

# Population First

## E-newsletter

November to January 2019

Random Thoughts

### *Into that world of freedom.....*

We step into another year with hope and expectation and also trepidation. Hope and expectation for a future “where the mind is without fear and the head is held high” as Rabindranath Tagore writes in his revered song from Gitanjali. And there is fear and trepidation that the increasing identity politics and narrowing mindsets, intolerance to divergent views may restrict our freedom of thought and speech pushing us into a world that denies us our right to dignity, equality and justice.

It makes me wonder how we can attain dignity, equality and justice and live fearlessly. Can material wealth and status acquired by whatever means give a sense of dignity and allow one and all to live fearlessly? In a world where material wealth is skewed in its distribution, would economic progress help the marginalised, downtrodden and deprived sections of our population live in dignity?

It is time we introspect about what we have done as individuals, families, communities and as a nation to build such a world. The 'Me Too' movement, the increasing violence against women, the lynchings and the high decibel communal and caste rhetoric in the wake of the elections all point to the need for each and every concerned citizen to stand up for freedom, truth, liberal values, rational thinking and take the nation towards a better future for one and all.

As change makers each one of us can help take the nation “into that heaven of freedom” that Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudev Rabindranath dreamt about and fought for. What we need is commitment, perseverance, patience and a belief that change is possible.

As we enter the New Year let's remind ourselves about these inspiring words:

“ Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action ”

As some scholars have aptly pointed out the “heaven of freedom for which Tagore prays is not a heaven of political or economic freedom but of spiritual freedom from fear, narrow mindedness and evil desires”.

“Theme of Adore and Nationalism in Tagore's Gitanjali: A Study” by G. Sankar, M. Sriprabha, S. Sankara Kumar, R. Senthil Kumar

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# Keeping the Conversation Going

*"We realise the importance of our voices only when we are silenced" Malala Yousafzai*



**Ms. Anuja Gulati & Ujwala Kadrekar sharing their thoughts on POSH**

The #Metoo movement and the fact that comparatively fewer women are entering the workplaces, catapulted the PF team with the support of UNFPA to organise a series of consultations and workshops with media leaders, HR heads and Internal Committee Members of advertising agencies and media houses to share their experiences, thoughts and ideas on **POSH – Implementation and Challenges**. Renowned journalists Kumar Ketkar and Kalpana Sharma addressed the house with Anuja Gulati of UNFPA and Ujwala Kadrekar a human rights lawyer, speaking extensively on the subject. The focused and meaningful one-day Consultation organised by Population First at Marine Plaza, Mumbai on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 ended with concrete action points for ensuring better implementation of POSH Act including media audits, communication and awareness campaigns, sensitisation workshops for various stakeholders and engaging with media networks and regulatory bodies.

A second consultation was held in Hyderabad on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2018 in collaboration with Bhumika Women's Collective. Media and NGO representatives, and women's group members, deliberated on POSH and its implementation. The discussions focused on 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013', the challenges, current issues and the way forward'. Dr. A.L. Sharada, Ms. Satyavati Kondaveeti, Vyjayanti Vasant Mogli, Rachana Mudraboyina and Ms. Devi addressed issues on POSH, #Metoo Movement, Anti Trafficking Bill, 2018 and Transgender Persons Bill, 2018.



**Rachana Mudraboyina, Vyjayanti Vasant Mogli & Satyavati Kondaveeti addressing the issues on Transgender Persons Bill, 2018**



**Kalpana Sharma sharing her thoughts on POSH**

The speakers highlighted the plight of women in the informal sector who have no access to a redressal mechanism. It was also pointed out that the Local Complaints Committees at the district level are non-existent and non-functional depriving women of an opportunity to seek support and redressal for sexual harassment.

Arising from the discussion were the following action points:-

- Letters to all the district collectors for the formation of Local Complaints Committee
- Creating awareness about the Act as a preventive measure to sensitise school and college students
- Pressurize government, especially WCD and other related institutions for the formation of ICCs in all government institutions.
- Developing IEC material for creating awareness on the role of ICCs.
- Pressurize government to focus on creating awareness for the formation of LCCs and later about the existence of LCCs for the women working in the unorganised sector.

“ Harassment is humongous and huge and our fight therefore is large. It is a fight of attitudes. It is a power relationship in homes and offices. We should devise a strategy how do we deal with attitudes and the relationship so that we are able to deal with the question more seriously and create culture, create a global culture of true emotional, sentimental thinking and professional equality of men and women.

*Kumar Ketkar, renowned journalist and editor*

## Continuing with Perspective Building

“Every communication that goes into the public domain should be gender sensitive” is the way Population First articulates the objective of its advocacy for gender sensitivity. Taking this agenda forward, three, two-day workshops were organised during December 2018 at Mumbai, Thane and Puri with around sixty journalists and writers gaining meaningful insights into gender sensitive reporting.

Dr. A.L. Sharada, Director, Population First and Manjul Bharadwaj, Founder, Experimental Theatre Foundation facilitated all the workshops with introduction, deliberations and theatre sessions respectively. Anuja Gulati, UNFPA and Ujwala Kadrekar Senior Lawyer of Lawyers Collective addressed in detail the POSH Act by way of defining its content and issues in implementation. Speakers from varied backgrounds took the session at different venues.



**Participants at Thane workshop**



**Dr Sharada interacting with the participants at Puri**

Shreya Ila Anasuya, Editor, Skin Stories of Point of View, Anuradha Rajan, Chief Executive of Mobile Creches, Sameera Khan, Journalist and Faculty at TISS, Mrudula Sawant, Member of State, Statutory Board of PCPNDT Act updated the journalists on “Sexual Violence: Initiating Conversations” at Thane on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2018

K.V Sridhar, Tista Sen, Aazmeen Kasad, Deepa Shankar Ganesh enlightened the audience at “Gender Conversations” at Worli, Mumbai on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2018

Mr.Soumya Ranjan Das, Editor of Sambad and Member of Parliament, Dr. Bhagaban Prakash, Founder ChairPerson of Odissa Nagarik Samaj and head of Orissa Election Commission, Anuradha Mohanty, a development activist, Jyothi Panigrhi, former Chair Person of Orissa Women's Commission and Ms.Namrata Chadha took sessions to constructively contribute to build inclusive organisations during the two day Workshop on “Gender Sensitivity on Reporting” at Puri on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2018.

The speakers dealt with subjects on gender sensitivity giving clarity of thought and of expression, interacting and answering questions, clearing doubts, enabling and encouraging the participants to write keeping in mind gender sensitivity. The guidelines for writing on different issues were shared with the participants.



## Objectives

- To create awareness on how to report and write with gender sensitively.
- To discuss non-binary genders and sexualities, violence and reporting on the same.
- To understand the intersectionality of gender, disability, sexuality and violence
- To build skills to report on rape and sexual harassment at work places
- To clarify the concept of domestic violence, the provisions of DV Act and how to report on DV



**Members of Advertising community interacting with Leaders in Gender Conversations**



**First Panel from L to R at Andheri:- Heema Shirvaikar, Ketki Pandit, Nishtha Jain, Renuka Shahane, Vinta Nanda and Onir.**

Population First in collaboration with Screenwriters Association organised a one day workshop on #Metoo - Impact on Women in Media. The workshop focused on women screenwriters, filmmakers and producers at the workplace. The objective of the workshop was to implement and aid setting up of the IC (Internal Committee) and understanding sexual harassment of women at workplace. The workshop was organised on 28th December, 2018 from 11am to 5 pm at The Classique Club, 2nd Floor, Esquire Hall, Andheri West, Mumbai. 36 participants had attended the workshop.

The take away points that emerged from the panel discussion are as follows:

- 1) Constituting ICs. In all organizations related to the film industry
- 2) Capacity building of Internal Committee members on the issue of Sexual Harassment and implementation of POSH
- 3) Having more discussions and conversations around gender with members of Screenwriters Association.
- 4) Emphasising that professional bodies like SWA also have a responsibility to ensure better working spaces and play a regulatory role in ensuring that the POSH act is implemented in its true spirit in the organizations with which its members are associated with.

The second panel discussion was moderated by Tannishtha Chatterjee, Senior actor, screenwriter & director with other panellists like Smita Singh (Screenwriter, Sacred Games – Netflix), Karan Anshuman (Creator, Inside Edge & Mirzapur - Amazon Prime) Mayank Tewari (Screenwriter, XXX Uncensored - Alt Balaji, Screenwriter, Ragini MMS, Newton), Anupriya Goenka (Actor, Sacred Games, Padmavaat, Daddy), Manu Sharma (Writer, web series for Hotstar & Applause)

The second panel raised a few critical questions;

- Is the Web content primarily catering to a male audience?
- How can we shift this focus?
- How can we promote portrayal of women in more independent roles?
- How can we have more sensual roles for women without objectifying them?
- The need for more inclusive platforms to discuss diverse range and formats of scripts and stories was discussed at length. It was observed that often the actual presentation and picturisation of a scene is very different from the way it is written or intended. It was therefore recommended that all members involved in film making and the script writers work together as a team to make more sensitive movies.

# Celebrating Tomorrow's Leaders in Development!

“Children are the future”—the spirit of this statement was witnessed yet again at this year's *Balmelava*—an annual children's festival, concluding the year's Vikaspremi Shala Campaign initiated in the month of August. The campaign's goal was to include school children in hygiene and sanitation issues in schools and at village level. Three hundred children from nine schools, eighteen teachers and two committee members attended Balmelava on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Schools and their children were recognized and awarded for their persistence, hard work, and most importantly their enthusiasm towards building a better school and community. The PF team consisting of Ms. Meenal Gandhe, AMCHI Project Manager, Ms. Ujjwala Mhatre, Communication Manager, Ms. Venu Gawli, Admin and Ms. Leela Meher, a school counsellor and guest resource person at PF, attended the event and presented the awards to the schools.



Children performing at Balmelava 2019

To make this event truly a celebration of the children's creativity, energy and passion, the school children were invited to present a cultural programme including dances, skits and speeches. The participation of the students especially in presenting plays and speeches reflected the acceptance of the campaign by the children which focused on cleanliness and sanitation.

The children, school volunteers and vikasdoots included from *Zilla Parishad* (Z.P) schools of Bajarpada, Shendrun, Padvalpada, Savroli, Sarangpuri and Masavne were felicitated for conducting rallies on IEC of waste water and garbage management, constructing kitchen gardens, soak pits and motivating four families to construct toilets at home. Efforts of Vikasdoots of Chariv to clean the river next to their village, provide dustbins to the villagers and motivate the villagers to refrain from polluting the river were lauded by the organizers.

Whereas, tireless dedication of vikasdoots of Masavne towards maintaining cleanliness in the village by distributing forty dust bins made by recycling waste material to households and bringing about awareness in the community was also recognized.

Students of Z.P. Thune, Ubhrai and Khargaon went a step further. While Thune students enlisted the help of women SHGs and youth in ensuring village cleanliness by making and distributing dustbins, constructing thirty-five kitchen gardens, fifteen soak pits and twenty-nine compost pits; Ubhrai Z.P. students engaged themselves at community level and helped organize Mahila Gram Sabhas, conducted health check-up twice a week; while Kharangan students worked with the Gram Panchayat and ensured the construction of water tank in their school, new doors for their toilets and separate water connection for the school; for which all three schools were awarded “Champion of the Campaign”.



*The balmelava programme was conducted so well. So many schools had participated in the event. And I have danced for the first time in my life! I thoroughly enjoyed my time dancing with my students because the atmosphere of the event was so good.*

**Savroli School Teacher: Ghaiwad Sir**

*Our school children were very notorious; they did not attend school regularly and did not perform well. But we saw them change as a result of the Vikasdoot Programme. They were actively involved in the campaign, sincerely followed the activities and brought about change in their personal habits and took to the message of school development very well. We were not very sure they would participate in the programme but they proved us wrong.*

**Masavane School Teacher: Ramchandra Rera**





# Photo Feature

## Running for the cause of Laadli



Yet another promising year for Population First at Tata Mumbai Marathon 2019, indeed an amazing experience for one and all. Tata Mumbai Marathon is one of India's biggest platforms to raise fund for various charities. It is an occasion when men and women reaffirm their commitment to a cause dear to them by running for it, raising pledges or by cheering the runners. Over 550, NGO's have successfully raised in excess of INR 229 crores over the past 15 editions. Like every year, Population First received generous funds from individual donors. This year, around eight charity bibs were bought by the Individual donors for Half marathon and Dream Run. Our corporate team IRB infrastructures & developers, who are consistent in their support to Population First over the years participated enthusiastically in the run. Our team members also managed to raise funds for our organisation through their respective fundraising page. The event has given us memorable experience filled with energy, passion and enthusiasm.



*It was a fun and fulfilling experience and I personally recommend everyone to participate in it at least once. Run or walk, all the hard work would be worth it seeing the sea of humanity run for a cause, for a goal, for a change.*

Swathi Chaganty

*The race was picture perfect all along the route on Bandra-Worli Sea Link just as I was told about. And above all it was the people of Mumbai who made this race different for me. It was encouraging to find volunteers, locals, school kids and even police cheering us throughout the race and support the runners. To sum up I enjoyed my race to the brim.*

*I supported Population First for the cause it promotes which is Gender Equality. I think it is one of the most critical and important aspect of this world which can accelerate development in many spheres like education, health, economic development etc.*

Nishant Jain



**THANK YOU**

Abhijeet Jadhav, Abhishek Michyari, Ajay Michyari, Ajit Arora, Ajit kumar Menon, Akanksha Michyari, Asha Karkare, Bansi Bhanga, Barnali Biswas, Bhaskar Das, Bommakanty Lila Prasad, Chaganty Prasad Rao, Debashis Padhy, Deepti Srivastava, Haritha Paritala, Indira Rajeshwar Rao, Integrated Spaces Limited, Ivaturi Sivaram, Joyna Michyari, Kumar Nidathavolu, Laila Furtado, Latha Bongarala, Manjula Rao, Meenal Gandhe, Meghna Puri, Mercy Barla, Namrata Mankar, Nishant Jain, Pankaj Gaikwad, Pooja Nagdev, Prasad Pandhre, Pravina Pandit, Rajitha Bommakanti, Rama Alamuru, Rohish Khalkho, Rupan Mohan, Sayansh Gautham R Badida, Seema Kumar, Shrenik Khajuria, Shushumna Jella, Sneha Chavan, Swapnil Chavan, Sridhar Sridhar, Srinivas Alamuru, Sudha Damodar, Sushant Shelar, Sushil Shantiswaroop Mahesh, Suvrata Rajiv Gharge, Takhat Singh Sankhla, Tina Mehta, Uma Pochampalli, Vara Prasad Rao, Venu Gawali, Vijayendra Parthasarthy Badida, Vishal shah, Yashvardhana Tripathi, Zia Sud



Laadli

Celebrate Her Life

An Initiative by Population First

*Contact Us:*

**Population First**

Ratan Manzil ,Ground Flr, 64 Wodehouse Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005

Tel: 91 9167902776

Email: [info@populationfirst.org](mailto:info@populationfirst.org)

Website: [www.populationfirst.org](http://www.populationfirst.org)

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