



ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES
TO END SEX TRAFFICKING

RED LIGHT DESPATCH

DELHI | KOLKATA | FORBESGANJ (BIHAR)

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my dreams

I am member of Sonar Bangla SEG Group. My group started its work of cooking & supplying food to the offices nearby of Khidderpore areas. My dream is to turn this group initiative into a successful group business.

After joining to Sonar Bangla, I have felt that I got some friends with whom I can share my sorrow & happiness. I was never good at cooking, but after joining this group & working together I developed my skill of cooking, I learnt some new recipes also. During the cooking we all divide our work among us. I wish to continue this group activity & want to turn this initiative in a successful group business like – food center or restaurant. I shared this dream with my members also and they were very happy.

I belong to a poor family. But the amount that I used to earn from Munshigunj is not enough. Whereas this food business has a good market & we all together can run this properly. I also discussed with my group members about my dream they all also agreed with me. This small cooking activity showed me a path to grow up in life with dignity. I think if we all start to invest our time to build a food center we can do this & we already started to plan about this. To achieve this as a group we started to do group saving in bank account to build up our business starting cost.

I want be known as an entrepreneur in future & I think this group business can give me that identity.

Dolly Das ●

Sonar Bangla Canteen Group, Munshigunj

apne aap and indian school of women's study

Discuss The Criminal Law Amendment (2013)

Apne Aap Women Worldwide committed to work towards the empowerment of girls and women organized a round table discussion in association with Indian School of Women's Study and Development (ISWSD).

The agenda of the meeting(s) was aimed at charting out recommendations and concerns that have followed as a result of the of the recent UN reports that advocate the removal of punishment for pimping, brothel-keeping and advertising the sale of sex.

Participating in the discussion **Ruchira Gupta, Founder President Apne Aap Women Worldwide** said, "At the policy level, we should be looking at the **Third Way** where the stress lies on shifting the blame from the victim and to impose heavy penalty on buyers and finally criminalization of this entire nexus of johns and pimps. The same should be applied to understand the perspective of de-notified tribes."

Malini Bhattacharya, President, AIDWA, moderating the discussion shared, "Article 370 is in place but it doesn't contain all the provisions against trafficking that should be in place. Also there are certain provisions in The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, (ITPA), 1956 like rescue, rehabilitation and procedural things that should be included. We need to do this exercise for a new comprehensive anti-trafficking law."

The session concluded with the audience discussing various measures in which design for change can be implemented at grassroots level towards economic development, social and political development, and legal development.

Tinku Khanna ●



The World Outside

Seema Kumari , Vocational Trainer

Apne Aap works with the Perna community in Dharampura and PremNagar. Our centre works on livelihood like stitching and applique. Training on I.G.P has also started recently for the girls and women.

The organization is now providing trainings on applique and I.G.P.(sewing the future) so that the next generation could come out of the flesh trade. There are a lot of medical problems in this flesh trade like many women complain of severe headache and stomachache. After a period of 6 months they could be associated with the textile ministry of the Government of India that would help with the better functioning of the work. To do this kind of work the Government gives loans to the poor families at a very low interest.

If the beneficiaries underwent the training well then they can also work as a trainer themselves in the future. I, myself has underwent the training by the textile ministry and now am a trainer with Apne Aap for 3 years now. If I had not done the training then this would have not been possible for me. I am lucky to be working with the organization and the community which has provided me with a learning experience.

Volunteer Journal

Tatum Street

When we arrived at the Dharampura centre, One Billion Rising was already being vocally celebrated. The entire building was abuzz with excitement and unrestrainable energy.

Some of the girls performed a dance they'd been rehearsing for OBR - a sequence that had been uploaded on YouTube for all involved in the movement to learn for a Flash Mob that would take place in central Delhi that evening.

We then took to the streets of Dharampura, where the young women and girls would perform a street play at various points of

their neighborhood addressing the theme of women's empowerment.

The attention of on-lookers was gripped when the girls began their performance, as the girls theatrically acting out a story portraying the need for girls' education and problems they face in their communities.

The girls' performance blocked cars from passing through the street, attracting more attention from community members. When the cars beeped the girls yelled louder. When young men jeered and ridiculed they performed more obstinately. In their own community, these girls powerfully demonstrated how they are rising for justice.

This is an excerpt from the diary of the women's rights activists Ruchira Gupta and Gloria Steinem kept of their travels throughout India as they met the country's young feminists, writers and thought leaders.

Day One: Beginning this last week of my month in India — and the last day of the Kolkata Literary Meet, where my joint book with Ruchira Gupta, "As if Women Matter," has brought us — she takes me to Seagull, her favorite bookstore in this city where she grew up.

Up a daunting spiral staircase are two more book-lined rooms, with chairs for leisurely reading and a table for tea. We have the luck to find a friend, Gayatri Spivak, whose writing and teaching have helped to decolonize the humanities, whether questioning Europe-centered or male-centered assumptions.

While having tea, I also meet a woman who heads a local group working against domestic violence in Kolkata, and this makes us residents of the same psychic country. After all, if I added up all the Americans killed in 9/11 as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — and then added up all the American women murdered by their husbands or boyfriends *since* 9/11 — there would be more lost lives in the second group than in the first...

I call these Supremacy Crimes because they're much more about control and

"masculinity" than about self-defense or any rational gain. We also might include "honor killings," plus senseless shootings of strangers...

Day Two: Ruchira and I join Jessica Neuwirth and the five American activists who have been supporting the grass-roots anti-sex-trafficking work of Apne Aap and came to see it firsthand. Jessica's Donor Direct Action website had linked them through stories, but that's still different from meeting people where they live.

It's the virtue of these woman-led, girl-led days — a bridge pioneered by Jennifer and Peter Buffett of the NoVo Foundation — that they create two-way empathy, not just one-way support, but it's sometimes more painful for new arrivals than for the women and girls who have now begun to see a way out. As my friend Bonnie Schaefer says as we are about to leave,

"The good news is: We can't forget. And the bad news is: We can't forget."

The New York Times
A Temporary End to a Tour of the Indian Women's Movement by Gloria Steinem
March 20, 2014, 2:52 AM
[Read the entire article](#)

one billion rising

14th of February marked the One Billion Rising event in Kolkata where Apne Aap members from Munshigunge and Topsisia came forward to spread the message of rising for justice.

The event began with an 'Open Mic Session', which was held at the Khidderopore office of Apne Aap, where the women from Topsisia spoke about their problem of housing due to their eviction and the women from Munshigunj spoke about their need for an alternate livelihood and legal protection as well as education for their children.

This was followed by a huge rally where the members of Apne Aap from Munshigunge and Topsisia, along with all the staff of Apne Aap in Kolkata, wanted to spread the message of the importance of rising for justice to the people. The women walked all the way from the centre to the Watgunge Police station.

At the end of this, they submitted a petition to the local police station, which was a 7 point charter of demands regarding their right to education, right to fight against oppression, etc.

Anuja Bhojnagarwala ●

My name is Heemani. I am from Prerna community of Prem Nagar and my group's name is TAMANNA. I am here for getting the benefits like computer class, education and stitching and tailoring and also participate in other programs

I had also participated in the one billion rising celebration on 14th February 2014, which was a different experience for me. Especially in that program I learned dance on '*jaggo re jaggodillijago*' and also taught others the same. I felt excitement when I was being told to teach others and it was the happiest moment of my life, which came true because of *Apne Aap Women Worldwide*.

We performed really well in a street play, which our community saw and I enjoyed it and grasped also. I believe that this kind of program will be effective for the girls and community.

I would like to give a message to my friends and my parents and my villagers that they should think about it, feel it and raise their voice against injustice against women and girls.

Heemani ●



One Billion Rising

We celebrated 14th February as a part of the global celebration of the One Billion Rising in our Bihar office at Forbesganj. We celebrated it as Red Light Area Rising and it was attended by different women and girls from our community. We together celebrated our years of struggle together to dismantle the system of sex trafficking and prostitution.

In the voice of Fatema, our Community Mobiliser who has been associated with Apne Aap since the beginning; she has also been awarded by Eve Ensler, the founder of the V-Day program -

...I was very happy to be a part of this program. We celebrated it last year too. On this day, all women from the community expressed their thoughts and opinions in front of all present. We all spoke about how we fought for our freedom and dignity and meaningful this freedom is for us. Participating in this program, I felt proud of myself. It is important that we spread the message of our struggle across to different people and that people become aware of the fact that women also have the right to live with dignity & respect...

Fatima continues... Apne Aap believes in equality of women and men works for the rights of the last girl while fighting against sex trafficking. Our fight is to ensure that girls and women will never be forced into prostitution and exploited...

Ishrat Khatoon, a woman from the Nat Community, who is also a part of alternative livelihood program of Apne Aap speaks -

...I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this event. I feel proud that I with help of my friends and other women in the groups am able to fight and resist violence faced by women and girls in our community. I had never thought that there would be such a day in my life when I will be able to dance without any hesitation with other women from the community and team members of Apne Aap. I was very happy to dance together with women and girls so openly...we have never had so much fun and freedom in our lives...

Raju Kumar ●

field realities from denotified tribes

New Delhi, 10th February, 2014:- Apne Aap Women Worldwide, a registered charitable trust in India committed to work towards the empowerment of girls and women today organized its seventh session of 'Terrace Talks' at their head-office at India International Centre, New Delhi. The talk was chaired by Swati Chakraborty, Head-Monitoring & Evaluation at Apne Aap Women Worldwide. The discussion revolved around 'Field realities from denotified tribes'.

The ongoing study on the educational status of de-notified Tribes by Apne Aap Women Worldwide in the states of Delhi, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal clearly shows that these communities are still treated as outsiders by society and discriminated and victimized by authorities. Suspicion and traditional stereotyping (as criminal) is still a standard yardstick with which these communities are looked at. This is due to both conventional belief as well as ignorance about them among the authorities as well as the general public.

The session further delved around the findings of the study, where Swati and the team found that young girls were seen as a [financial](#) resource and often kept as security with brothel owners for a specified time period against a specified amount in case of familial dispute. It threw light on the

incidents when poor families have been forced to use their daughters more than once. There are endless stories of extreme exploitation of young girls and women.

Elucidating on the denotified tribes study, Swati Chakraborty highlighted how across the states, despite being extremely poor and low on all human resources indices, this study found that de-notified communities are not entitled to the various government schemes meant for the poor and backward communities. There is abject poverty among them across states. Police find it convenient to hold these communities responsible for any crimes both in rural and urban areas. Speaking at the session, she said

“ It is very easy to show through statistics how many children are not attending school, but the reason why they are not going or what are the factors that are pushing them away can only be known by having a field experience and by conducting studies of this kind ”

Florence Carson ●



Diary of a Social Worker Dichen Tshering Lepcha

Prostitution – a word with a whole different world blend into it. But does rest of the world really care?

I am a graduate in social work and hence aware of the various developmental issues hovering upon the society, yet I recall very few people talking about women in prostitution. If I'm not mistaken then it was not before Apne Aap Women Worldwide, which came for campus recruitment in our Department of Social Work, Visva-Bharati that I started to surf for the issue and the severity of the same.

How many of us can imagine ourselves being put into the flesh trade by our parents or in-laws? Most of us have not even heard of the term 'Inter-generational prostitution' before. But it's the way of life for many, an accepted norm of their society.

I've witnessed many changes in the past 8 months that I have worked with Apne Aap; changes that might not be visible initially, like in our target community, i.e. "Perna" in Premnagar, who have worked to accept an odyssey of change. Change to accept new faces in their community, change in creating interest among themselves in various activities like tailoring, computer class and a desire to change their lives.

Media is a powerful tool for spreading awareness, but a community member in Prem Nagar once asked, "If you do wrong things, will you blabber about it before the world?" True, we the general mass would see it as a collateral damage but for the community it's like auctioning their dignity. Only education among the perna community could bridge this gap.

Prostitution, I have read somewhere is a multi-billion dollar industry and I wish to quote Nelson Mandela in our fight to end it.

“It always seems impossible until it's done”
Nelson Mandela

बचपन के यादें सुहानी...

माँ कि गोद और पापा के कंधें याद आते हैं,
वोह बचपन के लम्हें रोते हुए सो जाना,
खुद से बातें करते हुए कही जाना,
वोह माँ का आवाज़ लगाना,
अपने हाथों से खाना खिलाना |
क्या वोह बचपन के दिन थे,
सुहाने क्यूँ लगते हैं वोह आज,
बेगाने मंज़िलो को ढूँढते हम कहा खो गए,
यार इतने बड़े हम क्योँ हो गए |

- करीना

अग्नि, किशोरी मंडल

बेटी हूँ मैं बेटी

बेटी हूँ मैं बेटी, मैं तारा बनूँगी,
गगन पे चमके चंदा, मैं धरती पे चमकूँगी,
पढ़ूँगी, लिखूँगी, मैं म्हणत करूँगी,
अपने पाओं पे चलकर मैं दुनिया को देखूँगी,
दुनिया को देखूँगी मैं दुनिया को समझूँगी,
अपने घर में माँ को इज़ज़त से देखूँगी,
अपे छोटे भाई को समझाउंगी,
ज़िम्मेदार हूँ मैं, ज़िम्मेदार बनूँगी |

- ज्योति

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किशोरी मंडल

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