

Expressions



Volume: III, Issue: VII

July 2022

DROUPADI MURMU

Jewel in the crown of Indian democracy

Kavya Rangan

If you want to shine like a sun,
first burn like a sun.

~ APJ Abdul Kalam

These words befit 15th President of India Droupadi Murmu. Why, you may ask? Well, she is a forerunner in empowering women and the tribal community of India. Her stellar victory in the presidential election is a testament to her hard work and integrity as a politician. She is the first ever tribal woman president of the nation and only the second woman in the country to hold this office.

Born to a family of Santhal tribe in village of Uparbeda, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, Murmu started her career as a teacher. She worked as assistant professor at Shri Aurobindo Integral Education and Research Institute, Rairangpur and served as junior assistant at the irrigation



New Delhi: Justice NV Ramana, CJI, administering the oath of the office of the President of India to Droupadi Murmu, at a swearing-in ceremony in the Central Hall of Parliament on July 25, 2022.

Photo: PIB

department, Government of Odisha.

She battled adversities during her growing years. These included paucity of proper education facilities, skepticism of her own tribe and family (her father and grandfa-

ther were village heads), and social oppression to complete her education and make a career. She was the first ever girl from her village to attend college.

Continued on P5 ▶

Editor's Desk

Welcome back to campus



After a long COVID-induced hiatus, Senior Students returned to campus bringing an atmosphere of excitement with usual hustle-bustle across the corridors. Students with their usual

smile said they were longing to have classes in Physical Mode after they shifted to Online teaching for almost two years.

Its wonderful to be back and interact with teachers they said adding Online teaching had become very irritating and painful.

On the contrary there were students who claim to have enjoyed their WFH Classes because they need not to prepare early in the morning for the Campus. It seems some of these quite liked confined to their rooms or in their comfort zone. These adolescents used to get up 10 minutes before class & had an unplanned day.

While Covid-19 forced students indoors for pretty long time and though they faced manifold health issues but they it looks they are not prepared to travel to campus and report in time. For Kid, school is more of fun but for adolescents they need to take time for the transition.

"Students have completely forgotten the classroom discipline and one can see them getting tired after post lunch, observed a faculty suggesting "If the transition to 'Study From Home' (SFH) came as a new normal both for students & teachers , the roll back to physical mode looks more challenging.

Returning to campus is certainly a positive step but these adolescents need to redesign their bodies and brains for a routine now in physical mode of classes.

As you begin this transition, things may seem stressful and challenging, and many adolescents take to unhealthy ways of coping with these stressors. Its better students adopt to healthy ways of not just taking care of themselves, but also practice stress management whenever they need to.

Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

ASCO: Where I Evolved!

Walking into the foyer on my first day of college was like first day at school, yes there was a little crying too, a medley of emotions, the only difference was that I was not 4! I was a young/new adult who was trying to absorb the huge shift and figuring out, well everything! With the feeling of starting from scratch, my introvert self was anxious with my gut in the throat. Away from home, away from school friends, this was a step into a different world altogether, for which I was not prepared, at least I thought I wasn't.



They say years pass days don't, similarly three years on campus went by in a blink though I still remember every day vividly. At the end of the first day of class, I remember coming back to my hostel room (which fortunately I shared with my twin sister) and feeling like a complete outsider, I thought I did not fit.

I started avoiding eye contact with anyone, with blinkers on my eyes I used to go to class and comeback to my still strange room where I had a familiar face, my sister. But little did I know that the same room / flat that once felt strange would become my happy place where I could build not only friendships but strong relationships for a lifetime. Six of us sharing the same flat in our hostel slowly started opening to each other, over mess food, late night conversations, coffee and understanding Amizone! While hostel had become a familiar face going to college every day was still a drag, I was struggling to make friends and live that 'college life' which is depicted in Hollywood movies and Archie's comics.

As God would have planned, I did not make friends with anyone but my classmates, seniors and faculty started initiating conversations with me which I embraced with open arms. I often wondered did I actually come across as so lost and alone that people out of pity were befriending me or they actually wanted to connect. I would believe in the latter.

All I needed was a little push! Still coy I gave myself the first push by auditioning for a play hosted by ASCO on the epic Mahabharata. Though I was rejected, in course of that audition I met people, made friends (who are still close friends of mine) and grew as a person! I was in my element. There was no looking back from there, still unsure of what I MUST do, I knew what I HAD to do, just try new things, and eventually figure what I WANT to do.

*-Shrishti Sharma
Accounts Executive, Ad Factor
(Batch 2012- 2015)*

ALUMNI CORNER

OLD AGE HOMES

Giving stability to the elderly

Shreya Kumar

Indian society has always been one that has been dependent on families. This interdependence consists of having lived with parents, grandparents, spouse and cousins all under one roof. Such joint families have always thrived.

In recent times, with change in social and cultural demographics, lifestyles and careers, societal equations have changed. From huge joint families, we have gone down to nuclear families including children and their parents. Caretakers have taken over the role of grandparents who would spend their days taking care of the young ones left behind between two working parents.

Those that remained with their kids, found the transition of adjusting to a new lifestyle and surroundings challenging. Leaving behind their homes with sentimental attachments, comforts, as well as their own social life leads to physical and mental distress. Many did not share the same lifestyle as their

kids but had to make compromises for their physical and financial stability leading to a growing dissatisfaction amongst both generations.

Old age homes are becoming an increasingly popular choice amongst children who live away from their parents for their caretaking and with families that cannot adjust to the elderly. Many senior citizens themselves prefer old age homes to living with children that do not care for or respect them and consider them a burden.

Samarpan Vrudhashram run by the Gayatri Pariwar Trust, and founded by Acharya Shree Ram Sharma Ji, is known all over the country and abroad for its welfare activities. "Some are here because their children are abroad and living alone causes stress and depression. Ideally, there should be a companion at home who can fill the void." Says the owner of Samarpan old age home, "My son and daughter-in-law, both are working in offices, so they were not able to take care of me at home, I said to them that it is fine even if my bahu cooks for

a single time in the morning, but he said he did not feel good that I'm living with him and he is not able to take care of me, so he sent me here." Mr S. Verma, is a resident at Samarpan Vrudhashram. Some are living here in the hope that their child will come back to take them or even meet them while some have lost hope and created their own social circle here. A resident at the home narrates his experience, "I was not treated nicely by my son especially after he got married. My daughter-in-law sometimes did not give me food, I once vomited, and she came shouting to clean it up. Then she complained about the same to my son. After this incident, I was left here." A worker at the old age home said, "They have all the necessary facilities, like 19 bedrooms, fully furnished, a library, a dispensary, a big dining hall and many more, but still for some, it is like keeping a bird in a gold cage and giving it tasty food nonetheless a forest is its true nature, it's actual home so it's not happy."

In the hustle and bustle of our own lives, we fail to realise that our parents are growing old too. It is when we see them struggling to climb the stairs, unable to carry heavy things or tiring out in a small walk, that we realise that with the years gone by and they have aged. Rather than struggling to adjust to their pace of life or forcing them to adjust to our own fast-paced one, it is better to provide them with an option where they can feel safe and wanted. Old age homes can provide them with an opportunity to find stability in the later years of their life and create a social circle that not only understands them but also give them an opportunity to start anew.



File Photo: Anuj Pratap Singh, ASCO Alumni

Cocomelon, more like 'cocaine melon' for kids?

Photo courtesy: Ashna Ali

Ashna Ali

In today's scenario, extreme pressure of workload causes parents to leave their children back at home and certainly give them less time. Amongst such a backdrop, alternatives are looked out for to prevent these small kids from getting cranky and grumpy. To the rescue, are shows with colorful depictions and animations which keep the child's mind sane and heart in a position making these young ones happy, cheerful and radiant. In the course of



Kids-themed YouTube channels are among the most popular types of content on YouTube, and as of March 2022 ChuChu TV Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs was the most subscribed kids content channel with approximately 55 million subscribers

Source: Statista

time, these shows become an obsession for the young minds, keep them fixated and hamper with their eyesight due to a prolonged screen time.

The shackles of these shows, such as Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes, and children's songs in 3D and otherwise as well, engage and put these children in a state of stupefaction and daze, which buys extra time for their parents to carry on with their work. The trance created by such shows leaves a cloistered impact on the brain, and the more it is watched, the more the brain gets habitual of it, erasing the child's inner creativity. Adding to which, in an

article by Yahoo.com, Jerrica Sanes, a child development expert, in an Instagram story wrote, "Cocomelon is so hyper-stimulating that it acts as a drug and stimulant. The brain gets a hit of dopamine from screen-time, and it seems that the stronger the drug aka the level of stimulations a show delivers, the stronger the hit," thereby breathing air into the fact that these shows can play with the balance and regulation of a child's emotions. Although, there is a paucity of researches on the effect of these cult animated shows on the minds of small kids, however, there is no dearth of personal incidences by parents documenting the tales of tantrums thrown by children when they refrained their kids from watching the show. Sana Ahmad, a young mother of a two-year-old mentioned about how she tackled with her son's tantrums and bawling, when she restricted him from watching Cocomelon. "Initially, due to household chores and office work, I used to put on Cocomelon for him, as a tactic to hold his attention for long enough. After a couple of months, I recognized he was becoming increasingly agitated when Cocomelon was not on. He would throw tantrums that would sometimes involve hitting her head with his fist."

Due to a sedentary lifestyle, spending too much time watching these

shows in front of a screen might result in a number of health problems. These include nutritional inadequacies brought on by poor eating habits, obesity, and issues with vision. Such viewing habits have been given a thrust especially during COVID-19, since there wasn't any other means of recreation available, as "69% of participants in Akatsuki latest survey agreed that they have seen an increase in their kids' animation content consumption habits post-COVID", in an article by The Financial Express. Voicing her opinion on sing-along and other shows, Areeba Ali, another concerned parent, claimed that the show was not only causing daily tantrums and meltdowns but also affecting speech development in her little one. "Being a three-year-old child, she just responds to tunes and tones of rhymes and not to real conversations. Ever since I prevented her from watching Cocomelon and started conversing with her, I have witnessed a steady difference in her. In my experience, Cocomelon is over dosing which delays a lot of personality growth," she added.

Shows like Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes and others are unquestionably a means of entertainment and leisure for these children but an absolute dependency on them is not the solution but a problem in disguise.

ONLINE SHOPPING PACKAGING WASTE

Threat to environment

Vaishali Gautam

It seems hypocrisy has become a lifestyle for humans. This can be justified in myriad ways, but we are focussing on environment here. Everyone has a lot to say on how the environment is in danger. We also know about its preventive measures to some extent but only 'theoretically'. Like many other things, we fail to put this knowledge into action. That is the reason why we have not recognized one of the biggest threats for the environment yet.

This threat has actually become part of our everyday lives. It has made our lives so convenient. Though this convenience is arriving at our doors with a huge but latent cost, we choose to keep our eyes closed. We all enjoy online shopping but little do we care about the packaging waste being generated because of it. According to a report by Oceana, Amazon alone generated 599 million pounds of plastic waste, 23.5 million pounds of this plastic waste entered and polluted the world's waterways and oceans. These numbers have only increased over the years for other platforms as well.

Smita Singh, a housewife who frequently opts for online shopping said, "It is actually very surprising that most of us have not even taken noticed it. In fact we appreciate platforms and products based on their packaging without caring about the amount of waste being generated. Most of the companies that market themselves as eco-friendly are also doing the same thing. It is obvious that the products need to be well packaged to reach safely at our doorsteps but

Plastic packaging shipped with the 7 billion packages Amazon delivered in 2019 generated 465 million pounds of waste. 22.4 million pounds of this plastic waste ended up in waterways and marine ecosystems

finding better alternatives to generate minimum waste is the need of the hour."

These e-commerce platforms want to make shopping as convenient as possible. Easy return policies are one of the major steps that are used to make shopping experience better for customers. Aman, a college student said, "I feel there are a lot of unnecessary elements that are added just to make the packaging look attractive. You will find complex packaging even for the smallest of things. Seems like 'Don't judge a book by its cover' is no more relevant."

So, shall we give up online shopping? Not really! We just need to implement more sustainable practices. Companies can stop over packaging, minimize plastic use, go for biodegradable packaging alternatives, and consider reusable packaging designs. We as consumers can contribute by encouraging minimalism, raising voice against excess packaging (you have social media at your convenience too), request items to be shipped together, and shop from companies using recyclable packaging material. We together, through our small contributions, can prevent a huge harm to the environment. Doesn't this motivate you to become better or even go for street shopping?

29%
increase in plastic
waste production by
Amazon in 2020

► Continued from P1

Jewel in the crown...

It was in 1997 when she started climbing the political ladder to become a councilor of Rairangpur Nagar Panchayat for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). She was president of BJP's Scheduled Tribe Morcha and became a minister of state in Odisha's BJD-BJP coalition government in 2000 and 2004.

Her public service portfolio is rich. She has had the experience of handling departments like Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Commerce and Transportation as minister of state. Murmu is also credited with to have set up transport offices in all 58 subdivisions of the state.

Coming from one of the poorest states of India as a suppressed minority of the Santhal tribe, she battled social stigma and political unrest between government and people of tribal communities.

In 2016, she bore the brunt of losing her office as governor of Jharkhand. This was because she made the controversial decision of sending back the amendments to the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, 1908, and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act, 1949, questioning how tenancy land amendments would help the masses.

Her tenacious and honest service to the community was the reason why she stayed in post as governor of Jharkhand till 2021 and was also considered for the country's highest-ranking office, once before in 2017.

Her election as the 15th president of the country is a victory not only for herself but also for the tribal community.

The PM's vote of congratulations to her is not only for her victory but also for her strength as both an exemplary politician and a strong and principled person of great values. She is truly a jewel in the crown of Indian democracy and is set to achieve great things in her tenure.

HAFTA BAZAAR

India's Street Economy



Weekly markets or 'hafta bazaars' have always attracted Indian buyers. Despite the abundance of online shopping websites and numerous physical shops, weekly markets are fascination for both rich and poor. Amity University Lucknow Campus photographer **SURESH SAHU** has beautifully captured weekly markets of Lucknow through his lens. We are carrying three such markets in this issue and remaining in next edition.



Weekly markets are held on a specific day of the week. In most of the cities these markets are named after the day on which they are held. In some of the cases they are named after the place where they are held. These markets do not have permanent shops. Traders from different places set up shops for the day and sell their merchandise.

ed and create traffic congestion but at the same time they offer many advantages. Here you get a variety of products from different places. These products are usually cheaper as there are no cuts and commission of middlemen. With some bargain you are likely to get the product at a very reduced price. Lastly, weekly markets are one place where you get everything like vegetables, utensils, groceries, footwear, clothes, and decorative items. Therefore, these are appreciated by all.



In this issue we are covering three markets of Lucknow: Tuesday market of Alambagh, Wednesday market of Nishatganj and Thursday market of Aminabad. You will find all shops for daily needs ranging from clothes, utensils, footwears to even furniture and antique items. These markets are generally held post lunch and end by 10 pm. People from far and near come to buy the necessary things of their choice.

Such weekly markets are held in nearly all cities and have become a part of India's culture. One can spot foreign tourists as well in these markets as they are interested in antique and handmade items. These markets should be preserved and maintained as they are an integral part of India's street economy.

Though these markets are crowd-



Aminabad



Aminabad



Aminabad



Nishatganj



Nishatganj



Nishatganj



Nishatganj



Aminabad



Nishatganj



PINK

The colour of Safety & Freedom

Ankita Bhatt

New Delhi, India's national capital, is known for being lively at all times and at the heart of this enchanting city is its public transport. While many recognize the metro as Delhi's main public transport, something else takes the cake. It is actually the DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation) busses connecting the nerves of this illustrious city and making it possible for millions of people to travel throughout the city to reach their destinations in a safe and cost-effective manner.

To encourage usage of public transport, the Delhi Government on October 29, 2019, issued 'pink tickets' allowing women to travel for free in DTC and circuit busses. This decision was taken to empower women in the city to travel by themselves without depending on anyone for monetary help and to include them in the economic growth of the country.

Women passengers are extremely happy with this decision. They are applauding the step taken to not only solve their transport issues but also to significantly decrease the cost of travelling in a metropolitan city such as New Delhi. Gayatri Sharma, a government teacher says, "Every day I have to travel for school at 6:30 in the morning. It is very important to get an easily accessible transport mode. DTC 24 hours service is very helpful because it is comfortably available for people like us."

Regular bus tickets are black and white in colour while the free tickets for women are pink in colour and every female passenger must



Delhi Economic Survey reveals:

Women availed over 217 million free bus trip tickets

76%

of over two million bus journeys clocked in the last five months in the national capital were using pink tickets

collect them from the conductor to travel for free. Each ticket has a face value of Rs. 10 and the amount for these tickets will be refunded to

the transporter when they present proof of the number of tickets they issued each month. Women passengers who want to pay for their tickets can do so and save the 'free tickets' for their fellow female passengers.

Navneet Kaur, a graduate student, opined "The government's initiative to make travel cost-free by issuing 'pink tickets' aided students like me to cut down our travelling expense and encourages us to save for pocket money. Even charges for men's tickets are minimal."

Marshals or police officers with red bands on their forearms are stationed on each bus which not only ensures the safety of the women passengers but also boosts their



confidence in travelling by public transport in the city, especially late at night.

The government has also launched the One Delhi app, integrating bus routes, real-time traffic updates, access to all bus stops, and issue e-tickets. The app can also be used to visit tourist spots in the city. The plan is to integrate payment platforms like Paytm, among others, to link with the app and make it a one-stop shop for in-city travel in Delhi NCR.

STRUGGLING TO WIN

Shahida Khan

Not all are born with a golden spoon. There are hurdles in the way which certainly is not one's choice. This is because everyone dreams of a life which can flow smoothly. But, to take control of your life, and overcome the stumbling blocks is a choice, kept open to all. Either you take it and fight or leave it and repent your whole life. Young Karishma chose the former emerging victorious.

A young woman in her twenties, Karishma worked extremely hard to make ends meet for her family. In an interview with Expressions' reporter, Karishma narrated the struggles and misfortune she faced, and how she wrestled against the same. "Belonging to a poverty-stricken family, I had to start working at a very young age. To make ends meet, my parents worked as housekeepers in the area. I opened a parlour, called Midas. The very reason behind this parlour was to enhance our lifestyle and to stand on my own feet," told Karishma.

Mentioning about the struggles she faced, she added, "My life wasn't easy. After college, I used to work part-time in a parlour, and the money earned was used to pay my fees." Karishma's life was a rollercoaster. She mentioned about her father not liking the idea of opening a parlour, but she had to because it was her dream. "As I graduated from college, I decided on opening my own parlour. However, I had no money nor premises to give wings to my dreams." When asked, as to how she managed to fulfil her dream, taking a deep breath, she mentioned, "I somehow managed to arrange Rs 20,000 and had a primary setup in a place which suited my budget. I used to go from house to house publicizing my business and gradually people started to appreciate my work which fuelled my business a little."

While, on one hand Karishma's business was flourishing, on the other hand COVID-19 was spreading its tentacles. This pandemic affected her life too. She said, "My business suffered drastically during COVID-19. As I could not afford the rent, I had to shut down my parlour for a while. But I did not lose hope." Against all odds, she restarted her business. This time in a new COVID-induced setup of work from home. Obviously, at the start, the work did not bring her enough customers, but she did not give up. She maintained her enthusiasm and dedication to work. "Sooner or later, everything got settled, and I used to get my parlour essentials from Delhi and Kanpur. I even participated in a lot of competitions and won certificates and prizes."

Speaking about her most prominent memory of her journey, she said, "I was fortunate enough to get the best bridal makeup award from a Bollywood makeup artist,

Vinay Garg, which is without a doubt, a moment I will cherish forever." As it is rightly said, it doesn't take long for happiness to get destroyed, Karishma, after making her family happy, lost her father, after which, her responsibilities increased, and she started to work even harder for her loved ones.

Karishma's story clearly portrays, that even if you are put in challenging situations, you have got to come out of it, work for it and fight against it, after all, life is blend of both happy and sad moments.



Karishma (R) with her client



Karishma's Parlour

PROBIOTIC DRINKS

Are they effective?

Drishti Vanaik

Since time immemorial, our elders have been making us consume homemade 'kadha'. Apparently, this fights infections and keeps one's mechanism hale and hearty. Of course, the aforementioned drink is looked up to nowadays, but there are other manufactured players in the line as well, referred to as, 'Probiotic Health Drinks'. One must have definitely heard the name of the most popular drink, 'Yakult'. Often people depend upon such dietary supplements and functional foods. This is because of the union of two factors, the affirmative health advantages they present and the consumer awareness activities held by the companies.

With COVID-19, this dependency on probiotic drinks certainly has been expeditious. According to an article by Pune-based marketing research firm, Research Dive, "The global probiotic drinks market is estimated to generate a revenue of \$13,814.70 million by 2028, increasing from \$7,330.20 million in 2020, at a noteworthy CAGR of 8.5%". While if we speak of India only, "The probiotic drinks market reached a value of INR 778 million in 2021. Looking forward, analysts expect the market to reach INR 2,371 million by 2027, exhibiting a CAGR of 21.00% during 2022-2027", according to offerings by Research and Market. Furthermore, this growth in demand of probiotic drinks in India can be attributed to various reasons. These can range from changing dietary patterns, growing health consciousness and the principal reason of these drinks professing to improve gut health.



WHO defines probiotics as "Live microorganisms that when conferred in adequate quantities provide a health benefit".

"Globally the probiotic is a \$14-billion industry – yet in urban domains craving for pro-biotics is increasing rapidly and probiotic drinks and foods are slowly grabbing market space."

(According to an article by Vaartha Bharathi)

"Major players in the market for probiotics drinks and foods include Yakult, Nestle, Amul, Mother Dairy."

(According to IMARC Group)

Well, this change in consumer behaviour is acceptable, but the question is - what is the efficacy of these drinks? Are they only using consumer psychology to drive sales, or are they really healthy? A majority of studies show that probiotic drinks are not really beneficial to people who are already healthy. The bacteria seem to help only those suffering from a few specific intestinal disorders. Dr. Bhamri, Swarn Hospital, Lucknow, mentioned, "The intestine is a highly neglected organ although it controls all aspects of health and

probiotics help to maintain intestinal balance." It is not only the gut benefit it offers, but people consume it also because of its taste. "I enjoy Amul's probiotic drinks a lot, they are healthy, whet appetite and boost digestion", added Ujjwal, a regular shopper of probiotics.

Probiotics are also considered to reduce risk of common cold, allergies among other ailments. Attention to minute details while purchasing them is extremely crucial. Dr. Shikha, a homeopathic doctor, said, "It is important to study the label of the probiotic food and its scientifically proven health benefits. Choose the one that contains microorganisms proven to get the desired effect, and has a viable bacteria. Ensuring proper storage conditions for them also hold immense importance." Moreover, those with immunity compromised have to consume probiotics with caution. The Lancet, a British medical journal, says that, "The 'good bacteria' commonly found in probiotic drinks can be fatal for people suffering from severe pancreatitis." Even though the probiotic market is increasing at a phenomenal rate, it should be clear that they are not a replacement for any treatment.

Amidst the benefits and drawbacks of probiotic drinks, their sales look reasonably decent. Devprakash Mehra, owner of Apna store, a grocery shop in Aliganj, mentioned, "Over 60% of people come and buy Yakult from us. It is either for themselves or for their children." This proves that probiotics is the new trend these days. Every household fridge can be seen with one now.

Hajj: A journey for self-purification

Garima Dobhal

Every Muslim should travel, at least once in their lifetime, to Mecca for one of Islam's five pillars, the Hajj. With rites performed in the most sacred locations in the Islamic world, it is the most spiritually significant event in a Muslim's life. Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca, and the Kaaba and the sanctuary there, are two of Islam's holiest sites. As a result, it is the centre of Islam and a tremendously spiritual place for Muslims everywhere.

The Hajj promotes gender equality and unity among Islamic sects and ethnic groups, as well as more empowering attitudes towards women, such as increased support for female employment and education. It is considered as a physically taxing trek that affords the chance

The Hajj trip is one of Islam's most important ceremonies. Every capable Muslim must visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime. By removing all markers of social standing, riches, and pride, the Hajj helps Muslims understand the true value of life on earth and in the afterlife. In the Hajj, everyone is treated equally

to atone for previous sins and begin anew before God. Since their origins, the Hajj rites have not changed, and they continue to be an important religious obligation that unites



Muslims from all over the world, regardless of country of origin or kind of religion. Dating back to history, Mecca was a key pilgrimage site for Arab tribes in northern and central Arabia even before Islam. They believed in many gods, but they came to Mecca once a year to worship Allah. Fighting was outlawed in Mecca for the duration of this holy month, allowing trade to burgeon. As a result, Mecca also grew in importance as a trading center. The impact of Hajj is such that every Muslim keenly and deeply believes in it, as Rimsha Khan, a 25-year-old, mentioned, "Being a follower of Islam as well as according to my religion, every Muslim who is physically capable, mentally sound, and financially capable must perform Hajj at least once in their life. The title of Hajji is given to those who complete the journey. Hajj cleans the soul, bringing hope, renewal, and purity. It also increases individual faith, which promotes the unity of all Muslims."

Furthermore, the Hajj is thought to have spiritual importance in addition to being a religious requirement since it enables Muslims to renew themselves. A reminder of the Day of Judgment, when Muslims believe

everyone will stand before God, is served by this Muslim Pilgrimage. "My father performed Hajj five years ago, and this year I got to do it with my father, making it a very special year for me because it was my first time," mentioned Mohd Aaqib Khan, a working professional. Speaking of 2022, "One million fully vaccinated Muslims, including 850,000 from abroad, were allowed at this year's Hajj in the city of Mecca, which was a big rise after two years of drastically curtailed numbers due to policies to stop the spread of coronavirus infection," as mentioned in an article in Hindustan Times. Adding to the magnificence of Hajj, Umay Kulsum, a college-goer, cheered, "A person who performs Hajj returns home as he or she was when he or she was born, implying that all faults will be forgiven. As a result, you become sin-free."

Muslims are inspired to perform good deeds by the holy act of Hajj, which sharpens their moral sense and polishes their conscience. It is essential for re-establishing the core values of honesty, purity, and integrity in each person's heart and for fostering a just and prosperous society.

Is housework essentially a... **WOMAN'S DOMAIN?**

Kashika Nigam

If we analyze the various types of jobs around the world, we will notice that many of them are gender based. For example, household work. It is one of the most common and important jobs which does not even have an 'off day' and women of the house are expected to do this work. Why so?

As we progress, we see household work is no longer considered as gender-based work. Yet, there are people who believe that women of the house should perform the daily kitchen and cleaning tasks as it is their duty to do so. To a similar question, a 19-year-old college student Dev Ranjan replied, "Work has no gender.

From a very young age I started performing all such tasks which were assigned to me and I used to do it without any ifs and buts." But the question is, "Is this kind of environment prevailing in all households?"

Daughters from a very young age are asked to help their mothers in the kitchen in preparing and serving food to the elders of the house and sons are expected to handle all the work outside the house. Similar is the case of a 20-year-old girl Radhika Saxena who tells, "There are no said or written rules on activities which should be performed by the daughters and the sons of the house but there are definitely some unsaid rules which can prove the prevailing patriarchy in the system." Giving an example she adds, "Whenever her father returns from work, she is always asked to make tea for him even though her brother is always present in the house and is never asked to do it."

It has also been seen that if the house is messy, the woman is held responsible for it and men can always pass through as it is not their part of job to look after. According to a report by the Labor Department, 'housework is still considered a woman's job'.

A 15-year-old teenager on being asked the same question replied, "many times when guests leave and we have to clean the mess, it is always her who is asked to take the dishes to the kitchen, and never her brother. Even when he insists on doing so, he is stopped. It cannot be de-

As per Gender Development Index 2020, India ranks 123rd

In the 2021 edition of the annual Global Gender Gap Report produced by the World Economic Forum, India stands at the 17th position from the bottom

nied that some women do not allow their sons or husbands to do the household work." As we are moving to a modern world, there are still some things which pull us back. It is quite evident that inequality is still prevailing in the society, and it starts from our own house itself.



Photo: Suresh Sahu