



Editorial

An Open Letter to the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi

Dear Prime Minister:

Congratulations on Your Great Achievement and Best Wishes for the Good Days Ahead!

It is an auspicious moment for you to recognise that a strategy of fast growth can only be sustained by an increased participation of educated women in the work force. Traditionally, it made sense for only men to work outside as the work involved primarily muscle power. No more. Advances in modern technology and their implementations for economic development today increasingly require a substitution of muscle power by brain power. The Nature has endowed women and men equally with brain power. So, it's a terrible waste for a nation when educated women don't find easy access to participate in the workforce dominated by men. It is worse still when the violence against women discourages them from gaining education and from working outside home. Such a culture of violence inside and outside home also makes women less privileged than men in every aspect of life.

India is among the group of countries where two-thirds of married women have been found to suffer domestic violence and where female infanticide and sex-selective abortions have been identified as the primary cause of skewed gender ratios. Prohibitive property and inheritance laws, lack of credit and welfare benefits, discriminatory religious codes and exploitative employment practices, systems of dowry, a discriminatory workload for women defined by their traditional roles as wives and mothers of men, such as housework, childcare, gathering of water and fuel, the care of elderly relatives, unpaid agricultural work have all kept Indian women poorer than men in each and every socio-economic category.

Such a systematic discrimination against women does not uphold India's national pride; neither it helps the economy to grow fast by taking an easy ride on the modern technology. Hence a more **equal division of work between men and women at home and outside seems to be a better allocation of human resource in the economy** for ensuring maximal possible pace for economic growth as well as a

fast disappearance of gender inequality. Unfortunately, customs and rituals of various kinds which often has a religious overtone dictates the traditional gender based assignments of roles in the society that would resist such a growth and development strategy. Consequently, your vision and leadership for liberating the country from the shackles of traditions that perpetuate "gender gaps" in work and education would be critical in taking India's economy to a sustainable path of growth with equitable distribution of economic opportunities between women and men.

In this issue, we have included real world illustrations of how social traditions and customs undermine women's education. Those news stories call upon us to appreciate the undue social pressure on women that undermines their ability to contribute to their fullest potential and thereby unwisely destroys the potential wealth of a nation. We find how the social pressure of child marriage remains real despite the law of nation and how that undermines the value of investment in girl's education by denying her an opportunity to work outside home. We read about how the horror of abuse of a girl child led to her dismissal from school and subsequent demoralisation which must have undermined her ability to make the best of her education. On a brighter note we document evidence of a sharp increase in women's education at the tertiary level which would be helpful for India's economic growth, provided those educated women get the opportunity to reduce their workload at home by sharing work with men and to participate at work in a safe environment. Unfortunately, the evidence we find especially for India and for fourteen other nations confirm our presumption that increased education among women had not led to increased participation of educated women in the workforce. **Increasing educated women's participation in India, therefore, remains one of the most important challenges for ensuring a sustainable growth with gender equality under your leadership** in the coming years.

For that, we wish you the best!

I. Stories of Child Abuse by Trusted Members of the Society

Priest held for raping minor in Pataudi:



GURGAON: A 62-year-old priest of Inchipuri temple in Pataudi has been arrested for allegedly raping a 12-year-old girl two weeks ago. According to the girl's mother, her daughter used to visit the village temple every day. The priest used to lure her with food. The priest took the girl to Vrindavan, about 14 km from the city, and raped her repeatedly. He dumped her outside her village and warned her to stay quiet.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/Priest-held-for-raping-minor/articleshow/43030328.cms?intenttarget=no&utm_source=TOI_AShow_OBWidget&utm_medium=Int_Ref&utm_campaign=TOI_AShow [Times of India, Sep 21, 2014]

Child Abuse in School



Laptop of Arrested Bangalore Instructor Allegedly Had Videos of Children's Rapes:

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/laptop-of-arrested-bangalore-instructor-allegedly-had-videos-of-children-s-rapes-561861?curl=1412070353> [NDTV news, July 21, 2014]

Sexual Abuse and the Role of Religions

Alma Marisol Gatica

It's my personal account of horror to find out first-hand how conservative religions may control women's mind through fear and manipulation of women's sense of worthiness and thereby how they contribute to the silencing many sexual abuses in the society. Religious values are often men's interpretation, if not men's creation and, for all practical purpose, we can only seek help from male priests and male pastors and not from GOD, who is beyond our physical reach."

What could be the origin of hostility against women in the religious institutions that helps to perpetuate an eerie silence around sexual violence against women? Well my country, Guatemala, is not like USA; it is more conservative than USA and even though it was already in the 80s, yet we couldn't talk about sexual abuse easily. In most of countries in Latin America people still live in quite conservative societies with strong religious values. My country is very religious - about 50 to 60 per cent people is hard core catholic, 40 per cent protestant and about 1 per cent from the other religions.

I was raised in different religions which may have confused me even more; my grandma and dad were Jehova's witness; my mom was catholic; and I decided to be a Christian which, I think, was what kept me alive. I needed to believe in something. I needed hope and Christianity gave me hope. It has been difficult being a protestant, though. It was a divided church, some were very traditional and that did not help at all; some of them made women believe that they would have to stand by their husbands, no matter what; but the new protestant church has a different point of view and teaches women how valuable they are.

Also, there is still a conservative mind-set that is biased against women. **If a woman is not a virgin she does not have the same worth. That's not true for men.** A part of the population has changed that mind-set, especially the new generation; but my generation, especially the religious one, still

has not changed that discriminatory attitude between women and men.

I try to teach my daughter it is not virginity that determines her value and, of course, that is going to be her decision. Both the protestant and catholic churches emphasise on virginity but they practice hypocrisy, because, most of the time, they only refer to women.

Some men, who go to those churches, make fun of other men, who married women with children, because, for them, it is like telling the whole world that she has been with someone else before. Women don't make fun of other women like that!

If a man comes and gives testimony at the church that he has been with many women nothing would happen to him; but a woman couldn't even think about making similar confession. Such bias in the attitude may arise due to a discriminatory mind-set of a society; but religion maybe guilty for providing a moral foundation for such a society. If only we could make the religions understand how they have harmed women's dignity.

I definitely believe that if there is no taboo against "losing virginity" for religious reasons or otherwise then children, girls and women, in general, will feel much more comfortable about reporting against sexual abuse and hence violence against women will decrease sharply.

A conservative system of values of the religions creates a psychological barrier in the society against us women's wish to openly discuss our problems with others and that aggravates our sufferings. The barrier is not just for us but also for the people with whom we try to talk about in schools and churches.

I remember once I talked at church about the topic of sexual abuse and even made a play about it. During the show, many ladies cried, as if they identified their own stories with it. Yet, most of the women prefer not to talk about it.

I understand that the hard way women are judged by religion might actually influence the way women react to abuse. It makes them feel dirty by making them experience a sense of loss, instead of advising them to accept the "loss of virginity" as a normal human experience or, as a mistake anyone may make. Moreover, it makes women feel "guilty" and bad in a way that is quite unlike the way it treats men. Through the sense of morality of a religion women fear strong discrimination unlike men and remain quiet about their sexual abuses.

Well, here is my personal story that may validate the above account of my understanding of the role of religions in a conservative society in silencing sexual abuse. I call it:

“After the storm”

I was just 9 years old when everything begun; my mom had left me when I was 5 years old and my dad raised me with my grandmother; my dad used to work all day long and my grandma used to go out all day, sometimes as part of her religious requirements. There was this uncle who used to take care of me; one day he started abusing me, without my parents knowing. The lack of relationship with my mother plus the fact that my dad was busy all day did not give me a chance to talk about the matter. Besides, I suffered from threats of my abuser uncle. I really believed that he could kill my dad.

I went to a Catholic school which was quite conservative in upholding moral values with a special emphasis on sexual purity and virginity. Now I wondered why I was never told in school about the fact that such things could happen to me and what I should do if it happens to me. I would be aware of it and would have stopped the abuse with their help. Instead, I thought that it was happening only to me and decided to swallow the pain in silence. After 3 years of abuse, it started to affect my performance at school. I missed my elementary graduation. Amazingly, my teachers and principal never made any effort to find out the reason behind my absence from school ceremonies.

Later on, I remembered a teacher at my Catholic school whom I trusted enough to begin a conversation. I mentioned to him that my mom left my dad for another man and he told me that she was an adulteress. That was like a shock in my little mind the way he said it made it seem like if she was the worst woman ever a true sinner. I could not forget those words. I didn't understand exactly the meaning of that word but it was my mom; so it sounded, as if, she was the worst woman ever; it was a shock of a kind for me! Later on when I went through all this horrible episode and I thought about telling someone at school. I remembered how this teacher talked about my mom. Immediately, I thought, well, if I mention something like sexual abuse, they might only focus on the sex part and say I am like my mom. If they were so hard with my mom probably they will be the same with me too.

That was like a dirty secret: maybe my reputation would be that I was evil like my mom.

When I entered junior high I tried to talk about the matter and what I have been going through psychologically once more; but instead of offering any help, they took me out of school. I only mentioned how my abuser used to give me drugs to put me to sleep; but they concluded that I had been using drugs and hence would be a bad influence on other students.

Since it was a catholic school this kind of things one could not talk about. I thought they were going to protect me. Yet, they did the opposite. I tried to talk to the priest and asked him for help; but he wanted to avoid the topic. It sounded like a taboo for him. They used to teach us about purity and chastity. I felt that their treatment of me was opposite to their teachings. They called my dad to explain and that was when he found out for the first time about the abuse. Then the principal told my dad to send me to a boarding school. That advice was not to protect me. Instead, she made it sound like, as if I should not be in an open society. As if, it was my fault and then she kicked me out of school. That's how my ultra conservative religious school treated my misery from sexual abuse as a girl child.

Without any counselling and necessary supportive learning to protect myself, I got into another abusive relationship. Once more another man hurt me and beat me a couple of times. The psychological damage was even more than the physical violence. I was able to get out of this relationship; but it was not easy. I gathered a lot of courage from the self-help literature available from secular media. Now, I am finding out how valuable I am. I also realized that from that self-help literature that I must be

sure that I have healed before I begin another relationship. I wish I received that knowledge from my Catholic school.

It's incredible now when I go back in time and realized how religion played an important role in the way we see things. How the wrong messages could stop women from reporting abuse when we have been taught that once we are touched by a man we are no longer pure. We are afraid that the whole world might judge us. We feel dirty because of what they teach us about purity. They made us believe that we are a sinner even if is not our fault.

They closed their ears to my reality because it did not match with their sacred principles. **They expect a higher standard from women than men. The safety of women and kids must be placed above and beyond any religious concept of purity. We should be careful of what we teach our kids and avoid being manipulated by so-called morality of a religion to the point where we might put kids and women in danger.** I never got any support from anybody; because when I was little and tried to talk, I did not get any support. That is why I mentioned how schools can help because that was the only place I tried to look for help; but even they did not help me; so schools need to change. To be honest I swallowed the pain all those years because I never got any support from my school. Even when I went to live in USA with my Mom and mentioned it to her, she preferred not to listen to it at all. I never went to an organization because I was not aware of the issues concerning child abuse. I too went to an NGO when I was little; it was a school too; but they did not do anything then. Now they have different programs. I have worked for them and I had the chance to see now they are conscious about this issue.

Schools have an important role in protecting kids from being abused and I also noticed there still is not enough information and protection to women who are being abused. They should not be made to feel that they are alone because that is one of the many reasons women don't report abuse. Religions should address issues related to sexual abuse and should not make them a taboo with a pretence that it happens only to bad people. If women feel encouraged by their religions to report sexual abuse and gets counselling and moral support afterwards then a large number of people will dare to report abuse and the number of abuse would decline significantly. So, by making religions a bit more moral in this way, the extent of sexual abuse in the society can be reduced significantly.

The reason, I thought that I was not good enough for any man, was because I thought my body was dirty in my little girl mind. I did not know how to deal with all that and, in my society, still even women who have had a man in their lives, even a husband, but they are separated, men think woman do not worth the same as a virgin one.

I used to believe that there was a deficit in me, because I was not pure anymore and for so many time I thought that I had to cover it loving so much to the point where I sacrificed myself and my own needs but now after being hurt so much maybe pain made me understand that I am valuable as an unique creature as a woman. I am taking time for me and my kids, leaving the feelings of guilt which has not being easy; but I am learning and learning to love life too.

ALMA MARISOL GATICA MALDONADO is from Guatemala City, Central America. She works as a Spanish Interpreter and had experience working as a teacher for 12 years. Working with children and teenagers has been her passion. She works as a volunteer in different social organisations concerning youth welfare.

IIA. Stories of Child Marriage and How to Resist Them

“Child Marriage is worse than Rape” Says Delhi Court: Child marriage “is an evil worse than rape” and should be completely eradicated from society, a Delhi court has said while ordering registration of a case against a girl’s parents for getting her married at a tender age: <http://www.ndtv.com/article/cities/child-marriage-worse-than-rape-says-delhi-court-587970> [NDTV news, September 07, 2014.]

Girls Not Brides: Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of more than 400 civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their potential. The guiding principle of their mission is the understanding



that: “Ending child marriage is central to reducing poverty”. “How are we supposed to handle single teenage girls? It is not good to have girl 13, or 14-years-old girls roaming around the village unmarried.” This is what Moushumi, 13, heard when she refused to get married. In her village in West Bengal, India, marriage is what most girls are destined for. Find out how our member Landesa gave Moushumi the opportunity to change her destiny: [Source: <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/girls-voices/now-moushumis-turn/>].

A Turning Point Linkan Subudhi



This is a story about my struggle against the mind-set governing the family values of a society that stops girls from getting education and that pushes them into an early marriage and how it reveals its violent paws, marking a turning point.

I am a software developer by profession and a social worker by passion. I live in Noida (Uttar Pradesh, India). I love kids and my primary goal in life is to work for their education. I had been working for more than 4 years in a Slum Community. In this community children are born but their lives are not valued—they are the means for making some money for the family. Consequently, there were numerous roadblocks between a child and her education. I met a few volunteers who were putting in their time and effort in late night after office and during the weekends for some rag-picking children to get into schools. I understood the reality of the challenges and the genuineness of the team and started working along with them. Our goal was to motivate the slum children to get education. However, that required us to teach and to empower their mothers, fathers and their whole community. We built a small school for those children to avoid having to deal to unwarranted educational problems. We call it “Odiya New Year at Anandasharam” and manage it via: Seva Prayas Foundation: <https://www.facebook.com/sevaprayas.foundation>

Among the different types of roadblocks, one of the major concerns was the being a “GIRL”. A girl in the Indian society has to fight for her human rights even today in many places due to the

lack of awareness, poverty, socially backward community and insecurity of gender based violence such as rape which could lead to murder. I found 3 to 4 girls getting married before turning 18 years who were not even aware of the consequences of a marriage. One of our female students got married in her native village without informing us. Apparently, poverty and her feeling of insecurity prevented her to inform us about her marriage. I received the news of her marriage after a month and that was followed by the news of her suicide, apparently due to assaults by her in-laws for dowry.



This incidence made me restless. I thought of the irrelevance of the government’s laws prohibiting child marriage and the of its effective implementation. The lawmakers did not realise the physical and mental stress on a girl due to lack of education and maturity to handle the family pressure for marriage or for giving birth to a baby. I started counselling every teenage girl in our school and their parents to avoid any further child marriage among our students. **There was a girl; let’s call her Farah. She told me about the phase she was going due to the parental pressure to get married –she was in class 7, aged 13 whereas she wanted to continue her studies.** I counselled her mother -. But that effort turned out to be of no use. Farah was taken to Bihar for marriage with her cousin. She called me two hours before -her marriage and described the entire situation and asked me to save her. Immediately, I discussed her situation with the Child Welfare Committee. Then I sought support from the Patna police station and described the whole situation over a long distance telephone call. The entire team reached the destination during the girl’s marriage and stopped it. Afterwards, a written

statement was taken by the police with an assurance not to marry her forcefully. It was a glorious victory on my part to save her from an early marriage.

After 15 days, her father, who was a very weak and indecisive man in the family and who supported Farah, came back to Noida. He asked me to re-admit her in the school to continue her studies. This happiness did not last long, when Farah's mother and her cousin Rahim (groom) came back too and started assaulting her. Her mother forced her to go out only with that guy, even if she had to go to school or to the nearest market. Farah informed me of every instance and I shared the same with the Child Welfare team. Once there was an assault which led to Farah's attempt to commit suicide. She left a note blaming her mother and the prospective groom. Fortunately, she was saved in time and I consoled her suggesting that she should not contemplate suicide; instead, she should fight for her rights. I assured to help her in every situation.

On the evening of the 18th Sep, Farah called me to inform me that Rahim had made a sexual attempt on her, which led to fight amongst her father, mother and Rahim. Farah's father asked me to visit her next morning to discuss and to resolve the dispute as it was reaching its height.

On the morning of the 19th Sep, while our volunteers were doing maintenance work, I went to talk to Farah and her father. I was standing in her lane discussing the matter and I suddenly noticed Rahim with a sharp knife about to attack me. I ran away to save my life and hid behind a house inside a half built Indian latrine. But Rahim and Farah's mother found me and stabbed, strangled, kicked and hit me with bricks and left me bleeding to die there.

A lady saw my foot and screamed as she came to save me. Immediately volunteers and residents carried me in a scooter to the nearest hospital. For the first 48 hours they had little hope of my survival due to my head and brain injury and blood loss. Lord's mercy, miracle and thousands of good wishes saved me. After 8 days in ICU, 2 days in observation and 2 days in the normal ward doctors and nurses brought me back to normal life. Recovering from brain haemorrhage and the injuries will take time but this will not change my determination to fight for children and their rights. I know Farah never wanted to see me in pain and she wanted to get higher education to attain some

position in the society. Yet, she did not know what would be the turning point of her story. Today her courage is shattered; her strength has weakened and she has taken a step back to listen to her inner voice. Now, she wants to raise her voice against illegal child marriage, not as she did earlier, when she wanted to fight against her own marriage in order to live her childhood studying for success in life and then to get a high position to make herself an ideal lady. Now she wishes to join the movement to fight against child marriage in her community.

Children are the heavenly gifts to the world. A girl child should be allowed to spend her childhood for education, reading books and enjoying good things of life. They have certain health issues which must be addressed. Moreover, the children are not matured to handle a family pressure for marriage. **Farah's story calls for our attention to this evil trap of early marriage for a girl child that makes the laws and policing irrelevant. We need to find new ways to change the mind-set and attitudes toward a girl child in the society.** If such social evils like child marriage are not stopped, we cannot say we are developed. She was mere a girl who was interested in studies and playing and she was forced to marry a person who was double her age. Where is the morality in society which would create a mind-set for upholding human rights for girls?, Where is the child's right, how can we uphold it in the society? We have to answer these questions. Also, we must change our teaching curriculum to ensure that children are made aware of their human rights in a way so that they can raise their voice against those who subscribe to such social evils like child marriage.

LINKAN SUBUDHI is involved with "Child Tracking System (Project e-Shishu)" which has won Confédération of Indian Institute Award, CDC, IT Excellence Award, Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration & 10th National E-Governance Award. They track children to ensure a regular school attendance and no more; if a girl child is absent then they take additional steps to track her down with the sole objective to prevent child marriage and child trafficking. In September 2014, she received the State Bravery Award from the Government of Odisha.

IIB. Brave Girl Stories

Standing up to the molester: I was molested ...I taught him a lesson that he will never forget: "I think the answer lies within us. Unless women put forward that is not OKAY for someone to touch and get away with it, nothing will change." - Megha Vishwanath, A Brave Girl. [source: <https://www.facebook.com/storypick/photos/a.641942945851396.1073741828.630422963670061/764510600261296/?type=1&theater>; image: Camilla Soares<http://stry.pk/1rPURLE>]

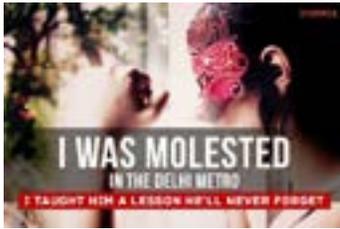
Paying Back to the Society in Kind: Sunitha Krishnan, born in 1972, is an Indian social activist and chief functionary and co-founder of Prajwala, a non-governmental organization that rescues, rehabilitates and reintegrates sex-trafficked victims into society. At 15, She Was Gang-Raped By 8 Men. At 40, She's Taking The Fight Back To People Like Them.

Gulabi Gang



Source: <http://www.scoopwhoop.com/inothernews/at-15-she-was-gang-raped-by-8-men-at-40-she-s-taking-the-fight-back-to-people-like-them/>; <http://www.heraldofindia.com/achiever.php?id=283>

A Group of Women Standing up for Their Rights in a Feudal Part of India: Sampat Pal is the leader of the Gulabi, or 'Pink', Gang. This feisty crusader is making headlines with her vigilante tactics; when she isn't attacking police, she is teaching women how to wield the 'lathi' - a long, wooden staff - to protect themselves against domestic violence. With over 40,000 members, the Gulabi Gang has quickly become a mass movement.



The gang are on a mission to ensure that those born into the lowest caste have an education, avoid child marriages, and earn a decent wage. [Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXwH-kjSUSs>; <http://journeyman.tv/60238/short-films/the-gulabi-gang.html>]

III. Women’s Empowerment with Economic Development

“Toilets Before Temple”: Indian government has a firm plan to eliminate sexual violence against women – build five million new toilets: <http://www.vancouverdesi.com/desibloggers/indian-government-has-a-firm-plan-to-eliminate-sexual-violence-against-women-and-that-is-to-build-five-million-new-toilets/779935/>

In India, lack of toilets increases rape attacks on women. “India’s new government has promised to build more than five million new toilets within its first 100 days in office. But for now the lack of toilets means girls and women have to put themselves at risk of attack everyday.” [Source: BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-28761363>, 12 August 2014]



Women’s Education

Subhodev Das

“Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process.”

–ICPD Programme of Action, paragraph 4.2

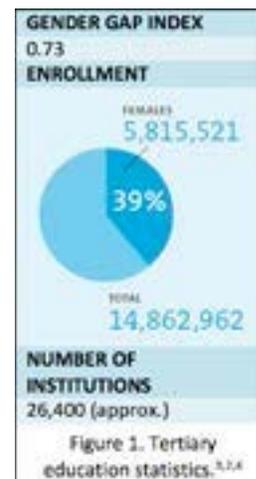
TERTIARY EDUCATION

Tertiary education, sometimes referred to as higher education, is the education after secondary or high school and includes certificate or diploma courses, vocational training, college or university. India’s tertiary education system is one of the largest in the world, with more than 14 million students, but only 39 percent of the students pursuing tertiary education are female (see Figure 1). There is great gender disparity in literacy: 75 percent of adult males are literate, compared to only 51 percent of adult females. The sheer size of the population and disparities across the Indian states mean that millions of young Indian women face the challenges of female access to tertiary education.

In the last decade, the government’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) or Total Literacy Campaign (I think the official name in English is “Programme of Universalization of Elementary Education”, as per their website <http://ssa.nic.in>) programme has increased primary school enrollment, expanded school infrastructure, reduced out-of-school children, increased transition rates and narrowed the gender gap. However, substantial gender disparities remain and are often emphasized by culture, caste structure and geography. Families that are socially and economically disadvantaged remove their girls from formal schools at the onset of puberty. Many girls are forced into early marriage, often becoming young mothers (mother’s median age at first birth is 19.9 years, 2006 est.2); and those who are not married take on household responsibilities and do not have the opportunity to realize their full academic potential.

Gross enrollment ratios for females drop to 60% (66% for males) at the secondary level and to 15% (21% for males) at the tertiary level. Women have widely different educational experiences across India. In the southern state of Kerala, women have achieved nearly 90 percent literacy, whereas in the northern state of Bihar,

this rate is only 31 percent (what about the other states? These states seem to be outliers, is that correct?). Ensuring education for all citizens in the second most populous nation in the world is an enormous challenge. Ensuring education for girls and young women is an even greater task. **Public sector spending on education is low; the government allocates only 3.2 percent of its GDP to this vital sector, ranking India at 134 in country comparison. 2 Privately funded English-medium education and government-funded schools that teach in regional languages often reflect broader social divisions: urban and rural, wealthy and poor, high-caste and low-caste. Thus, language is linked with power, domination and social inequality.** At the university level, English is the medium of education for sciences and professional subjects. For students who attend government-funded schools, learning English often becomes the students’ burden; they must study this language on their own after completing a secondary education with weak or non-existent English instruction. English, as a skill that facilitates economic opportunity, “remain[s] inaccessible to those who are disadvantaged because of their economic situation, their caste or both.”



Gender parity index has shown continuous improvement over the years as a result of Government's efforts to increase women participation. Women enrolment in higher education is highest in the faculty of Arts followed by Science and Commerce/Management. Women representation is increasing, though still low in faculties like, law, medicine, education, veterinary science etc. UGC have launched a number of schemes to achieve gender parity. Day care centres in universities and colleges provide day care facility on demand basis for children of 3 months to 6 years of age. UGC is also implementing Indira Gandhi Scholarship for single girl child for pursuing higher and technical education. Construction of girls' hostel for colleges is supported by UGC. There is also a scheme for the Development of Women's Studies in universities and colleges. The primary role of these centres is to promote knowledge simulation and transmission through teaching and research.

By 2020, India will have the largest tertiary-age population in the world and will have the second largest graduate talent pipeline globally, following China and ahead of the USA. Any advancement in the tertiary education system must be accompanied with increased participation of women as is the

case in the overall educational landscape. On the eve of the independence the women enrolment was less than 10 per cent of the total enrolment but in the academic year 2010-11 women enrolment increased up to 41.5 per cent. As this trend continues, it is expected that social changes induced by education will influence the traditional attitudes of the male-influenced society towards women's tertiary education for better.

References:

1. The World Bank (2013).
2. The CIA World Factbook (2014).
3. The Government of India (2011). The Report of the Working Group on Higher Education for the XII Five Year Plan.
4. The MasterCard Foundation (2011). Through Their Eyes, In Their Voices.

SUBHODEV DAS is an active member of the 'Protibaad' forum and contributes regularly to the blog and the newsletter.

V. Social Attitude and Cultural Violence Against Women

Child Bride Exploited by Husband: "On September 30, 2011, she went to the police station at Dabawli in Sirsa district to file an FIR against her husband. She says the police refused to file a complaint of rape, so she filed one of dowry harassment."



[Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/my-husband-wanted-power-thats-why-he-brought-men-from-both-congress-and-bjp-to-me/#.U7Pc55I4NZx.facebook>, Indian Express, June 29, 2014]

Changing Social Attitude:

"Women in 2733 rural villages in six districts of Madhya Pradesh have formed committees with local leaders to challenge social attitudes towards women, and to seek community-based solutions."- In the wake of new cases of violence against women and girls in India, thousands of women have risen up to fight for their rights.

The Horrifying Two Finger Test:

For fear of how state officials will treat them, 9 out of 10 Indian women don't report rapes. The Union government recently banned these tests and published new guidelines for helping survivors while collecting evidence, but these violations will continue unless enough of us take a stand. Madhya Pradesh is the worst state for child rapes, so the change should start here. [Source: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/india-violence-erupts-alleged-rape-victim-subjected-banned-two-finger-test-1446129>, India Business Time, April 25, 2014.]

"India's culture of caste is a culture of rape: Both for oppression and opportunism, caste-based sexual violence is meant to silence our communities"... A Dalit woman explains how the caste system is a lethal one where, according to India's National Crime Records Bureau, four Dalit women are raped, two Dalits are murdered, and two Dalit homes are torched every day. leave until justice was done.



The world mourned with a town called Baduan in Uttar Pradesh, India. There the raped bodies of two young girls were found hanging in a mango tree. [Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2014/06/09/india-s-caste-culture-is-a-rape-culture.html>, June 6, 2014.]



In the rural villages of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, women are organizing to fight for their rights and raise their standard of living. <http://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/29250-courage-to-create-change> [9 June 2014]



NEGOTIATING RIGHTS IN THE INDIAN CITY: VOICES FROM WOMEN ACROSS THE CLASS BARRIER, Urban women in India, regardless of class, face considerable danger and discrimination. [Source: <http://asiadialogue.org/negotiating-rights-in-the-indian-city-voices-from-women-across-the-class-barrier/>, 7 May 2014.]

Violence Against Women In Politics Rampant In South Asia

The study, 'Violence against Women in Politics' revealed that the insufficient implementation of laws, lack of support from police and judiciary and overall decline in 'moral' values are the major reasons for violence. The study finds that while the percentage of female voters and women candidates fielded by political parties has increased in all three countries, the percentage of female representatives in national bodies has decreased. More than 60 per cent of women do not participate in politics due to fear of violence. http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/violence-against-women-in-politics-rampant-in-south-asia_928631.html, April 30, 2014.

Social apathy halts justice despite the SC directives on the gang-rape case in Muzaffarnagar. Five persons are accused of allegedly gang-raping a 30-year-old woman in Phugana village during communal riots in Muzaffarnagar. [Source:http://www.livemint.com/Politics/NxEbMJmeJTgeF3yX5772tl/SIT-reopens-gangrape-case-in-Muzaffarnagar-after-SC-directi.html?utm_source=copy, Hindustan Times, May 2, 2014.

Nation Sleeps Over Another Nirbhaya? Was It Because It Wasn't an Urban Story?

14-year-old minor Dalit girl gang raped by 5 men inside moving bus. In a shocking incident, similar to that of Nirbhaya gang

Women's Voice in Indian Election: 85 percent voters want action on violence against women

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/85-percent-voters-want-action-on-violence-against-women-114040301226_1.html [April 3, 2014]

Does Women's Education Increase Women's Participation? Debasis Bandyopadhyay

As per our conventional wisdom, we almost axiomatically consider women's education as a silver bullet to empower women as well as to help accumulate the wealth of a nation. Underlying that grand wisdom is an assumption that education would empower women not only by increasing their awareness of their rights and their economic opportunities but also would help them to find work outside home to gain economic power. Indeed, in a society that limits women's role to a lifelong motherhood, their education would benefit the nation indirectly to some extent by improving the quality of their child rearing. However, that society typically does not have a clear mechanism to empower them in return. Consequently, women's empowerment through education requires increased work opportunity for the educated women exactly as we observe it for the educated men. In this study, we examine if women's education at least increases their participation in the labour market to generate (at least for them) additional income.

For each country, the percentage of adult women who are either gainfully employed or actively seeking work measures women's participation rate (WPR) and the average years of schooling, among all adult women, measures the level of women's education. From a plot for all 142 countries in Fig 1, which report those work and education related data, we observe that women's participation displays a U shaped variation with education. It implies that among the countries where women have a low level of education, more education strangely corresponds to less participation outside home!

However, in Fig 2, where we focus only on the countries belonging to the EU and the OECD, which are not included in the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) database for measuring gender equality, we find a clear and positive relationship between women's education and participation rate. The SIGI database

rape case, a 14-year-old minor dalit girl was gang raped by 5 men in a moving bus on Sunday. The gruesome incident took place in Madhya Pradesh's Sangrauli district. The bus driver and 2 cleaners were also involved in the incident. The bus driver offered a lift to the girl while she was returning back to her home. They raped and then pushed the girl off the moving bus due to which she suffered severe head injuries. The girl lay bleeding on the road in Nalhatani village. Thereafter, some villagers saw the unconscious girl lying on the roadside and informed the police about the same. The girl was taken to the district hospital where she told the police about the complete incident. [Source: <http://daily.bhaskar.com/article/MP-BHO-another-nirbhaya-14-year-old-minor-girl-gang-raped-by-5-men-inside-moving-bus-4587995-NOR.html> Dailybhaskar.com, Apr 21, 2014]



excluded these countries, presumably because, compared to the rest of the world, there exist no significantly large institutional and social barriers against women living in those countries so as to warrant a SIGI rank. With that presumption, we conclude that the chart below extracts the truly positive relationship between women's education and women's participation, which is often suppressed by institutional barriers and social norms against women in other countries.

In fact, for the rest of world, included in the SIGI database, we observe a negative relationship: more education to women corresponds to less participation by women in the labour market.

In Fig 3, we only focus on countries where institutional and social barriers against women are significantly larger than those belonging to the OECD and the EU. It appears that among those countries, women's education has a negative or a discouraging effect on the women's participation rate. A question arises naturally: why would people invest in women's education and where do they get their returns from education? Even if those investments are made by the government or other world organisations, the question about the returns from those investments in education would be quite pertinent. We return to those issues later.

Even more interestingly, we observe from Fig 4 that the women's participation rate (WPR) becomes almost non-responsive to an increase in the average level of women's education in a country, once the WPR falls below a critical minimum of 30%. **There are about 15 such countries with GDP less than US\$4000 per capita and, typically, with SIGI ranking indicating rigid institutional barriers that perpetuate a social norm against women's autonomy. They are in the Middle East (Iraq and Iran), North Africa (Syria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, and Tunisia) and South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan).** Locating returns to women's education in countries where women's education does not increase women's participation outside home amounts to understanding the social mechanism for valuation of women's

education in those countries. Clearly, those returns are not necessarily pecuniary. Naturally, a question arises for the policymakers to ponder over. What socio-economic conditions that block the expected positive effect of women's education on women's participation? In other words, if not increased income for women from an increased participation in the labour market, what are the returns to women's education? Here are a few conjectures which indeed requires close inspections and further analysis.

Parents may send girls to school to raise their values in the marriage market rather than in the labour market and thereby to reduce their dowry obligation. The society may put up a solid resistance against educated women who attempt to cross that line of control. Besides, private returns to education may come to a woman with her enhanced ability to find a safe haven of a rich husband who, in turn, buys wife's education for his social status and her service as an educated mother. **Thus women's education in those societies primarily contributes to generating a pool of educated women in the marriage market for men to choose from and thereby to help men to enjoy a higher status and to benefit from the improved quality of service from the enlightened pool of mothers for their children. Consequently, rich men and their political representative in those societies advocate women's**

education but not for women's participation in work outside home for additional income.

The strength of this income effect increases with men's income and, therefore, a richer man would likely to prefer a more educated wife and a more qualified mother for his children. Consequently, in those societies, more educated women would likely to show less participation in work outside home.

Thus, whether or not women's education serve to ensure women's empowerment is not a clear cut fact that can be axiomatically taken as given and it's especially not true in countries where women face a hostile social norm and other institutional barriers against their autonomy to move away from the marriage market and advance toward the labour market. The above conclusion remains a theoretical hypothesis yet to be proven through further research.

Yet, it seems to be a reasonable conjecture; so, instead of waiting for the confirmation, shouldn't the World Bank and other well-intended institutions try to ensure that their investment in women's education actually empowers women, rather than enriches the basket for men's consumption, especially in some of those societies with hostile norms and hostile social conditions against women's participation in work outside home?

DEBASIS BANDYOPADHYAY has a PhD in economics from the University of Minnesota with a focus on economic development. Currently, he has a permanent academic position at with University of Auckland, New Zealand. He is an active member of the 'Protibaad' forum and contributes regularly to the blog and the newsletter.

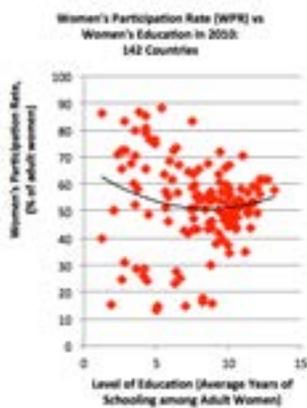


Fig 1 - All 142 Countries

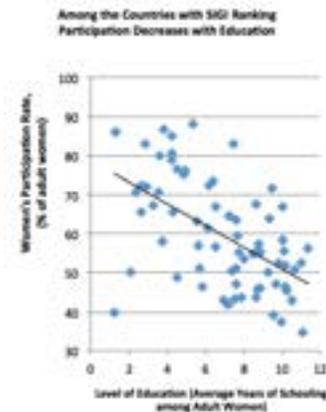


Fig 2 - EU and OECD Countries

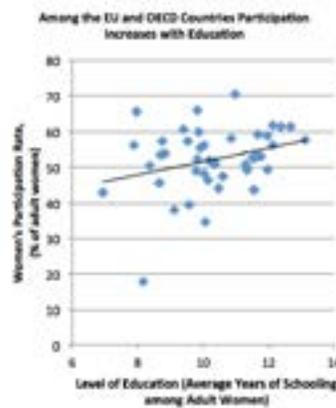


Fig 3 - Moderately High SIGI (Evidence of Significant Gender Bias)

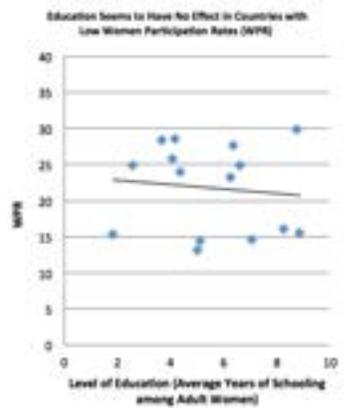


Fig 4 - Countries with SIGI among the highest (Acutely High Gender Biased Institutions)

For past issues please refer to Protibaad News Letters Archive at: <http://protibaadforum.wordpress.com/category/newsletters/>

CONTACT US

Protibaadforum@gmail.com
<http://protibaadforum.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/protibaad/>

Editorial inputs by Aparajita Sen, Subhudev Das, Arin Basu, and Debasis Bandyopadhyay

Designed by Amit Ghosh and Eugenio Felix at BST El Paso | <http://bstelpaso.com>