

childhood matters

AIF's Digital Magazine

VOLUME III | ISSUE NO. 3 | APRIL-JUNE 2024



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



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CHILDHOOD MATTERS

A Digital Magazine by Anthropos India Foundation,
July, 2024

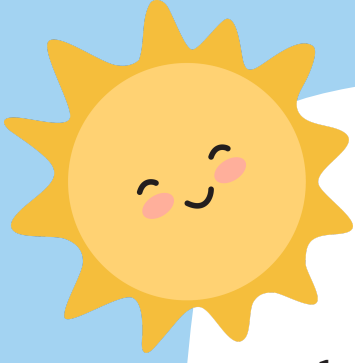


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About Us

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 with people and communities for solving various social issues of communities by furthering 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, and 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 promote creative articulation of children and with its humble efforts seeks to disseminate the knowledge and information related to child rights and protection. We are publishing the digital magazine "CHILDHOOD MATTERS" for the well-being of children to bring a 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 expression. We attempt to take into 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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Editorial

Dr Sunita Reddy

Founder-Chairperson, AIF
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For the editorial this time, I want to share my experience of visiting a bird's paradise, especially for the little ones to read and relish. My parents' marriage anniversary was on March 16th, 2024. Fifty six years of togetherness is a lengthy relationship by all means. This sort of an achievement became a wonderful occasion to celebrate for all of us. I couldn't think of anything better than showing them the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, also called the Keoladeo Ghana National Park, with its vibrant array of birds. We were so pleased to view the migratory birds that were to depart shortly to traverse continents, as we drove through the lanes and bylanes of towns into a tiny resort to soak in some relaxed time.

Located in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district at the meeting point of the Gambhir and Banganga rivers, Keoladeo Ghana National Park was formerly a seasonal flood-plain caused by a natural depression. Now it is an important bird-breeding and feeding ground with its extraordinary avian richness. It has a history of royal hunting reserves during the 1950s for the Maharajas and the British. It is said that Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India from 1936 to 1943, shot over thousands of ducks in a single day. This Park has also been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985.

As soon as we arrived, Prakash—a charming and assured tour guide with 23 years of experience—took us around the Park, using his telescope and taught me how to use my phone to click photos of birds while using binoculars. He informed us that the Bird Park was 29 square kilometers in size, of which 18 square kilometers were made up of dry ground and 11 square kilometers were made up of wet land, as we strolled through the lengthy section of the Park. He continued sharing information about the 370 different bird species that can be found in the Park, including about 100 local species in addition to the permanent birds and 150 migratory species from Siberia, Russia, China, and Mongolia.

This bird sanctuary is particularly known for migratory 'Siberian Cranes'. These birds fly from Siberia to India during winter months as they are cold-blooded animals that cannot survive in the extreme winters of their country.

Additionally, food production and food availability also reduces during winters, pushing these birds to migrate to India.

While there were initial worries about the area being too dry, Prakash noted that weather conditions had already improved so it was not a concern anymore.



Other than birds, there were 22 different species of mammals in the Park also, including small deer, jackals, hyenas, and wild boar, in addition to 40 different species of eagles, 30 different species of ducks, and other bird species including rafter, egret, cormorant, spotbill, ibis, flycatcher, and babbler that can be seen during winter. Luckily, he added, they have also spotted a leopard, which was usually visible to visitors on their sightseeing trips. A number of snake species, including cobras and vipers, can also be seen in this Park. He claimed that bird visibility varies occasionally in the Park. For instance, the green bee-eater was only seen during the spring and summer and was invisible during winter. Further, he also informed that there were bats in the Park, like fruit bats. Visibly exhilarated, Prakash shared that his lengthy interview and photograph regarding the Bird Park were also included in a BBC show.

As he energetically went on, the region was formally recognised as a National Park in 1981, but its traditionally known as 'ghanna' meaning a dense forest. It is said that the name 'Keoladeo' originated from the Lord Shiva temple located behind the Park. The Park also featured a hunting area where the royal family went duck-hunting from 1902 and 1964.

Seeing the various birds, their nests, and the entire marshy environment was an amazing experience. Our day trip taught us a great deal. Imagine what a rewarding and enriching experience it would be to take growing children to such a well-endowed National Park on special occasions.

Guest Editorial

सुनीता चौहान, फाउंडर, 4बी फाउंडेशन, दिल्ली

मेरा नाम सुनीता चौहान है। मेरा जन्म सन् 1978, 15 अगस्त को हुआ था। मेरी माताजी और मेरे पिताजी गरीब परिवार से थे। मेरे पिता के पूर्वज, स्वर्ण लोगों के खेतों, घरों, और मौहल्लों में काम करते थे। मेरी माँ और दादी गांव के ज़मींदारों के घरों में सफाई का काम कर के दो वक्त की रोटी जुटाती थीं। मेरी माता अनपढ़ थीं व पिता चौथी कक्षा तक पढ़े थे। घर की आर्थिक स्थिति ठीक नहीं थी परंतु मेरे पिता की सोच यह थी कि मुझे किसी की गुलामी नहीं करनी, और जैसे भी हो सके, सम्मान का जीवन जीना है। गांव में ऐसा कोई काम नहीं था जिसमें सम्मान का जीवन हो और अच्छा पैसा हो। दलित होने के कारण स्वर्ण लोग आगे बढ़ने भी नहीं देना चाहते थे। वे चाहते थे कि ये लोग सिर्फ हमारी गुलामी करें। इसलिए मेरे पिता एक सम्मान पूर्वक जीवन जीने के लिये सन् 1983 में सह-परिवार दिल्ली आ गए। दिल्ली आकर उन्होंने कर्ज़ा लेकर एक छोटी सी झुग्गी खरीदी। बहुत समय तक मेरे पिता के पास कोई काम भी नहीं था। वे बहुत ज़्यादा कर्ज़ों में डूब गए थे। बाद में उन्होंने मज़दूरी कर के हम चार बहन-भाईयों का पालन पोषण किया।



आज मैं 26 साल से दलित महिलाओं और बच्चों के अधिकारों की रक्षा हेतु काम कर रही हूँ। खास तौर पे महिलाओं को घरेलू हिंसा के खिलाफ आवाज़ उठाने के लिए प्रेरित करने से लेके उन्हें सशक्त बनाने तक, मैंने दिल्ली महिला आयोग की तरफ से भी उनके साथ काम किया है। कई बारी तो मुझे किसी की सहायता के लिए रात को भी जाना पड़ा है तो बेझिजक गई हूँ। कई केसेज़ में, महिला वर्ग के साथ घर परिवार से लेकर पुलिस थाने, यहाँ तक की कोर्ट तक भी, उनका साथ दिया है ताकि हमारे समाज में किसी महिला और बच्चे के मौलिक अधिकारों का हनन न हो। दरअसल, बहुत साल पहले, व्यक्तिगत तौर पे, मैं खुद घरेलू हिंसा का शिकार थी। उस घुटन भरी ज़िन्दगी से धीरे-धीरे, निरंतर कोशिश करते हुए जब आगे बढ़ी तो पाया कि दलित होने के कारण समाज में ज़्यादा दिक्कतों का सामना करना पड़ता है। गहन अध्यन के बाद यह भी पाया कि हम लोग स्वर्ण समाज और सरकार के द्वारा कितने प्रताड़ित हैं। इन्हीं सभी अनुभूतियों को लेके एक छोटे से प्रयास के अंतर्गत 'बचपन, बचाव, बढ़ना, बातचीत' (4B Foundation) नामक संस्था के साथ शिक्षा को आधार बना के समाज में काम करना शुरू कर दिया। बाबासाहेब भीमराव आंबेडकर हमारी संस्था के मुख्य प्रेरणा स्रोत बने। हम लोग साउथ दिल्ली के कुसुमपुर पहाड़ी इलाके में काम करते हैं। मुझे गर्व है इस बात पे कि हमारे संघठन ने अपने दलित समाज के कई बच्चों को शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में आगे बढ़ाया है। आज हम कम से कम 5000 परिवारों के साथ जुड़ कर काम कर रहे हैं और उनकी ज़िन्दगी बेहतर बनाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

हमारी संस्था की निरंतर कोशिशों के मद्देनज़र, मुझे नेशनल फाउंडेशन फॉर इंडिया की तरफ से 2017 में सी-सुब्रमण्यम अवार्ड से सम्मानित किया गया है। कई और पुरस्कार भी मिले हैं। पुरस्कृत होना सिर्फ कुछ समय के लिए ही अच्छा लगता है क्योंकि आज भी दलितों का जीवन कठिन है, चाहे शहर हो या गांव। बाबासाहेब चाहते थे कि समाज के सभी वर्गों का सभी क्षेत्रों में समान स्थान होना चाहिए, और सभी वर्ग के लोगों को जीवन में उपर उठने का समान अवसर मिलना चाहिए। उनके इसी सपने को साकार करने के लिए आगे का एक लम्बा रास्ता तय करना अभी बाकी है जो की हम सबको मिलकर तय करना चाहिए।

Children's Corner

Everything Same, Yet different..



*Pawan Kumar Pandey
Section Officer (Accounts)
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The sun rose as usual, a new day had come
Yet the world came to a halt without you mum
It was the same everything yet everything seemed so new
And I did not like the change because it did not have you!
Appetite was lost, sleep seemed far away
I knew days like this were now to stay.

The smiles transformed to tears, despair filled the heart,
Nothing seemed appealing without you; it was difficult to make a new start.
Everything was same – the house, farm, food, surroundings – with you where the
times I'd spent

But your absence made the same everything so different
It took me years to forget that day

The day that drew us apart – that took you away
To come to terms with reality, to wipe my own tears,
It wasn't easy for me – it really took me years.

And now when I somehow got used it, I have to start my again life
I have to leave all this too; I have to relive the pain;
I have to go far away and make a name for me

To climb the steps to success just like you wanted it to be
I have to leave the comfort of home and its memories attached with you
The world seems a mirage – sometimes pitch dark becomes the view.

Slowly and steadily, I'm climbing the stairs to success
But the void left by your absence is the same nevertheless
This time when everything's different – the surroundings, the people, the views
They seem the same to me – 'unappealing' without you

The sun still rises, the day still starts
But nothing ever seemed to admonish the pain in my heart.

Today I'm all that you wanted me to be
Only if now you could see me.....

Tears well up in my eyes but they do not flow
Earlier it was your shoulder, now they have nowhere to go.
If you can see me now, see that I'm miserable without you
I hardly smile now – the reasons are few.

I have no one to care for me, to tell what I ought to do now
Wish I could bring back that time, wish I could bring you back somehow.

I miss you, each second in my thoughts you are
I can still feel you around though you are among the stars.
If you can see me now, please come and wrap your arms around
Ever since you've gone, no solace I've found
I'm all that you wanted me to be.

I miss you 'Amma'..... wish only if you could see me!

THE STORY OF IQBAL MASIH



by R. Harini, Intern - AIF

Born on 1 January 1983, Iqbal Masih was a child laborer and activist who hailed from an impoverished Catholic Christian family in rural Pakistan. He was brought up in Muridke city. In 1986, Iqbal's father required funds to finance the wedding of one of his sons but lacked access to monetary aid, leading him to borrow a loan of 600 rupees from a local contractor (*thekedar*) by using his children as collateral, the only assets he possessed. The debt had to be repaid by the then four-year-old Iqbal, who became a bonded labourer in one of Pakistan's severely exploitative carpet manufacturing factories, as undisclosed expenses and interests were added to the initial amount. This, however, was not an uncommon occurrence. Iqbal Masih was one of 7.5 million bonded child laborers in Pakistan, most of whom were employed under hazardous conditions within carpet factories or brick kilns. This institution of modern slavery was established by the exploitation of marginalized Pakistani Christians in Punjab and Sindh, who were often illiterate and unable to protest against their circumstances. The informal nature of the lending practice (*peshgi*) allowed lenders to control and manipulate the terms of the contract, confining entire families across multiple generations in bonded labor.

For the next six years, Iqbal spent 14 hours a day chained to his carpet loom, earning just 1 rupee per day. Expenses encompassed the cost of a year of training (when he remained unpaid), tools, food, and fines for possible mistakes. Due to the high interest rate on the loan, the debt had ballooned to 13,000 rupees by the time he had turned 10 years old. Due to the long hours of labor, his spine had constricted while his lungs became infected by inhaling noxious carpet dust. As he frequently attempted to escape, Iqbal was subjected to severe physical abuse and rarely fed. When he died at the age of 12, he weighed only as much as a 6 year old.

"Today, you are free and I am free too."
-(Late) Iqbal Masih, a child laborer-
activist, 1994



Iqbal escaped for the first time when he was 10, but was brought back to his employer (a man called Ashad) by the Police. Even as bonded labor was declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the officers returned him due to the incentive of gaining a "finder's fee" for catching escaping bonded laborers. An entire institutional and social nexus controlled and legitimized this abhorrent cycle of exploitation, one that specifically targeted young children. Iqbal succeeded during his second attempt and managed to contact Ehsan Ulla Khan, the founder of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front (BLLF), who eventually managed to gain Iqbal's freedom.

For the next two years, Iqbal campaigned against child labor and bonded exploitation, freeing over 3,000 enslaved children. Iqbal also traveled the world, testifying before the International Labor Organization in Europe and visiting multiple countries to share his story, presenting the cruel realities of marginalized children of Pakistan. Iqbal's voice beckoned the world to turn their attention to children trapped by child labor with his efforts garnering him international attention and coverage. Inspired by Masih's visit in 1994, 325 pupils of the Broad Meadows Primary School of Quincy sent over 600 photocopied letters with three hundred signatures in each one, demanding the then Prime Minister of Pakistan (Benazir Bhutto), two senators of the state (John Kerrey and Edward Kennedy) and the managers of local carpet shops, to curb bonded child labor in Pakistan. He also influenced the renowned afterschool program 'Operation: Day's Work' (ODW), led by teacher Ronald Adams and received the Reebok Youth in Action Award by the Reebok's Human Rights Foundation. Brandeis University in Boston had even promised Iqbal - who wished to be a lawyer and liberate bonded laborers - a full scholarship upon the completion of his schooling in Pakistan.

However, tragedy was soon to strike. On 16th April, 1995, Iqbal was shot dead by members of a gang responsible for killing those who had escaped carpet factories when he was visiting his hometown for Easter Sunday. Only 12 years old, Iqbal died instantly due to hemorrhaging from 120 pellet wounds to his back and legs. His funeral was attended by approximately 800 mourners. In the week that followed, a protest of 3,000 people - half of whom were younger than 12 - took place in Lahore, demanding an end to child labor. Simultaneous processions were carried out in other countries and cities, including New Delhi. Following the incident, sales of Pakistani carpets dropped dramatically as countries demanded for an immediate intervention by the government. In response, economic elites in Pakistan denied the use of child labor and harassed workers for the BLLF with the help of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). To this day, his killers have not been brought to justice.

Iqbal's cause inspired the creation of several organizations, including We Charity, The Iqbal Masih Shaheed Children Foundation, and GoodWeave International and others. Sixteenth April was declared as '*International Day Against Child Slavery*' in Spain and South America in 1996. In Italy, the Istituto Comprensivo Statale "Iqbal Masih" was named after him in 1998. Iqbal was awarded the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child posthumously in 2000 and the United States Congress founded the annual Iqbal Masih Award for the Elimination of Child Labor in his honor in 2009. Iqbal Masih's story is one of suffering, perseverance and determination, inspiring millions across the world - to fight, to lead and to live a life of quality and substance.



SLUM LIFE: MAHENDRA'S JOURNEY AS A YOUNG MIGRANT



by Manya Singh, Intern - AIF

**Manya was part of the research team in the ICSSR-JNU project on child abuse in slums. This article is based on her fieldwork experiences. The names used in the story have been changed to maintain anonymity.*

A young boy named Mahendra lived in the bustling streets of Delhi, amid the chaos of honking horns and the constant humdrum of life. He was 13-years-old and had moved to Delhi from a small village in Bihar with his mother and sisters. Their move wasn't one of choice but of necessity. Four years ago, Mahendra's father had passed away, leaving the family with no option but to seek better opportunities in the city.

Life in Delhi was a stark contrast to that in their village. The city's sheer size was overwhelming, and the family had to adjust quickly. They moved into a cramped room in a crowded neighborhood, where Mahendra's elder sister had already been living. She had promised their mother that life would be better in Delhi, with more opportunities for work and education.

Mahendra was a talkative boy, full of curiosity and dreams, but the reality of their situation soon became clear to him. Despite the promises of extra help with his studies, Mahendra found himself struggling at his new school where the teachers were harsh. One incident stood out in his mind though. One day, a teacher, known among the students as '*baste waale Sir*' (the Sir with a bag), lost his temper and bit Mahendra on the arm. The pain and humiliation was too much for him. "*baste waale Sir marte the toh school jaane ka man nahi kiya*, (the Sir with a bag used to beat me at school so I lost interest)," he confessed, explaining why he had stopped going to school.

His mother, a resilient woman, took up selling water to support the family. Every day, she toiled under the scorching sun, her hands rough from carrying heavy water containers. Despite her hard work, life was tough for migrant families like theirs, especially in women-led households. They were often targets of local thugs who would come around, even in broad daylight, to threaten Mahendra's mother and take what little money she had. "*Room par aa jaate hain, chaaku dikhakar paisa le jaate hai*, (they enter our room, threaten us with a knife and snatch money from us)," Mahendra explained, his eyes reflecting the fear and anger he felt.





But Mahendra was not one of those who would back down. One day, he decided enough was enough. When the bullies came around again, he stood up to them. It was a brave but dangerous move. He sought help from a local '*pahalwan*' (wrestler), who was tough but was a kind-hearted worker at the water tank. Pahalwan, whose real name was Sanju, had reputation for standing up against injustice. When Mahendra approached him for help, Pahalwan did not hesitate.

Together, they confronted the thugs. It was a fierce encounter, and Mahendra watched in awe as Pahalwan fought back with skill and determination. "*Pahalwaan Bhaiya ke sath gaya aur khoob mara* (Pahalwan bhaiya and I beat the thugs and drove them away)," he recalled triumphantly, feeling mixed emotions of pride and fear. The confrontation sent a clear message to the bullies: they could not mess with Mahendra's family anymore.

Mahendra's act of courage earned him respect in the neighborhood, but it also paints a troubling picture of the challenges young migrants face. His involvement in such dangerous situations hints at a future that could be marred by crime and violence. Yet, at the same time it also shows his resilience and determination to protect his family.

In the heart of Delhi, amid the struggle and hardship, Mahendra's story stands out as a testament to the strength and courage of young children, who are forced to grow up before their time. This is another tale of survival, of standing up against adversity, and of keeping alive the flame of hope for a better future.

‘SRIKANTH’ – FILM REVIEW

THE VISIONARY BLIND MAN SRIKANTH BOLLA



by Dr Shaweta Anand
Senior Consultant (Research)
& Coordinator, AIF

Not many of us would have probably known the story of philanthropist and entrepreneur Srikanth Bolla, who was featured in Forbes Asia’s prestigious ‘30 under-30’ list in 2017, not until the critically acclaimed biopic ‘Srikanth’ was released on OTT platforms recently. Bolla, the CEO and Founder of Bollant Industries – a multi-crore business enterprise that manufactures compostable and eco-friendly packaging in Hyderabad – trains and employs scores of differently-abled people, giving their lives some hope and direction.

Directed by Tushar Hiranani and produced by Chalk and Cheese Films and T-Series, the film offers an inspiring saga of Bolla, born blind in Seetharamapuram village of Andhra Pradesh. His childhood was marked by trials and tribulations that only a person with exceptional grit and vision could handle constructively. Bolla, played by the critically-acclaimed actor Rajkumar Rao, said in the film “*main sapne toh dekh hi sakta hun*” (I can see dreams) implying that being a visionary in life doesn’t require perfect eyesight.

One of his other memorable dialogue was “*mujhe bhagna nahi aata, sirf ladna aata hai*” (I don’t know how to run but I know how to hold my ground and fight).

Rao has given yet another stellar performance in this film, portraying a character of strong determination and a never-say-die attitude. The director has also showcased some light moments in the film to keep its flavour upbeat despite tackling such a sensitive and serious subject.



Bolla played by child artist

Rao has been well supported by Alaya F, his leading lady, Jyothika, his awe-inspiring teacher, Sharad Kelkar, his businessman-friend who invested in his business idea, and Jameel Khan, who played former President of India A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in the film. According to industry Pundits, the film has crossed the ₹62 crore mark worldwide, especially considering it was a small budget film to begin with.

According to an estimate, 90% of the blind or severely visually impaired children do not visit regular school in India and are further deprived of their basic human rights including a conducive environment for healthy growth and development. This condition of being born blind is colloquially understood as an act of ‘*divine justice*’ due to sins or bad karma from past lives. Just like it was in the case of the tainted King Dhritarashtra from Hindu mythology who was born blind, but he turned out to side with evil forces in adult life.

In the case of Srikanth, his former parents of humble means were distressed to see the state of his eyes at birth. Due to the fear of social retribution and the fear that his life would turn out to be 'meaningless' and too painful in today's day-and-age, his parents considered parting with him. As is also depicted in the film, his father tried to bury infant Bolla as everyone around him, except his mother, advocated for his death as 'a timely service' to protect him from an unfortunate fate. Many people in the film also told Bolla that he was destined to beg and seek alms on roads but he was determined to prove them wrong, and in doing so, broke stereotypes around people like him.

In an interview to the Forbes magazine, the real-life Bolla shared that his parents initially felt that his fate would make him play guard at home and protect it from stray dogs since his hearing was so well developed. Fortunately for Bolla, their humanity got the better of them and they decided to continue supporting him like family ideally should. Unlike King Dhritarashtra, Bolla turned out to be the real-life hero for many differently-abled people in adult life as he chose to side with the good forces represented by many of the struggles he chose to take up. For instance, helping others like him through the kind of business venture he started, persistence, optimism, and hard work to complete his education and in hindsight, making it also possible for others to

do the same, cultivation of ace-level entrepreneurial skills and so on and so forth. The cornerstone of his personality, as ably depicted in the film as well, is his attitude that '*main kissi se kam nahin hun*' (I am not less than anyone).

Throughout his school life, especially in the initial phases, and as can be expected, Bolla had to endure challenges by bullies who taunted him for lack of sight. Despite that, Bolla kept his focus and continued being good at studies, thanks to his persistent hard work and the habit of constantly listening to audio notes that his favourite teacher regularly gave him. A major obstacle in his struggle for education was when he was discriminated against and denied the science stream after completing class X. He went through a six-month legal battle against the 'Indian Education System' with support from his teacher to get admission into the science stream, scoring a mind boggling 98% in class XII exams. However, his IIT dreams got shattered in India due to his disability, but Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, gave him the opportunity to pursue business management. Afterwards, the real-life Bolla returned to India to continue achieving many more milestones, which includes taking along his differently-abled brothers and sisters, who continue to seek hope much more desperately than anything else in life.



In conversation with former Indian President (It) Shri APJ Abdul Kalam; real and reel-life Bolla

LULL BEFORE STORM: NUTRITION DURING SCHOOL LIFE



*By Dr Priyanka Musale
MD (Hom.), FCHD (Skin),
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INTRODUCTION

The school-going age of 6-12 years is a latent period of growth. During this stage, growth is slow and body changes occur gradually. The nutritional requirement is the same for boys and girls up to nine years. After the age of nine, there is some change in the nutritional requirements for boys and girls.

DISCUSSION

Though the rate of growth is slow during the school years, adequate reserves are laid down during this period for rapid growth during adolescence. Hence the age from 6-12 years can be called the 'lull before the storm'. Usually girls have a higher deposition of body fat as compared to boys of the same age but have less percentage of muscle tissue. During childhood, boys are taller and heavier at each stage than girls, but at the age of 11-12 years, girls become heavier and taller. As the child enters school he/she develops the ability to work out problems and participate in group activities. This is a period of emotional stress, competitive behaviour and dreaming, which brings a drastic change in the previous learning and personality pattern. There is a change from dependence of parental standards towards those set by peer groups.



NUTRITIONAL ALLOWANCE

1. ENERGY AND PROTEIN

The requirement for calories and proteins increases during school-age. The calorie requirement remains almost the same for girls throughout. Boys from 10-12 years of age require more calories as adequate reserves are being laid for a growth spurt during adolescence. The protein requirements are slightly higher for girls than boys between 10-12 years for the approaching menarche.

2. FAT

In terms of visible fat, the ICMR has recommended an intake of 5-6 percent of total energy from Linoleic Acid. Considering this the minimum visible fat required has been estimated to be 12gm/ day but ICMR has suggested the desirable visible intake for school going children as 25 gm/day.

3. MINERALS

The 10-12 year old children require more calcium than adults to meet the demand for skeletal growth. The iron requirements are increased as blood volume increases. Also the mean increase in body weight from second year to the twelfth year in boys and tenth year in girls is 2.5 to 2.7 kg per year which is equivalent to iron requirement of 0.3mg/day. The iron requirement is further increased by the gradual rise in the hemoglobin concentration and losses. The requirement for iron in girls from 10-12 years is lower than those among 7-9 years because the iron absorption during 10-12 years is more, which is 5 percent, whereas it is only 3 percent in 7-9 years.

4. VITAMINS

Vitamin A requirement of children has been computed from the requirement figures for infants (50ug/kg) and adults (9.3ug/kg) by taking into account the growth rate at different ages. The RDA of vitamins A and C are the same as adult RDA. The requirement for B vitamins are in proportion with the calorie requirements.



DIET

By school age, children establish a particular pattern of food intake. This may differ from what is followed at home due to peer influence. The child may try new foods which they normally do not consume. Breakfast is a very important meal. Children are generally restless and spend very little time at the table. Skipping breakfast affects their performance level and the calories and nutrients lost cannot be made up at any other time during the day. Menus must include dishes that are quick to eat yet nutritionally adequate. Also, there should be variety in colour, texture and taste. The table below represents the recommended quantities of food to be consumed by the school going children.

PACKED LUNCH

Packed lunch has become a necessity for school children as it is not possible to have lunch at home. Packed lunch i.e. a lunch in a tiffin box is to be eaten by the child while away from home.

Points to be considered while planning packed lunches are:

1. It should meet one third of the day's nutritional requirements.
2. It should include food from all the five food groups though the number of dishes may be less.
3. At least one serving of green leafy vegetables should be included.
4. Food stuff providing good quality protein like egg, milk or milk products like paneer or curd would improve overall protein quality in combination with vegetable protein.
5. There should be variety.
6. Preferably the packed food should be different from that prepared for breakfast.
7. The dishes should be packed at the right consistency so as to avoid leakage, or food becoming dry during lunch which may not be appetizing for the child. One fruit or vegetable salad may be included every day.

Following are few examples of Packed Lunch:

1. Vegetable *pulao*, onion *raita*, boiled egg, orange.
2. *Sambar* rice, *amaranth*, *poriyal*, vegetable salad and buttermilk.
3. *Upma* with vegetables, apple, boiled egg
4. *Idli Chutney* (mint, coriander, and coconut); *chikki* made of groundnuts and jaggery

Some Healthy Food Items:

1. *Moong dal khichdi*
2. Boiled fish
3. *Besan* Omelette
4. *Ragi dosa*
5. Fish cutlet
6. Corn and sprouts *bhel*

**Choice and Method of Preparation of Vegetables**

Vegetables and fruits vary widely in their nutrient content and it is not always possible to interchange one with another without altering the nutritive quality of the diet. It is usually recommended that at least half the amount of vegetables eaten should be composed of green leafy vegetables and on occasions when leafy vegetables are not available some fresh fruit such as orange, tomato may be used instead. Starchy vegetables like potato, tapioca can be used to furnish the food but should not be used as a replacement for green leafy vegetables. Many nutrients in vegetables are destroyed by improper handling, storage and cooking.

Prevention of Dental Caries

Tooth decay can be caused by caries. This can occur in children who are susceptible to and whose integrity of tooth structure may be affected by nutritional deficiency. Vitamin A is necessary for enamel and Vitamin C is essential for dentine. Calcium, Phosphorus and Vitamin D are needed for calcification. Fluorine decreases susceptibility of caries. Fermentable carbohydrate which adheres to the tooth is the major cause of tooth decay. The stickier the food and longer it stays in the mouth the greater is the effect. Thorough cleaning of the mouth after each meal and developing the habit of brushing twice a day, early morning and before bed, might prevent dental caries in the long run.

Following Practical Suggestions will aid in Prevention of Loss of Nutrients:

1. Selection - It is economical to buy in-season vegetables since they are cheap and plentiful. Select vegetables which are fresh. It is preferable to choose one or two vegetables that may be served raw. E.g. carrots, lettuce etc. Tightly closed storage cupboards affect the freshness and nutritive value of vegetables.
2. Store vegetables like onion and potato in dry open tins.
3. Preparation of Handling - Peel or scrape vegetables very thinly. It saves waste and also many good nutrients can be lost through excessive peeling. It is suggested that some vegetables like potatoes are boiled with their skins to prevent nutrient loss.
4. Cook just enough before meals, quantity-wise.
5. Cooking in an iron pan is a good practice.
6. Always cook vegetables in boiling water. During this period of growth and development, children need extra attention as it is a very sensitive phase of their lives as the shaping of their constitution occurs at this stage. The quality of food affects the physiological and psychological development of children, which in turn affects their overall personality.

HEARTBEATS AND HEROES: NAVIGATING THE LABOUR ROOM



**By Anisha A Nair,
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Kerala**

“Hey, did you hear? We will be having labour room postings in our final year!”

I stared at my friend in disbelief. “Us! We know absolutely nothing!”

“Oh, don’t worry, they will teach us everything. I think.”

“Huh??? But we are still only med. students!”

I was never particularly interested in obstetrics and gynecology. I’d heard enough stories to know that obstetricians needed to be as tough as the women delivering in the hospitals to make a name for themselves in this specialty. It takes guts. And boy, I was not ready.

We had a total of four weeks of postings with 12-hour shifts every day. They were meant to familiarize us with the labour room: to understand its operations and how to care for pregnant women. More specifically, to know what needs to be done when they go into labour.

One of the first skills I acquired during my postings was drawing blood. It was a tricky process, especially if the vein was not superficial. However, once we saw the hint of red enter the hub, confirming that the needle had entered the vein and hence our success, we would tingle with joy and brag about it to the others who would look on wistfully, hoping to attain the same skill in the near future.

If I were to describe the labour room in one word, it would be “chaotic”. To monitor fetal well-being, we had machines that checked

fetal heart rate. The tests were called “non-stress tests” (NSTs) and “cardiotocography” (CTGs); the main difference being that NSTs were taken when the woman wasn’t experiencing contractions, while CTGs were taken during contractions. In my hospital, we had four different rooms to categorize the pregnant women based on their stage of labour and progress. The first room was for monitoring the women before their contractions had begun, and thus we were entrusted with the task of monitoring their blood pressure, pulse, and NST to ensure that both the mother and fetus were faring well.

However, one thing we were blissfully unaware of when we first entered as interns was that in the first room, we also had patients diagnosed with intra-uterine deaths and ectopic pregnancies awaiting treatment and they were kept in the labour room for close monitoring. One of my friends accidentally tried to record an NST for a patient with an intrauterine death but the machine was unable to detect a heartbeat. She tried placing her stethoscope at different sites to locate the heartbeat and managed to hear some tinkling sounds, assuming it was the heartbeat. Unbeknownst to her, they were actually the bowel sounds of the patient! The patient, on the other hand, kept the information about her condition to herself, hoping that perhaps her baby was alive and that the machine would pick up the heartbeat. It was rather unfortunate, but later we called her over when the situation came to our notice and apologized to the patient for the trouble. If any of the women started developing contractions and pain,

we would shift them to the next room, where we would monitor how long the contractions were lasting and review the CTGs to ensure there was no fetal distress. Once the contractions started lasting longer and the frequency increased, we would look for crowning, which is the term used to describe the stretching of the vulva by the fetal head. When that was detected, the doctors would yell “SHIFT” at the top of their lungs, and the attendant would rush in with a wheelchair to shift the woman to the delivery room.

In the delivery room, the woman would be placed on the table in a semi-reclined position with knees bent. The staff would get ready for the delivery, and we would all chant “PUSH” in unison to encourage the mother. We would then look in awe as the baby’s head appeared, followed by the body, and the baby would start crying for air as we all collectively ushered the little one into the world. Following the delivery of the baby and placenta, and ensuring both the mother and baby were healthy, they would be shifted to the last room: the postpartum ward, where we were once again tasked with monitoring the vitals and ensuring the mother was fine and had no excess bleeding. Contrary to popular belief, the job isn’t done once the baby is out. While we, as interns, usually gathered around the warmer where the baby was placed to adore and play with it, begging the nurses to let us hold the infant, the doctors would be busy performing the episiotomy stitches, monitoring the exhausted young mother’s vitals, and cautiously ensuring the placenta was delivered.

Within 30 minutes of the baby’s delivery, the placenta must be expelled completely. However, there are moments when it refuses to come out, and we are required to intervene. The medical term for this condition is “retained placenta”. One such incident occurred during my postings where the placenta stayed inside, and we were forced to shift the patient to the operating theater, give her anesthesia, and remove it manually through the vagina. Since it was our first time seeing such a case, my friend and I rushed to the theater to observe and assist with the proceedings. Our professor seated herself grimly at the table, inserted her doubly gloved arm into the vagina, and began actively searching for the placenta. She managed to feel the edge and tried to remove it, but the placenta didn’t budge.

The ultrasound was able to locate the placenta, and it was revealed that the placenta had not yet detached from the uterus. That’s when everyone in the room broke into a cold sweat.



The placenta had to come out no matter what, or it could lead to several complications, including hemorrhage, shock, and death if left untreated. And the clock was ticking. My professor resorted to calling the senior professor and explained the situation. Within 15 minutes, she arrived and was scrubbed in. All our eyes were on her as she began searching for the placenta. We waited with bated breath till finally, my professor withdrew her arm with the intact placenta in hand, and a wave of relief washed over the staff. My friend grabbed my arm, almost in tears over the fact that the placenta was finally out. I smiled back, realizing that our professor, much like a superhero, had saved the day.

The experiences in the labour room were both challenging and enlightening, teaching us not only the technical skills needed for obstetrics but also the emotional resilience and empathy required to support patients through one of the most significant moments of their lives. I witnessed the dexterity and swift decision-making skills of my professors, who provided physical and emotional support to the women in a professional manner. I was also exposed to the raw fear and excruciating pain the mothers were experiencing, and I gained a lot more respect for all the new mothers who were willing to go to great lengths for their babies.

Our initial fear and uncertainty gradually transformed into confidence and competence as we navigated the complexities of childbirth, from the chaotic early stages to the critical moments of delivery. The labour room is a hub of mayhem where complex emotions clash like turbulent waves, yet with the help of doctors and nurses who thrive amidst it all, we safely welcome new mothers and future generations.



बोलता बचपन
(Hindi Section)

सोच



पवन कुमार पाण्डेय
अनुभाग अधिकारी
श्री वेंकटेश्वर महाविद्यालय
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

आज गए थे दोस्त से मिलने
कुछ सुनाने और कुछ सुनने,
बचपन की यादों को ताजा करने
एक बार फिर से बच्चा बनने...

सोचा था बचपन के खेल फिर से खेलेंगे
गुरुजनों और किताबों में फिर से उलझेंगे,
जाति-धर्म, ऊंच-नीच, फिर नहीं मानेंगे
साथ देंगे और साथ लेंगे...

चलो, दिल की गलियों में खेलेंगे दिल भर
भावों का संगम हुआ दोस्त पाकर,
मगर, बदला था सब कुछ और बदल गया है जमाना
इतना भी बदल जाएगा, दिल ने न माना...
लगा दोस्त अपनी उपलब्धियां गिनाने
बातों ही बातों में मुझको गिराने,
अपनी कुटिलता में मुझको मिलाने
निरर्थक बातों को लगा समझाने...

अपनी अमीरी पर लंबा-चौड़ा भाषण दे डाला
सच की कर दी थी हत्या और झूठ की पहनी माला,
चेहरे पर न कोई शरम थी और न ही भगवान का कोई
भय
कितना गिर गया था मेरा दोस्त और विस्मित था मैं...

सच, ये महोदय कितना बदल गए हैं
झूठ और कपट अब इनके गहरे मित्र हैं,
इनकी सोच और नीयत कितनी बदल गई
सुनते ही सुनते बहुत देर हो गई...

चलने का किया था उपक्रम और दोस्त से विदा
ली,
सोच के चला था तो कुछ और मगर यहां बात
कुछ और ही हो ली
भरे मन से वापिस घर लौट आया था
पत्नी पूछती ही रह गई थी मगर मैं उसे कुछ भी
बता ही नहीं पाया था...

'इंसानियत' और 'सच' तो केवल किताबों तक
ही सीमित रह गए हैं
गिरती सोच लेकर चलते ये 'विषधर सजीव' अब
केवल ढांचा मात्र हो गए हैं,
काश! 'पवन' बचपन का बचपना मिल पाता
सब तरफ होती अपूर्व शांति और मैं भी जन्नत
पाता...



पिता का साया ~...

शुक्रिया थैंक्स और धन्यावाद जो श्री बोल कम है पापा
साँ से तो कर लेती हूँ दिल की बातें पर आपसे न करने
का गम है पापा,

प्यार आपका सब से ज्यादा, अहसान आपका सब से ज्यादा,

हिस्सा आपका सबसे कम और,
काम आपका सबसे ज्यादा,

ये कैसा हिस्सा है, बिना मतलब तो फिरते श्री काम न आते।
कभी न कहा जो, वो आज कहने दो,

हमेशा खुद सहते आए आज मुझे श्री सहने दो,

खुद न देखा अपने लिए कभी कुछ लेते, हमे हमेशा कुछ न कुछ देते।
दोस्तों दिन खराब बहुत पर कभी हमे प्रतिक न लगने दी,

छाने को चाहे खुद कुछ न हो, पर हमे कुछ कभी लगने न दी,

पापा मैं आपका शुक्रियादा करु या धन्यवाद ये मुझे समझ नहीं आता,

पर मैं रहना चाहती हूँ आपके साथ हमेशा, बस इतना कहना चाहती हूँ।
मैं हमेशा ऊपर वाले से दुआ करती हूँ की मैं आप जैसा बनना चाहती हूँ।

अपने के तो होड़ो अपने तो दुश्मनो के श्री घर बसाए,

नाज़ है खुद पर कि मैं आपकी बेटी हूँ।

आपको श्री करऊंगी एक दिन नाज़ यह वक्त मैं देती हूँ।

I ♥ U
DAD

☺ Behind every
great daughter is
a truly great dad..



महजबी

कक्षा-12वीं की छात्रा

जीआईसी गैरसैण इंटर कॉलेज, उत्तराखंड



बालपन और पर्यावरण का महत्व



सुनीता रेड्डी
फाउंडर-चेयरपर्सन
अन्थ्रोपोस इंडिया फाउंडेशन

ढ़ाई दशक से शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में होने के बाद और दो बच्चों की माँ होने के नाते, मैंने पाया है कि शहरी स्कूलों के बच्चों और अध्यापकों में ज़्यादा साझेदारी से काम नहीं हो पाता है। होगा भी कैसे? अब दिल्ली के ही प्राइवेट या गवर्नमेंट स्कूलों को देखा जाये तो बच्चे कक्षाओं में कैसे ठुसे हुए हैं। हर कक्षा में ३५-४० बच्चे होते हैं और उन सब के लिए क्लास टीचर सिर्फ एक। मुझे अच्छी तरह याद है कि पहले कैसे मैं अपने बच्चों के प्राइवेट स्कूल जाया करती थी, तो अपने बच्चों की तस्वीर हमेशा साथ रखती थी ताकि अध्यापक उनको पहचान के बता सकें कि दोनों पढ़ाई में कैसे हैं। वैसे बच्चे सीखते तो बहुत जगहों से हैं - घर से, स्कूल से, दोस्तों से और अपने आस पास के माहौल से भी।

अब कल्पना कीजिये, मैं जब ६ घण्टे गाड़ी चलाके पहाड़ों में ब्रमण हेतु पहुंची, तो मैंने उन वादियों में क्या देखा? एक छोटा सा प्यारा सा प्राइमरी स्कूल जो कि चारों ओर से घने पेड़, पौधों और पहाड़ियों से घिरा था। और जो स्कूल के अंदर पाया वह तो और भी अद्भुत था। वहां केवल तीन छात्र पढ़ते थे और उनका एक ही अध्यापक था जो उन्हें पांचवीं तक के सारे विषय पढ़ाता था।

थोड़ा और आगे जाके देखा तो वह तीन बच्चे - एक लड़की और दो लड़के - आपस में क्रिकेट खेल रहे थे। अध्यापक से अनुमति लेने के बाद जब मैंने उन बच्चों से बात की तो पाया कि बड़े होकर एक को टीचर बनना है, एक को फौजी और एक को ड्राइवर बनना है।

उन्होंने बताया कि घर से स्कूल के रास्ते में उनको हाथी मिलते हैं, और बकरियां, ऊँठ और तरह तरह की छिपकलियां भी। अब कहाँ यह बच्चे और कहाँ हम, बिल्कुल विपरीत। जहाँ एक ओर इन बच्चों के लिए पशु पक्षियों के साथ मिलकर रहना कोई बड़ी बात नहीं थी वहीं हम दो ५० साल की व्यसक, भ्रमण पे निकली सहेलियों के लिए थोड़े थोड़े फासले पर खतरा महसूस हो रहा था। चिंता सता रही थी कि कहीं अचानक से कोई हाथी मिल गया तो क्या करेंगे, या कोई चीता मिल गया तो क्या करेंगे, और कहाँ ये बेबाक नन्हे नन्हे बच्चे, हस्ते गाते जानवरों के बगल से निकल के रोज़ रोज़ स्कूल पहुँच रहे थे। नन्हे तो यह दिखने में थे ही पर यह डरना नहीं जानते थे, हम शहरी लोगों की तरह। सौ बात की एक बात यह है कि जो बच्चे ऐसे माहौल में पले बड़े होते हैं, उनकी समझ बूझ शहरी बच्चों से भिन्न होती है। यहाँ के वातावरण और शहर की भीड़ भाड़ और शोरो गुल में बड़े हुए बच्चों की सोच अलग होती है।





बस इसी बिंदु पे हमारी शिक्षा व्यवस्था से गलती हो जाती है। अलग-अलग परिपेक्ष और जगहों से आने वाले बच्चों की प्रतिस्पर्धा करवा देते हैं, खासकर शहरों में। ऐसे में ज़्यादातर बच्चों का ध्यान और सोच थोड़ी संकुचित और एक-तरफ़ा ही रह जाती है। बच्चे, न चाहते हुए भी, भेद भाव करना सीख ही जाते हैं। बजाय इसके, शिक्षा व्यवस्था तो ऐसी होनी चाहिए कि बच्चों को एक संतुष्ट और पूर्ण जीवन जीना सीखा दे, जहाँ सबको समान दृष्टि से देखने की सीख दी जाती हो। आखिर तभी तो एक ऐसे सकारात्मक समाज की रचना हो पाएगी जहाँ 'जिओ और जीने दो' सही मायनों में सिद्ध हो पाएगा।





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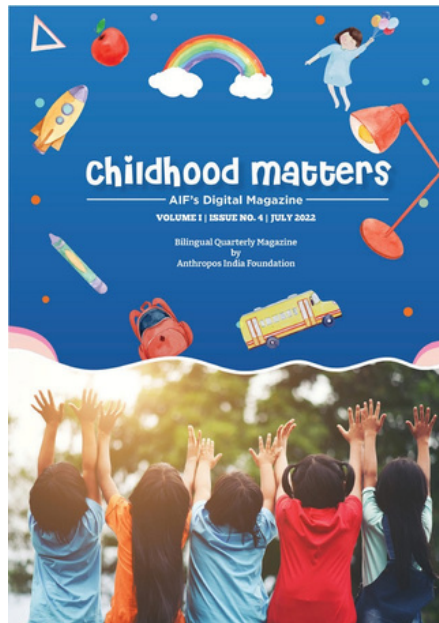
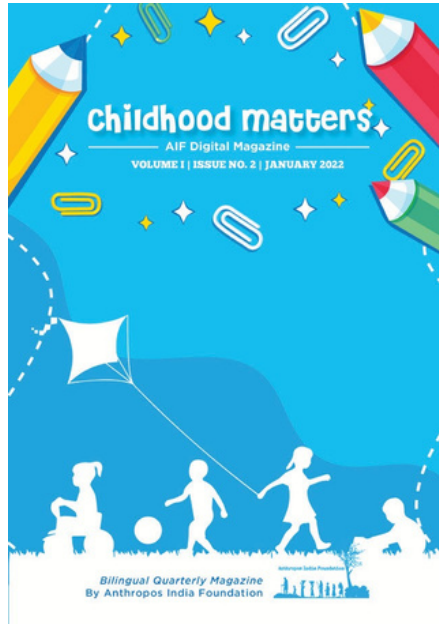
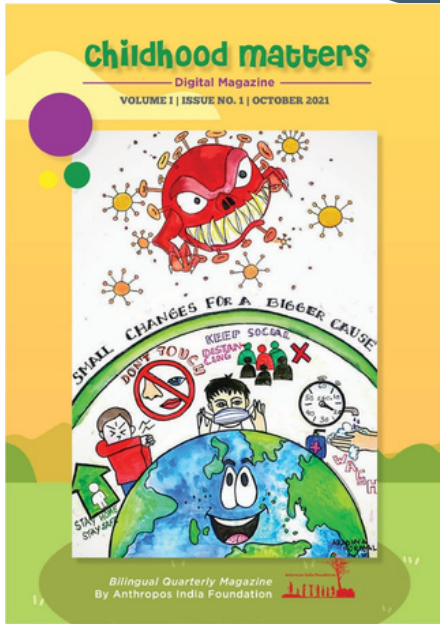
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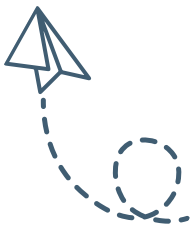
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VOLUME I | ISSUE NO. 7 | JULY 2024

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