delhi High Court on the constitutionality of Section 377 IPC and found that the said section does not suffer from any constitutional infirmity."

We hold that Section 377 does not suffer from... unconstitutionality and the declaration made by the Division Bench of the High Court is legally unsustainable." It, clearly and rightly added: "Notwithstanding this verdict, the competent legislature shall be free to consider the desirability and propriety of deleting Section 377 from the statute book or amend it as per the suggestion made by Attorney-General G.E. Vahanvati."

A review of the Supreme Court judgment is necessary for interim protection of LGBTQI folks. However, in their search for justice, gay rights activists must not allow courts to encroach on the legislature's domain. If we press for the judiciary to overstep its boundaries and take over the work of the elected legislature we will pave the way for fascism, with not even the ability to file PILs or protest on the streets. The last thing any minority group would want is the subversion of our democracy.

The SC judgment has yanked all members of all political parties out of their comfort zone and rightly put the ball in the court of the legislature. Now it is up to LGBTQI activists to dialogue with political parties of all hues, pressing for the deletion of Section 377. In the great democratic tradition of India, they will have to come out on the streets, build alliances, court arrest, write in the media, hold debates and rallies- in short mobilize a national movement that will put pressure on their elected representatives to change the laws. The means we choose will dictate the end we get.

-Babita Roy

Class: XI, Age: 18 years

Kolkata

- Sangita Sharma

Class: XI, Age: 18 years

Kolkata



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