

Population First

E-newsletter

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Op-ed

The Third Wave Of Feminism Of Today Is Saying "Personal Is Social"

The #MeToo movement has left me wondering, listening, arguing, convincing and also laughing at some of the humorous word plays on MeToo.

I kept wondering why is it so difficult for people to understand that such kinds of behaviour – unwanted touch, discomfoting looks or inappropriate talk, is something that every woman would have faced sometime or the other in her life. The extent of the violation and its impact may vary from one person to another and from one situation to another. We may move on in life pushing the incident into the deep recesses of our mind, call it putting a stop to it and redefining the relationship or may take decisions regarding our careers and aspirations which may restrict our freedom to fulfil our dreams and aspirations.

Then, why this sudden burst of anger and cathartic sharing? It stems out of the frustration that in spite of the legal provisions these behaviours go unacknowledged in organisational structures and processes which are still very much male-dominated. Otherwise, how do we explain the casual of film industry members and media that such and such a person is known for such behaviour or attitude? Then why was he not called out – by his colleagues and other witnesses of incidents? Is it because he was in a position of power and everyone is interested in safeguarding their interests? Or is it the attitude that we can overlook it as long as it is not denting the organisation's image? Why is the onus on the victim to fight for redressal and justice and not on the organisation to build healthy work cultures?

It is difficult to convince people that such behaviour occurs in contexts where the victim is disempowered and has consequences that are disempowering too. As a woman coming from an entitled background and less vulnerable, I may have better negotiating power, ability to call out than an ambitious young girl with dreams of stardom and success or a woman who needs a job desperately to support her family. It is this vulnerability which gives control over her to the sexual predators. The

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experience of sexual harassment and violence itself is disempowering as it dents the victim's self-confidence, self-respect and self-image. The culture of victim blaming which pervades the society doesn't help her much either, causing self-doubt and self-blaming. Is it a surprise then that many do not speak out and that even those who do are silenced mercilessly?

#MeToo is a social movement that is aimed at destroying the power structures that promote and normalize sexual harassment perpetrated by Men in power making workspaces hostile and harmful to women. The personal narratives are the means of furthering the objective of the movement and social media is the carrier of the message. The personal narratives are meant to reflect the social reality and ensure the political battles we won for progressive legislations are translated into social reality. Time, we change our social institutions, structures and mindsets to build a society that has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. The second wave of feminism said, "Personal is political in late sixties, the third wave of feminism of today is saying "personal is social"

Dr A. L. Sharada is the Director of Population First. The views expressed are the author's own. This article is an abridged version and you can find the full article here: <https://www.shethepeople.tv/blog/third-wave-feminism-saying-personal-social>

What do the adolescent girls say?

In spite of the increasing focus on the adolescent girls in government programmes and also many initiatives by NGOs and Corporate, till recently there was no comprehensive data on what they know, think and aspire. The Teen Age Girls (TAG) Report 2018 bridges this important data gap and is a comprehensive report developed by Nanhi Kali project, jointly managed by Naandi Foundation and K.C. Mahindra Education Trust. It informs us about "what it means to be a teenage girl in India". The TAG Survey focuses on the educational and nutritional status, sanitation and menstrual hygiene measures adopted, marriage and career aspirations, basic and new age life skills learnt and agency of the teenage girls. Below are the key findings from the report: (*Teen Age Girls (TAG) Report 2018. Nanhi Kali, Naandi Foundation and K. C. Mahindra Education Trust.*)

- Overall, 39.8 percent of girls resort to open defecation, with majority percentage of girls coming from ages between 13 and 15. In rural areas 49 percent and in urban areas 18 percent of TAGs reported open defecation
- Every second teenage girl in India is using unhygienic methods of menstrual protection. Prevalence of unhygienic methods of menstrual protection is almost double in rural and low wealth quintile households when compared to urban and high wealth quintile households respectively.
- Overall, 50.2 percent of TAGs were found to be underweight and only 46.3 percent were found to be normal under the BMI category. Every second girl in the country is anaemic.
- Eighty percent of TAGs are currently studying. However, with increase in teenage years the percentage of girls studying decreases. 70 percent of total TAGs wish to complete at least graduation or study for a job entrance examination.
- Overall 74.3 percent TAGs had career aspirations. The most commonly aspired career options were, teacher, tailor, and doctor. Joining the army and becoming a nurse were also few of the interesting aspirations of the TAGs in the survey.
- Almost all TAGs in the survey were not married. 51 percent said they aspired to be married between 21-25 years of age, 25.9 percent would like to be married between 18-20 years of age and 22.3 percent of girls would like to get married after 26 years.
- Among 28 states, Kerala ranks first and Uttar Pradesh ranks last in TAG Index. Among seven cities surveyed, Mumbai ranks first and Chennai ranks seventh in TAG Index.
- Uttar Pradesh's rank is reflective of its poor scoring in parameters such as: no open defecation, hygienic menstrual products usage, normal BMI, normal haemoglobin levels. Uttar Pradesh has the least score under the parameter agency to own a mobile phone with 7.5, among all the states and cities surveyed.
- Chennai's rank is reflective of its low scoring in parameters such as: normal haemoglobin levels, normal BMI, new age skills, and agency to own a mobile phone.

'A Celebration of Gender Sensitivity in Media and Advertising'

It was yet another evening of celebration of great communication driven by a commitment to promoting gender sensitivity. The ninth edition of Regional Laadli Media and Advertising Awards for Gender Sensitivity 2017 (LMAAGS) on 14th September, 2018, at USI, New Delhi, and the second edition of South Asia Laadli Media and Advertising Awards for Gender Sensitivity 2017 (SALMAAGS), on 12th October, 2018, at TATA Theatre, National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA); saw some of the best work of the year being showcased.

Eighty-five Regional Awards and 14 Jury Appreciation Certificates were presented in Regional Awards Event in New Delhi. Celebrated journalist, Founder & Editor of the People's Archive of Rural India, Ramon Magsaysay Awardee, and champion of rural India, P. Sainath was the Chief Guest along with Mr. Derk Segaar, Director of UN Information Centre for India and Bhutan

While the South Asia awards were supported by IAA and UNFPA, UNFPA joined us as a cause partner. Distinguished journalist, and Editor-in Chief of The Print, Mr. Shekhar Gupta, graced the SALMAAGS as the Chief Guest and the event was hosted by Ms. Rohini Ramnathan, a radio jockey, and voice of Mumbai on Radio Nasha.

Famous Indian singer Joi Barua and children from Mehli Mehta Music Foundation enthralled the audience with their performances.

We were honoured to have two renowned musicians accept our special awards. The "Laadli Lifetime Achievement" was presented to Padma Bhushan Prabha Atre, the renowned Hindustani music vocalist of the KiranaGharanaa, an acclaimed researcher, practitioner and promoter of Indian classical music and performing arts.



“ This is the first award I ever received in my own country, though I have received many awards abroad and I am very happy to receive it for my 50 years contribution to performing choir globally,

Coomi Wadia

“Laadli of the Century” was presented to Madam Coomi Wadia, the first and only conductor to lead an Indian chorus to win several acclaimed international competitions.

A special recognition, “Woman Behind the Screen”, was awarded to Late Kalpana Lajmi, the avant-garde filmmaker and screenwriter of the Indian parallel cinema well-known for women-oriented movies like Rudaali, Ek Pal etc.

This year Population First received 1455 entries from over 13 languages from across the country. Total of 33 awards, including 30 National Awards and three South Asian Awards were presented in Mumbai.

The international award winners included Tooba Masood from Pakistan, Durga Karki from Nepal, and Himanshu Marchurchand from Mauritius.

This year also saw the release of many women centric and gender sensitive films and the award has gone to Ms. Alankrita Shrivastava for “Lipstick Under My Burkha”. In the theatre category Manhar Gadhia Production's “Saath Teri Ekvees” won the award.

Under the book category the story of Shivani and Richa in “Cappuccino Confessions” by Anita Kumar won the Fiction Award, whereas, for “The Sensational Life and Death of Qandeel Baloch” by Sanam Maher and “Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker” by Nalini Jameela and Reshma Bharadwaj won the Non-Fiction Award.

“ There are quite a few great one's this year to choose from,” K.V. Sridhar said referring to the number of ads that were reviewed by the jury, which touched upon a wide range of issues. “The objective the awards set for themselves are being achieved, with more and more influential brands trying to be more sensitive to gender and making an impact on social change ”

K. V. Sridhar, Founder & Chief Creative Officer, Hypercollective



Under advertisement category; Lowe Lintas Ahmedabad's #EveryWomansRight—won the Grand Prix Award for promoting toilet construction in rural areas; FCB Interface's #LadkiHaathSeNikalJaayegi-Mahindra and Nanhi Kali won the Digital Award for promoting girl child education among others. Click on the link to read about the award winning entries. <http://bit.ly/2QfuwZF>

The awardees under print and online media category represented a wide array of issues and innovative campaigns. Huff Post India's Adrija Bose, won the Web Feature award for her article, “When women fight their own battles”; India Today's Shweta Punj won the Print Feature for her article,

“I Was Sold At 14 As A Sex Slave”; and Rajasthan Patrika's Amit Baijnath Garg won the Print Feature Series for his article, “Rote Rote Gumnaam hui Rudaali”. Hidden Pocket's Aisha Lovely George won the Award for, “Pocketshalla (Ep01-06) an awareness initiative for adolescents while Rachna Mudraboyina won for her YouTube channel 'AA EE Anjali' aimed at creating awareness about issues related to transgender persons.



You can find the entire list of awardees and their winning entries on the link given here: <http://bit.ly/2BQ3qPS>

A New Beginning...

Population First's AMCHI team is committed to improving the services of Anganwadi centres in the villages of Shahapur to improve the health and nutrition status of children particularly in tribal areas. It has been working closely with the village level service providers like Anganwadi Worker, Anganwadi Helper, ANM and ASHA as well as with the block level officials since 2004. Over last few years it has built an excellent rapport with the officials of ICDS, Health Departments and has improved the services in many Anganwadi Centres, as well as the Sub-district Hospital (SDH) Shahapur, which has led to better equipped facilities, responsive staff helping the poor rural and tribal people, especially malnourished children, access and benefit from their services.

Acknowledging the work implemented by AMCHI on malnutrition among children in Shahapur, Jindal Steel Works' Foundation (JSW) approached Population First to initiate some work in its project area on under nutrition.



Gathering information from a lactating mother during Participatory Rural Appraisal in Asangaon



Workshop for Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs, ANMs, MPWs and Supervisors in progress

The AMCHI-JSW project aims to create sustainable and empowered communities and systems focused on reducing under-nutrition among children enrolled in Anganwadis in 29 communities reaching out to nearly 1000 children in a period of two years. To achieve this, AMCHI team plans to create awareness among parents about under-nutrition – its causes and consequences as well as ways to deal with it. Besides, members of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee and Gram Panchayat will also be engaged in the project to address the issue of under-nutrition at the community level. As a preventive measure pregnant women and lactating mothers would be trained on best practices on nutrition, hygiene and neo-natal care. Training sessions on reproductive and sexual health have been planned for adolescent girls to enable them make informed decisions. Celebration of “Arogya Din” is being planned in villages to ensure timely immunisation of children and women, re-iterating its importance for maternal and child health.

We will keep you updated on the activities under the project through this news letter. If you have any queries regarding our AMCHI projects and our approach, please email us at amchi.pf@gmail.com.

Time to look at our demographic indicators critically!

The Status of the World Population Report 2018 by United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) once again underscores a few key demographic trends and provides a few pointers to population policy and planning in India.



- In 2016, total fertility rate (TFR) of India was at 2.3, close to achieving the replacement level of 2.1
- 55 percent of India's population lives in states that have replacement level fertility; another one third of nation's population has TFR between 2.5 to 3; Bihar has TFR 3 or more; southern states, Maharashtra and West Bengal are advanced in reducing fertility and mortality indicating a demographic divide in the country.
- Every fifth person in India is an adolescent (10-19 years), every third – a young person (10-24 years). Investments on their health, education and technical skills could leverage this nation's demographic dividend for the country's growth and development.
- Size of elderly population (60+ years) will double to 192 million by 2030, which signals at the need to have more investments providing old age support through appropriate welfare measures.
- Level of urbanization is high in six demographically advanced states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh & Telengana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu,
- India ranks 127th on gender inequality index, composite of parameters: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market.
- Overall sex ratio is 943 women for 1000 men and child sex ratio is 919 girls for 1000 boys.
- Female labour force amounted to only 28.5 percent as compared to 82 percent for men in 2017.
- The above three points indicate the need to work towards closing the gender gaps in education, , vocational skills, health and nutrition status, access to land and assets, work-force participation, ending discriminatory practices such as gender-based sex selection, child marriage and gender-based violence in both domestic and public places.
- To make the most of the demographic dividend:
 - Plan for the eight demographically advanced states. These states have achieved replacement level fertility in 1980s and 90s and are having lesser percentage of young working population, like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Gujarat and Punjab. Plan by focusing on making working environment conducive for migrant workers from outside, such as strengthening social and health security, innovating employment solutions for women.
 - Plan for another eight states of Karnataka, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, J&K, Haryana, and Uttarakhand, which achieved replacement level fertility post 2000, where the window of opportunity will close in a decade by focusing on harnessing the current potential of the increasing young population
 - Plan for states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar who are still far from achieving the replacement level fertility by focusing on overall social and inclusive development - investing in education and skill building, universal life skills, expanding voluntary access to family planning services through better outreach, addressing maternal and reproductive health needs, improve child survival through neo-natal care, immunisation and nutrition, addressing harmful discrimination practices of sex-selection, and ensuring safety of women in public spaces, promoting positive norm changes towards achievement of gender equality, and evolving support systems for migrant workers.

Thus, the report once again reinforces the importance for inclusive development to achieve our demographic goals.

Source: *Status of World Population Report 2018—Power of Choice* by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Changing the way the stories are told

An interaction with the storytellers of SONY TV

Where and how do our gender biases and perceptions creep into the stories that we tell? How conscious are we of the gender nuances of our communication? These were the questions which were addressed at the gender sensitisation workshop held for the Creative Team of Sony Pictures on July 9, 2018. The workshop was conducted following a public outcry by abortion and women's rights activists over one of



Dr. Sharada interacting with SONY TV's creative team.

their programmes which indicated an anti-abortion stance in one of their promos for an episode on Abortion. While, Sony's 'Zindagi ke Crossroads', a reality show, was lauded for its attempt at depicting the dilemmas regarding abortion, foetal anomaly and the stigma attached to abortion, the problematic advertisement with an "anti-abortion" message was also discussed at length. The team was sensitized to the concept of gender, patriarchy, the power equations between men and women and the need to uphold women's right to choice regarding her reproductive behaviour. The young creative team members were open to discussing the nuances of communication which subliminally reinforces gender stereotypes, women's subordination and violence.

Is the focus on PCPNDT compromising access to safe Abortion?

Both going through repeated pregnancies in the hope of a male child and inability to access safe abortion services when needed are indicative of the denial or abridgement of women's reproductive rights. In our enthusiasm to 'Beti Bachao' are we overlooking the right of women to access safe abortion services? To understand this conflation a workshop on 'Access to Abortion: Issues & Concerns', was organized for MTP (Medical Termination of Pregnancy) service providers by Population First in association with Pratigya Campaign for Safe Abortion in Mumbai on the 27th of July, 2018. While Dr. Chandra Sekhar from IIPS shared the findings of the Guttmacher study which showed poor access to contraception as a major

reason for unwanted pregnancies and abortions and the limited outreach of services, Dr. Ganotra from FPAI highlighted how the MTP providers are being victimized under the PCPNDT act, forcing many a practitioner to stop providing services. The deliberations at the workshop reinforced the fact that abortions can be legally provided by medical practitioners under section 5A of MTP Act if there is a risk to the survival of the woman on the pregnancy being continued, which is not being used by the medical practitioners leading to unwarranted legal cases and delays in providing abortion. The need to make abortion services visible and ensuring confidentiality at the service delivery point was also emphasised. The question of decriminalizing abortion was raised by Dr. Suchitra Dalvi. It would ensure that MTPs are provided by doctors as any other medical service making the MTP Act redundant, she observed.



Specific land mark cases were also discussed to understand the conflation of other acts like POCSO, PCPNDT, disability rights issues etc. Thus, the workshop provided the participants an overview of the issues and concerns related to right to safe abortion and the implementation of the MTP Act.

Working Together

Technical support provided to Tech Mahindra Foundation

Population First has been providing technical support to Tech Mahindra Foundation for the last few years in lieu of the institutional funding support it is receiving from the foundation. Three interesting interventions were carried out in this quarter. A training programme on Community Mobilization was conducted by Dr. A.L. Sharada, Sangita Tribhuwan & Fazal Pathan from Population First on the 7th and by Manjul Bhardwaj, Founder of Theatre of Relevance on the 8th of September, 2018.

The two-day workshop helped identify the inability of the community mobilizers to define their role as change makers and see their contribution to the bigger goal of the foundation to build skilled and empowered youth who would help build a new India. While the exploratory activities by Dr. Sharada and her team helped in identifying the issues and gaps and suggest mechanisms to address them, the theatre workshop by Mr. Manjul Bhardwaj helped the participants clarify their vision and role as change agents. Though the immediate aim was to ensure maximum enrolment from the community for the skill training programmes, retention in the training programmes and increasing job enrolment, the workshop helped the participants and organizers realize the importance of investing in enhancing the soft skills through counselling and communication training programmes of the community mobilizers.



Manjul Bhardwaj explaining an activity to students

Telling the story differently

Yet another training programme was organized for a different set of Tech Mahindra's stakeholders – the Balwadi and primary school teachers. The subject was 'Role of storytelling as a pedagogic tool'. With varied group activities such as hand puppets, enactment of stories, Ms. Leela, an experienced preschool teacher trainer, conducted a session on storytelling which was an eye opener for the participants as it covered not just how to narrate a story with voice modulation gestures etc but also covered topics like storytelling and its roots in the evolution of human society, why stories are important in classroom particularly, different ways of story narration, the do's and don'ts of storytelling. She cautioned the participants against making value judgements about the children, which is important to preserve the individuality and potential of each child. She also asked them to be conscious of the gender stereotypes while narrating stories. The idea that story telling has multiple benefits such as improving cognitive & emotional development of the child, enhancing imagination and creativity etc. was greatly appreciated by the participants. A good story and story teller encourage children to think differently and ask questions, thus laying the foundation for a future generation of thinkers, scientists, artistes and leaders.



Ms. Leela telling a story

Working Together

Exploring Gender as a concept and as experience

The Balwadi teachers work at the lowest rung of the educational system, often underpaid and over worked. How do they experience gender and how do they address gender issues in the class room and with the parents and community. This was the focus of two workshops on gender sensitivity conducted in the month of October by Ms Daiwashala and Ms. Ujjwala. Both the workshops focused on the difference between gender and sex, how the social construct of gender restricts children from exploring activities, their choice of sports, and creates gendered perceptions and how they as teachers perpetuate those gender stereotypes and perceptions. Many vowed to create more equal



space in the Balwadis, by avoiding stereotyping of games, activities and roles of boys and girls. The conversation moved beyond class rooms to their personal lives helping them look at their own role in the Balwadi and home from a gender perspective. The sharing was cathartic and many have acknowledged that it was the first time that they were candid in expressing their views and in sharing their experiences.

Ms. Daiwashala conducting an activity on October 15, 2018

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