



Creating Spaces

A photograph of four individuals sitting on a bed with a red and gold floral patterned blanket. From left to right: a woman in a black headscarf, a man in a grey cap and jacket, a woman in a dark jacket, and a woman in a light blue headscarf and pink pants. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Guru kala

'Some men in the neighborhood wanted one of my chelas (students) to be friends with them. They thought that they could offer us money and we will be ready to serve their desires', says the 42 year old Guru Kala.

Transgender people are considered to be the downtrodden individuals of the society and are thought to be used as a means of entertainment only. They are pushed out of their homes at an early age because their families are embar-rassed to be associated with them.

Homeless and humiliated, they do not know who to turn to and some of them become sex workers. They can't even travel in public transport without the fear of being ridiculed', says Guru Kala.

Guru Kala had recently met the Vision team and was impressed by the kind of work their organization was doing. The trainings taught the transgender community ways to make them acceptable among the larger portion of the society. It strived to change the mind sets of the individuals around them through their behavior.

The resident where Guru's chelas live is nestled in a very busy neighborhood.

'All my chelas are very well behaved and they make sure not to create any trouble for the neighbors. We have cordial relations with the people of our Mohallah. When we refused the offer of these men, they applied pressure on our landlord and created false stories to damage our reputation. The land lord asked us to vacate the house', says the Guru.

Guru Kala was already in touch with the Vision team so he sought their support to resolve the matter. 'The staff of the Vision team told us to seek backing of our neighbors by taking them on board and collectively going to the landlord to update him regarding the truth of the matter.'

The people residing in the Mohallah were very kind and agreed to approach the landlord. Once the landlord became aware of the matter and saw that the entire neighborhood supported the transgender community and vouched for their reputation, he gave them full assurance to continue staying in the residence and that he would personally ensure their security.

It has been three months since the incident and the chelas are living in the residence peacefully.

Facing rejection from both home and school, transgenders often run away – finding solace only in their own community. With no proper education and severe hatred from the people around them, they are left with no other choice but to adopt the professions others in their company have adopted – sex work or dancing.

Guru Kala says that not every transgender is a sex worker; some of them work hard to make money through attending functions. It is the responsibility of the society to not see everyone as being the same; like all men and women, there are good and bad individuals among transgender community too.