



childhood matters

AIF Digital Magazine

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A Bilingual, quarterly, digital magazine by AIF's *Anthropos Books* catering to children, parents, teachers, and to all those who work for children.



Childhood Matters

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Childhood Matters.

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About Us

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.

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A photograph of a child swinging on a swing set in a park. The child is wearing a light blue shirt and dark shorts. The swing set is green and black. In the background, there is a colorful slide and other people in the park. The ground is sandy.

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Guest Editorial

Why Childhood Matters?

Children are an important section of the human population. They have needs and rights of their own, and unique characteristics and faculties lacking in adults. In an era of information, it is surprising to discover how little we know about children and their childhood. As social scientists specializing in the study of the human species as a whole, we need to acknowledge that our discipline has neglected the study of children, as it had neglected the study of women until very recently.



Almost all conventional studies of children have focused on the status of children as proto-adults, as the objects of socialization and child-raising practices carried out by adults to reproduce the same kinds of adults as non-agentive language learners. Social scientists scarcely recognize the fact that at least some children are capable of exercising effective leadership, and that great technological, social, and cultural innovations often begin in the minds of children. It is a matter of serious concern that the importance of children as social and cultural agents has largely been ignored. Children can be best described as “missing children” in social sciences.

Children are not accorded the full respect to which they are intrinsically entitled as human beings. Children are often treated as marginal people whose activities and experiences matter less than those of adults. They are either conceptualized as minors (compared with adults) or dependent family members (compared with economically active family members).

Modern childhood constructs children out of society, mutes their voices, denies their personhood. Each day countless children are exposed to the dangers that hamper their growth and development. The escalating instances of child abuse and neglect are becoming a major concern in many contemporary societies. Children in challenging circumstances are denied their rights, and rarely do they have protection against abuse and neglect. Therefore, childhood matters should be taken seriously by social scientists and all other stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the members of the editorial board of the digital magazine Childhood Matters for this wonderful initiative. I am sure that the magazine will address some of the critical issues concerning children and childhood in the coming days.

Professor Deepak Kumar Behera

Vice-Chancellor,
KISS-DU, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Editorial

We all have been reeling through pandemic for the past two years. Lives have changed immensely, especially for children. Some were born during this period, some were supposed to step into the schools, have been delayed into this ritual of entering the schools and are homeschooled, while others looking forward to enjoying the time in high school never got a chance to bid goodbye to their friends and teachers. These times have been tough and challenging for the children to be indoors and pursue their dreams and aspirations. As Childline puts it, the calls for 'help' 1098 increased exponentially. These calls were not just for reporting the abuse at home, many more, asking for help for getting the basic needs- food, water, shelter, struggling to survive and queries related to schools.

While most of the families are trying to help their children within homes to engage them in art, craft, online schooling, home works, assignments, good food and nutrition. Large sections of society do not have basic needs, for them, online schooling is a distant dream. The Government and NGOs who have provided food rations in relief have helped some families from the marginalized sections, but many are still waiting to get back to their employment, work and wages.

In this crisis, many organizations are doing their best to reach out to needy people; one such organization is Prayas. Prayas has been doing a commendable job of providing shelter to homeless, orphan children. They have taken additional responsibility to take care of these children in their residential homes across the country during the pandemic. This edition showcases these children's positive motivation, despite the hardships with no immediate family around. Still, the more prominent family 'Prayas' consistently nurtures them without shutting its door, unlike many other institutions. The efforts of some dedicated souls realize their aspirations and dreams. God bless them.

We at AIF look forward to working for children's safety, security, and well-being. We pledge to collaborate, coordinate and make concerted efforts to make this world a little better for the children. An unknown quote says, 'Child's smile is one of life's greatest blessings'. We look forward to joining hands with each of you to bring a smile to children's faces.

Hopefully, this year should see the light of a pandemic-free world, where we can hear the chirpy sounds of children laughing, shouting, and giggling in the homes, neighbourhoods, and school playgrounds.

Sunita Reddy,
Editor-in-Chief,
Founder Chairperson,
AIF, Asso. Prof. Jawaharlal Nehru University



CHILDREN CORNER

Online Classes

Manasvi Yadav

Class VII, Student

In the year 2020, a disease came named COVID,
Everyone endeavoured their best but could not control it.

We all have got stuck at our houses
But our studies continued with online classes.

Online classes initiated through zoom
Gathering all knowledge in our room.

In the school, students no longer roam
With modern gadgets, they learn at home.

Don't ask us, what do we do
We miss our crazy crew.

Some students attend the online class
Only for their time pass.

As they are waiting for the reopening of schools
And don't take online classes as a study tool.

No more new bags, no more tiffin, no more school bus
With peers, there is nothing to discuss.

We always pray our school open back
And the world gets rid of this demonic attack.

For some more months, we have to study online
As nobody knows when the situation goes fine.



Dr Sachidanand Joshi - Video on Child Labour Day

Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, is the president of Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal, Member Secretary at Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts (IGNCA) and Chairperson, Advisory Body on Intangible Cultural Heritage & Diverse Cultural Traditions of India relating to UNESCO (ABICHU).

<https://youtu.be/4vOtgKbWY6M>

EXPERT COLUMN**Covid-19 in Children: Global Perspective and Impact of Vaccination****Dr Satish Ranjan***Molecular Immunologist and COVID 19 consultant, Germany,
Group Leader, Translational Immunology, Institute of Advanced Materials, Sweden.*

The emergence of novel Coronavirus-Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was reported in December 2019 from Wuhan, China. The disease caused by this virus has been classified as Covid-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO). SARS-CoV-2 rapidly spread worldwide and caused Covid-19 in a vast number of people, and by March 2020, WHO had declared it a pandemic. As compared to adults, the overwhelming evidence from the real-world data demonstrates that children and adolescents usually have mild disease courses, along with low disease-associated morbidity and mortality.

SARS-CoV-2 has infected children of all age groups from across the world. Children in the age groups of 5-11 are also getting infected in large numbers and transmitting the virus. This was evident from the large-scale spread of infection among primary school students in many schools across countries around the globe. Germany has, for instance, experienced widespread infection among school-going children in all age groups.

But Germany has an exceptionally lower fatality rate among adults and children. During the current wave, which the Delta variant has primarily driven in Germany, the overall hospitalization rate associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection was 35.9 per 10,000 children, ICU admission rate was 1.7 per 10,000 and case fatality was 0.09 per 10,000.

Children without comorbidities were found to be significantly less likely to suffer from a severe or fatal disease course. The lowest risk was observed in children aged 5-11 without comorbidities. In this group, the ICU admission rate was 0.2 per 10,000, and case fatality could not be calculated due to an absence of cases. In Germany, vaccination for children aged 5-11 is still not being done, and without vaccination in this age group, remarkable recovery has been



reported. This provides good evidence of robust immune response in children towards Covid-19 caused mainly by the Delta variant. The currently reported Omicron strain is spreading very fast across the globe because of its tremendous ability to multiply in the upper respiratory tract. This result is a substantial viral load in infected persons, and such people can infect many others by transmitting viruses through coughing and sneezing. The current scientific study also suggests that Omicron has a lower ability to multiply in the lungs. This scientific finding, combined with the real-world data of Omicron infected patients, indicates that the disease severity caused by Omicron is lower than another variant, especially Delta, which has caused devastation in India during the second wave. In such circumstances, chances of children getting a severe disease are lower, and if proper precautions are adopted, Omicron will have less to no impact on children. Vaccines have so far provided protection against hospitalization and prevented severe disease but provided no protection against getting infected

and transmitting the virus. So, vaccination for children will also offer protection against severe diseases and should be encouraged as approved by the Government for 15-18 age groups now. In India, the higher fatality among adults during the second wave compared to other countries was noted. Out of the various factors responsible for higher fatality, the most important factors were self-treatment, wrong treatment and in many cases, over-treatment. So, life-saving lessons must

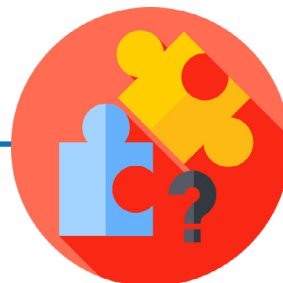
be learned from this and such practices should be avoided in adults and children as our immune system can fight against the virus more efficiently. In cases where severe symptomatic problems occur after 5-7 days, medical intervention should be done under strict medical supervision.



Riddles to solve

1. If you don't keep me, I'll break. What am I?
2. I have a tail and a head, but no body. What am I?
3. You'll find me in Mercury, Earth, Mars and Jupiter, but not in Venus or Neptune. What am I?

Answers on page number 31



Psychologist Column

Priyanka Tank

Masters in Applied Behavioral Analysis (MSc), and Clinical and Health Psychology (MSc), from Bangor University, United Kingdom, and member of The British Psychological Society.

Isn't it the most beautiful thing to nurture a child? I, Priyanka Tank, have the privilege to build a nurturing environment for the children of our society as my full-time profession. I am a behaviour therapist working with Early Autism Services, Bangalore, India. I have a double Masters in Applied Behavioral Analysis (MSc) and Clinical and Health Psychology (MSc) from Bangor University, United Kingdom. I am an active member of The British Psychological Society. Gained over four years of experience in parent and child counselling and have worked with various NGOs in training underprivileged children, parents, and government teachers. I have had the opportunity of accumulating a wide range of experiences and knowledge. I am currently working towards international certification/ registration from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

Being associated with Early Autism Services for a year now, I have worked hands-on with individuals on the autism spectrum. We specialize in providing early intervention ABA services to children from three to twelve years. I conduct one-to-one assessments along with my supervisor. We engage with the child through play, conversations, and observations. We also conduct detailed interviews with parents to understand the history of the child and the concerns and expectations of the parents. I work towards building fine motor skills, language and communication skills, self-help skills, pre-academic skills, social skills and play skills. Another essential part of being a therapist is building personalized therapy plans tailored to every child's individual needs under the supervision of a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have extended our services by providing Tele-therapy to children and parent training sessions to aid them with basic ABA



knowledge that can be applied in their home setting.

I would describe myself as an enigmatic leader and someone who works devotedly with dedication towards using the science of ABA in various domains of life. I strive to provide a secure, stimulating, and happy environment to help grow and develop children and parents that I work with. My therapeutic processes are centered around creative and practical goal-setting approaches. I strongly believe in providing tools and skills that empower the child and their family to transcend from coping lifestyles to thriving possibilities.

I believe that my driving force comes from the following quote-

"Nurturing a child's sense of personal worth and therefore hope and dreams for a wonderful future is perhaps the most important responsibility of every grown up in the child's life."
– Wess Stafford.

PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The Trauma of Online teaching

By Stuti (A parent of a six-year-old, Mumbai)

It still feels like yesterday when our kid had only recently started going to physical school classes, which was a big changeover from the earlier playschool sessions. The kid was just about beginning to realize that school was not just all fun, friends, music/dance, and play and was about to condition to this new understanding of what a school was when COVID struck in March 2020.

It was tough for adults to adjust to this new situation of being confined to their homes. It was equally difficult for kids to understand this situation at such tender age. The situation just kept growing from bad to worse, and with no sight of respite. ONLINE Classes for kids was introduced within a few weeks.

TRAUMA for the child: I could have never imagined my childhood staying indoors, but unfortunately, I see my child living secluded from the classroom experiences and outdoor activities. It is heartbreaking to say no to a kid who wants to go out and explore more with their friends. This indeed was a privileged part (as now we can tell) of our whole experiential learning as a child.

Online classes for a 5-year-old kid, who has not had enough time to understand the school, are nothing less than traumatic than for the parents. The attention span of the young five-year-olds, especially the naughtier ones, is extremely low. The only part of a physical school that my kid could, until then (of what she had experienced of the physical pre-primary school), really appreciate and look forward to was the fun, games and interaction with other kids. Now, that has become a thing of the past in the current digital platform scenario. No matter how much we tried to convince them that it was still the same as before and they could still see and interact with their friends, it simply wasn't and possibly will never be. Most kids, especially the hyperactive ones, who love all the attention, are simply bored

and eventually repelled by the idea of this online replacement. Loneliness, boredom and lack of interest in what was being conducted (and I must say with great efforts from the teachers) have become the compelling issue. The same kid who used to jump out of bed excited to rush to school in the pre-pandemic era was now not interested in online classes.

TRAUMA for the parent: At some point in time, all of us have been kids and have attended schools/colleges during our days, and believe it or not, the saying "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" actually held for the majority of us. But this is not the case anymore. As a parent, I am exposed to more than necessary information about the kid. As a responsible parent (by societal standards), I am supposed to take action upon that available information for the betterment of the child and her future. And there precisely lies the crux of the problem!

The child has indeed been trying her best to adapt to such an environment of learning. However, post repeated usage of old age famous/infamous "SAAM DAAM DAND BHED" techniques, requests and lures (literally offering her candies sit/get through a session), reprimands and constant comparisons with other kids, it has been a continual struggle for me. Since the kid still imagines the sessions to be non-serious, it has become mandatory for the "accompanying" parent to attend and make notes, if necessary, of the entire session to sit with the kid again and revise and re-revise the session later in the day. So basically, it's not the classes themselves, but it's what ultimately you are teaching your child post the session that matters. The accompanying parent(s) are the agents of the schoolteacher who are now facilitating the studies, and their presence has become compulsory.

Online classes can never be as effective as offline classes. There are a lot of shortcomings like lack of

focus for long periods, not being able to interact with their classmates as much as in regular classes, lack of physical breaks and physical activity, no respite from the screen, and disruption of social communication.

Another extensive trauma for such “responsible” parents is to learn to let go of a child who makes innocent mistakes in understanding a concept or answering a query during the session, which is easier said than done in most cases. The brunt of such mistakes is thus borne not only by the kid but also by the parent who has taken this task upon oneself. Also, the urge to prompt a correct answer OR scold for a wrong one OR simply stare in rage with utter disbelief over a “repeated mistake” by the innocent kid during the online sessions in front of the entire class and class teacher is immense, since the parent (agent now) mistakenly has started to believe that the mistake pointed out directly is co-owned by the parent as well.

In many ways, the realization that these reactions are uncalled for and the regret of such responses

is a significant trauma that cannot be washed off easily by any parent.

While I am not a big fan of online studies, I am still not saying that online classes should not be held because something is better than nothing. That something is still not enough for us parents to take so much pain for, as ultimately, it's solely the task of the parents to do everything for such small kids as they are still incapable of doing it all alone. Learning also needs to have joy associated with it. The lack of space to engage with others, and have healthy banter and discussions in a classroom, does take away the joy of the experience of learning on an online platform. It would indeed be a significant relief for every parent to not know of “everything that a child goes through” during the learning stages at school and finally end this co-educating the child along with the distraught teachers through such online sessions.

A teacher itself best handles the job of a teacher, and that's how it must be but through proper physical schooling sessions.



TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

My experience of Online Teaching

Dr Twinkle Pal,

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Hindu College, University of Delhi.

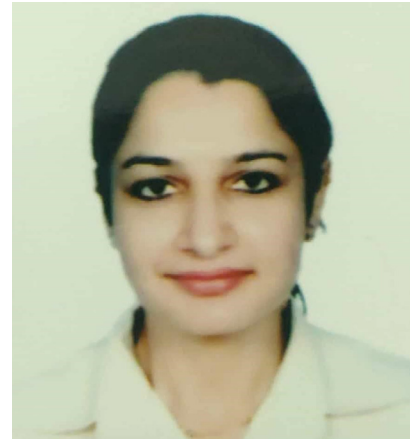
C OVID – 19 pandemic has deeply impacted all areas of life. Work from home is the new buzzword. The pandemic has brought about drastic changes in the field of education. When the lockdown was first imposed, most saw it from the perspective of an extended vacation. But the situation took a completely different turn as the pandemic worsened and people were asked to work from home. Schools and colleges also closed down. Within fifteen days or so, teachers were asked to start teaching online. The teachers were directed to continue teaching in virtual mode. The usual classroom teaching and learning were replaced by not familiar online teaching and interaction. Blackboards gave way to whiteboards, tablets replaced notebooks. This drastic shift came almost unannounced and unexpected. With the sudden switch to online teaching, most faculty members had no prior experience to fall back on. Transitioning the course from an in-person to an online version meant a lot of work. This shift also included learning new online tools, interacting with students on the screen, and adjusting to the poor internet connection. The journey wasn't smooth with online teaching tools, with little or no familiarity with online teaching tools. After a few chaotic weeks, teachers and students adjusted to new ways of teaching and learning. While teachers got trained to handle online classes, bringing students together was a challenge due to their socioeconomic backgrounds.

Undoubtedly, online teaching came in handy to arrest the disruption in learning caused by COVID -19. However, the transition to a virtual classroom wasn't a smooth one. Online teaching is challenging both for teachers and students. With colleges closed, taking online classes from home brought many complexities. Many teachers, especially female teachers' work-life balance, became quite tricky. Children who had never seen

their mothers work from home took some time to adjust to the new arrangement with their mothers being around but unavailable. The female teachers also struggled to bring forward

their work commitments with many distractions. Making students understand that you are not available 24X7 without sounding rude and less responsible did not come easy. During the online class, retaining students' attention became quite a challenge. It wasn't easy to keep students focused. Another challenge most teachers encounter in online teaching is knowing how much students have understood. The unconventional set-up of online classrooms makes it difficult for teachers to monitor the actions and behaviours of students as many students switch off their video and/or audio. The black screen of the laptop is not at all appealing. After some time, it became nearly impossible to persuade students to keep their cameras on or initiate any interaction. While technological glitches such as the internet and connectivity issues hamper online learning, the lack of face-to-face interaction with students often makes the assessments more difficult. We all miss physical interaction with the class. WhatsApp has become a second-tier response after official online teaching platforms.

Last year when we received communication from college directing us to begin our classes online, the idea of taking classes from home was highly comforting. Being a mother of two small kids, this arrangement seemed more feasible and practical. Well, this notion of conducting lectures



from home would be far easier and more sorted was shattered soon. With my kids walking in and out of the room, sometimes shouting during a lecture or even fighting with each other in the same room where I was taking my lecture was quite a distraction. Moreover, the shift to online classes meant that teachers had to be present and available 24X7. I became busier than before, and the work seemed never-ending. Students were dropping texts and writing mails at odd hours. As a teacher, my role now expanded. I was now not only teaching the students but mentoring them. I would connect with them and know about their well-being. All of this took place while simultaneously supervising my son, who too was attending online classes in the adjacent room. So, while taking lectures, I would take a break and move to the adjoining room to check on my son.

On the other hand, my younger one would wait restlessly to finish my classes and come out of the room. Soon I realized that taking classes from home was not feasible for me. So, I began conducting online classes from my husband's office. His office became my new classroom. Soon, we all realized that this online teaching model was bound to continue. Returning to the classroom seemed a remote possibility. So, I

started preparing PowerPoint presentations and looking for YouTube links to make my lectures more interesting. However, online exhaustion set in after a point, and students missed classes. Indeed, it hasn't been easy for the students either. Students learning exclusively through online instruction do miss out on a lot. I often tell my students that one of the limitations of online teaching and learning is that students lose out on peer interaction and many experiences and life skill development that they would have benefitted from while attending college. Also, the bond that the teacher and students share in a conventional classroom setting cannot be replicated and established in a virtual mode no matter how hard both parties try.

The COVID 19 pandemic has changed education drastically. There is no denying that online classes came in because we all were thrust into the situation. There is a distinct rise of e-learning, whereby teaching happens remotely and digitally using various online platforms. Online teaching has many advantages and disadvantages. It has its fair share of challenges. But there is no denying that it is here to stay, and it is the new normal.



Mrs. Malavika Joshi - Podcast

Malavika Joshi Ji is an educationist and has a long experience teaching children. She has podcasts on child rights and social relations to her credit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoVF07AUvcs>



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.

Courageous Freedom

Compiled by

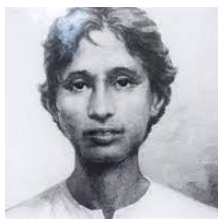
Mumuksha Porwal (AIF Intern)

1. Birsa Munda (15th November 1875 -9th June 1900)

Born on 15th November 1875, Birsa spent his childhood across the belts of the village of Jharkhand and Bihar. He belonged to the Munda tribe and joined the German Mission school by converting to Christianity on the recommendation of his teacher. Knowing British colonial rules and their misdeeds, he started to have faith in 'Birsait'. Soon after, the Munda and Oraon tribes joined it to challenge British conversation activities. He spent his time close to Sardars centre and got inspired to join anti-missionary and anti-government programs. On 3rd March 1900, he was arrested by British police during his sleep and died in Ranchi jail on 9th June 1900, at 25. With a life of just 25 years, he forced colonial officials to introduce laws protecting the land rights of tribals.



2. Khudiram Bose (3rd December 1889 - 11th August 1908)



Khudiram Bose was born on 3rd December 3, 1889, in Mohobani village in West Bengal. His life was full of hardships. He lost his mother at the age of 6 and his father just a year later. At 15, he became a volunteer in the 'freedom struggle'. He had a fearless revolutionary spirit and was caught by Britishers while distributing pamphlets. At the age of 18, he planned to assassinate a judge with his friends. He was caught and put to trial and hanged at 18 for attempting an assassination at a young age.

3. Prafulla Chaki (10th December 1888 -1st May 1908)

Prafulla Chaki was born on 10th December 1888 in Bogra district and lost his father early. His mother raised him. He was into revolutionary activities from childhood and was an active member of Bandhab Samiti, organizing cultural activities. He was expelled from his school because of his revolutionary participation. He met anti-British revolutionary Barindra Kumar Ghosh and went to Calcutta to join the Jugantar group. He also planted a bomb in the car along with Khudiram Bose. After this, police caught him, but he committed suicide at 19 years at the station. His death was greeted with tears and anger by Bengal revolutionaries and inspired them to liberate India from British rule.



4. Pritilata Waddedar (5th May 1911 - 24th September 1932)



She was born in Chittagong and was a good student at school. While studying at Eden College, she developed her anti-British sentiments along with her friends and joined Deepali Sangha, a revolutionary group. She was inspired by revolutionary leader Surya Sen and joined an underground group. At the age of 20, she and her associates devised plans to raid the armoury of the British forces and destroy their telegraph and telephone lines. In 1932, Waddedar was assigned to attack the Pahartali European Club in Chittagong because of its discriminatory activities towards Indians. The club got attacked on 23rd

September night, and she got a gunshot. To avoid arrest, she consumed potassium cyanide. She was just 21 years old.

5. Baji Rout (5th October 1926 - 11th October 1938)

He was born in Dhenkanal, Odisha and was the youngest freedom fighter killed at 12 years. He was a boat boy and was shot by British police when he refused to ferry them across the Brahmani River on 11th October 1938 at Nilakanthapur Ghat. He was an active member of Banar Sena of Prajamandal. The British forced him to cross the river, but he refused and got shot by them. He is remembered in the poem "Boatman " by Sachidanand Routray.



Bravery Awards 2022

National honour for children from across states, backgrounds

A total of 29 children from 21 states and Union territories across India were on Monday conferred the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2022. During a virtual ceremony, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with these children and transferred their winning certificates in a digital format using 'blockchain technology'. The winners of the PMRBP, under which children in the age group 5-18 years are honoured for exceptional abilities and achievements, receive a medal, a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and a certificate. HT profiles this year's winners.

ART & CULTURE

GAURI MAHESHWARI
Age: 13; From: Rajasthan

Gauri has received the award for her extraordinary calligraphy skills. She has mastered 100 styles of calligraphy and has featured in several record books.



REMONA E PEREIRA
Age: 15; From: Karnataka

A Bharatanatyam dancer, Remona has a unique style. She not only dances on glass pieces, but can also balance herself on a mud pot, and has delivered performances using fire.



DEVIPRASAD
Age: 14; From: Kerala

A Carnatic percussionist, Deviprasad is adept in playing the Mridangam. He has been performing in concerts, along with renowned musicians, from a very young age.



SYED FATEEN AHMED
Age: 13; From: Karnataka

The pianist has won many competitions and has expertise in playing western classical piano. He's also the youngest certified Indian to score distinction in diploma in music.



DAULAS LAMBAMYUM
Age: 13; From: Manipur

The Imphal boy has been recognised for extraordinary skills in painting and photography. He has received recognition at various exhibitions and national level competitions.



D CHAKRABORTY
Age: 5; From: Assam

Dhrishtishman, from Assam, has shown extraordinary talent in singing and can sing in five languages - Assamese, Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English.



INNOVATION

SHIVAM RAWAT
Age: 16; From: Uttarakhand

Shivam has used bio-informatics for his research on Indian mustard plants. His research helped in increasing crop productivity.



VAISHALI NC
Age: 6; From: Tamil Nadu

Among the youngest patent-holders in India, she has invented an "automatic life rescue flood house" which can prevent drowning during floods.



TANISH SETHI
Age: 14; From: Haryana

Tanish is an app developer from Haryana's Sirsa district, who has developed a mobile app called 'Pashu Mall' which helps cattle farmers connect with buyers and sellers.



SPORT

ARUSHI KOTWAL
Age: 17; From: Jharkhand

She has won several international competitions in chess and has represented India in Commonwealth Chess Championship.



SHRIYA LOHIA
Age: 13; From: Himachal Pradesh

A karting racer from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, Shriya has represented India in international motorsports competitions.



JIYA RAI
Age: 13; From: Gujarat

She has India's top rank in open water para-swimming and is the first autism spectrum girl to swim from Worli to Gateway of India.



ANVI ZANZARUKIA
Age: 13; From: Gujarat

The specially abled child from Surat in Gujarat has achieved a gold medal at national-level championships in Yoga.



BRAVERY

GURUHU HIMAPRIYA
Age: 12; From: Andhra Pradesh

When terrorists attacked a camp in Jammu in 2018, Guruhu, showed immense bravery by engaging them in conversation for 4-5 hours.



JUI ABHJIT KESHAR
Age: 15; From: Maharashtra

Jui has discovered a wearable tremor-profiling device known as 'Tremor 3 D' which can help neurologists during dosage planning. The device can be worn as a glove or a strap.



PUHABI CHAKRABARTY
Age: 15; From: Tripura

Puhabi has developed a user interface to control a spirometer which helps in providing adequate amount of oxygen gas mixtures to Covid-19 patients and eases their difficulty in breathing.



BANITA DASH
Age: 15; From: Odisha

An astrophysicist who has been recognised as a citizen scientist by NASA and IASC, Banita has designed an automatic sanitising school bag.



TELUKUNTA CHANDRA
Age: 7; From: Telangana

The mountaineer climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa in 2021. He has his name in several record books.



C SINGH CHOUDHARY
Age: 12; From: Uttar Pradesh

The 12-year-old roller-skater from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh has a record of 48 hours and then 96 hours of continuous skating.



SWAYAM PATEL
Age: 14; From: Maharashtra

Swayam, who has been diagnosed with Down Syndrome, swam 10 km at the age of 13, and set a world record.



TARUSHI GAUR
Age: 12; From: Chandigarh

The 12-year-old is featured in the Guinness Book of World Record for her Taekwondo skills. She has won several national competitions.



SHIVANGI KALE
Age: 6; From: Maharashtra

The girl from Jalgaon saved the lives of her mother and sister from electrocution with her quick thinking and presence of mind.



SCHOLASTIC

AVI SHARMA
Age: 12; From: Madhya Pradesh

The 12-year-old from Indore in Madhya Pradesh is known as the youngest mentor of vedic mathematics. He has written an abridged version of Ramayana in Hindi and named it 'Bal Mukhi Ramayana'.



ASWATHU BIJU
Age: 13; From: Tamil Nadu

A young paleontologist, Aswathu works to generate awareness regarding conservation and preservation of fossils and conducts seminars on it.



MEEDHANSH K GUPTA
Age: 11; From: Punjab

The app developer has been recognised for a single-platform web portal that offered all info regarding Covid-19 during the early days of the pandemic.



ABHINAV CHOUDHARY
Age: 15; From: Uttar Pradesh

The entrepreneur has developed an e-commerce platform to facilitate buying and selling of old books. He has helped over 10,000 students.



PAL SAKSHI
Age: 8; From: Bihar

Pal has raised 30,000 through an online musical charity show for the PM-CARES Fund. He also developed an app to raise awareness about Covid.



AAKARSH KAUSHAL
Age: 16; From: Haryana

The programmer developed a MIS:RTPCR portal for managing the situation of Covid-19 in Karnal. He also made a dashboard from hospital beds.



DHEERAJ KUMAR
Age: 14; From: Bihar

Dheeraj, from Champaran in Bihar, displayed immense courage when his brother was caught by an alligator in river Gandak. He fearlessly fought the alligator and saved his brother.

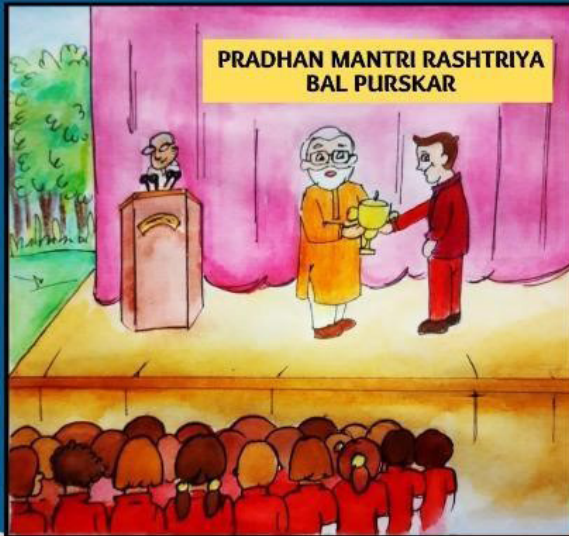


Source: Hindustan Times, January 25, 2022



Comic Strip

COMIC STRIP



When 15-year-old Divyansh Singh from Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh was returning home with his five-year-old sister Samridhi and seven other school children in January, 2018, they were attacked by a bull near a roadways bus base. Without fearing for his life, Divyansh attacked the bull with his school bag and managed to drive the bull away, saving the life his sister and seven other children. During the incident, Divyansh even broke his arm but he continued to fight against the bull relentlessly. He is being awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2021 for his excellence in the field of bravery.

Adapted from the true story of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar winner, 2021

Child Sexual Abuse: Breaking the Culture of Silence

Ananya, AIF Intern

3 9,827 is not just a random number from our daily maths class but is indicative of the dire situation we inhabit. These are the number of cases reported for child abuse in 2018 under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) by the National Crime Records Bureau (Press Trust of India 2020). This article attempts to elaborate on the socio-cultural context of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), highlighting the pandemic-induced challenges and mapping out effective strategies to protect different colours of childhood from these offences.

Sexual abuse of children is not a recent phenomenon but rooted in the past, which provided it with enough opportunities to proliferate and take its contemporary forms. Anagol (2020) argues violence against a muli (girl) was part of the discussion undertaken by religious lawmakers in Sanskrit and gained traction during the age of consent debate in the colonial period. While analyzing the Shivaji and Peshwa rule in Maharashtra, the legitimization of pre-pubertal marriages coincided with the 'burgeoning of child sexual abuse' (Anagol,2022). The rights of children were limited, and they were often subjected to forced child labour pre-pubertal marriage, which significantly altered their experience of childhood and subjected them to a greater degree of physical and sexual exploitation.

The contemporary context witnessed an unprecedented change with the first large scale nationwide study of child abuse undertaken by the Government of India in 2007, which revealed that 50% of the population (n = 12447) was exposed to some form of sexual abuse (Kacker et al. 2007, Pandey et al. 2020). This was followed by incorporating key tenets and principles of the United Nations Convention on the Child Rights in the comprehensive law of POCSO passed in 2012 that aimed to protect children from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography. It understood child sexual abuse as an umbrella

term involving a wide range of offences (penetrative assaults including rape and sodomy, non-penetrative sexual abuses including verbal abuse, voyeurism and inappropriate touching, along with indecent exposure including flashing and pornographic material). Chaudhary (2020) highlights the uniqueness of the law, which aimed to provide a child-focussed framework to deal with child sexual abuse, based on the notion of inclusivity and adoption of gender-neutral understanding of both victims and perpetrators.

Studies conducted across states have revealed that the law's impact is limited and child sexual abuse continues to be a global concern. As Banwari (2015) mentions, 'shame, secrecy, and denial associated with abuse's act(s) foster a pervasive culture of silence. Children often do not speak about it, and adults are uninformed and do not take action even if they suspect someone is sexually abusing a child' (Govt. of India,2007). The acts of violence remain under-reported, under-recognized and under-treated when the victims are boys due to embedded notions of masculinity, particularly in situations where the perpetrator is a peer (Banwari 2015). Disability exacerbates sexual offences due to communication gaps, dependency and vulnerability of the child. Studies have indicated that 'twice as many disabled girls report CSA that non-disabled girls' and 'boys with physical disability are three times more likely to experience sexual victimization than non-disabled boys' (I. Barron et al. 2019). A survey conducted by Swasti Health Resource Centre revealed that four of every ten transgender people are subjected to sexual abuse before 18 years of age (Chaturvedi 2017). Social media also acts as a source of threat. A study by Interpol estimated that around 2.4 million instances of online child abuse were reported in India between 2017-2020, 80% of which were experienced by girls under the age of 14 (Press Trust of India,2021).

These alarming trends demand urgent action, particularly during the pandemic marked

by social distress and aggravated violence. Data from the Childline India Foundation has reported a significant (approx. 50%) increase in the received calls for protection, indicating only the tip of the iceberg (Poddar et al. 2020). Increasing homelessness, loss of caregivers, closure of schools, and increase in child marriage, among other things, subject children to greater exploitation.

Significant steps must be taken to increase awareness and protect children from such acts of violence. Pandey and Reddy (2020) argue for both child-focused and parents-focused approaches to deal with the situation. Effective communication with parents and grandparents about the issue could successfully reduce the mental distress that children are subjected to. Banwari (2015) suggests that cinema could be an effective medium to enhance awareness and break the culture of silence between parents and children. Popular movies like Highway by Imtiaz Ali and shows including Satyamev Jayate could empower individuals to come out with their stories and share their personal lived experiences. Also,

more than 80% of perpetrators are known to the child, and thus cases do not go to court. Despite the presence of stringent laws like POCSO, child abuse continues.

The need of the hour is to have enough preventive measures in place and employ multiprong strategies to curb CSA. Introducing the Sexual Health Module in the school curriculum for classes one to 12 would be a step to create awareness. Short stories, illustrations and articles on child rights in school books would create awareness among parents and children. Making short films and podcasts would create awareness among children and parents and break the ice between them. Creating safe, child-friendly community spaces making full-day functional Anganwadi centres can be helpful. Anthropos India Foundation's sustained work on this can be accessed in the links given in the references.

We hope this article sets in motion constructive conversation to protect our children's future and ensure that every childhood matters.

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CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE FACTS

- ✓ Out of a total of 1,28,531 cases of crime against children registered in 2020, 57,459 (38.8 %) were reported under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, including child rape.
- ✓ 24 Lakh instances of online child sexual abuse have been reported during the three years of 2017 - 2020, with 19,20,000 (80%) girls' victims below the age of 14 years.
- ✓ 53.22% of children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.
- ✓ 50% of abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Delhi reported the highest percentage of sexual abuse among both boys and girls.
- ✓ Over 1,16,000 searches are made on the internet related to child pornography every day.

(Source link 1, Source link 2)

Compiled by Habiba and Mumuksha (AIF Intern)

SDS-MY BUILD - a school-led digital organiser for school children ORGANISED CHILDREN TO BETTER IN EXAMS!

SDS-MY BUILD- a school-led digital organiser for school children to organise their studies as ORGANISED CHILDREN TO BETTER IN EXAMS! Created by children and parents to help better support the student.

This platform is being used in the best UK schools.

Contact akahn@sds-group.co.uk

Once a child moves onto secondary school and towards national exams, organisation is key to all types of learning and all topics they will study.

SDS-MYBUILD allows pupils to work, store and retrieve their data in the same place. The many links and resources that they will receive at school will be useless to them unless they can find them when they need them. This tool helps children organise their work in ONE PLACE with ONE INTERFACE.

Pupils are already designing their own education as they learn to use digital devices and explore apps and games in their daily lives.

SDS-MYBUILD puts the pupils in the driving seat. With basic instructions they can create their own learning environments and take charge of their data in creative ways. They can build a website for every subject, so knowledge is personalised and presented in their own unique way. Parents and teachers can access their work anytime to see how they are getting on and note which subjects are being neglected and where the pupil excels.

Seth, who is in year 8 at Cheney School, Oxford, has helped develop a Catch-Up tool so that children can easily access their work and be creative in the way they organise their lessons and homework. He has problems remembering all the links from each lesson and forgets when to hand in homework. He has created a dashboard to put all his school needs on one interface.



Click here to view the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/Rkz8oZu-LMk>



Paintings by the Prayas Kids



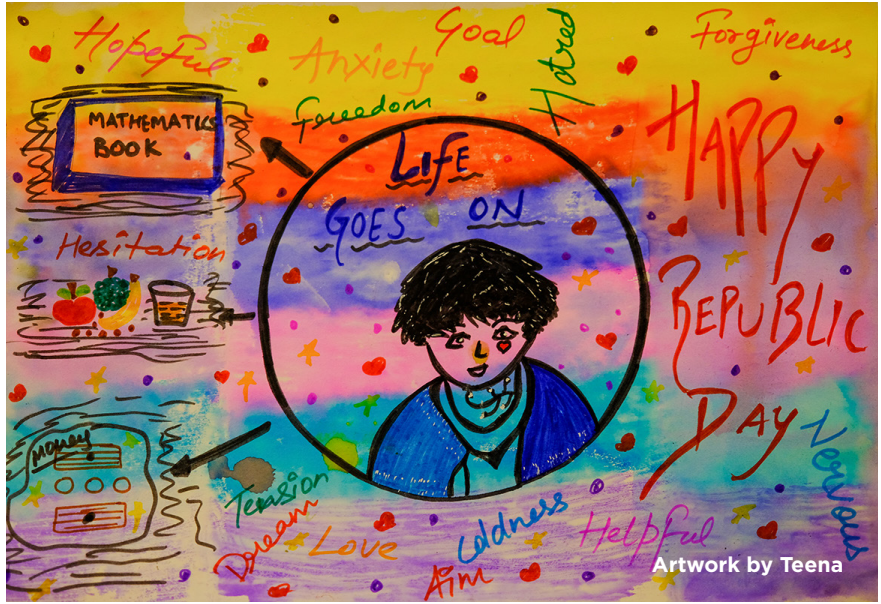
It was so heartening to see the zeal, positivity and eagerness to participate by the PRAYAS kids in the painting activity. The colours came to outlive, and some of the selected ones shared below show the love for the country the strength to face the world. PRAYAS has given them the support, encouragement, and strength to live life despite not having a biological family around.

Every opportunity to shine under the sun is welcome. Anthropos India Foundation organized a painting competition for children of Prayas. And how they used it to show off. Just have a look! How they make us all so proud every single day.





Artwork by Pratibha
Name: Pratibha



Artwork by Teena



Artwork by Rosani



Artwork by Komal
Name: KOMAL



Artwork by Simran



Artwork by Priya

POCSO: An Introduction

Dr Gunjan Arora,

ICSSR Post Doc Fellow, Jawaharlal Nehru University & Volunteer Researcher at Anthropos India Foundation

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act) was enacted to protect children from sexual offences and introduce child-friendly judicial mechanisms for dealing with the cases of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The Act came into force on 14th November 2012 and is a comprehensive law to protect children from sexual harassment, sexual assault, and pornography. It safeguards the child's interests at every stage of the judicial process by incorporating child-friendly mechanisms for reporting, recording evidence, investigation, and speedy trial of offences through special courts. As per the Act, a child is 'any person below 18 years of age, of any gender, who has been sexually wronged and can access the remedies provided under the Act.

The Government of India has formulated and legislated various child-centric Acts, namely Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act), Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act (CPCR) 2005 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 for protection and promotion of child rights. While the JJ Act, 2015 ensures children's safety, security, dignity, and well-being, the POCSO Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law protecting children from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography. Despite such comprehensive child sexual abuse laws in our country, child sexual abuse cases are increasing. Few states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi constitute nearly 51 per cent of the country's POCSO cases, and according to a survey conducted by World Vision India in 2017, one in every two children is a victim of sexual abuse in our country (Madan, TOI, November 2021). In most cases, the perpetrators are known to the victim, and therefore the victims are reluctant to approach the authorities. The major hurdle is the inadequate knowledge about the POCSO Act.



What is covered under POCSO Act?

POCSO defines various forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, sexual harassment and pornography. It considers a sexual assault to be aggravated under certain circumstances, such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when a person who commits the abuse is in a position of trust or authority (like a family member, teacher, doctor, or police officer). People who traffick children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the Act. POCSO prescribes stringent punishment with a maximum rigorous imprisonment for life and fine. According to Section 44 (1), the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) should ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Act (Firstpost, August 2021). Another prominent feature of the POCSO Act is the mandatory reporting obligation imposed (under Section 19). As per this section, every person who suspects or knows of a sexual offence being committed against a child has to report it to the local police or the Special Juvenile Police Unit (Madan, TOI, November 2021). Any person heading an institution, if fails to notify the Commission of a sexual offence, is liable to be punished. The Act, however, exempts children

from any non-reporting liabilities.

Often child sexual abuse victims do not voice their complaints immediately for multiple reasons. Recognizing this, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice in 2018 clarified that there is no age bar or time for reporting sexual offences under POCSO. Consequently, a victim can report an offence immediately or even a few years after they were abused. Therefore, organizations dealing with children cannot reject child sexual abuse complaints raised against their employees on the pretext of time-lapse.

For the victim's safety, the POCSO Act prohibits disclosing the victim's identity in any form of media (except when permitted by the courts established under the Act). This violation can attract punishments under the Act, regardless of whether such disclosures are made in good faith. Any organization dealing with children has to take care of specific rules as prescribed by the Act. Firstly, any institution working with or housing children must conduct periodic police verification and background check of the employees. Secondly, the institution must impart regular training to sensitize its employees on child safety and protection. Most importantly, it must adopt a child protection policy based on zero tolerance to violence against children.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019, seeks to provide severe punishment to those involved in sexual crimes against children, the death penalty in cases of aggravated sexual assault, and levying fines and imprisonment. The POCSO Bill recommends protecting the interest of vulnerable children in

times of distress, disaster or any natural calamity, thus ensuring their safety. The Bill was approved by Parliament- by the Rajya Sabha on 29th July 2019 and the Lok Sabha on 1st August 2019. The Bill seeks to amend the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and provide stringent punishments for other crimes against those below 18 years of age. The POCSO Bill pursues to award strong punishment when drugs are administered to children to develop early sexual maturity. The legislation introduced a minimum jail term of 20 years or for the entire life and death penalty in rare cases, as per the Court's decision.

The POCSO Act was amended to make it more efficacious in dealing with cases of child sex abuse in the country. The Act was notified on 6th August 2019 and came into effect from 16th August 2019.

POCSO e-Box

A study on POCSO cases in India in March 2021 conducted by Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation reported that child sexual abuse is one of the most pressing concerns. The rising number of cases indicates the failure of the State and society to provide children with a safe environment. The NCPCR received 354 complaints through POCSO e-Box during the last three years, i.e., 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and the current year 2020-21 (till 31st January 2021), and out of these 354 complaints, 140 complaints have been addressed conclusively (Firstpost, August 2021). The rising public consciousness, media attention, along with the proactive measures taken by the judiciary in the last few years, proves that the right of children to live with dignity is finally getting the attention it requires.

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बोलता बचपन

HINDI SECTION



सांता क्लॉस, हनुमान या अलादीन का जिन्न

अमिताभ श्रीवास्तव

सुना था

सांता क्लॉस साल में एक दिन आता है
लेकिन 'अपना वाला' तो रोज़ सुबह आ जाता है
दूध, सब्ज़ी, अंडे की मुराद पूरी कर जाता है
गुमनाम, चुपचाप, अंधेरे में बिना हमें जगाए।

सांता तो आता है ढेर सारे कपड़े पहने
अपनी बग्गी पर सवार
पर आज का सांता कैसे आता है
ना किसी ने देखा ना समझना चाहा।

रात को खाली थैला बाहर रखना
और सुबह आँख खुलते ही भरा हुआ पाना
किसी चमत्कार से कम तो नहीं।

कहीं से भी, कितनी दूर से भी
कुछ भी, कहीं भी पहुँचाने वाले को
कुछ लोग हनुमान भी कहते हैं।

सर्दी, गरमी, तूफ़ान या बरसात में
लाकडाउन में या लॉकाउट के बाहर
बिना सवाल पूछे हुक्म मानने वाले
को अलादीन का जिन्न मानने वाले
भी हैं।

क्या वो ग़लत हैं?

सोचने वाली बात।



‘प्रयास’ में एक अनूठा प्रयास

अमिताभ श्रीवास्तव

Veteran Journalist, received two lifetime achievement award for journalism.

जब हमने कुछ चुनी हुई लड़कियों को देश के सबसे बड़े पर्व ‘गड़तंत्र दिवस’ पर अपने विचार रंगों और काव्य के माध्यम से कागज़ पर उतारने के लिए कहा तो ऐसी रंगों की फुहार होगी सोचा ना था।

असल में ये बालिकाएँ हमारे आपके घरों में पलने और रहने वाली साधारण लड़कियाँ नहीं थीं। ये वो बच्चे थे जिन्हें या तो घरों से अपराधियों द्वारा निकाल कर बेच दिया गया था या जिन्हें घर कभी नसीब ही नहीं हुआ और उन्हें सबसे उनको याद है वो स्वयंसेवी संस्था ‘प्रयास’ के तुगलकाबाद स्थित लड़कियों के आवास में रह रही हैं।

लेकिन जैसे ही उनके हाथ में रंग और ब्रश आये वो तो जैसे अपनी ज़िन्दगी के सारे गिले शिकवे भूल कर अपनी भावनाओं को रंग भरने में जुट गयीं।

जैसा कि उनकी कुछ कृतियों को इस पत्रिका में देखने से पता चलता है देशभक्ति केवल पैसे वालों या ‘तथाकथित’ सभ्य समाज वालों की जागीर नहीं है।

इस प्रतियोगिता में भाग लेने वाले अधिकतर बच्चों की हम आपको क़ानूनी मान्यताओं की वजह से शकल नहीं दिखा सकते और ना उनका परिचय करा सकते हैं क्योंकि १८ से कम उम्र वाले अशक्त बच्चों का सार्वजनिक परिचय देना और क़ानूनी है लेकिन उनके परिचय के लिए ये कृतियाँ ही उनकी पहचान हैं।

लेकिन हम आपको ये तो बता ही सकते हैं ये लड़कियाँ देश के हर प्रांत से आयी हैं। उनका धर्म, उनकी भाषा, उनकी बोली यहाँ तक की उनकी जन्म कुंडली भी उनकी परिचायक नहीं हैं और नाम तो बहुत दूर की बात है।

उनके धर्म का पता इस देश की राष्ट्रीय पताका है जिसको इन बच्चों ने इतनी शिद्दत से अपनी पेंटिंग में उतार कर भारत की एकता का अभूतपूर्व परिचय दिया है।

उनका परिचय देश के नेता और स्वतंत्रता सेनानी नेहरु, अम्बेडकर और भारत के लौह पुरुष सरदार पटेल हैं जिनको इन बच्चों ने कागज़ पर उतार कर अपनी परिपक्व सोच का परिचय दिया है।

इनकी कृतियाँ इस बात की भी गवाह हैं कि ये बच्चे चाहे कहीं से आए हैं वो अब ठीक जगह पर हैं। उनकी परवरिश अब ‘प्रयास’ जैसी एक ऐसी संस्था में हो रही है जहाँ इंसान की पहचान उसकी कुंडली या धर्म से नहीं बल्कि उसकी योग्यता से होती है, उसकी सोच से होती है उसके कृत्य से होती है।

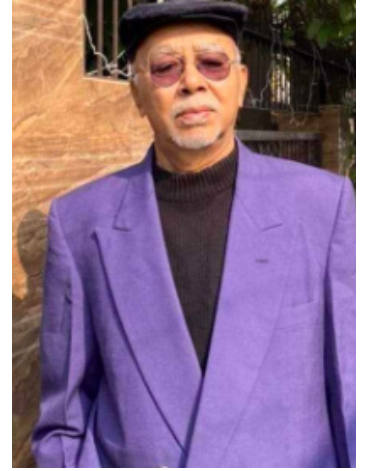
इस प्रतियोगिता में ना केवल बच्चों को पेंटिंग के लिए आमन्त्रित किया गया था बल्कि उन्हें इस अवसर पर गड़तंत्र, आज़ादी और मुक्ति के विषय पर लिखने को भी कहा गया था।

और जैसा कि आप इन प्रस्तुतियों में से कुछ चुनिंदा चित्रों को देख कर समझ सकते हैं इन बच्चों को आज़ादी का महत्व शायद हमारे जैसे सम्पन्न परिवार के बच्चों से अधिक होता है क्योंकि इसमें से बहुतों ने अपना बचपन बच्चों की तरह जिया ही नहीं।

कुछ बच्चों ने अपनी ज़िन्दगी का दर्द इतनी खूबसूरती से अपनी पेंटिंग ही नहीं अपनी पंक्तियों में अंकित किया है कि विश्वास नहीं होता ये बच्चे समाज से तिरस्कृत और प्रताड़ित वर्ग से हैं।

उनके गालों पर ठहरे हुए आँसू उनके दर्द ही नहीं उनकी प्रतिभा की भी पर्याय बन चुके हैं।

अगर इन लड़कियों को सही मार्ग दर्शन और प्रोत्साहन मिल जाये तो ये ना जाने क्या क्या कीर्तिमान स्थापित कर सकती हैं। उम्मीद है इस पत्रिका को पढ़ने वालों को इनकी प्रतिभा का परिचय मिल गया होगा किसका कहीं ना कहीं इनके भविष्य पर प्रभाव ज़रूर पड़ेगा।



चलो कुछ बात करें

क्या ऑनलाइन पढ़ाई एक 'व्यथा' होती है

अमिताभ श्रीवास्तव

अगर एक ३/४ साल के बच्चे को ये पढ़ाया जाए कि मूली, प्याज़, या आलू ज़मीन के अंदर उगते हैं या ऊपर, तो बहुत से लोगों इस तरह का ज्ञान बाँटना फ़ालतू लगता होगा।

लेकिन मैं उनसे थोड़ा अलग विचार रखता हूँ क्योंकि जब मैं बचपन में चंदामामा में राजकुमार सिद्धार्थ (जो बाद में महात्मा बुद्ध बन गए) की कहानी पढ़ रहा था तो उसमें ये पढ़ कर बड़ी हँसी आयी थी कि जब उनसे पूछा गया कि चावल कहाँ से आते हैं तो उन्होंने कहा "थाली से"।

लेकिन बस। इससे ज़्यादा नहीं। इतने छोटे छोटे बच्चों को ये सिखाना की बैंगन से या आलू से क्या क्या व्यंजन बन सकते हैं और उन्हें कैसे काटा जाता है तो बन्दर के हाथ में उस्तरा देने जैसा है।

क्या हम अपने नन्हें नौनिहालों से अब रसोई में जाकर गैस जलाने और चाय बनाने को कहेंगे क्योंकि लॉकडाउन में उनके स्कूल बंद हैं? लेकिन ये हो रहा है और क्योंकि स्कूल वालों से पंगा लेने की किसी को (ki) हिम्मत नहीं है।

पता नहीं वो हमारे बच्चे को क्या रैंकिंग दे दें? क्या पता हमारी बेटी, पोती या नाती को श्रीमती गुप्ता या श्रीमती मिश्रा की लड़की से कम नम्बर मिल जाए तो? उसकी कितनी इन्सल्ट हो जायेगी।

बात में दम है। हमारे समय तो मैट्रिक के बाद के भी पिताजी सबके सामने दो झापड़ भी लगा देते थे और रोने पर एक और पड़ता था। पर ये बच्चे। बाप रे बाप। उनकी सहेलियों या दोस्तों के सामने किसी बात के लिए मना भी कर दिया तो बग़ावत।

ख़ैर, बात हो रही है ऑनलाइन पढ़ाई की, जो कोरोना के कारण पिछले लगभग दो सालों से छोटे बच्चों के लिए जी का जंजाल बनी हुई है।

५ साल से छोटे बच्चे जो पिछले मार्च से आज तक स्कूल नहीं गए, जिन्होंने अपनी टीचर की शक्ल तक नहीं देखी, अपनी क्लास के बच्चों से नहीं मिले, ये उम्मीद करना कि वो टीचर को एक फ़ोन, या लैपटॉप पर देख कर उनके हर सवाल का सही सही जवाब देंगे तो इस सदी का सबसे बड़ा अत्याचार होगा।

मैं कुछ बच्चों को जानता हूँ जो ऑनलाइन पढ़ाई की वजह से अपना आत्म-विश्वास पूरी तरह खो चुके हैं। कुछ बच्चे जिन्होंने अभी अभी बोलना शुरू किया था अब तुतलाने लगे हैं और ४० मिनट स्क्रीन के सामने एक अनजान टीचर के सामने बैठने को राज़ी नहीं हैं।

ऐसा नहीं है ये सिर्फ़ बच्चों के लिए दुःख भरे दिन हैं। टीचरों की हालत तो और बुरी है। अगर उन्होंने बच्चे को संतरा दिखा कर पूछा ये क्या है और वो बड़े विश्वास से कह देता है आलू, तो वो गुस्से में चिल्ला भी नहीं सकती और उसे अपने पूरे मेकअप की मर्यादा रखते हुए मुस्कुरा कर कहना पड़ता है "ग़लत जवाब। बेटा ये संतरा है, ऑरेंज, यू नो"।

वो भी मज़बूर हैं। उनकी सेलरी वैसे ही कम हो गयी है और अगर ये ऑनलाइन क्लास नहीं हुई तो वो भी ख़त्म। इसलिए वो भी छोटे छोटे बच्चों से रोज़ ४० मिनट तक उनसे बात करने के नाए नाए फ़ॉर्मूले इजाद करती रहती हैं। अभी डेल्टा गया नहीं और आमिक्रॉन आ गया। जब तक बच्चों की वैक्सीन नहीं आती माँ बाप अपने नौनिहालों को स्कूल भेजने को तैयार नहीं।

दिवक्रत ये है की ऑनलाइन पढ़ाई से सिर्फ़ छोटे बच्चों का ही नहीं बड़ी क्लास के बच्चों को भी कोई विशेष फ़ायदा नहीं हो रहा है। उनकी दिन में तीन या चार बार क्लास तो होती हैं लेकिन ये सिर्फ़ एकतरफ़ा क्लास होती हैं जहाँ बच्चे कहीं भी बैठ कर या सोते हुए भी अपनी क्लास अटेंड कर लेते हैं।

पता नहीं कि स्कूल वालों ने अपने आप ये फ़ैसला किया या शिक्षा मंत्रालय के आदेश पर। ऑनलाइन क्लासों कभी दिन को होती हैं कभी रात के ८ बजे पर इससे छात्र और टीचर दोनों परेशान हैं।

इस वर्ष की बोर्ड परीक्षा के नतीजों से कॉलेज वाले परेशान हैं क्योंकि ये पिछले वर्ष से कई प्रतिशत अच्छे हैं। और ऑनलाइन परीक्षा में दसवीं या बारहवीं के समझदार बच्चे क्या-क्या कर सकते हैं ये सब जानते हैं।

अब कई राज्य स्कूल खोलने की घोषणा कर चुके हैं पर आमिक्रॉन के खतरे को देखते हुए अधिकतर माता-पिता अपने बच्चों को स्कूल भेजने से इनकार कर रहे हैं।

“जान सलामत रही तो अगले साल पढ़ लेंगे। एक साल ड्रॉप करने में हमें कोई फ़र्क नहीं पड़ता” बच्चों के माता-पिता, नानी-नाना, दादी-दादा, चाची-चाचा, मौसी-मौसा सभी सहमत हैं।

उधर सरकार सारी परीक्षाएँ स्कूल में जा कर लेने को आमादा है। बल्कि उसने बोर्ड की परीक्षा को साल में एक के बजाए दो बार कर दिया है।

अब कौन किसको राय दे रहा है पता नहीं लेकिन आफ़त बच्चों की ही है ये तो पक्का है।



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 select 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 AIF is not responsible for any exigencies.

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On the eve of Children's Day, Anthropos India Foundation launched a participatory, bilingual, quarterly Digital Magazine '**Childhood Matters**'- 'Bolta Bachpan' to build awareness about child protection and child rights among the masses.

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