



# apni kahani



## About AAWC

An introduction to the organisation. Last year's highlights, and next year's goals and needs

## Flying high

One of our Sparrows writes in with her memories of starting a new life at AAWC.



## Dal Khichdi

A collage with recent pictures events, art works, writings and other creative talents

## Rahsan Juman

As the centre's counsellor, she shares moments that have touched and challenged ...



## A brief introduction to Apne Aap Women's Collective

**Target:** Underprivileged women from Falkland Road, Kamathipura, especially those in prostitution

- Set up in 1998, AAWC is a Non Government Organisation (NGO) with no other branches
- To work with women in brothel based prostitution and their children



**We are NOT about changing the world. We believe in making a DIFFERENCE in the lives of the marginalised, abandoned, destitute, exploited, when they have little to keep their body and soul together**

### OBJECTIVES

- **Women:** Be a source of solace, care and support
- **Sparrows:** Equip the daughters of women in prostitution, with skills and support to pursue a dignified life. This is to ensure that none of them have to turn to prostitution
- **Children:** Get them used to an educational environment at the formative age, to decrease drop out rates

Since we began nine years ago, we have had nearly 700 women, 165 girls and 85 children

**Highs and lows of 2007-2008**

4 Sparrows got married. 2 of them are daughters of Devadasis.

5 girls were selected for SHE Creates - a film making workshop. Conducted by Mammovies, a Mumbai-based social enterprise of young filmmakers

8 girls were placed in jobs, while 9 others in boardings

Out of 38 girls, 12 secured ranks and the rest showed remarkable improvement. One stood first in the whole school.

5 women beneficiaries passed away in 2006 & 4 so far in '07.. Main cause was AIDS - TB.

**Looking forward to 2007 - 2008**

3 Sparrows have been attending advanced beautician training by an NGO Seva Sadan and are promised jobs in affluent parlours.

Started Social Marketing with Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust (HLFPPT)..

In the first phase, we will be setting up 6 Condom-Vending Machines (CVMs) on Falkland Road.

We are still looking for highly trained staff.

18 children from our *Balwadi* (day-time crèche) were placed in government-run formal schools. Now, we are looking to expand this to reach out to more children.





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## Rabeen Juzzmani

As the centre's counsellor, she shares moments that have touched and challenged ...



As we all know, our society is male dominated... from the field of education to sports. There are several rights for women in our country. Rights that no one honours. I know that I never had much of a childhood. Until I was 13 yrs, everyone told me that men and women were not equal. At the time, I was in the seventh standard. Like other girls, I used to think that boys could do everything. That 'we' could not win against them. That we were just nothing in front of them.

One day, when I returned from school, I saw two strangers talking to mummy. 'Namaste', they said before asking my name. Then they spoke to my mother and left. I asked mummy about them. She told me that they had come from an organisation that teaches girls. I asked, 'They teach only girls?' She replied, 'Yes, why?' 'I want to go!' I suddenly decided. But she hesitated...

When the *didis* came again, they spoke to mummy and convinced her to allow me to go. These two *didis* then told me their names. That evening, for me, was incomparable. They took me to a classroom and told me there were many girls like me who went there to study, work, play, sing, dance and learn a lot of new things. Then I asked them what the name of this place was. They replied Apne Aap. That evening I learned a lot and made many new friends. All the *didis* were so warm. That evening I returned brimming with joy. Seeing this, my mother let me go there everyday.

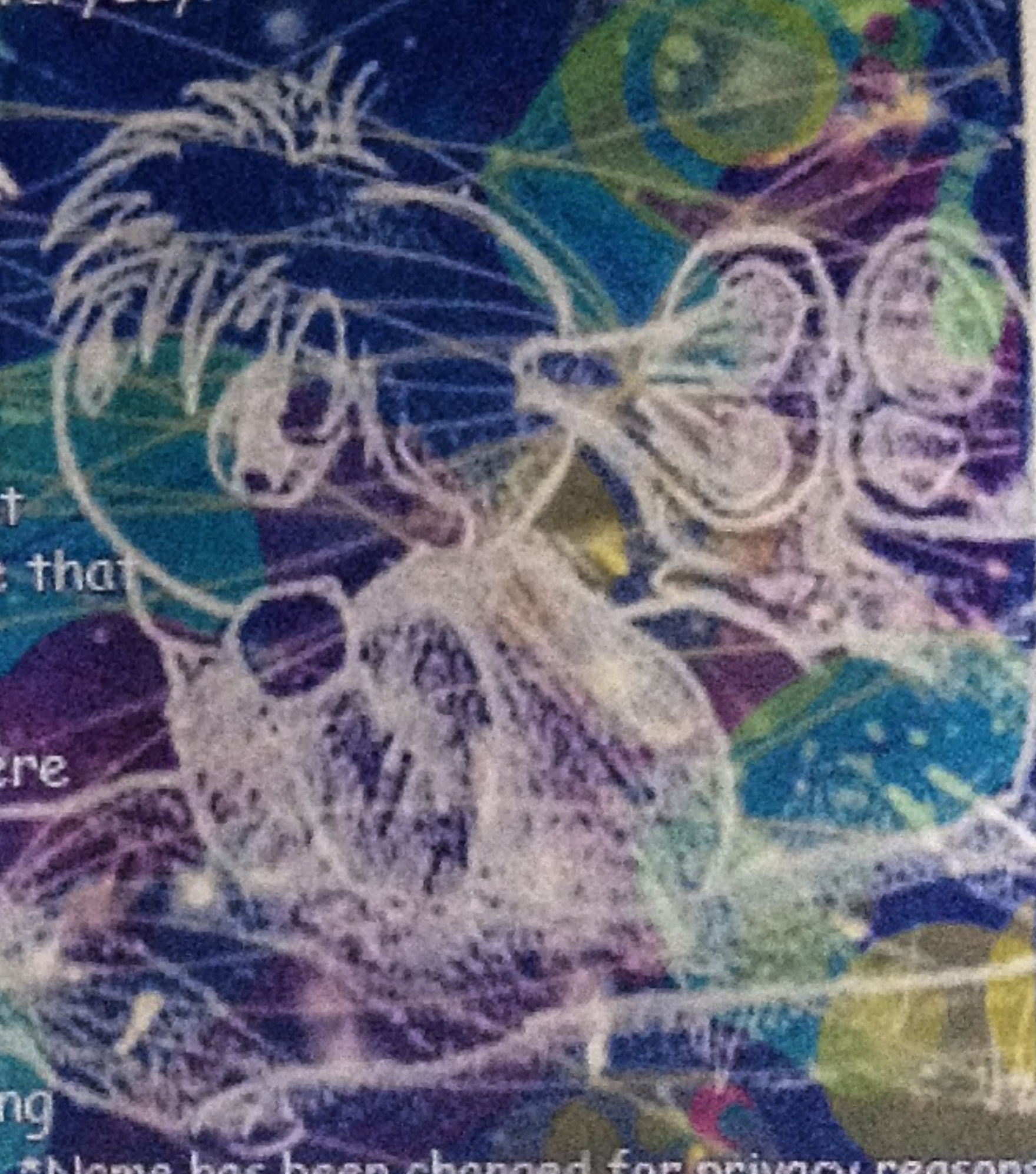
Apne Aap fights for the rights of women. I mentioned earlier how society is male dominated. Similarly, Apne Aap is female dominated. Every activity is for girls. Apne Aap strives to make us work hard in academics as well learn new skills. It has given so many of us the strength to do something. Now, we in return will show AAWC, that we can do anything a boy can. We no longer believe that we are less than they are.

Today, I work in a leading Pizzeria. I have come here through AAWC and I am working there as any other boy...

AAWC was my inspiration.

Veena Shah- 19 yrs, working

\*Name has been changed for privacy reasons







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## Rahsan Jumanani

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You are Love Oh my Lord! Fill me up with your Love  
I want to spread your Love in the whole world

Such Blessings I always want...

You are Power, Oh my Lord!  
Fill me up with your Power  
I want to spread your Power  
to the whole world

Such Blessings I always want...



The country that disrespects its women  
this country will never develop  
Today, our country faces so  
many problems because we  
are not respecting women.  
'Woman' means power. She is  
a symbol of God, a pillar of  
Love If you degrade her, you  
will never ever succeed  
in your life.



Life is night  
don't know how many  
dreams there are  
The ones we meet are ours  
The ones that break,  
those are just ... dreams



Mother: Oh Child! Why are you making a hole in your new umbrella?  
Child: Oh Mother! How would I know if the rain has stopped!

Prayers I offer to the Lord  
Water I pour on the Tulsi  
Give eternal happiness  
to my parents



The fragrance of a flower  
can't be stolen The rays  
of the sun can't be hidden  
However far away,  
friends like you can't be  
forgotten





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### Raheen Jummani

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We must have the courage to bet on our dreams, to take the calculated risk and leave behind forever the internal forces that hold us down.

This is spirit with which we work at AAWC

Sold either by her own family, by her husband or her beloved, small dark rooms, heightened bed, a mask of make-up, varied colored clothes, pressure and blasts from the madam \ pimp, force, injuries, scars from the clients or boyfriend, lack of hygiene, lack of proper food, work the whole night, complete her household chores in the day, lack of freedom, no choice at all. This is the real Life of a **PROSTITUTE**.

Still there is hope, hidden needs, desires, dreams, Dream to stand up for her self, Dream to educate her children, Dream to save her daughter from falling into this profession, Dream to give her children a normal and respectful life, Dream to one day come out and live life of her own choice, Dream that she'll be heard one Day.....

- Raheen Jummani (Counsellor and Project Co-ordinator)

### Mangala Murale - (Outreach Worker)

I have been associated with Apne Aap for 8 years now. I joined here as a beneficiary. Initially, I used to drink a lot and never bother about my life. But after joining this organization, I feel the difference sphere of my life. The first thing I learnt here was how to write a letter in

English from Manju Madam, gradually, I decreased my regular intake of alcohol. This organization helped me get my two daughters married. Now both of them are happily settled. My elder daughter trained as a paraprofessional in this organization. I have actually learnt

the "way of living" from this organization. Presently I am working as an outreach worker trying my level best to convince all the beneficiaries to learn from my example. I am and will always be extremely grateful to this organization...  
*Thank you Apne Aap.*