

childhood matters

Digital Magazine

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Childhood Matters

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Childhood Matters.

A digital magazine by Anthropos India Foundation.

October 2021.



Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) is a trust registered in Delhi since, October 2011. Anthropology is one of the most vibrant and fascinating subjects. Anthropology deals with communities both big and small and people from all walks of life. It engages in solving various social issues of communities by understanding from an 'emic' perspective and respecting the local cultures and ecology. The philosophy, theories, concepts and methods of anthropology have made notable contributions in every field, be it law, human rights, public health, education and child rights. The aim of AIF is to promote the discipline of anthropology, its philosophy and methods. It also aims to conduct anthropological research; applied, visual and action research.

Childhood matters and the experiences of childhood play an important role in the making of an adult. The impact of childhood experiences will decide the personalities, attitudes, actions of future adults. The current situation is grim because crimes against children are on the rise. Child rights are violated every second in this vast country. To have a safe, healthy and happy childhood is every child's right. This digital magazine aims to make humble efforts to disseminate the knowledge and information related to child rights and child protection. We are releasing the digital magazine "CHILDHOOD MATTERS" for the wellbeing of children to bring some positive impact on society. The methodology and approach of the digital magazine is participatory, where all the stakeholders will be involved: children, parents, teachers, child welfare activists, child protection professionals and all those who are concerned about children. Each one of us can contribute to this digital magazine, in the form of poems, stories, illustrations, paintings, podcasts, short films, images and many other forms of expressions. We attempt to take under consideration the existence of multiple childhoods along with specific circumstances of children shaped by the intersection of caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion and other specific context. We shall keep the diversity of children in mind and come up with meaningful, useful, and impactful content. This is a small effort to bring a small change by the AIF team to make childhood a better experience.

Dr. Sunita Reddy
Editor in Chief

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guest editorial

Dear Children,

Firstly, my greetings to all the readers & viewers of the digital magazine published by Anthropos India Foundation.

The COVID - 19 pandemic has made the whole human race believe that life does change overnight. One day, the streets were busy enough with countless activities, the offices were full, and children were physically attending their schools & playing outside in the open with friends, but the very next day, the streets are empty, minimum staffed offices and untimely closed schools. A global pandemic has brought the whole world to a standstill & made us accept the changes it brought with it.

The pandemic has been tough specifically for children who are puzzled with the sudden alteration of daily life from strict lockdown, work from home parents to online classes. And the expectation from children to understand the need for social distancing and facing quarantine in day-to-day life.

Though the children have adjusted & eventually accepted the new normal post COVID - 19 pandemic, children's vulnerabilities grew manifold in unprecedented situations like these.

Since the second wave of Pandemic COVID - 19 has hit our country again, our utmost duty is to keep them safe, protected, and healthy both mentally & physically in all environments, including rural & urban areas.

I hope the digital magazine made by Anthropos India Foundation for the children will be beneficial for the target audience & also for the parents & people working for children.

Last but not the least, we need to remember that each child is important & each one of us is responsible for providing them with a healthy environment to grow & nurture.

Regards

Ms. Rosy Taba

Member NCPCR Ministry of Woman & Child Govt. of India



Children's corner

Life brought new dimensions to it with Corona. The roads with horns all day became silent within a day or two. The bells of school after every half an hour are of no more use now. The walls of the home are the only friends left with us. Television, for which we quarrelled with our siblings gives no excitement. Father, who used to leave home at 8 am in the morning and return at 6 in the evening, is home all day. I am not able to keep track of days, every day for us is Sunday. We spent almost a year now with the same routine. This vacation has never come yet, and I wish it will never come again. The fear to step out from homes. The restrictions to even greet our near ones are something which no one had ever imagined. Life took an almost opposite turn.

Despite all the fears, it brought many lessons to our life as well. Somewhere we now appreciate our Vedic and natural lifestyle. On the other hand, we realize the importance of life, which maybe we all were taking so casually. Yoga became part of individual lives. The planet got its air again. Staying home and spending this much time with family is something I never thought of, but we all get to know each other in a better way because of this Corona.

I request every friend reading this to stay home, stay healthy, and remember – my grandmother always says, “it is a time, it shall pass”.

Tanay Porwal 5th class
Springdales Children School
Kota, Rajasthan



Celebrity Talk

Message with Love and Care

“A message from me to all my young friends out there. You can be the hope and the heroes in this fight.”

- *Hrithik Roshan*

Bollywood Actor

Click the Instagram icon to watch Hrithik Roshan's Message



EXPERT COLUMN

Children with Disabilities have Rights

IT IS OUR MORAL DUTY TO RESPECT AND SUPPORT THEM

M. Thomas Kishore

Additional Professor of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS

There are children amidst us who cannot see, hear, move or function the way the majority of the peer group is capable of. Some may have an identifiable problem that is responsible for diminished or altered functioning. For example, physical defects in the eye, ear or hands and legs can interfere with the functioning of those organs. The physical defects are also called impairment. In some instances, we may not be able to identify what the impairment is but the child is unable to function as expected of his or her age. For example, there are children who have intellectual disabilities and other developmental issues (e.g. autism, dyslexia) though there is no identifiable impairment in the brain or elsewhere.

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4% experience significant difficulties in functioning. As per the last census, there are 21 people with disabilities for every 1000 in our country. Most of the persons with disabilities are at school-going age but very few get to go to school. The situation is very grim for children with developmental disabilities and within this category, intellectual disability, autism, and dyslexia.

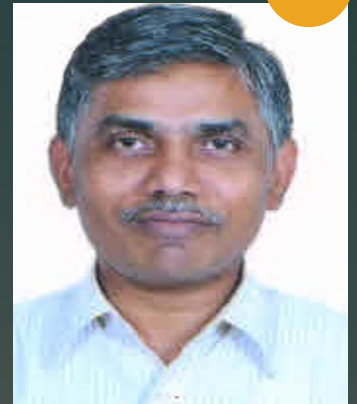
The situation of limited opportunities is not always because of disability conditions. Societal attitudes and stigma also play a role in limiting the participation of persons with disabilities in the community. For example, a child with autism wishes to go to school but may not get an opportunity because schools and communities are not ready to give admission. Or, even if the child is admitted, there may not be

adequate support to sustain the child in the mainstream. As a result,

many children with disabilities, especially those with developmental disabilities like autism, dyslexia and intellectual disability drop from mainstream education, social activities and occupation. And, it will seriously impair their quality of life.

There are very good policies to address the needs of persons with disabilities. One of them is the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (see, <https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts.php> for more details). However, policies are effectively translated into action only when the large majority (that is, those without disabilities) develop a positive mindset to recognize the rights of people with disabilities. It may entail being sensitive to the special needs and adopting an empathetic (not a sympathetic) stance towards persons with disabilities. What is a better time than now to inculcate that attitude!

As the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed in 1992 to annually observe 3rd December as the International Day of Disabled Persons, let us resolve to include persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life that we all enjoy and aspire for. But, most importantly, we need to understand that every person will have some abilities no matter what the disability is. And, it is our moral duty to recognize and strengthen those abilities.



Parent's Perspective

Another worry as a mother of a teen nowadays is the increased screen time. School classes, mathematics tuition, and then those weird online games, PUBG, Call of Duty, and Minecraft....Three I can recall immediately.

The other day my son and his friends were in a zoom meeting and doing their homework.

It seemed weird but upon inquiry, I was told that they were just 'Buddying Up' (as they call it)." Like in school, we used to sit together, chit chat and do our homework, so same over Zoom." was his instant reply. Coming out of his room, two opposite thoughts ran through my mind. One, there was no need to increase your screen time (which already worries me) and second, the felt need of children to be with their peers. The second thought overpowered me, and I felt that social isolation because of COVID did not allow children to be with their friends. You indeed need someone of your age group to talk, discuss and share your ideas or worries. Maybe as a mother, I was not interacting with him enough because of my schedule....ufff...another concern added to my list while I unthinkingly muttered it loud enough for my son to overhear.

"No, it's not because you are not giving me enough time... it's just that I want to be with my friends. I miss my school, my playground, and my 'buddying' time

with my schoolmates," he said. A bit relieved, but it's a fact that social isolation is an issue that needs to be addressed. My sister resonated with my worries. My 4-year-old nephew, who was to start his nursery, could not attend his classes physically. He does not even know what it is to be going to school. For him, school is his laptop, and the teacher is someone who is politely directing him to learn and write, and classmates are those visible in small boxes in the Zoom room. Safety reasons bound children to their homes, glued them to their screens and the small 14-inch screen became their new world.

How long will it be like this? When would the school again be full of noisy classes, and the park in my locality with chirpy kids fighting for their turn on the swings?

Dr. Gunjan Arora
Post Doc Fellow

Centre for Social
Medicine and
Community Health
JNU

Parent



Teacher's Perspective

The Shift To Screens

The impact of online education on the students.

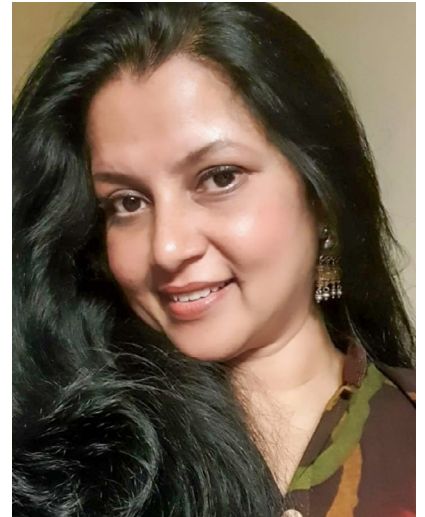
The spring of 2020 forced the people of the world to confront the serious implications of Covid 19. The aftermath of this realisation was the nationwide lockdown which led to the shutting down of schools and the conversion to online education.

The benefit of this is that students can study wherever they want; there is no need to travel to a campus. Students can reap the benefit of viewing their lessons several times. Although a lecture is only delivered once, online resources are accessible at all times. Students benefit financially from the reduction in high fees and travel costs. Many have honed their creative skills, seeking to find work and careers that they are passionate about. The increase in the rise of small businesses and blogs run by teenagers is remarkable. They have chosen to represent their innovative streak, helping others in their growth along with them.

Despite these advantages, there are some significant disadvantages to using online education. The perks are offset by the increased demand for a personal computer, home Internet access, and paper and print cartridges. The continued use of online teaching may result in dehumanisation, meaning that the repetitive nature of connecting to the Internet to do work may lead to people being perceived as automatons rather than people. Sitting for hours staring at screens creates many eyesight problems, headaches and not to mention strained backs and necks trying to find a comfortable position. This often leads to demotivation and lack of concentration. The increase in online teaching deprives the users of face-to-face contact which can be seen leading to a lack of in-group experiences and social touch. Teachers cannot rely on classroom theatrics to convey ideas to students. Sometimes, the curriculum required cannot be found or used online and computer crashes prevent students from accessing classes.

Quoting Charles Darwin, these were truly the best of times and the worst of times. The lockdown, despite its many drawbacks, helped students in realising their best selves and the online school has provided self-direction in students. We can say with conviction that this period strengthened students to cope with rapid change and taught them many life lessons.

Ms. Kavita Tank | Teacher, Bishop Cotton Girls School, Bangalore.



Riddles to solve

- ✓ What has hands and a face, but can't hold anything or smile?
- ✓ It belongs to you, but your friends use it more. What is it?
- ✓ Kate's mother has three children: Snap, Crackle and ____?



Riddles answers on Page 21

TALK THE TALES

MATTER OF TRUST

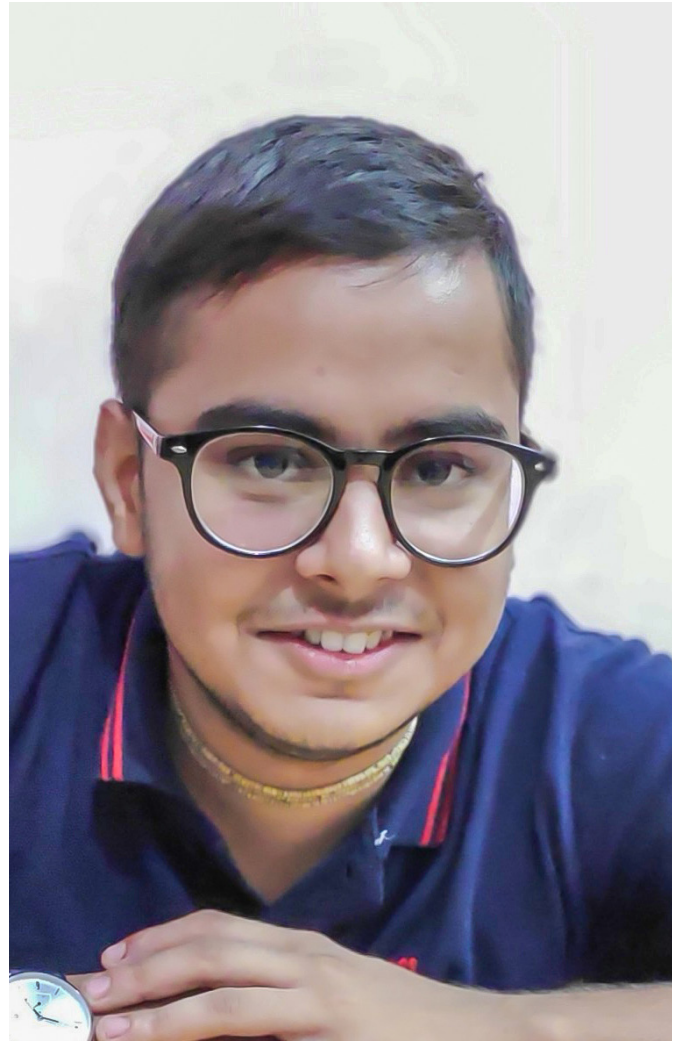
I was twelve. The cold winter night was silent. Everybody was sleeping. I somehow could not sleep. Suddenly a voice from downstairs disturbed the silence of the house. I was so afraid that I could hear my heartbeat. The slow steps were breaking the silence of the cold night. I wanted to be with my parents and tell them that I had heard someone. I gathered all my courage and went downstairs. To my horror, I could see three masked black figures moving around my house. They saw me....and I screamed. Within a few seconds, my parents were out of their room. The lights were on, and we could see the black dressed men with their masks on to hide their faces. I could only see their eyes.

We all were alerted when one of them put a knife on my mother's neck and asked us to collect all the valuables in the bag. They had brought three bags with them. We shouted and asked them not to harm my mother. My father requested and agreed to get all the money and jewellery in the house. My father held my hand and took me to the adjacent room to fill the bags with the little valuables. My mother was still captive in the Living room. We filled the bags with all the stuff we had. An idea then struck me. We called the masked robbers to the room and asked them to fill the bags themselves. Just when they were busy filling the bags, daddy and I rushed out of the room and locked the robbers inside the small adjacent room. We hurriedly reached our mother, who was gasping for breath. My father called the police. Within a few minutes, we realized that the masked men were my father's friends.

We all were shocked at the revelation and felt our trust was betrayed. I just thought that even friends could not be trusted. It is only faith, love and trust that define a friend. We should be careful while choosing our friends

Mumuksha Porwal

AIF intern



unheard words · The culture of silence

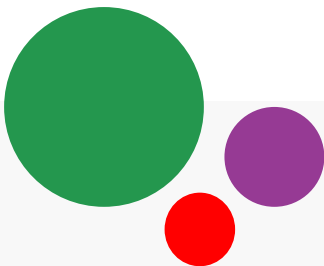
I was just ten years old when he first time took my hand and forced it to rub his intimate parts. I was sleeping with my elder cousin whom I naively believed was like my guardian or my protector.

I felt weird but I was not able to express that. Afterall, I was not aware of the existence of such happenings. As time passed, every time he visited my home, he repeated the same actions and if

I tried to say anything, he threatened me with dire consequences. The intensity of his actions increased, and my silence took me to the depths of dark well with no hopes to come out. As I grew, abuse with boys was not common and this made me a hollow human. When I gathered the courage to share this with my parents, they consoled me and asked me to be silent as he was part of the family and nothing could be done.. Their reply left me emotionally weakened and now I have no voice.

Anonymous victim

Student



POET'S POETRY

I am **Aradhya Porwal** from 8th class brought poem on lockdown experience. Please click on the YouTube icon to watch the video.



Child Abuse: The Indian Context of Bullying

Vasu Yadav and Aman Kachroo are not just names; these are the unheard voices of children waiting to be heard. Guilt, sorrow, grief can't return their lives and pacify their loved ones for their loss.

1 out of 3 children is bullied in some way or other. Aren't you?

In India, bullying is not considered what it is. It is masked by the facade of joy, hobby and fun activity to school for college going children to pass their free time. Bullying is a behavior that hurts someone else. The hurting weapon can be name-calling, teasing, hitting, punishing, forcing to do something, spreading rumors, breaching privacy, abusing, threatening, humiliating, etc.

Sometimes, children or adults bully at schools, restrooms, boarding schools, and college hostels, at home, at online platforms. This time pass activities for someone can lead to physical, emotional, psychological lifetime trauma for others. Many times, it crosses the boundary of trauma to life-threatening actions like suicide or death.

In the past two decades, the world has gone through many developmental actions, and digital platforms took many turns into it. Online games and social media platforms added new breeding spaces for bullying. In India cyberbullying cases have increased many folds within the last decade and are on rise with every passing day. Sending threatening messages, sharing embarrassing images or videos, trolling, sex chats, engaging children in sexual conversations, encouraging young people to self-harm are different ways of cyberbullying. This affects the child psychologically and leads to depression and anxiety.

India ranks third in the list of online bullying cases as per the survey conducted by Microsoft in 2012 in 25 countries. Girls are more susceptible to cyberbullying as compared to boys. The victims are also prone to committing suicide after being bullied.

Some signs of bullying are-

- ✓ Physical injuries such as unexplained bruises;
- ✓ Being afraid to go to school;
- ✓ Asking for or stealing money;
- ✓ Damaged belongings;
- ✓ Frequent fights and anger;
- ✓ Avoiding person or group discussions;
- ✓ Being nervous, losing confidence, becoming distressed;
- ✓ Problem with eating or sleeping.



There are many serious effects of bullying, the child becomes weak in self-esteem, loses self-confidence and resists making friends. The child often isolates themselves and remains secluded as they cannot build lasting friendships or relationships and it might continue to their adulthood.

Breaking the silence is hard for a child in such situations but is essential.

Help from parents and elders can be of great comfort for the child.

Following actions can be taken in providing help to a child in these cases:

Talking to children about bullying and asking them to share their daily routines can play an important part in understanding the course of their everyday activities and identifying their daily routine.

Giving them time to tell their stories instead of interrogating them is yet another important aspect.

Taking bullying seriously and taking immediate action against it.

Reporting bullying is vital to save others from it.

The government of India has enacted a regulation called: UGC Regulations and Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Education Institutions, 2009. But this is only applied to all the colleges and higher education institutions. This law does not apply to schools. For schools, the former HRD minister has generated the guidelines for all affiliated schools:

1. Form a committee: deals with the case of bullying and ragging;
2. Ragging in school: Students will be given a written warning and can lead to the rustication of the student.
3. School notice board: a warning to students of strict action, if anyone found bullying someone
4. Committee members: it should include vice-principal, a senior teacher, doctor, counselor, parent-teacher representative, school management representative, legal representative, and peer educators



Unfortunately, nobody in India has watchful eyes over schools to oversee and examine to what extent these guidelines are being followed. There is no law in India pertaining to cyberbullying. We as adults should take steps to stop bullying and make educational spaces safe for children.

“The beginning can’t be traced but the end can be achieved by conscious efforts”.

Reference:

- Dharni Aishwani, Cases of bullying in India. March 28, 2019.
- Ghosh Sudip, Anti-bullying in India for schools, colleges and cyber world. December 14, 2016.
- Shalini Swati, what is cyber bullying as anti-bullying laws in India. September 20, 2019.

Mumuksha Porwal

Intern, Anthropos India Foundation

FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN

CHILD MARRIAGE

The risk of child marriages has heightened as a result of the pandemic's economic fallout, as vulnerable households could be forced to adopt coping mechanisms.

According to data reported by Child line, a nodal agency of the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development protecting children in distress, out of 92,203 interventions, some 5,584 during the lockdown (35 percent) were related to child marriages. Of this number, 97 percent were minors (18 years and below) and 91 percent were girls.

Child line India claims to have compiled reports of 5214 child marriages reported between March to June across India. Child line, a children's helpline, has reported a 17% increase in distress calls related to early marriage of girls in June and July this year compared to 2019.

Reference: Domestic violence and other crimes (Deepika Bahl, Shalini Bassi, and Monika Arora, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Adolescents: Early Evidence in India," ORF Issue Brief No. 448, March 2021, Observer Research Foundation.)



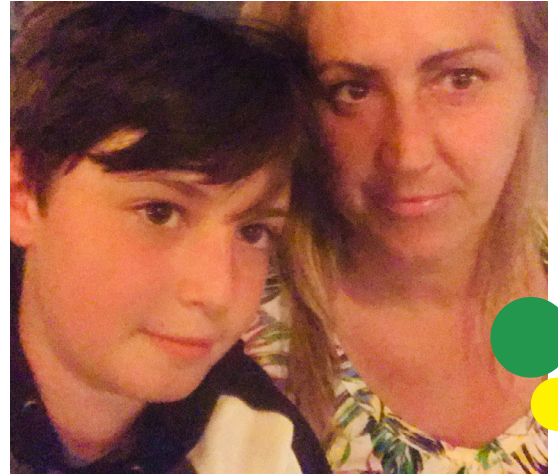
DIGITAL CHILDREN

online gaming: An interview with Seth from The UK

Hi Everyone,

My name is Alison Kahn, and I am a visual and digital anthropologist. That means that I am interested in how people live their lives online all over the world. I am also a documentary filmmaker and I have worked with companies such as the BBC and made a series for Discovery Channel. My research investigates how children have adapted to the digital world and I use my experience as a mother and a teacher to find out what children need and how we can support you throughout your lives.

I am based in the UK and with my family. My husband is American, but I am British. My father was brought up in India and I have Indian cousins. I have three children, Helena (15), Seth (12) and Lukas (9), who use digital media as part of their school learning activities; they also play video games, make videos, record songs, stream content and create digital art. Over the next few editions of this magazine, I will share with you some of their work and tips for how to use digital media creatively to expand your worlds and offer tips for a healthy digital lifestyle.



Today we are going to start with on-line gaming. My 12-year-old son plays video games. He thinks Minecraft is a great game for all ages, but he also wants to share some advice about the dangers for children using on-line platforms.

Here is an extract from a short interview with him:

Mum: What is the difference between gaming and online gaming?

Seth: Online gaming is the same as gaming on a computer, but the online means your need Internet access.

Mum: Which games do you like to play online and why?

Seth: Minecraft because it is fun; there is a lot of creativity. Fortnite is good but you should limit yourself as it can pull you in. 2K21 is great; it is NBA Basketball. Rocket League is a football car game. You need to calculate the angles properly to angle the ball into the goal.

Mum: What is the attraction for children to play games online?

Seth: The advantage is that you have the game to yourself; you can play with people on the other side of the world.

Mum: Have you experienced any inappropriate behaviour online?

Seth: Yes, on a few occasions; on ROBLOX people were swearing; they insulted other players and swore at them. But there are options to censor this kind of behaviour. You can turn a censor option on during the game, and it puts any bad language into hashtag. I have not experienced bullying but sometimes friends can be mean and annoying. You do have the option any time to leave. It's easier online just to turn off the game.

Mum: What do you think parents and children need to know before they allow their children to play online games of any kind?

Seth: First, the content of the game, if there is any risk of harming your child's mind. You should look at reviews as well. You should always check with your parents first. Type up 'Guidelines' or 'Reviews' for the game in question and this could help.

Mum: How do you stop adults coming on to children's games?

Seth: You should check you know the person before answering requests to be your friend online. You should call your friend on the phone and ask them for their username, so you are sure you are accepting the friend request. It is OK to play with unknown players if you are only playing the game, but never have any text contact with them. If they try to contact in the chat box, you should leave the game immediately. In school we have lessons on cyber bullying and the dangers of giving out personal information online. Basically, don't give anyone any details about yourself, your age where you live, or any bank details online.

Mum: Will you always let me know if anything happens online that upsets you?

Seth: Yes, I would always. Once my friend was being really annoying and it was irritating me, and when you are hearing all this through headphones, it magnifies the voice. I told you about it. I called him on the phone, and we decided to meet at school and be face-to-face to make up. If anything makes you upset, you should always tell your parents. Rely on your own instincts and stop the game if you start feeling agitated.

Mum: I allow you to play online games on Fridays and Saturday evenings for 2-hours each time during term time, and almost every evening during holidays. Do you think this is too little or too much?

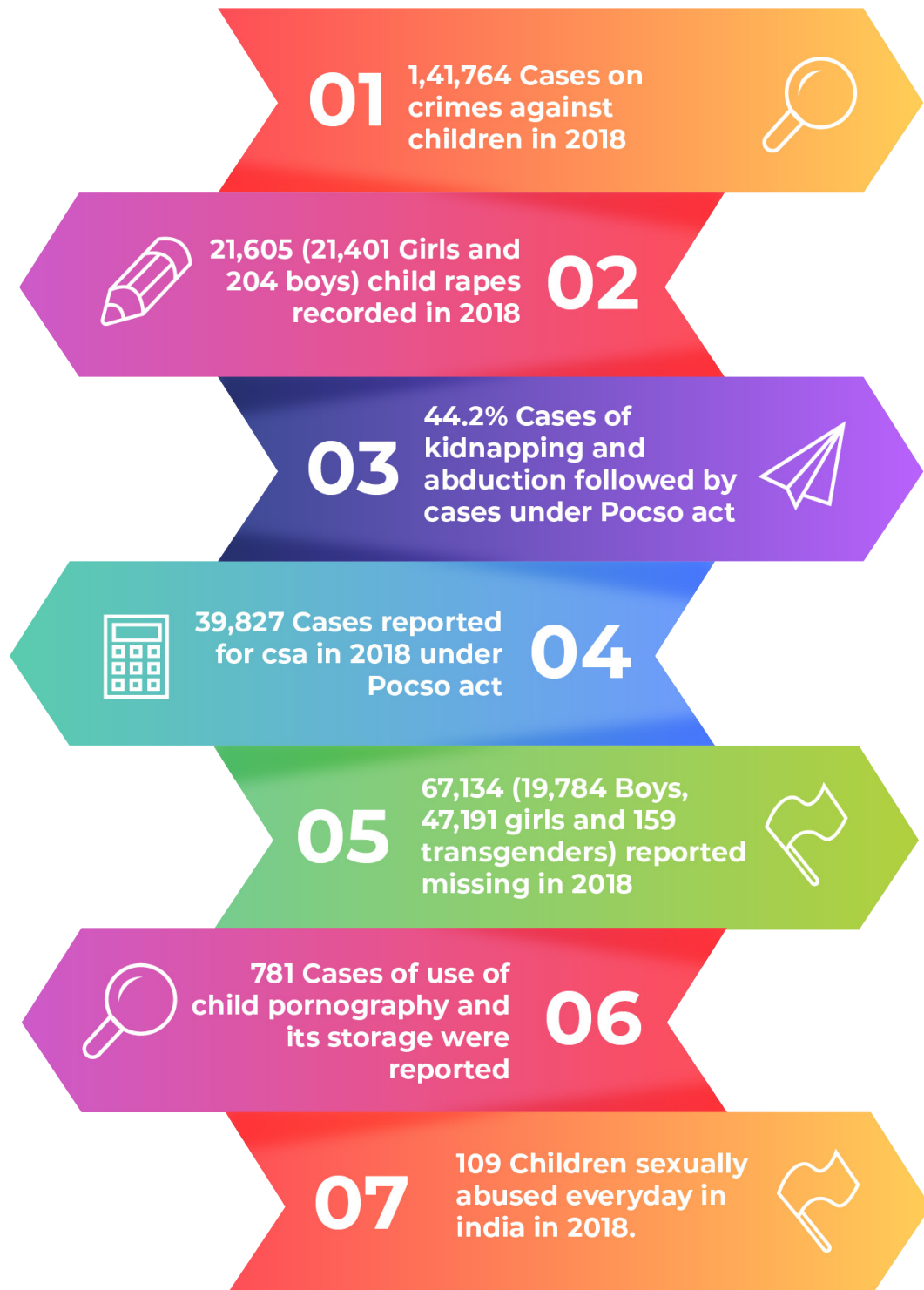
Seth: Four hours a week is OK but sometimes there can be exceptions when you want to level up and get good at the game. Your parents should let you finish a game if it is important to you, but don't do this too often, and not on a school night. You should not have screens in your bedroom, and always wind down with a book for half an hour before you go to sleep.

Mum: Do you think you should let me know which games you are playing and who you are playing with each day? Why?

Seth: If it is a different game or a 12 + and you are 11, you should check with your parents to see if it's a suitable game. This is important as your parents should be aware of the content in case something disturbs you and they can help you. This should be agreed upon. An inappropriate game is GTA, there's blood, guns, stealing and bad behaviour. It is 18+ but I don't think that kind of game is good for anyone.



Child Protection And Rights



INFORMATION SOURCE- <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/109-children-sexually-abused-every-day-india-2018-1636160-2020-01-12>

Child Protection Policies in India

JUVENILE JUSTICE (CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN) ACT, 2015

Standard Operating Procedure (sop) for care and protection of children in street situations

The protection of children from sexual offences act (pocso), 2012

The criminal law (amendment) act, 2013

CHILD HELPLINE NUMBER IN INDIA

1098

FREE EMERGENCY CALLING 24/7.

You can be any child who needs help.

Call for medical assistance, shelter, missing children, repatriation, protection from abuse, emotional support and guidance, death, information about childline, volunteers, runaway and child labour, etc.



can you help me?

Seeming anxious

Becoming withdrawn

Running away or gone missing

Lacks social skills, has few friends

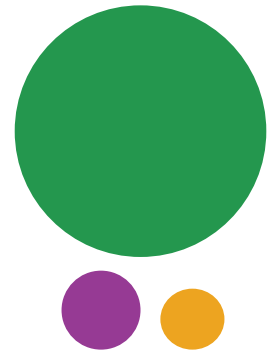
Unexplained change in behaviour

Poor bond or relationship with parents

Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive

Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age

Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body



If you notice any of the signs among any child around you,
don't let it go. Someone might need your help!

Your one step can change someone's life

बोलता बचपन (Hindi Section)



“चलो कुछ बात करें”

अपने पंख फैला कर उड़ने का समय आ गया है

हर बच्चे के जीवन में कुछ मौके ऐसे होते हैं जब उनका या उनके बारे में लिया गया फ़ैसला उनकी पूरी ज़िंदगी का नक्शा बदल देता है।

ऐसा ही एक अवसर अब आ गया है जब बारहवीं के परिणाम आने के बाद उनको अपनी आगे की पढ़ाई के विषय चुनने हैं।

लेकिन दुर्भाग्य से आज के भारत में ना तो बच्चों के अभिवावक ना उनके टीचर इन बच्चों को इस लायक समझते हैं कि वो अपने मन से अपना आगे का रास्ता चुन सकें।

ये दुर्भाग्य है क्योंकि क़ानूनी दृष्टि से अब तो सोलह साल के बच्चे भी बालिग़ माने जाते हैं। अगर इन बच्चों को अपराध करने के लिए परिपक्व माना जाता है और वो १८ साल में अपनी सरकार चुन सकते हैं तो वो कॉलेज के लिए अपने विषय चुनने के लायक क्यों नहीं माने जाते?

ख़ैर, ये पत्रिका बच्चों के साथ उनके माता पिता, अध्यापकों और ऊपर बैठे देश के दिशा निर्माताओं को भी समर्पित है इसलिए ये सबसे अपील है की बच्चों को अपनी ज़िंदगी के कुछ फ़ैसले अब खुद लेने दीजिए।

बचपन के लिए स्कूल के अध्यापकों की निगरानी में, उनके बनाए अनुशासन में रहना शायद ज़रूरी था लेकिन अब समय है जब उनको अपने सपनों की उड़ान भरने के लिए छोड़ देना चाहिए।

ना जाने किस बच्चे की किस्मत उसे उन बुलंदियों तक पहुँचा दे जिसकी उसके अभिवावकों ने कभी कल्पना भी ना की हो।

दुख की बात है आज भी हमारी दक़ियानूसी सोच वही ५० साल पुरानी है। हर अभिभावक की इच्छा होती है मेरा बच्चा या तो इंजिनियर बने या डॉक्टर। दूसरी पसंद कॉमर्स। सब ठीक रहा तो वो चार्टर्ड अकाउंटेंट बन कर भारी कमाई करेगा। ये अलग बात है कि सी ए की परीक्षा में आज भी यह पहले से तय रहता है कि कितने प्रतिशत को पास किया जायेगा। मैं बहुतों को जानता हूँ जो बीस सालों तक परीक्षा देने के बाद भी सी ए नहीं बन पाए और ये हसरत लिए ही सेवा निवृत्त हो गए।

सबसे बड़ी समस्या है उन बच्चों की जो आर्ट्स लेना चाहते हैं। मैं दिल्ली के एक जाने माने स्कूल की एक छात्रा को जानता हूँ जिसने अपने दसवीं की परीक्षा के बाद अपनी मैथेमैटिक्स की किताब के पन्ने फाड़ कर आग में जला कर एक विडीओ बना कर सोशल मीडिया पर डाल दिया। उसका तो पता नहीं लेकिन उसकी सहेलियों को उस विडीओ को शेयर करने के लिए इतनी डाँट पड़ी कि उन्हें उसे डिलीट करना पड़ा।

आर्ट्स लेने वालों को और उनके अभिवावकों को आज भी उतनी ही हीन दृष्टि से देखा जाता है जितना आज से ५० साल पहले जबकि आज उनके लिए इतने ऑप्शन खुल गए हैं। एम बी ए, प्रशासनिक सेवा, अध्यापन, सेना जैसे रास्ते तो पहले भी थे जहाँ पैसा और इज़्ज़त दोनों मिलते हैं। अब तो मीडिया, एनिमेशन, सोशल वर्क, कम्प्यूटर, स्पोर्ट्स जैसे ऑप्शन भी दरवाज़े खोल कर खड़े हैं।

शायद ग़लत फ़ैसले लेने की वजह से बहुत से इंजीनियर क्रिकेट खेल रहे हैं, सिनेमा में अभिनय कर रहे हैं, डॉक्टर प्रशासनिक सेवा में उच्चतम पदों पर काम कर रहे हैं या एम बी ए लेखक बन गए हैं।

ज़्यादा ना कहते हुए सचिन तेंदुलकर का उदाहरण देना ही काफ़ी है। अगर उनके माता पिता उन पर स्कूल की पढ़ाई के समय उन्हें क्रिकेट नहीं खेलने देते तो वो आज दुनिया के समसे मशहूर और अमीर हस्तियों में नहीं होते।

बच्चों को भी समझना होगा कि मेहनत और अनुशासन हर जगह है चाहे वो क्रिकेट हो, गायन हो, अभिनय हो या लेखन। लेकिन अगर अभिवावक अगर उन्हें अपने विषय का चुनाव खुद करने देंगे तो रास्ता बहुत सहज हो जाएगा।

इतना सत्राटा क्यों है भाई

उस गरीब को तो

हर सभा में

हर योजना में

हर रैली में

सबसे आगे बैठाया जाता था

फिर ऐसा क्या हुआ

कि नेताओं का भाग्य विधाता

एक गरीब बाप

आज

इतना डरा हुआ, सहमा हुआ, दुबका हुआ

अपने आप से

नजरे नहीं मिला पा रहा है

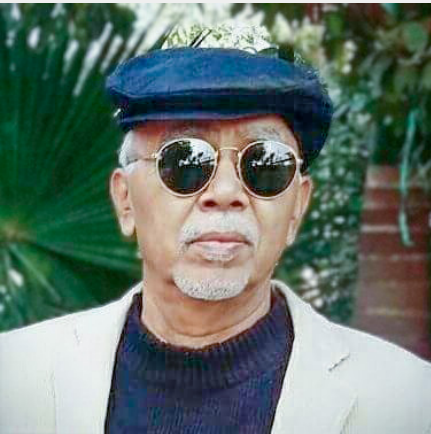
देखना कहीं उसके घर

बेटी तो नहीं पैदा हो गई

कविता संग्रह 'कुछ इधर की कुछ उधर की' से

अमिताभ श्रीवास्तव

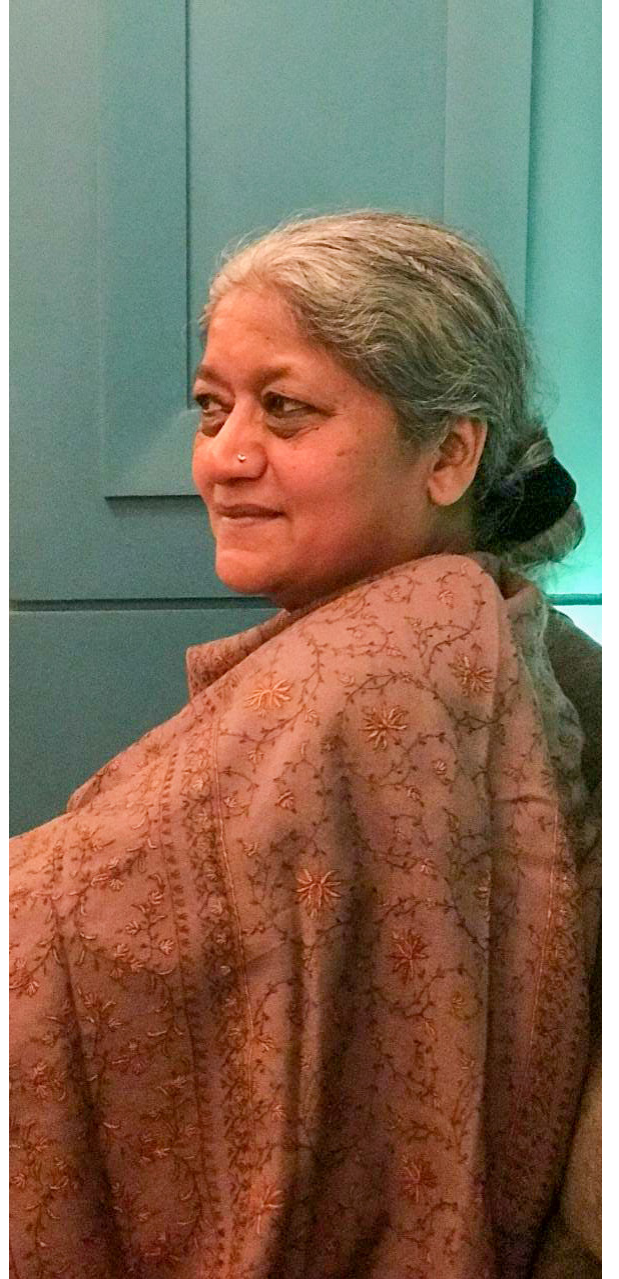
45 वर्षों से पत्रकारिता कर रहे अमिताभ श्रीवास्तव जिन्हें 2021 में लाइफ़टाइम अचीवमेंट पुरस्कार प्राप्त हुआ



बदलाव

घर के सारे काम निपटाते निपटाते शाम के चार बज गए थे। सर्दी की शुरुआत थी। मौसम में आया एक हल्का सा बदलाव तन और मन दोनों को सुखद लग रहा था। एक कप चाय ले कर पल्लवी अपनी छोटी सी बगिया में आ बैठी थी। पूरे दिन के बाद बस यही एक घंटा उसके हिस्से में आता है, उसका अपना समय या आजकल की भाषा में कहें तो मी टाइम। अपनी मन पसंद कुर्सी पर बैठ कर, गर्म चाय की चुस्की लेकर चैन की सांस ली पल्लवी ने और लगी कोसने महामारी कोरोना को। “आग लगे इस कोरोना को, बीमारी के साथ साथ घर का काम भी चौगुना बढ़ गया है। कुछ महीने पहले बच्चों को स्कूल और पति को ऑफिस भेजने के बाद उसके पास 2-3 घंटे आराम के होते थे जिनमें वह दोस्तों से गपशप करती, अखबार, पत्रिकाओं में लेख और कहानियाँ पढ़ कर अपनी क्रिएटिव अर्ज को शांत करती थी, वहीं अब न वो अनमोल खाली समय है और न ही पत्रिकाएँ। ज़ाहिर है पत्रिकाएँ अब आ ही नहीं रहीं तो पढ़ी कैसे जाएंगी। इस मरे कोरोना की नज़र मेरे शोक को भी लग गयी है। यह तो खैरियत है कि अखबार आ रहा है। कम से कम दीन दुनिया की खबर तो मिल जाती है। वैसे तो समाचार टीवी या मोबाइल वगैरह से भी पता चल जाते हैं लेकिन जो मज़ा अखबार का है वो किसी और में कहाँ?

बचपन से उसे पढ़ने का बहुत शोक था, पुस्तकालय जाना, नई नई किताबें और पत्रिकाएँ लाना, उन्हें पढ़ना, शादी के बाद भी जारी रहा। कई अड़चनें आईं लेकिन उसका शोक लगातार बना रहा। इन किताबों, पत्रिकाओं के माध्यम से नई दुनिया से उसका परिचय होता रहा। लेकिन आज कल वह जैसे अपने अंदर एक खालीपन सा महसूस कर रही थी। अचानक बायीं तरफ रखा उसका मोबाइल बजने लगा, डिस्प्ले पर नाम उभरा लतिका, उसकी प्रिय सहेली का। दिल खुश हो गया। तुरंत फोन उठा कर पल्लवी ने लतिका को इतने दिनों तक फोन नहीं करने के लिए खूब खरी खोटी सुनाई लेकिन फिर जो बारें शुरू हुईं तो कॉलेज के दिनों की यादें ताज़ा हो गईं। बातों बातों में लतिका ने पल्लवी से पूछा, “अच्छा यह बताओ कि तुम्हारा पढ़ना लिखना कैसा चल रहा है?” पल्लवी की तो दुखती रग पर किसी ने हाथ रख दिया हो। “कहाँ, आजकल तो लगभग सब बंद ही है, वही पुरानी पत्र पत्रिकाओं को दोहरा कर पढ़ लेती हूँ ‘अच्छा यह बता अखबार लेती हो आजकल?’ लतिका ने पूछा। पल्लवी ने तुरंत जवाब दिया हाँ क्यों नहीं, हर रोज़ लेती हूँ। बस पढ़ने का समय बदल गया है। क्या कह रही हो? आजकल भी लेती हो? बड़ी हैरानी से लतिका ने कहा। पल्लवी ने जवाब दिया, अरे भाई मैं तो जब तक अखबार की हैडलाइन्स से लेकर संपादकीय नहीं पढ़ लूँ चैन ही नहीं मिलता, तुम तो जानती हो यह बात। लोगों ने खूब समझाया मुझे कि अखबार मत लो या पूरे अखबार को सैनिटाइज़ करो, धूप में रखो वगैरह। लेकिन कोई भी बात मुझे आश्वस्त नहीं कर पा रही थी। ऐसा नहीं कि मुझे डर नहीं था लेकिन बेवजह का डर मैं नहीं पालना चाहती थी। लिहाजा मैंने अखबार विक्रेता/ वेंडर आनंद जी से बात की। उन्होंने बताया कि अखबार का छपना पूरी तरह से मशीनी प्रक्रिया है इसलिए उसका संक्रमित होना मुश्किल है, और बड़े बड़े डिस्ट्रिब्यूटोर अपने अपने स्तर पर अखबार सैनिटाइज़ भी करते हैं। इसके अलावा अखबार बांटने की पूरी ज़िम्मेदारी आज कल आनंदजी और उनके पुत्र अतुल ही उठा रहे हैं तो उनको अपना खयाल रखना ही होगा। आनंदजी ने मुझे बताया कि उन दोनों ने कोरोना टेस्ट भी कराया था जो निगेटिव निकला। तो उनकी बातों से आश्वस्त हो कर मैंने अखबार लेना जारी रखा। लेकिन लतिका तुम यह क्यों पूछ रही हो? पल्लवी ने पूछा, क्या तुम अखबार नहीं ले रही हो? लतिका ने कहा, हाँ। खैर बातों में समय कैसा बीत गया पता नहीं चला। लतिका के फोन रखने के बाद पल्लवी गहरी सोच में डूब गयी; क्या इस महामारी के डर से लोग आपसी रिश्तों

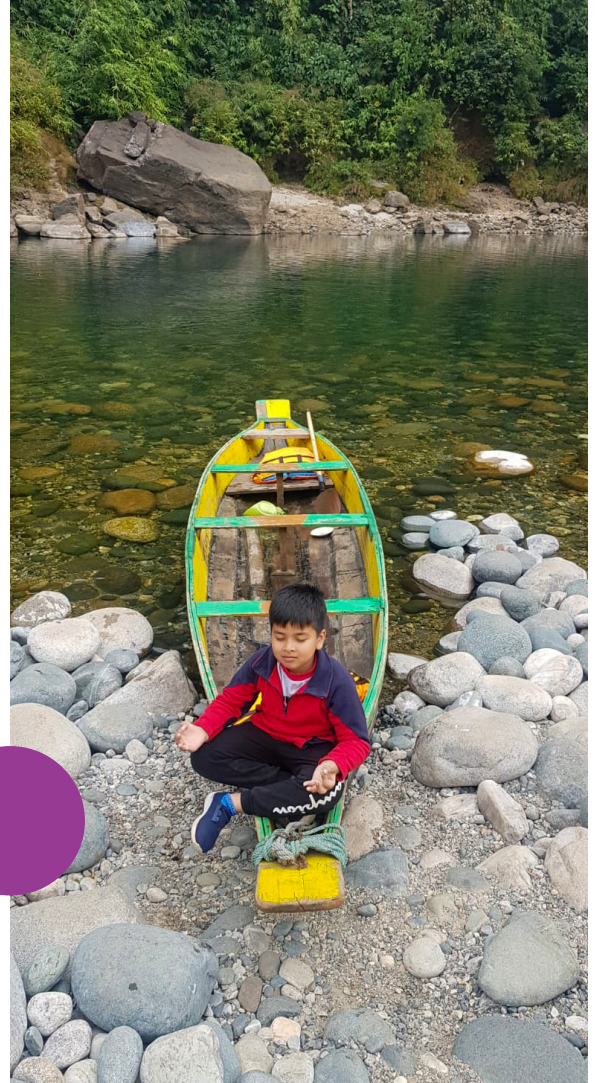


को भूलने लगे हैं? आनंद जी जैसे न जाने कितने लोगों की रोजी रोटी खतरे में पड़ गयी होगी, क्या हम इनके लिए कुछ नहीं कर सकते? हमारे नज़रिये में आया एक छोटा सा बदलाव भी चमत्कार कर सकता है। यह ठीक है कि हमारी सुरक्षा हमारी प्राथमिकता है लेकिन समाज के प्रति भी तो हमारा कोई इस कर्तव्य है। हमसे जुड़े जो लोग हैं, क्या उनकी और उनके परिवार के प्रति हमारी कोई ज़िम्मेदारी नहीं? आनंद जी के परिवार में उनकी पत्नी, पुत्र के अलावा एक छोटी बेटा भी तो है, जो कक्षा 8 की छात्रा है और उनका पुत्र 12वीं के बाद बी एस सी में पढ़ रहा है और पिता का हाथ भी बंटता है। अगर आनंद जी का काम नहीं चला तो इन बच्चों की पढ़ाई, इनके भविष्य का क्या होगा?

ठीक है कि अखबार पढ़ना मेरी दिनचर्या का एक ज़रूरी हिस्सा है, लेकिन इसी बहाने मुझे एक मौका मिल गया अपने एक प्रयास से आनंद जी के चेहरे पर मुस्कुराहट लाने का। वैश्विक महामारी के इस दौर में जीवन कहीं थम जाए ऐसा बिलकुल नहीं होने देना है। आखिर इसी समय में तो मेरे और आनंद जी के बीच स्याही और कागज़ के संबंध के अलावा एक और संबंध बन गया था- समझदारी, मानवीय समवेदनाओं, और आपसी विश्वास का संबंध। अपने निर्णय से संतुष्ट, पल्लवी के चेहरे पर मुस्कान थी, और उसकी उँगलियाँ मोबाइल पर लतिका का नंबर मिलाने लगी, उसे अपनी दोस्त के नज़रिये में बदलाव लाने में कामयाब होना ही था। उसे यकीन था कि लतिका को अगर उसकी ज़िम्मेदारी का एहसास कराया जाएगा तो वो ज़रूर समझेगी। बूंद बूंद से घड़ा भरता है यह बात सबको समझ में आती है, लतिका भी समझेगी। इस विपत्ति के में वो पूरी कोशिश करेगी कि आनंद जी के बच्चों की शिक्षा होती रहे

POONAM KUDAIYA

संस्कृति कर्मी



Answers for Riddles from Page 08:

1. A clock 2. Your name 3. Kate

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Childhood Matters on behalf of AIF welcomes original contributions for the magazine. All contributions should be sent to the email shared below. Contributions from parents, teachers, Child Welfare Committee Members, Child Rights Activists, Lawyers, Academicians are welcome. Children of any age group are encouraged to submit their contributions for the issues. All write-ups that have not been published or submitted elsewhere will be considered. The columns like guest editorial, teacher's perspective, expert column, and parent's perspective should be around 200 - 250 words with their name, profession, and affiliation. For children's corner and art corner, write-ups and artistic work like painting, photographs captured by children, their experiences, videos with messages are invited.

The AIF editorial team reserves to selected and drop any article based on the content. All the contents will be run through turnitin for plagiarism check. The views will be of the authors and the AIF is not responsible for any exigencies.

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