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संवेदना

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by

**Internal Complaints Committee
Maitreyi College**

Patron

Dr. Haritma Chopra
Officiating Principal
Maitreyi College,
(University of Delhi)
hchopra@maitreyi.du.ac.in

Chief Editor

Dr. Prachi Bagla
Associate Professor
Department of Commerce,
Maitreyi College (University of Delhi)
pbagla@maitreyi.du.ac.in

Editors

Mrs. Manjula Saxena
Associate Professor (Rtd.)
Department of Sociology,
Maitreyi College (Univ. of Delhi)
msaxena@maitreyi.du.ac.in

Dr. Pramod Kumar Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of Sanskrit,
Maitreyi College (Univ. of Delhi)
pramodsingh@maitreyi.du.ac.in

Dr. Jagmohan Rai
Associate Professor
Department of Mathematics,
PGDAV College (Univ. of Delhi)
drjagmohanrai@gmail.com

Ms. Apurva Setia
Assistant Professor
Department of Commerce,
Maitreyi College (Univ. of Delhi)
setia.apurva@gmail.com

WITH SUPPORT FROM

News Analyst

Prarthana Judith Herald
BA (H) Political Science, 3rd Year
JMC, University of Delhi

Sketches

Simran Tyagi
BA (Prog.), 2nd Year
NCWEB, Maitreyi College Centre

Back Cover & Pictures

Dr. Perna Das
New Oregon, USA

Computer

Mr. Abhishek Khurana
Senior Technical Assistant
Deptt. of Computer Science
Maitreyi College, University of Delhi

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Irrespective of various crises that human life is subjected to in the present times, life has to move on with its distinctively creative modes of thinking and ways of living into the possible 'new normal'. Crisis often inspires us to make use of our resources optimally and pushes us to come out with out-of-the-box solutions to the existent and unprecedented issues of life. I feel proud, as the Chairman of the Governing Body, to see Maitreyi College taking lead in attempting to move beyond the limitations that covid-19 pandemic has imposed. Everyone concerned - teachers, students, parents, supporting staff and alumni – deserve special appreciation for their support and active participation in this endeavor. I sincerely applaud Dr Haritma Chopra, principal of the college, for her efforts in keeping the college at the forefront of new developments.



I am glad that the Internal Complaints Committee with continuous efforts, is bringing out a new issue of the e-magazine which stands out for quality and varied themes on gender discrimination. The magazine portrays the spectrum of gender bias with all its shades and complexities that exist in the contemporary world. Institutions are responsible for developing ethics, values and proper behavior on their premises, which in turn would train the individuals to 'live and let live' be it the physical or the virtual world. I am pleased that Maitreyi college not only advocates and nourishes such an environment and culture, but also deliberates on the related issues and concepts through Samvedana. I am sure, by creating a good platform for debates on Gender bias, the magazine has established its own place in the academic realm through its earlier issues.

I congratulate the editorial team and the Principal for their untiring efforts in bringing awareness on the issues of gender discrimination to the stakeholders of educational institutions at large.

Date : 16-06-2020

Balaganapathi Devarakonda

*Professor & Head
Department of Philosophy
University of Delhi, Delhi - 110007*

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Reader

At the onset, I wish and pray for the wellbeing of you and your loved ones.

As the world is presently grappling with the pandemic COVID, many of our known might be facing multiple challenges on medical, emotional, and economic fronts. While this difficult time has brought anxiety and uncertainty, our positivity, resilience, and tenacity will help us emerge the victor.



The human instinct to survive and fight back all challenges and difficulties finds roots in human history and is also evident in the present times. Past few months would have provided you all with reasons and opportunity to introspect and evaluate actions which should change at the personal, institutional, and social level. During these days, we have repeatedly heard of the “new normal”, the term most often used to highlight that the world post-COVID would be different than earlier times. While this year will remain etched in memories for decades to come, it is incumbent on us to govern how it is remembered, as just a period of economic and cultural distress, or also as a phase which marked the beginning of landmark societal, cultural and environmental transformations- it is up to us to define this “new normal”.

Every adversity has enabled society to evolve and craft lessons for the times to follow. Amongst the few highlights of these difficult times is the resolve to come together of our doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, law enforcement, and innumerable other corona warriors, independent of any discrimination of caste, gender, or belief, to fight the common enemy - coronavirus. Better hygiene and social-etiquette imbibed in the form of social distancing, use of personal protective equipment (PPEs) may become a way of life for all. Our comfort with technology and the use of various online platforms to ensure seamless continuity of our normal operations is a testimony of our flexibility and adaptability. The self-healing act of Mother Nature, which has provided us with fresh air to breathe, cleaner rivers and clear blue sky and starry nights, a sight which many of the millennial kids would have never experienced earlier.

The current times have brought to the fore the realization of togetherness, inculcating higher sensitivity towards people around us, making our contribution towards building an all-inclusive society that upholds the rights of all citizens to live with dignity, self-esteem and in harmony with our environment. May we imbibe the art to appreciate and reciprocate kind deeds in our personality and make our world a great place.

This issue of “Samvedna” is a compilation of the articles woven around these attributes- a step towards redefining our society.

Enjoy Reading! And Stay Safe!

Dr. Haritama Chopra

*Officiating Principal
Maitreyi College
University of Delhi*

EDITOR'S NOTE



Indian society has been a victim of strong perceptions and stereotypes. As for men, unwritten norms have been that they should wear only certain colours, in marriage they should be taller, wealthier, older than their wives, should not to express their emotions too publicly... It has been awkward and a topic of gossiping to majority people if men did household chores or looked after children. For women, the norms have been suffocating. They were to play certain 'safe' games- kabaddi, boxing, weight lifting were unthinkable, talk decent, not to laugh loud, remain submissive... A girl who proposed first to her male friend was considered 'loose' and was sure to be dropped eventually; wife was expected to remain passive or else was considered abnormal. The word that defined 'good' woman was 'sacrifice' who never claimed power and an independent existence.

These stereotypes can be seen crumbling down over the last couple of decades. Currently, women are asserting and demanding equal say in all the matters that concern them. What brought this change is not a simple evolution. One major factor that has contributed to this change is their financial independence and education of their parents. Additionally, in this era of information boom, girls know their rights and are much more progressive in their disposition.

However, there is one stereotype that still needs to be broken! As always, there is a clamour from all quarters, though not very explicitly always, that women should make their own efforts to remain safe by not going out late or not wearing certain clothes... *It is now time men take the charge of making our society safe.* It is high time they shed their fake modernity and come to the terms that they are the ones who need to change their mindset. Importantly, they have to learn to share power with women and acknowledge their constructive role in the society. A lip service alone will not do as they are already doing it. They now need to openly and genuinely condemn bad behaviour by men and with support of legislature and judicial system make our society best in the world for all.

Dr. Prachi Bagla
Chief Editor

The views expressed in the write ups are those of the authors concerned.
The editors are not responsible for them.

Reviewers

We thank our reviewers for offering their expertise in selection of articles for Volume II issues I & II

- | | |
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Feedback on January 2020 Issue

सादर नमः ।

संवेदना पत्रिका को पढ़ने में थोड़ा समय लगा। यद्यपि किसी ई-पत्रिका को पहली ही बार रुचिपूर्वक पढ़ सका। यह पत्रिका अंगर कागज पर ज्यों की त्यों उतर आए तो किसी भी स्तरीय छपी पत्रिका से किसी भी अंश में कम न होगी। अंग्रेजी और हिंदी विभाग दोनों ही उपयोगी, सामयिक, स्तरीय सामग्री से युक्त बहुत समर्थ एवं सार्थक हैं।

पृ. 13 का लेख हो या इसी एनीमिया विषय से संबंधित पृ. 18 का सर्वे हो, कॉलेज छात्राओं के लिए निश्चय ही उपयोगी और उनकी आज की स्थिति पर प्रकाश डालने वाले हैं। 'द अहोम राज्...' इतिहास के पन्नों को पलट उच्च वर्ग में भी स्त्री की माध्यम भर रह जानेवाली स्थिति को प्रस्तुत कर रहा है। हाँ, महल कौर पर लिखा लेख उसके संघर्ष की गाथा है।

आर्टिकल 370, कश्मीर जैसे ज्वलंत विषय इसमें हैं। भावपूर्ण कविताओं, स्केच आदि से सज्जित यह पत्रिका वास्तव में प्रभावी बनी है।

इसके लिए प्रतिभा, परिश्रम, योजना और शुष्ठु उपयोगी सामग्री, योग्य लेखक वर्ग का चयन के लिए जैसा विवेक चाहिए उसका स्पष्ट दर्शन में कर सका हूँ।

इस सबके लिए संपादक मंडल को सहस्रशः बधाइयाँ, साधुवाद, पूरी टीम का अभिनंदन। पत्रिका आपने मुझे भेजी, इसके लिए कृतज्ञ रहूँगा...

डॉ. दलित विहारी गोस्वामी

पीएच. डी., डी. लिट., एसेसिएट प्रोफेसर (सेवा निवृत्त)
पी. जी. डी. ए. वी. महाविद्यालय, नई दिल्ली

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ENGLISH SECTION



Self Respect

Dr. Prachi Bagla*



I observed this old man, lean and thin, wearing unclean clothes, unkempt hair, bare feet, expressionless, working mechanically in our neighbourhood park, quietly and totally unconcerned with his surroundings. He was not interested in people walking by, dogs running around or birds chirping on a nicer spring evening. His only companions were his broom and spade. I observed his monotonous routine of shifting twigs, cutting grass, and collecting dry leaves and garbage left by the visitors into one big heap in the corner of the park day after day.

Suddenly, I was curious to know who he was, where did he live, his family and background. I already knew that he lived alone in the complex of the park itself. He could not have a jhuggi because regulations

do not allow anyone to make a temporary shelter in the park.

With plenty of caution, I approached him, prepared mentally of being ignored or rebuked (as he looked quite unfriendly). Contrary to my apprehension, he greeted me with a broad smile, quite willing to share his tale. He hailed from district Tikamgarh near Jhansi, Madhya Pradesh. He did not know his age though by his appearance he looked around 75 years old to me. Totally illiterate, he did not know to even write his name. A father of four sons and a daughter, all married, his wife had passed away some 15 years ago. Till about three years ago, he lived with his family in Tikamgarh leading a quiet, laid back and retired life. He never had a good status at home as his sons and their wives ruled the household. He had come to terms with the fact that he was no longer useful to his family. Still life had to be lived. Fully accepting the emptiness, he maintained a low profile and mostly kept to himself. However, one major incident changed his life and he took a bold and brave decision to leave everything behind.

One day, one of his sons, driver by occupation, came home drunk and totally unsteady and unstable. Baba (I called him Baba) asked him not to drink as it is dangerous for him and others when he is on wheel in such an inebriated state. In response, his son gave him two tight slaps and kept hurling 'choicest' abuses at him till he was completely out. No one in the family intervened. Apparently no one found it to be objectionable or abnormal!

* Department of Commerce, Maitreyi College

Poor people may not have money, and uneducated people may not have education, they can still have dignity. More than physical assault, it was an assault on his dignity. He had enough. With no hope of a respectful life, badly hurt, he started to contemplate committing suicide on the railway tracks. That would be an easy exit! But good sense prevailed and he decided to move out of his surroundings and start new life.

You cannot choose your family, but you can choose your friends. The support that he got was from a female gardener, Rajjo, from the same district working in a municipality park in Delhi. She recommended his name to the contractor and arranged a job for him in the same park.

Starting a new life in a new place, with no money, no education, no skills, no home, and no support cannot be easy. I will leave the readers to imagine what he may have gone through. How were his basic needs met? Rajjo cooked for him initially, but she had to stop that after about four months being overworked herself. Now he cooks both the meals for himself in the morning before leaving for work. His meals consist of only thick rotis and pickle. No vegetables, fruits or milk for him.

He is no longer in touch with his family. He has not gone back to his native place even once during these three years. His sons did try to call him back every now and then but there has been a strict 'no' from his side every time. He does not want to put his dignity on stake second time. Getting this "dream job" may not be possible and he may not get a 'second chance". On asking if he could go to live with his daughter, he said they don't do that in their community.

I asked him how he envisions his old age without support and without anyone from his family around. His reply was that he will work as long as possible and then depart when God calls him. As for the family, to him, those people don't exist.

He feels grateful to Rajjo who came up as a saviour when he had despair all over him. When asked about his savings, he informs that he saves Rs. 2000 from his meagre salary of Rs. 6000 a month.

After talking to me, he resumed his work silently, again without any expressions. I watched him from a distance, sadly, thinking how eagerly one waits for offspring, especially male child, to arrive, their education, their work, marriage, all remaining the priority, till they really 'grow up'. And boy, his sons did "grow up."

My high school math teacher once said that one father can take care of 4 sons but 4 sons cannot take care of one father. I never fully understood what he meant. Now I get it. This statement by my teacher was made more than 5 decades ago. So, I sadly realize that this problem is not new. There are many more people like Baba in our society, who suffer in silence, see their dignity taken away but do not have courage or means to do anything about it. I still suspect that although this issue may not be new, but it is more prevalent now than in past.

What crime he must have committed to bring his children to this world, caring for them, settling them down. How happy he must have been to have just one 'liability' and four 'cheques' to take care of his old age. He must never have thought that instead of a comfortable life, he would be ill treated and be forced to live such a pathetic life. But the very next moment, I smiled. In sharp contrast to those who keep tolerating inhuman behaviour in twilight zone of their life, to protect the prestige of their children in the society or may be fearing their older age, this man elected to discard his ungrateful family. I saluted his confidence, courage, sense of self-respect, and positivity that he decided not to take nonsense from his children.

I wondered if his wife could have taken this step had she been subjected to this kind of behaviour

The Feminine 'Nature' in the Indian Texts and Tradition

Shayoni Banerjee*

Sunit Bhardwaj#

Abstract

This article is an endeavour to bring forth the the ancient wisdom of Integral Vision. The Ancient Vedic wisdom imparts teachings to care for the ecology. Indian society grew beside the grooves of the nature of earth, it worshipped them considered everything essential for a holistic growth of the human species. The river Ganga cleaning movement has since then taken lives of many intellectuals of the tradition in modern India, who should have been regarded as the nurturer of the civilisation. The Indian intellectual text and tradition has been regarded as an Ecotheology centred around the Eco-feminist perspective of Nature. There is a feminine in the nature and any harm to either of them is a harm to both of them.

Women in Indian tradition has been compared and seen as Nature, owing to the feminine attributes contained in it, that is, the ability to procreate. The Indian tradition conceives women as the first God and calls it as 'Shakti', that is, "power, ability, strength, might, effort, energy, capability" more appropriately as energy or the force behind creation, almost all the definitions and meanings of 'Shakti' points to the very fact of the ability to procreate. In many states of South India, there is a practice that is still alive and is preserved till this date called Raja festival or the Raja Parba. The practice is centered around the perception of seeing the feminine in the Nature that is pronounced as Prakriti in Sanskrit language (James G. Lochtefeld (2001), p. 224, 265, 520) [1], it

refers to the feminine aspects of all life forms. A woman is seen as a symbol of Prakriti, one who holds the capability to procreate in the human genus (Knut A. Jacobsen 2008, p. 1299-1300) [2]. Raja Parba signifies the beginning of the solar month of Mithuna from which the season of rains starts. The earth is called Prithvi (which is also a feminine word of Sanskrit grammar) who is also deified as bhudevi (anthropomorphic deification of earth as goddess) one who produces, creates and nourishes all the creatures and non living things, all the existence, like a mother and is the provider of the food for all living in her reach (David Kinsley 1986, p.8-9) [3]. The Durga saptashati points to the very feminine character of nature-

So long as the earth is able to maintain mountains, forests and trees until then the human race and its progeny will be able to survive. (Durga Saptashati, 'Devi Kavacham', 54).

Such identifications are brought forth to make clear that the nature and the women in the human genus are identical in attributes and must be identified together as one and the same. The Continuity and oneness of nature and human originated out from the Vedic Sanskrit's rta (Sanskrit रत rta "order, rule; truth") which is the principle of natural order or the cosmic order of things. The word shares close

* Centre for Persian and Central Asian, Asian Studies/ SLL&CS, JNU; Student Representative, ICC-JNU.

Post- Graduate Student, Centre For Persian and Central Asian Studies / SLL&CS, JNU.

connotational relations and meaning with nature, the word *rta* means 'cosmic order of things' (Holdrege 2004, p.215) [4]. *rta* is the timely functioning of the natural, moral and sacrificial orders. It is the principle of the natural order which regulates and coordinates the operation of the universe and everything within it, from this *rta*, comes the words *Ritu* and *Ritual* itself. *Ritual* means the correct order of performance, it comes from Roman "ritus", *ritus* is the root word which moves from *rta* to *ritus* for *ritual*. The word *Ritu* meant seasons, it is derived from the Vedic Sanskrit word *ṛtú*, a fixed innate- cosmic time, this is cognate with the word *rta* (ऋत), that is, "order or course of things", a proper time for sacrifice (*yajna*) or *ritual* in Vedic Sanskrit. *Ritu*, in the words of Sandhiya Ramaswamy [5] is *ritual* that sets in motion the rhythm of life, the dance of the seasons and the occurring of the menstruation in the lunar cycle that is how came the word *Ritu kala samskara*. In fact the word *menstruation* or *menses* comes from Latin word *mensis*, whose meaning is *month*, which is cognate with the Greek word *mene*, that is, *moon*, hence the rhythm of months which average around 29.5, that is, the period from one new moon to the next, days reflect on the reproductive cycle of marine plants as well as on the menstrual period (Subhash kak 2002, p.9) [6]. The Knowledge of this *Rta* and *Ritu* had highly impacted on the speculation on the knowledge contained within the body itself and unraveled the science of body and its relations with nature or the *Prakriti*. The speculation resulted in the identification of biological footprints of life in "Nature" in the mirror image of human body and was marked by the celebration of *Raja Parba*, which falls on the mid June is celebrated to mark the femininity of the nature (nature is attributed with femininity and has been personified as

goddess, who has the ability to nourish and procreate), folks in many parts of south India and specially in Orissa believed that in these days mother earth, that is 'Nature', is undergoing menstruation and must be left alone for the first three days from the onset of the festival. Another such festival is celebrated in Assam during mid-June, that is, *Ambubachi Mela*. As *Kapila Vatsyayan* states this ancient wisdom in her words-

Man's life depends upon and is conditioned by all that surrounds him and sustains him, namely, inanimate, mineral and animate, aquatic, vegetative, animal and gaseous life. It is, therefore, Man's duty to constantly remind himself- in individual and collective life- of the environment and the ecology (*Kapila Vatsyayan*, 1992. p. 160) [7]. This way the celebration or the festivals in the hindu society moves from a mere gathering of euphoria to celebration of consciousness of the body and to care the nature and the Nature/world due to the relation of interdependent existence shared by both of them, a similar practice is observed in a different ceremony for girls called *Ritu kala samskara* or *Ritushuddhi*, which is a rite of passage for the coming of the age for young girl and is called by different names in different parts of india, *Half sari function* or *Langa Voni* in Telugu: లంగ వొని, *Pavadai Dhavani* in Tamil: பாவடலை, *Langa Davani* in Kannada: ಲಂಗ ದಾವನಿ.

Such celebrations or rites of passages are praxis of the Vedic teachings that the nature and human body are one and the same and share the attributes of composition or an impression in the mind to reflect upon the organism as the cosmic whole or the cosmic whole as an organism and locating the body in time and space as the interconnected whole, such that the feminine and nature are identical wholes

operating in domains of fluid identity as the cause of existence. The body and nature are in intimate interconnection to each other, the body is the expansion of the ether that had expanded after the Big Bang for the procreation of this existence, hence we all share the Nature in our bodies. The foundations are rooted in the Rigveda, nature is "One that manifests in all"(Rig Veda, I.164.46).

The body and Nature are the continuity of the symphony of cosmic rhythm. It is through the body that this universe and its existence is perceived. As noted by Jaideva Singh

The Universe is nothing but an opening out (unmesa) or expansion (prasara) of the Supreme or rather of the Supreme as Sakti. (Pratyabhijnahrdyam by Jaideva Singh, 1980, p. 8) [8].

The body and universe are seen as complimentary to each other's evidence of existence. It is because the universe exists that the body exists and vice versa. In the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty in Phenomenology of Perception the body and world share intimate interconnection with each other and are in a single system of interconnected relation

In the same way, we shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in a in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourselves, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception. (Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1981, p. 206) [9].

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Rape: Juvenility and Punishment

Dr. Haritma Chopra*

Dr. Prachi Bagla#

Sexual and gender based violence are a major concern in India and world over. It is a multi-faceted & complicated societal issue. One feels so miserable and helpless coming across such incidences day after day, right from the morning in electronic and print media leaving bad taste in mouth. The situation becomes even more bothersome to the society when such crime is committed by juveniles (with victims not necessarily a juvenile). Any such incidence raises difficult issues,

strong opinions and legal discourse for which a consensus opinion is virtually never reached. Societies and legal scholars have faced this difficult situation across the globe. India is no exception. Table 1 shows the proportion of such crimes by juveniles in India from years 2001-2018. Data clearly show a disturbing increase in both absolute numbers and proportions of such crimes committed by juveniles. There is an urgent need to address this issue now.

Table 1: Temporal Trend of Sexual Assaults over 18 Years in India

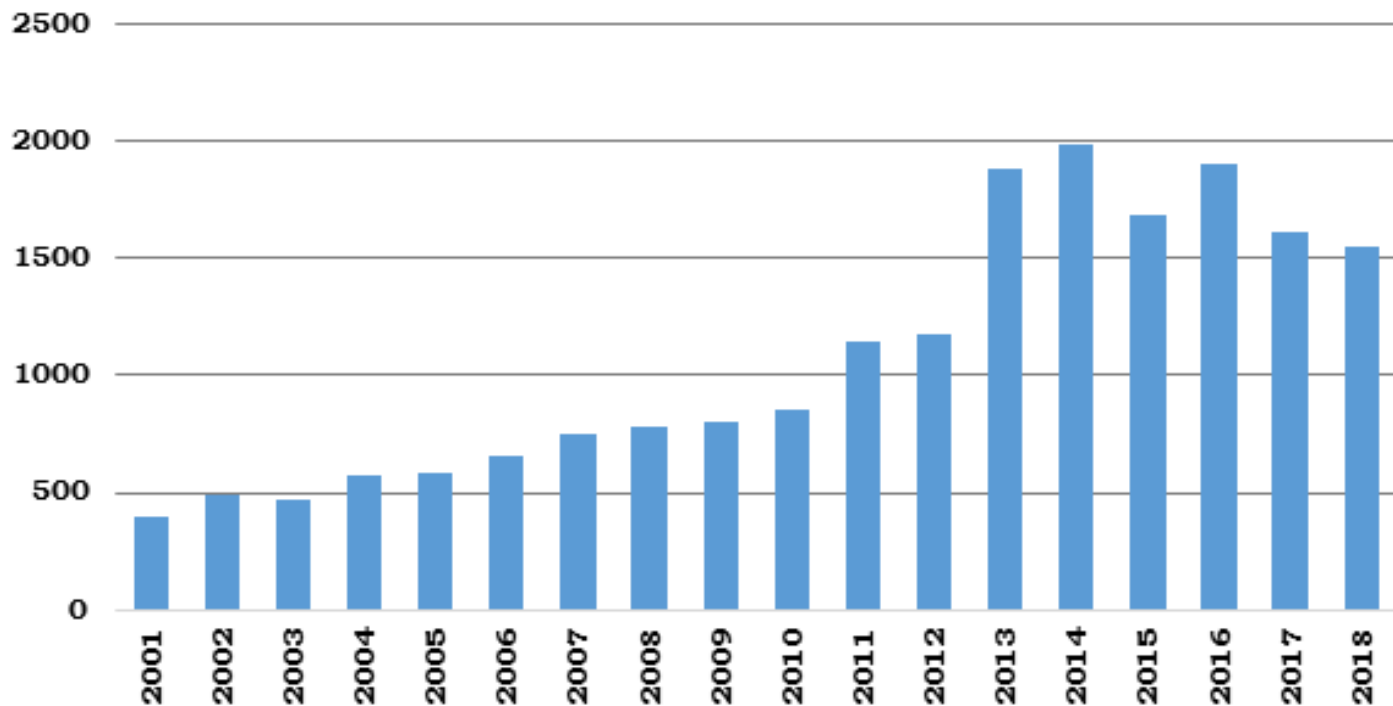
Year	Total Rapes	Juveniles	% of rapes by juveniles
2001	16,075	399	2.48
2002	16,373	485	2.96
2003	15,847	466	2.94
2004	18,233	568	3.12
2005	18,359	586	3.19
2006	19,348	656	3.39
2007	20,737	746	3.60
2008	21,467	776	3.61
2009	21,397	798	3.73
2010	22,172	858	3.87
2011	24,206	1149	4.74
2012	24,923	1175	4.71
2013	33,707	1884	5.59
2014	36,735	1989	5.41
2015	34,651	1688	4.87
2016	38,947	1903	4.89
2017	32,559	1614	4.96
2018	33,356	1547	4.64

Source : National Crime Records Bureau 2001-2018 (Total incidence u/s 376 IPC)

* Officiating Principal, Maitreyi College

Department of Commerce, Maitreyi College

No. of rapes by Juveniles (2001-2018)



Juvenile and Punishment:

Who is a juvenile for legal purpose? In most simple term, juveniles are those individuals who are below the age of majority. The age cut off limits to separate juveniles from majors varies from country to country, and from culture to culture across the world. For instance, in Germany, a person below 21 years of age is treated as a juvenile. In USA, the definition as a juvenile varies from state to state and criminal majority can begin at 16, 17, or 18 years of age. France defines three stages of minors viz. below 8 years, between 8-13 years, and between 13-18 years. In Sudan and Saudi Arabia, it is 18 years and Nigeria the cut off age is 17 years. In India, a person who has not completed eighteenth year of age is called a juvenile or a child. However, in 2015, the definition was revised to consider children

in the age group of 16-18 years involved in heinous offences to be treated as adults.

As for punishment to juveniles (a), different countries have different interventions or punishments for criminal acts of juveniles. Some countries have made subclasses within the ambit of definition of a juvenile while fixing the extent of punishment. The emphasis, however, world over is on educational intervention wherein the juvenile will go through a defined reformatory process on completion of which they will live their life sans crime.

To quote a few cases, in Germany no minor can be prosecuted as adult no matter what crime they commit. There are separate prisons for adolescents which are like mirror of the outside world to teach offenders to live life away from crime after they are released. In the USA, measures are designed to educate child

offenders in a variety of ways like placing the child under the care of an institution, ordering the child to work in public or private properties, or placing the child in an alternative incarceration and the like. In France, a child below 8 years of age cannot be convicted; a minor between 8-13 years the sentence can be in the form of educational intervention; and for minors between 13-18 years there can be both educational and a criminal punishment. However, in case of serious crimes, minors above 16 years may have to face the same punishment as for adults. In India, under relevant Acts revised from time to time irrespective of nature of their crime are referred to reform homes for a period of three years and after their release, their criminal records are deleted to make sure that juveniles can be restored towards the society without anyone being made aware of the past records of that juvenile. During these three years, the juvenile is made to undergo vocational programs and apprenticeship that are more adapted to the modern world. Since 2006, voluntary organisations have been allowed to work with juveniles to provide them with work opportunities, job experiences and education.

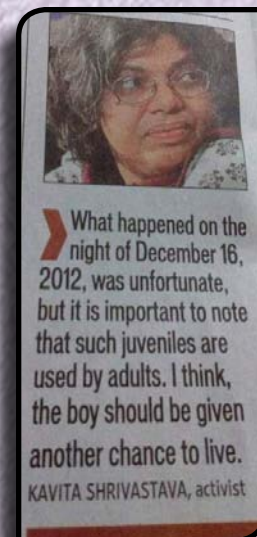
In 2015, the law was amended under which children in the age group of 16-18 involved in heinous offences, including rape, are tried as adults (b).

A Question: Indian Context

When rape is committed by so called “children” below 16 years of age, should their age be taken into consideration while awarding punishment? Opinions

vary.... Experts on media, especially social media, have been arguing for and against on the subject generating chain reactions from time to time. Statement in favour of no need to change the statues, talk of reforms, another chance, future of the child criminal infuriates people holding the opposite view no end.

Generally, the champions of a child who commits such heinous crimes tend to portray themselves to be higher thinkers and reformers than those who have opposing views. The morality of advancing one’s own image without any regards for the victim can be seriously questioned. Further, arguably, anticipation of leniency may have further fuelled the fire. Views of others need to be heard.



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Though there has always been a clamour to treat juveniles as adults for this crime, most recently this demand got flared up after the so called बच्चा, the most ferocious of the six criminals involved in December

2012 crime was freed after three years (c). Anger mounted after the four involved in the crime were hanged after a prolonged legal journey to their final day. As expected, anger was felt across Indian society against that juvenile. How did he get away without paying his dues? Can anyone guarantee that he will not do the same act in future? Who is making sure that no one else is victimized by the same individual? Time has come to discuss this issue openly and without apologies. Every angle of the problem and all possible solutions need to be heard. No one should be allowed to shout down opposing point of view. With this scenario in mind, Internal Complaints Committee (against sexual harassment) of Maitreyi College held an online essay competition open for students studying in various colleges of Delhi University and other Universities in Delhi and NCR. The topic was:

‘There is no need to check date of birth of the rapist’

The objective was to know whether in the opinion of young citizens, juveniles committing rape should be treated as adults at all ages.

Forty essays were received in all out of which 36 were by female students. All but one were under graduate students.

Table 2 : Gender of Participants

Gender	Count	Percentage
Girls	36	90%
Boys	04	10%
Total	40	100%

Table 3 : Educational Status of the Participants

	Count	Percentage
Pursuing UG*	39	97.5%
Pursuing PG**	01	02.5%
Total	40	100%

*Under graduation

**Post graduation

Responses received from the subjects while deciding the fate of the under trials fall in the following two categories:

Table 4 : Response- for/against

Response	Count	Percentage
For*	35	87%
Against**	05	13%
Total	40	100%

*For: no need to take the age into consideration

**Against: take age into consideration

Clearly, a majority of our participants support a similar legal discourse for a minors and adults committing, irrespective of age. The current legal situation is very different and its implication for the perpetrator is very obvious. The culprit, if treated as an adult will be subject to severest of the punishment whereas for a juvenile the punishment will be a stay in reform home for a period of three years (with other provisions under law) during which time he will undergo behavioural therapy and will be reintroduced into the society. Though this survey, we wanted to know whether this dual treatment for a similar crime acceptable to the young

citizens? Some of the arguments for and against put forth by forty participants are presented below:

Arguments for not considering age of the offender

1. It is such a serious crime that there is no scope for any leniency on account of age of the criminal. That is, punishment should be according to crime, no other factor should be relevant. So, no adult or juvenile in that! Rapist doesn't see age of the victim; his age should not be considered while deliberating on the punishment.
2. If a child is physically and mentally mature enough to understand and commit rape, he should be considered mature for punishment also.
3. Law should be fair to the victim for whom it is a lifelong trauma. She has to live with social stigma, fear, depression, guilt and negativity all her life. Harm caused by the rapist will not heal ever.
4. Culprit will use this factor as an escape route. If not punished now, seeds for more severe crimes will be sowed.
5. Children are maturing fast; the law must also evolve.
6. It is nonsense to argue that the juvenile committed the crime does not know what he is doing, and that the crime is committed under impulse, or under influence of media or simply out of curiosity. Such arguments tantamount to making things simpler for the culprits. It is not by instinct; rather it must have taken time and thought to commit the crime.

7. Can somebody so sick in mind be reformed in just three years? Can his mentality be changed in such a short period?

Arguments Against

1. All the arguments given treating juveniles as adults are termed vengeance, belligerent, and aggressive approach.
2. Juveniles commit this crime without a proper understanding of the consequences, sometimes under peer pressure/ influence.
3. They should be given a second chance. Attempt should be made to reintegrate children with criminal tendencies to mainstream society through reformatory processes.
4. A premise that there will be deterrence in crime against women if there is 'one crime one punishment' is grossly flawed.
5. If housed with adult criminals in jail, their exposure to hardened criminals will increase further diminishing their chances to reform.
6. If age is a factor in issues like drinking, driving, marriage, voting etc. why can't age be a factor in crime against women?
7. According to neuroscientists, while more than 90% brain development takes place by about six years of age, various parts of brain remain in developing stage till late 20s. Neuroscience tells that while adolescents know difference between right and wrong, they lack the capacity to control their instincts.

Besides lack of adequate nutrition, high levels of stress, some trauma in life, and abuse add to the reasons for unacceptable behaviour – one or more of these factors, found in children with economically poor backgrounds need corrective therapy.

It can be seen that the arguments for treating a juvenile as an adult are centred around the nature of crime and extent of harm whereas the arguments advocated for treating juveniles differently concur with the social and behavioural experts.

Final Thoughts

Rape is a serious crime without a doubt, whether committed by an adult or a juvenile. However, with due respect to our judiciary and law of the land, when court grants that mild punishment to a juvenile and advocates use the age as a tool, blood of many of us boil and heart bleeds for the victim. In such situations, many are left to feel that law has sided with the perpetrator and justice is not served to the victim. An equally strong, if not stronger, parallel lobby preaches with a conviction that at the end of the day, the juvenile will be weaned off the criminal tendencies. This is what most countries, including India, seek to achieve given the emphasis on reforms of juveniles instead of punishment at par with the adults. Great degree of optimism indeed! But does that happen? It must be acknowledged by everyone including champions of juvenile criminals that there is no information on success of three years of intervention as prescribed by law. There must be some follow up but in absence of any structured follow up, society doesn't know whether

or not these juveniles are truly reformed after their release. Confidence dwindles when one comes across the reports like once a child in America commits a crime, they are more likely to commit a second crime after completing their sentence within the justice system [1]. In Germany too where 30% of its juveniles and young adults came back to prison in three years or as per a state report in New Jersey, more than 85% of its juveniles are rearrested or return to court[2]. Not much data are available on efficacy of the reformatory approach in India. Data from other countries mentioned above are troubling and there is immediate need to have some mechanism in place in India to follow these juveniles after release for an extended period. This will not only ensure safety of public but also provide valuable information to law makers to change the course if current approach is not working. In the meantime, debate continues in media, social media, college campuses, academic circles and dinner tables and the pressure mounts on the government as well as on law makers each time such a crime is committed by a juvenile.

End Notes

- a. Almost every nation in the world has a system to handle juveniles who are found in conflict with the law. For obvious reasons, there does not exist any universal standard for juvenile care. UN did try to bring uniformity with respect to the child juvenile justice practice especially since 1980s with shift in focus from punishment to development of the child. Resolutions were passed prescribing rules on how

juveniles should be cared for. However many countries can be found violating the rules. For instance, though death penalty is explicitly outlawed for juveniles, countries like Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia have awarded this punishment to juveniles.

- b. Prior to independence, different regions in India had different and conflicting legal system for dealing with young criminals ranging from apprenticeship program, punishment like whipping and jail system. After independence, in 1960, The Children Act was passed which created a uniform process for juvenile courts to follow. Finally, in 2000, the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, revised in 2006, was passed. Revised again in 2015, the Act now called Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2015 made a sub category of juveniles with age 16-18 years. Under this Act, children in this age range, if involved in heinous crimes will be tried as adults.

Heinous crimes are defined as those for which minimum punishment under Indian Penal Code (IPC) or any other law under force currently is seven years. Further, the law has specified various sections under IPC and the punishment under which the crime committed by a juvenile can be termed a heinous crime. The list includes rape u/s 376 of IPC for which the punishment defined is minimum seven years and up to life.

- c. On December 2012, a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern boarded a bus

with her male friend late in the evening to reach home. There were six persons in the bus including the driver. All of them raped and tortured the girl. One of them was a juvenile, just short of 18 years, and was the most brutal among the convicts as he attacked the victim with an iron rod. One convict died during the trial period and the remaining four adults were sentenced to death and hanged on 20th March 2020. The Juvenile convict was released on 20th December 2015 after his stay in a reform facility over a period of three years.

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Madhumita Pandey as Doctoral Researcher
Criminology, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge
"Published in Times of India"

Postpartum Psychiatric Illness

Ms. Surbhi Pahuja*

Ms. Mehak Goyal**

Dr. Aparna Das, MD#

Introduction

Childbirth though stressful is considered a “happy period” and is believed to bring immense joy to woman and her family. However for some women things take a completely different turn when they go through emotional and behavioral problems after delivery. Women may experience mood symptoms during the post-partum period, 4-6 weeks following delivery of the baby [1]. The severity of emotional symptoms varies and is on a spectrum ranging from milder forms to more severe ones. The postpartum emotional disorders are classified into 3 major categories: postpartum blues, nonpsychotic postpartum depression and the most severe form being postpartum psychosis [2]. Postpartum depression is gaining widespread attention nowadays due to the fact that although it is intangible in nature but can be quite impactful to the affected woman and her family. Postpartum depression is a disorder followed by childbirth where a female may feel much stressed while navigating her new role, balancing care for herself and an infant, it can be overwhelming as well as exhausting, and in this medical condition a female may also feel guilty or ashamed. The common symptoms of this disorder include anxiety, anger, crying, restlessness,

depression, fear, lack of concentration and unwanted thoughts, insomnia, and fatigue. Postpartum depression affects about 15 % of the women around childbirth [3]

Contributing factors may include physical, environmental, emotional, and biological factors [4]. The physical factors may include hormonal changes that occur while giving birth to a baby. Sleep deprivation is also considered as a prominent physical factor. Apart from physical factors emotional factors also play a major role in PPD, these factors may include stress and anxiety due to the new responsibilities and a completely new and different role. The environmental factors may include the level of education of a new mother, the quality of physical environment provided to that female, the kind of social environment, whether the female is provided the power or choice to decide the routine and major decisions of her life and the kind of communication that is done by the female. Biological factors like genetic factors like family history or past history of psychiatric illness also play a role.[5]

* Research Scholar, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

** Research Scholar, Netaji Subhash University of Technology, Delhi

University of Arkansas, USA

Medically or clinically it can be classified as follows:

Disorder	Incidence	Time Course	Clinical Features
Postpartum blues	30-75% of women who give birth	Days to weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tearfulness • Anxiety • Insomnia • Mood lability
Postpartum depression	10-15% of women who give birth	Months to years if untreated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Guilt • Anxiety • Crying spells • Poor care of the baby • Suicidal ideations • Fear of harming the baby
Postpartum psychosis	0.1 to 0.2%	Within 2-3 weeks and almost within 8 weeks of delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspiciousness • Confusion • Incoherence • Irrational statements • Obsessive concerns about baby's health • Fear of harming self and/ or the baby

According to Kübler-Ross model the first stage also known as baby blues occurs a few days after the birth of the baby and is characterised by sadness, tearfulness and irritability. Signs and symptoms of baby blues — which last only a few days to a week or two after the baby is born — may include:

- **Mood swings**
- **Anxiety**
- **Sadness**
- **Irritability**
- **Feeling overwhelmed**
- **Crying**
- **Reduced concentration**
- **Appetite problems**
- **Trouble sleeping**

Postpartum blues may get better or may progress to a more severe form- postpartum depression. This is characterized by the following [6][7]:

- Low mood
- Decreased interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Increased guilt or feelings of inadequacy
- Suicidal thoughts-sometimes
- Thoughts of harming the baby-often

If postpartum depression is untreated it may worsen and can be associated with psychotic features. Sometime the illness may begin with psychosis and then it is called postpartum psychosis. With postpartum psychosis, a rare condition that typically develops within the first week after delivery, the signs and symptoms are severe. Signs and symptoms may include:

- Confusion and disorientation
- Obsessive thoughts about your baby
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Sleep disturbances
- Excessive energy and agitation
- Paranoia
- Attempts to harm yourself or your baby

Postpartum psychosis may lead to life-threatening thoughts or behaviors and requires immediate treatment.

People with other mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, also experience psychosis. But those with psychotic

depression usually have delusions or hallucinations that are consistent with themes about depression (such as worthlessness or failure), whereas psychotic symptoms in schizophrenia are more often bizarre or implausible and have no obvious connection to a mood state (for example, thinking strangers are following them for no reason other than to harass them). People with psychotic depression also may be humiliated or ashamed of the thoughts and try to hide them. Doing so makes this type of depression very difficult to diagnose.

Management

Education of the patient and family members is of paramount importance.

Postpartum blues- no medication is recommended. Supportive therapy and support from family members may help in speedy recovery.

Postpartum depression (PPD) - Therapy and antidepressants are usually recommended. There is a new medication called brexanolone (brand name Zulresso) that was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2019 for ameliorating the symptoms of PPD. It's administered as an intravenous (IV) infusion over a period of 60 hours (2.5 days). The patient has to stay in a healthcare facility for this medication. It was studied in particular in women with moderate to severe PPD in whom it improved symptoms more than a placebo

Postpartum psychosis- Antipsychotics and lithium in combination with

antidepressants are the treatments of choice.

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is extremely helpful and first line management option for a patient with severe depression with psychotic features and suicidal ideations.[8]

For patients of postpartum depression and/or psychosis, suicidal and homicidal ideations should be thoroughly assessed. If the mother has thoughts of harming self then brief hospitalization is considered for further management. If she has thoughts of harming the baby, distancing the mother from the baby briefly is a prudent approach.[9][10]

With proper treatment, studies report high rates of recovery from postpartum psychiatric disorders. There is growing evidence that postpartum psychosis is essentially an episode of mood disorder, usually bipolar disorder. Hence it is recommended to psychoeducate the patient and the family about the episodic nature and course of mood disorder/ bipolar disorder and to catch early warning signs in the future in case of an impending episode so that it can be nipped in the bud.

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Parenting in The Digital Age

Aakanksha Kapoor*

In December last year, we found that few students from one of Mumbai's prestigious school were found to be indulging in sexual conversations on their Whatsapp groups that included conversations around "gang bang" and raping their classmates. Again, just a few days back, another shocking incident was found to be involving a group chat of teenaged boys around 16- 19, named 'Bois locker room', was exposed on social media for making such derogatory comments and exchanging private photos of girls. An incident which has shaken the belief of people has necessitated the need for parental involvement and supervision of young kids in today's digital age.

Parenting is an art and is becoming a challenging task these days. It is challenging to protect our children from various distractions provided by the excessive use of technology, such as the internet, smartphones, laptops, I Pads etc. Adding to this pressure is the surmounting presence of various social media handles, like what's app, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, snap chat etc. These days, we have children who can't stay in a conversation for more than a minute, or focus on their studies for hours because as soon as they hear that Ping! On the phone, they are off and running to check their Whatsapp message or a new Insta story or a Facebook post.

Parenting in this digital era is very different than it was earlier, as this digital exposure is playing a massive part in the physical and mental growth and development of children. Today's children are far more intelligent, informed and updated about all the latest progress in the world due to their access to technology. From information to entertainment, everything is on their fingertips. Google guru is playing a significant role in providing all sorts of information on a platter to this generation kids. So, though there are numerous benefits of growing up in this digital age, parents cannot ignore the fact that there are multiple negative aspects of growing up amidst a plethora of devices and internet.

In a world, where children are growing up digital, parents are playing an essential role in teaching their children the healthy concept of digital use and citizenship. We all will agree on the fact that we cannot deny a child access to the internet; the only thing required is that parents should teach them the fair use of these technological devices. We do understand that it's not easy to become a digital parent and raising kids in this digital age is getting even harder.

* *Counseling Psychologist, Maitreyi College and Ph.D Scholar, JNU*

Today's parents do not have a road map to follow, the experience of the previous generation to guide them, or the benefit of being able to ask their parents for advice. They are the first mums and dads bringing up their children in this digital age. So, we think that the following guidelines can help the first generation of digital parents meet that challenge effectively:

1. Parents should treat digital access as any other environmental factor affecting their child's life

They need to be careful about both real and virtual environments. Set limits for their usage of digital technology. Parents should know their kid's friends: both online and offline. They should know as to what their children are using, all platforms, websites or mobile applications and what are they doing online.

2. Talk and listen

Many children turn to these devices when they feel that their parents are too busy making their career and have no time to attend to their needs. They complain of intolerable boredom and in the process, get glued to social media platforms, where they can connect themselves to the entire world. Make friends, chit chat and discuss all small and significant problems in their life. You need to take out time for your children. Listen to their problems, play with them and involve them in other outdoor activities.

3. Set the right examples

Children mimic their parents. So if parents want their children to make reasonable use of technology, they need to set a proper example before them. If they are themselves going to spend hours sitting in front of computer screens and fiddling with their mobile, their child is going to do the same. So, parents need to limit their usage of technology and spend time with their children, playing, reading or cooking. When their children see them having the kind of fun that doesn't require a plug or a battery, they'll be more inclined to follow suit.

4. At times parents have to be strict with their children

Parents have to be less fearful of their children. They have to make peace with the fact that their children will sometimes be unhappy with their decisions, but they have to be strict with them. Be kind and acknowledge their frustration, but don't be afraid to set limits.

5. Screen time can be shared

Try to take active participation with your children when they are using screens, as it encourages the interaction and the bonding time between you and your child. Encourage playtime or you can watch a show with them and have healthy discussions. Try to interact with them so that they can understand what they are doing and be a part of it.

6. Keep the role of technology to the minimum possible

Keep family dinners, playtime and children's bedrooms away from any digital media. Parents need to turn off the television that they aren't watching because background TV can get in the way of face-to-face interaction with their children. Don't use or charge your devices in your child's bedroom to help them avoid the temptation. This will help encourage better family bonding, healthier habits and a better routine.

7. Don't use technology as an only means of emotional support

Social media should not be the only way to keep the kids entertained. This should not be the only medium to keep them busy or channelize their emotions. They should be encouraged and taught other ways to identify and handle their emotions, think of activities to manage boredom, or finding other strategies to problem-solving.

8. To some, an extent going online should be permissible

Online relationships are part of healthy development. They can help them explore and discover their standing in the grown-up world. Your job should be to teach them how to behave appropriately in the offline and online worlds. Keep that space and communication open and assure them that you are there for them always and no matter what, they can rely on you completely.

9. Educate and warn children about privacy needs

Kids should be taught about the fact that whatever content they share online, can't be removed or deleted once it has been uploaded. Hence, they should be extra careful while uploading their photos, status or any personal message. Educate them about the use of privacy settings and should be warned about the cyber crimes that are so common these days.

Remember: Kids will be kids and they are bound to make mistakes when it comes to social media. You should know how to handle it with care and turn these mistake into a teachable moment. Media and digital devices are an important part of our lives today. The benefits of these devices can be significant. We should just know how to use them moderately and appropriately. Restrict and **ACTIVELY** manage your child's digital exposure. While it is so convenient to buy some silence in the house by giving them a device, using all your parental skills to manage this aspect of their lives is critical for their long term development. So wishing happy parenting to all the parents in this digital age.

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Epiphany

Simran Tyagi*

In this bleak night of December,
Lying in my bed wrapped around me, a blanket,
Wondering! How my life has been,
Just like a rollercoaster...
The more I go up Happy and exhilarated,
The more I have to come down devoured, hopeless, broken and in despair,
But suddenly when cold breeze enters my little imaginary world,
Through a little wide open window,
Touches my uncovered face, Giving me chills,
Making me shiver,
Bringing me back from the realm of
Featherbrain, I have been to,
Waking me up from all the substandard thoughts coming to my mind,
All this time, I have been looking at dark, long and cold nights,
And ignoring, what could have been the most beautiful moment of my life,
I was ignoring the beautiful luminous moon,
Accompanied by little twinkling stars,
Moon which can be a metaphor for life,
He is different from all but isn't alone,
He is beautiful because he has stars,
We have friends and family praying for our success,
And not to see us cry and endure,
Perhaps, things are glum today,
But all day won't be the same,
Perhaps, today feels like a snow storm,
Which has covered everything beneath it,

* BA (Prog.), 2nd Year, NCWEB, Maitreyi College

But one day the sun will rise,
Scattering its radiance, melting the snow,
And marking a new beginning of life at its best,
Maybe today wasn't our day,
But tomorrow is unpredictable and hasn't come,
A little endeavor toward our goal,
Annihilate the bad and tormenting thoughts,
Those which stands like a wall between us and our goals,
Things people say might hurt alot,
Do not take it to your heart,
Rise and move ahead,
Don't stop,
Don't give up,
No holding back,
No turning back,
Look back at your past for good and the cherishable moments
Not the one which pulled you down,
You are strong because you know your weaknesses,
You will win because you have failed,
Let no rejection break you down,
You deserve the best,
The best takes time,
The best is yet to come,
Give it some time,
Eventually, everything will fall into place,
Change you perception towards everything,
Become more positive,
Look for the light even in immense darkness.
Stay happy and smile 😊

The Resilient Begums of Bhopal

Aradhana Singh*

Seldom in history do we come across narratives of women's lives, especially tales associated with their quest for power and challenge to the patriarchal set-up. It is more because of this abandonment and obliviousness that stories like that of the enigmatic Begums of Bhopal still surprise and inspire us. Bhopal State, the second largest Muslim state of India (Hyderabad, was the first) during the British Raj, was one amongst more than 500 princely states which enjoyed autonomy in lieu of loyalty towards British Crown. Founded in the early 18th century by an Afghan, Dost Mohammad Khan, Bhopal gained the status of a princely state around March 1818. This was followed by an unprecedented and exceptional turn of events which ultimately brought women to the helm of the power structure in Bhopal. For more than a hundred years, between 1819 and 1926, Bhopal came to be ruled by four progressive and influential women or "Nawab Begums" (as they preferred to call themselves after been granted the male elite appellation "Nawab", by the British). The significance of the successful disposition of power by these women rulers can be gauged from the fact that this was a time when political organizations in India were completely male centric. Qudsia Begum (1819-1837), Sikander Begum (1843-1868), Shah Jahan Begum (1868-1901) and Sultan Jahan Begum (1901-1926) governed the State with remarkable strength, administrative capability and audacity.

Qudsia Begum (1819-1837), the first in the line of these female rulers, took over the reins of the empire upon her husband, the young Nawab Nazar Muhammad Khan's assassination. The rise to power of this woman who was illiterate and had strictly observed purdah from her youth, didn't go unnoticed and was in fact initially opposed by the English East India Company. But Qudsia was not someone to be budged so easily and she soon emerged as a headstrong ruler who ultimately gave up purdah (this action of hers obviously met with astonishment, given the times). She took over the empire at the young age of 18 and justified her rule by quoting Queen Victoria as her inspiration and model. Soon after assuming political supremacy, Qudsia Begum declared that her 15-month old daughter Sikandar will succeed her to the throne. Her declaration, in front of the male members of the royal family, at her husband's post-death ritual, was a powerful challenge to prejudice and patriarchy. She displayed her diplomatic skills in ultimately managing to convince the State Qazi (judge) and Mufti (one who was entitled to give legal opinion), and powerful men in the family, to issue a legal document recognizing women's right to power, thereby becoming the first woman in South Asia to assert the right of Muslim women to rule.

* *Doctoral Candidate at Centre for Historical Studies, JNU*

Throughout her reign, Qudsia Begum was engaged in a constant struggle to prove her mettle as a ruler capable of handling the State in times of political instability and war, to her enemies within the ruling family. Personally, she was a strict adherent of Islam and adopted a very simple lifestyle. She indulged in a lot of public and charitable work, including the construction of Bhopal waterworks and laying of pipelines throughout her State, and issued a number of religious benefactions. She trained in horse-riding and military techniques and is known to have frequently participated in hunting and other martial activities.

Although Sikandar Begum (1847-1868) was declared the successor to the throne, the deal was that she would soon be married, after which her husband would take control over the empire. Qudsia Begum enjoyed the authority of a decision-maker here and wanted to keep the affairs of the State in her control. She went to the extent of issuing a warning to her future son-in-law to always please and obey her. But call it fate or 'veiled opportunity', Sikandar's husband Nawab Jahangir Muhammad Khan Bahadur died after ruling for six years in 1844, and she came to the throne, playing a pivotal role in the First War of Indian Independence (1857-1858). In this battle, she chose to ally with the British (even though most members of the royal family were against it), and it was in lieu of her assistance and claim to be invested as Ruling Chief of the State that the British government declared her a sovereign in her own right and made her the only female knight besides Queen Victoria in the British Empire. Furthermore, her

decision to side with the British during this troublesome time earned the status of a favored and valued loyalist State for Bhopal. Lord Canning credited her entirely for this, in a speech delivered in a durbar held in 1861 he extends his gratitude in the following words, "when the State was beset and threatened by our enemies, you, a woman, guided its affairs with a courage, an ability, and a success that would have done honour to any statesman or soldier."

Destined to be a ruler, Sikandar Begum was trained in martial arts since childhood, and defying gender norms, she also indulged in playing polo, practicing archery and went hunting. She is believed to have inherited the headstrongness of her mother as she decided to leave the Nawab after he disagreed with her giving up of purdah and inflicted a sword wound on her hand. She went to Islamnagar fort and it was here that she gave birth to her daughter Shah Jehan Begum. Apart from being an able ruler and tough army commander, Sikandar Begum believed that there should be progress in culture, education and administration, too, and worked towards women's education and health reforms. She founded the Victoria School where girls were taught basic academic subjects and were also trained in vocations such as handicrafts. Sikandar Begum is known to have performed the Haj to Mecca and also maintained a diary to record events during this pilgrimage, which was later translated and published as 'A Pilgrimage to Mecca.'

Shah Jehan Begum (1868-1901) succeeded to the throne after her mother Sikandar Begum's death. The archival evidence suggests that unlike her

predecessors, Shah Jehan Begum was distinctly feminine. She repulsed training in the martial arts and in fact wanted to be a poetess. She was fluent in Arabic and Persian language and had also acquired formal training in handling account and state affairs. Further, her strong inclination towards art and literature transformed the State of Bhopal into a cultural and literary center, with her reign still regarded as a 'Golden Period' in the State's literary and poetic history. Shah Jehan is credited with the composition of several Urdu poems (under the penname Shirin) and also the text 'Tahzib un-Niswan wa Tarbiyat ul-Insan', a reformist manual dedicated to women, containing a range of topics from women's work to their status in Islam. Her competence and capability as a ruler were in no way impacted by the fact that she chose to embrace purdah. She was a strong administrator and contributed towards the improvement of education, health, housing and technology. Following her mother, she took special interest in the propagation of education, spending enormous funds on schools and Madrasa.

Her daughter and successor, Sultan Jahan Begum (1901-1926) is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and audacious female personalities of the 20th century. She ascended the throne at the age of 43, three weeks after her mother's death. From the beginning of her reign, she had to face a lot of difficulties (an empty treasury, instances of maladministration, etc.) but overcoming all obstacles she ultimately managed to establish a successful administration. As a child, Sultan Jahan had been well prepared to assume the role of a ruler. Her grandmother Sikandar

Begum educated her and instilled strict discipline from the very beginning. Her daily timetable included morning exercise, reading of the Quran, practicing writing and learning languages like English, Persian, etc., practicing arithmetic and physical training in the form of horse riding and fencing. Thus, the routine was similar to any male member of the royal household, both physically and academically.

Like her predecessors, Sultan Jahan is acknowledged for her contribution to the field of education and modernization of the Bhopal State. She presided over the All Women's Conference on Educational Reform and was the founder and first Chancellor (and till today the only female Chancellor) of Aligarh Muslim University. She organized several social and educational campaigns for women's emancipation and worked towards the reformation of other sectors too, for example, the police, judiciary, army, taxation, agriculture and health and sanitation.

However, Sultan Jahan's most noteworthy contribution can be seen in the restoration work at Sanchi, an important ancient Buddhist site of ancient India, situated in Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh. Her interest in antiquities can be traced back to 1903 when on her return from a pilgrimage to Mecca, she brought religious relics and organized a ceremonial display of the same at the Moti Masjid. As for Sanchi, it had figured prominently in her public life. Repair efforts at Sanchi started in 1904 under the supervision of H B Cook, whose manner of execution proved extremely destructive. John Marshall, the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India at that time, instead

shifted the blame on Muslim chowkidars, who in his opinion were unable to look after Buddhist monuments and therefore suggested to employ Buddhist chowkidars in their place. The Begum however strongly refuted Marshall's suggestion and felt that by raising alarm in this manner Marshall was questioning her capacity to look after Bhopal's monuments.

Thus, their association started on a 'sour note', but it was to go a long way, as in due course the Begum became Marshall's chief benefactor and his Sanchi volumes are dedicated to her memory. This however remains the classic case of historical neglect till date, as although the Begum provided all necessary financial and logistical support for the restoration work, she is not at all acknowledged for her contribution. The museum at the foot of the Sanchi hill, which was in fact sanctioned by her, contains nothing to remind visitors of her contribution. A photo exhibition organized as late as in 2006 'remembered' a range of people associated with the site, but there was no mention of the Begum's patronage to Sanchi.

Despite such neglects and attempted erasures, the memory of these independentminded and strong-willed Begums of Bhopal, who fought for and inspired thousands of women during and after their lifetime, has survived. All four of them practiced Islam, but their religion and gender never came in the way of their vehement rejection of the constraints imposed by a patriarchal society. We find a lot of instances when they invoked Tradition or interpreted the tenets of their faith according to their suitability and desire. Their long rule was characterized

by benevolence and a pioneering reformist zeal, which brought radical changes in the cultural, educational, and political structure of Bhopal for centuries to come.

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Corporate Social Responsibility: A way towards Women Empowerment

Apurva Setia*

A stark urban and rural divide is still one of the major issues in our country despite a significant improvement in the business environment post globalization and liberalization. To bridge this gap and to make the corporate sector more involved with the development sector, the government came up with statutory obligations under Corporate Social Responsibility in Section 135 of the Companies Act in 2013. India also earned the label of the first country to formalize the role of CSR and make it mandatory for eligible companies to spend 2 percent of their net profits on social development. This new bill with specific recommendations for CSR spending took many companies by surprise. Seen as corporate philanthropy till 1990s, CSR is now considered as a source of innovation as well as management strategy to gain competitive advantage. As a concept it has been the focus of various deliberations and research over the years and has evolved through different stages, like community engagement, socially responsible production and socially responsible employee relations. Today, it is no longer a sporadic corporate philanthropic activity but an area of regular spending linked with definite budgets. So where should the spending go to and how should it benefit society and the company itself?

Hon'ble Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, in her maiden speech on Budget 2019-20, quoted Swami Vivekananda's letter

to Swami Ramakrishna, "there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly with one wing" [1] stating that India can make significant progress with greater participation of women by encouraging and facilitating the role of women in India's growth story.

Schedule VII of the Act defines 'promoting gender equality and empowering women' as a key area for corporate investment. The reason for this is simple: despite significant steps in economic growth and social development, India ranks 112 out of 153 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2020. Since 2006, the gap has gotten significantly wider. [2]

Women are central to the entire development process. The economic empowerment of women is an essential prerequisite for social and economic development of a country. Yet, India's declining female labor force participation has been the subject of discussion for years. According to McKinsey Global Institute, progress towards gender parity in economic participation could boost India's GDP by 16 per cent by 2025 [3], not to mention the human and social gains that are incalculable. The corporate world is a key partner to India's journey towards this goal. The global consensus is clear: When

* Department of Commerce, Maitreyi College

we support women, we support growth and prosperity for all. Some of India's largest companies have been supporting this movement.

Project Shakti: Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)

Project Shakti is HUL's initiative which aims to financially empower women in rural India. These women entrepreneurs (called Shakti Ammas) learn several aspects of running a retail business, from inventory to distribution management. They are also introduced to HUL products, which they sell. The company has a team of rural sales promoters who help Shakti Ammas in managing their business. This includes help in business basics, troubleshooting and training in negotiation and communication skills. The model has also been adapted and evolved in other countries such as Vietnam, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and has created livelihood opportunities for more than 80,000 women across India. It has helped Shakti Entrepreneurs gain selling skills, become self-confident and learn how to run a business effectively. Most importantly, their interventions have helped in building and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset amongst Shakti Entrepreneurs. [4]

Project Sakhi: Hindustan Zinc (HZL)

Sakhi- Women's Empowerment program is a flagship CSR initiative of HZL which is geared towards mobilizing rural women into self-help groups (SHGs), developing their capacities around leadership, skill development, savings, entrepreneurship and contributing to women's socio-economic empowerment. Some of these

groups are also being trained in various skills such as tailoring, embroidery etc. The idea is to mobilize rural women into SHGs, promoting women run federations and developing their capabilities regarding governance, fiscal management, running micro-enterprises, etc. The program aims to set up more than 2,000 SHGs over the next 5 years, across 174 villages. [5]

Project Prerna: Mahindra & Mahindra

Project Prerna aims to empower women working in the agriculture sector. It is based on the insight that women are often the invisible face of agriculture in India. There are 100 million women many of whom work long hours in back-breaking tasks in the fields, often with tools and equipment not suited for them. Despite these challenges, they are usually paid less than their male counterparts. It aims to address these issues with the promotion of women-friendly, efficient and ergonomic farm tools and equipment through well-designed and targeted interventions. The project aims to increase efficiency and productivity of farm women, which will, in turn, lead to sustainable development in the agricultural sector. Mahindra has collaborated with Central Institute of Women in Agriculture (ICAR-CIWA) and PRADAN for effective implementation and outreach of the program. ICAR-CIWA is at the core of Prerna, providing technical support and essential skills training in the efficient use of women-friendly farm tools. [6]

Women economic empowerment programme: ITC

ITC believes that economic empowerment of women transforms

them into powerful agents of change. This programme aims to provide women with opportunities to earn independent incomes, strengthening their position as decision-makers in their families and in their communities. It has forged an empowering partnership with rural women - those living in extreme poverty and are the only earning members of their families and having no assets or regular incomes. With training and financial support, these women who remain the invisible backbone of their households and communities can take-up self-employment activities, set up small businesses or join together to form self-help groups or micro-enterprises. Their earnings and savings mean better education, nutrition and health for their children - a vital investment in the future of their communities. This initiative has provided a range of gainful employment opportunities to over 64,000 poor women cumulatively, supported with capacity building, financial assistance by way of loans and grants and access to sustainable sources of income through non-farm livelihood opportunities. [7]

Swayam: CEAT Tyres

Swayam, a first of its kind Women Empowerment Program, launched in 2014, looks beyond the conventional livelihood training. Instead, it focuses on promoting Gender Equality by encouraging women to pursue a career in driving, an otherwise male dominated industry. The training focuses not only on driving skills but also self-defense, which lends the drivers confidence to handle potentially unsafe scenarios. They also undergo training in allied skills like spoken English, customer

service skills, first aid and training in mechanics to help them stand out as professional drivers. The program has got immense support from the Transport Sector, encouraging these women to work as taxi drivers, in valet parking services, in driver-on-call services, school van drivers, as instructors, auto rickshaw drivers and two-wheeler delivery personnel, amongst others. [8]

It is safe to say that CSR has been hailed as new means to address gender inequality, particularly by facilitating women's empowerment. It provides an opportunity of great significance in India, given that it's one of the first in the world to make it compulsory for companies to invest their profits in CSR initiatives. While there are still many obstacles to equality, corporate India is starting to show greater sensitivity to the fact that companies need to recognize women as legitimate employees, supply chain members, and customer segments. With a majority of BSE 100 companies reporting CSR initiatives for promoting women's economic empowerment, there is an obvious interest in and commitment to this issue. However, the quantum of spending still remains relatively low. According to the new report by UNDP (2009) [9] the top 100 companies in the country spend only 4 % of their total expenditure on CSR activities on women's economic empowerment. Most of the CSR spending goes to complimentary development activities like hunger, education, poverty, environment sustainability and rural development.

The misconception with women empowerment schemes is the perception

that any action done for them will be empowering. Among several other gaps, there is a lack of focus on critical aspects of women's economic empowerment life cycle. Most programmes are focused on "prepare and enter" stage through career counselling, self-help groups, and vocational training. But a lack of support during the later stages through financial and digital literacy is missing. Since there is growing awareness and criticism about gender washing, companies need to ensure that efforts are directed towards addressing the real needs. It's important for various stakeholders to work together so that various CSR initiatives can focus on the entire life cycle of women's economic empowerment and also address attitudes of community members, collaborate with schools, colleges, workplace to provide a conducive ecosystem for women.

Conclusion

Six years after the Companies Act, 2013 made it compulsory for eligible companies to contribute their profits to social development, talk of CSR, is everywhere. The amendment must be given some credit if the intention of the government was to transfer resources from the corporate sector to augment its own social development goals and programmes. But if the aim was to generate business responsibility towards all stakeholders, there might be a long way to go. By equating money with responsibility, the act seemed to imply that all that was needed to be socially responsible was a contribution. The whole issue is whether making CSR a legal compulsion to ensure that a corporate

does its duty towards the society in which it lives, its ultimate stakeholder, is working or corporates are just treating it as a "check the box" exercise rather than looking at innovative ways to generate a return from doing social good?

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Individual Social Responsibility: Life in times of COVID-19

Shiza Parveen*
Apurva Setia#

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus also popularly known as COVID-19 is a virus that started spreading in the month of November 2019. The first case in India was reported on 30th January 2020 and since then it has been spreading rapidly. The count reached above 2 Lakh by the first week of June 2020 in our country even when the lockdown was announced at an early stage. The pandemic has forced the world to come to a complete standstill.

In these trying times, many underprivileged members of our society have been badly hit and are bearing the brunt of the crisis. The impact of the lockdown is turning to be immense, robbing daily wage workers of their earnings and threatening to take away everything they had managed to save.

While the government has announced a sufficiently large economic stimulus package with the aim of building an Atmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India, there are additional 3 major metrics which the world seems to be undertaking to deal with the ongoing Pandemic - Corporate Social Responsibility, Institutional Social Responsibility and Individual Social Responsibility.

Corporate Social Responsibility commonly known as CSR refers to the social responsibilities undertaken by corporates and businesses. This is mandatory to be undertaken by most of the companies to contribute towards societal problems and give back to the society in a positive manner. Institutional Social Responsibility

is undertaken by educational institutions to act as a socially responsible entity and give back to the society in terms of solving prevailing societal problems. Another form of social responsibility is Individual Social Responsibility which recognizes the duty of an individual and helps them to understand and undertake actions that will help benefit the society as a whole.

While quarantines and lockdowns have become ubiquitous, many are volunteering their time and resources, finding ways to lend a hand during the outbreak and assuming their Individual Social Responsibility in one way or other. It's clear that the Pandemic is likely to have long lasting economic and social impact and that we all have a part to play.

A survey was conducted to discern how the privileged section of the society is extending hands to help the needy in such a crisis, be it our own housemaid, driver, society watchman and other needy people, in monetary or non-monetary ways. Another survey was conducted to know about the lifestyle changes people adopted in order to help with the household work because as the saying goes 'help begins at home' like helping your mother with household chores, helping your younger siblings with studies, teaching your parents to become tech-savvy, and many more. Each effort counts as a help, as it is rightly said 'no work is big or small' or 'no donation ever goes waste'.

* B.Com.-III Year, Maitreyi College, Delhi Univ.

Department of Commerce, Maitreyi College

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The main objective was to access the social role performed by various individuals around us akin to CSR/ISR in the face of crisis due to COVID-19.
2. To know the various forms (monetary and non-monetary) in which individuals are extending help to the underprivileged section of the society.
3. To gather information about how the lockdown brought changed the day-to-day routine of the male population at their home and how much are they able to help with the household chores now.

Relevance of The Study

The study for this research revolved around the social responsibilities individuals were undertaking during the first two months of the lockdown period. With the advent of COVID-19 in India, the Government took several measures for the safety of the citizens of the nation along with trying to contain the spread of this deadly virus. The main and most important step taken by the government was implementing a nationwide lockdown and restricting the movement of all the citizens to implement social distancing.

With this lockdown being implemented on a short notice, the movement of people got severely curtailed. No citizen was allowed to leave the house other than for medical reasons or buying essentials. People were not allowed to call their part time household helpers like maids, drivers, gardeners, car cleaners etc. Businesses were forced to exercise work from home option. Schools and colleges

were shut and e-learning was implemented by all the educational institutions. Daily wagers, rickshaw pullers and people like junk dealers were the ones who were badly hit because of the lockdown with meagre savings and being miles away from their hometowns. Factory gates and markets of non-essential goods were ordered to shut down, rendering casual laborers and workers jobless. The Government appealed to the employers and households not to fire their workers and continue to give them their salaries and wages. The Government also announced schemes, distributed food packets and provided other help to the needy but the problem was of such a volume that it required help and support from the public in general too.

A research was thus undertaken to know the role of Individuals in the first two months of complete lockdown with no relaxations available. Besides, when the household helpers stopped coming to work and children with their continuous demands at home especially with restrictions all around, it became imperative to know whether the male members of the family gave a helping hand towards the various household chores and discharged their responsibility at home.

Scope of The Study

The survey was mainly for the privileged section of the society it was divided into 2 categories:

1. Firstly, the main segment of the study was focused on the earning members of the family who were in a position to extend financial help to the needy people in the society.
2. For the second part of the study was based on responses from the male members of the family.

Proposition of The Study

After conducting the survey, following statements could be inferred:

1. People discharged their social responsibility wholeheartedly and helped the needy people around on a regular basis.
2. Male members assumed an extended role at home and helped with the household chores regularly.

Methodology

Keeping in mind the core objectives of the study, it required us to use the primary data. The data was collected with the help of two Google forms through a non-random sampling procedure hoping that those selected for the study bear likeness to the larger group. Thus, a convenience sampling procedure was used, that is, using whatever was immediately available.

The main and first Google form was based on the Individual Social Responsibility discharged by the privileged section of the society and thus the form was to be filled up by the earning members of the family, male or female, who were in the position to have their own resources to provide help to the needy.

Second form was largely focused to cater to the third objective stated above and focused only on the male members of the family of all age groups. They were required to fill up with a premise that they do not indulge in or help so much with the household chores during normal times.

Questions in the Google form designed were majorly of three types:

1. Open ended questions allowing respondents to provide the response in his/her words. This information was expected to be complete and accurate.

2. Restricted questions with ordered alternatives.
3. Partially open ended questions in which the last alternative was open ended wherein the respondent could record the answer, if necessary.

Statistical Tools : Data so collected were arranged as frequency tables with absolute numbers (count), percentages and pie/bar charts for a visual display.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

(A) Individual Social Responsibility

Number of respondents (n) = 154

The survey was taken by earning members from various households.

1) Sample Characteristics

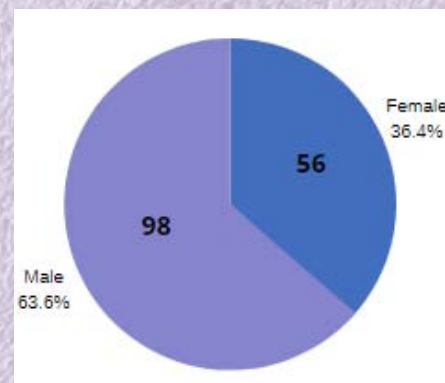
a) Age of Respondents

Age (in years)	Count	Percentages
Below 20	15	9.7 %
20 - 30	31	20.2 %
30 - 40	27	17.5 %
40 & Above	81	52.6 %
Total	154	100 %

Table 1

The majority of respondents- 52.6% (81) were of age group 40 & above.

b) Gender Classification



Graph 1

The survey consisted of both males and females as respondents.

c) Employment Status

Employment Status	Count	Percentages
Currently Employed	119	77.3 %
Not Employed	35	22.7 %
Total	154	100 %

Table 2

The majority of the respondents- 77.3% (119) were currently employed and 22.7% (35) were unemployed.

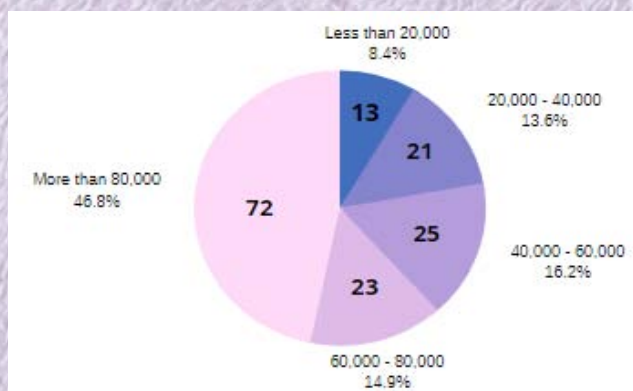
d) Marital Status

Marital Status	Count	Percentages
Single	42	27.3 %
Married	111	72.1 %
Divorced	0	0 %
Widow/Widower	1	0.6 %
Total	154	100 %

Table 3

Majority of the respondents- (111) 72.1 % were married. The mean family size was 5.

e) Family Income:



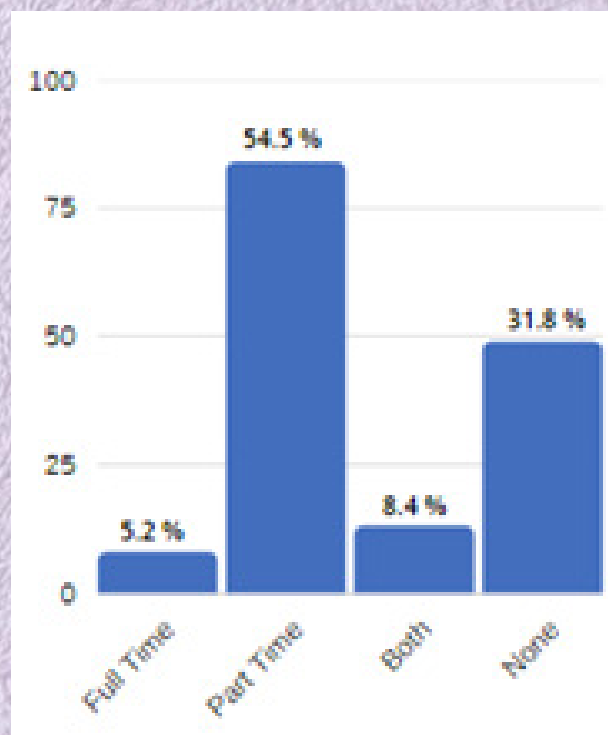
Graph 2

Majority of the respondents - 46.8 % (72) belong to the high income group (more than 80,000 per month).

2) Domestic Help before lockdown:

Nature of Domestic Help	Count	Percentages
Full Time	8	5.2 %
Part Time	84	54.5 %
Both	13	8.4 %
None	49	31.8 %
Total	154	100 %

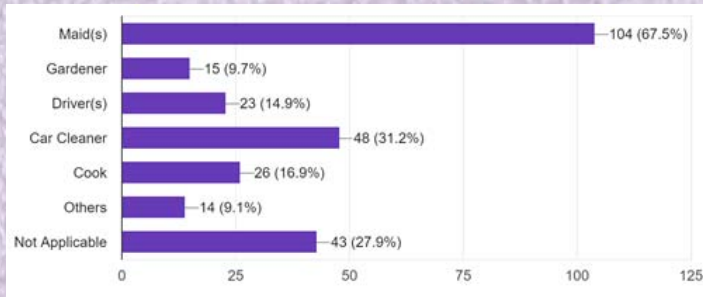
Table 4



Graph 3

5.2 % of the sample size employed full time domestic help only, whereas with the highest percentage i.e. 54.5 % of people employed part time helpers. 31.8 % had no domestic help at all and only 8.4 % had both part time and full time domestic helpers.

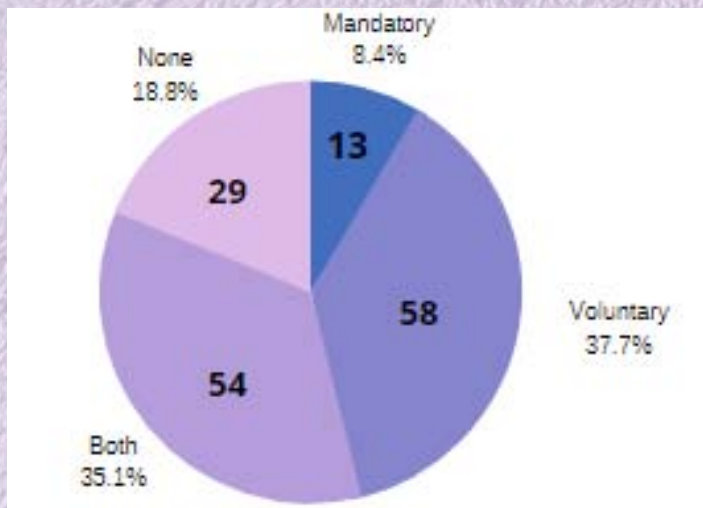
3) Types of Domestic Help employed:



Graph 4

Majority of respondents - 67.5 % (104) respondents employed maids, 31.2 % (48) employed car cleaners and 16.9 % (26) employed cooks.

4) Help provided by the households:



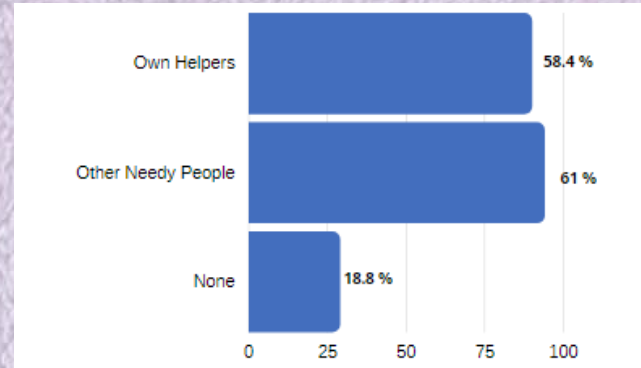
Graph 5

Respondents were asked to disclose which type of help they extended:

- **Mandatory:** under a mandate/ directive/ appeal from the employer
- **Voluntary:** If the help extended was not of mandatory nature.
- **Both:** Includes both mandatory and voluntary help.
- **None:** No help was provided at all.

Majority of respondents – 81.1% (125) provided help in some form while 18.9 % (29) respondents did not provide any help.

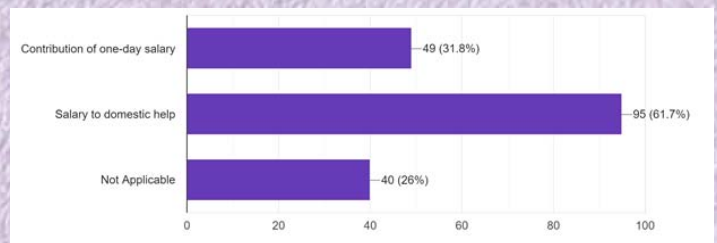
5) Individual Social Responsibility beneficiaries



Graph 6

Majority of respondents - 58.4 % helped their household helpers and 61 % of respondents helped other needy people also while 18.8 % didn't extend in any kind of help.

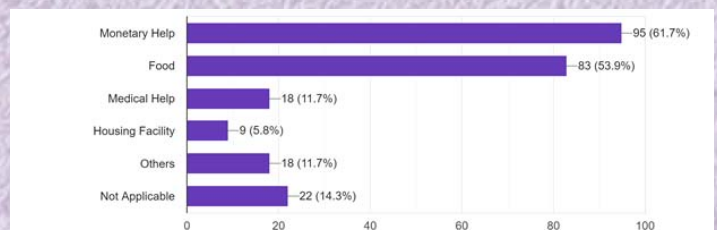
6) Nature of Mandatory help:



Graph 7

Responses showed that 49 respondents out of 119 employed made their contribution in the form of their one-day salary. A wide majority (95 respondents out of total sample of 154) gave salary to their domestic workers even when they were not working. For currently not employed or not employing domestic help (40,26%) this question was not relevant.

7) Nature of Voluntary help:



Graph 8

It was found that respondents provided help in a variety of ways, most important being monetary help (61.5 %) and food (53.9 %)

8) Frequency of help:

Frequency of help	Count	Percentages
One Time	57	45.6 %
Regular	48	38.4 %
Occasional	20	16 %
Total	125	100 %

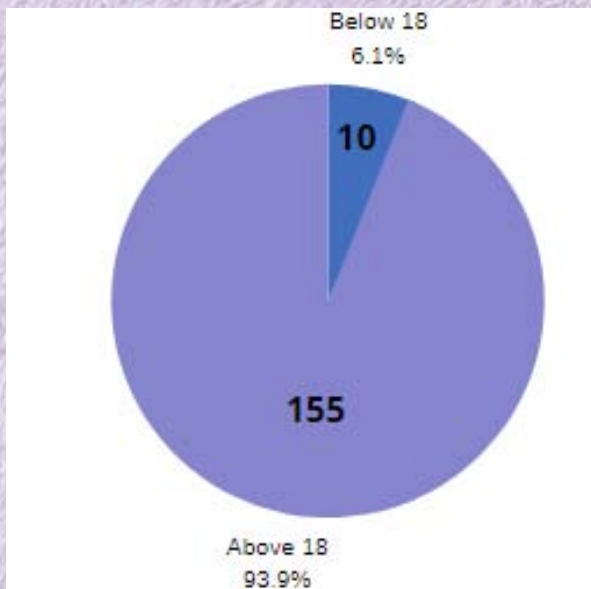
Table 5

Majority of the respondents- 45.6 %(57) indulged in this kind of help one time only but 38.4 %(48) regularly helped. Only 16 % (20) of respondents helped occasionally.

(B) Quarantine Activities

In this survey, focus was on the male members of the family to know how much they helped with the household chores during this lockdown and discharged their duties in their own house. No. of Respondents for the survey was 165

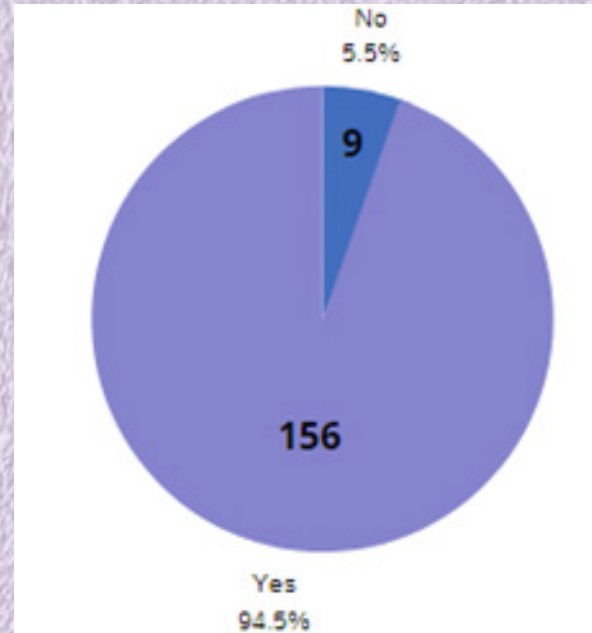
1) Age of Respondents



Graph 9

6.1%(10) respondents were below 18 and 93.9 % (155) were above 18. In this survey, the composition was only of the male population completely

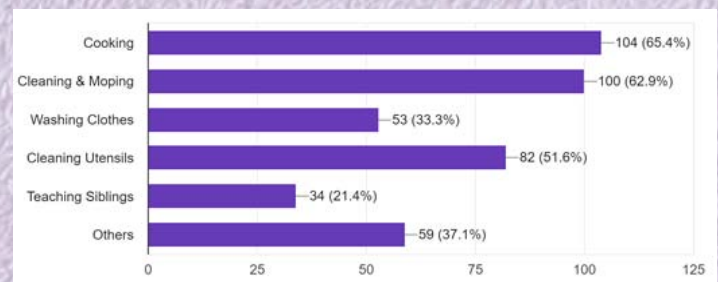
2) Contribution towards household chores



Graph 10

Respondents were asked if they tried to help with the household chores or not. 94.5 % (156) of respondents helped with the household chores in this lockdown with no domestic helpers around. Only 5.5 % (9) disagreed with contributing towards household chores.

3) Type of household help:



Graph 11

Majority of respondents - 65.4 % engaged in cooking, 62.9% helped in cleaning, 51.6% helped in cleaning utensils while 33.3% helped in washing clothes.

Discussion

COVID-19 is far more than just a health crisis. Economists around the world are calling it the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression. Almost no country has been spared and it has had a catastrophic effect all around the world. It has also brought huge personal, economic, social damage and has upended countless lives.

While the pandemic has overwhelmed the entire world, the poor and vulnerable class seems to be badly hit, facing a hard time even for basic survival resulting in a lot of chaos and panic. Government relief measures have fallen short because of the scale of distress. With such a situation arising, it is evident that as global citizens we all have a role to play. The world is coming together to fight the pandemic bringing governments, organizations, industries and individuals together. It is inspiring charity among millions and the outpour of support sparked by this shared challenge has been exceptional. This lockdown has helped a great number of citizens to understand their social responsibility and fulfilling it by giving back to the society they live in.

Thus, to know how the citizens of this country are helping their fellow citizens in times of need, two different kinds of surveys were conducted.

Keeping in mind the objectives of this Research Project, following inferences are made:

1. The first survey was solely based to know about Individual Social Responsibility undertaken by families to help the needy around them. It was filled by 154 respondents. The main points analyzed by this survey are summarized as follows -

- a) It is evident that a large number of families extended their help and contributed to the individuals and communities affected by the outbreak.
- b) It is also seen that the respondents helped not only the domestic helpers or workers who worked for them but also other vulnerable individuals and who had no basic means to survive. The contribution was in both monetary and non - monetary terms. It involved help of all kinds from giving salary regularly to their workers even during lockdown times or giving food, medical help, housing facilities and many others. It was also observed that the help was extended not only once but many times, repeatedly.
- c) Another observation is while most of the respondents tried to help and contribute in one way or the, there were still a few families who didn't make any contribution at all.

Thus, it is evident that the first survey fulfilled the first two objectives of the research.

2. The second survey was undertaken to understand how the lockdown has changed the daily routine of the male population and their inclusion in household chores, keeping in mind that a majority of male population in India don't usually help with the household chores. It was filled by only the male members of various families and the sample size was 165. The following inferences were made:

- a) It is seen that the respondents of almost all age groups were willing to help with the household chores.
- b) The respondents helped in all kinds of activities from cleaning, cooking, washing to teaching their siblings/ children and many others.

The pandemic has increased the amount of domestic work needed at home. Because of the risk of bringing infection into the home, the workload cannot be outsourced. Quarantine at home can perhaps be a time to understand and distribute tasks more equitably. The survey shows us that the burden is being shared to some extent. The silver lining of the lockdown is the male help with household chores and other responsibilities like cooking, cleaning utensils, teaching siblings etc. Most partners and sons are helping out more than usual. Many of them are seeing this as a new opportunity to learn. That is how the third objective of the research is concluded.

While data have focused on infection rates, market losses and unemployment rates, COVID-19 has highlighted the

importance of our contribution to the society and the burden of unpaid work. So many things that we have taken for granted have now changed. And although the 'new normal' has created various limitations and inconveniences, we're all in this together. Aren't we?

End Note

Despite their increase in work force, women around the world take on majority of the unpaid labor at home including child care and household chores. With the Covid-19 lockdown, gender equations have taken on new dynamics. The wall between the world and home is crumbling and status quo is being redefined. We are all slowly becoming aware that survival in this grim time depends on cooking, cleaning, and care tasks as much as it does on making money. With the domestic help gone, families are finding themselves locked up indoors, compelled to face the reality of everyday chores that have been conveniently assigned to women for decades. Creating value for unpaid care work must begin at home, with families and individuals. Maybe this lockdown is our best bet to undo the lockdown on gender roles. The important question is- when all of this is over, what will a post-COVID world look like for both men and women? Will it be different than what it already was? Will people still lend a helping hand to the needy? Will men go back to their jobs and stop contributing to household chores? This calls for an introspection and opens up further scope for research.

Assessment of the Rights of an Indian Woman -the Right to Life and Dignity: An Overview

Prarthana Judith Herald*

Introduction

The paper attempts to deal with the concept of women's rights in India today with broader emphasis on their right to life and dignity which is the cornerstone of a fundamental right. The main theme of this paper is to highlight the plight of women in India by taking into account the real life instances and evaluating it between the time period of 2009-2015 respectively and the data for which was collected from surveys, newspapers and journals. Much of the analysis was done with the help of newspapers like 'The Hindu', articles from India Today and data accumulated from National Crime Records Bureau.

The major aim of this paper is to sensitize the reader about the current happenings in the country with facts and figure that would offer a backbone to the above argument, and the research result also represents an eye opening data.

Review of Literature

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states some basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled to, there are 30 declarations of human rights, here stating Article 2 wherein "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty".

Something similar to this declaration can be found in article 15(2) of the Indian Constitution which elaborates "that no Indian citizen can be discriminated against on basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth. It states that no citizen shall be denied access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment."

The paper concisely attempts to study 4 key areas that challenge the rights of women and analyze the data for the same.

The World Health Organization (WHO) that defines sexual violence as: 'Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work'.

* BA(H) Political Science, 3rd Year, JMC

1. Rape

The life of a woman and a child is precious , but the increase in rape cases today makes one question the quintessence of Human rights. One can say that the reason of this rise in rape cases remains ambiguous since there are several underlying factors associated with it given the fact that 94% of the offenders are known to the family, and in order to hide the public shaming in most cases the family members discourage the victim to report a case. Another issue which is a humongous problem in India is illegal child labor. As stated by 'THE HINDU 'on April 12 , 2019 that a 12 year old girl brought from a remote village in Jharkhand was abused and victimized by a couple living in Vikaspuri, where she was often beaten by the owner and deprived of food and care, thus a step was taken by The Delhi Commission for Women who rescued her after finding her in a traumatized state.

It is heart-wrenching to find out that the country and the government is doing nothing for the illegal child labor persistent in so many households, despite of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, amended in 2016 where a "Child" is defined as any person below the age of 15, and the CLPR Act prohibits employment of a "Child" in any employment including as a domestic help and which also declares such an act as a cognizable criminal offence. The problem here lies in the implementation of the act and the state machinery such as the police who are not consistent in their work and often do not report such incidents.

2. Dowry Death

The Indian criminal laws were comprehensively amended to include dowry as a punishable offence. Section 304B was added to the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ("IPC"), which made dowry death a specific offence punishable with a minimum sentence of imprisonment for 7 years and a maximum imprisonment for life. According to the Times Of India dated on April 2, 2019, it stated there was a news regarding the starvation death of a 27-year-old woman from Kerala. The postmortem revealed that the, woman was reduced to a bag of bones and weighed a mere twenty kgs. The in-laws admitted to having fed her only rice and sugar soaked in water. The girl's family alleged that this was because their dowry demand of rupees 2 lakhs was not met.

As per by the Press Information Bureau, The highest number of dowry deaths during the last three years consecutively have been reported from the state of Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, Uttar Pradesh reported 2244 dowry deaths(Sec 304 B of IPC) in 2012, 2335 dowry deaths in 2013 & 2469 dowry deaths in 2014(Provisional) which is the highest in the country for that year.

3. Women Trafficking

The definition of trafficking can be found in the various sections of ITPA, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956. Section 5 speaks about" procuring, taking and even inducing a person for the sake of prostitution". According to this section, even attempt to procure and attempt to take or cause a person to carry on prostitution amounts to trafficking. Therefore 'trafficking' has been given a broad scope. As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the number of cases registered under Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), 1956 in 2010, 2011 and 2012 are 2,499; 2,435 and 2,563

respectively. According to the Press Information Bureau, The Ministry of Women and Child Development is also implementing “Ujjawala” – a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-integration and Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation. As on date, 238 projects including 126 Protective and Rehabilitative Homes have been supported under the Scheme. These rehabilitative centers are given financial support for providing shelter and basic amenities such as food, clothing, medical care, legal aid, education in the case the victims are children, as well as for undertaking vocational training and income generation activities to provide the victims with alternate livelihood option.

4. Domestic Violence

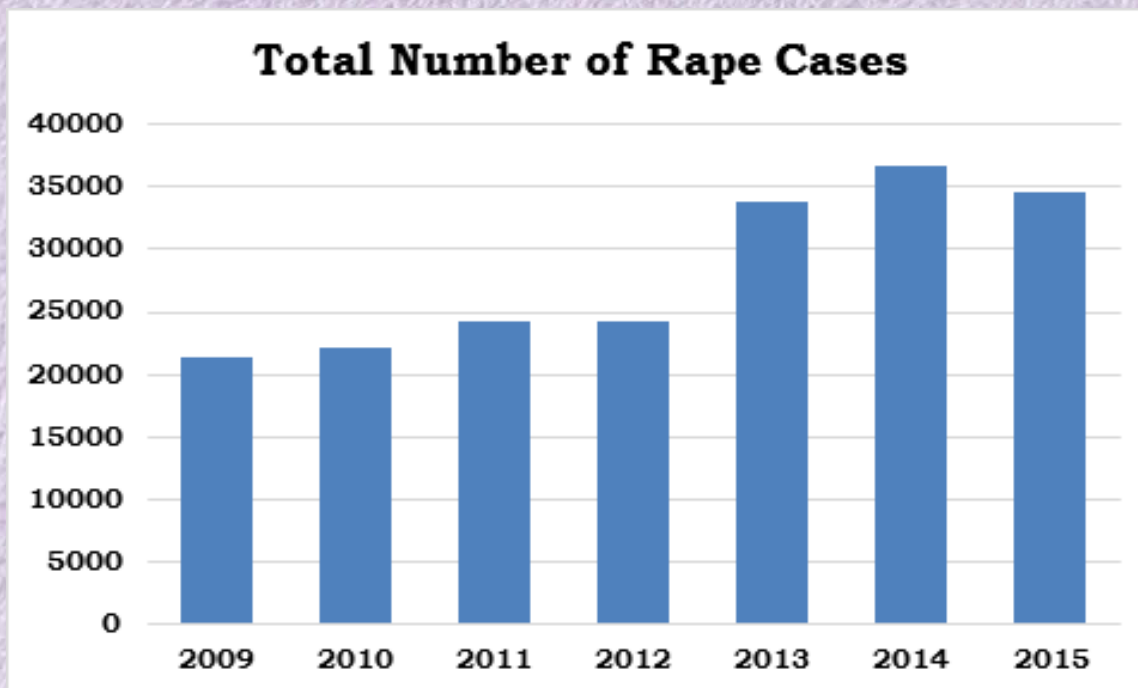
Domestic violence ,defined by the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 as "physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse against women by a partner or family member residing in a joint family", plagues the lives of many women in India.

According to the study conducted by National centre for Biotechnology information ,USA the study estimates that 4 in 10 Indian women (when surveyed about multiple forms of abuse) report experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime and 3 in 10 report experiencing domestic violence in the past year. In addition to highlighting the high domestic violence frequency of occurrence, the studies in this review also emphasized on the trauma faced by Indian women through its impact on mental, physical, sexual, and reproductive health.

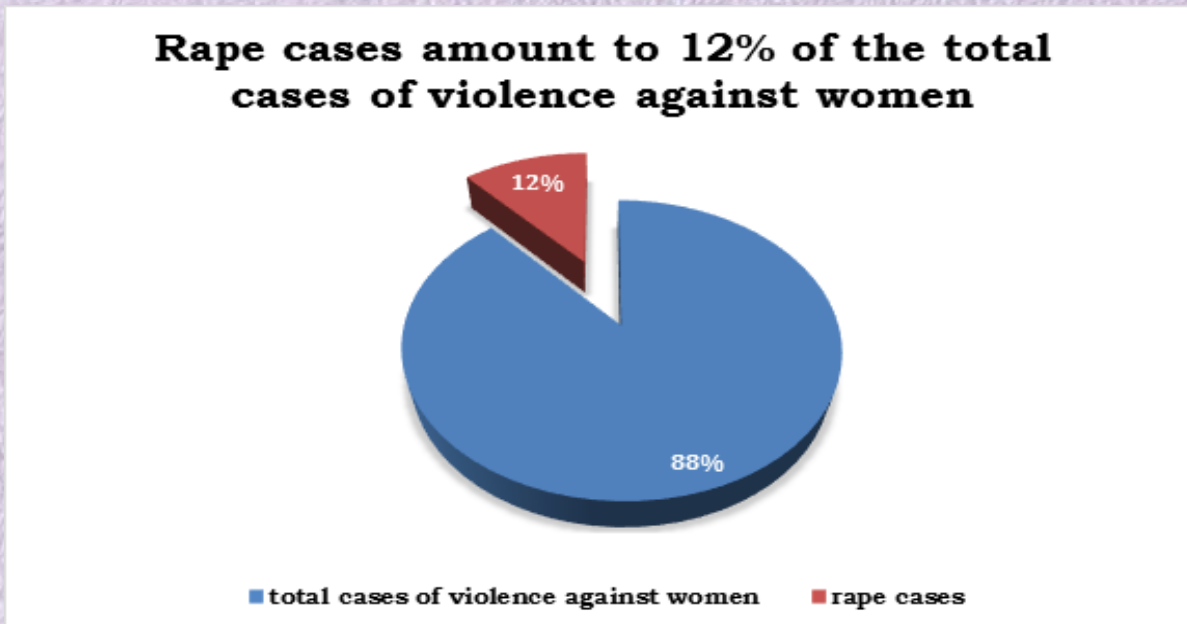
Methodology

The method employed for the collection of data was through newspapers articles as mentioned earlier like The Times of India, The Hindu. Statistics were also taken from press information bureau government of India, and the National Crime Records Bureau.

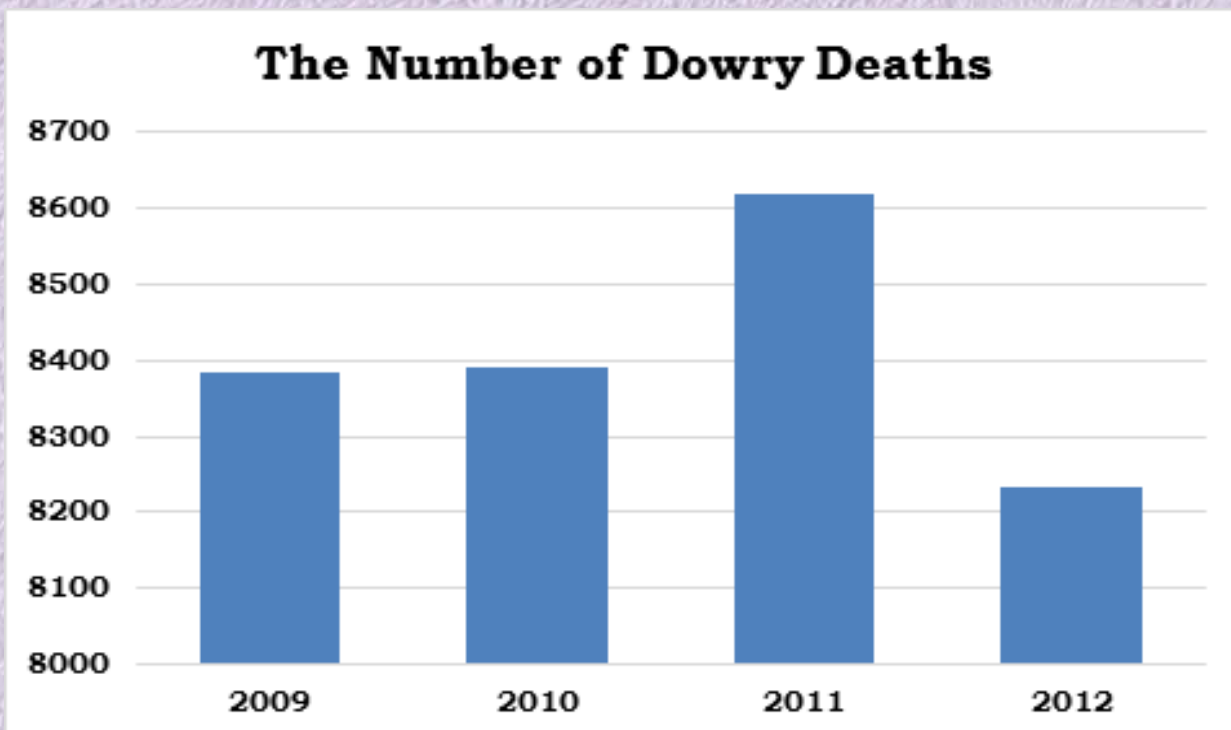
Findings / Results



The above chart was made by accumulating data from the National Crime Records Bureau. The chart shows that there has been an increase in the number of rape cases with the subsequent year that is from 2009-2015. While also noting the fact that Feminists in India have engaged with law and have been successful in the context of laws relating to violence against women, through the 1980's women demanded legislations of various kinds which even proved to be successful and their efforts were able to bring considerable amount of change example being Sati and Dowry. Even Ratna Kapur in her book *Feminist Terrains in Legal Domains* remarks that recognizing women's experiences in different areas can help deconstruct the hegemonic nature of law.



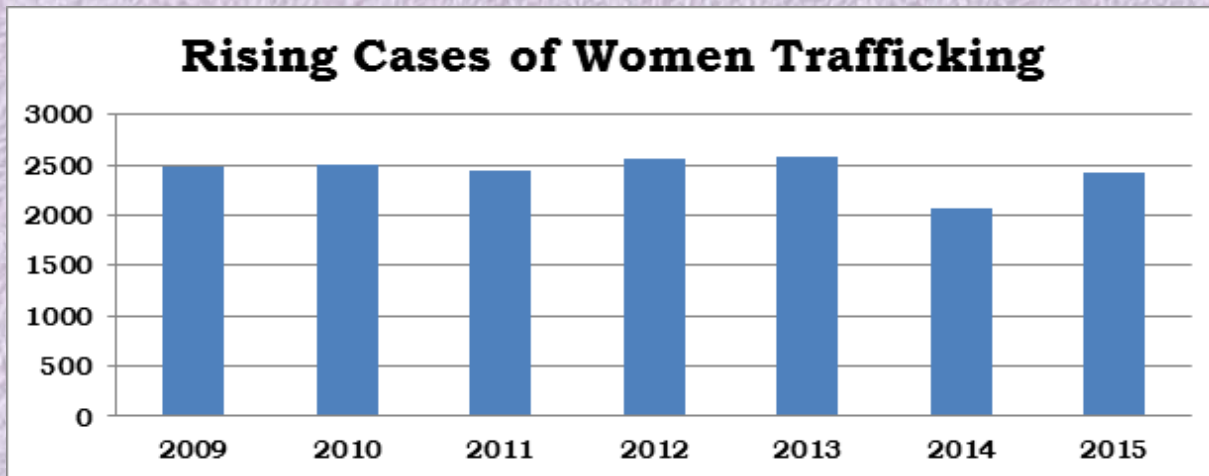
(According to the Times of India report)



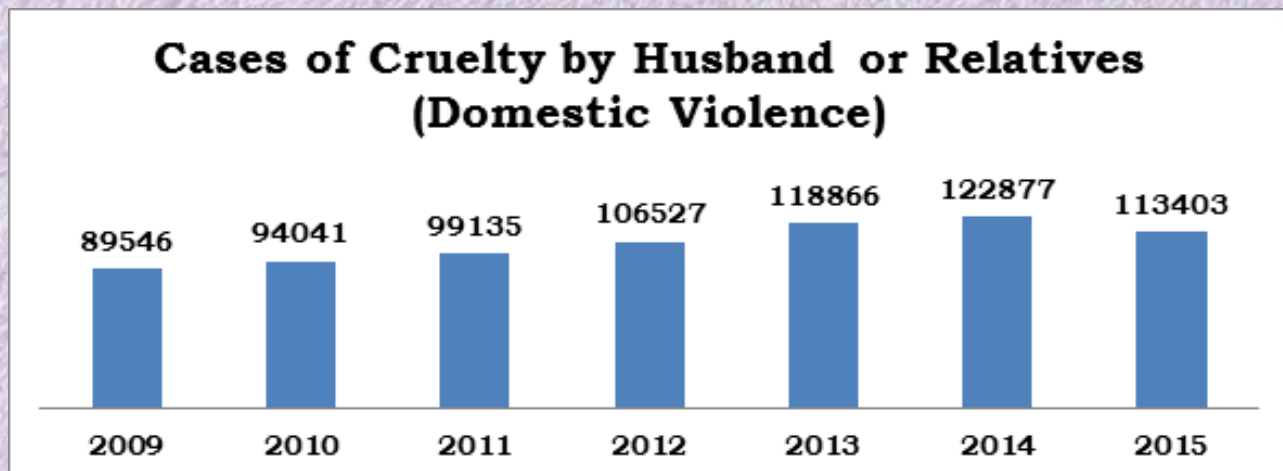
Dowry deaths rose from about 19 per day in 2001 to 21 per day in 2016. While these statistics are worrying, there is a great deal of variation in the incidence of “dowry deaths” across regions and over time.

It is indeed alarming that the rise in dowry deaths is unabated despite greater stringency of anti-dowry laws. In 1961, the Dowry Prohibition Act made giving and taking of dowry, its abetment or the demand for it an offence punishable with imprisonment and fine or without the latter. (Edlund, 2006)

The above chart was made by accumulating data from the National Crime Records Bureau. Here there were 8172,8383,8391,8618 and 8233 dowry deaths reported in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. One can clearly see a rise in the number of dowry deaths in 2011.



The above chart was made by accumulating data from the National Crime Records Bureau. One can note that there has been a steady increase in the case of women trafficking though in 2014 there has been a slight decrease. There were 2474,2499,2435,2563,2579,2070 and 2424 cases of women trafficking in 2009,2010,2011,2012,2013,2014 and 2015 respectively. In the 'HINDU' dated 10 February 2020, the NCRB report states that "Only 82 trafficking survivors have been awarded relief in the last 8 years "(which is a very recent report of the current state of the country)



The above chart was made by accumulating data from the National Crime Records Bureau, and Press Information Bureau. One can see an increasing trend in the number of cases against women meted out by their husbands or relatives. There were 89546, 94041, 99135, 106527, 118866, 122877 and 113403 cases in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. The highest was seen in 2014.

Discussion

Human rights in the ancient world

It was the Magna Carta (1215 AD) issued by King John of England was one of the earliest document on human rights. Later came the two major revolutions that occurred during the 18th century, in the United States (1776) and in France (1789), leading to the adoption of the United States Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen respectively

In the contemporary era

It was in the contemporary era that the provisions of the United Nations Charter provided a basis for the development of international human rights protection. The preamble of the charter provides that the members "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the equal rights of men and women".

According to the International Journal of Legal Information, "Socialism has proved that genuine, not illusory, individual freedom can be achieved only if society and the State consistently carry out a series of wide ranging measures. It is not enough to proclaim freedom. What is vital is to provide conditions in which all can exercise it."

The UDHR covers two broad sets of rights, one known as Civil and Political Rights, and the other known as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and that both sets of rights must be protected as the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." It is the responsibility of governments to protect the human rights proclaimed by the declaration thus under the provisions of Civil and Political Rights, all governments are to protect the life, liberty and security of their citizens, should guarantee that no-one is enslaved and that no-one is subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention or to torture, where everyone is entitled to a fair trial.

On the other hand under Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, all governments are expected to try progressively to improve the living conditions of their citizens.

Conclusion

The above findings indicate an exponential increase in the incidences of rape, number of dowry deaths, women and child trafficking and domestic violence,(which are some of the parameters taken to evaluate women's right to life and dignity in India that this paper concisely deals with), which clearly represents that the state might offer rights for safety and dignity of women but in the ultimate analysis most of the times, there is a loophole in its practicality that makes one question the rights that are granted to the women of this country since with such increasing crimes meted out against women how can they have right to life and dignity also keeping in mind that India was not only a statutory body to the UDHR,1948 but even signed and ratified it, which makes it legally binding to provide equal rights to even women , and which can

also be viewed in the above arguments that Article 15 of the Indian constitution is very similar to Article 2 of the UDHR, owing to the fact that the Indian constitution was much influenced by the UDHR. At the same time to also note the fact, that there are sometimes unambiguous factors underlying cases that challenge women's right to life and dignity for instance, the United Nations has a long history of addressing women's human rights and much progress has been made in securing women's rights across the world in recent decades. However, important gaps remain and women's realities are constantly changing, with new manifestations of discrimination against them regularly emerging. Some groups of women face additional forms of discrimination based on their age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, health status, marital status, education, disability and socioeconomic status, among other grounds. These intersecting forms of discrimination must be taken into account when developing measures and responses to combat discrimination against women.

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हिन्दी भाग



एक चिन्त्री जीवन के नाम

ॐ

तुम चले गए। जाकर लौटना अच्छा होता है लेकिन जाकर न लौटना बहुत खराब लगता है। तुम्हारे जाने के बाद मेरे अंदर कुछ घाव बन रहे हैं। मुझे अंदर ही अंदर दर्द होने का एहसास होता है। मैं परेशान हूँ लेकिन नहीं जान पा रही कि इससे निजात कैसे मिले? क्या मुझे इन घावों के कारण का पता लगाना चाहिए या मैं पहले से इनके कारणों को जानती हूँ? मैं अनजान कैसे बन सकती हूँ? अगर लापरवाही की, तो बात बिगड़ जाएगी। मेरी जिंदगी को खुश रहने का हक है। इन घावों का इलाज करना जरूरी है...हाँ मैं इनका खुद से इलाज करूँगी।

मुझे किसी ने कहा कि आप इन घावों को लिखकर कम करो। कहानी लिखो या फिर कुछ और। मैंने लिखना कई साल पहले ही छोड़ दिया था। असल बात तो यह है कि मैं लिखने का हुनर नहीं जानती। इसलिए चिन्त्री लिख रही हूँ अपने दर्द को शब्दों में बताना आसान नहीं पर चिन्त्री इसे थोड़ा आसान कर सकती है। यह जो गुबार/दर्द/दुःख/अवसाद मन में रहने लगा है, इससे अपने मन का कमरा खाली करवाना चाहती हूँ। लिखना इसमें मदद कर सकता है। मैं लिखना तो जानती हूँ, पर लिखने के लिए पंक्तियाँ नहीं जुटा पाती। शब्द जानती हूँ पर शब्द, पंक्तियों में पिरो नहीं पाती। अब मैं क्या करूँ? इस असमंजस में यही चिन्त्री जीवन के नाम लिखना चाह रही हूँ।

भास्कर बहुत बहुत उदास रहने लगा है। उस हादसे के बाद... नहीं नहीं! मैं उस हादसे को याद नहीं करना चाहती। कहीं भीतर एक दर्द की टीस उभर आती है। तुम्हारे बिना हम दोनों अंधरे से हैं। भास्कर स्कूल गया है। उसके जाने के बाद भी मुझे यह एहसास होता है कि वह अपने अंदर रहने वाली उदासी का एक टुकड़ा घर पर मेरे लिए छोड़ कर जाता है। मैं जब भी उसके कमरे में जाकर चीजें ठीक से रखती हूँ, तब लगता है कि उसके कमरे में रहने वाली उदासी मुझ में धीरे-धीरे समा रही है। कोई

महक सी बनी रहती है उसके कमरे में। मुझे घबराहट होती है और मैं वापस अपनी खिड़की वाली जगह पर आकर बैठ जाती हूँ।

...भास्कर! ... मतलब सूरज! सूरज जिसमें रोशनी भरी है। जो उजवाला है, जो इस जमीन पर सबको जीवित रखे हुए है, जो अपने वक्त का पाबंद है, जो खुश है, जो फूलों-पत्तियों से प्रेम करता है, जो पारदर्शी किरणों का प्रेमी है...फिर मेरे इस कम उम्र के बच्चे के अंदर वह क्यों नहीं रहता? मैं क्या करूँ कि उसके दिमाग में झिलमिल रोशनी का एक दीप बना दूँ? मुझे कुछ तो करना ही होगा। मुझे उसके कमरे की उदासी को बाहर करने के उपाय सोचने होंगे...नहीं! मैं शायद गलत हूँ। कमरे से पहले मुझे भास्कर के दिल-दिमाग से उस उदासी को बाहर का रास्ता दिखाना होगा। हाँ, मैं कुछ करूँगी, जरूर! उसके अंदर बैठी उदासी की वजह तुम ही हो।

तुमको एक बार हम दोनों से बात करनी चाहिए थी। लोग कहते हैं कि लोग मरने के बाद उस नीले आसमान में चले जाते हैं, सितारे बन जाते हैं...लेकिन वास्तव में होता क्या है, ये मुझे नहीं पता। हम दोनों जो तुम्हारे पीछे छूट गए हैं, बस इतना जानते हैं कि तुम अब हम दोनों के बीच नहीं हो। और तुम्हारे न होने का गम हम दोनों के अंदर गहरा घाव बनाता जा रहा है। हम रात को आसमान में सितारे देखते हैं। हम एक दूसरे से बात किये बिना उन सितारों में तुम्हें खोजते हैं। इस उम्मीद में कि शायद तुम हम दोनों को दिख जाओ।

मैं उस दिन को याद कर के काँप जाती हूँ जब मैंने तुम्हारे गले में उस रस्सी को देखा था। एक मामूली सी रस्सी ने तुम्हारी जान ले ली। तुम्हारी मृत्यु की वजह वह रस्सी नहीं थी, बल्कि तुम्हारा दुःख को अपने मन में दबाकर रखना वजह थी। तुमने

* शोधाग्राम, जवाहर लाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय, नई दिल्ली।

उस दुःख को कभी भी साझा नहीं किया। किया भी, तो जितना तुम्हें जरूरी लगा। उस दर्द को तुमने अपने पर हावी होने दिया। तुम्हारे पास हमेशा से हम दोनों थे जिनसे तुम बात करके हल्का महसूस कर सकते थे। तुम वापस जिन्दगी की तरफ मुड़ सकते थे, लेकिन तुमने अकेलापन चुना और तुम्हारे अकेलेपन ने तुम्हारी मृत्यु को चुना।

काश! ...काश, तुमने ऐसा कदम उठाने से पहले एक बार सोचा होता। यह गैर-जिम्मेदाराना हरकत है। जिन्दगी इतनी सस्ती तो नहीं कि उसे किसी भी दर्द के ना सह पाने के चलते मौत को भेंट कर दिया जाय। तुम तो जिन्दगी बचाया करते थे। मुझे वह कड़कती सर्दी का दिन याद आ रहा है जब एक अल सुबह तुम अस्पताल जाने को तैयार थे। मैंने कहा कि बहुत सर्दी है। आज मत जाओ। तुमने थोड़ा संयम के साथ मुझे जवाब दिया था- “जिन्दगी हर चीज से ज़्यादा बड़ी है।” मुझे यकीन नहीं हो रहा कि जो शख्स इस तरह के फलसफे के साथ जीया करता था, अचानक उसे ऐसा क्या हुआ कि उसे अपनी जिन्दगी छोटी लगने लगी? और यह छोटापन कब मौत में तब्दील हुआ मुझे पता भी नहीं चला। उस रोज जब कमरे का दरवाजा खोला, तब जो देखा उसके बाद से मुझे यह लगा कि कोई एक पिस्तौल से निकली गोली मेरे सीने के पार से निकाली गई हो। उस वक्त लगा जमीन पैरों से दरक रही है और मैं एक गहरी खाई में गिर रही हूँ।

मैं शायद गिर गई थी...लेकिन मैंने अंत में उस खाई से बाहर आने का फैसला किया क्योंकि भास्कर में से एक रोशनी निकल रही थी। मैं उसी रोशनी की रस्सी के सहारे बेसुध ही सही पर उस गहरी खाई से बाहर आई। मुझे कई बार ऐसा भी लगा था कि तुम्हारे जाने के गम को मैं झेल नहीं पाऊँगी। कई बार नितांत अकेलापन कुरेद देता है। खालीपन आकर मुझे घेर लेता है। जिन्दगी का लक्ष्य या फिर कोई उत्साह भी नहीं दीखता। बेबस सा महसूस होता है। एक ऊब और उदासी मन में रहती है। कितना अजीब है कि इस स्थिति में भी हम इंसान सामान्य से दिखाई देते हैं...

मेरा बहुत सा वक्त उस खिड़की के पास बैठे हुए गुजरता है। मुझे वहाँ आराम महसूस होता है। आराम नहीं शायद राहत!

तुम्हारे जाने के बाद ऐसी न दिखने वाली चोटें लगी थीं, जिनको कोई नहीं देख सकता। कितनी रातें उस महान दर्द में बीत गईं और बीत रही हैं। अब जब इस खिड़की के पास आती हूँ तब हवा मेरे अन्दर घुसकर मेरा उपचार करती है मानो। धावों को प्रकृति के पास जाकर ठीक करने का काम शुरू किया जा सकता है। यह खिड़की ही है जो मुझे बाहर की दुनियां में ले जाती है। मैं घर में बैठे-बैठे घूम आती हूँ। थोड़ा आसमान देख आती हूँ और थोड़ा उड़ आती हूँ। क्या मैं ठीक हो रही हूँ? क्या मैं स्वार्थी भी बन रही हूँ जो तुम्हें भुला रही हूँ? नहीं... नहीं...मैं शायद तुम्हारे जाने को स्वीकार कर रही हूँ। धीरे-धीरे तुम्हारे जाने का समय लम्बा होता जा रहा है।

कहीं किताब में एक पंक्ति पढ़ी। “आपको इस एक जिन्दगी को समझने के लिए इस पूरी दुनिया को निगलना होगा।” मुझे यह पंक्ति अच्छी लगी। क्या तुमने सारी दुनिया को निगल लिया था या फिर निगलना आया ही नहीं? मुझे नहीं पता। तुमने अपने बचपन को बचपन में नहीं छोड़ा। उसे अपने सीने में पालते रहे। दुःख में डूबे हुए अनुभवों को हम हमेशा साथ लेकर नहीं चल सकते, जो वक्त के साथ हमको मिलते हैं। सच्चाई तो यही है कि हमें लम्हों में चिपक कर नहीं रह जाना चाहिए। अगर चिपकते हैं तब वर्तमान में हम उस बेपरवाही से नहीं उड़ पाते जितने की जरूरत होती है।

दुनिया का दूसरा नाम लोग भी हैं। बचपन में तुम्हारी माँ के इस दुनिया से रुखसत होने के बाद तुम अकेले पड़ गए। तुम्हारा बचपन दुःख में बीता। पिता तुम्हारे होते हुए भी तुम्हारे हो नहीं सके। तुम मन से हमेशा दूर रहे। एक रिश्ता जो ताना-बना बनाता है वह हमेशा पिता और बेटे के बीच गायब रहा। एक मिनट! नहीं तुम्हारी तरफ से गायब नहीं था। पिता के पास कभी इतना समय नहीं रहा और न वह समझ रही कि वे तुम्हारे साथ समय गुजारते। लेकिन इसके बावजूद मुझे तुम हमेशा बहादुर लगे। तुमने जिन्दगी को कभी छोड़ा नहीं। तुम्हारी दूसरी माँ के आने के बाद हालात और खराब होते चले गए। लेकिन फिर भी तुम्हारे अंदर पिता के दामन में रहने की ललक तुम्हारे अंत समय

तक बनी रही। नई माँ अपने साथ तुम्हारे लिए अतिरिक्त नया और असहनीय भार भी लाई।

गलती तुम्हारी कभी नहीं थी। लेकिन तुमने एक बड़ी तमन्ना को मन में हमेशा पाले रखा। उस उम्मीद की सिंचाई करते रहे कि कभी तो पिता तुम्हारे सिर पर हाथ फेरेंगे। लेकिन ऐसा हुआ नहीं। उम्मीद का पहाड़ तुमने ऊँचा तैयार कर लिया। लेकिन पिता उस उम्मीद के पास तक नहीं पहुँचे। जब तुम उस पहाड़ से गिरे तब तुमने अवसाद को गले लगा लिया। लेकिन इस सब के बाद भी मैं और भास्कर तुम्हारी जिन्दगी में हमेशा से ही थे। तुम्हें मरे हुए रिश्तों की जगह जीवन्त रिश्तों के बारे में सोचना चाहिए था। बचपन से बना अवसाद बड़ी उम्र में तुम अपने परिवार के साथ से मिटा सकते थे। क्या उन रिश्तों से एक कदम पीछे नहीं हटा जा सकता जो सुख और संतुष्टि नहीं देते? तुम तो डॉक्टर थे। जब शरीर में कोई घाव बन जाता है तब उसे सर्जरी करके निकाल दिया जाता है फिर तुम जिन्दगी के घाव वाले रिश्तों को क्यों नहीं निकाल पाए?

मैं फिर भी कहूँगी, क्या तुम्हें मेरे या खुद के परिवार के बारे में नहीं सोचना चाहिए था? क्या हम महज लोग थे जो तुम्हारे साथ रहा करते थे? क्या हममें तुम प्यार नहीं खोज सकते थे? मेरी शिकायतों और सवालों की फेहरिश्त बड़ी बन रही है। मैं तुम्हारी और अपनी आलोचना भी कर रही हूँ। मैं उन्हें जानने में असफल रही। मुझे हमेशा से लगता है कि एक डॉक्टर मौत और जीवन के बीच वह दीवार है जो अपने मरीजों को मौत के जबड़े से खींचकर वापस ले आता है। एक डॉक्टर जितना दर्द बीमार लोगों में देखता है, उसका एहसास लेता है, उसे समझता है, उतना शायद ही कोई और समझ पाए। फिर भी तुमने ऐसा कदम उठाया...

...कभी-कभी यह सब सोचती हूँ तब सिर चकरा जाता है। मैं कमजोर नहीं हूँ पर कमजोरी महसूस करती हूँ। मुझे अपने आपको समेटने में वक्त लगता है।

सर्दियों का मौसम आ रहा है। सुबह-सुबह गुलाबी सर्दियाँ महसूस होती हैं। गुलाबी से याद आया जब तुम्हारे भीतर बह जाने

की बेचौनी उगने लगी थी तब वह किसी भी रंग को बर्दाश्त नहीं कर पाती थी। धीरे-धीरे तुमने अँधेरे को गले लगाया और उसमें वक्त बिताने लगे। शुरुआत में मुझे लगा कि काम का दबाव है। इस पेशे में अक्सर ऐसा हो जाता है। लेकिन मुझे यह नहीं लगा था कि तुम अँधेरे में रहते-रहते अपनी जिन्दगी को खत्म करने जैसा कदम उठा लोगे। कभी-कभी बैठकर सोचती हूँ तब लगता है कि इतना बड़ा कदम उठाने से पहले तुम ने कुछ सोचा भी या नहीं। मेरे बारे में भी नहीं सोचा? मेरा रहने देते कम से कम बच्चे के बारे में तो सोचते कि इस उम्र में तुम्हारा जाना उसके लिए कितना बड़ा धक्का होगा?

एक सुबह सपने में मुझे तुम्हारा पर्ची पर लिखा 'डेथ' (Death) शब्द दिखा। मैं काफी घबरा गई थी। थोड़ी देर बाद जब स्थिर हुई तब याद आया कि किसी मरीज को एक बार तुम दवाओं के नाम लिखकर दे रहे थे। कमरे में मैं, तुम और वह व्यक्ति था। सब सामान्य था। लेकिन मैंने अचानक देखा कि पर्चे पर तुम एक के बाद एक 'डेथ' शब्द लिखे जा रहे थे। मुझे बेहद घबराहट हुई और तुरंत मैंने तुम्हें नाम से पुकारा। तुमने मेरी ओर देखा। लगा कि तुम उस पल कमरे में मौजूद ही नहीं थे। मेरे पुकारने के बाद तुम्हें मानो होश आया और तुरंत उस पर्चे को फाड़कर पास में ही रखे कूड़ेदान में डाल दिया। मरीज भी थोड़ा हैरान था। लेकिन तुमने कहा कि कुछ दिन पहले किसी पेशेंट की मौत की खबर से तुम आहत हो। इसलिए ज्यादा सोचने के चलते तुम पर्ची पर यह शब्द लिख गए।

उस दिन मुझे लगा कि कहीं कुछ छूट रहा है। तुम्हारे अन्दर कुछ पनप चुका है। मैंने कई बार तुम से इन मसलों पर बात करने की कोशिश की। पर तुम 'सब ठीक है' कहकर टाल गए। ऐसा नहीं है कि मैंने तुम्हें अकेला छोड़ा। बल्कि तुम खुद ही अपने पिता और अपने बीच के रिश्ते के बीच खामोश होते जा रहे थे। मैंने यह भी समझाया कि तुम किसी को प्यार या स्नेह करने के लिए मजबूर नहीं कर सकते। यह जरूरी तो नहीं कि सामने वाला आपको उतना ही प्यार करे जितना आप उनसे बरसों से अपेक्षा करते आ रहे हैं। तुम हमेशा पिता के प्यार को

पाने की उत्कट इच्छा में अपनी जिंदगी बिताते रहे और तुम्हारे पिता उतना ही उनसे भेदभाव करते रहे। एक पिता अपने बच्चे के प्रति इस तरह का बर्ताव कैसे कर सकता है, कभी सोचती हूँ तब चौंक जाती हूँ।

रिश्तों का सोचती हूँ तब इंसान को बेहद स्वार्थी और जटिल पाती हूँ। प्रेम की तो एक ही नस्ल होती है तो फिर क्यों सौतेली माँ को इसमें भेद सा दिखने लगता है? अगर तुम पर सौतेली माँ ने थोड़ा बहुत भी प्रेम लुटाया होता तब तुम ऐसे तो शायद ही करते। मुझे सौतेली शब्द से ऐतराज था। अभी भी है। लेकिन जो तुम्हारे साथ सबूक किया गया उसे लेकर मैं शायद ही उस औरत को कभी माफ कर पाऊँ! परंतु मेरी माफ़ी की उसे जरूरत भी क्या है? उसे क्या फर्क पड़ता है? तो! तुम्हारे पिता को शायद मैं माफ न कर पाऊँ। हाँ, उन्हें माफ़ी देना मेरे लिए मुश्किल होगा। बचपन से जो व्यवहार उन्होंने तुम्हारे साथ किया वह तुम्हारे अंदर धीरे-धीरे जमता रहा। दुःख की परत ऐसी होती है कि उसे निरन्तर गलाया जाना जरूरी है। लेकिन अगर कोई ऐसा नहीं कर पाता तो परिणाम वही होता है, जो तुमने अपने लिए चुना। प्रेम एक ऐसा सीमेंट होता है जो अगर न मिले तब इंसान अपने अंदर एक खालीपन को पाता है। खालीपन आगे चलकर हमारे दिमाग से जो चाहे करवा सकने की ताकत रखता है। फिर भी मेरा मानना है कि कहीं मन में वह आत्मा रहती है जो मुश्किल पलों में चिंगारी की तरह दिखती है। तो क्या हम इंसान उसे देख नहीं पाते या फिर नजरन्दाज कर देते हैं? क्या तुम्हें वो चिंगारी नहीं दिखी? मैं उस चिंगारी को अपने अंदर पाती हूँ। इस समय चाहे इस खिड़की से बाहर घंटों शून्य में देखती हूँ पर मुझे इसका अंदाजा अच्छी तरह है कि मैं जिंदा हूँ, मुझे जीना है...हाँ, मुझे जीना है।

कुछ दिनों से मुझे अपने घर में रोशनी फैलती हुई दिखती है। किसी ने सही ही कहा है कि दिन बदलते हैं। ये रोशनी सुनहरी सी है। घर के हर कोने में फैलती है और शाम को जाते हुए सभी कोनों में अपने होने के निशान छोड़ भी जाती है। भास्कर अभी

गम को अपने अंदर समेटकर रखता है। मैं कोशिश करती हूँ कि घर का माहौल थोड़ा बदल लूँ। जाने वाले अपने निशान हम पर छोड़ कर चले जाते हैं पर सच्चाई यह है कि जो अभी जीवित हैं उन्हें जीना सीखना चाहिए। हम क्यों मरे? मेरे इन शब्दों का मतलब यह नहीं है कि मैं तुम्हें भूल रही हूँ या फिर मुझे कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता। वास्तव में मैं तुम्हारे अंश को अपने होने में सहेज कर रखना चाह रही हूँ। लोग मरते जरूर हैं पर अपने पीछे वह पूरी जिंदगी हमारे अंदर रखकर जाते हैं।

प्यार आदमी-औरत के भेद को मिटाकर आत्मा से होने वाला राग होता है। जानवरों में भी अपने जन्म दिए गए बच्चे को लेकर लाड़-दुलार होता है। दूर आसमान में दाने की तलाश में गई चिड़िया शाम को अपनी नन्हीं चोंच में अपने बच्चे के लिए दाना ले आती है। यह प्रेम ही तो है। समंदर जिस जमीन पर अपना साम्राज्य का बिछौना बिछाता है वह उस जमीन से प्रेम से ही बंधा है। उसका तल कितना शांत होता है। लगता है जैसे अपनी प्रेमिका के साथ वक्त बिता रहा हो। आसमान बादलों में अपने प्रेम को देखता है। हम इंसान भी ऐसे ही हैं। कुदरत ने हमें ऐसा बनाया है। बिना एहसासों के हम खोखले हैं। फिर तुम्हारे पिता ऐसे कैसे तुम्हें प्रेम नहीं कर पाए?

खुद मजबूत बनूँगी तभी भास्कर की बेहतर दोस्त बन पाऊँगी। उसे जिंदगी के मायने समझना होगा। उसे यह जानना होगा कि उदासी से हमारे जीवन के पल कम हो रहे हैं। हमें आगे बढ़ना होगा। हमें हवा को महसूस करना होगा। हमें बारिश, जो एक जादू है उसे हैरानी से देखना होगा। आसमान में बादलों के खेलों को पास से निहारना होगा। इन पेड़ों से सीखना होगा कि अपनी जड़ों के सहारे मजबूती से कैसे खड़े होना है...हमें बहुत कुछ सीखना है...जिन्दगी रुक नहीं सकती। हम रुक नहीं सकते। यह गतिशीलता कुदरत की देन है। अगर हम रुकते हैं तब हम कुदरत की खिलाफत करते हैं। तुम्हारे प्रेम को मन में बसाकर हमें अपने सफर पर निकलना ही होगा, हर हाल में!

स्त्री-पुरुष विमर्श

डॉ. मनीषा कुमारे शर्मा

स्त्री और पुरुष का आकर्षण भाव आदिकाल से चला आ रहा है, इनके बीच का यह प्रेमभाव न केवल समाज में बल्कि साहित्य में भी, यथार्थ में ही नहीं कल्पना में भी, इतिहास में ही नहीं पौराणिक इतिहास में भी निरंतर बहता हुआ समाज का निर्माण करने में योगदान दे रहा है। स्त्री का साथ पुरुष के लिए सुखद अनुभूतियों का स्रोत रहा है और पुरुष की कल्पना स्त्री में सर्वाधिक आनन्द प्राप्त करती रही है। अनादिकाल से ही स्त्री सुकमारता, कोमलता, विनम्रता, त्याग, कर्तव्यपरायणता तथा मधुरता का जबकि पुरुष शक्ति, शौर्य एवं कठोरता का प्रतीक रहा है। महादेवी वर्मा के अनुसार “पुरुष को यदि वृक्ष की उपमा दी जाए, जो अपने चारों ओर के छोटे-छोटे पौधों का जीवनरस चूसकर आकाश की ओर बढ़ता है तो स्त्री को ऐसी लता कहना होगा, जो पृथ्वी से बहुत थोड़ा सा स्थान लेकर अपनी सघनता में बहुत से अंकुरों को पनपाती हुई उस वृक्ष की विशालता को चारों ओर से ढक लेती है... प्रकृति ने केवल उसके शरीर को अधिक सुकुमार नहीं बनया वरन् उसे मनुष्य की जननी का पद देकर उसके हृदय में अधिक संवेदना, आंखों में अधिक आर्द्रता और स्वभाव में अधिक कोमलता भर दी।” स्त्री-पुरुष का यह सम्बंध ही मानव समाज की रचना करता है। उनके आपसी सहयोग, सहभाव, स्नेह व प्रेम से समाज का विकास होता है, इसलिए आज के संदर्भ में स्त्री-पुरुष विमर्श का महत्व और अधिक बढ़ जाता है।

मानव समाज की रचना का आधार स्त्री-पुरुष है, जिसकी बुनियाद उनके पारस्परिक संबंधों की पूर्णता पर टिकी होती है। स्त्री-पुरुष के बीच मजबूत आधार ही समाज को मजबूत बनाता है। लेकिन इसी संबंधात्मक संबंध में जब अहंकारी प्रवृत्ति उत्पन्न हो जाती है, तो स्त्री-पुरुष के

दाम्पत्य जीवन, पारिवारिक जीवन और सामाजिक जीवन में भी अस्थिरता उत्पन्न हो जाती है। समाज में पति-पत्नी का संबंध एक शुद्ध एवं ठोस आधार लिए रहता है। पति-पत्नी का पारिवारिक जीवन तभी सुखी और संतोषजनक हो सकता है, जब पति-पत्नी में परस्पर स्नेह, सहयोग, आत्मविश्वास, विश्वास व प्रेम की भावना हो। पति-पत्नी का संबंध भारतीय धर्म और संस्कृति में पवित्रता के उच्च शिखर पर आसीन रहा है। पति-पत्नी वह केन्द्रीय संबंध है, जहाँ से अन्य सभी संबंध शुरू होते हैं। पति-पत्नी गाड़ी के दो पहिए के समान हैं। यदि गाड़ी के दोनों पहिए ठीक हों तो मंजिल आसानी से मिल जाती है। यदि पति-पत्नी के संबंधों में मधुरता, प्यार, विश्वास है तो जीवन की नैया आराम से पार हो जाती है। यदि इसमें कड़वाहट आ जाती है तो नैया भव-सागर के बीच में डूब जाती है। समाज की यही बुनियाद ही दूषित एवं विघटित हो जाए तो सभ्य समाज की परिकल्पना ही नगण्य हो जाती है। समाज में स्त्री-पुरुष की अहंकार की भावना, अपने अधिकारों की प्राप्ति, व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता व अस्तित्व की होड़ में दोनों एक-दूसरे को आदर व सम्मान नहीं दे पाते, जिसका एक कारण परंपरागत वह मानसिकता भी होती है जो एक लड़का-लड़की के बीच में मतभेद उत्पन्न करने में मुख्य भूमिका अदा करती है। वास्तव में लड़के व लड़कियों के विचारों में मतभेद का मुख्य कारण केवल तत्कालीन परिवेश व परिस्थितियां ही जिम्मेवार नहीं होती हैं, अपितु इनके मतभेदों की नींव के बीज बचपन से ही पारिवारिक व सामाजिक सोच व परम्परा के परिणाम स्वरूप उन पर पड़ने लगते हैं। अतीत से लेकर आधुनिक काल तक अर्थ सर्वोपरि रहा है। अर्थ आज तक

* हिन्दी विभाग, स्कूल ऑफ ओपन लर्निंग, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय।

पुरुषों के हाथों में रहा है और रहेगा भी। महिलाएं नौकरी करके पैसा तो कमाती हैं, लेकिन उस पर भी पुरुष का अधिकार है। इस पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में आज तक किसी ने भी इस ओर नहीं सोचा कि पुरुषों के साथ-साथ समाज में महिलाओं का भी अर्थ पर कुछ अधिकार होना चाहिए, उसकी भी अपनी कुछ इच्छाएं होती हैं। परिवार के मुख्य विषयों पर निर्णय लेने का एकाधिकार आज भी पुरुषों को ही दिया जाता है। एक लड़की ने कितने ही अथक प्रयासों से नौकरी प्राप्त की हो, संतान उत्पन्न होने पर पुरुष वर्ग तनिक भी देरी नहीं करता अपनी पत्नी को यह कहने में कि वह घर को संभाले, नौकरी भले ही छोड़ दे। परिवार द्वारा बाल्यकाल से एक लड़के के मन में यह मानसिकता भर देना कि वह लड़का है तो लड़कियां उससे कुछ कम हैं, उसे लड़की की तुलना में अधिक स्वतंत्रता प्रदान करना, अधिक महत्व देना, और स्त्री-सुरक्षा का भार उसके कंधों में डालने के कारण लड़के के मन में अहंकार की मानसिकता उत्पन्न होने लगती है। इसके उदाहरण परिवार में भी दिखने लगते हैं, जब एक छोटा भाई बड़ी बहन को अनुचित-उचित का पाठ पढ़ाने लगता है।

विवाह की अवस्था पर पहुंचने तक पारिवारिक व सामाजिक संदिवादी और परंपरागत मानसिकता का अभाव उसके जीवन पर इतना अधिक पड़ चुका होता है, जिसके बंधन से निकलना सम्भव नहीं होता। अधिकांश लड़कों के मन में यह भावना स्थिर हो चुकी होती है कि विवाह के बाद उसके द्वारा अपने घर में लाई गई लड़की का मुख्य दायित्व उसके परिवार के प्रति ही है चाहे उसका और उसके परिवार का व्यवहार जैसा भी हो अपने अस्तित्व का त्याग, अपनी भावनाओं का त्याग, अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं का त्याग उस नवविवाहिता को ही करना पड़ेगा। अपने पुरुषत्व में भले ही कितनी ही खामियां हों, किन्तु लड़की उसे सर्वशुण सम्पन्न चाहिए। धीरे-धीरे उसकी यही मानसिकता स्त्री को एक सम्पत्ति के रूप में स्वीकार करने लगती है। उसके

अनुसार वही सुकन्या है जो उसके कथन के अनुसार ही सारे कार्य करे। उसका व उसके माता-पिता के हर उचित व अनुचित बात का समर्थन करे, गृहकार्य में पूर्णतः निपुण हो, साथ ही व्यावहारिकता में भी पूरी तरह से सम्पूर्ण हो, देखने में किसी नायिका से कम न हो, उसकी पत्नी एक आदर्श पतिव्रता तो हो ही, साथ ही वह आधुनिकता से पूरी तरह परिचित भी हो। इस प्रकार पितृसत्तात्मकता की मानसिकता से प्रभावित विवाह से पहले ही लड़के के मन में अपने लिंग को लेकर अहम की भावना तो बनी रहती है। यह अलग बात है कि यह भावना किसी में अत्यधिक, किसी में अधिक और किसी में बहुत कम होती है। यह विडम्बना ही है कि एक लड़के की मानसिकता स्त्री को लेकर बहन, माँ और पत्नी के संदर्भ में अलग-अलग दिखाई पड़ती है। पत्नी पर अपना पूर्णतः अधिकार समझता है। यह अधिकार कई बार सीमाओं को लांघ जाता है। किन्तु उसके अपने लिए कोई नियम व सीमाएं नहीं हैं, वह इस बात को नहीं समझ पाता कि यदि पत्नी उसके घर में आते ही परिवार की कोई समस्या उससे साझा करने का प्रयास कर रही है, तो उसका वह एकांकीपन पूरे दिन प्रतीक्षा की उत्सुकता होती है, जिसकी वह उसके आने की प्रतीक्षा करते हुए बिताती है। लेकिन वह उसे चुगली या निंदा का नाम दे देता है और पत्नी निरंतर उस तनाव की मानसिकता को अपने सहयोगी जीवनसाथी के साथ बांटने में पूर्णतः असफल हो जाती है। इस प्रकार एक तनाव का वातावरण उत्पन्न होने लगता है, अपने सगे सम्बंधियों के प्रति दोनों का अति संवेदनशील होना भी मतभेदों को बढ़ावा देता है।

एक दूसरे के लिए समय न निकालना भी स्त्री-पुरुष के संबंधों में बिखराव का कारण बन जाता है, इसलिए यह आवश्यक है कि आज का युवा वर्ग पुरुष इस बात को समझ लें कि वह पत्नी के रूप में एक ऐसी जीवनसाथी लाया है, जिसने उसके साथ वर्षों का सफर करना है। वह कोई सम्पत्ति नहीं लाया है, जिस पर वह समय-समय अपना

मालिकाना हक प्रकट करता रहे। जहाँ एक ओर समाज का युवक वर्ग युवतियों के प्रति अपने पारिवारिक दबाव से ग्रस्त होता है, वहीं दूसरी ओर स्त्रीवर्ग पर यह दबाव कहीं गहरा होता है। परिवार में बचपन से ही लड़की को यह समझाना आरंभ कर दिया जाता है कि वह पराया धन है, उसका वास्तविक घर यह नहीं बल्कि वह है, जिस घर में विवाह के पश्चात वह जाएगी। उसे हर स्थिति में घरेलू गतिविधियों में अपना पूरा योगदान देना पड़ेगा, उसके लिए खाना पकाना, बच्चों की देखभाल करना, घर को व्यवस्थित रखना, अपने सास-ससुर को हर हाल में खुश रखना, विवाह के उपरांत भले ही कोई भी स्थिति क्यों न हो, समझौते के लिए तैयार रहना, पति को परमेश्वर समझना आदि उसकी प्राथमिकता होंगी। उसका अपना अस्तित्व, उसका अपना जीवन इन सबका कोई महत्व नहीं है। परम्परागत भारतीय समाज में इसी मानसिकता के साथ एक लड़की के जीवन को विकसित किया जाता है, भले ही आज की आधुनिक शिक्षित लड़की इन सभी बातों को पूरी तरह मानने को तैयार नहीं है। उसकी अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाएँ हैं, अपनी इच्छाएँ हैं, वह अधिकारों में समानता चाहती है, वह स्वतंत्रता चाहती है, वह किसी प्रकार के बंधनों में बंधना नहीं चाहती, किन्तु पारिवारिक और सामाजिक दबाव उसके विरोधों को कार्यवत् नहीं करने देता है और अधिकांश अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं को परिवार के दायित्व के दबाव में दबा लेती हैं, जबकि ऐसी स्थिति में न आने के लिए वह अपने कैरियर के प्रति भी पूरी निष्ठा से दायित्व निभाती हैं, ताकि उसे सुखमय जीवन प्राप्त हो सके। वह अपने भावी पति के रूप में एक ऐसा वर चाहती है जो उसे जीवन भर प्रेम करे, सदैव उसका ध्यान रखे, उसकी इच्छाओं व भावनाओं का मान रखे। साथ-साथ उसके मान-सम्मान को लेकर सचेत रहे। वह चाहती है कि जिसके लिए वह अपने माता-पिता को छोड़कर आई है, वह नई परिस्थितियों में सदैव उसके साथ जीवनसाथी के रूप में सहयोग देता रहे। वह घर और बाहर दोनों स्थितियों को संभालने के लिए तैयार है, किन्तु

उसे अधिकार, समानता व स्वतंत्रता भी चाहिए। एक पत्नी के रूप में कोई भी लड़की उन परिस्थितियों के लिए अपने आप को तैयार नहीं कर पाती, जब उसका पति उसके सही होने पर भी उसका साथ न देकर अपनी माँ या परिवार के सदस्यों का साथ दे। वह उन स्थितियों में भी दुविधाग्रस्त हो जाती है, जहाँ उसकी इच्छाओं के सामने पारिवारिक दायित्व आ जाते हैं, अधिक प्रयासों से प्राप्त सरकारी नौकरी को भला वह कैसे छोड़ दे? क्योंकि सशुराल वाले चाहते हैं वर्षों से सजाए अपने स्वप्नों को वो कैसे कुछ वर्ष पहले स्थापित बंधनों के लिए तोड़ दे, केवल इसलिए क्योंकि वह एक लड़की है? इन सभी समस्याओं से टकराने के लिए अपनी इच्छाओं, महत्वाकांक्षाओं को पूर्ण करने के लिए, अपने अस्तित्व और अस्मिता को बनाए रखने के लिए वह एक ऐसे साथी पुरुष को जीवनसाथी के रूप में साथ चाहती है, जो कदम-कदम पर उसका साथ दे।

अपने लिए योग्य पुरुष के आकर्षण से अधिक आत्मीयता, स्नेह, प्रेम, विश्वास के भाव चाहती है ताकि उसका जीवन सुखमय हो सके। वह उसमें वह अधिकार और स्वतंत्रता भी ढूँढ़ती है, जिसकी अभिलाषा उसके मन में एक पति के रूप में विवाह से पूर्व रही है। वह पुरुष के विरुद्ध संघर्ष का बिगुल बजाना नहीं चाहती न ही वह घर-गृहस्थी की दीवारों में दरारें डालना चाहती है, वह तो बस पारिवारिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक व धार्मिक सभी परिस्थितियों में अपने जीवनसाथी के साथ कदम से कदम मिलाकर चलने की समानता चाहती है। यह तभी संभव हो सकता है, जब युवक और युवतियाँ दोनों एक-दूसरे को मान व सम्मान दें, एक-दूसरे की इच्छाओं, भावनाओं और संवेदनाओं को समझने की मानसिकता को विकसित करने का समय दें ताकि एक सुदृढ़ परिवार और समाज की स्थापना हो सके। स्त्री-पुरुष विमर्श से उन विसंगतियों को विराम मिलेगा जो युवक और युवतियों की मानसिकता को बार-बार ब्रन्द की स्थिति में डाल देती है।

बेटी होने का फर्ज

चंदा यादव^ॐ

निश्चाना पड़ेगा
बेटी होने का हर फर्ज
क्यों
क्योंकि
तुम बेटी हो
जिसका कोई घर नहीं होता
जिसका कोई हक नहीं होता
जिसके कोई जलबात नहीं होते
जिसकी कोई अहमियत नहीं होती
होता है तो
उस बेटी का सिर्फ एक धर्म
झुजत बन झुजत बचाना
नजरे झुका चुप हो जाना
बाप, भाई, पति, बेटे
तथाकथित सम्मानित पुरुषों
का मान बढ़ाना
उनकी बातों तले
अपने अरमान जलाना
निश्चाना पड़ेगा तुमको
क्योंकि बेटी हो तुम
यही रीति है जग की
माँ, नानी, दादी, बुआ, मौसी
सबने निभाई है
तुम क्या खानदान की लाज डुबाओगी
तुम क्या नाक कटवाओगी
बेटी हो तुम
एक चौखट की औकात है तुम्हारी
दूसरी चौखट तक वो भी मिट जाओगी
अरे कब समझोगी तुम बेटी हो
कुचली जाओगी पर सर पर नहीं बैठ पाओगी
कितनी भी लाडली हो
बेटे के सामने ही कई बार बेटी बताई जाओगी
क्या कर लोगी तुम
पर तुम कुछ तो कर लोगी

कुछ तिनका भर बदलाव
जो तुम्हारी
माँ, दादी, नानी, मौसी, बुआ ने नहीं किया
वो बदलाव
ताकि तुम्हारी बेटी को कोई ना कहे
बेटी हो
निश्चाना पड़ेगा
बेटी होने का फर्ज
सिर्फ इतना बता दो इस दो मुँहे समाज को
बेटी हूँ कोई कर्ज नहीं हूँ
जो सारे फर्ज मैं ही निभाऊँ
तुम भी तो बाप, भाई, पति होने का फर्ज निभाओ
हमें सिर्फ हमारा हक देकर दिखाओ
आँखें दिखाओ नीचा मत दिखाओ
रास्ता दिखाओ थप्पड़ मत लगाओ
हौसला बढ़ाओ कर्ज मत बनाओ
मैं अपना हक ले लूँगी
तुम बस मुझे मेरे छोटे होने का
एहसास मत कराओ
कर जाऊँगी मैं जो किया नहीं तुमने पुरुषों
डरते क्यों हो
एक बार ये
समाज की बेड़ियाँ तो हटा कर दिखाओ
बेटी हूँ
निश्चानगी अब सिर्फ एक फर्ज
अपना अपने लिए अपने प्रति
सम्मान का फर्ज
अभिमान का फर्ज
बेटी हूँ
गर्व है
अस्तित्व हूँ तुम्हारा
कोई नहीं मेरा कर्ज है!!

* एनसीडब्ल्यूईबी, मोतीलाल नेहरू महाविद्यालय (दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय), नई दिल्ली।

‘जल थल मल’ पुस्तक की समीक्षा

व्याक्ति

पुस्तक - जल थल मल

लेखक - सोपान जोशी

प्रकाशक - राजकमल प्रकाशन लिमिटेड, नई दिल्ली

संस्करण- पहला, सितम्बर 2018

“दिल्ली को बाण-बगीचों का शहर कहा जाता था। चाहे आज यहाँ रहने वालों को इसकी भनक तक न हो, फिर भी वे दिल्ली के पानीदार इतिहास को जाने-अनजाने याद करते हैं। जब शहर को इलाकों के नाम से पुकारे जाते हैं। हैजख़ास, मोती बाण, धौला कुआँ, झील खुरेजी, हैज रानी, पुलबंगश, खारी बावली, अठपुला, लाल कुआँ, हैजे शम्सी, पुल मिठाई, दरियाबंज, बारहपुला, नजफ़ाद, झील, पहाड़ी धीरज, पहाड़बंज, सतपुला, यमुना बाजार...” कुछ इसी तरह की जानी-अनजानी मगर चौंका देने वाली जानकारी से सोपान जोशी की शोधपूर्ण लिखी किताब ‘जल थल मल’ अपने प्रवाह में पाठकों को बहा ले जाती है। किताब के अन्दर दिगु गडु विवरण के साथ प्रभावित करने वाले चित्र भी मौजूद हैं, जिनका चित्रांकन सोमेश कुमार ने किया है।

यह किताब सन् 2016 में गाँधी शांति प्रतिष्ठान से छपी थी और सन् 2018 में इस किताब को राजकमल प्रकाशन ने छापा है। किताब की विषयवस्तु को दस दिलचस्प अध्यायों में बांटा गया है। और प्रत्येक विषय के साथ अतीत, वर्तमान और भविष्य से जोड़ते हुए जल, थल और मल संबंधी शोध, उदाहरण, जानकारियाँ, मिथक कथाएँ, मान्यता, विचार, प्रचलित परम्पराएँ आदि को संतुलित भाषा में रखा गया है। पहले शीर्षक ‘जल, थल और मल’ में पृथ्वी की उत्पत्ति और उस समय मौजूद जीवों की पर्याप्त चर्चा की गई है। हर धर्म में पृथ्वी की उत्पत्ति संबंधी कहानियाँ मिलती हैं लेकिन विज्ञान इन कहानियों से परे तथ्यों और प्रमाणों के

साथ जीव और जीवन की कहानी बताता है। इस जीवन तक पहुँचने की लम्बी प्रक्रिया रही है। क्या हमारी पृथ्वी हमारी ऐसी नानी या दादी है जो हजारों सालों से अपने होने की कहानियाँ हमें सुना रही है? इस सवाल के साथ इस पाठ को दिलचस्पी से पढ़ा जाना चाहिए।

‘हर जीव का शरीर पृथ्वी के उर्वरकों का एक छोटा-सा संग्रह है। मृत्यु होने पर यह रचना जब टूटती है तब ये उर्वरक किसी और जीव के आकार में फिर जन्म लेते हैं।’ किताब में ऐसी ही कुछ सरल पंक्तियों से इस पृथ्वी पर जीवन के चक्र को समझाया गया है। शुचिता के तीन कोने वाले विचार से जुड़ा होना बताया गया है। इसका एक हिस्सा पानी, दूसरा मिट्टी और तीसरा हमारा शरीर और उसका अपव्यय से जुड़ा हुआ होना है। सही भी है। हमारे जीवन के पूरे चक्र में हम इन तीनों ही तत्व से जुड़े हुए हैं। हमारे मध्यकालीन संतों की वाणियाँ हों या घर में बड़े बुजुर्गों का फलसफा, यही बताता है कि जिस मिट्टी से जन्म लिया है, उसी मिट्टी में मिल जाना है।

जब मल अथवा इस शब्द की ही चर्चा होती है तब हमारे अंदर घिन (घृणा) का भाव आता है। लेकिन क्या बात यहीं तक सीमित है? इसका जवाब है, कतई नहीं। पुस्तक मल के बारे में चर्चा करते हुए उसके शरीर से निकलने के बाद उस अपशिष्ट का सफर हमारे दौरे में क्या है, बताती है।

* शोधाछात्रा, जवाहर लाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय, नई दिल्ली।

काम, इलाज, रोजी-रोटी की तलाश में आये लोगों को शौच की समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है। यही नहीं, इस कारण फैलने वाली बीमारियों के शिकार बच्चे अधिक बनते हैं, किताब इस पहलू पर भी बात करती है।

'सफाई के मंदिर में बलि प्रथा' अध्याय में हर रोज सीवर में सफाई के लिए उतरने वाले लोगों की मौत, महज मौत नहीं बल्कि वह बलि के समान है, की चर्चा की गई है। हमारे घर सुबह दस्तक देने वाले अखबार में सीवर में मरने वाले व्यक्तियों और उनके मरने की खबरें आम हैं। उसके बाद बलि रूपी मौतों पर राजनीति की पकती रोटियों में मुआवजा भी सहज है। हम एक समाज और मानव के तौर पर गमगीन होना भूलते हुए लोग हैं। लेकिन क्या विडम्बना और त्रासदी यहीं खत्म होती है? नहीं, बिल्कुल नहीं। पुस्तक के अनुसार फरवरी 2013 की संसद की एक रपट में दर्ज है कि भारत में 26 लाख सूखे शौचालय हैं। इनमें कोई आठ लाख ऐसे हैं जिन्हें सफाई कर्मचारी अपने हाथों से साफ करते हैं। ये आंकड़ें सन् 2011 की जनगणना से निकले हैं। कानून तो बहुत हैं लेकिन जमीन पर ये कानून रेंगने लगते हैं। लेखक ने विस्तार से मैला दोने की प्रथा और इसमें मजबूरी में संलग्न व्यक्तियों की चर्चा की है।

'शरीर से नदी की दूरी' शीर्षक पाठ में हमारे मल और उसका विसर्जन तक के सफर का वर्णन है। इस अध्याय में लेखक ने सन् 1858 में लंदन की टेम्स नदी के नाली में बदलने की घटना का जिक्र किया है। उस साल सूखा पड़ा और गर्मी ने तंग किया। ऐसे में नदी में बहाया गया मल खौल गया और पूरे शहर को 'द ग्रेट स्टिंक' का सामना करना पड़ा। नाक में न दिखने वाली महक जो बदबू थी, घुसी। मल और उसका निपटान एक महत्वपूर्ण और राजनीतिक विषय बन गया। क्या हमारी यमुना भी अगर संसद के किनारे होती तब हमारे राजनेता राजनीति करने के बदले कुछ अहम प्रयास करते, जैसा इंग्लैंड ने 19वीं शताब्दी के मध्य में

किया? सड़ता हुआ मल और मरता हुआ जल, हमारी यमुना रोज दोती है। लेखक ने इस अध्याय में यूरोप के इतिहास में नदियों को नाले के रूप में बदल दिए जाने और उन्हें पाट दिए जाने की कहानी रखी है। सीवर जैसी व्यवस्था में मल को नदियों में 99.9 प्रतिशत पानी के साथ बहाया जाता है। इससे नदी तो दूषित होती ही है, साथ ही जल की भारी हानि होती है। लेखक ने महान चिन्तक कार्ल मार्क्स की पुस्तक 'कैपिटल' में लिखी गई एक महत्वपूर्ण टिप्पणी को उद्धृत किया है- "उपभोग से निकला मैला खेती में बहुत महत्व रखता है। पूंजीवाद अर्थव्यवस्था इसकी भव्य बरबादी करती है। मिसाल के तौर पर लंदन में 45 लाख लोगों के मल-मूत्र का कोई और इस्तेमाल नहीं है उसे टेम्स नदी में डालने के सिवा, और वह भी भारी खर्च के बाद।"

पुस्तक के अगले अध्याय का नाम 'गोदी में खेलती हैं इसकी हजारों नदियाँ' है। पुस्तक के अनुसार उत्तरी दिल्ली के वजीराबाद में यमुना दिल्ली में प्रवेश करती है और इसी बिंदु पर यमुना का 80 प्रतिशत पानी हम प्रदूषित कर देते हैं। यमुना के कुल लम्बाई का महज 2 प्रतिशत यह हिस्सा शहरों के शहर दिल्ली शहर में आता है। मनुष्य और नदियों के बीच के रिश्ते को उजागर करते हुए लेखक कई अन्य नदियों से जुड़ी जानकारी देते हैं कि कैसे हमने अपनी नदियों को जीवन के बदले जहर की सौगात दी है। तमाम तरह की राज्य और केंद्र सरकार की परियोजना नदियों को बचाने में विफल साबित हो रही हैं, इस अध्याय से यह भी पता चल जाता है।

लेकिन क्या इस मैले पानी का कोई हल नहीं है? इस सवाल के जवाब के लिए लेखक आपको हुगली नदी के किनारे बसे कोलकाता शहर ले जाते हैं और बताते हैं इस 'मैले पानी का सुनहरा सच' क्या हो सकता है। यह अध्याय पूर्वी कोलकाता के मछुवारों के उस कौशल के बारे में बताता है कि कैसे उन्होंने मैले पानी के उपयोग को सीखा है। वे

इस मैले पानी के उपयोग से मछली पालन जैसे काम धंधों को कुशलता से चला रहे हैं, वह भी किसी खास तकनीकी ज्ञान के बगैर। अगले अध्याय 'पुतले हम माटी के' में हमारे शरीर और उसके मल, शरीर में मौजूद जीवाणु और विषाणु आदि की दिलचस्प चर्चा की गई है। हमारा शरीर हमारा ही नहीं है बल्कि कई सालों के विकास के चरण में यह उन प्राणियों का घर भी है जो हमारे अस्तित्व के साथ ही हमसे जुड़े हुए हैं। लेकिन हमने अपने असंयमित व्यवहार से पृथ्वी के जीवन जगत्चक्र को बेतरह बिगाड़ दिया है। इसलिए हर रोज हमारे सामने एक नया वायरस चुनौती के साथ खड़ा होता है जो हमारे जीवन को लीलने के लिए तत्पर है।

अगले अध्याय के लिए लेखक 'खाद्य सुरक्षा की थल सेना' नाम का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। इसमें वे उन कृत्रिम उर्वरकों के बारे में चर्चा कर रहे हैं जिसका इस्तेमाल हम अंधाधुंध होकर किये जा रहे हैं। खेती की उपज जैसे-जैसे बढ़ी वैसे-वैसे भूमि-संबंधी इस्तेमाल में एक बड़ा अंतर आया है। हमारी खुशी बेशक 'हरित क्रांति' से जन्म लेकर हमारे साथ बनी हुई है लेकिन क्या यह इतना सस्ता था? जमीन को उपजाऊ बनाने के कृत्रिम तत्वों के चलते प्राकृतिक तत्वों की अनदेखी बड़े पैमाने में की गई जो कि मल से जुड़ा हुआ है। नदियों में बहते उर्वरक हों या जमीनी पानी में घुले जहर, इंसान की जाति इस खाद्य सुरक्षा के पीछे सुरक्षित नहीं है। इस पाठ में लेखक ने जैविक और कृत्रिम खाद का मूल अर्थ और इनके प्रभाव का बेहतरीन प्रस्तुतिकरण किया है।

'मल का थल विसर्जन और मलदर्शन' जैसे दोनों अंतिम अध्याय पुस्तक की अहम कड़ियां हैं। लेखक लद्दाख का उदाहरण देते हुए कहते हैं कि जीने के मुश्किल हालातों में भी वहाँ के लोगों ने मल का सही निपटान करने की

विधि का इस्तेमाल वर्षों पहले से शुरू कर लिया है। इसके अलावा इकोसैन शौचालय जैसे तरीकों की जानकारी दी गई है कि कैसे यह मल विसर्जन की विधि मल और मूत्र को अलग-अलग करती है। इसकी तरह अन्य तरीकों की क्या कामयाबी है और क्या नाकामयाबियाँ रही हैं, उसका वर्णन भी इस अध्याय में मिलता है। इसी के साथ व्हेलों के संदर्भ में एक दिलचस्प बात भी बताई गई है, जिसे पुस्तक पढ़कर समझना चाहिए।

मल-मूत्र पर जब भी चर्चा होती है तब एक ऐसा बहुत बड़ा समाज है जो नाक-भौंह सिकोड़कर मुँह पर रुमाल लगाने की तैयारी करने लगता है। लेकिन क्या यह इतना ही धिनौना है? पुस्तक पढ़कर यह पता चलता है कि यह धिनौना नहीं है बल्कि इस पृथ्वी पर जीने की प्रक्रिया में यह अहम हिस्सा है। घर जैसे नितांत निजी जगह के शौचालय में पलश के साथ जो मल बाहर की दुनिया का हिस्सा बनता है वह निजी नहीं तब सामाजिक बन जाता है। कई-कई बार पलश के बटन को टीपने वाली यह नई मनुष्य की सभ्यता यह नहीं जानती कि उनके मल का क्या होता है और इसका कितना असर खुद उन पर, अन्य लोगों पर, नदियों पर, सागरों व उसमें रहने वाले अन्य प्राणियों पर, भारत माता यानी जमीन आदि पर कैसे और कितना भयानक होता है। शुचिता का सारा तामझाम मल के साथ जुड़ा हुआ है। उस पर सबसे बड़ी विडम्बना यह है कि इस पेशे से जुड़े हुए लोगों को ही इंसान मानने से इंकार करने वाली सभ्यता भी हमारे पास ही है। सरल भाषा में लिखी गई इस पुस्तक को हर किसी को एक बार जरूर पढ़ना चाहिए। लेखक ने उपदेश देने की भाषा का कहीं भी इस्तेमाल नहीं किया बल्कि अपने अथक शोध और पठनीय मेहनत से एक समृद्ध पुस्तक को लिखा है।

गाँव 'बलियापट्टी' की अपनी कहानी

शीतलकुमारी^ॐ



74 साल की गिरिजा देवी विधवा हैं और दो पुत्रों में एक विक्षिप्त हैं। तीन बेटियां हैं जिनकी शादी हो चुकी है। अपने पिता की झुकलौती संतान गिरिजा अपने मायके में ही रह रही है। बेटे और बहू उससे दूर रहते हैं। अश्री गिरिजा देवी की 110 वर्ष की माँ भी जीवित हैं। इस प्रकार गिरिजा को अपनी बूढ़ी माँ और एक विक्षिप्त बेटे की देखभाल करनी पड़ती है जबकि वह स्वयं भगवान भरोसे जी रही हैं.....

था तो चाँदपुर की लठैती देखने वाली होती थी। इन चारों गाँवों में बलियापट्टी अपनी लठैती के लिए कम अपनी मधुर मुस्कान के लिए ज्यादा जाना जाता है। बकौल बाबू चंद्रिका सिंह- “हम बलियापट्टी वाले जलालपुर से सीखते हैं और भाईचारा भी निभाते हैं, लेकिन माधोपुर का पहले पानी भी नहीं पीते थे।” 85 वर्षीय चंद्रिका बाबू की ये बातें इस ओर इशारा करती हैं कि कहीं न कहीं बलियापट्टी का ऐतिहासिक संबंध माधोपुर से अच्छा नहीं रहा है और जलालपुर के साथ निकट का रहा है।

गाँव में लगभग एक सौ परिवार रहते हैं और आबादी भी तकरीबन पाँच सौ से कम ही है। लेकिन भूमि का असमान वितरण इस गाँव को कई तरह की संरचनागत दुविधाओं में डाले हुए है। तीन सौ बीघा के गाँव में दो सौ बीघा केवल बड़का

बिहार राज्य के सिवान जनपद का एक छोटा-सा गाँव है- बलियापट्टी। बलियापट्टी महाराजगंज अनुमंडल के अंतर्गत माधोपुर के ग्राम पंचायत में आता है। इस गाँव का पत्रालय जलालपुर और थाना जी. बी. नगर (तखारा बाजार) है। गाँव के पूरब में माधोपुर, उत्तर में जलालपुर, पश्चिम में गंडक नहर तथा दक्षिण में चाँदपुर गाँव है। कहने वाले कहते हैं कि नब्बे के दशक में जब पूरे राज्य में जंगलराज का वर्चस्व

घर का ही है, शेष सौ बीघा में पूरे गाँव की भागीदारी है। यही कारण है कि तथाकथित ऊँची जाति के किसानों के पास भी बमुश्किल एक-दो बीघे की ही हिस्सेदारी देखने को मिलती है। ऐसे में, खेत का मेंड तोड़कर अपने-अपने खेतों का नए ढंग से जबरजस्ती सीमांकन करने की प्रवृत्ति यहाँ के लोगों में काफी है। इतना ही नहीं, जमीन की कीमत भी अन्य गाँवों की तुलना में ज्यादा है। गाँव के प्रत्येक घर में कोई न कोई प्रवासी है। इसमें भी दिल्ली-एन.सी.आर. में प्रवासी सबसे ज्यादा हैं।

गाँव में शिक्षा की स्थिति भी अच्छी नहीं कही जा सकती। एक आंगनबाड़ी केन्द्र और एक प्राथमिक विद्यालय है, जिसे अब प्रोन्नत कर माध्यमिक विद्यालय बना दिया गया है। विद्यालय में बच्चे पहले जमीन पर बैठकर ही पढ़ते थे, लेकिन कुछ वर्षों से उन्हें फर्नीचर मिल गया है। फिर भी, कक्षाओं में छात्रों की उपस्थिति नगण्य ही है। दोपहर के समय मिड-डे मिल के नाम पर छात्रों का जमावड़ा भले ही कुछ देर के लिए दिखा जाए, लेकिन औसत उपस्थिति दयनीय



70 वर्षीय दलित मजदूर रामलखन राम, सुदामा बाबू के घर 3000 रुपये प्रतिमाह पर काम करते हैं। पूछने पर बताते हैं कि बचपन से ही मैं ग्राम्य नृत्य में नर्तकी बनकर काम करता था, और अखिरी ठाकुर का नाच देखता था परन्तु दलती हुई उम्र में अब मास्टर साहब सुदामा बाबू का ही एक सहारा है.....

है। छात्र-शिक्षकों का अनुपात भी दयनीय है। आंगनबाड़ी केन्द्र सिर्फ एक आंगन में सिमटकर रह गया है। दिलचस्प बात यह है कि कागजी कारवाई में कोई कमी नहीं है।

* शोधाछात्रा, हिन्दी विभाग, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय।

आस-पड़ोस के गाँवों में भी प्राथमिक चिकित्सा केन्द्र नहीं है। आज से दस-बारह वर्ष पहले ही गाँव के प्रतिष्ठित किसान बृजानंदन बाबू ने स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र के लिए अपनी भूमि को दान में दिया था, जिस पर ठेकेदार ने भवन भी खड़ा कर दिया लेकिन व्यावहारिक रूप से आज भी वह केवल भवन मात्र ही है, स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएँ नगण्य हैं।

गाँव की युवा पीढ़ी पलायन और प्रवास कर शहरों में जा चुकी है। बूढ़े, लाचार सेवानिवृत्त और शैक्षणिक योग्यता न रखने वाले कुछ सिरफिरे युवा ही गाँव की शोभा बढ़ा रहे हैं। स्थिति ऐसी है कि आपातकालीन परिस्थिति में यह गाँव भगवान भरोसे ही है। सुशासन बाबू ने गाँव की एकमात्र कच्ची सड़क का पक्कीकरण अवश्य करा दिया है, लेकिन सड़क का तंग स्वरूप और उसके किनारों पर मवेशियों की जमावट गाँव की जड़ मानसिकता को प्रतिबिंबित कर रही है।

खेती और किसानों इस गाँव की मुख्य आर्थिक क्रिया है। कुछ लोग गाँव के ही बाजार में छोटी-छोटी दुकानें चलाकर



बिहार के ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में तपती हुई दोपहरी में मजदूरों को भोजन के रूप में सत्तू खाने को प्रायः मिलता है। ऐसे ही, एक दोपहरी में रामलखन राम और उनके दोनों पुत्र दिनेश और अवधेश राम सत्तू खाते हुए.....

जीविकोपार्जन करते हैं। सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि गाँव के लोगों में अंधभक्ति चरम पर है। किसी भी व्यक्ति की सफलता व विफलता का मापदंड यहाँ के लोगों की दृष्टि में उसकी आर्थिक हैसियत ही है। कुछ लोग पुरातन महाजनी व्यवस्था को आज भी संरक्षित किए हुए हैं और उनका ब्याज दर 'कोरोना वायरस' की तरह चक्रीय गति से

बढ़ता है। ब्याज की मार प्रायः गाँव के पिछड़े और दलित समाज पर ज्यादा दीखता है। इसके अतिरिक्त कुछ लोग ऐसे भी हैं जो स्वयं को 'दीनबंधु' कहते हैं और भगवान शिव के प्रसाद के रूप

में गाँजा और अवैध व्यापार भी करते हैं। आर्थिक विपन्नता की स्थिति इतनी भयावह है कि दिन में मजदूरी न कर पाने वाले तथाकथित 'सिपाही' रात में चोरी कर '21वीं सदी के नए भारत' को चुनौती देते नजर आते हैं।

बिजली की स्थिति में काफी सुधार हुआ है। औसतन 15-16 घंटे बिजली रहती है। टेलीविजन और सेलफोन ने भी अपने पाँव बखूबी जमा लिए हैं। गाँव के बगीचों में अब बहस केवल ठाकुर मुखिया और श्याम बहादुर विधायक तक सीमित नहीं है बल्कि मोदी और ट्रंप तक पर लोग डिबेट करने की स्थिति में हैं, जो कि पहले नहीं दीखता था।

स्त्रियों की स्थिति में शराबबंदी ने अवश्य सुधार लाया है। झलकू महार की पत्नी कहती हैं कि दारू बंद होने से अब हम औरत लोग के रोज-रोज गाली और मार नहीं खाना पड़ता है। इधर नितीश कुमार की कई महिला केंद्रित योजनाओं का साफ-साफ असर इस गाँव की स्त्रियों पर दीखता है। पुनीतवा अब साइकिल से स्कूल जाने लगी है और गिरिजवा के विवाह में जलेश्वर महतो खूब खर्चा किए थे, ऐसा सुनने को मिला क्योंकि बारहवीं पास गिरिजवा को शादी के लिए सरकारी सहयोग मिला था। मनरेगा का प्रभाव अदालत काका के घर के उत्तर में ही निरुत्तर होकर लाचार दीख रहा है। केवल गड्डा खोदकर फिर भरने का काम किया गया है।

बलियापट्टी गाँव में एक हनुमान जी का मंदिर है। यह गाँव का सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र है। हर मंगलवार को यहाँ भजन-आराधना बड़ी धूमधाम के साथ होती है। होली और छठ पूजा के वक्त जब प्रवासी नौकरी पेशा लोग गाँव में आते हैं तो यह मंदिर ही केन्द्र की तरह बन जाता है। बाहर रहने वाले ग्रामीण मंदिर के विकास हेतु प्रतिवर्ष कुछ दान दिया करते हैं। हालांकि कुछ ग्रामीणों का ऐसा भी कहना है कि गाँव के कई लोगों ने इस मंदिर के नाम पर भी काफी कमाया है। खैर! जो भी हो यह छोटा-सा गाँव स्वयं इठलाता हुआ वैश्वीकरण के साथ कदमताल करते हुए आगे बढ़ रहा है, जहाँ गाँवई संवेदना खत्म होने जा रही है और पूंजी का आकर्षण सबके सिर चढ़कर बोल रहा है।

माँ

डुध. बलबीर सिंह*

मैं आज हो गयी हूँ बड़ी,
शुक्रिया करूँ मैं अपनी माँ का
जिसने मुझे है ये दुनिया दिखाई

कहने को एक शब्द है माँ
पर है इसमें शारी शृष्टि समाई

बचपन में ये लाड़ लड़ाए,
रूठने पर प्यार से मनाए,
गुस्सा करे कभी,
पर उसमें भी प्यार समाए।

कुदस्त की एक अनमोल नेमत
अपने लिए जिए कम,
पर अपनों के लिए
हर मुश्किल में है साथ खड़ी।

जान गयी अब मैं सब क्योंकि
मैं आज हो गयी हूँ बड़ी
शुक्रिया करूँ मैं अपनी माँ का
जिसने मुझे है ये दुनिया दिखाई

रिश्ते बहुत हैं दुनिया में
कुछ अपनों से, कुछ परायों से
कोई करे अहसान, कोई झूठ से मन बहलाए
पर माँ में हमेशा सच ही नजर आए।

गौर किया जब मैंने रिश्तों पर
तो लाइन थी बहुत बड़ी।
पर माँ और बेटी का रिश्ता
दिखा सबसे ऊपर,
इसमें ना कभी दरार आयी।

चर्चा करूँ मैं अब यहाँ
अपनी माँ की माँ का,
रिश्ते में जो मेरी नानी कहलाती,
गरमी की छुट्टियों में जब हम,
उनसे मिलने जाते,
प्यार भरे वे हाथ नानी के,
आज भी वो हैं याद आते।

विनती करूँ मैं एक भगवान से,
माँ मिले सबको मेरी माँ जैसी,
जो हर परेशानी में साथ है मेरे खड़ी,
बस अब मैं सब जान गयी हूँ,
क्योंकि मैं आज हो गयी हूँ बड़ी,
क्योंकि मैं आज हो गयी हूँ बड़ी!!

* गुरुद्वारा श्री गुरुसिंह सभा, रमेश नगर, नई दिल्ली।

बाला देवी

बाला देवी ❀

29 वर्ष की बाला देवी केवल एक नाम ही नहीं है, बल्कि उन सभी महिलाओं के लिए एक पहचान और मिशाल बन चुकी है जो दर्शाता है कि महिलाएँ स्वयं अपनी पहचान बनाने के लिए उत्साह के साथ प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में डर के माहौल में भी निडरता से आगे बढ़ रही हैं। बाला देवी का जन्म 2 फरवरी 1990 को मणिपुर में हुआ था। बाला देवी एक भारतीय महिला फुटबॉलर हैं, जो भारत की महिला टीम और मणिपुर की महिला टीम के लिए आगे रहती हैं। अगर आंकड़ों के हिसाब से देखें तो 15 साल की उम्र में पहली बार भारत के लिए खेलने वाली महिला खिलाड़ी थीं, जिन्हें 2002 में टूर्नामेंट का सर्वश्रेष्ठ खिलाड़ी घोषित किया गया था।



स्वर्ण पदक जीतकर उन्होंने अपने राज्य को एक अलग ही पहचान दी। वह अभी तक फुटबॉल टीम के लिए सबसे अधिक गोल करने वाली खिलाड़ी हैं। बाला ने 2010 के बाद से अब तक 58 मैचों में 52 गोल किए हैं। बाला को 2015-2016 में अखिल भारतीय फुटबॉल महासंघ (ए.आई.एफ.एफ.) ने 'वुमेंस प्लेयर ऑफ द ईयर' पुरस्कार से नवाजा था।

बाला देवी स्कॉटलैंड के क्लब रेंजर्स एफ.सी. से 18 महीने का करार करने जा रही हैं। ऐसा करने वाली बाला देश की पहली महिला फुटबॉलर हैं। बाला देवी रेंजर्स के लिए खेलने वाली पहली एशियाई इंटरनेशनल फुटबॉलर बन जाएंगी जो महज महिलाओं

के लिए ही नहीं अपितु सभी युवाओं के लिए ही एक प्रेरणास्रोत हैं। इस करार से खुश बाला देवी ने स्वयं कहा कि "मैंने कभी सपने में भी नहीं सोचा था कि मैं एक दिन दुनिया के सबसे बड़े क्लबों में से एक के लिए यूरोप में फुटबॉल खेल पाऊँगी। मुझे उम्मीद है कि रेंजर्स के साथ मेरा यह करार भारत में फुटबॉल को पेशे के तौर पर अपनाने और



इसमें बड़ा करने की चाह रखने वाली हजारों लड़कियों को प्रेरित करेगा।" यह उनका सब ही था कि वह इस मुकाम तक पहुँची हैं या यूँ कहे कि कभी खुद को कमजोर न पढ़ने देने की शिद्दत ने उन्हें इस मुकाम तक पहुँचाया है।

बाला केवल अपने राज्य के लिए ही एक मजबूती बन कर नहीं उभरी है... बल्कि देश और हर उस महिला के लिए मजबूती बनकर उभरी हैं, जिनके अंदर एक प्रतिभा...; एक जड़बा है... और कुछ बड़ा करने का उत्साह है। बाला देवी ने ये बता दिया कि महिलाएँ खेल में भी पीछे नहीं हैं, उनमें वो जड़बा एवं मजबूती भी है, जिसके बल पर वह देश के लिए ही नहीं बल्कि विश्व के लिए भी मिशाल बन सकती हैं तथा उन सभी लड़कियों के लिए जो हर राज्य के छोटे-छोटे गाँवों में..., किसी झोपड़ी में..., रहकर भी वहाँ की मिट्टियों में ही अपने सपने को मजबूती के साथ बुनने में लगी रहती हैं और एक दिन बाला देवी जैसी महिला के रूप में भी उभरती हैं और एक इतिहास रचती हैं।

* एम.ए. (द्वितीय वर्ष), एनसीडब्ल्यूईबी, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

शोषण

दृष्टिर्गर्भितुं

दिल की क्यारी में
एक नन्हा पौधा उगाया है,
कभी खून, कभी दूध
कभी आंसू से सींचकर,
उस पौधे को पेड़ बनाने का
बीड़ा उठाया है।

हवा का विरोध कभी
कभी हंसता सावन,
मोहक वसंत की बहार कभी
कभी निराश पतझड़ की बेरुखी,
जीवन के हर मौसम के लिए
उसे तैयार रखूँ।

उस नहीं-सी जान को
ठोस जमीन और खुला आसमान दूँ,
शांत सहजशक्ति
मूक बलिदान की मिसाल नहीं,
उसके लिए एक विकराल योद्धा का उदाहरण बनूँ।

कभी ढाल तो कभी शार्थी बनूँ,
उसके जीवन की जड़ों को मजबूत करूँ,
उस नहीं सी जान को
खुल कर पनपने दूँ।

पोषण करूँ अंतर्मन का
प्यार के जल, पराक्रम की धूप
और विश्वास की खाद से,
अस्तित्व के तने में
आत्मनिष्ठा की शाखाओं पर
संवेदना और समझदारी के फूलों को महकाऊँ।

दिल की क्यारी में
एक नन्हा पौधा उगाया है,
कभी खून, कभी दूध
कभी आंसू से सींचकर,
उस पौधे को पेड़ बनाने का
बीड़ा उठाया है।

आधी आबादी को सशक्त करते कदम

डॉ. शीमा खिंह

पिछले कुछ वर्षों से भारत सरकार ने महिला सशक्तिकरण को लेकर कई महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाए हैं, जिससे महिलाओं का संपूर्ण विकास हो सके। जिन महत्वपूर्ण विषयों का चयन सरकार ने देश के संपूर्ण विकास के लिए चुना, वे हैं स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा के साथ कन्या एवं बालिकाओं का संपूर्ण विकास। उज्ज्वला योजना तो महिलाओं के लिए कहीं न कहीं बड़ा वरदान साबित हुई। इसी बीच 'बेटी बचाओ और बेटी बढाओ' सहित कन्या के पैदा होने पर सरकार ने उनके पढ़ने, बड़े होने, रोजगार, शादी तक के लिए राशि निर्धारित किया है। इस योजना को महज एक योजना नहीं बनाया गया अपितु जमीनी स्तर पर उसके विस्तार और विकास के लिए काफी बड़ा नेटवर्क विकसित किया है, जिससे ग्राम आदमी तक ये योजनाएं पहुँच सकें। बहुतायत लोभ इस मामले में लाभान्वित श्री हुए। विकास के लिए इससे पहले बातें चाहे जितनी हुई हों, परंतु उस पर काम उतनी तीव्रता से नहीं हुआ। वर्तमान सरकार ने सार्थक पहल किया। इसके साथ ही छोटे स्तर पर बालिकाओं के लिए प्राथमिक स्तर से लेकर माध्यमिक तक उनकी शिक्षा का प्रबंध किया। पूरे देश में कन्या भ्रूणहत्या रोकने के लिए ऐसा सिस्टम श्री डेवलप किया, जिससे बेटे को प्राथमिकता देने की जो भारतीय मानसिकता है, उसके बरकश भारतीय बेटियों को गर्व का संबल बनाया। इसका सार्थक फायदा यह हुआ कि यह भारत देश जो पितृसत्ताप्रधान देश है, वहाँ पर 'सेल्फी विद डॉटर' जैसे मानव मन के छोटे-छोटे आयामों को बारीकी से देखा गया। इससे पूरी दुनिया में यह संदेश गया कि हम बेटियों के संरक्षण को लेकर कितने जागरूक हैं। राष्ट्र के महत्वपूर्ण पदों पर आज मातृसत्ता नजर आयेगी। महिलाओं में यदि धार्मिक विभेदन न किया जाये तो इन्होंने सबसे बड़ा काम किया वह मुस्लिम महिलाओं के लिए किया। सैकड़ों वर्षों से कूप-मंडूक नियमों में बंधी हुई मुस्लिम महिलाएं यौन शोषण से लेकर जीवन के न जाने कितनी की पीड़ा के प्रकोष्ठों से गुजरने के लिए विवश थी। ऐसे में तीन तलाक लाना, उसे पारित करके संशोधन को नियम में डालना कहीं न कहीं नारी के प्रति बड़ा बदलाव था जो लोगों की कल्पनाओं में छिपा था। ज्ञान-विज्ञान सभी में मातृत्व सत्ता चरम पर नजर आयी। इसलिए एक वर्ष में कई बार बेटियों को लेकर महिलाओं के विकास के लिए पिछले कुछ वर्षों में कई योजनाएं केंद्र सरकार द्वारा लायी गयी हैं।

पिछले कुछ वर्षों में महिलाओं को आर्थिक रूप से मजबूत बनाने और महिला सशक्तिकरण पर जोर देने के लिए सरकार ने देश भर में कई तरह की योजनाएं लागू की हैं। ये योजनाएं कमजोर और पीड़ित महिलाओं को आवाज उठाने में मदद कर रही हैं। आइए कुछ महत्वपूर्ण योजनाओं और जमीनी स्तर पर उसकी हकीकत को जानने का प्रयास करते हैं।

सुकन्या समृद्धि योजना : बेटियों के सुंदर भविष्य के लिए यह योजना काफी लाभदायक है। बेटियों के भविष्य के लिए पैसे जोड़ने के लिए यह अच्छी स्कीम साबित हो सकती है। यह पीपीएफ से अधिक ब्याज देती है। दस वर्ष तक की बेटी के लिए इसका लाभ लिया जा सकता है। इसका खाता खुलवाने पर वर्तमान में करीब 8.1 फीसदी की दर से सालाना ब्याज मिल रहा है। बेटी के इक्कीस वर्ष होने के उपरांत अकाउंट मैच्योर हो जायेगा। जो श्री व्यक्ति अपनी बेटी के भविष्य के लिए निवेश का प्लान कर रहा है, वह इस स्कीम का इस्तेमाल कर सकता है। बैंक और पोस्ट ऑफिस दोनों ही जगहों पर यह खाता बेटी के अभिभावक खोल सकते हैं। इस अकाउंट को मात्र 250 रुपए में खोला जा सकता है। इस धन का बालिका की शिक्षा और विवाह के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है। केंद्र सरकार की यह योजना इनकम टैक्स बचाने में भी कारगर होती है। इस योजना को 'बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढाओ' स्कीम के तहत लांच किया गया है। छोटी बचत स्कीम के लिए यह सबसे बेहतरीन विकल्प है। सन् 2016-17 में इस पर 9.1 फीसदी की दर से ब्याज मिला है। इससे पहले यह 9.2 प्रतिशत थी। इस योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य गरीब तबके को ध्यान में रखकर क्रियान्वित किया गया है। निश्चित आमदनी के साथ ही आपके पूंजी की सुरक्षा यह स्कीम देती है।

अठारह वर्ष की उम्र में बालिका की उच्च शिक्षा के लिए पचास फीसदी की रकम निकाली जा सकती है। इसे खोलते समय बच्ची का बर्थ सर्टिफिकेट पोस्ट ऑफिस या बैंक में देना जरूरी होता है। बच्ची और उसके कानूनी अभिभावक का पहचानपत्र और पते का प्रमाणपत्र श्री अनिवार्य है। शुरुआत में

* पोस्ट डॉक्टरल फेलो, भारतीय इतिहास अनुसंधान परिषद्, नई दिल्ली।

250रुपए लगेगा और इसके बाद 100रुपए के गुणांक स्वरूप में राशि जमा होगी। यह खाता जिस तारीख को खोला गया है, उसके बाद के 15वर्ष तक इसमें राशि जमा की जा सकती है। यदि किसी कारणवश अकाउंट में रुपए जमा नहीं हो पाए तो उसे 50रुपए सालाना की दर से अतिरिक्त धन देना होगा। 2कम जमा करने के अनेक तरीके हैं, जैसे कौश, चेक, डिमांड ड्राफ्ट या कोई भी वह माध्यम जिसे बैंक स्वीकार कर सके। इलेक्ट्रॉनिक ट्रांसफर मोड में भी 2कम जमा की जा सकती है। सरकार ब्याज तिमाही में तय करती है।

पिछले कुछ वर्षों में ब्याज की दर कुछ इस प्रकार है-

- अप्रैल 2014 : 9%
- अप्रैल 2015 : 9.2%
- अप्रैल 2016 : 8.6%
- जुलाई 2016 : 8.6%
- अक्टूबर 2016 : 8.5%
- जुलाई 2017 : 8.3%

बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ : पिछले कुछ वर्षों में यह योजना सबसे महत्वपूर्ण योजना बनकर उभरी है। इसका लाभ कई लोगों को मिला। इसका उद्देश्य है महिला भेदभाव को समाप्त करना और युवा लड़कियों के लिए कल्याणकारी माहौल का निर्माण करना। यह योजना 'महिला और बाल विकास मंत्रालय', 'स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय' और 'मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय' का संयुक्त प्रयास है। किसी भी कारणवश जिन महिलाओं की शिक्षा अवरुद्ध हो गयी है, उन्हें आगे शिक्षित करने की ओर प्रेरित करना ही इस योजना का प्रमुख ध्येय है। इसकी घोषणा प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने राजस्थान के झुंझुनू में एक कार्यक्रम में की थी। बाललिंग अनुपात लगातार गिरने से लड़कियों की संख्या कम होती गयी। इस लिंग अनुपात में गिरावट 1961 से ही देखी जा रही है। सन् 1991 में हजार लड़कों की तुलना में 945 लड़कियाँ देखी गयी। यह आकड़ा आगे और गिरा और 2011 की जनगणना में लड़कियों की संख्या महज 918 रह गयी। यह आकड़ा विकास करने वाले किसी भी देश के लिए अच्छी तस्वीर नहीं है। इसी गंभीरता को देखते हुए केंद्र सरकार ने 2015 में इस योजना की शुरुआत की। विभिन्न राज्यों में यह आकड़े भिन्न-भिन्न हैं। हरियाणा के पानीपत में 2015 में प्रधानमंत्री ने इस योजना की घोषणा की। इसके प्रमुख तीन लक्ष्य थे। पहला कन्या भ्रूणहत्या को

रोकना। दूसरा कन्याओं की सुरक्षा और समृद्धि और तीसरा आधी आबादी की शिक्षा और भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करना। इस योजना का लाभ जनता तक पहुंचाने के लिए सौ करोड़ का बजट तय हुआ। इसकी शुरुआत सौ जिलों के साथ हुई। इस योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य लोगों की सोच में बदलाव लाना, पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था को खत्म करना और नारी को उसका अधिकार दिलाना है। इस योजना के प्रमुख लाभ लिंग-अनुपात को व्यवस्थित करना, बेटे की चाह को कम करना, बाल विवाह को रोकना और बालिकाओं की शिक्षा के प्रति जागरूकता लाना है।

महिला ई-हाट : यह प्लेटफॉर्म महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने के लिए कारगर है। महिलाएं अपने उत्पादों का इस स्थान पर प्रदर्शन कर सकती हैं। छोटे स्तर पर व्यापार करने वाली महिलाओं के लिए यह बहुत बड़ा अवसर है। जिन महिलाओं के लिए बड़े बाजार में अपना सामान पहुँचाना आसान नहीं है, वह इस ई-हाट के द्वारा पूरे देश में अपना सामान बेच पाने में सक्षम हो पाएंगी। इस योजना का उद्देश्य घर पर रहने वाली महिलाओं को आर्थिक मजबूती देना है। इस ई-हाट के माध्यम से कोई भी महिला ऑनलाइन रजिस्ट्रेशन कराकर अपना बिजनेस शुरू कर सकती है। इसका कोई चार्ज नहीं लगता है। यह पूरी तरह से निःशुल्क है।

यह योजना महिला उद्यमियों की जरूरतों के लिए सार्थक पहल है। यह डिजिटल इंडिया और स्टैंड अप इंडिया का ही एक हिस्सा है। महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय के राष्ट्रीय महिला कोष के तहत इसकी स्थापना की गयी है। इसका उद्देश्य महिला उद्यमियों में निरंतर विकास को बढ़ावा देकर उसे सशक्त बनाना है ताकि वह वित्तीय भागीदारी सुनिश्चित कर सके। इसका मिशन है- वेब के माध्यम से खरीदार और बेचने वाले का सीधा संपर्क स्थापित करना। इससे मेक इन इंडिया को बल और संबल मिलेगा। आर्थिक मजबूती महिला को सामाजिक बराबरी भी दिलाएगी। यह प्लेटफॉर्म महिलाओं द्वारा बनाया, निर्मित किया गया और उनके ही द्वारा बेचे जाने वाला मंच है। यह महिलाओं की रचनात्मक क्षमता का विकास करती है। इसे शुरू करने के लिए बस एक मोबाइल नंबर की आवश्यकता है। खरीदारों की सुविधा के लिए प्रोडक्ट की तस्वीरें, लागत, मोबाइल नंबर, निर्माता का पता ई-पोर्टल पर प्रदर्शित करना होगा। विक्रेता टेलीफोन या ईमेल किसी भी साधन से सीधा संपर्क साध सकता है।

इसमें भाग लेने के कुछ महत्वपूर्ण नियम और शर्तें हैं, जैसे महिला का भारतीय नागरिक होना, उसने इससे पहले किसी महिला उद्यम का नेतृत्व किया हो, महिला की उम्र 18 वर्ष से अधिक होनी भी जरूरी है। सामान की गुणवत्ता की जिम्मेदारी प्रतिभागी और विक्रेता को लेनी होगी। राष्ट्रीय महिला कोष का इसमें कोई उत्तरदायित्व नहीं होगा। इस ई-पोर्टल में किसी भी प्रकार की रुकावट के निवारण की जिम्मेदारी भी प्रतिभागी और विक्रेता को लेनी होगी। प्रतिभागी और विक्रेताओं को यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि इस पोर्टल पर किसी अवैध सामान का प्रदर्शन न हो। यदि ऐसी कोई गतिविधि होती हुई पायी गयी तो कानूनी कार्यवाही की जा सकती है। दोनों पक्ष को यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि यहाँ सभी प्रकार के कानून का पालन हो रहा है। सभी करों का भुगतान हो रहा है, यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा। नियम और इसकी पात्रता की शर्तें किसी भी कारणवश बदली नहीं जा सकती हैं। प्रतिभागियों को खरीदार से सीधा भुगतान प्राप्त होगा। यहाँ बिचौलिया कोई नहीं होगा।

उज्ज्वला योजना : कितना ही हम विकास की बात करें पर सच्चाई से सभी वाकिफ हैं। हमारे भारत में गरीब महिलाओं को खाना बनाने के लिए आंखों को कितना जलाना पड़ता है। यह पीड़ा शायद राष्ट्रीय समस्या न बन सकें। उज्ज्वला वही योजना है जो भारत में रहने वाली अधिकतर महिलाओं की समस्या का समाधान करती है। यह योजना धुआँ-रहित ग्रामीण भारत की परिकल्पना को सिद्ध करती है। इस योजना के शुरुआत में वर्ष 2019 तक पांच करोड़ परिवारों, विशेषकर गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रह रही महिलाओं को रियायती एलपीजी कनेक्शन उपलब्ध कराने का संकल्प था। इस योजना से एलपीजी के उपयोग में वृद्धि होगी, साथ ही स्वास्थ्य संबंधी विकार, वायु-प्रदूषण एवं वनों की कटाई को कम करने में सहायता प्राप्त होगी। इस योजना की शुरुआत प्रधानमंत्री ने मई 2016 के बलिया गमन पर दी। इसमें तीन करोड़ परिवार की गरीब महिलाओं को मुफ्त कनेक्शन देने की घोषणा हुई। साथ ही आगे भारत की सभी महिलाओं तक यह सुविधा पहुंच जायेगी इसकी भी घोषणा हुई। फ्री गैस सिलेंडर के लिए लोगों के अकाउंट में रुपए भेजे गए, जिसका बहुत से लोगों ने लाभ लिया। इस लॉकडाउन में भी इन गरीब परिवारों के लिए घोषणाएं हुई। इस बंद के दौरान लाभार्थियों को मुफ्त गैस सिलेंडर मिलता रहेगा। लगातार लोगों के अकाउंट में इसके रुपए आ रहे हैं। इसमें गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाली महिलाओं को निःशुल्क 2सोई गैस उपलब्ध होती है।

वन स्टॉप सेंटर : इस योजना को 'सखी' के नाम से भी जाना जाता है। इसके अंतर्गत किसी भी प्रकार की हिंसा से प्रताड़ित महिला और बालिका के लिए एक ही स्थान पर आश्रय, पुलिस डेस्क, कानूनी सहायता, मेडिकल की सुविधा और काउंसलिंग की सुविधा दी जाती है। सेंटर की शुरुआत अप्रैल 2015 में निर्भया फंड से लागू की गयी थी। इस योजना का टॉल फ्री नंबर 181 है। दहेज, घरेलू हिंसा या कोई अन्य अपराध जो महिलाओं का शारीरिक और मानसिक शोषण करता हो तो महिलाओं को यहाँ-वहाँ भटकने की आवश्यकता नहीं पड़ेगी। सरकार ने उन्हें एक स्थान दिया है। जहाँ पहुँचकर उनकी तमाम समस्याओं का समाधान हो सकता है। कानूनी सलाह ही नहीं महिला के रहने और खाने की व्यवस्था भी यहाँ उपलब्ध करायी जाती है। चाहे दहेज के कारण घर से निकाली गयी महिला हो या वृद्धावस्था में बच्चों के द्वारा बोझ समझी गयी बुजुर्ग सभी को यहाँ न्याय मिलता है। शुरुआत में पांच से दस दिन तक रहने की व्यवस्था है। देखभाल के लिए दो नर्स भी हमेशा रहेगी। मनोवैज्ञानिक सलाह के साथ ही कानूनी सलाह देने वाले भी उपलब्ध रहेंगे। इन सभी के साथ सुरक्षा की भी कड़ी व्यवस्था है। यह चौबीस घंटे कार्य करती है।

महिला शक्ति केंद्र योजना : बजट 2017-18 में घोषित महिला शक्ति केंद्र की स्थापना का उद्देश्य महिलाओं का कौशल विकास, उन्हें जागरूक करना, स्वास्थ्य संबंधी जानकारी देना, आंगनवाड़ी से जुड़ी महिलाओं को सशक्त करना इत्यादि निश्चित किया गया है। इसके द्वारा ग्रामीण महिलाओं को केंद्र सरकार से जुड़ी योजनाओं की जानकारी दी जाती है। जिसमें ट्रेनिंग और सामुदायिक भागीदारी का सहारा लेकर उनकी क्षमता को और निखारने का प्रयास भी किया जाता है। ये महिला शक्ति केंद्र, राज्यों के पिछड़े स्थानों में खोले जायेंगे।

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NEWS ANALYSIS

By Prarthana Judith Herald

Man assaults sister over dress in Dwarka

HT Correspondent

• htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) Tuesday urged police to take action in the case of a 20-year-old woman whose eyes were "punctured" when she was allegedly assaulted by her brother in southwest Delhi's Dwarka for buying a dress worth ₹100.

But, the police said the woman had been discharged from hospital and did not want to register a case.

We found the woman lying in a pool of blood with her eyes punctured and face swollen inside her jhuggi

DCW statement

The DCW came across the girl while it was conducting a door-to-door visit in the area as part of its 'mahila panchayat' program.

"We found the woman lying in a pool of blood with her eyes punctured and face swollen inside her jhuggi. She was kept confined by her brother. Upon counselling, the woman told us

her brother used to beat the younger siblings as well. Marks of him having tried to bite her younger sister, aged, 8, were clearly visible on the girl's hands," the commission said in a statement.

The woman was admitted at the Safdarjung hospital.

The Dwarka district police

said a PCR call about the incident was received on August 5 and the woman was taken to Dwarka's Venkateshwar Hospital and was later shifted to Safdarjung.

"According to the doctor treating the woman, her eyes are fine and she was discharged from the hospital on August 12. The woman said she doesn't want a legal case against her brother," the statement read.

The woman's minor siblings were housed at a children's home as the parents had gone to their native village, police said.

A Horrendous Tale of Violence

What an abhorrent crime to treat one's own sister with disgrace and contempt! Who would have thought that a brother would stoop down to such a level and torture his own sister for buying a dress worth Rs. 100. To the nation now this man is an epitome of disgust and the quintessence of 'violence unimagined'.

With a heavy heart I write that even after 73 years of our independence we still haven't quite achieved the milestones of true freedom and equality in many respects, ranging from varied socio-economic to women's issues and much more.

"We found the woman lying in a pool of blood with her eyes punctured and face swollen inside her jhuggi"- DCW statement

Bruised, beaten and swollen what is unbelievable is the fact that the 20 year old woman did not wish to register a case against her brother despite of being harassed and tortured by him since the age of 8. It was only when the DCW while conducting a door-to-door visit in the area as part of its 'mahila panchayat' program saw the victim lying in a pool of blood and thus admitted her in the hospital. The woman also reported that her brother used to beat her younger siblings too, however the latter were housed at a children's home as the parents had gone to their native village.

What I find strange is the fact that the parents never punished their son whenever he tried to bite their daughter, who was 8 years old then. It is the duty of the parents to correct the child when they are young so that they do not grow to commit heinous crimes later in life. When the girl was 8 he used to bite her, at 20 he punctured her eyes, who knows what will be his next crime? It completely proves that the parents are least bothered about their daughter. What a pity!

Still today many women in villages and slums are subjugated to acute pain and patriarchal norms, and often feel trapped inside the four walls and thus do not report the crimes being meted out to them since in most cases it is against the male members who are the ruling figures in their house, or at other instances their female counterparts discourage them to do so.

According to the National Family Health Survey conducted in 2015-16, represents the trends in under-reporting of crimes by comparing data on actual experiences of crime victims with that of crimes recorded by the police, and compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau.

I can only conclude by saying that this problem is a deep-seated one and requires progressive governmental mechanisms and initiatives wherein the government takes these matters in its ambit and initiate actions for the same because, even these women are the citizens of the same country and deserve their due rights that the country offers to all.

Woman jailed for turning hostile during rape trial

Rakesh Goswami

• letters@hindustantimes.com

JAIPUR: A 45-year-old woman in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district was sent to jail and fined ₹10,000 for turning hostile in court during the trial of three men accused of raping her daughter.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act court of Jhunjhunu convicted the woman for offering false evidence and sentenced her to one month's imprisonment on Tuesday, public prosecutor Lokendra Singh Shekhawat said on Wednesday.

The woman lodged a case against a man she accused of kid-

napping and raping her daughter in 2017. In her statement before a magistrate, the girl accused two more men of raping her. Police arrested the three and filed a charge sheet against them under sections of the Pocso Act and IPC, Shekhawat said.

"During trial, the woman said her daughter was neither kidnapped nor raped...She even claimed that the girl was not a minor when the FIR was registered. She said she is illiterate and didn't know the contents of the FIR," the prosecutor said.

The three suspects were acquitted on November 3, and on the request of the prosecution,

proceedings under section 193 (false evidence) of the IPC were launched against the woman. On Tuesday, Pocso court judge Suresh Kumar Jain declared the woman guilty and sent her to jail.

In the ruling, Jain said he had found that in more than 50% of Pocso cases, the complainants turn hostile during the trial. "They negate the statements given in the FIR and those given before magistrates under section 164 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure)," the judge said.

He said the reason for people turning hostile in Pocso and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act

cases was the stringent punishment prescribed under the laws. "To save oneself from the punishment, the accused reach out-of-court settlements with the complainants," he said.

Rajasthan has posted a rise in the number of crimes against women and children. According to National Crime Records Bureau data of 2017, the state recorded the second highest number of rape cases in the country at 3,305. According to an affidavit filed by the state government in the Rajasthan high court on May 28 of this year, 43.3% of rape cases filed in 2018 were false. The affidavit said: "The number

of false cases would be even higher if the Pocso Act cases are not included as, under this Act, even a consensual act is an offence". Activists contest this and say the police close investigations for other reasons even if the complaints are valid.

In sexual offences or offences against women in general, a case is based on the statement of the complainant prima facie, but sometimes powerful people exert pressure on complainants to withdraw the case or turn hostile, lawyer Akhil Chaudhary said.

"The judge adjudicating on such matters needs to consider this fact," Chaudhary said.

There is completely no doubt on the fact that even family and relatives are giving up on their children and loved ones when it involves being witnesses to a particular offense. We find something very similar to this particular article stated here wherein a 45-year old woman turned hostile in court during the trial of three men accused of raping her daughter. She advertently stated that her daughter was neither kidnapped nor raped, and opted for an out of court settlement.

The article states, "....In sexual offences or offences against women in general, a case is based on the statement of the complaint prima facie, but sometimes powerful people exert pressure on complaints to withdraw the case or turn hostile....."

The above statement somehow partially solves the mystery of witnesses turning hostile, due to the pressures exerted on them by powerful people. However something that really intrigued me was the following fact.

According to the 'Deccan Herald'"There is an increase of cases under Pocso Act involving victims from Below the Poverty Line (BPL) and social stigma is suspected to be the main reason for victims turning hostile. This highlights another important factor that goes before 'hostility'. For instance... Pocso Act invariably comes into force when the victim is below the age of 18 years, in such cases relating to poor families, the child will not be in the care of parents. Both the parents will be out on work, mostly daily wagers and the child is sexually assaulted while in the custody of others. The victims in majority of such cases are hesitant to face the trial," (as stated by an officer).

With the help of the above data we can analyze that there are numerous factors that go into making the witnesses hostile and opt for an out of court settlement, but what distresses me at this point is the fact that in spite of opting for the latter agreement, (which seemed viable for the accused) the woman was awarded a fine of Rs. 10,000 with imprisonment. Also, often a time people deliberately choose to settle it outside the judicial purview, keeping in mind the time and energy that goes into judicial proceedings, but what is rather deplorable to note here, is that in both the cases it is the victim who is suppressed with no justice left. This indeed opens the Pandora's box, before which the victims as well as the witnesses stand with much trepidation!

16-yr-old who filed rape complaint commits suicide

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

DEHRADUN: A 16-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide in Uttarakhand's Haridwar on Sunday, three days after she had filed a rape complaint against another minor, a police official familiar with the matter said.

According to police, the Class 10 student was raped for over a year on the pretext of marriage by the absconding accused, who was booked under the relevant Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) sections on Thursday.

"Both of them [the victim and the accused] were from the same neighbourhood. The boy was raping her on the pretext of marriage for over a year. The accused had promised to elope with the deceased on April 10, however, he failed to turn up," police inspector Pradeep Chauhan said.

Chauhan said the girl committed suicide on Sunday afternoon by hanging herself from a ceiling fan at her house.

"During the initial investigation, police found a suicide note in which the girl named the boy. Now, more sections could be added in the case," the inspector added.

A Tale of Dismay!

What a grave mistake committed by the 16 year old girl to trust a boy, who raped her for one year on the pretext of marriage. Both the victim and the accused were from the same neighborhood, and though the girl had filed a rape complaint against the minor accused, in the end she committed suicide due to the intense trauma faced by her. This is indeed shocking and strange that how could a literate girl of class 10 allow anyone to deceive and exploit her on the pretext of marriage.

We live in a deceptive world which offers fallacious promises. It is therefore necessary for all of us to understand that we do not take people on their face value but analyze the motives behind their action so that we do not get trapped in their sinister ways.

I believe that instead of trusting the boy the girl should have told her parents about the promise of marriage made by the boy, as their decisions would have guided her actions. However this was all done secretly which led to the tragic death of the girl. Thus we see and realize that no one in this world is trustworthy and can be relied upon. Somewhere deep down I strongly feel that the girl should not have committed suicide but should have waited for the accused to be arrested, and for the matter to be clearly sorted out in order to get her due justice but unfortunately all of this ended up with a tale that sowed dismay, and wounds that can never be healed. I would say that today we as women need to be "Brave and Bold" and not be subjugated by anyone, even if it is our mistake we should look for ways to amend our mistakes and learn a lesson from our past so that we do not repeat it in the future, and similarly help women facing the same trauma.

Parents kill 20-day-old twin girls over expenses

Press Trust of India
• letters@hindustantimes.com

MUZAFFARNAGAR: Two newborn girls were drowned in a pond by their parents in an Uttar Pradesh village, with the father claiming that they killed the 20-day-old twins as they could not bear their expenses.

Waseem, a daily wager, and his wife Nazma were arrested on Sunday for killing Afrin and Afiya at Bhikki village here, Station House Officer (SHO) Ajay Kumar said.

"Our financial condition is very weak. We could not have borne the expenses for our two daughters," Waseem, who also has a seven-year-old son, told police.

The couple had an argument on Saturday night following which the newborns were thrown by them in the pond near their house, the SHO said,

adding that the twins drowned.

The father lodged a missing complaint on Sunday morning, but during investigation it was found that the twins had been killed, Kumar said.

Waseem, in the complaint, said when he woke up this morning, he found his daughters missing, the officer said.

The parents have been booked under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender), Kumar said.

The bodies were recovered and sent for postmortem, he said.

"The parents have confessed to killing their daughters," Kumar said.

Residents of the village said Waseem was angry over the birth of two girls and frequently fought with his wife over it.

Baby dies after dad throws her into river to cure his ailments

Pranjal Baruah | TNN

Guwahati: A two-and-a-half-year-old girl drowned after she was thrown into a river by her father in a bid to cure his ailments in Baksa district of Assam.

Birbal Boro, 45, was arrested shortly after the crime on Saturday in Tamulpur. He claimed that God came to him in his dreams and ordered him to commit the act. "He was sick for some-time. On Saturday, he took our daughter, Hrishika, for a walk in the evening but returned home alone. When we asked about her, he said he has thrown her in Borla river," said his wife, Junu Boro after lodging a police complaint.

She immediately raised an alarm and called for help. However by the time the State Disaster Response Force team fished out the girl's body, she had died. Birbal was caught by locals and handed over to police. Police are probing the possibility of an occultist's role in the crime. "It is suspected that his mental condition is not well," police said.

What a pathetic society we are living in today, where the state of human relations are on a constant decay. Our society today has become a plethora of deadly crimes with its central focus on the destruction of female life. There are no words to console the weeping hearts and the wounded flesh but just a burning desire to pursue justice. Tell me who will raise a voice for the weak? Men today are just lovers of money, they kill their own flesh and blood just because of their sex. I am tired of reading the same painful stories committed by different people and I'm sure you would be too! The recalcitrant people having no heart at all!!

Twin girls killed by the parents over expenses....., 2 year old thrown by her step grandmother...., father drowning her daughter ,believing her death would cure his ailment....,a stepmother throwing a six-year old from the third floor on being asked to terminate her pregnancy ...what a lamentable state of human affairs.

According to the BBC '...female infanticide is more common than male infanticide, and in some countries, particularly India and China, is likely to have serious consequences on the balance of the sexes in the population.

The reasons behind it are almost always cultural, rather than directly religious....'

I have no words to express my grief on the pretext of what's happening to women and girl child in our society, but I have a heart to feel them and so I challenge you all, we cannot stay silent now. It's time that we stand up for the powerless and make them feel empowered, it's time when we stop lazing around, it's time when we become the voice of the mute and become the hands and feet of the crippled in the gender hierarchy, it's time when we shout and say, "no more atrocities, no more pain", because this world is given to us by

Step-granny flings toddler to death from 6th-floor flat

Nitasha.Natu@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Two days after a two-year-old girl was found dead in the compound of a Malad (East) society, her step-grandmother was arrested on Monday for flinging her off their sixth-floor flat.

Rukhsana Ansari, the 50-year-old accused, told the police she was not happy with the child, Zia, and would frequently reprimand her. Rukhsana's grandson, also a toddler, and Zia would get into tiffs while playing and this would anger the accused. Zia's post-mortem report alerted the police that something was amiss as her injuries were inconsistent with that from a fall.

Zia lived in a joint family with her parents and grandparents at Kurar Village. Recently, her aunt and her two-year-old son had started staying with them. Her father works in a cellphone shop and her grandfather is a garment seller.

Her post-mortem report revealed a skull fracture and injuries on both sides of the body below the armpits. "When we examined Zia's sixth-floor flat, the door and windows were shut. This meant the child couldn't have fallen off accidentally. Some family member had flung her and shut the windows thereafter," said DCP D S Swami. Police recreated the crime with a dummy. They interrogated the family separately for 12 hours.

"Rukhsana confessed, saying she flung the child from the kitchen window at 5.30am," added the officer.

God, and as women we too have our rights to live the way we want to. No man has the right to take a life of his daughter, wife or mother. It's high time we get off our chairs and bring a halt to the present misgivings, because it's the reality that we face today no matter how much we may try to cover it.

It's time to realise समाज का कर्तव्य राष्ट्र का हित, है बेटी का सम्मान, नाकि उसका अनहित!

TN woman kills 6-year-old stepdaughter

M Manikandan
manikandan.man@thelocal.com

CHENNAI: A 26-year-old woman has been arrested for killing her stepdaughter by throwing the six-year-old from the third floor of their apartment building on Tuesday evening.

The woman has confessed to the crime and has been booked for murder.

According to Selalpur police station inspector Y Srinivasan, the accused, Suryakala, a resident of Sembakkam on the outskirts of Chennai, had married Parthiban in 2017 after the latter's first wife died. The couple has a one-year-old boy while Parthiban had a daughter, Raghavi, from his first marriage.

"On Tuesday evening, Parthi-

ban was at a friend's where he learnt that Raghavi had been missing for a while. He returned home to find a weeping Suryakala who claimed that the child had been missing since 2pm. After an hour-long search, he found his daughter's body near the apartment building and assumed she must have fallen down," said a police officer who reached the

crime spot first.

However, police grew suspicious following Suryakala's contradictory statements. Tuesday was a holiday due to Vijayadasami and Raghavi, a Class - I student, was at home with her stepmother.

"Suryakala, who disliked Raghavi, first hit her on her forehead with a stone. When the girl collapsed, Suryakala took her to the third floor and hurled her down to make it look like an accidental death," police said. The girl died as a result of the fall, police said.

Police also retrieved the CCTV footage from a nearby apartment complex. In the footage, Suryakala can be seen moving outside the apartment.

"Suryakala confessed that she

had recently got pregnant for a second time. But her husband asked her to terminate the pregnancy as they already had two children. That fuelled Suryakala's hatred for Raghavi. We have taken the accused for a medical check-up to see if she is being truthful about her pregnancy," a police officer said.

Raghavi's body has been sent for a post-mortem to Chrompet Government Hospital.

"It is an open and shut case of murder since the accused has confessed to the crime. We have booked an FIR under IPC section 302 (Punishment for murder) against the arrested. We will produce Suryakala before a local court seeking remand to aid further investigation," Inspector Srinivasan said.



SKETCHES

By Simran Tyagi

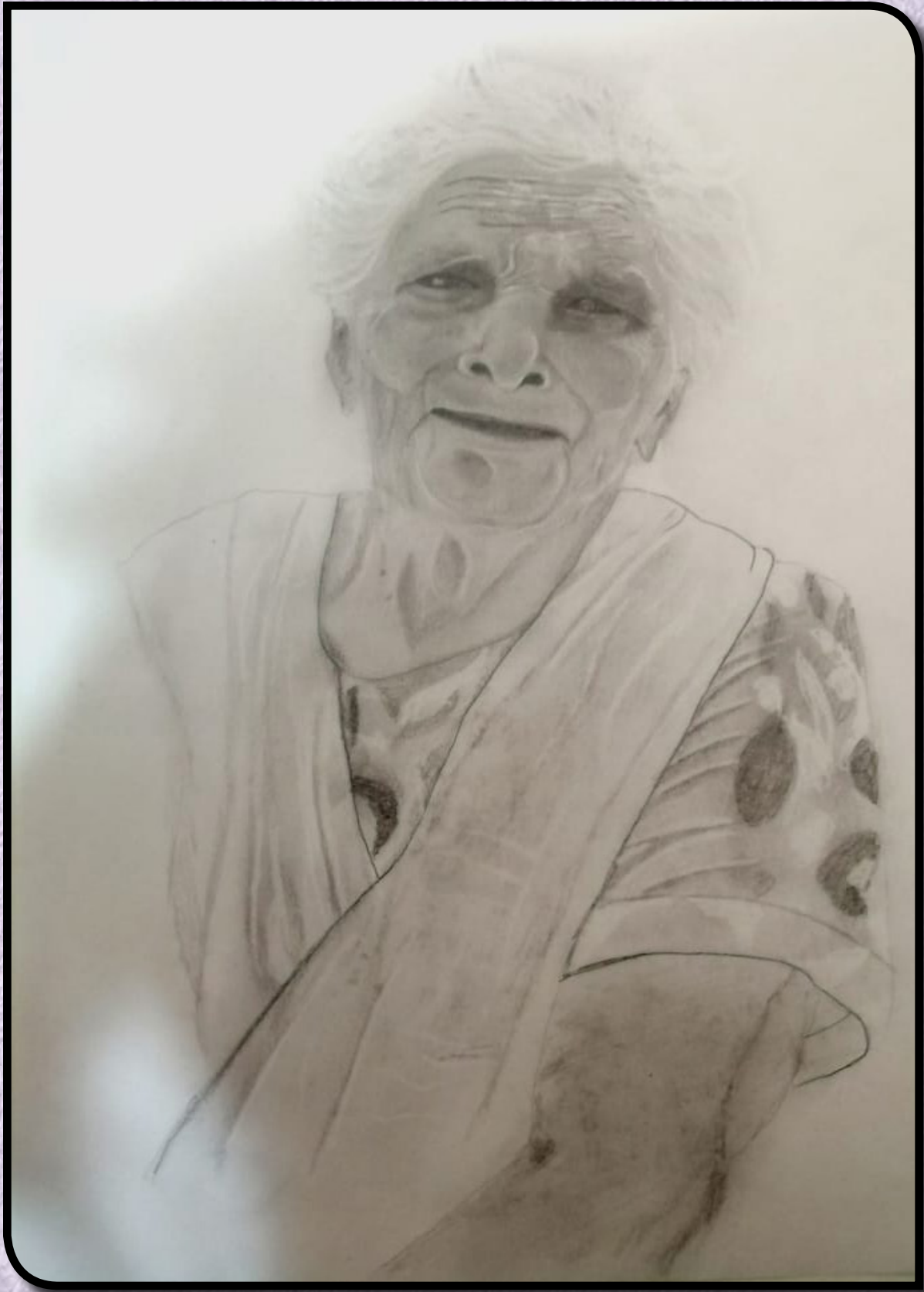
Based on Articles in January 2020 Issue



Pardon Me - I Do Not Drink



Mahal Kaur : A Woman of Grit





“Wishing for peaceful meadows and outdoors without a care or fear - where both nature and me are together with love and harmony!”

Dr. Prema Das, Informatics Research Assistant
Oregon Health & Science University
New Oregon, USA



ICC Maitreyi College

Bapu Dham Complex, Chanakaya Puri, New Delhi-110021
Phone No. 011-24673815 | Mobile No. 9818015570
e-mail : pbagla@maitreyi.du.ac.in

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