

TANA BANA: Volume 15: August 2023



From the Editor's Desk

In this edition of our newsletter, we bring you a collection of insightful articles, interviews, and a book and movie review that celebrate the spirit of freedom, unity, and youth on the occasion of International Youth Day and Indian Independence Day. We are a little late to this, but the topic is of utmost relevance.

This volume is enriched by the contributions of students from Kishinchand Chellaram College, Mumbai. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr Leena Pujari, Head of the Sociology Department at K.C College, for her enthusiastic support and encouragement of the students' participation in our newsletter.

The lead article, "The New Age of Freedom: Youth's Vision for a More Inclusive and Just Society," delves into the transformative power of the youth and their unique approach to dismantling age-old social norms and advocating for social change. As we reflect on India's vibrant youth demographic, this piece reminds us that the future is in the capable hands of the next generation.

Our movie review by Ritu, "Because I Could not Stop for Ruins," explores Mrinal Sen's *Khandhar/The Ruins* (1984) and delves into the intricate layers of history, freedom, and the haunting resonance of the past. It's a poignant reflection on how the past shapes our present and our responsibility to acknowledge and learn from it.

From thought-provoking interviews with inspiring individuals like Vriti Kawad and Kushagra Negi to a gripping book review that explores the Quit India Movement through the eyes of young protagonists, this newsletter encapsulates the essence of youthful aspirations and the pursuit of a more just and equitable world.

We hope you find these pieces both enlightening and inspiring. May the stories shared here ignite your passion for change and encourage you to embrace your path to freedom. Wishing you a thought-provoking read and a future filled with the pursuit of justice and equality.

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The New Age of Freedom: Youth's Vision for a More Inclusive and Just Society

Harleen Kaur Khosla (she/her): Aspiring psychologist, athlete, and advocate for societal empathy and inclusivity.

Naina Kailash Tolani (She/her): Aspiring psychologist on a mission to make therapy accessible, and a multi-talented artist embracing guitar, singing, dancing, and drawing.

Aaj Ke Bache Hi Naye Kal Ka Vikaas Karenge

The youth has a different approach towards life and to different social constructs. Breaking the shackles of age-old social atrocities and beliefs, we see the society being reconstructed by them in ways we never predicted. They've addressed various social issues across nations, from accepting different genders to healing generational traumas. India is a young country with a youth percentage of 50% below 25 years of age and 65% below 35. Predictions say that we are likely to see an upsurge in the numbers in the near future.

Youth and Freedom

International Youth Day is celebrated every year on August 12 and has a significance that goes beyond symbolism. This event offers an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the innate qualities of youth, acknowledging their potential to influence the future of nations and the entire world. If we go by the Wikipedia definition, Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, and change as one wants without hindrance or restraint. Many acts have bestowed the citizens of India certain rights to exercise their freedom, and the constitution ensures that no one is denied their right to freedom. However, this idea of freedom is idealistic and differs distinctly from reality. If we examine the questions raised by the youth, their demands and their rebels, we see that they have been disappointed with the failure of enforcement of rights safeguarding their freedom.



Independence and Independency

The day reminds us of our freedom fighters' unshakable resolve and the sacrifices they made while heroically resisting colonial tyranny. The reverberating independence euphoria throughout the country provides a reminder of the triumph of justice, equality, and the spirit of unity. International Youth Day is essential to sociological thinking because it enables us to comprehend the social dynamics, difficulties, and opportunities that young people worldwide confront.

So what sort of freedom does the youth want?

The question that now emerges is how young people today view freedom. We are young citizens of this generation, and this is how we perceive freedom. Young people nowadays view freedom via a complex lens that reflects the changing sociocultural environment. With the development of technology and communication, many young people now have independence that goes beyond conventional limitations. They place a high significance on one's ability to express oneself freely and cherish freedom from society's expectations.

- Freedom of thought: The youth demands a liberal mindset. Every being has their thoughts. Contrasting thoughts are very likely to be seen, and it is essential that we keep ourselves in their shoes and think differently. We often see a disconnect in thoughts across generations, and the new generation is often repulsive and rebellious to certain thoughts. It is essential that their thoughts should be regarded with due respect, and there should be an attempt to provide intersectional solutions.
- Freedom of expression: We are often told to behave a certain way by society, to wear pink if you're a girl, not to cry if you're a boy, and the list never ends. Society has been dictating the lives of everyone to fit into these boxes of stereotypes, and whoever fails to fit in is called out, humiliated or forced to fit in. The youth demands the freedom to express themselves how they want, to wear, act and speak how they feel.
- Freedom to choose their gender: The world now is not just about men and women but inclusive of all gender identities. The LGBTQIA+ community should be treated equally and should be given equal rights in various sectors of society. All genders must be treated with respect, and a sense of oneness must be integrated, abolishing all sorts of violence against these minorities.
- Freedom of representation: The youth also demands equal representation in the nation's whereabouts, right from family decisions to political issues; their representation should be honoured. They demand equal representation and opportunities for the gender, caste and class minorities as well.

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New Age Freedoms

The internet significantly shapes this viewpoint. It offers a forum for activism, self-expression, and idea-sharing. Through social media, young people can express their thoughts, question authority, and interact with like-minded people worldwide.

It's crucial to remember that this online freedom can also have consequences, including cyberbullying, privacy issues, and false information. Teenagers must navigate a difficult environment where they must balance their need for freedom of speech and the requirement for appropriate online conduct.

Furthermore, societal and environmental concerns have influenced how adolescents view freedom. Many people are fighting for racial justice, gender equality, and action on climate change because they see these issues as necessary for a freer and more just society.



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Women in Youth Political Engagement: It is crucial to empower women in politics if we are to achieve gender equality. Many young women have assumed leadership positions in youth-led organisations and political activism. Young women’s voices have been magnified by campaigns like #MeToo and youth-led feminist organisations, which address topics like sexual harassment and gender inequality. However, obstacles to their full participation may still exist, such as gender bias, unequal representation, and cultural norms.

LGBTQ+ People in Political Engagement: LGBTQ+ kids frequently encounter particular difficulties while participating in politics. Many people have been at the vanguard of LGBTQ+ rights movements, fighting for equality in all spheres of life, including marriage. However, they may experience hostility and discrimination; therefore, it is critical to develop welcoming environments and legislative frameworks that encourage their participation in politics.

Inclusive Celebrations

Many countries commemorate this day to recognise their progress toward independence and sovereignty. Political participation during these events frequently reflects the more diverse demographic landscape, including the presence of LGBTQ+ communities, women, and young people.

Making Independence Day festivities more inclusive can be done by emphasising the role that other groups, such as women and LGBTQ+ people, played in the fight for independence. We can encourage future generations to participate in political movements that advance justice and equality by highlighting their contributions.

Finally, International Youth Day and International Independence Day offer occasions to consider the value of youth and political participation, emphasising including women and LGBTQ+ people. These events serve as a reminder that everyone, regardless of age, gender, or sexual orientation, must actively participate in order to create a more equitable and just society. The challenges confronting today's youth are multifaceted and can have a substantial impact on their sense of independence. Among the myriad issues they face, mental health problems stemming from academic pressures, the pervasive influence of social media, and societal expectations are notably prevalent. Additionally, financial concerns, such as mounting student loan debt and the rising costs of housing, loom large, affecting their overall sense of economic security. The job market presents its own set of challenges, with many young adults struggling to secure stable and fulfilling employment, fostering concerns about their future. Access to quality education remains unequal, exacerbating educational inequalities and the burdens of student loans.

Substance abuse, encompassing alcohol and drug addiction, continues to affect youngsters worldwide. In an increasingly digital age, forging meaningful relationships can be difficult, often leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, political disillusionment leads to disengagement and apathy among some young people regarding civic participation. Discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other criteria drives them to engage in social justice movements. Health issues, encompassing obesity, poor dietary choices, and sedentary lifestyles, pose significant concerns for today's youth. Excessive screen time and smartphone addiction have negative implications for productivity and mental health. Pressures to achieve excellence in various aspects of life can lead to burnout and stress. Lastly, surging urban housing costs make it increasingly challenging for young individuals to find affordable homes. These combined issues create a complex landscape that young people must navigate as they strive to establish their independence.

In conclusion, young people today view freedom as a dynamic idea that transcends traditional bounds. Even as they struggle with the difficulties of the digital age, they cherish the opportunity to express themselves online and are actively involved in creating a more inclusive and just society. The youth's demands should, therefore, be acknowledged and considered. They should be trained and guided well, providing them with good opportunities and rich knowledge, paving the way for a better future, aka the Amrut Yug.

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Voices of Freedom: Inspiring Youth on International Youth Day and Indian Independence Day

Anisha Hemant Pamnani (she/her): Aspiring mental health advocate with a passion for music, and dance.

Ms.Vriti Kawad is a young, inspiring student studying at K.C. College. She is a Bisexual woman who is not afraid of hiding her identity. She sets an example for the youth as she freely accepts her identity despite social judgement.

Anisha: Can you introduce yourself?

Vriti Kawad: Hello, I am Vriti Kawad, and I belong to the Lgbtqia+ community. I identify as a Bisexual woman.

Anisha: You are a Bisexual, so how does that affect your freedom?

Vriti Kawad: Being bisexual can sometimes limit my freedom because some people close to me have treated me differently or negatively judged my sexual orientation. This has led to feelings of insecurity and the need to hide who I truly am.

Anisha: How does it change the view of society towards you?

Vriti Kawad: Society's view of me can change when they become aware of my bisexuality. Some individuals may accept and be supportive, while others might have misconceptions or prejudices. It's essential to recognise that not everyone in society will understand or embrace my sexual orientation. This variance in attitudes can impact how I am perceived and treated by different people and communities. Ultimately, it reinforces the importance of seeking acceptance and understanding among those who genuinely care about me while striving to educate and challenge stereotypes in society as a whole.

Anisha: Lastly, what is 'Freedom' for you?

Vriti Kawad: Freedom to me means being able to embrace my true self without fear or judgment. My family's acceptance and love, just as I am, are at the core of this freedom. It's about feeling secure in my identity and knowing that the people I care about most support me for who I am, regardless of my sexual orientation.

Mr.Kushagra Negi: A young and passionate individual who raises his voice for others and always engages in social welfare work. He motivates others to voice out themselves and take a stand against the injustice of society.

Anisha: Let's begin with your introduction

Kushagra Negi: My name is Kushagra Negi, and I'm from Dehradun. I'm currently studying for my BA at KC College

Anisha: Have you participated in any Freedom-related protests?

Kushagra Negi: I've never personally had to fight for my freedom; I have attended and participated in protests advocating for the freedom of others. My most recent protest was against the 'Bilkis Banu case criminals' who were released in 2022. The protest was against the convicts of the Bilkis Banu case, who were given life imprisonment but were released in 2022 on the basis of goodwill during their prison time, which highlighted the double standards of our government.

Anisha: As you've been active socially and participating in raising your voice on social issues, Have your parents ever opposed it, or Have you received judgemental comments?

Kushagra Negi: I am grateful to have been raised in a family where I never had to face such challenges, and they have always been very supportive of my work. I couldn't be more thankful to them. I have received judgments and been criticised multiple times for raising my voice in a country that values freedom of speech.

Anisha: The last question for you is - What is 'Freedom' from your perspective, and when do you feel that you have freedom?

Kushagra Negi: Freedom means the ability to act and make choices without undue constraints or limitations. While achieving 100% freedom in life may be challenging, one can always work towards it because the more you work for it, the more you'll grow as a person.

Together, their stories remind us that freedom is not just a historical concept but a living, evolving reality. Freedom is the ability to be true to oneself, to voice one's concerns, and to work towards a more just and equitable society. As we celebrate the dreams of a young and free India on its Independence Day and the aspirations of youth worldwide on International Youth Day, let Vriti Kawad and Kushagra Negi's courage inspire us to carry the torch of change, fostering a world where all individuals can live without fear, judgment, or constraint.

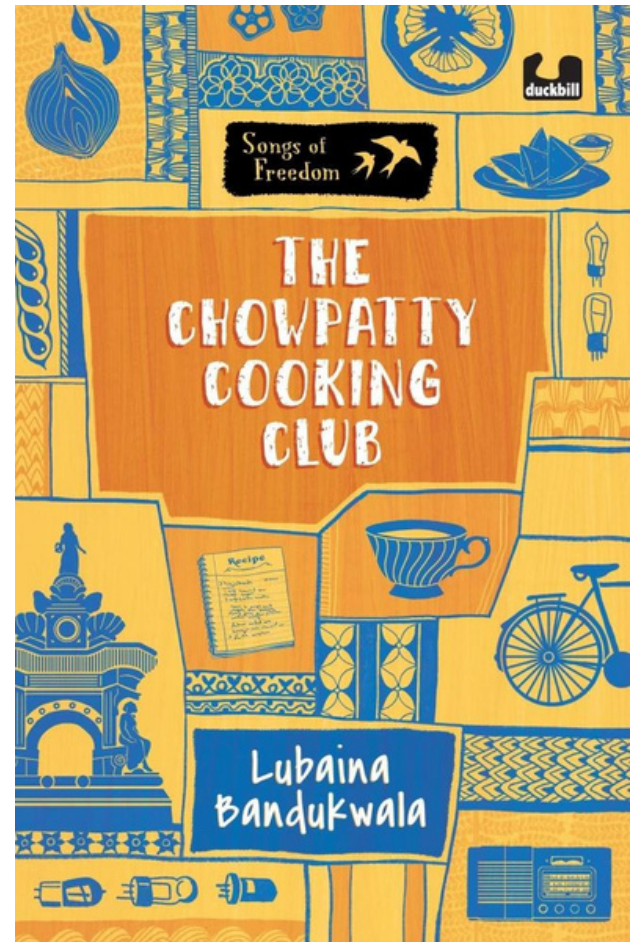
“Freedom means the ability to act and make choices without undue constraints or limitations. While achieving 100% freedom in life may be challenging, one can always work towards it because the more you work for it, the more you'll grow as a person.”

THE CHOWPATTY COOKING CLUB

Reeddi Ghosh (she/her/any!) A college student who loves books, music, and painting and values empathy, inclusivity, and acceptance.

“Are you ready? Ready to do or die for India?”

Set in Bombay (1942), against the backdrop of the Quit India Movement, *The Chowpatty Cooking Club* follows the adventures of three children: Sakina, our narrator, Zenobia, the “question-asker”, and Mehul, the “know-it-all”, as well the parallel friendships between their mothers Ateka, Freny and Dina, respectively. The story is conveyed to us, one day at a time, in a series of journal entries by Sakina, her childlike innocence reflected in every other line. Since the story takes place when the Quit India Movement was gathering momentum, we find these children caught up in the revolutionary ardour and see them as they try, in their way, to be part of the freedom struggle. Amidst the nationalist struggle, protests, underground broadcasts and secret newspapers, you would hardly think there is time to be engrossed in the delicious Parsi cuisine explored in this book – well, you would be very wrong!



The past is not romanticised at all; the fact that privilege still existed during colonial rule is also addressed.

Over the course of a few months, the trio of three friends make some very interesting discoveries, and while they initially were quite dejected at the idea that a group of ten-year-olds could not contribute anything of value to the freedom struggle, they end up surprising themselves by the end when they find out that they had a much more significant role to play in it than they thought they had. The mothers of the three friends seem to have created a cooking club – every week, they whip up a new dish and recipe and send them to each other through their children. The children are puzzled; they are not complaining about the food, but how are their mothers so immersed in their cooking while being completely unaffected in such turbulent times? Turns out they are not.

In fact, the recipes they share are written in code and not really recipes at all; it's information! Strict as British censorship in those days was, news found its way to the people. News travelled by word of mouth or in codes from one revolutionary to another, or maybe it was a secret underground radio service that delivered it to the people – as the Peoples' Radio does in this book. Run by the very relatives and friends of the main trio and inspired by the actual Congress radio of 1942, Peoples' Radio, a well-connected underground radio service, was determined to get authentic news to the citizens despite how dangerous it was to be partaking in such an activity during colonial rule.

The children do not understand right away why there is so much outrage or uproar about the British. In her tight-knit circles, Sakina sees the discussions about potential harm to business by switching to Swadeshi cloth or a few members being pro-British, which makes her develop conflicting views about the British. We see this gradually change over the course of the story– in the beginning, she had written a respectful letter addressed to King George about letting her beloved Bela Aunty out of prison. She gets a letter back apparently from the King himself that she shall be brave, like a heroine, and join in on the freedom struggle; by the end of the story, when Bela Aunty gets imprisoned again on charges of being a political revolutionary, Sakina writes another letter addressed to the King saying that while she now feels like a true heroine, many people like her aunty are being wrongfully held in prisons, all because they believe that they have a right to rule their own country and thus she respectfully asks of “dear King George” to “please Quit India”.

While the book is a short read, it's an important one. It's very clearly aimed at a younger audience but has something for every age group. While the story is told from an innocent, lighthearted and humorous perspective with grown-up narratives interspersed in between, the author does not shy away from showing the very difficult and lived experiences of revolutionaries or even common people amid the freedom struggle. Almost all characters in the story are shown somehow contributing to the struggle, no matter how marginally. The past is not romanticised at all; the fact that privilege still existed during colonial rule is also addressed. At its core, the book is incredibly vulnerable and, thus, easy to connect to. “I just tried to capture an innocent desire to be larger than life, which eventually grows into a more evolved understanding of what freedom means and the enormous cost that thousands were willing to pay for it”, – said Lubaina Bandukwala to FirstPost.

The story is entirely a work of fiction but inspired by real events that took place during the Quit India Movement. The characters and their stories are inspired by actual freedom fighters such as Usha Mehta, Vithaldas Khakar, Vithaldas Jhaveri, Chandrakant Jhaveri, and Nanak Motwante. It is a well-researched, elementary and delightful work of historical fiction that beautifully showcases how the youth of India experienced freedom so passionately yet differently than their older counterparts. It is also a part of the “Songs of Freedom” series, which explores the lives of children across India during the struggle for independence.

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Mrinal Sen's Khandhar/The Ruins (1984)

Ritu Thakur "Sahitya" (any/all): Student, writer, cinephile, music lover, baker, and passionate advocate for anti-imperialist and anti-fascist ideals.

Fresh – the body is taut, and the blood drips through.

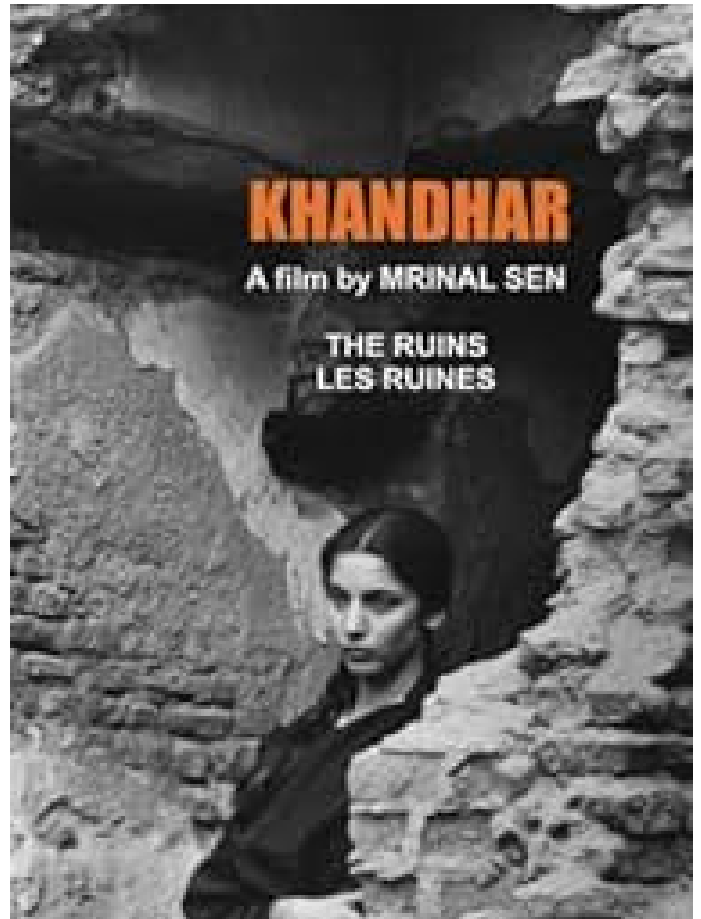
On sunny afternoons spent under the red roof of my college canteen, breaking bread with friends, lurks in the distant corner of my mind, an image of the unforgettable gaze of Subhash, the photographer character from Khandhar. The screen is bathed in the red of a photography darkroom and slowly develops the image of a woman gazing wistfully beyond the audience. Cue the title card, credits roll, and we cut to Subhash at work. In a weary voice, he promises the audience a journey to a place where time stagnates and lives as a real-time story, living apart from our superfluous dailies. He looks at the camera, boring his absent eyes forward.

The film is about a city photographer (Naseeruddin Shah) and two of his friends, Dipu (Pankaj Kapur) and Anil (Annu Kapoor), going on a trip to the titular ruins. They meet a blind, old

woman (Gita Sen) and her daughter, Jamini (Shabana Azmi), waiting for her suitor, Niranjana. In a predictable turn of events, Jamini's suitor has left them waiting for years and married someone else. The tragedy is drawn out when the bedridden mother mistakes the presence of Subhash for Niranjana, and he plays the part out of momentary pity. With this innocent mistake, the girl falls for the boy, and the boy falls for the girl, but not as much as he falls for her *mise en scène*; the boy abandons the girl. The End.

Bloat – the gut disintegrates, and a stench permeates the atmosphere for miles.

Early in the film, Dipu criticises Subhash's darkly lit photography, only for the rest of the film to be dominated by oppressive shadows. They use flashlights and metal lamps to make their way around, and not much is found except Jamini in the 'Kandahar' near theirs. She is passive and observed, first assumed to be a ghost, then revealed to the audience as a girl bound to her relic duties and ailing mother. Ghosts can pass freely; Jamini is a daughter. She retrieves into the shadows and remains behind metal bar windows, yearning for



companionship. Shabana Azmi's physicality as a woman on the verge creates a sense of deep despair, which pairs well with the gothic atmosphere of the setting. The film was shot in the dilapidated Raipur Rajbari of Birbhum, infamous for a tragic 'accidental' fire that killed two children of a Baron.

The place has a fascinating history of ownership and colonial ties, and the moss which finds itself amidst the long charred columns must be resilient; the area is isolated and has a perfect Gothic backdrop. Jamini is camouflaged in her environment; she wears drab cotton saris and dark shawls, bears no maquillage, and does not lack eloquence but remains silent. She is unflinchingly vulnerable, resembling a badly stitched-up wound that bleeds with the wrong push. In her conversation with Subhash, she seems like a child for once. Her smile consumes the screen, and the sound of her laughter is such relief from the bleak desolation of her environment. She is still young; she still laughs when Subhash jokes about the bleating goat who interrupts them, and she blooms for a moment before being snatched away by her reflections in the diary and nagging mother. A trampled flower still smells sweet, but it must return to earth.

Active Decay – rot and infestation conquer.

The personal and the commercial merge in our modern times and obscure humanity. The advent of photography was a cruel reminder of humanity's disparate behaviour. One could photograph and remember family for the first time in history without having to burn a hole through their pocket, but the Nazis could record their repugnant cruelties as mementoes of some sick victory too. The photograph pauses time without wasting any; it violates its subject by seeing them how they cannot see themselves.

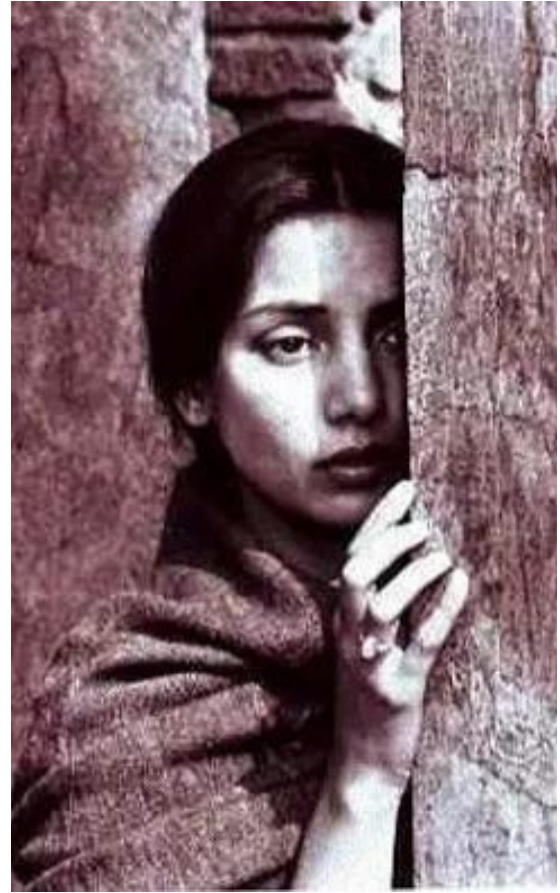
So when private Marxist Mrinal Sen poses Subhash in front of the ruins, his photographs have only a mindless sense of grandeur. The Kandahar is small and lacking in proper



upkeep, this much Subhash himself admits at the sight of the ceilings, but in his photographs, it seems a dollhouse covered in dust. He is a commercial photographer since no artist can make a living without submitting to the needs of a market. He must shoot photographs for a pharmaceutical company, but of course, the effects of medication do not appear the same in publicity as they do on the old woman and her daughter who bicker constantly. Illness and frailty of the human body are touched up for marketing in a new world where Subhash cannot extend more than a hand and a glossy 8x10 in a magazine to them. In a dream, he envisions Jamini as a golden bride, but with his income (or lack thereof), he cannot marry her. He cannot play house with her until her mother dies, he cannot say a true word, and he must leave her to rot.

Advanced decay – darkness.

The last day of the trip is a forgone conclusion. The parting is set in stone. The old woman is not photographed, and there are no goodbyes. Jamini approaches Subhash, and he averts his gaze as he leaves. In this moment, she sees him with the precise gaze of a camera, capturing his brief, blameless cruelty that he cannot see for himself. Feeling some guilt and some Orphean urge, he runs back to Kandhar to take a photograph of her hidden amidst dark rock and brick and never returns. He has committed a heinous crime: he has now bound her to this place as another ancient accoutrement, and the ruins finally look like remains of cold ash and fire in his photograph. Her freedom has its final blow; she is chained to her unkempt cage and dying mother, whom she cannot resent but feels so much for. Meanwhile, he can return to his studio with an image of her silent boiling rage, and her photograph will haunt his models as she hangs quite literally above his head. The ending is a chilling close-up of the same photograph we saw being developed at the start of the film. It is static and fixed to a wall. Context is lost, but the ghostly spirit remains.

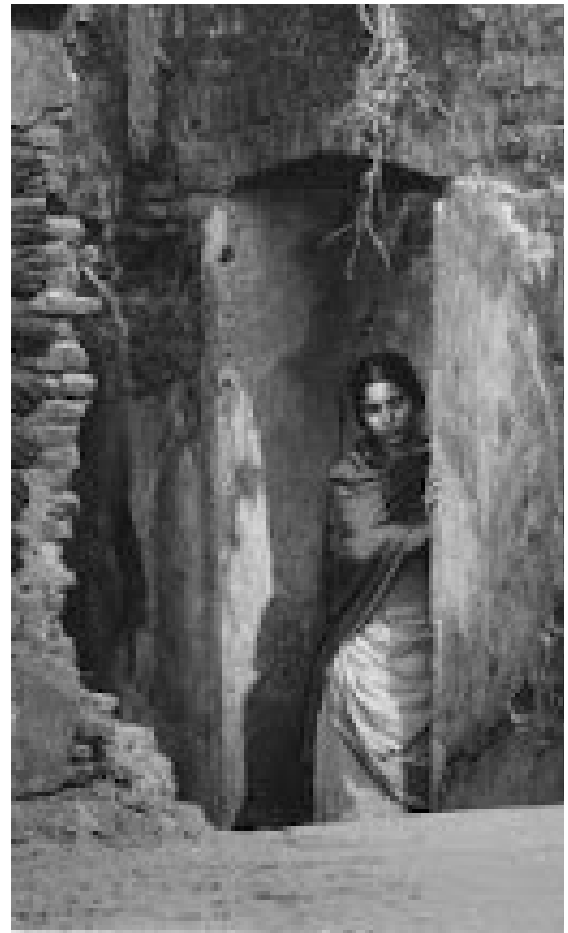


Dry – bone remains.

The film is a deeply moving exercise in one's limits of empathy. Youth and freedom have a shelf-life; they are lost to the sands of time without notice. The best years of my life will be documented on phones, through text messages and pictures on a hard disk that might not even belong to me. Technology is unnerving. I write this review on a computer, which will disappear one day. The film's original negatives were in terrible condition at the National Film Archive of India in Pune. Restored by Reliance MediaWorks, the film was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010, but a decent complete copy available for viewing remains inaccessible to most. I watched it on a shady web link and found a way to save it to my computer because I wanted to be haunted by the film. Others I know watched it on YouTube (an even worse copy, with worse sound) and were just as moved by it. How can the youth grow up and learn of things new but not old? How is it that our sense of freedom that we so staunchly believe in, the opportunities we have, still somehow hold up those old structures that creep us out? My past and family history have violence in them, of the independence struggle, of personal struggle, of having to move from Pakistan to India as Sindhis, but I do not feel this connection to it. The ruins of my ancestors shape me, and I believe they gave me a free world, but I am bound to their spectres, to photographs I don't have of them, to traditions they used to follow, and I am not unique in how I bear my past. I am young, and I will be old, and I will be just as ignorant as the youth of tomorrow. I hate this. I can flinch from the twinge of a phantom wound as Jamini and Subhash do.

I can stagnate in my ruins but would rather use my youth to embalm the ghostly spirit and give it peace. Jamini feels ferocious. Trapped in ruins, she understands most deeply. Her tragedy is the flaw of her strengths; she is innocent sincerity lost to modern artefacts - she is still as the time that she is connected to. A wave of melancholy washes me. I must know of my past and be tethered to my present.

My true freedom lies in feeling. The rise of neoliberalism and capitalism created a popular belief in the 1990s - the death of culture and history; from Francis Fukuyama to Frederick Jameson, thinkers claimed we had reached the end of history. We were meant to sleepwalk through the market as Subhash does, abandoning Jamini in the ruins of the unknowable, painful past. I refuse. I am moved by a scratched, presumably VHS copy of a thirty-nine-year-old film, and I feel closer to my parents, past and friends than ever. I have love, and it makes me a conscious flesh and blood person who wants and yearns tirelessly for a just world; one day, I will die, but there will be more like me. I feel free. Because I could not stop for Ruins - they kindly stopped for me.



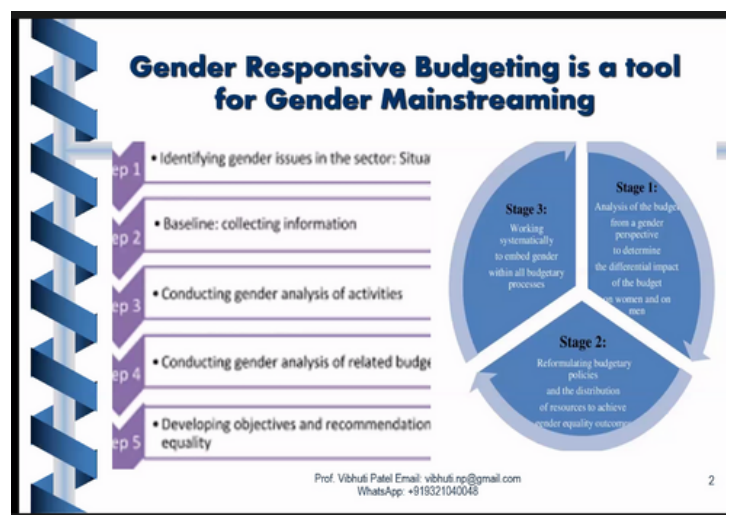
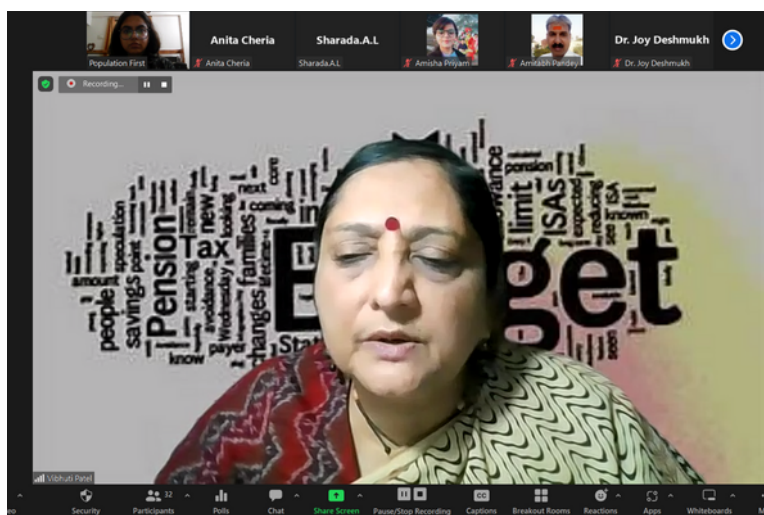
Masterclass on “Analysing Budgets from a Gender Lens” by Prof Vibhuti Patel (9th August 2023)

On August 9, 2023, Population First organized an online masterclass titled “Analysing Budgets from a Gender Lens.” The event aimed to emphasize the importance of examining budgets with a gender-focused approach, given the usual emphasis on economic aspects during budget discussions and the limited representation of women in such deliberations.

Dr. Sharada, in her opening address, highlighted the significance of understanding budgets through a gender lens, pointing out that budget releases often prioritize economic development at the expense of social developmental aspects. The underrepresentation of women's perspectives in budget discussions was stressed as a crucial issue.

The masterclass featured Prof. Vibhuti Patel, a prominent Gender Economist and Women's Rights Activist, who discussed the journey of women from the 74th Amendment era to the present, emphasizing the need for capacity building in gender-sensitive budgeting to promote equality. She also highlighted the role of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in raising awareness about policy impacts on men and women, advocating for budgetary commitments that foster gender equality.

GRB's foundation can be traced back to policy documents and development plans, and its primary purpose is to assess the alignment of budgetary intentions with actual policies, promoting gender equality and increasing transparency. Prof. Vibhuti Patel underscored the global importance of GRB, requiring diverse strategies and strong collaboration between governments, civil society, and international bodies. At the grassroots level, political and financial decentralization play critical roles in effective GRB, but challenges such as unresolved budget issues and underpayment of women workers persist. Gender economists advocate for greater transparency and a proactive role for National and State Commissions for Women in advancing GRB.



A two-day workshop on Capacity Building of Journalism Students on Gender-Sensitive Reporting at Jaipur (10th & 11th August 2023)

The two-day "Gender-Sensitive Reporting" workshop, held on August 10th and 11th, 2023, at Vesta International in Jaipur, was a collaborative effort involving Population First, HJU, UNFPA Rajasthan, CECOEDECON, and Lok Samvad Sansthan. The workshop aimed to equip approximately 35 journalism students with the skills and awareness needed to report on gender-related issues, discrimination, and violence while promoting human rights.

The inaugural session featured Dr. Anil Kumar Mishra, Dr. Deepesh Gupta, and Prof. (Dr.) Sudhi Rajiv, setting the stage for the project 'Gender Sensitive Reportage.' Dr. A. L Sharada's opening session provided an in-depth understanding of gender concepts, norms, and patriarchy. Interactive activities challenged stereotypes and heightened awareness of patriarchy's societal impact. Ms. Shobhita Rajagopal's session explored gender-based discrimination and violence, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to combat these issues. Mr. Govind Chaturvedi and Prof. Himanshu Vyas focused on reporting techniques, including news photo stories and short films.

The second day featured Ms. Trisha's session on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Reporting, emphasizing the role of journalists in promoting human rights principles. Dr. A. L Sharada continued with sessions on gender-sensitive reporting, language use for sensitive topics, and the media's portrayal of social norms. Mr. Kalyan Kothari concluded the workshop, highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive reportage in addressing societal disparities and promoting inclusive narratives.

Participants left the workshop with enhanced skills and perspectives, ready to contribute to more equitable and responsible journalism that empowers and informs, challenging stereotypes and fostering a nuanced comprehension of gender issues in media. The collaborative efforts among participants and organizations represented at the workshop are vital in advancing these goals.



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