Life Insurance for India’s Sex Workers

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Sex workers in India are now eligible for life insurance coverage, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reports (news.yahoo.com, 5/19). While prostitution remains illegal in India, sex workers hope that this move will help legitimize and eventually legalize the profession.

According to the article, there are 1.2 million sex workers in India. The state-run Life Insurance Corporation of India has agreed to provide this coverage under the condition that they receive routine medical screenings, including HIV testing.

“We have started by signing up 199 sex workers in Sonagachi [in the Indian city of Kolkata], one of Asia’s largest red-light districts, housing over 10,000 women involved in the business,” said Smarajit Jana, chief adviser to the Committee for Indomitable Women, a coalition of Indian sex workers. “Our target is to bring 50 percent of the sex workers of the country under the insurance coverage by 2008.”

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