



FEDERATION OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGICAL SOCIETIES OF INDIA



mom

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION AND COMPETITION : 23 BEST ESSAYS

Theme: Save the Girl Child or How My Mother Motivated Me?

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FOGSI PRESIDENT MESSAGE



Dr. Alpesh Gandhi
President FOGSI



Dear FOGSIANS,

Greetings! It is a pleasure to write the foreword for this very special book about the most special women in our lives: our mothers.

There is a saying: "Life doesn't come with a manual, it comes with a MOTHER". And reading through these brilliantly written essays, I am sure you will all agree.

Our mothers are our first teachers, our guides, our light in the darkness. It is through their love and strength, that we develop our own.

All over the world, Mother's day is celebrated to show mothers that they are indeed loved and cherished, which sometimes in our day to day schedule, may not get put across.

We at FOGSI decided to commemorate the occasion in a slightly different way.

Through this book, we pay a sentimental and much deserved tribute to our mothers, the often unsung heroes who have made us who we are.

I am thankful to all the participants who have made the competition successful and interesting by sending their essays. I am thankful to three judges, Dr Nandita Palsetkar, Dr Ashwini Bhalerao Gandhi and Dr Suvarna Khadilkar for performing the difficult task to select a few essays out of so many essays. I am thankful to editors, Dr Ashwini Bhalerao Gandhi and Dr Sunil Shah for doing a difficult job of compiling the essays and converting it into an attractive e.book.

Happy reading!

Dr. Alpesh Gandhi

President FOGSI

Senior Consultant, Obst-Gynaec

Critical care in Obstetric Specialist

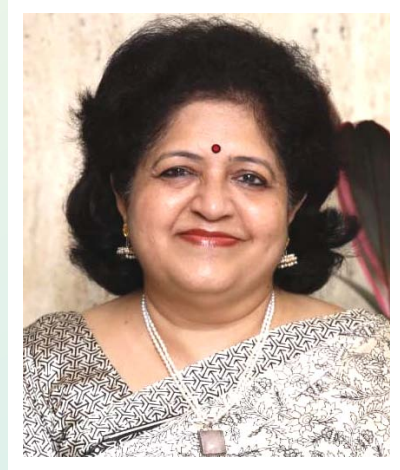
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Dr. Sunil Shah
Joint Secretary, FOGSI
Editor of E Book



Dr. Ashwini Bhalerao Gandhi
Editor of E Book

Dear FOGSIANS,

It was my proud privilege to conceptualize and co-ordinate the Mother's Day special essay competition of FOGSI! All of us are fond of our mother and always cherish her memories.

This competition motivated FOGSI members to pen down their memories, thus turning gloomy Lock down days into a creative exercise. The second topic was 'Saving the girl child!'. Gynecologists are often at the receiving end of criticism related to female foeticide in India. We felt that FOGSIANS can project their sincere efforts directed towards saving the girl child, & protecting her from malnutrition/child labour/domestic violence/rape/child marriage etc, through essays which will act as role models for other doctors also.

The response towards this essay competition was overwhelming as from day one, we started receiving the essays. Total 71 members participated from various FOGSI societies. 42 wrote on 'How my mother motivated me' & 29 wrote on 'Saving the girl child'. 7 essays were in Hindi and rest in English. Members residing in every nook and corner of India sent their entries from cities like- Saharanpur, Mumbai, Rajkot, Nagpur, Noida, Bharuch, Ambala, Ratlam, Bhavnagar, Sagar, Aligarh, Jaipur, Dhaulpur, Trichy, Faridabad, Jabalpur, Lucknow, Thrissur, Nashik, Ahmedabad, Patna, Kochi, Gadag, Durgapur, Thane, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Kota, Aurangabad, Amravati, Tiruchirapalli, Bijapur, Nabha, Jamnagar, Chandrapur, Varanasi, Cochin, Baroda, Nagercoil, Muzaffar Nagar etc.

It was a pleasure going through these essays as they expressed personal experiences. I was pleasantly surprised by the literary skills portrayed by most of the authors. It was a difficult decision to short list 23 essays to be compiled in an E-book. It was still more difficult to select first 3 prize winning essays! I hope that FOGSI members will love to read these thought provoking essays. I would like to thank FOGSI president Dr Alpesh Gandhi as well as co-judges Dr Nandita Palshetkar & Dr Suvarna Khadilkar for their support. Thanks are due to Dr Sunil Shah for editing this E-book.

Happy Reading!

With regards

Dr. Ashwini Bhalerao-Gandhi
Co-Ordinator,
FOGSI Mother's Day Essay Competition

OUR JUDGES



Dr. Nandita Palshetakar

MD., FICOG.

- DIRECTOR AT NINE BLOOM IVF CENTRES
- PROFESSOR IN OBGY AT D.Y.PATIL MEDICAL COLLEGE, NAVI MUMBAI
- PRESIDENT AMOGS (2020 – 2022)
- FORMER PRESIDENT FOGSI (2019-2020)
- FORMER PRESIDENT MOGS (2016)
- FORMER PRESIDENT IAGE (2017)
- VICE PRESIDENT ISAR (2020)



Dr. (Ms) Ashwini Bhalerao-Gandhi

MD, DGO, DFP, FCPS, DNB, FICOG

- Consultant Gynaecologist, P.D.Hinduja Hospital & Hinduja Healthcare Surgical, Mumbai
- Secretary, JOGI (2018 to 20)
- Vice-President, FOGSI (2013)
- President, MOGS (2012)



Prof. Suvarna Satish Khadilkar

MD DGO FICOG, CIMP, PG Diploma in Endocrinology (South wales UK)

- Professor and head of department ObGyn and Consultant Endocrinologist and Gynecologist, Bombay Hospital
- Treasurer, FOGSI, 2018-2021
- Librarian, Mumbai ObGyn Society 2017-18
- Immediate President IMS, (2017)
- Editor in Chief, Journal of ObGyn. of India [JOGI] FOGSI, 2018-21



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How my mother motivated me?

DR RAJAL THAKER MD, FICOG

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After passing my MD, I got a job as a lady medical officer at the post partum unit of medical college teaching hospital where I was born, did my undergraduate and postgraduate study. One afternoon when I was at my office, a young journalist came to meet me. She was writing an article as festival of Rakhi was approaching and it was based on girls who are not having any siblings and what's their feeling on Rakhi Day. So, she asked me my view, as I am a single child of my parents without any brother and sister. I told her that, 'I have cousins whom I tie Rakhi' but then she insisted and asked, 'what kind of brother you want, if your wish to have a brother is granted?' I told her, 'I am ok with what I am. But if at all my wish is granted then I want brothers that are shown in Hindi movies, where brother goes out to teach a lesson whosoever is harassing his sister!' and listening to my answer we both laughed....

I was born in 1965 after a long treatment of infertility for which my mother had undergone some surgery. Later when I was conceived, she had some complications and was advised for cesarean section. There were so many adhesions that lower segment couldn't be approached and hence, classical cesarean section was performed and I was born. My mother had paralytic ileus in post-operative period and she later recovered. (I came to know about these details in the discharge card that is still with us). So, with much difficulty and waiting I was born.

My mother was born in 1933 and was fourth out of five siblings, in a lower middle class family. Despite financial constrains, my grandfather made sure that all children should study and hence, my mother graduated and later did her Bachelors in Education and she got a job as a teacher at our native village. Later when she married, my parents started their life in a rented one room at Ahmedabad. I was also born when they were living in that small house. My mother got a job at school in a walled city area of Ahmedabad. Money was scarce and her monthly pay was Rs 120. My father was also doing a job as a journalist. After some years, they moved in an apartment that was purchased on loan. Hence, paying loans, running the house and my education was difficult but manageable. I was put in Shardamandir that was considered a good school. As per Gandhiji's teachings,

my parents always believed that, a child should study in the medium of his/her mother tongue; hence I studied in Gujarati medium school. She deliberately did not put me in a school where she was a teacher, as she believed that, if I study at same school, everyone would consider me as Naliniben's daughter and not just a normal girl. One of her colleagues had two daughters and they had appointed a drawing teacher for them. So, same drawing teacher Shri Pravinbhai Mehta was appointed for me as well and I started painting, sending my paintings to different competitions and also started participating in on the spot drawing competitions. I received many prizes and of these three are worth mentioning. (i)I received a consolation prize at Shanker's International Children's competition where thousands of entries were received across the world. (ii)In 1971, there was a major flood in the Sabarmati River at Ahmedabad and we (me and my parents) went to see the fury of nature. The water was moving so fast taking trees, animals, people etc and we were just silent observers, couldn't do anything. This incidence has created a major impact in my mind and later I made a painting on flood and its devastating effects at a drawing completion. I received a prize and one of the judges was Shri Amit Ambalal who is a very well known painter of India. I was just six years old then. But after few years when I met Shri Amit Ambalal, I told him that I was one of the recipients of prize and he still remembered the subject of my painting- 'fury of flood.' (iii)My first camera- AGFA click III was received as a prize in drawing competition and now I am having professional SLR camera and doing good amount of wildlife photography. My mother's vision was so vast that, not just mere painting but through which, I started learning about Nature, colors and developed observation power. She asked my drawing teacher that my handwritings must be good and so for almost six months I didn't paint, but I practiced for good handwriting and calligraphy. And today, I can proudly say that I am good at calligraphy and my handwritings are also good.

After completion of primary school, my parents

decided to put me in a school that has its foundation in Gandhiji's Principles and that has changed my life for good. Sheth C N Vidyalay, which is known as Shantiniketan of western India, has so many extracurricular activities like painting, music, farming, weaving, tailoring etc in addition to studies. The ground of our school was in acres and there were so many trees around. We had a big playground and we used to have one session of prayers at a 'Prarthnamandir' where dignitaries across the world used to be our guests and we used to be inspired by listening to their talks. Each class has to present weekly programs on stage and I used to take part in playing musical instruments like Harmonium and Sitar. Each year we used to have eloquence competition and I used to take part in it and received many prizes as years passed by. My mother always helped me in preparing a speech and I used to practice before her before going to the student audience. I believe that, these eloquence competitions helped me a lot to remove stage fear and I can proudly say that, today I don't have any problem delivering a talk or a lecture and even as a compere in a live program. In the year 2004, I compered the inaugural session of FOGSI's 1st satellite conference on 30th October from BISAG studio in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, where the chief guest was none other than then chief minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendrabhai Modi. After inauguration, when he was leaving, he came forward and told me that, 'I didn't know that doctors can be so good at compering!' I was so happy to get complements from him and yes, credit goes to my mother who had motivated me from my school days to take part in eloquence competitions.

When I was in 4th standard, there was a student agitation and all promoted to higher class. So, all my friends were having a leisure time then. But for me, it was a study time as she was preparing and teaching me for middle school scholarship examination that I cleared and in those days I received some amount as a scholarship.

I have been writing travelogues past several years for largest selling Gujarati newspaper, and my writing skills are just due to a habit that my mother imbibed in me of writing a diary and also to genetics (as my father is a well-known journalist.) Every night she used to remind me to write something in the diary. She is very much perfectionist and hence, my spellings in Gujarati language are without any mistakes and also thanks to her that I have learnt a good number of proverbs in Gujarati. Although I studied in Gujarati Medium, my mother wanted my English to be good and hence, she taught me English grammar through set of books called 'Pathmala' and in middle school, I won a prize at English poem recital competition.

During the school years, morning and evenings were just not free. I learnt classical music, played sitar and learnt Bharatnyam classical dance and Later on, I did my Arangetrum in vacation of 2nd MBBS. Every evening when I come back from school, my father used to comb my long hair (I had very long hair in school days), give me glass of milk and then he would drop me at dance school. And how can I forget vacations! My parents used to take me for swimming in the mornings and for skating in the evenings and afternoon was passed playing several games with friends, helping her in kitchen and cleaning the wheat in season will be rewarded by ice-gola that was available for 50 paisa!

Our apartment is on the main road where Municipal Corporation had planted trees on roadside. In summer, my mother would ask me to carry a small bucket of water for these trees. They are still alive and every morning when I see chirping of birds on these trees they remind me of my mother who motivated me to water them. Every morning during vacations I used to go for morning walks with my mother and my aunt Uma mami and they used to tell me the names of various trees. As I grew up, my interest in trees also grew. Past several years, I have been volunteering in nature education camps where I have been taking sessions of tree identifications, importance of trees and about various people who have been actively involved in protection of trees, like chipko movement, Julia Butterfly Hill etc.

My mother used to donate blood at Ahmedabad Red Cross Society. That is motivated me as well and I have been associated with Red Cross society past several years for the awareness drive for blood donation.

During childhood years, even with scarce money my parents managed for budget trips at several places in Gujarat and India. May it be at a friend's bungalow at Tithal or at Lonawala, or a bus journey from Khajuraho to Ahmedabad or visit to Gir National Park. My father's friend Dr Shanti Patel was mayor of Mumbai and also president of labour union of shipyard. My mother requested him that we wanted to see a ship and with special permission we went to see a cargo ship at Mumbai and also went to see Elephanta caves form Gateway of India. Later, in last few years my parents and I have travelled to several places including many trips abroad. After passing MD, I have done several treks including Kailash-Mansarovar Trek but the first trek that I did was my mother's motivation. We had gone to Mount Abu after my class 10th examination. My cousin was instructor at mountaineering institute and we all had gone for a night trek at Mount Abu. Even my love for wildlife has roots that were laid in my childhood, when every Sunday my mother used to take me to visit Kankaria zoo.

My mother always encouraged me to help those in need. When I was in 9th standard she motivated me to be a writer for a visually challenged boy in his class 10th board examination. Later when I grew up, I have been

helping Divyang children by taking their health education sessions and also taking them for nature education camps by sponsoring them through our family run charitable trust. So far, we have sponsored many visually and hearing challenged children as well as Tribal children for nature education camps. I was winner of 2nd prize in a car rally where the navigator is visually challenged and the route is in Braille and need to drive as per instructions of navigator.

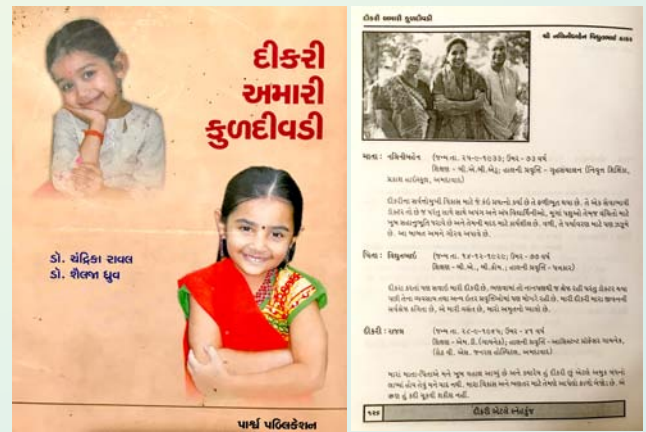
My mother taught me how to value money and she would want me to go to a vegetable market and grocery shop where we get them at a reasonable rate. Till this day I try to follow the same.

My mother had undergone Coronary Artery Bypass surgery in December 2005. Being hypertensive and diabetic, she ended up with wound gapping in post-operative period. In January 2006, I was to go to 49th AICOG at Kochi as I was one of the YUVA FOGSI Dr Kamini Rao orators from west zone. Since, my mother hadn't recovered, I didn't want to go. But she insisted that I must go and after my doctor friends who assured me that they would take care of my mother, I could go to Kochi for oration. I landed Kochi at 11 am, reached the venue, delivered my talk and took train to reach home as flights were not available due to heavy rush of AICOG. How can I forget, that my mother had accompanied me to 35th AICOG at Madras in 1991 when I read my first paper at a national conference.

My mother is perfectionist. She wants everything in order. I still remember when I was studying, I used to clean my room before she is back home from her job. I am trying to become like her and my residents know me well. When their thesis is getting prepared, there are always several corrections. Few years back, message from university was received that, one of the dissertations was rejected. All residents were worried. But my resident Dr Brijesh Patel was much confident that, his dissertation couldn't be rejected as my madam has read every single word! I was so happy to hear these words from my resident that, I am trying to become like what my mother wanted to...

My parents have never ever given me a feeling that, I am a girl and I should have any restrictions. They have provided me opportunities. So that I can fly and they have helped me to evolve as a better person. Truly their life is their message of 'Save The Girl Child.' A plaque has honored my parents and we are part of a book released on parents of single girl child. Our story was also part of Times of India's initiative of Save the Girl Child in 2008.

My parent's life has motivated me to work for the 'Save the Girl Child' initiative through lectures, radio talks, and articles, writing a song on beti bachao-beti padhao for AICOG 2017 as well as awareness through walkathons. I have participated in walkathons on theme of 'save the girl child' organized by AMA in 2007, by AOGS in 2009, at Thulir conference at



Picture 1 & 2: Our Family story was published in a book on single girl child family



Picture 3: My parents were felicitated for their contribution in 'Save The Girl Child' campaign

Chennai in 2018 and one that was organized on the foundation day of Gujarat in 2007. I had organized / participated in a walkathon on theme of 'Save the Girl child' in 2019, 2018 and 2017 in a capacity as a president of AOGS, organizing secretary of SOGOG conference and organizing joint secretary of AICOG 2017. I won first price twice for a poster on theme of 'save the girl child' at SOGOG 2001 and at NMCON in 2002. I have motivated my post graduate students and students of several colleges to make posters on the save the girl child theme in 2017 and these posters were exhibited at AICOG 2017 and at SLU college, at NHL Municipal Medical College, SCL Hospital as a part of women's day celebrations. I was also felicitated by an NGO on International women's day 8/3/2017 for my work on mission 'save the girl child.' So, far I have



Picture 4 : Times of India's initiative of 'Save the Girl Child' in 2008



Picture 5: Year 2008: quote by Dr Rajal Thaker in calender published by UNFPA

'Many patients cringe when they get a girl child. I make it a point to tell them how lucky they are'

covered more than 1 lac adolescents and women through lectures across India including villages of Ladakh, Nagaland, Assam and Meghalaya. I have kept record of all my activities in form of pictures and letters of appreciations that were received. I am dedicating my FOGSI Gestosis Unsung Hero award to my parents.

On several occasions when a girl child is born and patient is upset, I make it a point to tell her, that girl should not be considered lesser than a boy and I advise her to provide education to the girl.

Several incidences I remember when I was asked by dear and near ones for sex determination. Working at a medical college hospital, we never encourage or entertain such demands. But despite the law, people would come and ask. (i) One of my neighbors was pregnant for the third time and had two daughters. She came to me and asked whether I can help her for sex determination. I bluntly said No. Then she asked whether I could suggest a doctor who can help her. I counseled her and told her that, 'this is illegal and you

too can be punished.' She understood and her third lovely young daughter is now studying in the high school. (ii) One of the social workers working at an NGO that is working for women's rights, her daughter-in-law was pregnant for second time and her first child was a baby girl. She wanted me to help her for sex determination. I counseled her that, you are working for women rights and you want sex determination? Later, she realized and didn't go anywhere. (iii) My maternal uncle who was on death bed due to lung cancer and his only son's wife was pregnant. Family wanted me to do the sonography and let him know the gender of unborn fetus so that my uncle would die in peace. Despite family pressure, I didn't do the sonography and counseled them that, does it make any difference whether unborn child is boy or girl! Family members were furious but I didn't succumb to their pressure.

After retirement, my mother has joined Vedant classes where she used to go every morning. Now at age of 87, due to arthritis, she has stopped going to classes but she attends the class every morning through digital platform. Her enthusiasm at this age is unimaginable and she has a strong will power. She still does household work. She has never complained that she is bored. She keeps herself busy, by watching TV (news, serials and movies). She keeps herself updated with news and everyday she reads three newspapers and she is very fond of crosswords. I wish that I should also have the same enthusiasm at that age!

There is a proverb in Gujarati that means that 'one mother is equal to 100 teachers'. In my family, my mother is teacher too!

My mother = 100 teacher + 1 Teacher by profession
That makes 101 and she is supermom for sure.

If at all there is a rebirth, I would like to be born again and be with my parents.

As per shloka in Skandpurana,
Nasti matru sama Chhaya, Nasti Matru sama Gati,
Nasti Matrusamam Tranam, Nasti matrusma Prapa.
That means, there is no shadow like Mother, there is no home like Mother, No security like Mother and in the whole world there is no one who can give life. Whatever I have achieved is because of her motivation and whatever good in me is because of my parents.

Thanks FOGSI, for this essay competition, as I relived all those years while writing this essay and would like to write one essay on my father as well on Father's Day.



Picture 6: With my parents at Statue of Unity

Theme of the essay – Save the girl Child

WRITTEN BY DR. SEEMA MEHROTRA,
(In the hope for a better world for the girls of our country)



“What is a queen without her king?”

Oh I don't know, but let's ask.

Cleopatra

Nefertiti

Razia

Hatshepsut

Victoria

Amina

Tzu-hsi and

the countless other kingless queens who turned mere kingdoms into the greatest of empires.

India is a mix of cultures, traditions, religions, diversity in food, languages, etc. It is one of the oldest civilizations of the world dating back to nearly 4500 years. However, while history ran its course and great empires rose and fell one thing did not change; and that was the gradually diminishing status of women in the society. From the early Vedic Age (1500 B.C) where the men and women were considered equal, to Modern India of the twenty-first century, where even the birth of a girl child is considered a reason for mourning, times have not been kind to females and where cases like the Nirbhaya Rape Case and Suryanelli Rape case are gaining more media coverage than justice.

Over the years, the scenario has changed so drastically for women, that she cannot feel secure in the one place where she is supposed to feel the safest: the womb of her own mother. Indian hospitals are filled with requests and demands to abort the fetus as soon as it is found to be a girl and though, this heinous act is equivalent to murder, it is done without any shame or regrets. In this country a man who prays to the Goddesses Laxami and Saraswati for wealth and knowledge is the same man who curses the boon that is a daughter. Why in this country, where a girl is worshipped as a goddess, is not even safe in her own home? What is our reaction when we hear of the atrocities done against women? Anger, pity and a reflex action to curb the freedom of our own daughters, wives, mothers and sisters? But why are we not shocked? Why are we so used to the fact that women are to be treated this way that we have accepted it without even raising our voices against it? The people in our society believe that when a girl gets raped or robbed it's because of the clothes she was wearing, or maybe because of the place she was in at that time or probably because of the fact that she was

out after dark. The slogan "boys will be boys" has been imbibed so thoroughly in our upbringing that it seems more like a fact. It is almost funny how nobody has ever questioned the boys who were involved in these crimes as to why they deemed it correct to abuse a woman that way or why is it acceptable for them to even think this way about a girl who has never wronged them or even knows their identities. Why do they not realize, these self appointed judges, that it is not up to them, to catcall a girl on the basis of her attire, color, size or any other criteria they concoct, to lower a girl's self esteem till it has been reduced to mere shreds; to make her feel unsafe on the very roads she has an equal right to, categorize her based on the way she walks, talks and behaves; and then give her an ideal that she has to live up to or she is deemed ugly by their standards.

Having grown up in a remarkably sheltered childhood, with morally upright, intelligent parents whose love for me was more than the fear of the expenses that came automatically along with the fact that I was a woman; and a family who realized way before majority of the country that daughters are a blessing too, with two younger sisters I had privileges, love and respect that a few women in India received. Though this did not mean that I was unaware of the maltreatment women received. Although for me, I must honestly admit, the mere idea of female feticide was nothing more than a scary bedtime story that I thought I would never have to encounter considering the fast pace at which India was progressing. However in this case my country was regressing was something everyone failed to add. My beliefs were cemented when I had my first child, a beautiful baby girl. Holding her tiny form in my arms, I could not fathom how any set of parents would be heartless enough to kill something so precious. It was soon after this that the wall of my beliefs came crashing under the tsunami of hatred an unborn female receives in our country. Though it was long ago, the incident is still clear as day in my mind.

I was a young lecturer in a medical college at that time, when medical representative working in a reputed pharmaceutical company came with his wife expecting her second pregnancy, the first one being a

female child. He informed us that his wife was having twins; specifically twin girls. While relaying this happy news he seemed to stiffen, while his wife who was seated meekly by his side hunched forward with her head bowed as if she were ashamed. His disgruntled expression was proof enough that he was unhappy with the fact, even then what he said next seemed to shock not only me but every other doctor seated in that room. He wanted to abort the twins!! I was baffled! How could a father want to do something like this? I then turned my questioning gaze towards his wife, wanting to read her agreement in her expressions. What mother could agree to kill her own child? However as the poor woman's shoulders sagged with despair under my scrutiny, I deemed that answer enough. She did not want to terminate this pregnancy. So gently I spoke to the man asking him for his reason for wanting to commit an act as odious as murder. He flinched at the word 'murder'. But remained quiet.

First and foremost it was illegal to know the gender the baby pre birth. Then it was a bigger crime to abort the baby. But no matter how much we advised him against the idea he was adamant. Finally sick of his backward attitude and beliefs about how sons are better I finally threatened to call the police. He looked at me in shock as if he did not believe I would do it. In all honesty, I might not have initially as he was a close acquaintance and very well known in the medical world but right now the situation was different and two innocent lives depended on my actions. An awful silence ensued after my words; finally broken by my teacher (in a hard voice that was rather uncharacteristic of her sweet nature). She explained to him how girls were equal to boys and also since every person present in that room was a female, his words were not appreciated in the least. She then went on to tell him how she was a daughter born in a family of five older brothers all of whom had only daughters. She told him how happy and successful all her nieces were. Ma'am asked him then, if she had truly believed that daughters were a bad idea she would have aborted her nieces as well. She then gave examples of many famous Indian women and asked him if all of them would have been killed who would have made our nation proud? She concluded by saying she will not commit a sin by taking away two innocent lives before they had even had the chance to see the light of day. Finally convinced, simply because he held her in high regards he left mortified and shame faced. His consideration for her words left me nonplussed and bewildered. I was dubious though but my teacher put my skepticism at ease with her wise words and soothing voice. After some days I got so busy with my work that the incident was pushed to the back of my

mind and did not resurface till many years later.....

.....I was a professor by then and I was in Delhi for a conference. While leaving, a man came up to me and started thanking me profusely. It took me some time to place the thin, pale man in front of me, but when I did, I was pleasantly surprised. He then informed me about how he had liver cancer and Rhea one of the twins had donated her liver to save him, despite knowing how he had never been kind to her and had tried to get her aborted when she was just in the womb. He was so grateful now because of that. He told me how he was alive right now because I had not let him kill his daughter earlier. I accepted his gratitude with a smile and went with on with my work. A few months later an invitation arrived in my office where I was sitting with my teacher. It had been sent by the same M.R. It was an invitation for the inauguration of an all girls school he had opened in the honor of his daughters. Reading it brought a smile to my face and wordlessly I showed it to my teacher whose eyes became glossy after reading it.

It was after that day I realized things were not as hopeless as I had considered for women. If people learn to give their daughters and sisters a little love and respect, well you know what they say "Each small step from you is a giant leap from mankind". I believe that the first step we need to take is to drill this into boys and girls from a very young age that they are equal. We do not just need to make our females stronger we need to make the men more aware. We need to show them that there have been great women in the past and there will be more in the future only if we let them live. When a girl is born we should teach the parents to see her like she is their child. Not as a son or a daughter but as an individual who deserves love, safety and an education to help make this world a better place. Otherwise, I fear that the utopian society our ancestors dreamed of will always remain a dream for us and for the future generations to come. My heartfelt request to all the parents out there; when a daughter is born in your house, treat her like the blessing she is. Do not give her a life where she feels that homicide was a better alternative. And my message to anyone reading this: it is our duty to make this world a better place for the women. As sons or daughters, as brothers or sisters as an uncle or an aunt and as a mother or a father and more than that as a decent human being; we owe it to them.

I would like to end by sharing this ode.

AN ODE TO FEARLESS WOMEN

-NIKITA GILL

*Defined by no man, you are your own story,
blazing through the world, turning history to
herstory*

*And when they dare to tell you about,
all the things you cannot be,
you smile and tell them*

**"I am both war and woman and you cannot stop
me"**

MY MOTHER MOTIVATED ME...

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“God could not be Everywhere, hence he created Mothers...”

“A child gives birth to a Mother”

“The only true selfless love is that of a Mother for her child”

These are a few quotations that are often associated with Motherhood, but as obstetricians we are seeing, interacting and treating mums on a regular basis hence sometimes take this for granted.

Where do I begin? From **Conception**, would be a good idea...I was born to an elderly gravida after a late marriage, who had suffered one miscarriage, who had worked hard to reach where she was in life but gave me pride of place in her life, despite being a “girl-child” in a son-obsessed Indian society! Being the first-born daughter was an inspiration to be a leader in the family.

Mom herself was born as the only child to an uneducated but hard-working woman from South, who was widowed young and struggled to bring up her daughter in the unforgiving City of Dreams, Mumbai. She stopped going to school after her Father’s death as they couldn’t afford the money...but the school principal herself decided that this bright student should not be denied education, and insisted that she join back and waived the fees. This was the start to a brilliant academic career-after doing well in school she joined Wilson college and topped in Arts first year, and on insistence of the college principal and supported by her extended family (benevolent uncle) she did science and got entry into the prestigious Seth GS Medical College and KEM Hospital, became a doctor and then a gynaecologist.

Education is the best gift you can give any child, and that is what young Kamal got then was priceless! Her story made me determined to use the many opportunities for higher studies that came my way, and probably explains why I have done all the OBGY exams and degrees possible; and others including the ECFMG (now called USMLE) although I never went to

work in USA and did MRCOG way back when it was not so popular, even though I never worked in UK!! This love for learning came from her, and I ensured that we never differentiated between son and daughter, giving equal opportunity to both of them as per their choices.

Mother being a **gynaecologist** was an inspiration in many ways. After doing MBBS, she joined obstetrics and gynecology as a resident. She had worked with the famous Dr BN Purandare, and told me stories about how she would go at 5am to Purandare Griha to see/ assist Sir in his private cases, and then they would go by his car to KEM where even more work was awaiting them. These stories left me enthralled and also made me marvel at the capacity of our senior generations to do so much work with such enthusiasm. In fact, the trend nowadays is to opt for residencies without “too much workload”/ “not very heavy work” It’s a sign of changing priorities in life, I guess!

To be honest, when I was a child, I remember saying that I never wanted to be a gynaecologist due to 2 incidents I clearly remember. The first was a movie with the family, where she was called out by the theatre staff mid-way (no mobiles, hence physically called out!) and had to rush for a delivery. The other was during the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict where everyone was huddled at home with darkened windows and Mom and Dad left in our grey Morris Minor to take her for another emergency case! Those were different days, and dedicated doctors doing service! This thought changed, however as I grew older and perhaps wiser. I saw the many women who were happy and grateful to her, and realized that her work had brought joy into many families. It gave me the insight that labor and delivery, though hard work, was a labor of love for both the patient and doctor. Hence

although I had done well in MBBS and could have taken surgery ENT or other surgical branch, my mother's life and work motivated me to be an obstetrician and gynaecologist. I have never regretted that decision, and by God's grace I did my PG in the same institute as my mother which made her very happy and proud.

Another aspect of her life that enchanted me was the **extra-curricular** aspect. KEM Alumni reunions always recall my mother as the one who would take part in the Marathi plays and dramas in college, participate in singing and be always well-dressed with a big "kunkoo".

The story of the big kunkoo/ bindi continued into my life...last Diwali, years after my mother had passed away, when I was shopping at the local mall one middle-aged lady pushing her mom around in a wheelchair smiled at me as I was looking at them, appreciating their enthusiasm for Diwali shopping. We said hello, and out of the blue she asked me if I was Kamal's daughter!! It turned out that my mother was the doctor who had delivered her, and her mum (on the wheelchair) recalled the times when she had come to their home for visits with breakfast! They recognized me on the basis of facial features and big bindi!!! It was such a touching moment, and I am sure Mummy was smiling down from Heaven at us and giving her blessings.

To continue the story of her vivacity- she was always the life of the party, and would have interesting anecdotes and stories from real life which would be told with a twist and perhaps some masala which made it even more entertaining. I have been told that my mannerisms and way of talking reflect her style- in fact my husband sometimes warns me to come to the point and not give the whole "Ram Kahaani" when describing some situation!

However, one important aspect of her life that stood out was her **generosity** and large-heartedness. Having struggled to come up from very humble beginnings to a relatively comfortable life as a consultant, she always had a soft corner for the needy- whether it was her receptionist, a less-affording patient or a street urchin. She funded the education of a couple of young girls, made regular donations to the school which had helped her in childhood and did a lot of pro-bono work with different charitable organisations. My father would jokingly say that your mum has a hole in her palms- whenever any money comes into it, it falls out in a jiffy! However, God was kind to her and gave her enough to satisfy her needs and those of others around her. The lesson I learned from this aspect of

her persona was to be kind, and try to help out others, even if it's in a small way because as they say "Each drop contributes to make the ocean" and each of us can make a difference. Another line she would say related to this was "The smallest good deed is bigger than the largest good intention" hence putting your thoughts into practice is most important.

The last, but not the least aspect of Mummy was just that- **being a Mother** in the fullest sense. By the time I was in middle school, I had 2 siblings and both my parents were in private practice, hard-working doctors. My mother was well-known to the school teachers as she would do the voluntary free health check-up for the girls. One day I got 2/10 (failed miserably) in a spelling test. The teacher commented that it was surprising, being a doctor's daughter that I got the spelling of "kidney" from the line "steak and kidney pie" wrong. I retaliated saying that it made no difference having doctor parents as they had no time for my studies. She was called by my teacher, and on hearing all this took a very major decision. She decided to stop evening consultation with immediate effect, to spend time with the kids. Obviously, this led to a gradual but steady decline in her practice. She never let that bother her, and was determined to be the focussed Mother who could give not just quality time but also quantity time to her children.

This last lesson I learnt about much later, when I was older, as narrated by my family. I took this to heart and decided to implement this in my life too. It's very important for mother to be there for her kids, no matter what else she is doing. Hence, I chose to remain in a full-time job in public service, even when the salary barely covered my petrol expenses in those days, so that I could have a work-life balance and give time to my child who was born just after I graduated as MD OBGY. I never regretted this, and always thank my parents, especially my mom for their support and encouragement in all my decisions in life. When she died, I experienced a huge void in my life and in fact her loss made me try for a second chance, second child. I was one of the few women who was praying desperately to have a girl child, and when my daughter was born, I named her after my mother- **Komal**, the namesake of **Kamal!** She has grown up to be very much like her nani, although they had never met.

Today, whatever I have achieved in my life, is due to the benevolence and blessings of my mom who has been the beacon, guiding light and inspiration for all my endeavours. Although she passed away more than 2 decades ago, I think of her every day and smile, remembering the good times we spent together! I thank FOGSI for choosing this theme, as it made me pen down the thoughts which have been in my mind and heart from so long.

Maa Tujhe Salaam!!

HOW MY MOTHER MOTIVATED ME ?

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‘Janani Janma Bhoomishcha Swargadapi Gariyasi’

The line quoted above is originally in Sanskrit. It describes the superiority of Mother and the Mother land over the heaven. Mothers are the Epitomes of God. God could not be everywhere, so he made Mothers. What all these lines indicate? Mother is the Supreme creation of God. She is the ultimate and best example of creativity of the God. What are the qualities that make us understand the eternal truth? If one has to go to the depth of this five lettered word ‘Mother’, the meaning revealed will be as follows:

M-Motivator

O-Ocean of knowledge

T-Trustworthy

H-Healer

E-Educator

R-Reliable

Mother is the amalgamation of all these qualities. She continuously showers her blessings on her children so as to enable them to develop to their fullest capacities and capabilities.

It has been rightly said and universally accepted ‘**Na Matuhu Param Daivatam**’ meaning Mother is divine. Worshipping mother is like worshipping God.

The list of Great Mothers in Indian Mythology and History is unending. Kausalya, Kunti, Yashoda, Seeta, Jeeja Mata, Shyamachi Aai, Mother Teresa (Mother of the world) are few of them. For us, above all these is, Mother India. These great Mothers devoted their whole life for the upbringing of their children by their timely guidance and foresight.

For me, my Mother was the ultimate source of inspiration, She was my first teacher and strong motivator. I remember my childhood. I was born in the middle class family and was the second girl child of my parents. In those days, social attitude towards girl child and that too second girl child was not favorable. But I was lucky to be born in the family of educated parents who were broad minded to accept girl child. After completing my school education in meritorious grade, I decided to pursue medical career. Mere top scoring was not the asset but it was the inspiration of my parents, specially my mother, I opted for medical education.

Passion, hard work, resilience and will power are the

qualities, I imbibed from my mother. All these qualities led me to achieve my goal to be a Gynaecologist and to serve the mankind. Along with medical education, she stressed the importance of ethics in day to day life and medical practice. Though she is not alive, I fulfilled her wish by completing post graduation in Law(Criminology) & Post Graduate Diploma in Human Rights Education. This made me competent to help my colleagues in times of medico-legal crisis.

My mother was a fantastic role model for us. She had passed inter science examination in first class. Being an educated lady, she always encouraged to adopt scientifically proved facts and not to follow age old customs just blindly. That developed my mind scientifically and others also followed the same. She is the example of responsible parenting and offered complete support. Always she had a smiling face. She was indeed a enthusiastic, cheer leader, sharing ideas and offering maximum opportunities and honest feedback. Her unconditional love and support as well as her timely guidance made me to learn more and more things from her and from surrounding world, that helped me to develop as a responsible adult.

My mother was caring, compassionate, multifaceted personality. She used to get fully involved in the activity related to cooking, music, teaching, sports, writing, painting, drawing, delivering speech. She was a Good writer, a Classical singer, Excellent harmonium player, Good orator, Good Artist, Good cook and above all, a Good human being. She had an art of sculpture making. All these qualities in one person, just impossible but she was gem of all arts. And irrespective of these qualities, she was always, down to earth person. Having such a strong, sincere, multi-talented woman in my surrounding, has shaped me in so many ways. I just cannot forget & I am so grateful to her for all her hard work, good will and blessings that she kept on showering upon me that made me competent to create my own world.

My mother was a strong fighter. Whenever she came

across any injustice in society , she used to fight against that and report to the authority if the wrong doer does not improve . During one of the marriage functions in our family , she alone stopped the drunkard persons who tried to enter the premises and make chaos. I felt as if Goddess Durga is doing the challenging job through her .Her courageous attitude and strong fighting spirit gave me strength and lesson not to give up even in adverse conditions and remain physically as well as mentally strong. Her hard work and determination to face tough tasks inspired me to keep cool and well balanced even during chaotic circumstances.

My mother was very much fond of travelling and maintaining relationships. Summer vacation was meant for travelling to different places with my parents and enjoy the relationship with the relatives. I could feel the bond of love, respect and trust during family functions and adversities .

My mother taught me ethics, accountability, responsibility and truth. She taught me to work for self satisfaction and not for others' praising words or for impressing others. This made me capable to work hard and pursue my dream without getting disturbed by others' comments or remarks. She taught me the importance of availing new ideas, new opportunities. She used to quote the sentence, '**opportunity knocks softly**', so always listen to it and believe in your capabilities and inner strength- **know thyself**. Also believe that I can do the impossible and nothing is impossible for me if I decide.

My mother passed almost three decades back due to malignancy but she is always remembered day and night . She only inspired me to live a freedom based life and to take fullest advantage of the avenues when they come up. She indeed was an Entrepreneur and enjoyed every moment of life with full enthusiasm and responsibility. She was indeed the Goddess of Love. She gave me tenacity and stubbornness at times of adversities but kind compassionate heart.

My mother was a genuinely kind human being and humble personality. She was like a light house for my whole life, professional career and for my family. She painted a vivid and tangible picture of professional success in my mind. She pushed me to succeed, elevated me to reach my goals.

She inculcated in me the value of service to society. "**Service to humanity is like worshipping God**". She inspired me to devote my service to the poor needy patients and work for their betterment. She always used to say that the most valuable contribution we can make in this life and the greatest success we can enjoy –comes from helping others to achieve their goals.

She stressed the importance of this value every day and night.

My mother was very jolly and cheerful personality. She stressed the importance of happiness and the positive energy generated from it. She always told me , my sister and brother to do what makes you happy, not what makes you to earn . Money will automatically come to you if you work hard with positivity. That's the secret of my success in every field.

My mother taught me to rely on my own creativity and vision. She insisted to use natural means, natural sources, nature's way to nurture oneself and next generation. I am grateful to her for her Breastfeeding support which I received during my post caesarean period. I could become successful breastfeeding mother. That made me feel empowered and full of gratitude towards her . Otherwise I would have resorted to artificial milk and food to feed my children. The end result I can see in my children . Both are talented , multifaceted having meritorious career. Even I was breastfed by my mother till the age of three years along with homemade complementary food after six months.

My mother was extra-ordinary in patience and a quick- mindedness. She took lot of efforts to upbringing us in positive environment, to the best of our abilities. It was her vigilant and constant encouragement, advice and guidance, we three developed and had meritorious career in different fields. We all three, my sister and brother inherited our parents' Art of Singing.

Lastly I offer my prayers to my Mother and will quote a song written by Rosmarie Ashley, MD at Gen Ray records.

**Greatest gift-
"Through this life,
You are my guiding light,
I am grateful for a constant sprite,
Wisdom shared with me ignites,
Aluminosity, free to express my Curiosity,
Your ever present love inspires me to need my call,
Your love is the greatest gift of all".**

Recently FOGSI celebrated '**Mothers Day**' on 10 th May . On this occasion '**Virtual – Walkathon**' was organized. Thousands of FOGSI members participated in the event (**India Book Of Records**).Slogan of the day was '**Beti bachav-Beti wadhav – Beti Padhav**' to encourage '**Beti**' who is future mother. If the Beti is well brought up , she would be successful Mother in the future who can develop her child efficiently, to the best of her ability.

In Marathi it is well known quote-
'Na roon janmadecheche phite'

I express my gratitude to my beautiful, caring Mother, **the Angel**.

Essay : Title: Save The Girl Child

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'यदा यदा ही धर्मस्य, ग्लानिर्भवति भारतः,
अभ्युत्थानं अधर्मस्य, तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ।
परित्नाणाय साधूनाम, विनाशाय च दुष्कृतम,
धर्मसंस्थाप्रार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥'

धर्म की रक्षा और मान के लिये, अच्छे लोगों के कल्याण के लिये, अधर्म का नाश करने के लिये और दुष्कृत्यों का विनाश करने के लिये, हर युग में ईश्वर जन्म लेते हैं ! युगों युगों से होती आ रही ऐसी कई घटनाओं का मैं स्वयं प्रमाण हूँ। हां, मैं समय हूँ।

मैं आप से पूछ रहा हूँ कि क्या इस युग में भी हमें ईश्वर के एक नये अवतार की प्रतीक्षा करनी होगी ?

मैंने देखा है कि इस पृथ्वी पर युगों पहले ईश्वर ने सर्जन किया इन्सान का, और फिर इन्सान की सृष्टि को चलाने के लिए सर्जन किया एक नारी का। और फिर मनुष्य बदलता चला गया, इतिहास के पन्ने फिरते रहे, घटनाएं घटती रही, अतीत के पहिये चलते रहे, जिन्दगी के लम्हें कटते रहे, मनुष्य की सोच बदलती गई, और मानो अचानक...., अचानक लगता है कि संसार की घड़ी रुकनेवाली है। खुद मेरी आँखें भी दंग रह गई हैं ये देखकर कि ईश्वर की बनाई हुई सुंदर सृष्टि को इन्सान क्या से क्या बना सकता है !

क्या कभी किसीने कल्पना भी की है कि साल ३०३० कैसा होगा? आइए, मैं आप को दिखाता हूँ उस वक्त का अचंबित करानेवाला एक अदभूत नजारा।

३०३० के इस साल में हर तरफ एक ही बात चल रही है कि इस संसार को आगे कैसे बढ़ाया जाये। हर तरफ लोग अच्छी बाह्य प्रजनन प्रयोगशाला ढूँढ रहे हैं। पृथ्वी के सभी प्रभागों में संग्रहित बचे हुए स्त्रीबीज की संख्या दिन-प्रतिदिन कम होती जा रही है और उनकी कीमत हर दिन बढ़ती जा रही है। दूसरी और रास्तों पे गर्भाधान पुरुषों का दिखना एक आम बात हो चुकी है। पुरुषोंकी गर्भावस्था और प्रसूति के अस्पताल सामान्य बन चुके हैं। 'औरत' नाम की एक विशेष प्रजाति कभी हुआ करती थी ऐसी बातें बच्चों को पाठशाला में पढाई जाती हैं। नौजवानों की उत्सुकता और कुतूहलता को सुलझाने के लिए 'औरत' का शिल्प संग्रहालयों में रखा जाता है। ऐसे ही, कभी एक युवक एक औरत की अतिसुंदर और कमनीय मूर्ति को देख के विस्मय में पड़ जाता है। मानो उसके अंदर की उर्मियाँ कह रही हो 'चौहदवीं का चाँद हो, या आफ़ताब हो, जो भी हो तुम खुदाकी कसम, लाज़वाब हो।' तभी वो शिल्प से एक प्रचंड आवाज़ आती है—

“हे नादान मनुष्य,

'यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता ।

यत्नैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥'

जहां नारी को पूजा जाता है, वहां देवता भी खुश रहते हैं, और जहां नहीं पूजा जाता, वहां कोई भी कार्य का कोई फल नहीं मिलता। तू भूल गया ये बात, और अब तो ये भी भूल गया कि मैं कौन हूँ। देख क्या रहा है? मैं 'औरत' हूँ। नहीं पहचाना? पहचानेगा भी कैसे? हजारों सालो पहले तूने ही तो चाहा था कि औरत नामकी प्रजाति इस दुनियासे खत्म हो जाये। तो, अब भुगत इसका परिणाम !”

तो देखा आपने? कर्म का फल तो भुगतना ही पड़ता है। आप सोच रहे होंगे कि 'प्रकृति की ऐसी हालत किसने की? कौन जिम्मेदार है इसके लिये?'

अरे, ऐसा भी एक युग था जब नारी को आद्यशक्ति माना जाता था, पूजा जाता था। पर मेरी विवशता तो ये है कि मेरी आंखों के सामने होती हुई इन दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण घटनाओं को मैं ना चाहते हुए भी देखता चला आ रहा हूँ। चलिए, मैं आप को भी सुनाता हूँ, जो मैं खुद देख चुका हूँ। ये बात है साल २०२० की ...

“वाह, कितना सुकून है यहाँ, एक निरव शांति है यहाँ, शायद इससे अच्छी जगह तो और कोई ही नहीं सकती, क्योंकि ये मेरी माँ की गोद है। बस, अब कुछ ही समय की तो बात है, फिर मैं अपनी प्यारी सी माँ की खुबसूरत शकल देखूंगी, मैं अपने पापा की पलकों पे राज करूंगी, फिर मैं अपनी बहनों के साथ खेलूंगी, मेरे दादा दादी तो मुझे कितना लाड करेंगे ! वाह, कितनी अच्छी होगी वो बाहरकी दुनिया !” ये मासूम सी आवाज़ माँ के गर्भ में पल रही एक नन्हीं सी जान की है।

पर ये क्या? ये मासूम सी आवाज़ अचानक ऐसे क्रूर कृन्दन में क्यूँ बदल गई? सुनिए, ये चीखती, चिल्लाती, तडपती, काँपती, कमकमाती आवाज़ को, वो आवाज़ जो किसी को भी नहीं सुनाई दे रही है। पर, उस आवाज़ को सब को सुनना होगा, समजना होगा— “माँ, मुझे बचा लो माँ, कोई मुझे मार रहा है माँ, मुझे बहोत दर्द हो रहा है माँ, आह...आह.. कोई मुज पर चाकू और छुरियाँ चला रहा है माँ, पापा, बचाओ मुझे, कहाँ हो आप पापा, आपकी लाइली को बचा लो पापा, आह...आह.. कोई मेरे पैर काट रहा है माँ, कहाँ हो आप सब? मेरी आवाज़ सुनो, मेरी चीखें क्या आप तक नहीं पहुँच रही? आह..आह...आह... अब कोई मेरे हाथ काट रहा है, कौन है ये बेहरम ?

वो मुझे कुचल रहा है माँ, कहाँ हो माँ तुम ? आह..आह...आह... माँ, तुम तो सुन लो मेरी आवाज़... मैंने तो सोचा था कि ये सबसे सुरक्षित जगह है, पर यहाँ तो कोई दरिद्रा हैवान मेरे टुकड़े टुकड़े कर रहा है, आह... आह... माँ.. माँ.. माँ..” और फिर वो दिल को चीरनेवाली चीखें और झमीर को झड़ोलनेवाली आहें हमेशा के लिये थम जाती है ।

वो नहीं सी जान के माता पिता थे 'प्रकृति' और 'मानव'। जहाँ एक तरफ वो दर्दनाक चीखें शांत हो जाती है, वहां दूसरी तरफ ममता का रुदन चालू हो जाता है। मानो प्रकृति को लगता है कि वो नहीं सी जान अपनी माँ से पूछ रही है 'क्यूँ जींदगी की राह में मजबूर हो गये ? कितने हुए करीब कि हम दूर हो गये ।'

और प्रकृति खुद से बातें करती है।

“क्यूँ प्रकृति, क्यूँ? ये क्या कर दिया तूने प्रकृति ? माँ होकर भी तूने अपनी लाडली को मार डाला ? आखिर क्यूँ ? प्रकृति, तू क्यूँ इतनी बेबस और बेसहारा हो गई ? माँ और बाबूजी के सामने तू क्यूँ इतनी लाचार हो गई ? उन्हें क्या अधिकार है तेरी जीवन का फैसला सुनाने का ? उनके आदर और सम्मान के लिए तूने अपनी अंतरात्मा की आवाज़ भी नहीं सुनी ? और..

और.. भ्रूणहत्या का पाप कर बैठी ? अह..अह...अह...ह..ह...

और, तेरी वो सहेली जागृति ? वैसे तो उसका काम लोगों को जागृत करने का है, लेकिन, तेरे कठिन वक्त में, वो खुद समाजसेविका का नकाब पहनकर, खुदगर्ज बनकर, जान-बूझकर तुझे दोझख में अकेला छोड़कर भाग गई !

और, वो डॉक्टर ? वो ही तो एक थी, जो तुझे कह सकती थी कि पेट में पलनेवाला कोई लड़का या लड़की नहीं, सिर्फ एक मासूम जीवन होता है ! पर, पर नहीं, एक औरत होने के बावजूद भी उस डॉक्टर ने एक औरत की मदद नहीं की ।

पर प्रकृति, अब ये मत कहना कि मानव ने साथ नहीं दिया तुम्हारा । तुम्हें मानव के साथ की जरूरत कबसे पड़ने लगी ? भूल गई क्या ? याद कर संसार के वो नियमों को... तु तो प्रकृति है, प्रकृति, मानव का अस्तित्व तुझ से है प्रकृति, तेरा उससे नहीं ! मुझे, मुझे माफ़ कर देना मेरी गुडियारानी, माफ़ कर देना बेटा, करोगी ना बेटा ? कहाँ हो ? कहाँ हो बेटा तुम ? कहाँ हो ? कहाँ हो ?”

माँ की ये ममताभरी आवाज़ जैसे उसे सुनाई दे रही हो वैसे वो नन्ही परी कहीं से प्यारी पर मंद और असहाय आवाज़ में बोलती है ।

“यहाँ, यहाँ हूँ मैं माँ । मैं यहाँ स्वर्ग मे पहुँच गई हूँ, माँ ।

दादा, दादी, देखिये, यहाँ देखिये, वैसे तो यहाँ स्वर्ग में सब कुछ है, पर मेरे साथ खेलनेवाले कोई प्यारे से दादा दादी नहीं है । दादी, सच कहती हूँ दादी, मैं तुम्हें कभी तंग नहीं करती दादी । दादाजी, मैं बड़ी होकर पूरी दुनिया में आप का नाम रोशन करती । आप लोगों ने मुझे अपने साथ क्यूँ नहीं रहने दिया ?

जागृति चाची, आप क्यूँ चूपचाप खड़ी हो ? नारी आंदोलन की प्रमुख है ना आप ? तब कहाँ गया था आप का आंदोलन जब मेरी माँ आप से मदद मांग

रही थी ? तब क्यूँ आप ने सब को जागृत नहीं किया, क्यूँ ?

अरे डॉक्टर चाची, पहेचाना मुझे ? आप तो पहेचान ही लोगे, आप ही तो हो जिसने मेरे कोमल शरीर को काटने और कुचलने का काम किया है । और ऐसा घिनौना काम भी किस लिये ? सिर्फ चंद पैसो के खातिर ? आपके पैर नहीं डगमगाये उस वक्त ? आपके हाथ नहीं कंपकपाये उस वक्त ? अरे, लोग तो पूजते है आपको भगवान की तरह, और आप ? डॉक्टर के नाम पे कलंक हो आप ! डॉक्टर के रूप में एक कातिल हो आप ! धिक्कार है आपको ऐसे डॉक्टर होने पर !

पापा, आप कैसे हो पापा ? धरती से अंबर, चाँद, सितारे कैसे लगते है पापा ? अरे, इन सब में एक झगमगाता सितारा मैं हूँ पापा । आप देख रहे हो ना मुझे पापा ? बोलो ना, पापा, अभी तो भगवान ने मेरे छोटें छोटें हाथों में किस्मत की लकीरें भी नहीं बनाई थी, और उस से पहेले ही आप ने मेरे जीवन का फैसला सुना दिया ? क्या आप को मेरी पढाई की चिंता थी या मेरे दहेज की फिकर थी ? अरे पापा, मैं तो आपके साथ रहकर आपके सुख दुःख का सहारा बनती । आप ने अपनी गुडियारानी को क्यूँ मार दिया पापा, क्यूँ ?

माँ, ओ माँ, सुन रही हो मेरी प्यारी माँ ? माँ, यहाँ स्वर्ग में कहते है,

'नास्ति मातृसमा छाया, नास्ति मातृसमा गतिः ।

नास्ति मातृसमं त्राण, नास्ति मातृसमा प्रिया ।'

माँ के समान कोई छाया नहीं है, माँ के समान कोई सहारा नहीं है, माँ के समान कोई रक्षक नहीं है, और माँ के समान कोई प्रिय नहीं है ।

माँ, मैं जन्नत से बोल रही हूँ माँ, यहाँ जन्नत में रंगबिरंगी फूल खीलें है, ठंडी हवाएं चल रही है, तारें तीमतीमा रहे है, मैं परियों के साथ खेल रही हूँ, झूलों पे झूल रही हूँ, लेकिन...लेकिन तुम्हारी बहुत याद आ रही है माँ ।

देव देवता यहाँ ये भी कहते है कि

'जननी जन्मभूमिश्च, स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।'

माँ, तुझे तो स्वर्ग से भी ऊपर माना गया है माँ, फिर, तुमने ऐसा क्यूँ किया माँ ? क्यूँ मुझे इतना दूर भेज दिया ? क्या अगर मेरा कोई भाई होता, तो उसके साथ भी तुम वही करती जो मेरे साथ किया ? क्या तुम अपने लाडले के शरीर में भी चाकू और छुरियाँ चुभौने देती ? नहीं ना माँ ? तो मेरे साथ ऐसा क्यूँ किया ? क्यूँ माँ, क्यूँ ?”

इस माँ के पास, इस प्रकृति के पास तो ईन प्रश्नों का कोई उत्तर नहीं है । ना तो कोई ये जानता है कि मानव आखिर ऐसा क्यों कर रहा है ? कब तक, कब तक ऐसी नन्हीं सी परियाँ मरती रहेगी ? कब तक ? क्या इस समाज की इस के प्रति कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं ? क्या मेरी और आप की इस के प्रति कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं ? झांकिए अपने दिल में और जगाईए अपनी अंतरात्मा को ! अगर आपकी आंखों में अश्रुबुन्द और हृदय में हमदर्दी है, तो अपने सीने पे हाथ रखिए, और मेरे साथ प्रतिज्ञा लीजिए, की “हम कभी भी, कहीं भी, किसी भी बेटे की गर्भ में हूत्या करेगे नहीं, करवायेगे नहीं और करने देंगे नहीं । हम बेटों को समझायेगे, और हर एक बेटे को बचायेगे, बढ़ायेगे और पढ़ायेगे ।”

मैं, समय, आप सबको आप के भावि का चित्र दिखाके आप से मेरे भावि को एक सुखद समय बनाने की गुजारिश करता हूँ !

प्रणाम !

How my mother motivated me?

DR. (MRS) RANA CHOUDHARY
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MOGS Youth Council Member



Everyone has a source of inspiration and encouragement in their life, be it the famous idols like singer Lata Mangeshkar, footballer Christian Ronaldo, or famous actor. They give inspiration and positivity to many. As for me, my source of inspiration is none other than my beloved mother...my MOM! With due respect and love for all motherhood, I state that my "MOM" is my world and my inspiration. She has always been there for me in each and every part of my life, like a protector, an adviser, a caregiver. I have no words to fully express the sentiments about my mother.

To begin with, my mother has always motivated me. She always says "Keep trying and try to be the best version of you". She applauds me when I accomplished something and becomes miserable when I lose my objectives. However she never neglected to spur me to continue attempting. She trained me like a soldier to confront the world with courage.

Let me share why my mom has been a motivating force for me. My mother came from a humble background, living in a small hamlet, nested in Northern India. Born in a conservative Muslim family, she was one of the seven siblings, with six of them being girls! Yes, you read it correctly. In those times, society and people were not too happy with girl child and girls seeking education was unthinkable. They were made to do household work and were married off early to bear the future generations. My mother broke the norms!

She is a strong woman who fought for what she believed in. She stood against the orthodox system. She fought with the society for her right for education and women's liberalisation. She broke the shackles of this system and struggled for pursuing and completing her education. She was the only girl who attended the school with a bunch of boys. She used to walk kilometres daily to reach her school. She finally realised her dreams, her resilience paid off and she became the first graduate girl of her entire district in the 70's.

Her hunger to learn more things in life and gain

knowledge surpassed the society bonds and inspite of stiff opposition from her own family she shone like a bright star. She was criticized and bad mouthed by the conservative society, as her younger sisters got married before her and even bore children. It was a taboo in those times if your younger sibling got married before you. But she stood for her principles and the gamble paid off. She took all the criticism in her stride and never stopped trying. Trying to be better than what she was.... trying to acquire more knowledge...trying to help the underprivileged...

I appreciate this unstoppable spirit in her. This does not mean that she did not fulfil her duties as a daughter, wife or daughter in law. She was an obedient child, who loved and cared for everyone. In spite of her education and dreams, she later on decided to become a homemaker to help achieve the dream of her husband and to nurture our family. She is an extremely humble person, but has never shied to voice her opinion. She has always supported female education and wanted me to excel in life. She believed that only education can empower us. Women need to be independent to progress in life.

Even today, she never told me to hold back. She has been my inspiration and motivation. She told me that sky is the limit. If one is determined, no one can stop you to achieve what you want in life. She said you should do whatever your heart tells you without worrying about the society and its norms. I learned from my mother to be honest and believe in God. She is a God fearing lady but does not follow the patriarchal system blindly. She was liberal enough not to impose the parda system on me or my sisters. She believes that it's the individual's decision to wear a burqa / parda. No one has the power to dictate what one should do. God does not want us to be oppressed or to do things that our heart and mind does not agree with. She inculcated morals and good manners in all of us. It's only because of her dedication and courage that I am what I am today!

My mom taught me my worth as a person. I've learned

not to waste my time on people that don't treat me right. She doesn't let people walk all over her, and I've taken that lesson to heart. She has shown me resilience and strength. I have seen her go through hard times, from seeing her children through an unthinkable amount of problems to dealing with her own personal struggles. Her strength through life has been remarkable. She is a fighter who never gives up, no matter how hard it gets.

I have always looked up to her as a child, and even more now as an adult. She is one of the hardest working women I have ever met. Without ever questioning me, she has stood behind me and supported my ideas, dreams, goals, and career choices. She has instilled hard work ethic, and a moral compass always pointing in the direction of compassion. She told me "It is important to follow your dreams and heart. Do something that excites you." I am proud to be her daughter and accomplish my dream to become a doctor. I remember she was so happy when I cleared by MBBS and became the first doctor in our conservative Muslim family, in fact the first one in our entire native place!

All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother. My mother has always been my emotional barometer and my guidance. I attribute my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her. If I have done anything in life worth attention, I feel sure that I inherited the disposition from my mother. My mother is my root, my foundation. She planted the seed that I base my life on, and that is the belief that the ability to achieve starts in your mind. She has been a pillar of strength and my guiding light.

Over the years, I learned so much from mom. She taught me about the importance of home, family, history and tradition. She also taught me that aging need not mean narrowing the scope of your activities and interests or a diminution of the great pleasures to be had in the everyday. She deserves all the happiness in the world for her perseverance. Till date she encourages women and girls around her to get education and become independent. She pushes and supports the maids and other women around her to complete basic education by providing financial support and also gives them off from work!

My mother taught me acceptance, tolerance, bravery and compassion. I learned from my mother that if I worked hard, I will get what I want. "God willing," these are two words that my mother often speaks. She

has a positive spirit and says "Treat everybody the way you want to be treated, and never take for granted the talent that God has given you". She believes, 'Happiness is your own responsibility.' She always tells me, 'I want you to remember that the person you are in this world is a reflection of the job I did as a mother!'"

I am the first born and girl child of my parents. My mom always tells me that her joy new no bounds when I was born. I was loved and cherished by her and my family. However, it's quite saddening that till today, families and society gets miserable at the birth of a girl child. Even after so many decades of freedom we still don't respect the women. A recent report revealed that not a single girl was born in 132 villages in Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand in the last three months! The struggle of a girl child begins even before the day she is conceived. In India, female foeticide is still rampant, as cheap abortion practices allows households to exercise their preference for sons. She is 'lucky' if she is allowed to be born! Even after birth, the girl child faces discrimination and oppression. She is not provided with proper food compared to the male siblings, her education is not given any importance and all they want is for her to stay at indoors and do household chores. Things don't change much after marriage, the trials faced by women do not end as she continues to face oppression and sometimes even violence.

Empowerment of women by education is the only way out. B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of Constitution of India has said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." A country that empowers women empowers every individual! We have to start with protecting the girl child, ensuring that her birth is greeted with joy and she receives all the care and love needed to grow to her full potential. By empowering our daughters, we empower the communities, which mean empowering the nation!

Education for all girls is a must a small step in this direction. Ensuring decent work, fair and equal wages and a safe working environment for women is the need of the hour. We have to educate our daughter to be self reliant and independent. Education will give her this power. This is what I have learnt from my mother... She truly is my inspiration and has motivated me to cherish and enjoy womanhood and love, protect, educate and inspire my daughter. Your guidance and love have enabled me to see strength and ability in all women.

To the woman who is everything I aspire to be. I love you, MOM!

Essay : Motivated from Mother

डा. चित्रा बंसल, डी.जी.ओ.

धौलपुर

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जिसने दी है जिंदगी और चलना सिखाया है,

वह मां मेरी असल में भगवान का साया है।

तेरे दिये संस्कारों ने ही मुझे आज बनाया है माँ!

जीवन में काफी कुछ अनुभव से सीखा है, सीखने की प्रक्रिया वास्तव में गर्भ से ही शुरू हो जाती है क्योंकि कुछ बातें याद ही नहीं कब और कैसे सीखीं, फिर भी कुछ बातें मेरी मां की बातों से कितनी मेल खाती हैं!

अभिमन्यु का गर्भ में ही चक्रव्यूह में प्रवेश का हुनर सीखना काल्पनिक हो सकता है पर मेरे जीवन में मां से सीखी बातें बिल्कुल भी काल्पनिक नहीं हैं! कुछ बातें जो मैंने मां से सीखीं और कुछ बातें उनके दूर किसी और को कहते सुना और मेरे कानों से होते हुए मेरे दिमाग में छप सी गई हैं।

पहली सीख -

बारह साल की उम्र में पेनिसिलिन के टेस्ट डोज़ से बेहोश होकर अस्पताल में सफेद चादर पर लेटी मैं सुन रही थी, वह कह रही थी डॉक्टर साहब आप तो भगवान हैं आपने मेरी बेटी को बचा लिया। पता नहीं लोग ठीक होने पर मंदिर, मस्जिद, चर्च या गुरुद्वारे क्यों जाते हैं? ठीक होने पर उन्हें अस्पताल में ही कुछ सुविधाओं के लिए दान करना चाहिए।

जहां उबलती हुई सिरिंजों को देखकर मेरा खून जम जाता था, वही खून मेरी रगों में तेजी से दौड़ने लगा! एक अलग तरह का परिवर्तन महसूस किया मैंने उस अस्पताल के बिस्तर पर जिसे मैं गंदा, बदबूदार और डरावना समझ रही थी, अब वह मुझे साफ-सुथरा सुसज्जित देवालय महसूस होने लगा था! डॉक्टर व नर्स जिन्हें देखकर मैं रो जाया करती थी अब दोनों हाथ जोड़ अभिवादन कर धन्यवाद दे रही थी। और यहां से शुरू हुआ मेरा डॉक्टर बनने का जुनून, जो 1985 के पीएमटी में चयन पर जाकर परवान पहुँचा।

दूसरी सीख -

पीएमटी में चयन के बाद घर पर बधाइयां देने वालों का तांता लगा हुआ था। जितने लोग उतनी तरह की बातें, पर एक सहेली से कही गई मेरी मां की बात आज भी जेहन में है। एक सहेली मम्मी से कह रही थी आपके दो बच्चे पहले ही इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज में पढ़ रहे हैं और डॉक्टरी की पढ़ाई तो बहुत खर्चीली होती है कैसे पढा पाओगे

आप? बेटी ही तो है रहने दीजिए, कल को दूसरे घर चली जाएगी, आपके किस काम की उसकी पढ़ाई ????? मम्मी का उनको दिया गया जवाब, “पढ़ाई के मामले में मेरा मानना है कि बच्चियों को अवश्य पढ़ाना चाहिए क्योंकि उनकी पढ़ाई से दो घरों की उन्नति होती है, दो घरों में ज्ञान का उजाला होता है और दो घरों में उसका उपयोग होता है। इसलिए बच्चियों को पढ़ने से कभी नहीं रोकना चाहिए। दूसरा, खर्चा तो हमें दिख रहा था, बेटी के भविष्य के लिए मैं और इंजीनियर साहब (मेरे पिता जी जो उस समय सिंचाई विभाग में इंजीनियर थे) पहले से ही तैयारी कर रहे हैं, उन्होने सिगरेट पीना और मैंने पान खाना छोड़ दिया है, पिक्चर भी कुछ कम कर दीं हैं और अगर फिर भी परेशानी हुई तो हम एक समय का भोजन छोड़ देंगे पर अपने बच्चों को पढ़ने से नहीं रोकेंगे!”

पढ़ाई भोजन से ज्यादा जरूरी है और खासकर बेटियों की। पढ़ाई के प्रति मां की सोच ने मुझे मजबूर कर दिया कि मैं रात को अपनी मां से कुछ घबराते हुए पूछ बैठी, मम्मी आप कहां तक पढ़ी हो? मम्मी थोड़ी भावुक हो गई थीं! इस प्रश्न का जवाब पापा ने दिया, बेटा वो तेरी मां है, और हर मां, एम.ए. तो होती ही है! अब किस विषय में यह मत पूछना! उसके बाद मैंने यह सवाल अपनी मां से फिर कभी नहीं पूछा!

तीसरी सीख -

चिकित्सा शिक्षा के तीसरे साल में मेरे स्कूल के साथ की सहेली की शादी का निमंत्रण पत्र प्राप्त हुआ। ग्वालियर जहां मैं पढ़ती थी उसी शहर में उसकी शादी होनी थी, ऐसा मम्मी ने मुझे फोन पर बताया था। मैंने जाने में अपनी असमर्थता जताई, कुछ बहाना बनाया पर मां में पता नहीं कोई दैवीय शक्ति तो होती ही है, वह मेरे जवाब से संतुष्ट नहीं हुई और सही वजह जानने के लिए ज़िद करने लगीं। मैंने उन्हें मन की बात बताई, कि उसने स्कूल में एक प्रैक्टिकल में मुझे सहयोग करने से मना कर दिया था, इसलिए मैं उससे नाराज हूँ। इसके जवाब में मम्मी के द्वारा कही गई बात आज भी अपने बच्चों को दोहराती हूँ। “दोस्ती और रिश्ते में किसी भी बात को गिरह अर्थात गांठ नहीं बांधते, समय के साथ उन्हें भूल जाना ही अच्छा होता है।

दोस्ती और रिश्ते काफी मेहनत से बनते हैं, छोटी-छोटी बातों से उन्हें तोड़ा नहीं जाता। “ फिर मेरा सहेली की शादी में शामिल होना और उसका चीख कर मुझे से लिपट जाना, आज तक नहीं भूलता। तब मुझे यह पंक्तियां याद आयीं-

एक यह दुनिया है जो समझाने से भी नहीं समझती,
और एक मां है जो बिन बोले सब समझ जाती है!

चौथी सीख -

कभी पापा मम्मी किसी आर्थिक परेशानी से गुजर रहे थे। एम.बी.बी.एस. के अंतिम वर्ष के इम्तहान के बाद घर पर एक रात उनकी बातें कुछ बोझिल सी लग रही थी। पापा शायद..... मुश्किल है लिखना, क्योंकि मैंने अपनी पूरी जिंदगी में उन्हें कभी भावुक होते नहीं देखा था। पापा को कुछ आर्थिक मदद चाहिए थी और उनके सभी रिश्तेदारों, जिन्हें पापा ने काफी आर्थिक सहयोग दिया था, ने मदद करने में अपनी असमर्थता जता दी थी। मम्मी का पापा को समझाना, सब इंतजाम हो जाएगा आप चिंता मत करिए, आप ने सभी रिश्तेदारों को सहयोग दिया। आपके सहयोग से उनके बच्चे पढ गए, किसी की शादी हो गई, किसी का व्यापार स्थापित हो गया। हमारे द्वारा किये उपकार का फल हमें मिल चुका है, देखिये उनके आशीर्वाद से अपने सभी बच्चे उच्च शिक्षित हो चुके हैं! आर्थिक लेनदेन पर रिश्तों को दांव पर मत लगाइए। आप कुछ करने लायक थे, तो कर दिया, वापस लेने की उम्मीद मत रखिए। क्या हमने मदद करते समय यह सोचा था कि हम उनसे कुछ मांगेंगे? नहीं ना! तो फिर अब क्यों सोचना ??

मैं दंग रह गई थी मम्मी की बातें सुनकर, इतनी परिपक्व तो मैं हो चुकी थी तब तक। इनकी जगह कोई और महिला होती तो शायद पापा के रिश्तेदारों से नाराज़ होतीं और शायद कहतीं, उनके यहां शादी में नहीं जाएंगे, उन्हें अपने घर नहीं बुलाएंगे वगैरह-वगैरह। अगले महीने से इंटर्नशिप शुरू होने वाली थी और शायद सही समय पर मुझे पैसे का मूल्य समझ आ गया था! रिश्तो की अहमियत समझ आ गई थी! अपने पर भरोसा करना आ गया था! या यूँ कहें, बिना ग्लानि और बिना अपेक्षा के मुझे जीवन जीना आ गया था!

पांचवी सीख -

चिकित्सा सेवा में बच्चों का पैदा होना और बड़ा होना सभी महिला चिकित्सकों के लिए एक रोमांचक और साथ-साथ दर्दनाक अनुभव भी है! ऐसा ही एक अनुभव मुझे महसूस कराया मेरी मां ने। मेरा क्लीनिक जो घर पर ही था और रविवार को भी चलता था। एक रविवार मैं कभी क्लीनिक कभी घर, अंदर-बाहर हो रही थी। शाम को

बच्चों को टीवी से चिपका देख डांटना शुरू कर दिया था मैंने ...बच्चे बेचारे सहमे से अपने कमरों में जाकर पढ़ने का उपक्रम सा करने लगे। बेटी 10 और बेटा 8 साल का था तब। उनके जाने के बाद मां ने मुझे अपने पास बैठाया, चाय बना कर लार्यी थीं साथ में वो। सिर्फ इतना कहा उन्होंने “छुट्टी के दिन तो बच्चों को पूरा समय दिया जाना चाहिए ना!”

जिंदगी की दौड़ में, आगे बढ़ने की होड़ में, ऐसा लगा मानो किसी ने धक्का दे दिया हो। यह बच्चे पीछे छूटे जा रहे थे, और हम कहां भागे जा रहे थे!

एक माँ से एक मां ने समझा, मां का दायित्व! मां और चिकित्सक दोनों व्यक्तित्व अलग-अलग थे, दोनों में ही आवश्यकता थी, दया की, करुणा की, ममता की और वात्सल्य की। दोनों में सामंजस्य भी जरूरी था, जो बिगड़ रहा था, और बच्चों के भविष्य पर असर डाल रहा था। उसी क्षण मैंने निर्णय लिया रविवार को पूर्ण अवकाश का, और फिर यह प्रथा ऐसी चली कि जब मेरे बच्चे हाई स्कूल और कोचिंग के लिए जयपुर भेजे जाने वाले थे, उनका कोचिंग और पी.जी. सब निश्चित हो गए थे मैंने एक और कड़ा निर्णय लिया उनके साथ जयपुर जाकर रहने का। थोड़ा विरोध हुआ, अस्पताल कैसे चलेगा? घर कैसे चलेगा? पर मां की दी गई सीख शायद मेरे अंदर की मां पर हावी थी और चिकित्सक को हार माननी पड़ी। वह 3 वर्ष जो मैंने मेरे बच्चों के साथ जयपुर में गुजारे वह शायद मेरी जिंदगी के सबसे खुशनुमा दिन थे, बच्चों के परिपेक्ष में। बच्चों के साथ बैठकर खाना, स्कूल और कोचिंग के मजेदार किस्से सुनना, लग रहा था अपना बचपन वापस आ गया है।

एक चिकित्सक होने के नाते यह बात अब मैं दावे के साथ कह सकती हूँ कि हम अपने प्रोफेशन को अपने ऊपर इतना हावी कर लेते हैं, कि फिर उसमें परिवार तो क्या हमारा खुद का चैन, सुकून और स्वास्थ्य सब कुछ कहीं खो जाता है। और मज़ेदार बात यह कि हमें पता भी नहीं चलता।

मैं एक डायबिटिक पेशेंट हूँ और पिछले पंद्रह सालो से इंसुलिन पर हूँ, लेकिन अपने जयपुर प्रवास पर जहां मैं खुला आसमान देख पाती थी, बच्चों के साथ ठहाके लगाती थी, रोज कुछ नया खाने को बनाती थी और मेरी बोरियत की साथी थीं, कुछ किताबें और उपन्यास! उन 3 वर्षों में मेरा इंसुलिन कम हो रहा था, और मेरा अपने प्रति प्यार बढ़ रहा था! मेरा बच्चों के भविष्य के प्रति डर कम हो रहा था, और जिंदगी के प्रति विश्वास बढ़ रहा था! बच्चों की भी पढ़ाई से बोरियत कम हो रही थी, और आत्मविश्वास बढ़ रहा था! और क्या चाहिए था मुझे! मां की दी छोटी सी सीख कि 'छुट्टी के दिन तो बच्चों को पूरा समय दिया जाना चाहिए ना!' ने काफी सकारात्मक असर दिखाया था, तभी तो मुझे यह कहना बहुत पसंद है

तेरे दिए संस्कारों ने ही मुझे आज बनाया मां!

THE EXCHANGE OFFER

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I have been pondering on whether my story should be named “exchange offer” or “change offer”, but it indeed has nurtured a rare friendship that has survived the test of time and social scrutiny, a junk of taboos that most of us cannot grow out of!

The seed of this story was sowed in my childhood. As eldest of three daughters, in a lower middle class conservative family, one would imagine, I had a life that had not much to boast of. But it wasn't that way at all. I have not tried to find out from my parents whether they would not have chosen to have a third child if one of the first two borne was a son, but I strongly believe that they loved to have children around, so they would have had three kids irrespective of their gender. We had just about enough, two sets of clothes every year during Dusshera, enough to eat and as many books to read as was needed. What was distinctly different was my parents' snobbish reluctance to believe we sisters were any less than sons. So, talking of the seventies, when daughters were to be taught the art and science of being a good wife as a principle talent, my dad preferred to take us fishing instead. I remember holding the fishing rod for hours together hoping a fish would take the bait; the moment we moved and shuffled out of boredom, dad would put out a hushed scream, “ohh no! the fish was just there, you guys have scared it away.’ It was only later that we learnt, he was giving us classes on patience. We were, me more than the other two sisters, allowed to play kancha and gillidanda (few sports that are identified with the male gender) with the boys, climb trees, taught not to fear snakes, fight out our own battles with bullish guys and every other male activity on the cards. All this was not very alright with many neighbours and caring relatives. I still remember my aunt reprimanding my mother for buying a ‘not so cheap’ saree for Durga Pooja. She was told sternly, you have produced three daughters, you must be sensible enough to save for their marriage and avoid wasteful expenditure. My mother wept silently, but in the evening she had us sit by her side as she cooked on the chullah (the traditional mud oven) and hit us with greater vengeance when we failed to deliver. We hated it then. But now as all three of us lead professionally

successful lives, my heart can never thank them enough. And we, on our part, at least make an earnest effort to be good children (read sons), thanks to our understanding and supportive spouses.

The story moves to several years later. Now I have an elder daughter whom I named Drishti, meaning ‘vision’; she will grow up to be my eyes to this unexplored world. And have just been out of my second caesarean section and home with my daughter, Noyonika. God, I guess, listens to your heart. While undergoing a second trimester scan in my second pregnancy, I noticed the sex of the baby. The sonologist was terribly sorry, he offered to help me get it terminated without anyone getting to know about it. But I could not have been so partisan, I named her Noyonika, ‘the star of my eyes’ while still in the womb. God was kind enough, for when she was born, the first thing I saw was that her eyes were probably much bigger and beautiful than the usual neonatal eyes and I knew, she will be the star of my eyes!

As tradition goes, I soon had Hizrās(only my heart knows how much I hate calling them by that name) at my doorstep to bless the newborn. Since they had been coming every Holi and Deepawali to collect gifts, they knew I already had a daughter.

So they came in clapping,

“Sister, doodho nahao, puto falo. (Dear, may you flourish to bathe in milk and borne sons) I am sure you have a son this time!”

“No, not really, I have a beautiful daughter, Noyonika, the star of my eyes.”

“Ohhhhhh” The sigh seemed to last longer than normal.

“Okay, we are sorry, you will have a son next time. Just give us rupees 300, that's it. That's for shagun(goodluck), else we don't trouble anyone.”

“But why are you sorry! I am so happy to have her. And by the way, I don't intend to reproduce further.”

“Oh no, don't do that. One needs someone to take forward the family name and be taken care of in old age. We will bless you with open hearts, you surely will

have a son next time, our blessings don't go in vain" the tone was almost obliging.

"In which case, tell me how much would you take for a son?"

"Ohh, we will not take anything less than a thousand!" their eyes sparkled.

"Well then, I will give you a thousand bucks today. All you have to do is sing and dance and bless my child like you would do for a son."

For a few seconds there was silence, they probably could not comprehend what I was speaking. And then suddenly, Gulabo, as I later learned was the name of their leader burst out into a happy dance with loud singing with the dholak. It was something they probably wished would happen but not had an opportunity to celebrate. The neighbours now started to peep out, a bit confused, why I was so happy to have a second daughter!

I did not have any sweets at home, so I offered them the laddoos made after delivery along with water. When Gulabo was finally done with all the blessings she could shower, she sat down and heaved a sigh of relief.

"I wish I get to do it more often, sister"

"Oh, you surely will. You can see times are changing. Sooner than not people will realise, not that girls or boys are better, but that, it is what we teach them and how we bring them up is what makes the difference."

Gulabo could not hold back from hugging me and blessing me. A bond was established that very moment which was beyond our gender and class.

Every year to this day, Holi and Deepawali, Gulabo visits me, even though I have now prospered to own my dream house in a different locality. And she makes sure to sing and dance. We always sit down to share some heart talk over sweets and water.

One time, Gulabo, who made sure to visit me on Sundays, lest I am away for work, was disappointed to find out I was away attending a call. But Noyonika ran out, offered her a glass of water. Gulabo offered to come back again for the bakhshish (gift) but Noyonika made a false claim, "No need, mom has left behind your bakhshish." She handed over her savings of fifteen hundred rupees to her. Later, when I asked her why she did so, her answer was simple. Mom, it's you who told me, she was the happiest on my birth and her blessings do not go in vain. That people do not regard them with much respect and it is absolutely wrong to do so and to let them down. I was happy, I could teach the right morals to my child, my daughter. No, I hate people saying "your daughter is no less than a son."

My daughter is a daughter, why compare her with

something that neither I nor they want to be!

Gulabo continued her retinue even after my kids were gone to other places. The first question from her remains constant though,

"Bitiya log kahan hain re? Woh kya kar rahe hain?" (Where are the daughters? What are they doing?)

Every time I tell her about how beautiful, bold and brilliant my kids have grown up to be, her eyes lit up with satisfaction that her blessings have not gone to waste. When I shared a picture of ours on facebook, she was a surprised.

"Won't you feel bad sharing our picture on facebook? People do not look upon us with much respect, you see."

"Not really, people do not know my children are blooming and some share is yours too."

"Well, then let me tell you something" Gulabo almost was as calm as the sea.

"You know, doctor madam, since the day I celebrated the birth of your daughter, I may have said aloud, doodho nahao, puto falo, but in my heart I have always wished and prayed that may the child, boy or girl, grow up to its full potential with the best of health and good education. And I am happy these days many people are celebrating the birth of their children without bothering for the gender of the baby. But I sometimes feel very sad when people go on reproducing for the sake of a child of a particular sex. You see madam, I have no sex, so people take it otherwise if I try to counsel them about gender discrimination. They tell me, I cannot understand the meaning of such matters. What to do, you see."

"But Gulabo, that should not deter you from speaking what is right. After all, you know your blessings do not go in vain!"

"You are right Didi, I will keep telling people, gender doesn't matter, what we make out of the child is only what matters."

"And Gulabo, trust me there are many people out there who will be too willing to listen to you. Just start to tell them, beyond celebrating the birth of their sons, they have a bigger duty to perform. They must tell their sons that they are just about the same as the daughters. They must look upon all children as equal. Gulabo, do you realise, your saying so can save some daughter from sexual exploitation, domestic violence or simply make them a happier and educated lot. Your responsibility is way beyond dancing and blessing, it is curing our society of an evil that should have long been dead!"

I strongly believe, Gulabos' earnest efforts, blessings and prayers have made beautiful lives out of many newborns and many such Gulabos will keep blessing our daughters and gender discrimination will soon be a matter of the past.

यह युद्ध सिर्फ तुम्हारा है

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परिवार और समाज ये दो शब्द किसी भी मनुष्य विशेषतः स्त्री की संरचना को सबसे अधिक प्रभावित करते हैं। उसका नब्बे प्रतिशत शारीरिक, मानसिक निर्माण परिस्थितियों और परिवेश से ही गठित होता है।

“ये कर लो, ये न करो” इसमें परिवार का हित है।

“यहाँ जाओ यहाँ न जाओ” समाज क्या कहेगा?

करने और न करने, होने न होने के इस द्वन्द में एक लड़की कब स्त्री बन जाती है, उसे अभास ही नहीं होता।

इच्छाएं, अनइच्छाएं हो जाती हैं और त्याग, समझ।

कहाँ टोपी लगाकर पुल बनाओगी?

अरे कोर्ट—कचहरी करना शोभा नहीं देता लड़कियों को!

टॉपर हो। वैसे भी हमारे घर में कोई डॉक्टर नहीं है। ये शब्द प्रायः सुनने को मिलते। और सत्य स्वीकार करू तो आज कुछ गलत भी नहीं लगता। बचपन में देखी हुई पिताजी की सख्ती और माँ की फटकार, कड़वी दवाई जैसी थी। बीस वर्ष पूर्व केबिल टीवी, स्मार्ट फोन, सोशल मीडिया, से विरक्त जीवन जहाँ सोच को संकुचित करता था, वहीं स्वप्नो के पर भी काट देता था। एक कूप मंडूक की भान्ति हम एक स्वनिर्मित दुनिया देखते। किन्तु कोई दुःख नहीं, न ही कोई कूटा।

बीस वर्षों के संघर्षों से उपरान्त प्राप्त आज का यह दिन ही मेरे लिए सबसे सुनहरा है। संघर्ष के दिनों की स्मृतियां अमिट होती हैं। उनसे मिलने वाली सीख जीवन पर्यन्त के लिए उर्जा का स्रोत बन जाती है। मेडिकल की दुनिया में प्रवेश मेरे लिए एक उपलब्धि कम और उद्गार, अधिक था। समाज में परिवार की प्रतिष्ठा बनाये रखने के लिए किया गया एक उद्गार। पिता जी सरकारी महकमे में बड़े अफसर थे। परिवार में सदस्य भी कम न थे, तीन भाईयों के बीच मैं अकेली थी। इसको सौभाग्य भी मान सकते हैं, और दुर्भाग्य भी। सौभाग्य सीमित था। खान—पान में तुलना अथवा भेदभाव नहीं झेलना पड़ा, उसमें प्राथमिकता मिलती। दुर्भाग्य अनगिनत थे। आवश्यकता से अधिक संरक्षण और सुरक्षा मनुष्य के जीवन में सबसे बड़ी बाधा होती है। कुछ इस संरक्षण को प्रेम की अभिव्यक्ति भी मान सकते हैं किन्तु “अति” हानिकारक ही होती है।

प्रत्येक वर्ष गर्मी की छुट्टियों में गाँव में तपने का आनन्द ही कुछ और था। किन्तु, वहाँ महिलाओं की स्थिति पर चर्चा करें तो दुःख ही होता। कोल्हू के बैल की तरह दिन रात चलना ही उसके लिए नियत था। वह जन्म से ही सेवक थी, पिता की, भाई, की पुत्र की, सदैव से सदा तक सेवक। कोई शिकायत भी नहीं थीं उन्हें जो देखा नहीं, सुना नहीं, उसकी कल्पना कैसी? और इच्छा का तो प्रश्न ही नहीं!। व्यवस्था चाहे शिक्षा की हो, स्वास्थ्य की, यहाँ तक शौच की, महिलाओं के लिए न कारण थे, न ही साधन न किसी के पास समय।

किन्तु बचपन से मुझे गाँव में बहुत स्नेह मिला। प्यार से सब “गुड़िया” बुलाते। आस—पास यह बताकर कि गुड़िया अंग्रेजी मिडियम में पढ़ती है, गर्व करते। कुछ एक/आद तो भीड़ में अरे बिटिया बोलो तो “अंग्रेजी में”। मेरी उलट—पलट अंग्रेजी भी सब सुनकर हतप्रभ हो जाते। “देखा कितना फर्कटदार बोलती है” भाभियां गाँव की औरतों से कहती, और मैं स्वयं को

तुर्मुख: समझने लगती, किन्तु एक बात कष्ट देती। पूरा गाँव जाति प्रथा में जकड़ा हुआ प्रतीत होता। छूआ—छूत देखकर बहुत ग्लानी होती। एक उच्च ब्राह्मण परिवार में होने के नाते आपको नित अपनी शीर्षता का बोध कराया जाता।

“चाची शहर में तो सब जात एक साथ रहते होंगे?, अनायास ही एक दिन मेरी भाभी ने माँ से पूछा।

गाँव में रहने वाली मेरी भाभियां मेरे लिए किसी वीरागंगा से कम नहीं थीं। शक्ति प्रदर्शन के लिए एक नारी विदूशी हो, कामकाजी हो आवश्यक नहीं होता। विपरीत परिस्थियों में भी जो सशक्त हो ऐसी नारियों का वह मजबूत उदाहरण थी। सामाजिक कुरितियों के अनुसार उन्होंने स्वयं को ढाल अवश्य लिया था, किन्तु मानवता और आत्मीयता से पूर्णतः परिपूर्ण थी। मेरी माँ को यह प्रश्न अटपटा न लगा। जात/कुल की बातें गाँव में अमूमन ही की जाती थीं।

“हाँ लल्ली सब साथ ही रहते हैं कोई चारा भी नहीं है,” माँ ने उत्तर दिया।

“अरे चाची। हमारे यहाँ जो कहारन है, ललिता,” उसका आदमी खत्म हो गया, पिछले जेट में हैजा से। पाँच साल की छोटी लड़की है, सोचते हैं आप शहर में रख ले। सरकारी घर है आपका, कहीं कोने में पड़ी रहेगी, घर के कामों में हाथ भी बटा देगी, बड़ी दुखियारी है बेचारी।

माँ के तो मन की बात जैसे किसी ने परख ली हो। गटिया के चलते उनसे अब ज्यादा काम नहीं होता था। पिताजी ने भी हामी भर दी। ललिता बुआ हमारे साथ रहने लगी। माँ को भी मदद मिल जाती। गाँव—वालों ने पिताजी को उकसाने के बहुत प्रयास किये, किन्तु वे एक सख्त अफसर थे। छूआ छूत को वे भी गलत मानते थे।

माँ, छुटकी (ललिता बुआ की बिटिया) छः वर्ष की है, पढ़ेगी नहीं? मैंने माँ से पूछा

“अरे बिट्टी हमारे यहाँ कौन पढ़ाई करके कलेक्टर बन जावेगी। रहने दो दीदी” चौका बर्तन ही ठीक है इसके लिए, ललिता बुआ बोल पड़ी।

मैंने माँ को समझाने का बहुत प्रयास किया। उनके भी अपने तर्क थे,

वे बोली “अरे गुड़िया, ससुराल वालों ने अभी इसे कोसना नहीं छोड़ा कहते हैं, बेटे को खा गई अब शहर जाकर क्या बेटे को अंग्रेज बनाएगी ?

समाज के नाम पर उपजी बंदिशे प्रत्यक्ष हों या अप्रत्यक्ष, समाज के पतन का सबसे बड़ा कारण बनती हैं। विजय इस बार भी हमारी हुई, सारे विरोधी के बीच, पिताजी के सहयोग से छुटकी का दाखिला सरकारी स्कूल में हो गया। बहुत होनहार तो न थी छुटकी, किन्तु आत्मविश्वास देखते बनता था। ज्यों—ज्यों कक्षा बढ़ती गई, उसका व्यक्तित्व उभरने लगा।

इस वर्ष मेरी गाईनी रेजिडेंसी का मेरा वह अंतिम वर्ष था। परीक्षा समीप

थी। पिताजी का रिटायरमेंट भी होना था। पूरा गाँव आश्वस्त था कि गुड़िया पढ़ाई उपरान्त गाँव में अस्पताल खोलेगी और हम वहाँ के मालिक कहलाएंगे। मेडिकल के संघर्षों से अनभिग्य वे स्वप्न देखा करते थे। छुटकी का भी इस वर्ष इंटर था। उस दिन आखिरी वार्डवा का मुझसे अधिक इम्तहान की माँ को चिन्ता रहती थी। दो माह हास्टल में रहने के उपरान्त आज घर जाने का विचार मात्र मन में उल्लास भर देता। माँ भी राह देखती होगी। पिताजी कहेगे नहीं उनका मौन आशिर्वाद ही काफी था।

घर पहुँची तो देखा माँ भीतर नहीं थी, पिताजी ने बताया ललिता बुआ के ससुराल पक्ष से कोई आए है मां वही बैठी है। मैने भी अधिक ध्यान नहीं दिया। सोचा माँ चिन्तित लगी। कमरे में पहुँची तो देखा सब शान्त बैठे थे। ललिता बुआ के मुख पर शून्य के भाव थे।

वहाँ पहुँचते ही ललिता बुआ की सास मुझे पकड़ कर बोली अरे “गुड़िया बहुत खुशखबरी है, छुटकी के लिए बहुत अच्छा रिश्ता आया। लड़के की सरकारी नौकरी है रेलवे में, “तो क्या हुआ थोड़ी उम्र ज्यादा है”, रानी बनकर रहेगी।

मैं स्तब्ध वहीं खड़ी रही। माँ अवाक् मुझे देखने लगी, जैसे कह रही हो “बिटिया ये न समझेंगे” ललिता असमंजस में पड़ गई, प्रतीत होता सोचकर भी सोच नहीं पा रही थी, गलत जानकर भी किसी मायाजाल में गिर रही थी। कंठ सूख गया और कुछ न बोल पाई। छुटकी को तो कोई सुध ही न थी।

उसका क्या दोश ? सत्ररह वर्ष की उम्र में लड़की उनके लिए भेड़ ही थी, जहाँ ढेल दो, जहाँ चरा दो।

“तो फिर पक्का समझे” उसके बाद सास ने चुप्पी तोड़ते हुए बोला ललिता बुआ दबे शब्दों में बोली दीदी से पूछ लेते।

अरे दीदी (मेरी माँ) तो तुम्हारी सबसे बड़ी शुभचिंतक है। “छटकी उनकी बिटिया जैसी है,” जो बन पड़ेगा मदद भी करेगी।

ललिता बुआ की सास के ऊँचे स्वर और कर्कश ध्वनि के आगे सबने घुटने टेक दिए। आनन-फानन में मुहूर्त निकला ब्याह हुआ। पिताजी ने भी मुखर होकर विरोध नहीं किया। गाँव वालों के सख्त निर्देश थे, कि पारिवारिक विशय में बिलकुल न पड़ें।

समय किसके लिए रुका है ? सब भूल कर मैं भी नौकरी की खोज में व्यस्त हो गई। भाई-पिताजी किसी के पास समय न था, किन्तु माँ सोचा करती थी ललिता बुआ भी बिदाई बाद गाँव में ही रुक गई। कुशल मंगल की खबर नहीं मिली तो लगा सब ठीक ही होगा।

इसी उधेड़-बुन में मैने भी खैराबाद सीतापुर के मिशिनरी अस्पताल में कार्य करना शुरू कर दिया था। माँ की चिन्ता को अब नया विशय मिल गया था। शहर से दूर क्वार्टर में मैं कैसे रही होगी यह चिन्ता उन्हे खाए जाती। 400-500 कि०मी० तक कोई अस्पताल न था। प्रत्येक दिन ऐसे बेंमे से सामना होता। स्त्री सही अर्थों में एक उपभोग की वस्तु उसका ज्वलन्त उदाहरण प्रतिदिन देखने को मिलता मन सिहर उठता और हृदय कराहने लगता।

दो दिन से कार्य हल्का था। दिन की झूटी करने वाली सिस्टर जा चुकी थी। सहसा वार्ड बॉय मेरी तरफ दौड़ कर आया।

“मैडम हॉ रामू सांस ले लो”

“अरे एक लड़की बिलकुल खून में लथपथ आई है। घर वाले गेट पर छोड़कर भाग गए हैं”। रामू बोला

हमारे लिए कुछ नया न था। घबराओ नहीं, मैं स्वयं आती हूँ गेट पर” मैने उसे आश्वस्त किया। एक लड़की स्ट्रेचर पर निश्चेत पड़ी थी। उसके उपरान्त जो देखा वह दृश्य मेरी कल्पना के परे था। वह लड़की और कोई नहीं अपितु छुटकी थी मुझे तो मानो कांठ मार गया था। उसकी न नाड़ी मिल रही न रक्त चाप। शरीर ठंडा पड़ने लगा था। मेरे जीवन की अब तक यह सबसे कठिन घड़ी थी। केस **Septic Abortion** का था चार-पांच बोटल रक्त की तुरन्त आवश्यकता थी।

मैडम कोई नहीं है इसके साथ सिस्टर ने आते ही कहा।

“सिस्टर बहन है मेरी बस अब आगे काई प्रश्न नहीं मैने उत्तर दिया इस वाक्य के बाद किसी ने कुछ न पूछा, सब युद्ध स्तर पर लग गए। अस्पताल प्रशासन ने भी बिल आदि को लेकर कोई पूछ ताछ नहीं करी। रात हम सब उसके साथ ICU में रहे। पेशाब आने लगा था और रक्त चढ़ने के बाद नाड़ मिलने लगी थी। कुर्सी पर बैठे-बैठे नींद लग गई थी फिर सिस्टर ने उठाकर बताया मैडम छुटकी को होश आ गया है। उसके साथ क्या, कैसे हुआ होगा यह सोचने का समय मेरे पास नहीं था।

माँ का फोन आ रहा था पूरी घटना सुनकर माँ भी सकते में थी। ललिता भी उसके साथ नहीं थी क्या ? माँ को विश्वास नहीं हो रहा था।

खुशी इस बात की थी कि छुटकी बच गई थी। वह धीरे-धीरे ठीक हो रही थी। किन्तु सारे घाव शारीरिक नहीं होते। मानसिक घावों की पीड़ा मनुश्य को जीने नहीं देती। बस जब पास जाओ तो हाथ पकड़कर रोने लगती।

एक महीना हो चला था। छुटकी समय के साथ सामान्य होती दिख रही थी। बोलती कम थी किन्तु अन्य कार्यों में स्वयं को व्यस्त रखती। यह स्थिति कैसे हुई यह कुरेदने का प्रयास मैने कभी नहीं किया। क्वार्टर में अब मुझे उसके साथ अच्छा लगता था। एक दिन मेरी किताबें उलटते पलटते हुए बोली “दीदी हमारा इंटर आधूरा रह गया है। करवा दो” अम्मा को भी जब से फालिस पडी है कुछ कर नहीं पाती।

उसके शब्दों ने रात भर मुझे सोने नहीं दिया। आशा भरी उसकी वह दृष्टि व्यथित कर देती। यह शब्द सुनकर माँ ने कहा” बेटा तुम्हें देखना है क्या करोगी? कैसे करोगी? तुम्हारा भी अपना जीवन है।

यह बात समझ लो “यह युद्ध सिर्फ तुम्हारा है” कह कर उन्होंने फोन काट दिया।

माँ के शब्द कान में गूँजते रहें। अब छुटकी का मन पढ़ाई में खूब लग रहा था पढ़ाई के साथ-साथ मेरे लिए खाना भी बना देती थी। बायोर्लॉजी से इंटर का प्रइवेट फार्म भरवा दिया था।

दस वर्ष हो गए इस घटना को पर लगता है मानो कल की बात हो। इस बार दीपावली पर घर आई तो माँ बोली “गुड़िया”

अरे माँ बच्चों के सामने अब न बोला करो,

“तू हमेशा मेरी गुड़िया रहेगी” वह बोली अच्छा तो माँ इस गुड़िया को कुछ तुम्हे बताना है ये पढ़ो कागज देते हुए मैं बोली।

वह पढ़ने लगी

डा हेमलता सिंह, (BHMS) लेक्चरर आयूश मेडिकल कॉलेज, फैजाबाद कौन हमारी छुटकी, अरे हां यही नाम तो था उसका।

माँ की आँखे भर आई और मुझसे लिपट गई।

मैने कहा “यह युद्ध हम सबका था” और हम सब योद्धा हैं।

माँ मुस्कुरा दी।

ESSAY: MY MOTHER MOTIVATED ME...

AUTHOR:

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**“She acts patiently; she is helpful and strong;
She earns through love, the more endearing name,
And I find WOMANHOOD, just the same.”**

Motherhood is a million little moments that God weaves together with grace, redemption, laughter, tears and most of all, LOVE. It is no co-incidence that a child gravitates towards the mother, the strongest and the most special bond with her child for she not only brings a child into this world, she is also a complete institution per se. From raising a child to inculcating morals and values into them, to playing a crucial role in their future development; a mother makes a tremendous contribution in her child’s life. Therefore, it is well said that the women rule the world – sometimes by themselves, other times through the children they brilliantly brought up.

I have always believed that life is something to be a river that constantly flows, never stops or slows. It has those straight, normal and peaceful times, but it has rough times with twists and turns too. The one that face the experiences with the bright hearts and their heads held high are those that inspire me every single day to keep me going. Among them, my mother leads the list. **My mother is the IRON in my belly.** I will never reach her gargantuan status, but her example fuels me every day.

It seems to me that my mother is the most splendid woman I ever knew... I have met a lot of people knocking around the world since, but I have never met a more thoroughly refined woman than my mother. If I have amounted to anything, it will be due to her.

“Behind all your stories is always your mother’s story,

Because hers is where yours begins.”

I am just amazed at her devotion to me and my family...! From dawn till late night she is an epitome of selfless love, care and devotion to her family. She is the

one who always knows what I am thinking before I could ever say it. My mother is actually an ordinary woman but in her tiny appearance shines an extraordinary fortitude, perseverance, an altruistic soul and is very kind hearted. She always knows what to say or when not to say anything and to let me try and do things myself. Her influences affect the way I live.

I always recall as a child when I fell during a track meet and still came in 3rd place. My mother said, “Even with a bloody knee and pain, you never gave up and I will always be proud of you for that.” Her words gave me that drive to never give up and work hard in everything I do. My mother has a great sense of humor and a knack for making everything fun. Most noteworthy, it is very true that **when your mother asks, ‘Do you want a piece of advice?’ It is a mere formality. It doesn’t matter if you answer yes or no. You’re going to get it anyway...!!!**

One thing that resonated with me was how much she seemed to enjoy her own company and found ways to entertain herself. As a kid, I remembered her giggling while paying bills. What was so funny about bill paying? She would put humorous notes in the reference section of the check: For the electric bill, she might put “You light up my life.” Just like that, without her my life would certainly be dark and gloomy. As William Ross Wallace has truly said,

“For the hand that rocks the cradle;

Is the hand that rules the world.”

It illustrates the influence a mother plays to her child and in the long run to the society; that as a mother strives to nurture and teach a child, she explicitly makes the world a much better place. My mother has placed me in the center of my own

universe. She used to tell me I am the smartest, the best at anything I do. There was a time when she proved to me that this is the time I need to keep going forward and not giving up when I was in class 10th and she met with an accident. She underwent major surgery. Throughout the year, I have witnessed my mother endure many hardships and overcome many life changing obstacles. That whole accident was pretty enough to easily discourage me with little faith. I was quiet worried about her health and mental status. It had a gross negative impact on my study that I lost my confidence and didn't able to concentrate in anything.

After countless visits to multiple doctors and long hours of research, my mother developed a strong sense of faith. It was around this time that I began to realize that my mother was so much more than 'just' my mom — she was an extraordinarily strong, smart, tenacious person who wanted nothing more than to be with her family and friends. At the same time, her never-ending stream of hyperbolic compliments gave me confidence. As the time passed, I encountered more intelligent and her words acted as a bulwark. They led me to succeed in school, in work, in life, at least as far as my abilities could take me and become the most accomplished person I possibly could have.

“A woman is the full circle;

Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.”

A mother is a gem in everyone's life. There is no doubt that the impressions made on the receptive nature of a child in his early years are not easily forgotten and have a great deal to do with fixing his character and opinions for the rest of his days. Naturally it is the mother who has the greatest influence on the child. During my childhood, I have always seen DOCTORS as the MAGICAL HUMAN BEINGS who were to be held with high respect. To me, they were super heroes. Therefore, it was one of my biggest ambitions to become a DOCTOR. Today, I am one of the rising Gynecologists in my city. I can firmly say that I would not be the person I am today without her unconditional efforts. She believed in me during my hard times and supported me by tirelessly showing

up in a MALE-dominated world so that I could have a great career. The gleam in her eyes seeing my post graduation degree on the convocation day was worth anything. For that, I always admire her contribution to form a strong nucleus in my study.

**“Life doesn't come with manual,
It comes with a mother.”**

There is nothing that can come close to the love that a mother feels for her children. Women are inherently good mothers. Till birth women carry their young and then continue their love & affection throughout their childhood and even into adulthood. In fact, most people do not understand unless they become a mother themselves. Today, when I am on the way towards the motherhood journey, I remember my mother's words: “you have nine months preparing to fall in love for a lifetime because being a mother is learning about strengths you didn't know you had and dealing with fears you never knew existed...” I must say that motherhood involves plenty of frustration and tedium. With every new milestone — every first step, first food, and first flight — comes a societal expectation that you need more stuff to parent properly. Despite, I can strongly affirm that motherhood is the purest form of human existence...!!

This is all thanks to the strongest person in the world, my mother “BHAVNA”. At a time of sorrow, she grew wiser. During a time where we all felt weak, she grew stronger. At a time of defeat, she grew victorious. Such strength and faith still leaves me speechless. My mother has always taught me to be my own source of strength. All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my dearest mother. My mother is my hero. I can imagine NO HEROISM greater than her MOTHERHOOD. Thus, dedicating these few lines, I would like her to be crowned as the “person of most impact” in my life:

**For all the times that I forgot to “thank-you”,
For all the special, little things you do,
For all the words that sometimes go unspoken,
I need to say, “I love you, mom...” I do.**

मेरी माँ मेरी प्रेरणा

डॉ. राजश्री दीपक गोहदकर



“ हर सवाल का हल तुझसे ही तो पाऊं ।
हर कठिनाई से बचके गुजर जाऊं ।
प्रभु का प्रतिबिंब तुझमे मां मुझको दिखा है ।
माँ के लिए क्या लिखूँ
“माँ” ने खुद मुझे लिखा है ।”

निःसंदेह ! ईश्वर और प्रकृति का अनुपम उपहार है- माँ । प्रकृति की अनमोल रचना में अथाह प्रेम का सागर है- माँ धूप का साया और कंटको के बीच पथ प्रदर्शक है -माँ प्रत्येक मनुष्य के कष्टों में उसकी पीड़ा में उसके दुख में उसकी वाणी से स्वयं स्फूर्त होकर निकलने वाली आह है- माँ ऐसे अदभुत प्रेरणादाई व्यक्तित्व का रेखांकन करना दुष्कर प्रतीत होता है । इसीलिए लेखनी से फूटा 'माँ के लिए क्या लिखूँ ? माँ ने खुद मुझे लिखा है ।'

प्रेरणादाई माँ ऐतिहासिक झरोखे से-

भारत का इतिहास साक्षी है कि इस देश की माताएँ, ऐसे सपूतों, ऐसे वीरांगनाओं की प्रेरणा बनी है; जिन्होंने समय-समय पर इतिहास रच डाला । हिंदवी साम्राज्य की स्थापना कर, भगवा फहराने वाले वीर शिवाजी को छत्रपति बनाने वाली उनकी माँ जीजाबाई थी । वीरांगना लक्ष्मीबाई ने अपने पुत्र को पीठ पर लादकर अंग्रेजों से युद्ध किया और मातृ वीरता का अध्याय लिख डाला; वहीं अहिल्याबाई होल्कर, राजमाता सिंधिया ने अपनी प्रजा पर ममत्व की अजस्र धारा प्रवाहित की । एक नहीं कई सारे उदाहरण प्रेरणादायी माँ के इतिहास में यत्न -तल दिखाई देते हैं ।

आधुनिक प्रेरणादायी माँ के उदाहरण स्वरूप में भारत को विश्व पटल पर निशानेबाजी में रजत पदक दिलवाने "शैफाली" को सहज ही अपने मानस में प्रतिष्ठा देती हूँ । शैफाली को उनकी प्रकाशो और चंद्रो दोनों

दादियों ने अपनी संपूर्ण शक्ति लगाकर इतना पारंगत किया कि उन्होंने निशानेबाजी में सिर्फ रजत पदक प्राप्त किया वरन सामाजिक स्तर पर उन्हें इतनी मान्यताएं मिली कि " सांड की आँख " जैसे चित्रपट ने धूम मचा दी; जो शैफाली के जीवन की सत्य घटना पर आधारित थी ।

मेरी माँ - मेरी प्रेरणा

मेरी माँ - मेरी प्रेरणा है- इस विषय पर अब अपनी बात लिखने से पहले बता दूँ कि मैं अपने माता-पिता की तीसरी और अंतिम संतान हूँ । मेरी दोनों बहने मेरे से क्रमश 5 एवं 3 साल बड़ी हैं । सोचिए! उस समय की परिस्थितियों को; जब तीसरी बार मेरे माँ के आंचल में मैं आई संभवतः सामाजिक परिवेश में, परिवार जनों के मन में कहीं कोई आस तो होगी ही -दो बेटियों के बाद "कुलभूषण की....." परंतु मेरी माँ ने उसी मातृत्व से मुझे अपनी बाहों में समेटा और फिर मुझे अमृत - पान का आनंद दिया ओर उसी समय माँ ने निश्चित किया तीनों बेटियों को पढ़ा लिखा कर दुनिया के सामने उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करूंगी एक अति मध्यमवर्गीय परिवार के परिवेश में रहकर स्कूल में पढ़ाने वाली अध्यापिका, मेरी माँ ने हम तीनों बहनों को डॉक्टर बनाया । यही से मेरी माँ मेरी प्रेरणा बनी । आज पीछे मुड़कर देखती हूँ तो मेरी इस प्रेरणा के अपने परिवार, अपनी बेटियों को तराश कर उन्हें स्वावलंबी बनाने के कष्ट एक चलचित्र की तरह घूमते दिखाई देते हैं ।

यूँ भी हमारे भारतीय समाज में पुरुष का प्राधान्य है और हमारी सामाजिक एवं पारिवारिक संरचना पितृ सत्तात्मक है । परंतु सामाजिक मूल्यों के साथ नैतिकता और पारिवारिक दायित्वों के निर्वहन का पाठ प्रत्येक स्त्री को उसकी माता से ही मिलता है । अगर ऐसा ना हो तो विदेशों की भांति हमारे परिवार भी टूटते दिखाई देंगे । संस्कारों की, सहनशक्ति की, जो टोकरी माँ अपने बच्चों को देती है उसी के मेवे से परिवार की चासनी मिठास बनकर समाज और देश में खुशहाली लाती है । मेरी प्रेरणा मेरी माँ ने हम तीनों बहनों को जहां पूर्ण स्वतंत्रता दी थी वह थी माल अपने अध्ययन के विषय चुनने की, जीवनसाथी चुनने की, वही बाल्यावस्था से ही खेलने- कूदने के साथ नियम बद्धता से दिनचर्या पालन का पाठ भी जन्म घुट्टी में ही पिलाया ।

संभवतः यह भी एक अपरोक्ष प्रेरणा ही थी कि उस घुटी के प्रभाव से मैं आज अपने कार्यक्षेत्र और पारिवारिक दायित्व दोनों को ही समभाव नियम पूर्वक निभा रही हूँ।

मैं स्वयं आज एक सफल स्त्री रोग विशेषज्ञ हूँ। मेरे लिए निःसंतानता के क्षेत्र में विशेष परीक्षण की बात हो या 'सोनोग्राफी' में पटुता एवं दक्षता का हो मेरी माँ इन अवसरों पर सदैव प्रेरणा स्वरूप खड़ी रही है। इस अवधि में मेरे परिवार का दायित्व अपने कंधों पर लिया और मैं इन दोनों क्षेत्रों में आज आत्मविश्वास के साथ कार्य कर रही हूँ। इतना ही नहीं, मेरे स्वयं के मां बनने की कठिन सफर में भी उन्होंने मुझे अपना शारीरिक एवं मानसिक संबल प्रदान किया है।

तीसरी लड़की होने के साथ ही समाज में अपनी एक अलग छवि "सफल स्त्री रोग विशेषज्ञ" के रूप में बनने के साथ ही मैंने अपनी प्राइवेट प्रैक्टिस के प्रारंभ, आज से 20 साल पहले से ही यह तय कर लिया था कि कभी भी गर्भ समापन (MTP) गर्भ में पल रही बेटी का नहीं करूँगी साथ ही निःसंतानता विशेषज्ञ होने के नाते और राजस्थान जैसे राज्य जहाँ लड़का होना शायद उच्च से निम्न स्तर वाले हर परिवार में जैसे अनिवार्य ही हो, मैंने अपने सिद्धांत बना रखे हैं कि किसी भी दंपति को दो बच्चे चाहे, वह बेटियाँ ही क्यों न हो के बाद इलाज नहीं करूँगी। यदि यह नियम ही लागू कर दिया जाए तो भी शायद हम कुछ हद तक सफल हो जाएंगे।

ऐसा ही एक वाकिया कुछ यूँ हुआ जिसने मुझे झकझोर कर रख दिया कुछ 10 साल पुरानी बात होगी मेरे नर्सिंग होम में तीसरी डिलीवरी के लिए मरीज भर्ती हुई और उसने कहा यदि अब लड़की हुई तो मेरी सास मुझे और बच्ची दोनों को घर से बाहर निकाल देगी सचमुच लगा कि यह सत्य है कि एक औरत ही औरत की दुश्मन होती है और उसी दिन से मैंने अस्पताल में लड़की के जन्म पर मां के नाम ₹1000 का चेक तथा लड़की को कपड़े उपहार में देना प्रारंभ किया।

मुझे मेरी OPD में यहाँ तक सुनने को मिल चुका है की, पालना तो हम को है। आप इलाज के लिए क्यों मना कर रही हैं। ऐसी परिस्थिति में उन्हें समझाना बहुत मुश्किल हो जाता है परंतु फिर भी यह जानते हुए कि मैं एक अकेली डॉक्टर समाज की धारणा को नहीं बदल सकती, साथ ही मैं जानती हूँ के वही दम्पति निश्चित कहीं ना कहीं जाकर अपना इलाज लेंगे लेकिन मैं उन्हें मना कर देती हूँ।

यदि आज की परिस्थितियों पर थोड़ा विचार करें तो लगता है कि ऐसी भयावह स्थिति उत्पन्न ही क्यों हुई कि PCPNDT और "बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ" जैसे नारों की जरूरत आन पड़ी। हर सिक्रे के 2 पहलू होते हैं जहाँ टेक्नोलॉजी ने इतना विकास किया कि सोनोग्राफी प्रत्येक गर्भवती स्त्री के गर्भ में पल रहे बच्चे की संरचना से लेकर उसके विकास के क्रम को

देखने में सहायक सिद्ध हुई, वहीं दुरुपयोग ही माने की भ्रूण लिंग परीक्षण भी उस के द्वारा ही संभव हुआ। चिकित्सक सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण रखते हुए अपना कार्य करना चाहते हैं परन्तु सामाजिक ढांचा कुछ ऐसा है कि कुछ परिवारों में बेटी के नाम से ही घृणा सी पैदा हो रही है और उसके चलते ना के बराबर कुछ लोग ये घृणित कार्य कर रहे हैं। आवश्यकता सामाजिक परिवर्तन की ज्यादा है, साथ ही यदि चिकित्सक को उस घोर अपराध की कड़ी सजा है तो लिंग जानने के उत्सुक परिवारजनों को उससे ज्यादा सजा मिलने का प्रावधान होना चाहिए। उच्च एवं संभ्रात परिवारों का विदेश में जाकर टेस्ट ट्यूब बेबी (IVF) प्रक्रिया करवाना और उसके द्वारा लिंग परीक्षण बंद करने का भी कोई प्रावधान होना अति आवश्यक है। ऐसा क्यों कि विदेशों में सभी को भ्रूण के लिंग के बारे में बता दिया जाता है फिर भी वहाँ लड़का लड़की का अनुपात बिगड़ा नहीं है। यह सब कारण है कि हम उसी घिसी पीटी मानसिकता के शिकार हैं। जहाँ आज भी संपत्ति का वारिस, कुल को आगे बढ़ाने वाला बेटा ही है वरन आवश्यकता तो इस बात की है कि माता-पिता की सेवा और उनकी संपत्ति पर अधिकार दोनों का बराबर होना चाहिए।

जब तक यह मानसिकता नहीं हटेगी तब तक हमारे समाज को शायद बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ का पाठ पढ़ाना ही पड़ेगा और इसमें हम चिकित्सकों की अहम भूमिका है।

एक और सामाजिक कुरीति शायद लड़का लड़की में भेद को बढ़ावा देती है वह है दहेज प्रथा।

इस प्रथा का अंत अत्यंत आवश्यक है मेरे नर्सिंग होम के किसी भी कर्मचारी की बेटियों की शादी में दहेज ना दिया जाता है ना ही बेटे की शादी में लिया जाता है यह पाठ मैंने सब को पढ़ाया है साथ ही अखिल भारतीय समाज सेवा संस्थान चिलकूट उत्तर प्रदेश की कार्यकारिणी के सदस्य होने के नाते उस क्षेत्र में कोल एवं भील आदिवासी कन्याओं के बीच जाकर समय-समय पर जहाँ स्वास्थ्य संबंधित शिविर का आयोजन करती हूँ वही दहेज प्रथा के अंत के लिए भी हमारी संस्था सदैव कार्यरत रहती है।

माँ सृष्टि की रचयिता, प्रत्येक शिशु की प्रथम गुरु, संस्कारों का पिटारा और न जाने क्या-क्या है इस प्रेम मयी मूर्ति मां में।

ऐसी मेरी माँ मेरी प्रेरणा को नमन,

कुछ पंक्तियां

सादर,

"जब कठिन हो डगर तब संबल कोई याद आता है।

जब प्यास लगे तब जल याद आता है।

जब जीवन पथ में कंटक कोई आता है

तब माता और माता.....

"माँ" का आंचल ही याद आता है।"

Save The Girl Child

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Coming from urban area and a liberal environment, one doesn't understand the privileges of being a girl (pun intended). We are two sisters with no brothers and with a mom who didn't hesitate to use the whip if we didn't work hard to achieve our dreams. So life has been good and never thought that anything was impossible or gender could be a reason for not doing something or doing something.

As we grew old, we would sometimes hear an occasional aunt asking mom why they never tried for a third child or dad that he is missing something in life. We only heard them laughing at such comments. As maturity set in, and you are exposed to the world you realize that life is so different. That gender plays an important role in shaping your life, lifestyle and your dreams. You hear on infanticide, child marriage, dowry, molestation, rape, domestic violence, and the "Me Too" movement.

When you hear these things you become a feminist and I am a strong feminist till eventually I realised men and women are not equal. How can you compare apples to oranges or mangoes for that matter? Are they equal. Of course not. Do they want to be equal? No. Why? Because to be equal you need to remember your child's homework, while handling your own project, simultaneously deciding on the menu for dinner, reminding husband to call his favourite aunt, catching up with an old friend and noticing from the balcony what Sheela is wearing all this while suffering from premenstrual syndrome. Can't be done by men not me they will tell you. They may defend by saying we will prioritise and some of the stuff is stupid. But let's face it. It requires lots of mental processing which women are gifted with.

But is it enough to say women are superior will not end the discussion. The bottom line is one cannot survive without the other. You cannot separate yin and yang. Each plays multiple roles in others life. Beginning from being a husband, father, brother to wife, mother and sister. So if it is dualism when and how did this inequality start. How did the female voice get suppressed?

While reading online, I came across an article which

said that there is proof of gender inequality some 8000 years ago. Men were depicted more in cave art, most often in scenes depicting hunting and war. Men were the breadwinners and women were carer. As society grew other stigmata grew. One thing led to the other. Since women had carer roles, they got married early. Since, they got married early hands at home to work at farms would reduce. So women got undervalued. Marrying them required money for an elaborate ceremony and for the future family to keep her happy. This developed into the dowry practice. The better the family, the more educated bridegroom, more was the money. Thus it became a vicious cycle to the extent that fathers and mothers didn't want the girl child. It started with trying for a boy till you succeed to now female infanticide and illegal sex determination and termination.

Indian sex ratio over the years have deteriorated. Our literacy may have gone up but sadly in our hearts we are the same. We are possibly the biggest hypocrites and this fact stays the same in rural and urban India. Let's first talk of sex ratio and then we will discuss the hypocrite socialite in urban India. As I mentioned, suddenly no one wanted a girl child. The mother in law would curse the daughter in law. The daughter in law after so much of torment would not desire a girl child. So, a woman became an enemy of woman. This led to female infanticide. Probably watched a movie where the newborn girl child was killed by drowning in milk. How gross! No one liked this. Then came techniques of amniocentesis which apart from detecting abnormal babies could detect sex. Cleaner. Detect the sex and abort. Then came technique of non-invasive diagnosis with help of ultrasound. Even better and we the educated health professionals offered our service for killing the female child. I believe it was a dark period in the history of medical profession. So there came the Prenatal Sex Detection Act which prohibited any detection of sex prior to delivery which then became the preconception and

prenatal Sex Detection Act. Has the Act succeeded? So there are many doctors booked under the act but when observed closely these are more for clerical mistakes than and actual caught in the act doing anything illegal. Has it improved the sex ratio? Nope. The sex ratio has probably worsened. According to niti.gov.in , the sex ration of India in 2013-2015 was 900/1000 males. The poorest performers are Delhi 869, Gujarat 854, Haryana 831, Uttarakand 844 and amcha Maharashtra at 878. This shows that literacy has no impact on sex ratio and this implicates the mindset of society. Awareness should be increased about the evils of female foeticide. It has been noted that some of the states like Haryana now import brides from other states. But this has only known to increase abuse of women.

For the current government Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the flagship programme which we as an obstetric and gynecological society have adopted as our own. After all we are the first point of contact the girl infant looks up at. The government needs to ensure proper public health care of expecting women. There are complaints about the paucity of staff members and equipment's at hospitals. Effectively, it has to be a collective effort for the situation to change and one can't expect government interventions to change everything. Instead, that intervention needs to be coupled with changing the whole society starting with ourselves "Mulgi Shikli Pragati Zaali" was the most profound slogan during our childhood. There is a similar proverb " If you educate a man you educate an individual but when you educate a woman you educate a family" to which Michelle Obama has added "When girls are educated , countries become stronger and more prosperous. There are girls that are alive but aren't treated well and aren't given economic opportunities. Their parents do not spend on their education or nutrition and instead, prefer to save that money for marriage dowry. They end up getting married at an early age and unable to participate in the labor force due to lack of skills. These missing women and unwanted girls have a substantial economic cost especially for a developing country like India which can only benefit from a higher and better-qualified workforce.

My mother runs an NGO called Karuna Foundation. They do multiple activities under it. Basic work done

was looking after orphanages and old age homes. Sending them food through sponsors. Supporting education of weaker sections of society. Once while I was studying in the year 2012, their organisation came across government foundation called Rescue Foundation. This foundation basically rescued girls and women from prostitution and trafficking and help establish them back in the society. After being rescued these girls had intensive counselling and were helped to get back to home. However, the sad picture was their family no longer accepted them so most of them were at Rescue Foundation trying hard to move on in life. There were multiple rehabilitation activities at the center. This included dancing, yoga, tailoring, training to be beautician. There was also a German lady who would come every year for a month and teach them to make jewellery which she would carry with her to Germany to sell. Now there were 8 girls who were getting married by the organisation and my mother's NGO was coordinating their marriage. This had a lot of work involved. Now it is obvious that the men who were ready to marry were not exactly perfect. Most of them were from a low middle class background. There was extensive cross referencing and police checkups of these men and their family. There were counselling sessions and only then they were allowed. Finally, 6 of the girls were cleared for marriage. My mothers NGO arranged the entire wedding. And many of her sponsors travelled all the way to Boisar to watch this event. I attended too. I cannot say I had helped much in the entire planning but I was there. It was an event to remember. Everyone present wanted these girls to finally find their happiness. I am proud of my mom.

As doctors , we stick to our faith and oblige our duties to ensure we do not reveal the gender to save the girl child. But, is that really enough? A girl dies even if she survives rape, a girl dies even if survives an acid attack, a girl dies many deaths in all stratas of life. While we celebrate a few who became the Kalpana Chawlas, the Hellen Kellers, the Rani Laxmibais, the Savitribai Phules of the world. We only celebrate them but we must really pledge to ensure each girl born is looked at with same pride and respect. They too deserve the freedom, the opportunity, the equality that everyone enjoys. Saving the girl child is not just saving the girl from abortions, it means nurturing the girl, protecting her, loving her, caring for her, promoting her, encouraging her, empowering her, enabling her, entitling her so she can be the next Kalpana Chawla, Hellen Keller, Rani Laxmibai, Savitribai Phule or a homekeeper but be what exactly her heart desires. Save the girl child not just from death but from all evils that we see in the modern society.

Save the Girl Child

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**“A GIRL SHOULD BE 2 THINGS –CLASSY AND
FABULOUS**

BE THE HEROINE OF YOUR LIFE AND NOT AVICTIM”

God created human beings as man and woman with equal rights. He uses them as instruments to bring in human beings into this world.

In olden days women were considered inferior to men and were treated as slaves and servants. They were denied education and freedom of speech and were not allowed to take part in any outside activities. They were made to do all the house hold work and were used as tools to give pleasure to men and as tools to give pleasure to men and as machines to reproduce children. The practice of child marriages, infanticide ,sati etc. made them helpless and submissive to men. However due to the efforts of great leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dr.Subbulakshmi Reddy these cruel customs were abolished.Gradually women were allowed to get educated and now we see women occupying equal positions with men in all fields of life.We have women doctors, teachers, professors, M.L.A'S and M.P.'S,Ministers and chief ministers and Governors, Collectors and so on .Even in the field of dance,music,arts and science, cinema journalism, army airforce,space study etc.women show their excellence and shine as wonderful stars, thus bringing fame and name to their families and nation. The girl students are the toppers in all common exams from S.S.L.C to CIVIL Service Exams. They strive hard and make many sacrifices to reach the heights of their dreams.

It is a God-given privilege to be born as a girl child – so says the great Tamil poet Bharathiyar.

There is no happiness in this world without women..She is the gift of nature. The birth of the first baby-a girl child is regarded as the coming of Goddess Lakshmi into the house, bringing prosperity to the family.”A son is a son till he gets a wife, but a daughter till the end of her life”. It is said, “God cannot be every where, so he created the mother.”-Meaning that the girl child becomes a mother and takes care of the

family members, in the place of god with love and wisdom. She is the role model to her children and it is she who shapes them to become good citizens.

Inspite of all this, in many places girl children are looked upon as burdens to the family because the family has to incur heavy expenditure to get them married. So people try to avoid keeping many girls in the family. When there are already two or more girls in the family they try to avoid the next child in the family thinking that it also might be a girl.So they go for forced illegal abortions which is a dangerous one for the mother. The birth of the girl child is regarded as a curse and sometimes it becomes the cause for the divorce of the couples. In some rural areas people administer poison to the girl babies (cactus milk/calotropis milk/paddy seeds) and make them die . Recently in Madurai district, Tamilnadu a man and his mother were held for infanticide. They had given a poisonous juice to the fourth girl child of the man and had killed it., Even without the knowledge of the child’s mother.

Once a man was so furious at the birth of his fifth girl child that he refused to see even the face of the child and strictly ordered his wife not to bring the child in front of him at any circumstance. The wife did so, till the girl graduated in the local college where she was considered as the prettiest girl with all sorts of talents. One day the rich boss of the father came to his house and requested him to give his daughter in marriage to his only son. The father of the girl was extremely happy and astonished at this request and also see his beautiful daughter for the first time in his life.

In another house-a middle class family-there were ten children and all were girls. But the parents never regretted for that any they considered the girls as blessings from heaven. The elder girls looked after the younger ones. And they were all well trained not only in house hold works but also in living together happily with adjustment, helping one another facing the

various situations in life. Because of this they all easily got married one by one.

Though at present, girls enjoy equal freedom along with boys, the atrocities done to them still continue. Every day in the news papers we read how adult women, young girl and even children below ten years are subjected to sexual violence and in some cases the victims are brutally killed. Many young girl are cheated by young and old men and the girls losing their dignity and peace of mind finally commit suicide and end their lives. The advance technology in gadgets are used to black mail the young girls and they are led to take the extreme worse steps. Recently I read about a young woman journalist who visited the war field-her costly camera was taken away and she was subjected to mass rape. The moving story of Nirbaya is known to every one and though the culprits are awarded death sentence, the violence committed to Nirbhaya still haunts our minds and the endless sorrow of her parents cannot be described in words.

The government is taking all efforts to save the girl children and protect them from all atrocities. It has enacted many laws such as the **POCSO ACT,2012**, A comprehensive law to protect our girls from sexual assault and rape .The specialty of this law is, there is prohibition of disclosure of identity of the girl. There have been local projects global programmers and NGO'S to save the vulnerable girl child, to inspire breakthrough in the way the world treats them, and to achieve lasting changes in their lives. They ensure good educations, good health ,hygiene and safety for the girl children. There are separate homes for abandoned girl babies and young unwed mothers who had been subjected to sexual violence, but though they are well cared for their future hangs in the air.

Girls should be given awareness regarding pocso act and I am happy fogsi plays a major role in conducting Adolescent Conferences and Awareness Programmes in Schools, Colleges and Villages. Recently, the **THULIR CONFERENCE** at Chennai really did focus on the Adolescent population exclusively and did give vivid exposure and all their issue like medical problems, sexual problems and psychological problems.

As women doctors we should give awareness to our girls regarding healthy diet,regular exercise, hygiene, safe touch, good character and chastity, Academic performances, cultural upliftment, peer problems and

social wellbeing. And we should urge them to get the benefit of our Prime minister Modi's Schemes for the girl child like the **GOLDEN GIRL SCHEME,BENEFITS FOR TWO GIRL CHILD IN A FAMILY ETC.**

During this time of COVID-19 .It is imperative that we take cognizance of the adverse impact ,of corona virus which can potentially have on the most vulnerable children-especially girl children-street girls with no homes,refugees,displaced children ,child laborers, children with disabilities and girl children living with single parents .We do not know how long this corona lock down is going to last .We are going the extra mile in these uncertain times. COVID-19 has hit us all hard, but the situations of the poor people living on the fringes of society,the most marginalized girl children who need special attention..

Keeping all this in our minds let us all resolve to protect the girl child in the society-not to regard her as a burden to the family but as a source of happiness and prosperity. Let us treat her equally with the boys and helps her to achieve her goals in life and thus become not only, **Able citizens of our country** but also to become prominent achievers and leaders and win global admiration.

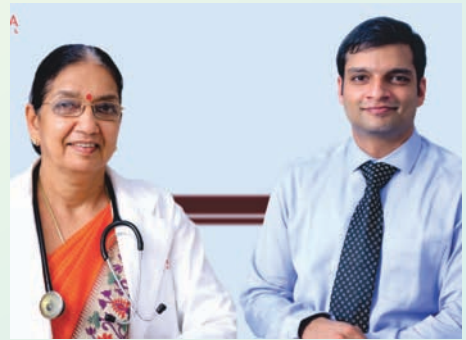
Let me conclude now that I am proud to be a **FOGSIAN** and being a **FOGSIAN** I could render a lot to the womanhood,apart from being honoured to be instrumental in the **CREATION OF GOD**, safely bringinfg healthy babies into the world. It is nice to see our President ,Dr.ALPESH GANDHI's theme, **SAFETY FOR WOMEN** goes relevant with the topic and I request all our FOGSIANS to extend a part of their services to the welfare of girls of our future, caring the slogans, "**BETI BACHAO; BETI PADHAO; BETI VADHAO;**" reaching the unreached horizons and be an example to the whole nation and to the whole world as a **COMPLETE WOMAN** with **STRENGTH AND STYLE, INTELLIGENCE AND COURAGE AND DIGNITY AND DIVINITY** which ultimately makes a, **PERFECT BEAUTY.**

**"BE A GIRL WITH A MIND
BE A WOMAN WITH AN ATTITUDE
BE A LADY WITH CLASS"**

THANK YOU

HOW MY MOTHER MOTIVATED ME?

DR. AKSHAY PRABHU



My life was just like any other doctor's child, rather I would say specifically an obstetrician's child. What is so special about them you may wonder? It is not very often that you get to spend long hours with your parent, in my case mother. Recollecting from my childhood memory, I hardly ever saw her seated for more than few minutes. Most days half the time would be spent in hospital, and the other half juggling between household chores. I had my complaints. Complaints of her not playing with me, not helping me with my homework, not putting me to sleep or on some days, being put to sleep and not waking up beside her to be left confused and thinking. All these things affected me as a kid.

My growing years were spent more in the proximity of friends than my mother. I was the only child and that made me lonelier. My father was a chartered accountant and he too had his work pressures and schedules. I would see mommies of other kids feeding them, walking them to school, playing with them, helping them with homework and I would envy them. None of them were doctors, let alone obstetricians. Human brain has this special ability to reason out and adapt to circumstances. We generally don't ponder over the same issue for long. Either we find a solution, which was not my case, or just take adapt to it and move on. Hence my adolescent and teen years went in a jiffy. School, friends, home-work and play occupied my time and I accepted it to be my life. There were times when this issue of not getting sufficient time with my mother would haunt me, but it was short lived, and I would be fine again soon.

There have been times when my dad was too busy to pick me up from school. My mom would be forced to abandon her busy schedule for a few minutes and rush to complete the task. Since both my parents would be working, I would be forced to wait in the hospital, either in the outpatient department with my mom and fellow doctors, or running around in the female wards playing with nurses, or even in the labour room if no patients in labour were there. I have seen and witnessed this atmosphere right from kindergarten days. The smell of phenyl, medicine samples heaped up in doctors room emanating an odd aroma, or the faint pungent smell of disinfectant lingering in the air masking the nauseous smell of blood which had been cleaned, nothing was new to me even at that young age. I did not know so much in detail about those various odours at that point, but learnt them once I started working in the same atmosphere later on. Why

am i elaborating this? I will explain later.

To be a doctor was my choice. I was not forced. I did not have to become a doctor because my mother was a doctor. She never asked me to. In fact I was so convinced about taking up MBBS that I never wrote any other entrance exams. May be it was my upbringing, those days spent in hospital, various odours which left an impression on my brain, that I guess convinced me from an early age that medical profession was the one I needed to take up. By God's grace I cleared my exams in the first go and went straight to the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College. Life in college was fun, it was a mixed bag of everything. I was away from home for four and a half years. Interactions with my parents, especially my mother was restricted. I was busy with my new life. New place, new lifestyle, feeling of being grown-ups, friends from all over India, new loaded curriculum with lot of Latin terms, games and sports. I was flying high. Even those years passed soon. I was not bothered about not spending time with my mother. She too was busy in her own world, sans the task of taking care of me.

What next was the question I asked myself? And I could see the same question on everybody's faces. Which speciality was I going to take up? I had developed a liking towards obstetrics & gynaecology right from my third year of MBBS as we had our clinical postings in antenatal wards. This further strengthened in my final year as I got some hands on experience. Then during my internship rotations, I started enjoying the work in obstetrics & gynaecology. I would have active discussions with my mother regarding various topics and try and assist her too in her work at our hospital. Yet I had failed to grasp the full gravity of this subject. I had decided I would be best to take up obstetrics & gynaecology as my speciality.

I wrote my PG entrance exam and cleared my exam in the second attempt and got into Kasturba medical college, Mangalore. I was on cloud nine, I had cracked it and was going to face the final frontier before starting my own practice. I thoroughly enjoyed the days after the seat allotment and prior to starting post graduate course as preparing for the PG entrance exams had taken a toll on me. Various ups and down, physically and mentally, was a pure scary roller coaster

ride till the last moment when counselling sessions had landed me a seat.

So finally my post-graduation course began and I too started off with a nervous excitement. Something familiar but new. Had not done much research about the course, thought it would be something similar to MBBS. New place, new friends, new lifestyle, new curriculum and fun. Alas, I was in for a shock. A handful of people were given a whole government maternity hospital to run. Out of which first years bore the maximum brunt, running pillar to post attending all chores left behind by seniors, and bridging gaps wherever required. My first duty lasted for 72 hours, I barely slept for a few hours. Then I got a break for a night and I was back on duty. The second duty started off light, but was woken up bang in the middle of the night just when I was trying to catch up on some sleep. Apparently few ladies had reported in labour and more hands were needed to manage the labour ward. Frustrated, but left with no choice dragged myself to work. I had become a zombie by then.

The very next day, same thing repeated, had a hectic long day and just as I was trying to get some sleep, my mobile phone rang, and we had to report to labour ward. Bang. That is when I had a kind of revelation. When Archimedes had such a revelation he ran naked through the streets of Greece, but for me the very opposite effect happened. In that moment I froze, I was paralysed. I could feel the sweat on my back running down my spine. In that very moment 2 things happened. I just realised the gravity of the speciality I had taken up. So far I never had had a real working experience in this field. Was I prepared for this? Second, more important and more shocking revelation I had is that, this is what my mother had been going through for the past 40 odd years. Silently, seamlessly, calmly doing this same thing, over and over again. That is when I had a flash back and I analysed my life, my growing years, adolescence and teen years in a blitz.

My mother delivered during her busy tenure in a busy private hospital. With her mother's and sister's help she was able to manage the tough initial years. Once I started kindergarten and early school, she had to work extra time to ensure that the family got its meals on time, be it at the meal table or packed ones. Had to bathe me and get me ready for school and take extra care when I fell sick. All this in addition to the already jam packed hospital schedule demanding her full energy and time. This also explained those nights, where she couldn't put me to sleep and also those worse nights where she had to put me to sleep, as I was too

adamant on being put to sleep by her and being pampered, and then rush to hospital to attend to labour cases.

What was I complaining about all these years? What deficiency was I cribbing about? What was I envying about other's mommies when I had a super mommy here myself? She was busy yes. Busy like mad. In spite of that we have hardly had to go to school or sleep on an empty stomach. Our meals would be ready on time. Our clothes would be neatly folded and kept ready on time. Our pills would never be missed when we were down with a flu. All this without any complaints or demands. Silently taking care of the family and her patients in hospital, together, with ease. Never pausing to enjoy a movie, or a song, or any kind of hobby. But has she ever lost her calm? Very rare. Has she ever complained? I can't recollect. Has she ever regretted her decision? Never. Given a chance I think she would take up this very speciality next life too. That clearly showed her love for the subject and compassion for her patients.

Slowly tears started rolling down my cheeks as I sat on the bed. How blind I was to what my mother did for me? How mean I was to crib about my short comings? How lazy I was not to enquire about it or lend a hand? In that moment I changed. I was born again. I could see with crystal clear clarity what my mother had done for me. The sacrifices she had undergone to raise me and keep our family together. The hardships she had gone through, on a daily basis, to balance her work and life at home.

Being a mother is difficult. Being a mother practicing obstetrics is even more difficult, I would say maybe most difficult. You not only care for your kids, you care for all those women who conceive and are soon going to deliver. In some way or the other they become your children too, till they have their children safe in their hands. An obstetrician can never rest, neither can a mother. That very day she became my super heroine.

My choice to take up the same profession was definitely moulded by my proximity to her and her work place. The revelation I had did not discourage me from pursuing my path, it made me bolder, it made me stronger. I reported for work with a glow on my face and a new strength in my heart.

After that very duty, at the very first opportunity I called up my mother and poured my heart out. I was relieved. She is a woman of few words and emotions. Strong willed and courageous to face problems as and when they come, with a stony hard face which reveals very little.

From then on she has always been a strong pillar of support in my life. She had passively moulded my life till then, through her silent actions. Now I actively take advice and support from her to get moulded to become a better individual, be it at home or work, so that I would at least end up being a fraction of what she has been or continues to be even at this age of hers.

For me, my mother continues to be my greatest inspiration, be it work or family, and I constantly cite her example to all the people out there who can do better with a dose of inspiration.

SAVE THE GIRL CHILD

DR. ANJALI GUPTA
M D (OBS & GYNAE)
Consultant Gynaecologist
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Introduction

Since times immemorial, spirituality and religions have been ways of life in India. Indians have always been proud of their cultural values and as a result of which they have worshipped daughters as goddesses. But during the course of many attacks by foreign invaders and changing socio-economic and cultural circumstances in the country there has been a gradual impact on the mindset of common man. Now some people out of fear due to their narrow thinking, dowry and misdeeds with girls, kill them in the wombs itself, resulting into weakening of the sex ratio against girls. Female foeticide is both a national problem and a social evil. It's unbelievable that the urge for a boy child makes some people so cruel that they dare to kill the yet to be born girl child. The child sex ratio (CSR), according to 2011 population census, was 943 girl child for every 1000 boy child. The Situation has become even more worse in some states like Delhi, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan. Even today, there are several sections of the Indian society where the girl child is treated as a burden. While several privileges are given to the boys; girls are often restricted to the confines of house and given very little or no opportunities to learn and grow in life. In such a scenario, the role of the government and NGOs becomes all the more important in order to ensure that girls are allowed to be born and flourish in life.

How gender discrimination takes place in India

Gender discrimination takes place in many forms in India, right from birth to adulthood.

Fewer months of breastfeeding, below par medical care, insufficient nutrition, lack of prenatal, natal and post-natal care result in girls being more susceptible to illness, having poor health and shorter lifespan.

Due to the wide prevalence of the patriarchal social system, a lot of women are still deprived of the right to own ancestral property, which is mostly given to the

male child.

In cities, women employees face the glass ceiling effect and disparities in pay. Their non-inclusion in the decision-making processes at almost every level is also a widespread phenomenon.

Not just an Indian phenomenon

While India shows a high degree of gender inequality, it isn't the only country where this phenomenon exists. In many countries around the world, women are fighting for the right to vote, right to education and to own property among others.

Horrific practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and trafficking are highly prevalent in parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

Why it is important to save and educate girls

For the betterment of society, it is essential that all members are given equal opportunity to grow and develop irrespective of their gender, caste, religion, language right from childhood. For this it has become all the more necessary to empower and educate the woman so as to ensure proper nurturing of child. For women empowerment, it is important that we begin with the protection and education of girl child because girls of today are the women of tomorrow. The role of social welfare organizations becomes all the more critical here as it is not possible for the government to reach and influence each and every citizen.

Save the Girl Child-A social initiative

Save the Girl Child is a social initiative in India to fight against the practice of female foeticide. The initiative also aims at protecting, safeguarding, supporting, and educating the girl child. Our present Prime

Minister has requested every section of the society to give whole hearted support to the ***Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao abhiyan***. '***Beti Bachao***' means '***save girl child***' and '***Beti Padhao***' means '***educate the girl child***.'

Possible causes of female foeticide

Different possible causes have been identified for the problem of female foeticide.

- 1. Lower social status of women:** Women have been subjected to injustice since ages. Some people feel that the birth of girl child may lower their status in the society. So they tend to discriminate against the girl child and prefer the birth of boy child.
- 2. Extreme poverty:** People living in extreme poverty often think that the girl child would bring more economic hardship to them. Poor families, when faced with the choice, often choose to send their boys to school instead of their girls and burdening girls with household chores. The social evil of dowry system further worsens the situation. Some people think that they will have to arrange for dowry for their marriage.
- 3. Illiteracy:** Illiteracy is also one of the leading social evils. Illiterate people are often ignorant. They are not able to decide and judge in the right perspective.
- 4. Dowry system:** Dowry system refers to the custom of paying money and other valuables to the groom's family at the time of marriage. This tradition was probably introduced in ancient times to give some sort of financial assistance to the newlywed couple. However, often, it is seen that the greedy family members of the groom's family demand huge amount of money at the time of marriage in spite of its prohibition by law. Dowry is viewed as a huge burden by the parents of the girl child.

How to save girl child before birth?

The technique of ultrasonography was invented to monitor the growth of foetus and well being of mother but unfortunately it is being misused to determine the sex of the unborn baby. There are laws for restricted use of technique. According to Indian laws, the determination of prenatal sex during pregnancy is illegal and punishable. So there is urgent

need for:

1. Strict enforcement of laws relating to medical scanning.
2. Impart moral teachings to doctors.
3. Changing mind set of people that there is no difference between a girl and a boy child.

How to save girl child after birth?

The girl child is not only unsafe inside her mother's womb but even after her birth, she has to face many hardships because of gender inequality prevailing in society. Society and authorities must ensure:

1. The girls should get a safe and comfortable environment at schools, colleges and place of work.
2. The girls should get equal and unbiased access to the educational resources of the school.
3. School, colleges and offices must have separate toilets for girls/women.
4. There is need for a shift in attitude in favor of social and economic equality between boys and girls.
5. The belief that only a male child can support the parents during the old age doesn't hold good any more in today's world. A girl can also take care and support her family whenever needed.
6. The family members of the girl child should come forward to protect her rights, both within and outside her home.
7. The exploitation, abuse and harassment of girl child should be dealt with strictly. The guilty should be punished as per the law. If required suitable amendments to be done in existing laws to ensure faster delivery of justice.
8. Dowry system should be discouraged through media campaigns and social awareness programs. Emphasis should be made to impart moral education to put an end to this evil system.
9. Doctors and other medical professions should be encouraged to act responsibly. They should never indulge in any malpractices such as prenatal sex determination.
10. Examples of powerful, successful girls and women

should be presented to society to serve as role models and help to combat gender based discrimination.

11. Financial and moral assistance to welfare schemes promoting protection and education of girl child.
12. Proper and effective counselling, nutritional, and medical facilities for the development of the girl child.
13. Conducting educational programs and workshops focusing on gender equality.

How to encourage and promote girl child?

1. **Women empowerment:** The women need to be empowered through equal opportunities in educational, social and economic sectors.
2. **Awareness:** Every citizen of civilized society should be made aware of the fact that a girl child is as important as a boy child. If she gets the right opportunity, she can also provide economic support to the family whenever needed. The mindset that a girl is a liability, needs to be changed and this requires efforts at the grass root level.
3. **Education:** Education raises the consciousness and awareness of a person. The role of education is extremely important that can go a long way in empowering women. The process of education has to begin early in life. More and more girl children need to be sent to school, provided quality and holistic education. Educated girls are able to take the right decisions in life. At the same time, a society in which girls are educated will see less of child marriages, decreased levels of poverty and increased participation of women in socio-economic process. Educating a girl has far reaching effects. It is rightly said that when women are educated, an entire society gets benefited.
4. **Love, respect, and equality:** Girls, just like their counterparts, deserve freedom and equality. All children equally deserve to be treated with love and respect. Treating girls with love and respect means respecting their autonomy and helping them to achieve their best.

Government's initiatives

The 'save the child girl, educate the girl child' initiative

is actively supported by the Government, corporate groups, human rights activists and NGOS. Besides 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', some other similar schemes initiated by government are:

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

Ladli

Ladli Laxmi Yojana

Sabla

Dhanalakshmi

Kishori Shakti Yojana

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

Under the initiative of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', several social organizations have come forward to build toilets at girl schools.

The corporate groups as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), are also earmarking funds for the welfare of school going girls.

Conclusion

For ages, the girl child has suffered a lot. This has to be stopped now forever. 'Save Girl Child' is the slogan that India needs to spread to each of its corners. Sadly we still live in a very discriminating society where girls and women are discriminated against. Girls are at increased risk of gender based violence and threats like female foeticide, forced marriage, pay disparity, child pregnancy, lower education levels and many more like that. Society has to ensure the removal of all bottlenecks in providing equal opportunities to girls. It is for its own benefit ultimately. There is an urgent need to change this archaic mindset of the patriarchal Indian society which views girls as liabilities. It is important for parents of a newborn to understand that every child is a blessing. A girl child deserves a life of dignity just like anyone else and all efforts must be taken to wipe out the crimes that are threatening her existence. Giving her a good education and making her independent as she grows up is the way to give back her dignity. It is therefore imperative that both government, non-government organizations and society as a whole work in cohesion to spread the message of saving and educating the girl child.

MOTHER MOTIVATED ME

**DR. NITI DOGRA
GORAKHPUR**



Less than half a century ago, a lady was praying in a sleepy remote tribal town of Betul to ease out her labour pains. The heavens accepted her prayers, and I was born on 23rd January 1977 – Yes, I share by birth date, 23rd January, with one of India’s greatest freedom fighter – Sri Subhash Chandra Bose, the mighty unsung hero of India’s freedom struggle.

Being the third on the list, all our relatives were looking forward to a male child, but God had other plans, and blessed the family with me – Niti. It was a moment that the entire family would be proud of later.

My mother, Kamla, born in a temple village of Belon, lost her father in early childhood. Thereafter, her education got discontinued, and was married to my father at an early age of 16. All that I remember from her home is a small idol of lord Ganesha, which blesses our home till this very day. It might be these early difficulties that made her strong to accept or change the complexities of life with smile and determination.

Today, we may be miles apart, but I am fortunate to have a wonderful feeling of togetherness with my mother. She is the source of strength, love, compassion and kindness – the values and pillars of my family. Her energy has a captivating force, both in magnitude and direction.

Born in lactational amenorrhoea, mother was not even aware of my presence till very late, while I imbibed the energy in her womb to follow my dreams, goals & happiness and make the person I am today. I

am so glad to be born to my mother so that I can be in her lovely presence to understand her.

Mother, you have been a source of inspiration and strength for me till this very day. Your life has been a continuous act of faith from the moment you conceived me, the journey of faith through the labour pains and delivery. Your undying faith in your daughters paved our paths to professional colleges.

We saw our mother performing the role of both parents for nearly a decade. Father used to travel daily from our home town to Morena, as parents did not want to compromise the children’s education. I still recollect that there were hardly few days when we used to see Daddy in the morning. He would leave at 4AM in the mornings, only to return late at night, when all of us had gone off to sleep. During this phase of our life, mother played the role of both parents. She would also stay awake till daddy came home.

Memories from childhood are sometimes misty, flooding from corners of my mind. Mother taught me to market groceries when I was a small child of 10 years. During this time, our new home was being constructed. She would prepare tea for the labourers and send me through the stony lane to give it to them. The faith, leadership, independence and courage you instilled in me during childhood years helped me to tide over difficult situations during my MBBS years at Sambalpur. Water shortage was a big problem there. Mother had inculcated in us, habit of getting up early. This helped me in getting up at 3 AM, and after bathing, getting down to study. This wonderful habit has groomed me into becoming a disciplined surgeon

over the years. I can assert with pride today, that I can start my surgery case in early mornings and also have time to prepare and leave my daughter for school.

All life on earth is a battle, and waged at all fronts. There is a persistent collision between the good and evil, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, truth and lies, delight and delusion, immortality and death. Mother helped me in distinguishing between these through her guidance whenever I was in doubt and confused in a situation. This guided me in building self-respect, dignity, poise and warmth, a few qualities of Kamla's daughter.

During my preparation for PG entrance exams, mother would always be beside me, supporting me with whatever I needed this time. Your faith and conviction in me made me come out with flying colours. The courage and underlying determination that mother inculcated me since childhood came to good use when my father got bed-ridden due to lumbar disc prolapse. It was a difficult phase in my life. Never the less, I was able to shift my father from Gwalior to New Delhi in an ambulance and get him operated at Sir Gangaram Hospital by myself. The relentless effort bore fruit, and after a few months, my heart filled with joy to see daddy driving by himself after a major neurosurgery. The secret warrior had done her work.

Father has always been a loving but difficult person. Your story has always instilled in me, a sense of hope and a motivation to move on in life. Your selfless unconditional love and service for the entire family, especially daddy during his post-operative period for spinal surgeries has set an example for all children.

Mother has always taught me to slay my ego. Ego is one egregious monster that negates all the good qualities in a person. She has constantly stressed on faith and forgiveness. Forgiveness is a conscious decision. When we forgive, we heal ourselves and others in the process. This does require a loving and happy heart. She always stresses the need for letting things go and move on in life. These qualities make me

a better person and help me develop peace from within.

Mother also taught me not to be judgemental, but always on being open and ready to listen to others. She always says that everyone's journey in this life has a different path. A lot of it is destiny and the result of Karma too. I look at the world so differently now. This has helped me in changing my attitude towards seniors, juniors, colleagues, staff and patients and people I meet on a professional and personal level.

The cultural heritage I received from my mother since childhood helped me to develop a warm and passionate relation with my mother in law and accepting the change from one home to another after marriage with gratitude. My mother would find happiness even in small things in life and has taught us to acknowledge even the smallest gestures by others. She always says that happiness and peace is a state of mind and we have the power to control it. The decision to be or not to be happy and at peace comes from within rather than external circumstances.

A very important aspect of life is to strike a balance between one's career and family. My mother has always been guiding me to honour the family commitments as much as professional ones. Testing times always come, but now I have learnt to face them and move on. The result has been very striking – I now celebrate life.

I raise salutations to you, my dear mother, for passing on these Mahavidyas to help me in the phenomenon of becoming a good human being. Winners never quit and quitters never win. Mother of creativity is a pure intention, and I as an obstetrician, promise you, O Mother, to pass on these values till posterity.

Save the girl child

DR (MRS.) ARUNA PRADHAN



It's an old saying that

“यत् नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत् देवता ।”

Means where women are respected the GOD dwells there! In olden days in India women were respected, were treated as equals to men. In fact whenever there came the need to destroy evil forces the power was depicted in the form of woman i.e. Durgamata! Because probably the women are mentally strong, multifaceted, intelligent, hardworking & have perseverance!

But today's India is evil, monstrous to women! Daily we see the headlines about physical abuse, rape, honour killing of women, dowry killings. The woman is treated as sexually weak, unequal, meek, humble entity confined to domestic boundaries, denied the rights of men such as education which gives knowledge leading to financial independence, self respect, individuality as a person. They are considered as social burden, curse. After marriage when newlyweds seek the blessing, they are given blessing as may god bless you with a son. Because it is thought that the son carries forward the family name, but in fact it is the girl who brings grace to two families not only one. But the girls are killed in the womb (foeticide) or killed in infancy (Infanticide)

Everyone wants a good, humble, obedient mother, sister, wife & daughter. अरे but they forget that they are all women. A family can't be run with only one partner, man & woman both are needed so why can't both be equals?

There is a Marathi proverb

जिच्या हाती पाळण्याची दोरी, ती जागते ऊद्धारी !

That female is a foundation stone of the family, as well

as the whole world. Because she would raise the future generations by inculcating them with good education, mannerisms, habits etc. So mother is priceless! But the girls are confined to domesticity, denied the rights to education, physically abused, beaten in closed rooms, honour killed, killed for dowry, raped, killed in the womb. This has reversed the ratio of males to females. The number of females has reduced mainly in the states of Kerala & Haryana .

So our government has taken certain good steps to reduce abuse against females, by launching बेटी बचाओ अभियान. Also banned female foeticide by banning sex determination, also launched right to education programme.

So every person in this country has the responsibility to contribute to these programmes by self educating & educate others also to respect women & to let them live their lives as they want to become an independent, individual person!

I am my parent's fourth daughter this was in early 1940s me in 1951. But they never treated us four sisters inferiority, never neglected. They gave every opportunity to develop personality, good education to all four of us.

In my practice I tried my level best to persuade many couples against female foeticide. One day one of my sisters came to me telling that one of the patients is crying because her husband & in laws have abandoned her because 3rd daughter was born. I consoled her, encouraged her by citing my own example. Fortunately she was a brave girl. She went to her husband somehow was able to persuade him. Today that infant girl is graduate, serving & happily married.

So the conclusion (bottom line) is SAVE A GIRL CHILD

SAVE THE GIRL CHILD

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A mother is always a motivational figure, an idol in a child's life. I am very grateful to my mother for giving such an upbringing in me, where I am taught as well as treated equally as my brother. She kept no difference between a male or a female child because of which gives me courage and strength to serve my patients and my country better.

A girl plays multiple roles in her entire life, daughter, sister, wife, daughter in law, mother, grandmother and most of all the backbone of any family. It is not only saving the girl child, I believe in giving her the respect, education, equality and opportunities which she deserves. Over the years we have seen great improvement in the society regarding upliftment of women.

I feel privileged and honoured to give my contribution in this noble cause in whichever way possible. I would like to share a few of them. Practising in an urban city, still I come across few communities who still believe in early marriages, male child preference, more the better number of children without even understanding their economic condition. Over the years I have been counselling these patients and their family members about the importance of education, hygiene, postponing marriages, family planning etc.

Today many of these women have started educating their children even the girl child, delaying marriages at least to 21 years of age where before they used to get married as young age as 14 to 16 years. Acceptance of a female child in the family, and I think I have been most successful in teaching them family planning. Most of these women have inserted a Cu -T after delivery of their first child which helps them spacing

between children and nourishing themselves and building up immunity for themselves and their child.

Secondly I remove at least 5min in counselling a young sexually active girl. It is our moral duty to explain them to use contraception, be responsible and avoid unwanted pregnancy along with its complications. Taking i-pills and abortion pills have side effects on their health and menstrual cycle. It is seen that many times girls cannot speak up to their parents regarding their menstrual hygiene and basic problems. I give lectures in some schools where I am specially called to address on menstrual problems and hygiene and also discuss on sexual problems and child abuse. It is very important to give sex education to your child, for which I believe mother and daughter should be friends and discuss openly then considering it as a shame.

Its time every mother treat their girl as a boy and support them to be confident and independent. It is time when society understands the power of girls and women, allow them to progress in life and achieve heights. Its time when all girls get rights to education so that they can break the society taboos. They have proven their worth and stand equal to boys in every field. Hence, they deserve to survive as their survival means the existence of the human race.

GIRLS ARE ANGELS SAVE THEM

A DAUGHTER IS A DAUGHTER FOR LIFE.....

For saving girl child the government has taken many initiatives and launched many campaigns to save

them. **BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO**, started by our **honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi** is the most recent initiative started by the government to actively encourage people to save the girl. The scheme was started in Haryana state on 22nd January 2015. Under this scheme, it is required to replace the conservative mind set against the daughters of the country in the social system. Every girl should pursue education. The difference should assure the durability of the village and the protection of the whole gender selection process. It is also necessary to ensure the literacy of girls in the house. Apart from that many NGOs, companies, corporate groups, human rights commission run various campaign to save the girl child.

The crime against women is a big barrier to the development and growth of the country. However, the government takes this problem seriously and for stopping female feticide they have banned the sex determination ultrasound, amniocentesis and scan tests in hospitals and labs. The government has enforced strict guidelines and laws PCPNDT act for saving the girl child. The government takes all steps to aware society that girls are a gift of God and not a burden.

I believe any noble cause should start with us and from our home. We should encourage our family members, neighbour, friends, and relatives to save the girl child and also make aware and educate other people say their maids, helpers etc. Also we should cheer our family member to have a girl child.

Girls and women have proved themselves in all fields. To get the inspiration here are some of the greatest achievements made by women of India.

- Pratibha Patil – First women President
- Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi – First Indian female physician
- Roshni Sharma – First Indian women to ride a motorcycle
- Mithali Raj - First women to score a double 100 in test cricket
- Kalpana Chawla – First women of India to reach space
- Arunima Sinha – First Indian female amputee to climb Mt Everest
- Kiran Bedi – First Indian IPS officer of India

You can see from the above examples that today girls are surpassing in every field may it be science, technology, games, astronautics, adventure, or politics. Daughters are equally valuable as sons in our society. They should not be separated from their rights and independence.

“GIRLS ARE THE SPIRIT OF OUR NATION, SAVE THEM AND STOP THEIR EXPLOITATION”

To end I would like to say Girls are the important part of a family as without them it is impossible to imagine the existence of life on the earth.

“NO GIRL SO, NO MOTHER ULTIMATELY NO LIFE.”

MOTHER MOTIVATED ME

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The famous quote states 'Behind every successful man ,there is a woman'...But in my life, my favorite quote is- ***Behind every successful woman there is a woman,*** Yes I really mean it & the woman is my mother Mrs. Pramila Manikrao Patil .

Her wedding life started at 17 years of age according to ancient times & she gave me birth at her 18 years of age, the bond of love that started in 1979 still continues .No words could define what she means to me...! But in short she is my world .Feeling proud to share behind each & every forward step in life , she is the backbone, whether it's related to education ,marriage, developing career & birthing decisions. She was, is & will be The One Woman Army yet my strong emotional & moral support.

Although she learned till SSC ,always desired that her kids should learn & earn efficiently in deep ocean called life ,should make our own identity with independency. There are some cherished moments that I'll never forget in lifetime which are flooded with strength & courage that taught me the three word miracle phrase '*NEVER GIVE UP*'

Discipline is her first name. When I was in class 7th , me & my brothers were fighting for a common thing, meanwhile she came over there, ordered to finish everybody the household work even though our Annual Exams were going on. The best part she never be on the side of anyone when it comes to the battles , those created stress & ate her valuable time energy that needs to recharge, rather she was never gender biased in our upbringing as well. My brothers have to do the work allotted by her whether it's regarding cleaning floor or washing utensils. This behaviour sow the seeds of gender equality inside me deep down. I realize kids need a mom who will help them to develop socially by encouraging others to contribute to their care. Learned kids need a mom who is not so

insecure & desperate for love, that she clings to the belief that only she can meet child's needs. With her due suggestions , fortunately I discovered the stability of having the earth beneath my feet early on, I did not pass the Super Mom trait to my kids. Many moms haven't been so lucky. She only explained me the importance of forgiveness, I learned forgiveness frees us to love, live & trust again, which is a part of life & it must go on ...

The beginning of year 2007 was totally embarrassing for us, as we came to know my father is suffering from Diabetic Nephropathy & soon he will land in chronic renal failure which in future might need Dialysis & Renal Transplant. Being a medico I was totally confused & helpless what next ? He was on palliative treatment but soon we need to go to Mumbai for his further treatment at Jaslok Hospital. At that moment I was doing my DFP post at Rajawadi , Mumbai. I opted for leaves but unfortunately I did not get, I took the decision of leaving the post. The only person scolded me for this decision was my mother, she was not happy with it, but I was optionless.

Even she is a non medico I salute her courage & urge to struggle with the situation with available resources in hand, Doctors advised to do Renal Transplant as life saving procedure or continue dialysis according to condition of my father. Decision making was so difficult as we need to stay in city like Mumbai for longer duration , the next big question from where to get Renal Donor..??? The people we suppose always with us show real colors in devastating times ...all the relatives were reluctant & run away with due fear. My mother stand still & told that she will donate the kidney. We were happy that if it works we could save life of our father. But somewhere in mind fear of

loosing parents was still there. On the day 15 October 2007 my father underwent Renal Transplant, after 33% HLA matching with my mother. On the day of surgery ,when I met her in recovery room she was smiling despite of intense pain of operative intervention , I asked the reason she replied Doctors who were operating on my father talking among themselves that this kidney will do better ,It's rocking kidney , I was experiencing mixed emotions of joy & sadness at the same time , salute to her courage for her attitude of smiling despite of worst operative pain she had. The Savitri in real sense saved the life of his Satyawan finally.

In 2009 I blessed with a cute baby girl, in 2012 I was expecting for the second time, Immense pressure I felt the moment I conceived. I was unaware of this gender issue till date. So much stress , social pressure I faced on those days, but my mother encouraged & supported my decision of continuing pregnancy without any intervention .I prepared myself to face whatever the situation is, I gave birth to my second daughter ,the only person happy was my mother & she is the only who distributed sweets on arrival of my daughter. The worth support saved one girl child.

She always encouraged me for upgrading with current knowledge in the field of medicine. Inspired from her I did online certificate courses wherever possible as CCGDM (Certificate Course In Gestational Diabetes Mellitus), Post Graduate Certificate Course in PCOS by Indian PSOC Society.

On 15th August 2016, I lost my father after a long ICU stay, because undiagnosed PAD & brain death we need to remove life supporting system, the moment was full of sorrow, we were more thinking of her that how she will cope up with the reality , but being a strong woman she handled everything ,even gave emotional support to us as well, her presence never make us felt the absence of our father. She is still continuing her duties in his absence as well.

My passion is Obstetric Ultrasound & I wanted to upgrade myself in Advanced learning ,when I took the decision of doing Fellowship In Advanced Obstetric

Ultrasound at Fernandez Foundation ,Hyderabad ,my mother respected my decision & supported me morally, financially as well. Credit of my educational growth goes to her , without her support it would have been dream only.

Life is full of obstacles , they always come to test hidden potential within us. After completion of my fellowship I joined A institute MGM,MCRI as consultant . I was very happy as we are about to organize our OBGYN SONOCON 2019 Conference. Fully excited as I was in Organizing Committee . But due to sudden fall on floor I had sacral fracture just 40 days prior the event ,I thought it's all over ,I'll not be able to actively participate in most awaited academic event. At that time she fully supported me, within 30 days with strict bed rest ,her loving tender care helped me to heal rapidly ,to gain my lost physical potential. She gave me birth second time Everybody aware of the grand success we got for our Live Ultrasound Workshops. The efforts appreciated by all the respected seniors & colleagues.

As now we all are aware of regarding the COVID 19 Pandemic , she asked my brother to help the students who were locked at education place apart from their parents in this phase of lockdown, by supplying grocery. She even asked the act should be done on the basis of humanity without publicity. If you are donating for publicity better not to donate, she told him in our culture we do believe that if we donate from right hand nothing be known to left one, that is donation.

It's all about my mother ,her different aspects of belief, attitude. I must say what I'm today is because of her only. Thanks mom for being always there in life's ups & downs .

One wish will always be there in my subconscious mind dear God , whenever I'll take birth I want her as my mother.

MOTHER MOTIVATED ME

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Offspring's grab invaluable gifts from their mother. Mother is an epitome of grace, kindness, care, love and knowledge. Children learn from their mother; how to grow and introspect.

Mother can help untangle a thousand mysteries of life with her few wise words. My mother teaches me to create a better life. There is so much I can gain from her that if I really take the pledge to learn from her and gain knowledge each day, even then I won't be able to fully acquire all that I can, in 100 years.

There was a trying episode in my life when everything seemed hopeless and I felt like what a thirsty person might feel after travelling many miles in search of water in a desert. This was the time when my mother, like always came to my rescue. Mother taught me to concentrate on myself, giving me an atmosphere to self-heal and introspection. She, as she always does, made me see the lotus flowers in the slush. I dealt with my problems calmly and finally came out of it. Extra effort is not needed to learn from your mother. Just observe her every now and then and it turns obstacles into learning opportunities. I look forward to many more lessons from my mother in future as well.

Mother.... she is like a cool breeze in scorching hot weather.....a calming lullaby in sleepless nights ...a balm in pain.....sunlight in freezing cold weather.....a mirror when you forget how to look at yourself.... basically, a solution to any problem in her child's life. A person can learn from so many people: a teacher, a wise old man, a historian, a boss and from just about anyone who has moral values to teach and is living a life to exemplify. But I have realised that what can be learnt from a mother is different. This is because a

mother's way of teaching is different. Everyone who has been lucky enough to have a mother who has had, or has been teaching him/her would understand and agree with me. My mother teaches me in a way no one else can.

The bad episode of my life taught me a lot. They also broke me a lot. But, because my mother motivated me at that time, my problems became miniscule. Anyone can support you during turbulent times, but the way a mother supports is unique. She gives you an environment in which you can grow and also with her selfless care, aids in healing the broken parts within you. My mother has taught me how to effectively utilise my time, be it regarding my studies or concerning my self-growth. She has helped me take good care of myself. She has encouraged me to follow my heart. She always appreciates the little efforts I make. A mother's heart is made of gold. She would always be there for her children even when sometimes they don't appreciate or understand that. A father's care is also beautiful, but mother is special because she spends around 9 extra months with her child! Well even if nature would not have been working that way, I bet still a mother would know our problems before us. My mother has given me immense knowledge to be confident and happy in life. I am thankful to her for bringing me to this world and helping me out at difficult times always

A woman gets transformed when she enters into motherhood. Suddenly she starts thinking more about her child than anyone else in her life. Her

husband also starts feeling that the child is probably taking away some of the attention that he enjoyed previously. The man of course also appreciates this fact too along with the innocent envy that he might feel. This emotion probably is natural. Whenever this phase comes in a woman's life she naturally matures and transforms into a more beautiful, amazing, loving and gentle person called mother. My mother often tells how much mischief me and my brother used to make when we were little kids. It must take a heart of a mother and mother alone to love such annoying creatures called children. She also recounts beautiful and wise moments of our childhood. She has dealt with everything the good, bad and ugly. This is why, she knows us inside out. She has helped me enormously in my life. During weak phase of life, she taught how to find optimism in smallest of things. This motivation has made me a strong woman today. I can deal with most of my problems myself now, knowing that she still is at my back. She has motivated me to leave the melancholic thoughts every time. She has reintroduced me to myself in my difficult times. When anything seems dull, she brings the candle to lighten up and bring a whole new perspective. My mother has brought light into dull chapters of the book of my life. This has allowed me to read myself better. When I read myself, I understood myself. Understanding lead to self-discovery and has made me realise that human being requires motivation every now and then. But the values fed to you by your family specially your mother always stay with you. The values my mother has taught me, have not only motivated me during the low phase of my life; but are continuing to help me overcome almost every obstacle. My mother has given me the motivation to live life with a strong self-belief and that solves many problems automatically. My mother being a doctor has always been great at her job. This has made me realise the importance of being meticulous and hard-working. She and my

father always encouraged me and my brother to carve out our own niche in our lives. My parents being doctors encourage me a lot, me being in the same profession. They also give the same environment to my brother who has chosen non-medical stream. They are great parents but I am slightly biased towards mother because she knows me better. She knows how should I deal with my problems better. She also knows when to intervene in my life and when to give me my own space to heal and grow. This motivates me to be a better person. Being a good human being is the most important thing and everything else follows after it. I have learned this from my mother. She encourages me most when I do something that is helping to others. This has helped me inculcate a caring attitude in life. She has motivated me to be myself and keep growing. The seeds which are sown in one's brain always grow and keep giving fruits forever. She has sown such seeds of self-growth and love inside me. She has made me who I am today. She still knows when I am hurt and when I am strong. She still has so much to give, to share and to teach. She still wants me to be stronger. I realise, even when we become adults, we continue to remain children for our parents. I am the same little girl for my mother whenever she feels the need to teach me something. She will, in the same way try to explain me things in a gentle yet assertive manner. That's the beauty of a mother; she can be fierce in her gentleness and calm in her anger. The motivations one gains from mother are really too many. Sometimes I feel they are like many stars in the sky. You can get motivated from the way your mother speaks or the way she deals with the day to day problems or the way she fixes a broken thing in your house. I am very much aware of the fact that probably there's some part of my mother in almost everything I do. When I am far from her, I remember her so many times. *No matter how many great people I meet in my life, I am convinced that my mother will remain the best motivator for me and the greatest person!*

मां मेरी प्रेरणा स्रोत

DR. NEELAM MISRA

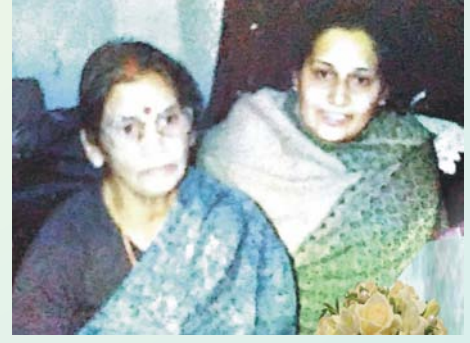
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"जब जब कागज पर लिखा मैंने मां का नाम
कलम अदब से कह उठी हो गए चारों धाम"

मानव जीवन का उद्देश्य है कि अपने मन वचन और शरीर से दूसरों की मदद करना, जब तुम दूसरों के लिए कुछ करते हो उसी पल हमारे जीवन में भी खुशी की शुरुआत हो जाती है

जीवन को सुंदर, हृदय को विशाल, बुद्धि को विवेकवान एवं तन को सबल बनाने वाली माँ धन्य है। गणेश जी ने अपने बुद्धि कौशल के बल पर अपने माता-पिता की परिक्रमा कर सर्वप्रथम पूजा का सम्मान हासिल किया था। सचमुच सबसे बड़ा तीर्थ स्थल माता पिता ही है माँ ही हमारी प्रेरणा स्रोत है जिसके ममतामई स्पर्श को पाकर मनुष्य अपने सब दुख भूल जाता है, क्योंकि माँ पग-पग पर अपने बच्चों को आदर्श और सच्चे रास्ते पर चलने की सीख देती है, समय का महत्व बताती है। माँ की ममता वह नींव का पत्थर है जिस पर बच्चे के भविष्य की इमारत खड़ी होती है। ईश्वर द्वारा मिले इस वरदान की कीमत आंकी नहीं जा सकती। ऐसी प्रेरणा स्रोत मां के चरण स्पर्श द्वारा आशीर्वाद को संचित करें तो भविष्य में उपलब्धियों के ढेर लग जाएंगे।

जब कभी मैं किसी मुश्किल का सामना करती हूँ तब मेरी माँ ही मेरे मुरझाए चेहरे पर तमाम प्रयासों द्वारा मुस्कुराहट लाती हैं। आज अपनी माँ के पद चिन्हों पर चलकर मैं भी अपने बच्चों का तथा समाज के सभी लोगों के लिए उनकी दी हुई सीख का अनुसरण करती हूँ और भगवान से प्रार्थना करती हूँ कि उन सभी के चेहरों पर अपनी प्रेरणा से मुस्कुराहट ला सकूँ।

"नील गगन पर सुनते हैं, कुदरत रहती है

लेकिन मां के पांव के नीचे, सचमुच जन्नत रहती है।"

माँ ईश्वर का दिया हुआ एक अनमोल वरदान है जिसकी आंचल की छांव में हम अपने आप को सुरक्षित महसूस करते हैं। माँ हमारे जीवन में मार्गदर्शक और शिक्षिका की भूमिका निभाती है। हम अपने जीवन में जो भी आरम्भिक ज्ञान तथा शिक्षाएं पाते हैं वह हमें हमारी माँ के द्वारा ही दी जाती हैं।

प्रेरणा एक तरह की अनुभूति है जो हमें किसी चुनौती या फिर कार्य को सफलतापूर्वक प्राप्त करने में हमारी सहायता करती है। यह एक प्रकार की प्रवृत्ति है, जो हमारे शारीरिक तथा सामाजिक विकास में हमारी सहायता करती है। किसी व्यक्ति तथा घटना से प्राप्त प्रेरणा में हमें इस बात का एहसास कराती है कि हम विकट परिस्थितियों में भी किसी लक्ष्य

को प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। हम अपनी क्षमताओं के विकास के लिए अन्य स्रोतों से प्रेरणा प्राप्त करते हैं जिसमें मुख्यता विख्यात व्यक्ति या फिर हमारे आसपास का विशेष व्यक्ति हमें इस बात के लिए प्रेरित करता है कि यदि उसके द्वारा विकट परिस्थितियों में भी लक्ष्य प्राप्त किया जा सकता है, तो हमारे द्वारा भी यह कार्य अवश्य ही किया जा सकता है।

कई लोगों के जीवन में पौराणिक ऐतिहासिक पाल उनके प्रेरणास्रोत होते हैं तो कई लोगों के जीवन में प्रसिद्ध व्यक्ति या फिर उनके माता-पिता उनके प्रेरणास्रोत होते हैं मायने यह रखता है कि आप अपने लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने में किस के विचारों और तरीकों से कितने ज्यादा प्रभावित हैं।

मैं डॉक्टर नीलम मिश्रा बड़े गर्व का अनुभव करती हूँ कि मेरी माँ मेरी प्रेरणा स्रोत हैं जिन्होंने मेरे मन में निस्वार्थ भाव से समाज की सेवा, दुखियों के दुख दूर करने का, हजारों माँ के मन में एक किलकारी के गूँजने की खुशी का व उनके होठों पर मुस्कान लाने का जस्बा कूट - कूट कर भर दिया है। आज मैं जो कुछ भी हूँ यह सब मेरी माँ का एक सपना था जिसे पूर्ण होते देख कर मुझे सुख का अनुभव करती हूँ।

5 साल पहले की बात है कि मेरे क्लिनिक में एक माँ अपनी बेटी के साथ आई जब मैंने उसे बुलाया तो रोने लगी और उसने बताया कि एक अमीर लड़के के बहकावे में आकर उसकी बेटी में अपनी इज्जत का सौदा किया मन बहुत दुखी हुआ मैंने बोला आप परेशान न हो फिर मैंने कानूनी प्रक्रिया करने के बाद उसका गर्भपात करवाया और फिर उसको समझाया कि बेटा जीवन भगवान ने जीने के लिए दिया यहां वहशी दरिंदे पग-पग पर बलात्कार करने के लिए मिले मिलेंगे क्या आप ऐसा जीवन चाहती हैं? आज से प्रण करो कि - आप अपने आप को शिक्षित करो जीवन में कुछ करने की ठान लो आपको अपने पैरों पर खड़ा होना है। आज से मैं डॉक्टर नीलम मिश्रा हर कदम पर आपको मदद व प्रेरित करूंगी किसी चीज की आवश्यकता हो तो मुझसे संपर्क कर सकती हैं आज मैं बहुत प्रसन्न हूँ उस लड़की ने मेरी बातों से प्रेरित होकर जीवन को नई दिशा दी, उसने बी. ए. किया और बी. एड. किया और एक स्कूल में एक शिक्षिका बनकर बच्चों को प्रेरित कर रही है। उसके जीवन को ऐसा लगता है एक उद्देश्य मिल गया हो। इसी तरह अगर व्यक्ति समाज में थोड़ा सा भी परोपकार करना शुरू कर दे तो यह देश व समाज को ऊंचाइयों पर जाने से कोई नहीं रोक सकता।

आज तक के अपने जीवन में मैंने अपनी मां को कभी विपत्तियों के आगे

घुटने टेकते हुए नहीं देखा है। मेरी सुख सुविधाओं के लिए उन्होंने कभी भी अपने दुखों की परवाह नहीं कि वास्तव में वह त्याग और प्रेम की प्रतिमूर्ति थीं। मेरी सफलताओं के लिए उन्होंने ना जाने कितने कष्ट सहे हैं। उनका व्यवहार रहन-सहन इच्छाशक्ति मेरे जीवन की सबसे बड़ी प्रेरणा है। मेरी मां मेरी प्रेरणा स्रोत इसीलिए इसीलिए भी है, क्योंकि ज्यादातर लोग कार्य करते हैं, उन्हें प्रसिद्धि प्राप्त हो और वह समाज में नाम कमा सकें लेकिन एक माँ यह कभी नहीं सोचती, वह तो बस अपने बच्चों को उनके जीवन में सफल बनाना चाहती है। वह जो भी कार्य करती है उसमें उसका अपना कोई स्वार्थ निहित नहीं होता यह कारण है कि मैं अपनी माँ को पृथ्वी पर ईश्वर का एक रूप मानती हूँ। आज मैं उन्हीं आदर्शों का पालन करते हुए अपनी बेटे और बेटों की प्रेरणा स्रोत हूँ और एक मार्गदर्शक समाज सेवा की भावना से ओतप्रोत अपने बच्चों को उस राह पर चलने के लिए प्रेरित करती हूँ।

मेरी इच्छा है कि मेरे बच्चे एक अच्छे डॉक्टर बनकर निःस्वार्थता और करुणा के मूल्यों को स्थापित करें। इतिहास कई सारी ऐसी घटनाओं के वर्णन से भरा पड़ा है जिसे माताओं ने अपनी संतानों के लिए विभिन्न प्रकार के दुख सहते हुए अपना सर्वस्व निछावर कर दिया। इनमें छलपति सम्राट शिवाजी महाराज माता जीजाबाई जिसने अपने पुत्र को प्रेरणादाई कहानियां सुनाकर प्रेरित किया और वह एक महान योद्धा और स्वतंत्र हिंदू राष्ट्र का छलपति शिवाजी बनने में सफल रहे और जीजाबाई ने यह सब हासिल करने के लिए अपनी सारी शक्तियां, योग्यता और बुद्धि लगा दी। एलेक्सजेंडर जिन्हें पूरी दुनिया सिकंदर के नाम से जानती है, पूरी दुनिया को जीतने का स्वप्न लिए युद्ध याला शुरू की उसमें उसकी माता ओलम्पिया थी, जिन्होंने सिकंदर के साथ जीत की रणनीति बनाने में पूरी मदद की।

"माँ पुतलीबाई" महात्मा गांधी हमारे राष्ट्रपिता को ईमानदारी और सच्चाई का मार्ग दिखाने वाली माता के रूप में जानी जाती हैं। इसी तरह मेरी काम, किरण बेदी, प्रतिभा पाटिल, इंदिरा गांधी आदि अनेक महिलाएं हैं जिन्होंने केवल देश सेवा का ही जिम्मा नहीं लिया अपितु अपने बच्चों को भी एक मुकाम हासिल करने की प्रेरणा दी। चिकित्सा के क्षेत्र में, खेलों के क्षेत्र में, फिल्मी दुनिया, संगीत, विज्ञान, मीडिया के क्षेत्रों में अनेक ऐसे उदाहरण हैं जिसमें माताओं ने अपने अथक परिश्रम, बलिदान, प्रेरणा और ममता लुटा कर अपने बच्चों को एक लक्ष्य प्रदान किया है। तभी उन बच्चों ने भी अपने माता-पिता को भरोसा दिलाया कि वह उनका स्वप्न पूरा करने के लिए जी-जान लगा कर मेहनत करेंगे।

आज की युवा पीढ़ी स्वतंत्र है। आज के माता-पिता भी अपने विचारों को अपनी इच्छाओं को उन पर हावी नहीं होने देते हैं। बच्चे जीवन में क्या करना चाहते हैं क्या बनना चाहते हैं माता पिता पिता को उनके विचारों का समर्थन करना चाहिए, यह आवश्यक नहीं है कि डॉक्टर के बच्चे डॉक्टर बने या शिक्षक के बच्चे शिक्षक बने, उनका यह अधिकार है कि वह अपनी राह स्वयं चुने, लेकिन उस राह को चुनने में माता-पिता प्रेरित करें और सही मार्गदर्शन करें तब आप स्वयं देखेंगे कि किस प्रकार बच्चे

उन सही मूल्यों को महत्व देते हैं। माता बचपन में प्रेरणात्मक कहानियों के पालों के माध्यम से सही गलत की पहचान कराती है जो आगे चलकर बच्चों के जीवन को एक सही दिशा से अवगत कराने में मददगार होते हैं। हर रोज हम अपने आसपास अनेक माताओं से रूबरू होते हैं। कामकाजी माँ, गृहणियां वे देखने में हाव भाव में पहनावे में भले ही अलग दिखती हो लेकिन भीतर से सब एक जैसी होती हैं और अपने बच्चों के लिए सबकुछ करने को तैयार रहती है, जमाने भर को प्रेरणा देने वाली इन माँओं को नमन है।

“बच्चों को मिले दुनिया की खुशी, बस इतनी उसकी आस है

एक मां के लिए औलाद ही सब उसकी कायनात है”

संतान उत्पादन एक महान उत्तरदायित्व है जिसे उठाने के लिए बहुत समय पूर्व तैयारी करने की आवश्यकता है। यदि माता-पिता सद्गुणी, अच्छे स्वभाव, नीतिवान व धर्मात्मा है तो उनके बच्चे भी उत्तम शरीर और मन वाले होते हैं। कभी कभी जो प्रतिकूल अपवाद देखे जाते हैं उनमें भी मानसिक प्रतिकूलताओं को ही उनमें निमित्त कारण पाया है। माँ जो अपने बच्चे को 9 माह तक गर्भ में रहती है उसका विशेष दायित्व है कि वह बालक में वह सभी गुण विकसित कर सके जो उसे एक संस्कारवान समाज को नई दिशा देने वाला एक जिम्मेदार नागरिक बन सकें। माँ को हर समय यह ज्ञात होना चाहिए कि उसका बच्चा क्या कर रहा है। केवल माँ ही भविष्य के बारे में सोचती हैं क्योंकि वह अपने बच्चे के रूप में उसे जन्म देती हैं। कोरोना वायरस का संक्रमण पूरी दुनिया के 200 से अधिक देशों में फैला है। माँ को अपने बच्चे की चिंता दूर करनी होगी खुलकर इमानदारी से बात करनी होगी। आप अपने बच्चे को आश्वासन दें कि वह ठीक रहेंगे अर्थात आशावादी बने आपको अपने बच्चों को सशक्त बनाना है। वह कौन से ऐसे कदम उठाए ताकि वह संक्रमित होने के खतरे को टाल सके यह प्रेरणा उसे अपने आप को स्वस्थ रखने के लिए प्रेरित करेंगी। बच्चों को साफ सफाई के असरदार तरीके बताने से हम पूरे समुदाय की सुरक्षा में योगदान दे सकते हैं।

अंत में मैं आज बड़े गर्व से कहना चाहती हूँ कि मेरी मां मेरी प्रेरणा है। मुझे इस बात पर गर्व है कि जो लोग मुझे जानते हैं वह मुझे पसंद करते हैं या फिर मेरा सम्मान करते हैं और कई तो मुझे प्यार करते हैं। मेरे इस सम्मान और प्यार के पीछे मेरी मां का हाथ है।

मां तुम शतायु हो तुम्हारे अंग कृत्यंग हमेशा तुम्हारा साथ देते रहे,
तुम्हारे जैसी माँ हर लड़की को मिले।

मुझे याद आता है वह बचपन

वो शरारते, वो लड़कपन

पापा की डाटें और तेरा मुझे बचाना।

सामने डांटना और चुपके से खाना खिलाना

मां बहुत याद आती है तेरी

ना तेरा आंचल है ना उस नीम की छांव

है तो बस जीवन की भगदड़ और पहाड़ों सी वेदना

फिर भी सब से लड़कर तू मुझे जीना सिखाती है

माँ तेरी प्रेरणा - तेरी प्रेरणा।

MOTHER OF MINE, YOU GAVE TO ME

DR. KALPANA GULWADE



Ma, !Amma!Aai ! How commonly these exclamations are uttered by any one in fear ,pain, anguish or distress! This exclamation has crossed all barriers of gender, age , caste and creed ..Almost from the spinal level, the intent is same.! Mother , the saviour, the reliever, the redeemer!

As I recollect the utmost epitome of selflessness, sacrifice and unconditional love my mother has been, I also remember the bright ray of determination and motivation which shone on me during all the dark phases of depression, never giving me a chance to escape without trying. Defeatest attitude was not for her daughters, and surely not for the hardworking!'Hardworking'??!! Yes, that was unconditional to bringing up. No substitute for hard work, was what was imbibed into us sisters, from times immemorial. Reminds me of the song by Jimmy Osmond.

Mother of mine

You gave to me allof my life

To do as I please

I owe everything I have to you

Mother , sweet mother of mine!

Vivid memories of the financial crunch we faced when dad retired from the services, with 2 of 3 girls in high school, and the youngest just out of her diapers.Came in the stronghold of the family, decided to venture out of the security of this close knit home, to pool into the finances of the house hold by getting a job as a primary school teacher. Let it be dawned onto the reader that this lady was a simple matriculate with all but a Montessori training to her credit. For she belonged to the era where eldest of the brood of 6 had to sacrifice her education for the lucky 5 who followed ..The rigorous schedule of setting out of the house at an unearthly 5.30 A.M, walking to the bus stand half a kilometer away, to be in school by 6.45 AM,for a 7am assembly seems unnerving today when I think about an emergency delivery at dawn. The day didn't start

there, but much earlier because of the lunch boxes, which had to be prepared for our school.

I know its hard mama.....

**I know it can be hard to get up every day
and have these little people rely on you.**

**I know its hard to feel like sometimes your world is
so small**

**I want to remind you,you are the world that those
little ones revolve around
you are their comfort.**

**You are everything to them ,
and I hope even on your hard ,
you know how special you are ,
especially to your little people!**

-Anonymous

Too naïve were we with petty minds to realize the bother and burden our small demands were for a retired parenthood. Never were we made to realize the invisible restrictions of a restrained purse. They would cut out their trivial pleasures(as they called them) to fulfill ours.Education was given utmost importance and their sheer determination and grit led all of us to untiring efforts. As some times my mother would say...

I am grateful for.....

Early wakeup= children to love

House to clean = safe place to live

Laundry to do = clothes to wear

Dirty dishes = food to eat

Crumbs under the table= family meal

Grocery shopping to do = money to use

Toilets to clean = indoor plumbing

**Lots of noise = kids having fun
Endless questions = a child who is learning
Getting into bed tired+ sore which taught me what
you felt
I'm still alive
- CHELESA LEE SMITH**

Whether it was our preparations for the all important final year viva, or the huge stress of seeking admission for post graduation, we always had the freedom to decide, and act as per our discretion with the unfounded support of our mother. The purity of intent was displayed by the often repeated quote "Keep your head on your shoulders". Long duty hours during residency and the demand for mental peace after grueling night duties was always met with a pat on the shoulder and 'these times will pass away' attitude. The occasional hostility of a jealous senior, for being the unit incharge's favourite underdog, the hardworking junior! The steel to tolerate mental stress to overlook cold stares during the rounds was instilled by my mother's fight to the second rung as school superintendent inspite of low qualification but with pure intensions and hardwork again. Her preaching were much like....

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

Seriously, be strong and know when enough is enough.

Take your stand, speak up and refuse to let other hurt you.

**Throughout your lifetime some
People will discredit you, disrespect you and treat
You poorly for no apparent reason at all.**

**Don't consume yourself with trying to change
them or win their approval.**

**And don't make any space in your heart to hate
them**

**You don't have control over what others think
about you,**

**But you do have control over how you decide to
internalize their opinions.**

Leaves them to their own judgements.

Let people love you for who you are, and not for

**who they want you to be.
Or let them walk away if they choose.
They can't harm you either way,
its their understanding that is faulty, not yours.**

You don't ever have to feel guilty about removing toxic people from your life

**Its doesn't matter whether someone is a relative,
Romantic interest, employer, childhood friend,
Or a new acquaintance- you don't have to
Make room for people who cause you pain or
Make you feesmall.**

**Its one thing if a person
Owns up to their behavior and makes an effort to
change.**

**But if person disregards your fellings,
Ignores your boundaries, and "continues" to treat
you in a harmful way,**

THEY NEED TO GO!

-DANIELL KOEPKE

Dark clouds move fast invited the confidence and poise of a consultant who had endured the tough surgical and PG sessions of a busy government medical college Like the diamond exiting from the fire of coal, I was ready beaming with confidence and so was this lady, proud to have a new title, DOC MADAM KI MA!

Again ring my ears,

Mother of mine

Now I am grown

And I can walk straight

All on my own.

I'd like to give you

All you gave to me

Mother sweet mother of mine.....

.As phases of the moon wax and wane, so does our temperament of tolerance to totally non medic parents, but understanding the irritability, I was always suggested to be guided by doctor parents of my mothers students, being from one of the prestigious schools of those times. Help poured in from all corners and different faculties to help 'Madam's daughter' decide the next course beyond a post graduate degree. After getting sound advice from

helpful minds, it was decided to pursue a course in laparoscopy . Meanwhile, marriage was on the cards and again our choice of life partners from different religions and castes was never met with dissent as it was human qualities and capability which was given importance. Again the strong hold, my mother fulfilled all her aspirations for marriages of all the 3 daughters to the best of her ability, slowly unraveling the treasures in kind and cash which she had meticulously saved and stored for each one of us. From motherly tips on settling down in our new abode , to setting up the kitchen to choosing the colour of curtains, my mother saw to every small detail with her heightened aesthetic senses . Hence forth the frequent call for whether the maid came to help from the rations available at home to finding out about the rest I managed to take after hectic night duties,the list seemed endless.....

Have each of us, specially girls turning into ladies and then home makers ever imagined what life would be without that friendly helpful support from Ma dear? Not everyone is blessed with good and sane choices to implement from day 1 of family life. It slowly dawns to us what hardships the lady of the house must have endured in those days of non Google.The ever suggestive youtube which we heavily depend on was never a click away in yesteryears, but this stenthened the discretion and 'Learn from Mistakes'which the strong ladies learnt and preached.

We always take that advice which comes unasked for with a pinch of salt.In time we develop the sensibility to make our own choices and slowly the much sought after advice becomes irritating specially when we are in a counselling session with our patients

.Days fly fast and finally I was a MOM!. Never once will I forget the joy and pride in my parents eyes when they held onto that little hand of life which was part of them ,as much as mine. All girls try to emulate our mothers and so did I during the bring up and parenting cycle, but Ma I miss You!!Will I ever be able to do justice to these little bundles of joy as they are today, with my busy and untimely work schedules.??!! Then came the strong wiff of the same morning air that she endured to make me reach this stature today. Never say die attitude, topped with hardwork and perseverance .

**Now , after becoming mom of two ,
When I recollect all the**

**efforts ,
sacrifices,
hard works,
love and emotions,
and so many of her million of things , which you did
for me and is still doing it,
without any question , without any expectations,
without any favour in return.
I feel like, I am doing nothing for my children,
Not even a percent of you.
I realized, God is kind enough to bless me two
moms,
One who has given me birth, AMMU,
Another, who has given me life AMMI.**

**Love you ammu and ammu
Love you for your presence
In the world and in my life—NAZ**

Time and tide taught me that

The most PRECIOUS jewels you'll
Ever have around your neck
Are the arms of your CHILDREN !!

And rightly so!. That is when I remember the sweet smile I used to get when she returned after a hard day's work, forgetting all she had been through. For it was for her loved ones for which she toiled.

Today at the age of 72, she still doesn't forget to send me phrases of concern and boost, even though she knows I may or may not see her messages.Her failing senses still wishing us 3 all the best in life and so to her grown up grandchildren. Waiting for lock down to end, waiting for our visit , waiting for the 'ting' of wats app to get news of her beloveds.Never for a day does she forget to enquire about our hardships in theses difficult time, reprimanding me for laxity in self protection.She is still the strongest person I turn to advice for in times of indecisiveness.For dear reader,
For every mother,

***She is water.
Powerful enough to drown you
Soft enough to cleasen you,
Deep enough to save you!!***

Save the girl child

DR AMITA GARG

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UP PMHS

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We regularly come across social terms such as gender equality, respect for human rights & human dignity, women empowerment, social injustice etc. If one thinks deeply, all these social terms have one core theme - Saving the Girl Child.

At a global level, there are key goals articulated by United Nations like Millennium Development goals (MDG) & Sustainable Development goal (SDG) which lay a great focus on gender equality. India has committed to achieve the vision of these goals and has launched many programs of women empowerment and gender equality since early 2000s. We have also brought in force various laws & acts to positively impact women welfare and women empowerment.

But back home in our state of Uttar Pradesh, this continues to be a grave concern in spite of all the laws & acts and needs to be addressed. To throw some light on the state of the problem, we should look at some basic facts. The sex ratio in the state is still behind the national average. Another data point that points towards the problem is admission rate in SNCU, Sick Newborn Care Unit where less than 28 days neonates are given care. Admission rate of female neonate has not crossed 40% (though an improvement in last 4 years from 25% to 40%). The LAMA rate of female SNCU babies is also high. The follow-up record of female babies is also less in comparison to those of male babies.

During my stint at District Women Hospital Muzaffarnagar, I have witnessed numerous incidents

over the years, threatening the Beti Bachao Abhiyan and I'll try & narrate a few to indicate the symptoms & root causes of this problem.

Once an unknown depressed & mentally shocked pregnant woman was admitted in the hospital on request of a social worker (journalist), who figured out that she was homeless and took shelter at railway station or some place in the market or sometimes in a temple. She needed a place where she could be saved from public nuisance and be provided antenatal care in the form of nutrition and medical care. Being the CMS, I got her admitted in the hospital in spite of some under currents of disagreement in the staff. But once admitted, the staff started taking care of the patient with full sincerity. It was a tricky case, the woman's behaviour was unpredictable – completely silent for a while and aggressive/violent at times, speaking with mannerism like a teacher but still in this condition. She stayed at the hospital for a month till she delivered her baby (a girl child) and was shifted to an ashram in Shukratal after 7 days of post-natal care in an appreciably normal condition. While she was being cared of in the hospital, we sent all the information to the police to figure out her whereabouts. We gave her writing & drawing material in the hope of getting some clues about her friends & family. We also floated her photographs in various whatsapp groups along with whatever clues we could gather from her writings & drawings. These efforts helped in tracing her whereabouts and details that she was the 5th daughter in a family, had a son who was staying with her parents. She was very badly treated by her husband & brother-in-law, who were responsible for this condition of hers. On further investigation & legal proceedings her husband & brother-in-law were

sentenced to prison, but the shock came when her parents did not agree to let her (and her newly born girl child) to stay with them, while they were perfectly happy having her son staying with them. She was ultimately shifted to a shelter home in Bharatpur, Rajasthan but this incident of apathy by her parents pointed towards the massive mindset block that our society has in nurturing a girl child.

The necessity of male child is a mindset that has built over generations and extremely tough to change. In another incident, a lady was admitted in the hospital at a gestational stage of 18-20 weeks in a gasping condition and was somehow saved. She had a first female child and completely ignored the doctor's advice after being diagnosed with a cornual pregnancy as she was told by some quack that she was going to bear a male child and should continue her pregnancy. She was ready to bear grave risks on her life in the pursuit of a male child.

I can recall another example of the male child mindset even in the family of a healthcare staff which embodied the hindi saying of "Chirag tale andhera". One of our ward boys had a daughter-in-law having a bad obstetric history with 7th gravida and only one alive issue (from her 2nd pregnancy out of first 6). A brief case history is as under:

- 1st pregnancy - LSCS done for fetal distress & severe PET and delivered a male child who died after 3 days, because of delay in taking decision for induction of labour & caesarean section.
- 2nd pregnancy - LSCS done for severe PET, alive female child
- 3rd & 4th pregnancy - mid-term abortions, one vaginal delivery & one hysterotomy for IUD (probably after sex determination??)
- 5th & 6th pregnancy - missed abortion of 8 weeks for probably unmanaged essential hypertension
- 7th pregnancy - now she was a full-fledged case of essential hypertension. However, her blood pressure was kept under control and she could manage to reach term. She delivered a female

child by cesarean section. Her husband (sales manager in a pharmaceutical company) gave a negative consent for permanent method of sterilization even after knowing the seriousness of his wife condition and a long obstetric career of 15 years. Even our ward boy seemed to be aligned with the approach

This innate desire for a male child often becomes irrational as cited above. In a separate incident, a couple gave conditional consent for tubectomy operation along with a cesarean section only in the scenario of delivery of a male child. In spite of counseling, there was no concern or bother for female health, whether it be a 3rd cesarean section or any other associated life-threatening complication.

Almost every now & then, we used to come across a female neonate found in the pile of garbage or left unattended in a forsaken place. Some passerby would bring her to the hospital after hearing the little one cry. As a protocol, such babies were given care in SNCU and then handed over to Bal Kalyan Parishad. But one can imagine how many of such cases were lucky to be noticed by a passerby & actually found their way to the hospital!!

The mindset of desiring a male child who is the key to continuing one's bloodline, is an extremely deep-rooted concept & has been reinforced over generations. It is almost a cultural & traditional belief. Such beliefs are also negatively reinforced by phenomenon like crimes against women. Families are afraid & paranoid of sexual abuse against a girl child with little or no recourse. The much talked about Nirbhaya case took endless years to get closure and serve justice. Our state witnesses alarmingly high incidents of sexual crimes against women, where families of lower & middle income groups find it

extremely tough to engage in long court battles to obtain justice. In addition to this, there are widely prevalent deliberate malpractices of prolonging justice like delay in or absence of medicolegal examination etc. Immediate or timely recourse in sexual crimes against women is a strong need of the hour for building a mindset of gender equality & women empowerment the way it has happened for other crimes against women.

The PCPNDT act (prevention of detection of sex of the fetus) has been quite stringent in recent years with exemplary punishments for those trying to violate the law. Child marriages have been prevented and more & more girls are going to school. Dowry deaths have seen a significant reduction once the law was given more teeth. On similar lines, there need to be more serious & bolder steps to curb sexual crimes against women.

On the positive side, there are a lot of efforts underway to tackle the problem of gender inequality and ultimately leading to saving the girl child. While we are still way behind in participation of women in all fields, there is an ever-increasing participation of women in fields like sports, mass communication, medical, administration, education etc. To tackle the mindset problem in the community, there is a lot of focus on BCC (Behaviour change communication).

Several programs have been launched by national & state governments targeted towards saving the girl child like Kanya Sumangala Yojana (where first daughter is given significant benefits).

In January 2015, 'Beti Bachao Beti padhao' was launched with the goal of celebrating the birth of a girl child, to ensure education of the girl child and to ensure protection and survival of the girl child. This is a key scheme to address the dipping child sex ratio and empower the girl child in the country and involves a

multifaceted approach to improve child sex ratio and to involve youth, adolescents, men, Panchayati Raj institutions, community leaders, judiciary and media for achieving behaviour change. To tackle the issues of traditional attitudes and awareness of generations, this program has a 3-pronged approach

1. Prevent gender biased sex selection
2. Ensure survival and protection of girl child
3. Ensure education of girl child

FOGSI is also playing an active and impactful role in the 'Beti Bachao Beti padhao' programme through various mainstream and CSR initiatives.

There are other initiatives that are targeted towards creating a better environment for raising a girl child.

National Girl Child Day which is being celebrated on 24th January every year since 2008 with the core purpose of gender equality. Honorable Minister Smt Smriti Irani posted on Twitter on 24th Jan 2020:

Today is a day to celebrate fortitude and accomplishments of every girl child. On National Girl Child Day, let us reaffirm our pledge to end discrimination amongst our girls and empower them with equal opportunities - "Meri beti Mera Garv"

To conclude, saving & nurturing the girl child is a clearly understood need by the government, healthcare & education institutions and there is a significant effort put in by these entities to achieve the goal. However, real shift requires a change in the traditional mindset, and we all need to gear up to play our part in the same. As a society, we have witnessed multiple seismic shifts in our approach towards different aspects over the last few decades and we are surely capable of achieving the goal of saving & celebrating our girl child.

Jai Hind!!