

জাগৃতি

(Awakening)

Human Rights
Watch board
Bethune College

Human Rights

ANKITA SEN

UG, SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

On 10th December 1948, The General Assembly of the United Nations with Eleanor Roosevelt as the appointed chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights, announced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This document aims to describe the 30 rights and freedom collectively called the “Human Rights” that we as human beings, by virtue of our humanity, are entitled to irrespective of where we come from, our ethnicity, our religious beliefs etc. These rights and freedoms include rights like the right to life, liberty, education, healthcare, social security, free speech, asylum, freedom from torture, inhumane treatment and so on. These human rights have since found their way into various International Human Rights Laws and treaties, many of which have been ratified by various countries.

The creation of this “Magna Carta of Humanity” was a climacteric event in the history of human rights. The heinous atrocities committed during the WWII, like the extermination of about 17 million people in the holocaust, had jarred the international communities to consciousness who had then proceeded to establish the United Nations and subsequently formed the UDHR.

But even after all these years, human rights are still being failed. Discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion is still rampant in many parts of the world. The world has shown us time and again that these human rights need protection from the very humanity that they were once designed to protect. So let us all pledge to know our rights, to understand that they are not ours alone, that they belong to each and every one of us. As Robert Green Ingersoll has said “Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself” .



RIMA KUNDU

SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

RIGHTS ARE THE ONLY RIGHTS

SREEPARNA ROY
SEM-VI, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

“To deny people their **human rights is to challenge their very **humanity**.”**

– Nelson Mandela

Humans- who have conquered the world by their mettle, said to be the best among all the species. Still daily news bulletins from all over the worlds comes with the pop up notifying violation of human rights every day and several just remain not reported, drowning in dark. An event from the past year amidst the pandemic made us entirely blown by shock was the death of George Floyd, an African American citizen who was knelt on the back of his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds by a white police officer named Derek Chauvin on May 25th 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. An almost nine minutes long brutal murder made the victim say “I can’t breathe” who was accused to buy cigarette with a \$20 counterfeit. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood,’ enunciates Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This incident has once again brought to fore the need of implementation of international human rights. The shameless naked brutality comes with a dress of protector of law in US, the so called leading country among the entire world. This is not the only one- another black man Rayshard Brooks was shot during an attempted arrest in Atlanta. And so called justice was hailed by accusing Chauvin who was charged in early June with second-degree murder, with the three assisting officers charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder. All have been fired. The police department faces a civil rights investigation from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

Despite UDHR proclaiming that ‘no man shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’ (Art 5: UDHR), the needless and preventable human suffering across the world is far from over. George Floyd is a reflection of national identity privileges of one race over others. It symbolizes the violation of ICERD (The International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) to which most of the countries in the world are signatories. We are in the era governed by constitutions; still human suffering is not ameliorated. Human dignity is uncompromising as it lies at the heart of human rights. Every human being is entitled to inviolable human rights. They are to be protected and promoted by the society, state and the international community and such incident is just enough to falsify the system and promises to ensure human right as well as protection.

It has become a practise from the history which is continually repeating itself. The horrors of holocaust brought ‘genocide’ on top agenda of United Nations after second world war. The Nazi genocide of 6 million European Jews between 1941-45 in German occupied Europe had unmasked the monstrous side of human face under Adolf Hitler. In ‘Life and Death of Adolf Hitler’ written by Robert Payne, its narrated that Hitler had not only wished Jews to die, but they must die in agony.

The torture, inhumane conditions of prisoners and human rights violations still remain unpunished and un-remedied. Neither UN, ICC, ICJ nor any other international community tribunals have still been able to ensure the closure of Guantanamo bay prison despite the US actions at Guantanamo are grossly infringing provisions of Geneva convention, International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention Against Torture (CAT).

Injustice and malpractices on treating others as inferior than himself is now literally established in all over the world. The protection of rights of 'indigenous people' by curbing their forceful assimilation is needed. The gross violation of rights of Caucasians by imperialist and expansionist Russia is not debated much in human rights discourse. The Russo -Circassian war of 1864 displaced lakhs of Caucasians who were native ethnic tribes of Caucasus region in Russia. Russians believed that they have authority to rule Caucasians after 'Treaty of Adrianople' that concluded Russo-Turkish war of 1828 between Russia and Ottoman empire. When the indigenous Caucasians resisted Russian atrocities, their villages and forest dwellings were destroyed. Many Caucasians were exiled to neighbouring states due to high-handedness of Russians.

In India, the history of shame is penned down with the ink made of blood and sweat of Dalits and that of other similar caste and tribes and the deprivation is still established and practised with the quotation and misinterpretation from mythologies to justify the inhumanity. There were reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings of suspected criminals and insurgents. Military courts are primarily responsible for investigating killings by security forces and paramilitary forces. Reports of custodial death cases, in which prisoners or detainees were killed or died in police and judicial custody, continued. In June the National Campaign against Torture reported the deaths of 125 persons in police custody in 2019. The report stated 74 percent of the deaths were due to alleged torture or foul play, while 19 percent occurred under suspicious circumstances. Of the 125 deaths in police custody, Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number at 14, followed by Tamil Nadu and Punjab with 11 deaths each. The 125 deaths in police custody documented by the National Campaign against Torture in 2019 included 13 victims from Dalit and tribal communities and 15 Muslims.

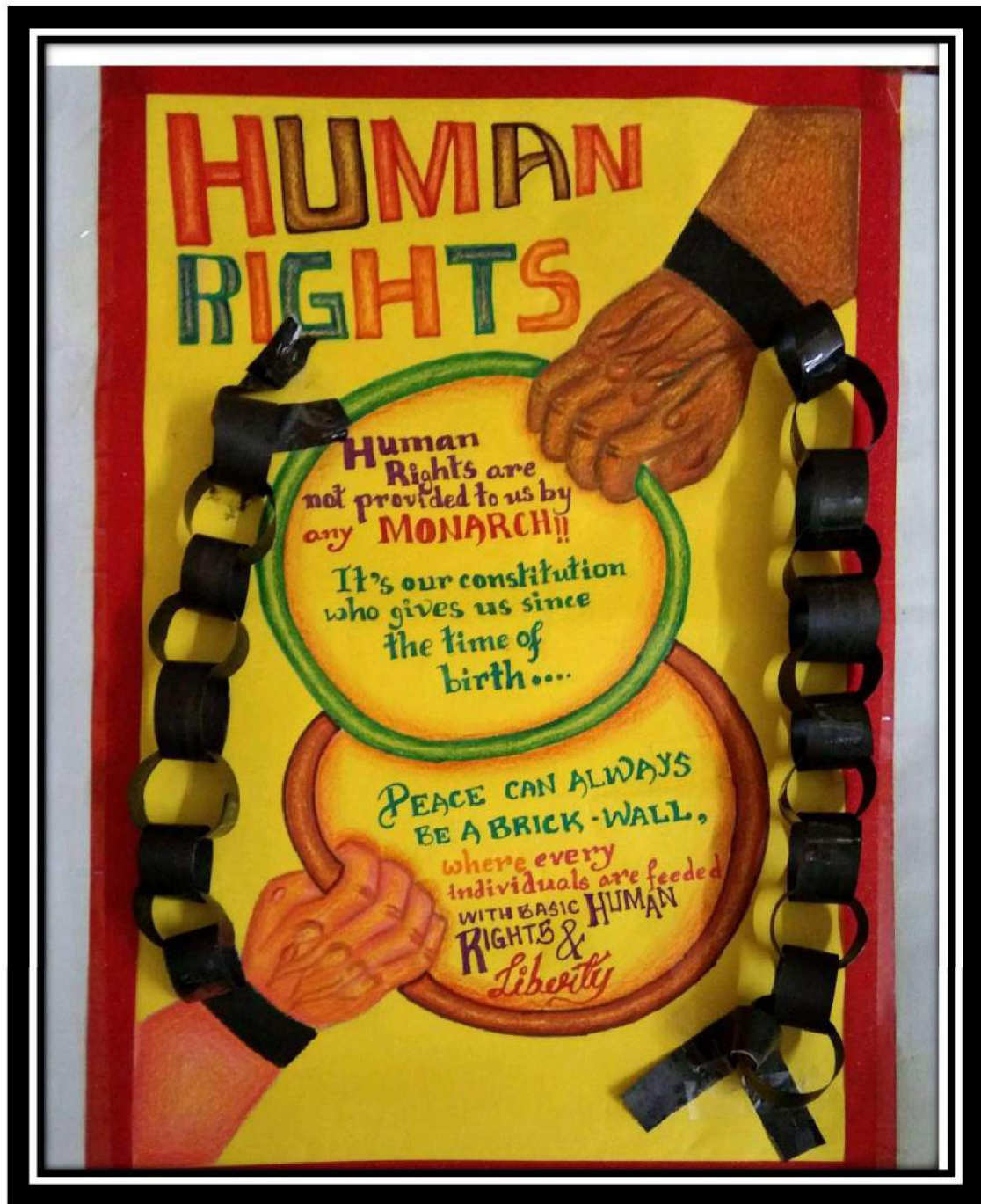
No information was available on how many persons younger than 18 were serving in the armed forces. Insurgent groups reportedly used children to attack government entities. In June the annual UN *Children and Armed Conflict* report outlined allegations that at least five children were recruited by, and joined, militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir, and at least two of these children were killed in encounters with security forces. NGOs estimated at least 2,500 children were associated with insurgent armed groups in Maoist-affected areas as well as insurgent groups in Jammu and Kashmir. The UN report also found that children continued to be affected by violence between armed groups and the government, particularly in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Freedom of speech is continuously getting violated as government with blooded eye scares us and fails to show positive attitude towards criticism which considered as the backbone of democracy. According to the HRW *World Report 2020*, sedition and criminal defamation laws were sometimes used to prosecute citizens who criticized government officials or state policies. The harassment and detainment of journalists critical of the government in their reporting or social media messaging continued. On February 15, Karnataka police arrested three engineering students of Kashmiri origin on sedition charges. According to police records, Basit Ashiq Ali, Talib Majeed, and Ameer Mohiuddin Wani recorded a video of themselves chanting slogans supporting Pakistan and posted the video on social media. They were arrested after college officials reported them to police. On June 10, the students were released on bail. On February 20, Karnataka police booked student activist Amulya Leona on sedition charges for shouting pro-Pakistan slogans in her speech at a rally in Bengaluru protesting the CAA. A local court granted her bail on June 11.

Now in the era of internet, violence has no bars to be spread. Online and mobile harassment was especially prevalent, and incidents of internet “trolling,” or making deliberately offensive or provocative online posts with the aim of upsetting someone, continued to rise. Journalists were threatened online with violence and, in the case of female journalists, rape.

So-called honour killings remained a problem, especially in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana; they were usually attributable to the victim’s marrying against his or her family’s wishes. In April, three persons were arrested for the killing of a 19-year-old girl in Punjab. Family members allegedly poisoned the victim with sleeping pills, strangled her to death, and cremated her body. An honour killing of a 16-year-old girl was reported on May 2 in Rajasthan. She was strangled, burned, and buried allegedly by her mother and uncle because she eloped with a local boy of whom her family did not approve. The mother and uncle were arrested. On July 17 in Uttar Pradesh, a woman was shot and killed by her three brothers for marrying outside her caste two years previously. The accused also attacked the husband, leaving him grievously injured. Police arrested all three brothers.

So, among the numerous instances I’ve tried to quote a handful of to just to depict that the brutality, violence, intolerance, revengeful attitude and other factors are leading us and indulging to banish a society of human enriched with kindness and having a life where at any point someone more powerful than us can chock us up without any ground of morality. So to conclude with a note of positivity that someday some group of people will act as the catalyst and kill the evils and will be the torchbearer of a newly constructed empathic society as Gandhiji said- “**Humanity** is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean **does** not become dirty.”



ESHA CHAKRABORTY

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

HUMAN RIGHTS & ITS VIOLATIONS

SUKANYA ROY

UG, SEMESTER IV, DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

Many countries have constitutions that include some version of a list made up by the United Nations back when. This list of “human rights” is nothing more than a cynical political promise. These words have no real force since they are written by a government and are easily superseded by new emergency laws. Global human rights are meaningless and their importance lies in making people think they actually have such rights. A right is something that is part of your nature. No one can take it away; even you can’t give it up. It comes with being human.

Human rights are important as they ensure principles of non-discrimination, equality and dignity for all mankind. They are in place to safeguard the sanctity of life and equitable distribution of natural wealth to which every human being is entitled.

A human rights violation is the disallowance of the freedom of thought and movement to which all humans legally have a right. The struggle for the protection human rights is a continuous pursuit and is a duty that should be borne by all peace loving citizens of the world in all fairness.

Here in India, the Constitution guarantees six fundamental rights to citizens as follows: (i) right to equality, (ii) right to freedom, (iii) right against exploitation, (iv) right to freedom of religion, (v) cultural and educational rights, and (vi) right to constitutional remedies.

Violence and discrimination based on religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and caste or tribe, including indigenous persons, also persisted due to a lack of accountability. A lack of accountability for misconduct at all levels of government persisted, contributing to widespread impunity. Here are mentioned, several types of violations of human rights faced by people on a global basis:

- **Workers’ rights**

All people have “the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.” These rights are threatened around the world in a myriad of ways. Injustices like wage theft, discrimination, and physical endangerment occur all the time. The capitalistic idea of increased productivity (solely based on the idea that your dedication towards your work is highly glorified only when you make a product) and making profit out of wage theft, share of finances, tricking workers fuelled this violations. Work systems can make work-life balance difficult, taking a toll on employees’ mental health. In many places, inadequate pay is also an issue. The federal minimum wage in the United States has remained the same since 2009. As we go into a new decade, worker rights will become more significant.

- **Gender equality**

Gender inequality has been a human rights issue for hundreds of years. There is some sort of hegemony by alpha male society that feels threatened whenever any person of opposite gender comes across to them. This has been thrived for years and years in this patriarchal society. Women are still treated as props/commodities and any man who’s also likely to be less masculine also threatens this patriarchal society. Access to education, political representation, reproductive rights, economic opportunities, and more contribute to gender inequality.

LGBTQ+ rights are not an especially recent human rights issue, but they will evolve in the future. Depending on the country, the state of these rights varies widely. As human beings, what differs us from the animals is that we can process feelings and possess the privilege of deprogramming the societal stereotypes and ancient practices of hatred towards certain communities. The freedom of choosing who we love has always been a top priority. Heterosexuality doesn't make us superior in any way. Our approach towards bettering our mind-set – that tells us not to create binaries for people based on their identity, their love interests, and their personal lives is basic humanity. Still a lot more years to come, we have seen posts on social media about pride month and right to homosexuality but people don't practice what they preach. They are still intrinsically insecure and societal conscious when the matters come to their family or relatives.

- Nationalism

Despite seventy years of multilateralism and global leadership from institutions like the UN, nationalism is on the rise. It can be found in countries like the United States, Europe, China, and Turkey. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights warns that nationalism threatens rights such as the right to life, food, and health. Vulnerable groups like refugees and the LGBTQ+ community face significant danger under nationalism. In the coming years, the world will have to reckon with this shift.

- Attacks on journalists and the spread of misinformation

The concept, definition, and spread of “fake news” will continue to be a major issue for societies around the world. Fake news, defined as misinformation and propaganda, causes divisions and endangers a free press. Journalists face significant obstacles and dangers to their work and lives. 2018 was the worst year on record for journalists according to Reporters without Borders. With nationalism gaining strength, this trend will continue. Human rights as a whole suffer when truth and access to information are endangered. Journalists, Stand-up comedians and environmental activists face increasing pressure in India to self-censor due to threat of legal action, smear campaigns and threats on social media, and even threats of physical attack.

- Human trafficking

Human trafficking is growing around the world. Armed groups and terrorists use human trafficking to spread fear. Victims often end up working in the sex trade or other forced labour. Human trafficking isn't limited to certain countries. Of those trafficked, women and girls make up the majority.

- Refugee crises

The world is dealing with the “highest levels of displacement on record.” Reasons include climate change and armed conflict. Refugees fleeing their homes also experience persecution and discrimination. Other reports suggest the situation will only get worse in the future. For example, Indian parliament passed the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). As per the report, the CAA is discriminatory because it applies only to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

The government has tried to justify the law, saying it seeks to provide sanctuary to religious minorities abroad, fleeing persecution. However, that claim is belied by the exclusion of many other vulnerable groups (to detention camps) who have sought refuge in India, such as minority Tamils from Sri Lanka and ethnic Nepal's from Bhutan. It also effectively excludes other persecuted Muslim minorities like the Hazaras from Afghanistan, the Shia and Ahmadiyya from Pakistan, and the Rohingya from Myanmar.

- Human rights and technology

Looking at the past, innovations spread at a lightning pace. Inventions like the internet impact how we communicate and how ideas develop. Technology also changes our relationship with powerful institutions. Unfortunately, legal protections and structures have not developed at the same speed. The future will include questions about human rights as they apply to data privacy, the definition of hate speech, surveillance and digital security. These issues will trigger the development of organizations dedicated to this area.

- Honour killings

An honour killing, or shame killing is the murder of an individual, either an outsider or a member of a family. Most often, it involves the murder of a woman or girl by male family members, due to the perpetrators' belief that the victim has brought dishonour or shame upon the family name, reputation or prestige. Honor killings are, along with dowry killings (most of which are committed in South Asia), gang-related killings of women as revenge (killings of female members of rival gang members' families—most of which are committed in Latin America) and witchcraft accusation killings (most of which are committed in Africa and Oceania) are some of the most recognized forms of femicide.

Most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner. Several laws are made for protecting women's rights such as

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

Indian Divorce Act, 1969.

Maternity Benefit Act, 1861.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Human rights advocates have compared "honour killings" to "crimes of passion" in Latin America (which are sometimes treated extremely leniently) and the killing of women for lack of dowry in India.

Human rights violation in Kashmir

Human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir union territory are an ongoing issue in northern parts of India. The abuses range from mass killings, enforced disappearances, torture, rape and sexual abuse to political repression and suppression of freedom of speech. The Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Personnel (BSF) and various separatist militant groups have been accused and held accountable for committing severe human rights abuses against Kashmiri civilians. Human rights abuses by militants and army.

Human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir and Rape in Kashmir conflict.

Ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus.



OINDRILA PATHAK
SEMESTER-II, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER
SCIENCE

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**MOUMITA HALDER
DEPARTMENT – BOTANY
UG SEM 4**

Human rights are the basic rights and freedom that belongs to every person in the world from birth until death regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or any other standard. Human rights are the standard that allow all people to live with dignity, freedom, equality, justice and peace. But the concern is – “globally only four in ten people say everyone in their country enjoys the same basic Human rights.” Human rights violation is a curse to society, culture, humanity. A few examples of violations of economic, social and culture rights include: forcibly evicting people from their homes – the right to adequate housing, contaminating water for example waste from state-owned facilities – the right to health, failure to ensure a minimum wage sufficient for a decent living – rights at work, denying access to information and services related to sexual and reproductive health – right to health, systematically segregating children with disabilities from mainstream schools – the right to education, failure to provide for a responsible limitation of working hours in the public and private sector – rights at work, failure to prevent starvation in all areas and communities in the country – freedom from hunger, failure to prevent employers from discriminating in recruitment based on sex, race, disability, political opinion, social origin, HIV status. Events regarding violations of human rights in India –

“Children’s Rights during Covid-19 Pandemic - Schools remained closed from March onwards and were still closed at time of writing in most of the country, affecting more than 280 million students and threatening to reverse the progress made in access to education for the poor, especially those who attended government schools. In most states, government schools did not deliver education during the lockdown, putting children from marginalized communities such as Dalit, tribal, and Muslims at greater risk of dropping out, and being pushed into child labor and early marriage. Girls were even more vulnerable. While many private schools offered online classes, only 24 percent of Indian households had access to the internet because of a large urban-rural and gender divide, widening the learning gap across high, middle, and low-income families, according to an August 2020 UNICEF report. Disability Rights For persons with disabilities - The Covid-19 lockdown brought particular challenges, including access to medical care and essential supplies, and exercising social distancing, especially for those who receive personal support for tasks of daily living. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - In September, a petition in the Delhi High Court sought the right of same-sex couples to get married under the Hindu Marriage Act. The matter was pending at time of writing. In July, the government published the draft Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020, seeking comments from civil society. But rights groups called on the authorities to halt the process of finalizing rules for a law, passed last year, which failed to provide full protection and recognition to transgender people.

The law is unclear on a transgender person's right to self-identify, which India's Supreme Court recognized in a landmark judgment in 2014. Its provisions are also contrary to international standards for legal gender recognition. Women's Rights - Cases of domestic violence rose during the lockdown, as witnessed in many countries globally. Sexual harassment at work remains an entrenched problem. The government has failed to properly implement the 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Law, including ensuring the creation and proper functioning of complaints committees for women in the informal sector."- Human Rights Watch world report 2021.



SRITAMA MONDAL

SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

HUMAN RIGHTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

**Sanjana Poddar,
Semester 6,
Dept. of Computer Science,
Bethune College**

According to UNICEF, “Human Rights are standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings”. These rights permit individuals to live with dignity, equality, freedom, peace and justice. We inherit these basic rights as human beings, despite sex, colour, nationality, faith or the other status. When we look back to the atrocities of World War II, and the struggles to end slavery, genocide, discriminations and state repression, it becomes clear that the measures to protect individual rights were inadequate. Thereby, in 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the first international document that declares the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. To make the UDHR de jure binding, the UN drafted two treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and all together they are entitled as the International Bill of Rights. These rights were documented, and then accompanied by treaties, conventions, covenants, charters, ratifications and reservations became the law.

The human rights are universal, inalienable, interconnected, indivisible and non-discriminatory. The UDHR states thirty human rights. The basic five of them are - right to equality, right to life, liberty, personal security, freedom from slavery, freedom from torture and degrading treatment and right to recognition as a person before the law. Although in today's date, there are several instances where these human rights are profaned across the globe. With the advancement of technology, a whole new space has been included in our lives. Now there are many queries that arises regarding our rights in this digital space, primarily how are our rights violated and what should be the human rights approach to deal with them.

To start with how our rights to equality are being impacted, there are many cases worldwide that have demonstrated the A.I. to be discriminating. This happens when the algorithm implemented by A.I. is flawed or the input data set is biased. For example, the U.S. uses recidivism risk-scoring software. It is a risk scoring method to measure the criminal acts resulting in rearrests or reconvictions and determine the punishment of convicts from assigning bail to criminal sentencing. This software has led to more black men falsely labelled as high-risks and given higher bail-conditions. The inputs used by this algorithm may be random, detention sentences may also be unlawful. Hence, it highlights the question whether justice system ought to employ such biased A.I. Another example is the usage of facial recognition in law enforcement which can lead to wrongful arrests due to error as it is seen that this software has lower accuracy rate to detect non-white faces.

Article 19 of UDHR gives us freedom of opinion and expression. There are instances when they are violated. Countries like Germany and France have sanctioned a law that requires social media sites to remove contents within twenty-four hours after they have been flagged. Internet companies that host content use A.I. to remove flagged posts that violate their terms of service. We know it takes time for A.I. to learn and yet there can be flaws. When companies are pressured to take down flagged contents so quickly, it is obvious that the A.I. can commit errors. This affects the rights to freedom of thoughts, expression, religion, association and in what way? Well, YouTube removed numerous videos reporting the atrocities in Syria after they have been flagged. A similar scenario was when social media companies, especially Twitter took down some of the flagged contents of Indian Farmer's Protest at the direction of the Government. Sometimes, such contents constitute the sole proof of horrific crimes and human rights violations. Therefore, the companies could have exceptions for these contents citing that they are for educational and documentary functions.

Governments have expanded their surveillance with the growth of modern technologies. These bodies collect our personal data and track our movements and communications. Facebook said that around the world, government requests to collect user's data jumped in the first half of 2015 to 41,214 (up from 35,051 in the second half of 2014). Countries like China and U.S. are extensively implementing invasive surveillance tools, CCTV cameras in public places and centralising facial recognition system. Such actions mark potential threats to end anonymity thereby right to privacy. The use of GPS co-ordinates in the cell phone of a person and the data from these surveillance systems can be analysed to predict his present and the future location. This puts their freedom of association to risk. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian Government launched the Arogya-Setu app. This app is a dangerous mix of health data and data surveillance, and it rises more privacy concerns.

The unemployment brought by technologies is not unknown to us. It is estimated that forty-seven percent of jobs at considerable risk of automation may be taken over by machines by 2030. Many people have already lost their jobs (especially in the labour market) with the advancement of technologies. These people struggle to provide for themselves and their families where it is their right to work and have an adequate standard of living. Governments and many companies in Canada, Finland, California are attempting new financial gain schemes that provides the basic income to the employees.

These are some of the instances where our human rights are violated in digital space. It is primarily the responsibility of the governments for protecting the human rights, however everyone in the society ought to conjointly uphold these rights. Concerns have been raised over a more human rights approach to A.I. regulation. The first landmark statement on defending the human rights in the age of A.I. was the Toronto Declaration in 2018. It calls the governments and companies to follow certain ethical guidelines that ensure the new technologies change our world for better. Tech companies like Microsoft, Google, and IBM have published their own set of ethical principles for developing their version of A.I. Apart from ethics, data protection laws should be applied to the governments and private sector to protect people against retaining their personal information being read and exploited in ways that may harm the society. European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) offers a framework that prevents A.I. to impose an individual's rights to risk and demands the explanation behind the algorithm used by A.I.

Technologies and A.I. bring us numerous benefits and they make our lives easy, especially for people with disabilities. Countries are adapting to this automated lifestyle and are competing among themselves to get an upper hand at possessing the most advanced technologies and A.I. But in all these, we just cannot compromise our human rights. So, such technologies should be developed on a proper non-discriminating algorithm and countries should enforce and improve data protection laws to safeguard the rights of its citizens. Our lives are so much dependent on technologies and A.I., especially in this COVID-19 pandemic, that we cannot live without them so they should be fair, safe and reliable to use.



A DROWNED TOY AND A LOST CHILDHOOD

ATREYEE BOSE

UG-SEM-II , DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

LEGAL RIGHTS OF MARRIED WOMEN

**DEBOSMITA BANDYOPADHYAY
SEMESTER II, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE**

Matrimonial Rights of Women[1]

- Right to claim Maintenance for self and children- The law imposes a legal obligation on the husband to provide maintenance to his wife. If he fails to provide for her, the wife can approach the court for an order of maintenance. The term —maintenance is the amount required for a decent living, including cost of food, shelter (if the same is not provided by the husband), travel, requirements of health care, educational, extra- curricular and recreational expenses of children, and other sundry expenses.

Can a woman who is living with her husband claim maintenance? Yes, if her husband is not providing her maintenance while she is living in the same house with him, she has a right to claim maintenance.

Tips: Many a times, husbands try to show that their earnings are far less than their actual income by showing old salary slips or by hiding their additional income. So it is necessary for the wife to get all the information before approaching the court, and collect the necessary details – recent salary record, bank statements, income from business or from family property, income tax returns etc.

Is it necessary to file for divorce while filing for maintenance? No. If the woman does not wish to file for divorce, she can make an application only for maintenance. This can be done under the provisions of S.125 Cr.PC or under the Domestic Violence Act without filing for divorce

- Rights of Mothers to Custody of Children-The Principle, the best interest of the child is paramount

The love and care given to the child is the most important factor. The general growth of the child, the child's well-being, progress in school, child's own preference, the atmosphere in the home - these are some of the factors which are considered while deciding the 'best interest of the child'. Usually, if the child is older, while changing the custody, the court will ascertain the views of the child.

Caution: If a woman is facing domestic violence and she is desirous of leaving her matrimonial home to escape from violence, she must be given correct advice that she has a right to take her children along with her, and that she does not require a court order to do this.

Protection under the Domestic Violence Act-What is “domestic violence” under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act? The term —domestic violence¹ under Domestic Violence Act includes physical, emotional, sexual and economic violence (S.3)

What rights does this Act give women?

Right to an order of protection: If there is a threat of violence, the woman can get an order of protection, restraining the husband and his family members from committing violence on her.

Even if she is living in her own father’s house and if she is afraid that the husband may assault her or come to her place of work and humiliate her, she can ask for a —stop order¹ (injunction) to restrain him from coming anywhere near her (S.18). Rape & Sexual Offences

Is forced sex in marriage (marital rape) within the purview ‘Cruelty against women’? Yes, forced sex amounts to sexual violence and is included within the term, —cruelty¹. So forced sex will come within the purview of this section and if there are any such complaints of this nature, the police must immediately file the complaint and arrest the husband. (Though S.498A does not specifically define sexual violence as cruelty, but uses broader general term as ‘any physical or mental harassment which causes harm to her life, limb or sanity’, rape / sexual violence would come within its scope.)

Women’s Health and Safety Right to live in the same house: The husband, father-in-law or even the father of a woman /girl cannot throw her out from the house where she is living or has lived (S.19).

Right to claim Maintenance: As explained above, the woman has a right to claim maintenance under this Act (S.20)

Right to custody: No one can take away the children from the mother, not even the father. If such a threat is there, she can go to court and get an order to protect her right. If her child is taken away forcibly from her custody she can approach the police or the court to get her child back (S.21).

Right to claim compensation: If the woman has suffered any harm or injury due to domestic violence she has a right to claim compensation for it under the Act (S.22).

Note: The woman has the right to take with her all her belongings i.e. clothes, jewelry, valuables, money etc. This is her stridhan. She can take help to retrieve her belongings from a local NGO, the police or the court. The remedy is also available under S.19 (8) of the D.V.Act. If her husband or in laws do not return her belongings (stridhan) at the time of leaving the home, she can also file a police complaint under section 406 of the IPC.[2]

Violence Against Women

- Is demanding dowry an offence?

Yes, it is a serious offence under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. It is punishable with a minimum of five years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs.15, 000/- or equal to the value of the dowry demanded or paid.

- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act -Background of the Act The MTP Act, passed by Parliament in 1971 to permit legalized abortions. Prior to 1971, abortion was criminalized under Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, except in cases where the procedure was necessary to save the woman's life. The Shah Committee, appointed by the Government of India, carried out a comprehensive review of socio-cultural, legal and medical aspects of abortion, and in 1966 recommended legalizing abortion to protect women's health and lives on both compassionate and medical grounds. It was also viewed as a population control measure. The term —Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) was used to counter opposition from socio-religious groups who were averse to abortion.

What are the conditions under which a pregnancy can be terminated?

Pregnancy can be terminated in the first trimester (within 12 weeks) if a doctor is of the opinion that it is safe for the woman to undergo an abortion. Beyond 12 weeks and up to 20 weeks, the opinion of two doctors is required to perform the abortion. Beyond that a pregnancy cannot be terminated as it is very risky and may cause harm or even death to the pregnant mother. Hence it can be performed only in an extreme situation when it is necessary to abort the foetus to save the life of the mother. [S.3 (2) (a and b)] While deciding whether or not to perform the abortion, the doctors must ascertain the risk of harm to the health of the pregnant mother. The doctors' permission to perform the abortion must be recorded in writing.

Whose consent is required for terminating pregnancy?

If the woman is a major, i.e. above 18 years, she can consent to the abortion herself. If it is a child below 18 years or the person is incapable of giving valid consent (if the person is of unsound mind) the consent of the guardian is required. The consent of the husband is not required to undergo an abortion.

Right to property

- Earlier, women had no rights over parental property. Now, married women's property rights in India are equal to their male siblings even after marriage.
Inheritance: Initially, the Hindu Succession Act, did not give daughters and sons equal right in the father's property. Daughters could enjoy rights on their father's property only until they got married. In 2005, the act was revised. The new act states that every daughter, whether married or unmarried, has equal rights as her male sibling to inherit her father's property after his death. Furthermore, the married women's property rights in India also states that daughters have a share in the mother's property. If the father does not sign any will before his death, they can take the help of court for legal assistance.
- A woman has equal legal rights to inherit her husband's property as other heirs. She can inherit it only if the husband hasn't prepared a will or hasn't excluded her from the will.
- If a husband remarries without dissolving the first marriage, the rights to the property belong to the first wife.[3]

Right To Live With Dignity And Respect

A wife has the legal right to live with dignity and self-respect with her in-laws. In India, wives have the legal right to have the same lifestyle that her husband's and in-laws have. This provides married women freedom after marriage.[4]

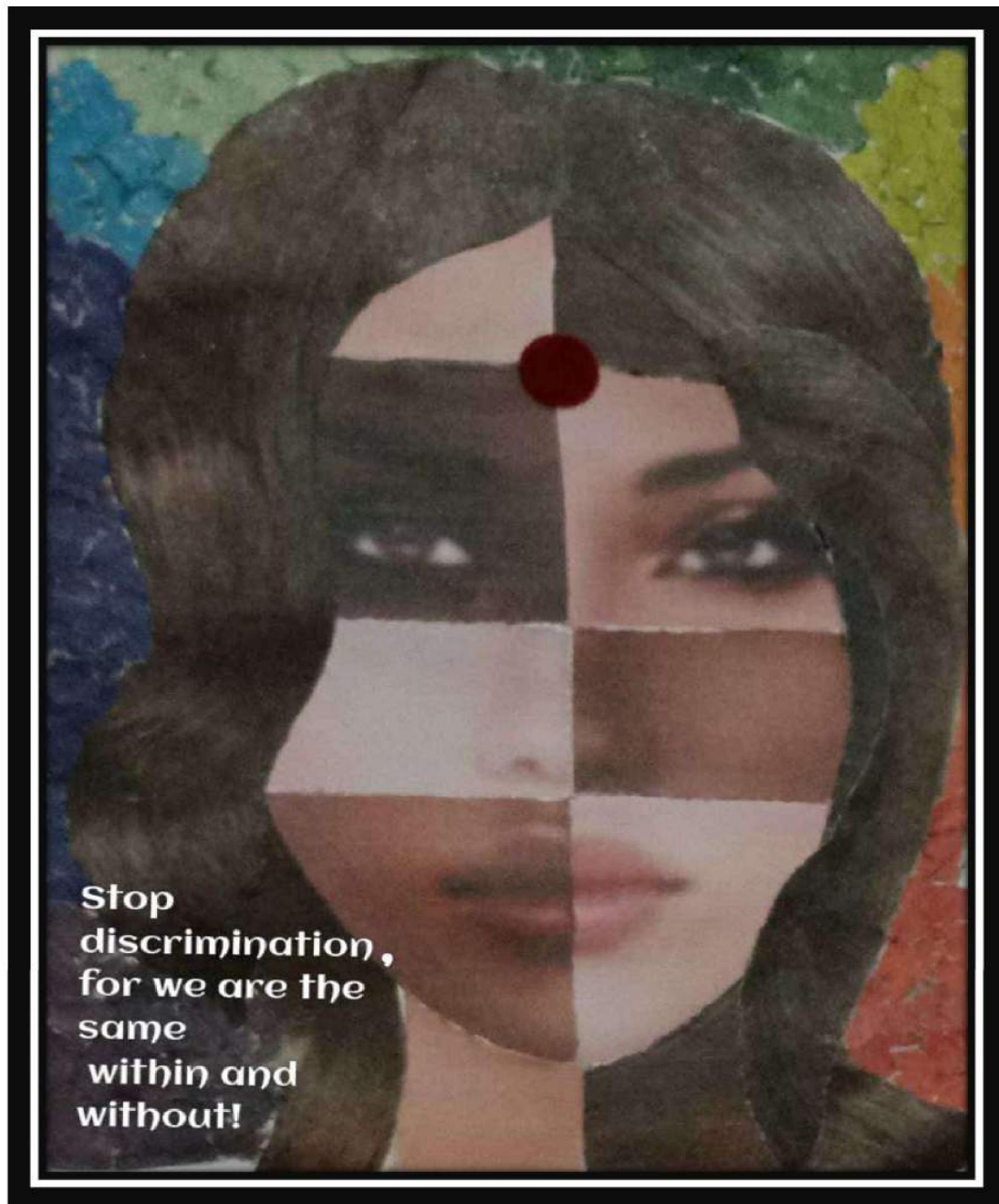
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DEBOSMITA BANDYOPADHYAY
SEMESTER-II, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

SHORT BIO NOTES OF RENOWNED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Sampurna Bhattacharya
Semester-4.
Computer Science Department

- **MICHELLE BACHELET:** Michelle Bachelet is a Chilean politician, born on 29 September 1951 in La Cisterna is the daughter of Jeria Gómez and Alberto Bachelet Martínez. She graduated in 1969 from Liceo N° 1 Javiera Carrera, a girls' public school. She is the first woman who previously served as President of Chile from 2006 to 2010 and 2014 to 2018 for the Socialist Party of Chile. On 10 September 2018, Bachelet urged China to allow observers into Xinjiang, expressing concern about the situation there. She said that: "The UN rights group had shown that Uyghurs and other Muslims are being detained in camps across Xinjiang and I expect discussions with Chinese officials to begin soon". In 2018, Bachelet has called on Saudi Arabia to hold accountable, responsible for airstrikes on civilians in Yemen. Regarding the November 2019 Iranian protests, Nasrin Sotoudeh asked Bachelet to administrate an independent investigation into the alleged atrocities committed by the Iranian security forces. In 2020, she expressed concern about the suffering of civilians during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In January 2021 she has issued a report on Sri Lanka which severely criticizes the failure of the current Sri Lankan government to address documented accusations of grave and numerous human rights crimes during and after the Civil war in Sri Lanka, even though the war ended in 2009. She has served as the 7th United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights since 2018.
- **KRITI BHARTI:** Kriti Bharti, Indian rehabilitation psychologist, born on August 19, 1987 in Jodhpur is a human rights activist. Her father abandoned her mother, Indu Chopra, when she was still in her womb. One went to the extent of giving her a slow poison at childhood, and Bharti managed to survive but she was paralyzed. She went through several treatments from different hospitals, until she was able to recover two years later. Due to the paralysis, she was unable to finish fourth grade. She managed to accelerate to 10th grade and cleared her boards. She obtained a Doctorate in Psychology from Jai Narain Vyas University. This 29-year-old activist has stopped 900 child marriages and annulled 150 marriages involving underage boys and girls. She founded Saarthi Trust in 2012, a non-profit organization that protects victims of child marriages. A 2014 report states that 47% of India's girls are married before the age of 18. This, a byproduct of a patriarchal society, has been going on even after the Indian government passed the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. She has worked with countless children who have been traumatized due to their childhood experiences.
- **NADIA MURAD:** Nadia Murad, born on 1993, is an Iraqi Yazidi human rights activist who lives in Germany. In 2014, she was kidnapped from her hometown Kocho and held by the Islamic State for three months. In 2014, ISIS abducted Murad, an Iraqi Yazidi, and took her to Mosul. There, she was forced to convert to Islam and held in sexual slavery for three years. After escaping, she began her life as an activist, speaking to the UN Security Council in 2015. She spread awareness about human trafficking and refugees, despite the dangers of speaking out. She is the first Iraqi and Yazidi to be awarded a Nobel Prize. In 2017, she published her memoir and in 2018, she shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Denis Mukwege, another activist who fights against sexual violence as a weapon of war.

A SHORT BIO NOTE OF A HUMAN RIGHT ACTIVIST: MEDHA PATKAR

SUKANYA ROY

UG, SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

Medha Patkar (मेधा पाटी) is an Indian social activist and advocate of human rights. She grew up in an environment imbued with a sense of social justice and freedom.

Her work challenges casteism, communalism and all forms of discrimination. She has been a part of numerous panels that work on issues raised on land acquisition, unorganized sector workers, hawkers, slum-dwellers and forest-dweller Adivasis.



Early life & education

She was born as *Medha Khanolkar* on 1 December 1954 in Bombay(now Mumbai), Maharashtra-the daughter of Vasant Khanolkar, a freedom fighter and labour union leader, and his wife Indumati Khanolkar, a gazetted officer in the Post and Telegraphs department.

She earned a MA in social work from the TISS in the early 1980s. She left the PhD unfinished due to her involvement in the work with tribal and peasant communities in the Narmada valley.

Activism

1. She is one of the founders of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), an alliance of hundreds of progressive people's organisations. Patkar was a commissioner on the World Commission on Dams which conducted thorough research on the environmental, social, political and economic aspects and impacts of the development of large dams globally.
2. She garnered national recognition by starting the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada) in 1985 to highlight issues faced by tribals, labourers, farmers, fishermen, their families and others living near the Narmada valley. She argued that Sardar Sarovar Dam would displace more than 40,000 families who live along Narmada valley. She fasted for 22 days in protest, before winning the battle against the government. Since 1992, the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) has been running Jeevanshalas (schools in the Narmada valley) and has regularly contributed in the sectors of health, environment and employment.
3. In 2005, she initiated the Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan which highlighted the struggle for housing rights when Maharashtra government demolished 75,000 houses, leaving thousands homeless. NAPM filed several public interest litigations against renowned builders.
4. She opposed Tata Nano Plant Singur, Golibar Demolition, Kovvada Nuclear Project and filed a PIL in court along with other activists against Lavasa project and Hiranandani land scam.
5. In January 2004 during the World Social Forum held in Mumbai. Medha Patkar and other members of NAPM initiated a Political Party 'People's Political Front' also called as 'Lok Rajniti Manch'. However, Medha did not become an active politician, rather she organised a fifteen days Maharashtra state-level campaign. Most of the members had asked Patkar to stand for election, but she denied.

Awards

Patkar was bestowed with honours such as the **Green Ribbon Award** for Best International Political Campaigner by BBC in 1995 and **Person of The Year**, in 1999. She received the **Right Livelihood Award** (1991), and the **Goldman Environmental Prize** (1992). She has been bestowed with other honours such as **Human Rights Defenders Award**, **Thomas National Human Rights Award** from Vigil India Movement (1999), the **Deenanath Mangeshkar Award**, **Kundal Lal Award**, **Bhimabai Ambedkar Award**, **Mahatma Phule Award**.

SAMPAT PAL DEVI AND HER GULABI GANG

**MONALISA SARKAR
UG SEMESTER-IV
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY**

What happens when brutal domestic abuse becomes an everyday practice and the country has to mourn in the news of rapes? A vigilante group of women comes forward, wielding their lathis (sticks) and takes on the abusers to instill fear in their hearts through their power of unity and sisterhood.

Let's remember one of the untold legacies of a woman that had a formidable influence in shaping India, by introducing the country's rod wielding Pink Sari crusaders --- The Gulabi Gang. For the last 15 years, Sampat Pal Devi, an Indian social-activist and founder of the Gulabi Gang along with its members have been relentlessly pursuing their one and only vision "to protect the powerless from abuse and fight corruption". From fighting violence against women; teaching them self-defence and how to be economically self-sufficient; preventing child marriage and arranging weddings of couples in love despite local resistance; to ensuring delivery of basic rights for the poorest of the poor, the gang's vision has found easy sonority across much of India's hinterland which is tormented by numerous reports of heinous sex crimes and gang rapes. The gang not only focusses on male jurisdiction over women, but also on other human rights.

The sticks are indeed an integral part of the gang's identity. When an incidence of crime or malpractice is brought to their notice, the first step taken by the gang is to request the police to take charge. The group also seeks restitution through rallies and hunger strikes. If none of these initiatives seem to work, the sticks do the trick. It is ironic that in India's one of the most backward regions, women have to become masculine and aggressive in their fight against machismo and patriarchy. Pal's trailblazing way of work helped the gang reach its goal of establishing Gender Equality to a huge extent and found success in empowering a lot of women of Bundelkhand, where justice system is quite debilitated and unreliable.

The unofficial headquarters of the Gulabi Gang is at Badausa, in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, a state which ranks as one of the most unsafe provinces for women, with numerous cases of rapes, kidnaps and dowry deaths. The movement now boasts a network above 4, 00,000 women attired in Pink sarees and all wielding a stick. At the formation of the gang, force and violence were used against the police and the government. However, the local police never complained, rather, claimed that the gang's ingenious and brave moves in a way helped them solve many cases. Devi has always chosen to be a philanthropist without seeking help from politicians and the government. The "Gang of Justice" earned the Kelvinator 11th GR8! Women Award, offered by the Indian Television Academy; the Godfrey Phillips Bravery Award for social bravery; the Ahalyabai Holker Award. A number of books, novels and documentaries have also highlighted Sampat Pal Devi and her gang's incredible contributions towards human rights and social development.

KRITI BHARTI

PUNAM SAROJ

UG, SEMESTER-II, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Talking about human rights, we often mistook that somehow more or less, the ancient misogyny or the orthodox has disappeared from the society but sadly it's not. Even today malpractices like child marriage is happening in the underprivileged areas. But not everyone has the courage and potential like Kriti Bharti to raise voice against these conservatives. Being a woman, it's not easy for her to go against this patriarchal society that too when life has not shown her any mercy. Kriti was born on 19th August in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.



His father abandoned her mother, Indu Chopra when she was still in her womb and society considering it as a disgrace and demanded her to abort. Despite these suppressions, Bharti's mother persisted and raised her alone. As a child, Kriti was physically and verbally tortured by relative who considered her a curse. One went to the extent of giving her a slow poison at 10 years old and Kriti managed to survive but she was bedridden and paralyzed and it took a couple of years to recover her and during her recovery, she changed her last name to 'Bharti' (Daughter of India) in an attempt to free herself from the caste system, religion and kin. Bharti has obtained a Doctorate in Psychology at the Jai Narayan University in Jodhpur. During her college days, she joined many NGOs and started counselling simultaneously. Her first case was a rape victim who was just 9 years old, she thought that a temporary relief via counselling is ultimately pointless and encounter

prompted her to think and take a step. Through the NGOs, she was able to work with several street children that suffered from child labour, poverty and child marriage. After a few months, she noticed that a pressing issue among the homeless children in child marriage. Child marriage, although considered illegal in India, remained prevalent, especially in rural areas as it is mentioned earlier. Rajasthan, Bharti's hometown, is considered the world's epicenter of child marriage. According to a report of UNICEF in 2009, titled State of the World's Children, goes on further to say that 40% of the world's child marriages happen in India. In 2011, driven by her experience with children in NGOs, she established Saarthi trust, which works on grassroots level and ensures the rehabilitation and welfare of child marriage victims after rescue. In 2012, Bharti made headlines on her first case, Laxmi Sargara. She was the first woman in India to have her child marriage nullified. Since then, Bharti and her team have been working on personally visiting villages and schools to discuss the detrimental effects of child marriage and to teach women empowerment. The organization has a helpline number for underage brides and grooms to report their case. Throughout years of activism, Bharti has faced countless death and rape threats. Hidebound Hindu leaders who approve the practice of child marriage have threatened to chop her nose and gang-rape her, but she never stopped. Saarthi trust has rehabilitated more than 6,000 children and 5,500 women. Bharti's team has annulled more than 44 child marriages and halted more than 1,400 from happening.

MENAKA GURUSWAMY: SENIOR ADVOCATE AT THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

PRATYASHA SEN

SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

“It is not just consensual sex between homosexual partners that this Court should recognize, but their love for each other. How strongly must you love knowing that you are unconvicted felons.”

An excerpt of Menaka Guruswamy's speech in favour of decriminalizing Section 377 at the Supreme Court of India.

Born in 27th November, 1974, in Hyderabad, Menaka Guruswamy is the daughter of Mohan Guruswamy, a former Bharatiya Janata Party strategist and Meera Guruswamy. As a child, she dreamt of becoming either a backup singer to Madonna, the famous American Pop Singer, or be a litigator. Subsequently, she went on to become a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India. Guruswamy holds advanced degrees in law from the University of Oxford, Harvard Law School, and the National Law School of India University. She obtained her D.Phil from the University of Oxford in 2015 with a thesis on 'Constitutionalism in India, Pakistan and Nepal.'

Guruswamy's first job was to work for the Attorney General of India. In an interview to *rhodesproject.com*, she says, "Everyone around me was four times my age, or three times my age. Women were just beginning to come out as lawyers, as litigators..." Among the significant landmark cases that she dealt with includes decriminalizing article 377, the bureaucratic reform case, and the Right to Education case.

In April 2016, Guruswamy along with a team of lawyers including Arundhati Katju and Saurabh Cripal filed a petition on behalf of five LGBT petitioners led by Navtej Singh Johar challenging the constitutionality of the Indian Penal Code. Guruswamy also appeared on behalf of petitioners from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi in the landmark judgment, the 5-judge Constitutional bench of the Supreme Court read down Section 377 as not applicable to consenting adults. It is said that Guruswamy's plea at the Supreme Court of India reduced many of the public to tears. Parmesh Shahani in his book *Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace* (2020) writes that Guruswamy "reminded the Court of its duty to not just give a hearing, but to bridge the gap towards emancipation, to fulfill a promise that harks back to the framing of the Constitution."

Guruswamy represented an intervenor, the Azim Premji Foundation, in the case of Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan versus Union of India pertaining to the constitutionality of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. Section 12(1)(c) mandated private unaided schools to admit 25% of their Class strength with children from weaker and disadvantaged sections and provide them with free education. The apex Court of India ruled in favour of the Constitutionality of the provision.

Guruswamy has also advised the United Nations Development Fund, New York and United Nations Children's Fund, New York and UNICEF South Sudan on International Human Rights Law. Her favourite leisure happens to be travelling and running

SOURCE:

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RENOWNED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS: MALALA YOUSAFZAI

SMITA GHOSH
UG, SEMESTER-IV, DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

Malala Yousafzai (born 12 July 1997, Mingora, Swat valley, Pakistan), often referred to mononymously as Malala, is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate (awarded on 10 October 2014). She is known for human rights advocacy, especially the education of women and children in her native Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, where the local Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan had at times banned girls from attending school. Her family came to run a chain of schools in the region. Considering Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto as her role models, she was particularly inspired by her father's thoughts and humanitarian work.

On October 9, 2012, Yousafzai was shot in the head by a TTP gunman while she was enroute home from school. Fazlullah and the TTP took responsibility for the attempt on her life. She survived the attack and was flown from Peshawar to Birmingham, England, for surgery. The incident elicited protests, and her cause was taken up around the world, including by the UN special envoy for global education, Gordon Brown, who introduced a petition that called for all children around the world to be back in school by 2015. That petition led to the ratification of Pakistan's first Right to Education bill. In December 2012 Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari announced the launch of a \$10 million education fund in Yousafzai's honour. About the same time, the Malala Fund was established by the Vital Voices Global Partnership to support education for all girls around the world.

Among her many awards, in 2013 Yousafzai won the United Nations Human Rights Prize, awarded every five years. She was named one of Time magazine's most influential people in 2013 and appeared on one of the seven covers that were printed for that issue. Yousafzai coauthored a memoir, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* (2013). She also wrote the picture book *Malala's Magic Pencil* (2017), which was based on her childhood.

On 8 October 2013 Malala, at the age of 16, visited The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, an American television programme, her first major late-night appearance. She was there as a guest to promote her book, "I am Malala". On the program they discussed her assassination attempt, human rights, and women's education. She left Jon Stewart speechless when she described her thoughts after learning the Pakistani Taliban wanted her dead, saying: "I started thinking about that, and I used to think that the Talib would come, and he would just kill me. But then I said, 'If he comes, what would you do Malala?' then I would reply to myself, 'Malala, just take a shoe and hit him.' But then I said, 'If you hit a Talib with your shoe, then there would be no difference between you and the Talib. You must not treat others with cruelty and that much harshly, you must fight others but through peace and through dialogue and through education.' Then I said I will tell him how important education is and that 'I even want education for your children as well.' And I will tell him, 'That's what I want to tell you, now do what you want.'" She runs Malala fund to donate to those needy students and also visits number of countries to listen to their stories and to help them out in their ways of struggles. Her contribution in the field of education for women and their right to that is praiseworthy and remarkable.

NADIA MURAD: SURVIVOR AND SAVIOR

**SUCHISMITA KARMAKAR
SEMESTER-II, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

A survivor of brutal sexual slavery, human rights activist, Nadia Murad, has vehemently condemned the sexual and genocidal assault on the Yazidi religious minority by the Islamic State (IS). A closed, polygamous community with many children, the Yazidis have long been accused, and wrongly so, of worshipping the devil. Yazidism is a syncretic faith with diverse theological elements that has been targeted by IS militants for heresy and subjected to biological annihilation using rape and extermination.

On August 3, 2014, Nadia Murad's dreams and peaceful life was ripped apart as the Daesh invaded her village Kocho in Iraq and massacred about 3000 elderly, disabled, men and children including her mother and six brothers. The girls were taken captive as sex slaves, inhumanely molested almost every hour and then sold off to other men. Nadia, her nieces and sisters-in-law, some of them pregnant, were among those innumerable women.

The first time she attempted escape, she was caught and gang-raped till she became unconscious, a punishment they termed sexual jihad. Finally, the sun beamed with tears as Nadia was successful in escaping from the infernal incarceration with the help of a Muslim family who had no connection with the IS.

With political protection from Germany, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate is a free woman, yet not free from the haunting grip of past tribulations that has propelled her to become the voice of vulnerable innocents embroiled in sectarian politics. On countless occasions, the UNODC Goodwill Ambassador has repeated the harrowing details of her nightmarish account, imploring international organisations and governments to constitute a multilateral task force to rescue the casualties of ethnic cleansing. Her efforts have borne fruit as aid has poured in from Canada, Australia, Greece, Norway, France, UK, UAE, the Emir of Kuwait and the United Nations. Her dedicated team and lawyer friend, Amal Clooney, have helped her throughout her mission. In May 2021, the UN Security Council officially recognised the Yazidi slaughter as genocide. The committee that was specifically appointed to investigate the matter prepared 14 detailed case files and named 1,444 potential perpetrators. Quite recently, an IS suspect, charged with murdering a Yazidi girl, was brought to trial in Germany. Nadia has authored the memoir, *The Last Girl*, and has set up her own initiative for sustainable reconstruction of her homeland, Sinjar, by designing and implementing schemes to enhance sanitation, hygiene, clean drinking water facilities, healthcare, education, livelihood, culture and women empowerment. Being worried that the pandemic situation will further depress the victims who are still recovering, she is actively working to mitigate any grave ramifications.

The strong woman has walked up to the lectern of the United Nations Security Council to deliver speeches for her cause even as she donned the cigarette burns, beating marks and all those invisible scars we cannot possibly fathom. Till date she cannot forget that fateful day when she lost 18 members of her family or the fact that her nieces, nephews and sisters-in-law are among those 2,800 women and children who are yet to be accounted for. Her life has thrown light on the animalistic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the genesis of which lies in the insular attitudes of ethnocentrism and xenophobia. The sole intention with which I have penned this piece is to hail her warrior spirit of courage and resilience and as a feeble attempt to echo her plea for peace and justice. The least we can do is to be aware.

SHORT BIO NOTES OF A RENOWNED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS:NADIA MURAD

AHANA DAS

UG SEMESTER II , DEPARTMENT OF BOTANT

She is an Iraqi-Yazidi human rights activist.

Born on 1993, she was witness to mass genocide by ISIS, in which she lost most of her family members. She was a victim of sexual enslavement, after being kidnapped from her hometown Kocho, Iraq in 2014.

Kocho, is a village in Northern Iraq, where she had a sheltered upbringing.

Everything changed in 2014, during the conflict, when inhabitants of her village was summoned to the village's schoolyard; men mercilessly fired upon and women taken as sexual slave. She lost her mother and witnessed six of her brothers being marched to death. She herself was captivated as a sex slave (*sabaya in arabic*), sold.

She was compelled to pray by her captivators, forcibly converted to another religion, forced to be dressed and put makeup before being raped. Her perpetrators regarded the victims as "dirty unbeliever", they wanted to wipe their religion from the earth.

Yazidism is an ancient monotheistic religion, unique in itself even though it has many common elements with other religions of the Middle East – Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Judaism and Islam.

Her harrowing experience in captivity is yet another testament of religious hatred in an androcentric society.

They were denied their basic human rights, right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture. Women were reduced to mere pawns, bought and sold in an organized market, enslaved, raped and tortured.

However, she had a lucky escape from captivity, and currently lives in Germany.

She is a human rights activist and strives to raise awareness about victims of human trafficking and genocide.

In September 2016, she was declared the first goodwill ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking of The United Nation (UNODC). She also has undertaken Nadia's initiative, which aims to provide advocacy and assistance to victims of genocide.

In 2018, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, jointly with Denis Mukwege for "their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict".

Currently, she is an advocate for sustainable development goals of United Nations.

Alexandria Bombach's documentary film 'On Her Shoulders' is based on her pursuit to represent thousands of voiceless people and demand actions.

Her autobiography 'The Last Girl: My story of captivity and my fight against the Islamic State' is a poignant memoir of her being enslaved, and her plea through testimony to encourage suitable strides of progress, so that she is the last girl to have faced such torment.¹

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