

Purnkuti-Connect helps Sex Workers in Pune During Covid 19

Food distribution



Maharashtra, Pune, May 5, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](http://www.Issuewire.com)) - Purnkuti - A ray of hope for sex-workers In Covid-19

Purnkuti successfully distributed 500 liters of edible oil and Happiness Kits to sex workers at Budhwar Peth Pune Maharashtra. During the pandemic, Purnkuti reached out to corporates and individuals to buy "Happiness Kit" for as little as Rs 80/-, containing 1 Kg Rice, 250 gm Pulse, 400 gm Potatoes, 100 ml Cooking Oil, and 50 gm Salt to feed a meal for a family of 5. Even for people working on the ground it was hard to believe that you can buy happiness for a family for something as little as 1.11 USD/Rs80. The volunteers and their children sold rakhis, donated toys, books, clothes for the kids of sex workers, and more occasions like this were created to mobilize resources. Purnkuti also has close ties with the women in villages in India, in forming a community. They ensure that they can sustain themselves and their families through the means of handicraft creation.

The plight of this neglected and disregarded section of our society can be heard through the heart-wrenching story of Shilpa Rai who has five rupees to her name. A worker in India's sex industry, she

lives in the narrow lanes of Budhwar Peth. A red light area with her two children in a room which she rents for 600 rupees a month. It has now been a month since India entered the second wave of the pandemic. With no clients, Rai's savings have dwindled. She has no money left for food, let alone for sanitary towels for herself and her daughters.

"They have no food, they are starving. They live in tiny, windowless rooms with no fresh air. Many don't have access to running water; sometimes, the choice is between paying water bills or topping up phones," says Sneha Bharti, co-founder of Purnkuti, which is a Non-Government Organization (NGO), duly registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1960. They are active in Child & Women Development space through Manosakha and Waterlily Education System since 2011. As the uncertainty and fear of the pandemic grow, social workers anticipate a sharp spike in depression, anxiety, and perhaps, suicide.

The outpouring of solidarity and support sparked by this shared challenge has been phenomenal. The volunteers were recently spotted helping them with their drive. "What we could provide on that day was a bit of food for a few months, but lots of hope for everyone living there. In our minds, we could not think of even a single profession, which was put out of a job as mercilessly as the sex trade, by both government and patrons. Their social status also forbids them from engaging in any other meaningful employment. " says Ranjana Singh, President of Purnkuti.

It was incredulous to believe that Budhwar Peth, Pune's famous red light area which is known for its color, food, and good life was not able to feed its residents even two meals a day.



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