

Vasant Valley TODAY

THE STRINGS THAT BIND CHILD MARRIAGE: IT SHOULD BE STOPPED.

There is no silver bullet to tackle the multitude of issues that women face today. A complacent attitude prevails where one simply accepts circumstances and chooses to live with them. Society holds the strings that dictate a woman's life, define how she must behave, what she must do and who she must be. The regressive nature of society proves to be a difficult hurdle for the modern progressive revolution to tackle. And this very fact is what makes women issues infinitely harder to resolve.

In today's context, the identity of a woman, the very life choices a girl makes are defined by overarching expectations from her. Women have been given a gender role set by society, one that expects them to be of a submissive nature and commodifies their sexuality. From a purely economic perspective, a large number of families view the girl child as a liability due to her limited role in providing for the family and the dowry that must be paid to have her married. Hence they go forth to arrange her marriage early to reduce monetary losses. Parents are so afraid of their daughter being tainted by promiscuity and sexual autonomy, they come to the verdict that their daughter must be married at a young age to prevent any risk of what they perceive as a threat to their family's honour.

This brings us to the issue that has plagued society for centuries, child marriage. Child marriage is deep rooted in gender inequality and is exacerbated by poverty. The idea of child marriage is very much prevalent in various developing economies, including India where it has become a social norm and perpetuates patriarchy by deeming her a liability and reiterates the ideal that women are the property of the man. Fifteen million girls are married before the age of eighteen every year, which leads to various problems with their health and welfare other than the obvious denial of choice given to them.

We recognise the importance of education and the fact that it is the fundamental method to develop human resources and impart knowledge. However child marriage has played a key role in disallowing women to be educated or pursue a higher education. As soon as she is married her role is immediately defined as one that is limited to the domestic realm where her capabilities as a student are nullified. The fact that she has been married essentially lays a duty upon her which is unjust and forceful in its nature. The girl is assigned the responsibility of rearing children and looking after the household which curbs her from completing her education. This closes the door on a world of opportunities that remain unexplored, dreams that were so tangible yet she has been unfairly barred from achieving them. This claim is further backed by the statistic that shows us the twenty percent gap that exists between male and female literacy in our country.

There are also various visible physical adversities that arise as a result of child marriage. When girls are married at a young age their susceptibility to adolescent pregnancy becomes exponentially higher. Child marriage is a key driver of adolescent childbearing and is responsible for 90% of adolescent pregnancies in the developing world. At such a young age there are various complications that can occur during child birth such as an increased risk of preeclampsia, essentially putting the life of the mother at risk. The problem is so grave that the second leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19 is complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, due to the contract of marriage that they are now bound by, women are much more susceptible to having their ability to consent to intercourse undermined, circumventing their basic human rights and leading to the allowance of violation of their body's sovereignty which is a harrowing idea.

Furthermore this brings us to another problem posed by this outdated construct. Women have an increased risk to HIV/AIDS as they engage in unprotected sex. The number of women who fall victim to this is aggravated by the completely false belief that if a man with AIDS has intercourse with a virgin, he will be cured of the disease. The confines of marriage prevent them from saying no and their lack of education prevents them from being safe.

Finally we come to the concept of emotional health. A girl is forced into this proposition by not only societal but also parental pressure. Her choice and ambitions are put on a sideline to fulfil a duty which is misguided in nature. She may be forced to bear children against her will, suffer domestic abuse by husband who is a completely foreign entity to her. We are taking a girl's life out of the ideal conditions for her to flourish and develop and placing it in a context where she is placed under great emotional stress and pressure, to the point where her basic need of security may not be available to her.

However women are not the only stakeholder who is negatively effected through this archaic construct. Often men are also married at a young age to prevent migration and keep them close to their families, limiting their choices. Instances of child marriage are rarer among boys, yet often they also subject to the same oppres-



SCHOOL WATCH

Essay Writing Competition - Class 5

1st : Kyra Dhar and Taarah Chandok
2nd : Vaani Chopra and Sahima Mittal

Inter House Math Quiz (9)

Winner : Yellow House - Prakriti Mahajan, Prithvi Oak, Advait Iyer and Vedika Bagla

Inter House Math Quiz (11)

Winner : Green House - Veeraj Jindal, Amay Gupta, Dhruv Kumar and Vidur Gupta

Speed Mathematics Class 10

Winner: Asmita Shah
Done Well: Rohil Bahl, Panshul Singh, Shubham Kalantri and Dhruv S Yadav

Website Designing Competition in Science (9)

1st: Advait Iyer
2nd: Prithvi Ranjeet Oak
3rd: Vedika Bagla

Tatkalik Pratiyogita (5)

1st: Shrishti, Sahima Mittal and Mannat Kukreja
2nd: Aarush Kapur, Kabir Bahl and Asmara Dang
3rd: Kasavee Kaur, Kartik Sharma and Arsh Chauhan

sive psychological effects that child marriage has on girls. The development of children born out of these marriages is also hampered as the mother may not be mature enough to raise a child at such a tender age when she is still at an early stage of cognitive development herself. The problem we face today is of a very complex nature. Not only does it involve stopping the process of child marriage but tackling the problem at its roots which exist in the very mindset of various individuals. Ending child marriage will require continued and sustainable efforts.

The creation of new and favourable policy to stem the problem is not enough. The effective implementation of such laws is what will drive change. Legislation is a crucial first step in this situation as it grants those who fall prey to child marriage a legal option that is enforceable to prevent it from happening in the first place. Furthermore there are various other solutions that exist such as empowering women by enhancing their access to education, providing economic incentives to the families of girls and leading drives to bring this issue to attention.

To conclude, child marriage is yet another example of an idea that is hampering the freedoms that women deserve and every human being is entitled to. A traditional mindset has hampered growth far too long and it is time to lead a unified campaign against the oppression of women through this mechanism. The value of a woman is reduced to a mere commodity through child marriage which goes against the very values we enshrine in our constitution. We have been puppets to the strings of society that has allowed this practice to continue till today and has restricted the freedom of women. These strings that bind her have no place in the modern society.

Aryan Sadh, 11

The Nanhi Chhaan National School Essay Contest (NSEC) is a national competition convened on an annual basis. This year witnessed participation from schools across 24 states with 5000+ essay entries. The themes for 2017 were 'Child Marriage-it must be stopped' and 'Climate change is real'. The final round took place in Chennai, which consisted another round of essay writing and a panel discussion. Aryan Sadh's entry was selected from Vasant Valley School and he won the national competition. He was awarded a prize of Rs.50000 as well Rs.25000 for Vasant Valley School and Rs.25000 for any charity of his choice.

NO ONE KILLED AARUSHI

There seems to be a phantom on the prowl, cold bloodedly murdering innocent victims and leaving without a trace.

Nine years ago, fourteen year old Aarushi Talwar's name sent a wave of shock through out the nation when she was found dead in the bedroom of her house in Noida, followed by the death of prime suspect, Hemraj only a few days later.

After a series of botched investigations and heavy media coverage, the Talwar parents were put behind bars as a consequence of being charged with murder, conspiracy and destruction of evidence inspite of the CBI failing to provide any conclusive evidence against the parents or even establish a valid motive for murder. Only recently did the Allahabad High Court announce a verdict, acquitting the Talwars and finally freeing them, not only from jail but of the emotional strain they had to under go after losing their own daughter and then being accused of her death.

'Sadly the soul of an innocent 14 year old cries out for justice'

Soon after, written across every news channel were the words "No one killed Aarushi." After nine years of shoddy investigation, major sensationalism of the case and a media trial of sorts, a pattern emerges on the Indian crime scene that our law enforcement agencies riddle with corruption, inefficiency, and lack of expertise to carry out a sound investigation even after 9 whole years. From no one killing Jessica it seems that nobody killed Aarushi either and the voice of justice has yet again, been suppressed with no lessons learnt. A convenient pattern has emerged as a consequence of the incapability of the so-called authorities to complete an investigation without letting factors like corruption, carelessness and incompetence undermine the entire system.

Sadly, the soul of a young, innocent fourteen year old, cries out for justice.

Harnoor Singh, 10

DOODLING DREAMS

*Flying is impossible.
Soaring through the sky on your own?
Isn't possible.*

*That when a star goes supernova
It bursts into a black hole.
And though it slows down time,
If you fell into it,
You'd be stretched and ripped into pieces.
It isn't possible.
But I looked on,
Up to where my arms couldn't reach.
No matter how hard I stretched,
Or how high I jumped.
No telescope,
Of glass or gold
Did justice to fractured moonlight,
Indented craters,
And fiery shooting stars.
I wove,
The stars and the moons together
In a fabric of dreams.
And though everything,
Was supposed to be black, silver and gold,
I simply picked up colors
And redrew the tapestry of sky, space
And black holes
In a rainbow.*

Zoya Hassan, 12

भारत से इतने कम नोबेल विजेता क्यों ?

कुछ ही दिन पहले, नोबेल समिति ने इस साल के नोबेल पुरस्कारों की घोषणा की थी। इन पुरस्कारों के विजेता विभिन्न प्रकार के वैज्ञानिक, अर्थशास्त्री और लेखक हैं और इन पुरस्कार को उनके क्षेत्रों का सबसे प्रतिष्ठित पुरस्कार माना जाता है। तथापि, हर साल, नोबेल पुरस्कारों के विजेता ज्यादातर यूरोप या अमेरिका से होते हैं। असल में, नोबेल पुरस्कारों के पूरे ११८ साल के इतिहास में सिर्फ ५ भारतीय नागरिकों ने यह पुरस्कार को पाया है: श्री रबीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर, सी. वी. रमन, मदर टेरेसा, अमर्त्य सेन और कैलाश सत्यार्थी।

ऐसा कैसे हो सकता है कि १३० करोड़ की आबादी वाली भारत केवल ५ नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता हों

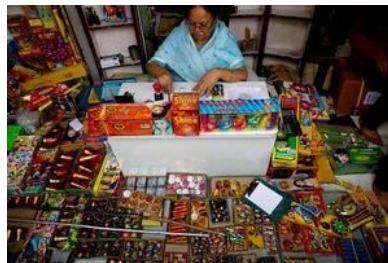
इस का एक कारण है कि भारत का अनुसंधान या रिसर्च पर खर्च बहुत सूक्ष्म है। भारत के पूरे जी.डी.पी में से बस ०.८५% अनुसन्धान की तरफ जाता है जब बाकी देशों में यह कम से कम ७ से १० % तक होता है।

एक और कारण है कि भारत में वैज्ञानिक अनुसन्धान एक लाभदायक व्यवसाय नहीं माना जाता है। भारतीय विद्यार्थी इंजीनियरिंग को ज्यादा प्रतिष्ठा देते हैं।

परन्तु अभी हार नहीं मानी जा सकती है। भारतीय सरकार भरसक प्रयास कर रही है। भारत के केंद्रीय विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी राज्य मंत्री, वाई.एस. चौधरी ने घोषणा की है कि भारतीय सरकार ने ऐसी योजनाएँ बनाई हैं जो भारतीय वैज्ञानिकों को २०३५ में नोबेल प्राइज दिलाए।

जे जगन्नाथ

POLLUTION REVISITED



The Supreme Court has recently refused to modify its ban on the sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR till the 1st of November.

The apex court had stopped the sale of crackers in the National Capital Region in November of last year due to a petition by three children, raising alarm and awareness about pollution and its harmful effects. Last month, the court suspended the ban as it felt that a complete ban is too extreme. However, a few days ago, the ban was brought back as the Court wanted to assess its impact on pollution levels within the area.

Traders appealed for an extension of the time frame to sell their firecrackers, however, the Supreme Court refused to change its decision. The Court's response to these traders was, "It will be against the spirit of our orders. We are not going to relax the order on the sale of crackers. This is an experiment. After Diwali we will take stock of the situation." The Court has also said that they are aware that this will not be a cracker free Diwali. The ban is not on the bursting of firecrackers, rather, on their sale.

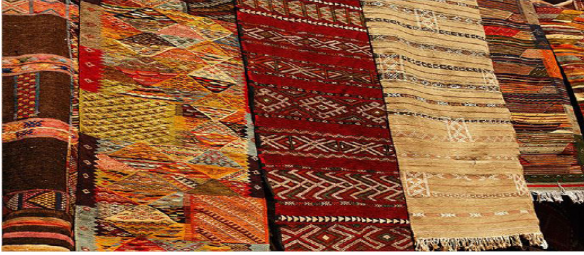
Crackers do add the necessary spark to the festivities of Diwali; however, pollution levels in Delhi and the NCR are abysmal. Thus, this ban has been long due in order to curb and alleviate pollution. This Diwali, I urge everyone to keep bursting firecrackers to a minimum level as the momentary satisfaction of doing can cost us a safe and healthy environment to live and breathe in.

Rabiya Gupta, 11

SPINNING YARNS

GST is the Goods And Services Tax is an indirect tax which was introduced in India and was applicable throughout India which replaced multiple cascading taxes levied by the central and state governments. Almost three months after the introduction of the GST regime in India, advocates of the country's vibrant crafts sector believe that another national movement is required to save our craftsmen from oblivion.

According to a 2014 study by KPMG for the National Skill Development Corporation, 84 per cent of weavers live in villages. Many belong to scheduled castes and tribes and minority groups. Many are women workers, of whom 71 percent are illiter-



ate, with underdeveloped marketing skills and low standards of living. There is poor internet connectivity and patchy electricity supply, let alone infrastructure to aid artisans to file the GST. They're all more dependent than ever before on their chartered accountants 50 km away, to deal with the added burden of paperwork.

Dhokra metalwork, a 4,000 year old wax casting technique practised by tribals of West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand, is being taxed 12 per cent under GST, unlike earlier, when there was no tax levied on them. Upcycled handmade cotton bags, earlier not taxed, are now being taxed at 18 per cent, with manufacturers scrambling to figure out how to pay tax on their raw material. GST on all handloom and handicraft below a certain price must be removed altogether. Instead of levying taxes on the craft sector, the government needs to make ensure the success of the craft sector. This countries rich and diverse crafts are integral, and most importantly, the livelihoods of people involved in this sector are endangered, and we must think about them, otherwise this diversity, and everything about out country, is gone.

Some information has been sourced from smartinvestor.business-standard.com, <https://www.cleartax.in>

Sanaa Sharma, 9

अन्वेषित घुसपैठिये : रोहिंग्या आंदोलन



रोहिंग्या वर्ग के कई लोग म्यांमार में रहते हैं। २०१६-२०१७ के संकट से पहले म्यांमार में करीब १० लाख लोग रह रहे थे। यहाँ मुस्लिम बहुसंख्यक हैं और हिंदू अल्पसंख्यक हैं। रोहिंग्या दुनिया में सबसे ज्यादा सताए हुए अल्पसंख्यकों में से एक के रूप में वर्णित है। 1982 के म्यांमार राष्ट्रीयता कानून के तहत

रोहिंग्या आबादी को नागरिकता से वंचित कर दिया गया है। वे राज्य शिक्षा और नागरिक सेवा की नौकरियों से भी वंचित हैं। यूनाइटेड नेशन के अधिकारियों ने म्यांमार को रोहिंग्या के उत्पीड़न को जातीय सफाई के रूप में वर्णित किया है।

रोहिंग्या ने यह मान लिया है कि वे पश्चिमी म्यांमार के स्वदेशी समुदायों में से हैं, जो कि अरबों, मुगलों और पुर्तगाली के प्रभाव से एक सहस्राब्दी से एक विरासत के साथ हैं। समुदाय खुद को अरुचिकर अराकान और औपनिवेशिक अराकान के वंशज के रूप में पेश करता है।

ऐतिहासिक रूप से यह क्षेत्र दक्षिणपूर्व एशिया और भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप के बीच एक स्वतंत्र राज्य था। बीसवीं शताब्दी के उत्तरार्ध में उत्पीड़न बढ़ने तक म्यांमार की संसदों के लिए रोहिंग्या विधायक चुने गए। अतीत में रोहिंग्या स्वीकार करने के बावजूद, म्यांमार सरकार की वर्तमान आधिकारिक स्थिति यह है कि रोहिंग्या राष्ट्रीय जाति नहीं अपितु बांग्लादेश से गैर कानूनी उत्प्रवासी हैं।

म्यांमार की सरकार ने तो "रोहिंग्या" शब्द को पहचानना ही बंद कर दिया है और समुदाय को बंगाली कह रही है। रोहिंग्या अभियान समूह, विशेषकर अराकन रोहिंग्या नेशनल ऑर्गनाइजेशन, म्यांमार के भीतर "आत्मनिर्णय" के अधिकार की मांग करते हैं। यूनाइटेड नेशंस के अनुसार, रोहिंगियों के खिलाफ मानवाधिकारों का उल्लंघन "मानवता के खिलाफ अपराध" है।

सूत्रों के मुताबिक, रोहिंग्या भारत के उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्य नागालैंड की सुरक्षा के लिए एक गंभीर खतरा भी बन गये हैं। खबर आइ है कि लगभग बीस आतंकवादियों परिचालकों ने नागालैंड में प्रवेश किया है। वे पूरे नागालैंड में आत्मघाती बम हमलों और बम विस्फोटों की योजना बना रहे हैं। हाल ही में हिंसा की शुरुआत में, 400 रोहिंग्या मारे गए हैं और हजारों लोग अपने गाँवों को छोड़कर भाग गए हैं।

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मीडिया के साथ-साथ मानव अधिकार संगठनों ने दुनिया में सबसे अधिक सताए हुए जातीय समूहों में से एक के रूप में रोहिंग्या लोगों का वर्णन किया है। उनके पास कोई कानूनी संरक्षण नहीं है और उन्हें म्यांमार में नागरिकता से वंचित किया जाता है, जिससे वे भेदभाव, शोषण और हिंसा के प्रति कमजोर होते हैं। आज अनेक लोग इन मासूमों की मदद करने में लगे हैं।

नीलाक्षि तिवारी, ९

सुधा मूर्ति

'लंदन के हवाई अड्डे पर लेखिका सुधा मूर्ति को मवेशी वर्ग का कहा गया है।'

कुछ दिन पहले मैंने जब अखबार खोला, इस शीर्षक को पढ़कर मेरे मन में जिज्ञासा उभर आई और पढ़ने पर पता चला कि लंदन में इंसोसिस की अध्यक्ष को एक महिला ने बिजनेस क्लास की क्रतार से निकलकर किफायती वर्ग की क्रतार में खड़े होने के लिए कहा था।

जब सुधा जी ने इसका कारण पूछा, तब महिला और उसकी साथी ने उन्हें समझाया कि बिजनेस क्लास की टिकटें ज्यादा महंगी होती हैं क्योंकि बिजनेस क्लास ज्यादा आलीशान होता है इसलिए उसमें गरीब लोग नहीं जा सकते हैं। और पूछने पर पता चला कि महिलाओं ने सुधा जी के परंपरागत भारतीय वस्त्रों को देखकर समझा था कि वे गरीब थीं और बिजनेस क्लास में जाने के लिए पैसे नहीं जुटा सकती थीं।

जब सुधा जी ने कुछ देर बाद हवाई अड्डे के सहायकों को अपना बोर्डिंग पास दिखाया और आगे बढ़ीं तो उन्होंने उन महिलाओं को आगे खड़ा हुआ देख लिया और उनके बुरे व्यवहार के बारे में अपने विचार स्पष्ट बता दिए। वे महिलाएँ उन्हें अवाक घूरती रह गईं।

सुधा मूर्ति का यह निर्भय व्यवहार बहुत प्रभावशाली है। वे भारतीय संस्कृति एवं धर्म को मानती हैं और दूसरों को अपनी राय बताने से झिझकती नहीं हैं। गुस्सा आने पर भी ठंडे और खुले मन से सोचना एक गुण है जो सबके पास नहीं होता है। सुधा जी तुरंत उन महिलाओं को अपना बोर्डिंग पास दिखा कर या अपनी पहचान बताकर विश्वास करवा सकती थीं कि वे गरीब नहीं हैं, मगर अपनी तेज बुद्धि की सहायता के साथ उन्होंने बिना किसी झगड़े या शोर-शराबे के उन महिलाओं को एक अच्छा सबक सीखा दिया था।



प्रकृति महाजन, ९

Changing Times

In the old days of yore,
Life was a bore,
There was nothing to do
Except stare at your shoe.
No T.V., IPod or devices
Load shedding and electric crisis.
But the air was so much cleaner
And the trees were so much greener
But I'm so glad I was born now,
I can call and communicate any how
I don't miss the old days of yore
I think times now are so much more.

Samara Sharma, 4

Then and Now

People didn't have any electricity
They didn't even have any phones.
But now we even have iPads
And flying everywhere are drones.
Walking miles away from home
For studying under trees
Today we come in fancy cars
We have forgotten all about the cool breeze.
Living in big joint families, with all the aunts and uncles around
There was always somebody to play with and something to talk about.
Now we are so spaced out, shrunk in our homes
We only worry about ourselves and are happy to be alone.

Kyra Oberoi, 4

MIGRATION

No more flowers on trees,
No more green grass for the wildebeest.
It's time to migrate and be bold,
When the temperatures dip, and it gets cold.
The birds, bees and butterflies,
Look for greener pastures and blue skies.
To swim, run or fly,
All fish, animals and birds try.
It can be just about any reason,
Mostly looking for food in change of season.
They settle when a comforting new home is found,
Together they flock to the new ground.
But then they always find their way back,
To come home with their own pack.
It's not only animals that migrate,
Humans do it to, when we relocate.
In search of better jobs and new places,
They travel to different continents and see new faces.

Kabir Bahl 5

Fraction Jungle

We have been learning how to divide a circle into equal parts for our 'Fraction Jungle'. First we were divided into groups and got two sheets. Each sheet had a picture of an animal, bird or fish. Each of us got a sheet on which we drew the animal we had chosen. Once approved we could pick up the parts we needed and we then assembled the pieces to make the picture. These were put up on the board. We all thoroughly enjoyed working on the Fraction Jungle and are proud of what we have done.

Class 5



Foundation is getting ready for a green Diwali!



WORLD TODAY

the easiest way for you to ace a GK Quiz

Rajesh and Nupur Talwar, parents of Arushi Talwar, were acquitted by the Allahabad High Court in the Arushi murder case.

The Supreme Court has banned the sale of firecrackers in the NCR during the Diwali season.

Elections will be held in Himachal Pradesh on November 9 and will be conducted in Gujrat before December 18.

Pollution levels have risen massively in Delhi due to the burning of crop stubbles in Haryana and Punjab.

President Donald Trump decertified the Iran Nuclear Deal signed between USA, UK, France, Germany, Russia, China, the EU and Iran.

A massive wildfire has been spreading across Northern California, taking the lives of 35 people.

USA and Israel have left the UNESCO in protest for what it believes is bias towards Palestine.

Joshua Wong, an activist for democracy in Hong Kong, was declared guilty in contempt of court.

शब्द खोज

शब्दों को ढूँढ़ें और अपना ज्ञान बढ़ाएं

अ	व	का	श	त	न	ग्री	ज
स	स	फ	र	स	क	ष्मा	स्प
च	म	त्का	र	ष्मा	व	का	श
य	ट	गि	आ	का	श	ली	ल
य	र	का	ल	ज	यी	न	आ
श्रुं	ख	ला	आ	इ	स	क्री	म
ख	शती	त	ल्ली	न	र	इ	त
त्य	वि	स्मृ	त	अ	भि	रा	म

अवकाश
श्रुंखला
चमत्कार
मटरगशती
सफर

आकाश
विस्मृत
कालजयी
तल्लीन
अभिराम

IF THEY CAN'T HAVE TOAST! LET THEM EAT CAKE !

Every year, the recurring problem of crop residue burning in North India is the start of the annual escalation of pollutant concentrations in the air, leading to massive winter pollution in the region. An estimated 35 million tonnes of paddy straw (crop residue) is set ablaze in Punjab and Haryana alone. This smoke blows across the plains causing damage to our health as well as environment. It causes aggravation of respiratory diseases, cancer, eye and skin diseases and pollutes the water as well. This pollution is further intensified by the massive usage of firecrackers in the region, around Diwali. We are all aware that in 2016 Delhi saw a case of extremely nasty pollution which even resulted in several residents moving out of the city. But the truth remains, that almost 60 percent of the pollution during this time of the year is due to farmers setting ablaze their fields to get rid of farm waste.

The question that arises is 'Why do farmers continue this practice even though they are aware of its adverse effects?' To understand the answer to this, we must look from a farmer's point of view.

Paddy, or rice, is a water-intensive crop. The high usage of water in its cultivation has resulted in the central and various state governments restricting the cultivation of paddy in the summer months. In order to prevent diversion of scarce water resources in the summer, paddy cultivation can legally begin only around mid-June, when the monsoons typically arrive over North India. This results in a very short window of time between harvesting of paddy and cultivation of wheat, at the end of the Kharif season.

Removal of the paddy stalk that remains on the field to prepare the field for wheat cultivation is a labour-intensive process. With labour being unavailable and the time being limited, the options that the farmer has are either investing thousands in expensive and rarely used agricultural implements and going further into debt, or burning the residue right on the field with a one rupee matchbox. Of the two, the latter is both cheaper and requires less effort.

To curb this pollution, we need to provide farmers with feasible alternatives. Initiatives like providing scope for further utilisation of paddy straw by using it as fuels a replacement for coal, or to produce paper and cardboard will definitely prevent them from burning crop residue to a great extent, as farmers will benefit by selling the paddy straw instead of burning it.



Vedika Bagla, 9

From DU to BHU - When will the oppression end?

For the past weeks BHU (Banaras Hindu University) has been all over the news. Not for any discoveries or commendation, but rather for mishandling a case of harassment of one of the female students, and news of an inefficient administration.

A student at BHU was harassed by three men on a motorcycle when she was returning to her hostel. On reporting the incident, instead of filing formal complaints and taking action, her allegations were dismissed by administration as well as the Vice Chancellor of BHU, G.C. Tripathi.

The harsh truth is that the administration has failed to provide a safe and secure environment for its students. According to reports and the alumni of BHU, cases like these have been common at the university, and when the student body protested their demands, the university paid no heed under Tripathi, the administration has imposed bizarre restrictions on female students. They are not allowed to use mobile phones after 10pm. Female students cannot access the university's library at night while male students are allowed to do so. They cannot use the campus bus facility, that is meant to be provided to all students, at night. Last year, female students were even made to sign affidavits stating that they would not indulge in protests, completely disregarding the fact that it is every citizen's right.



The alarming news of the case and the discovery that cases like these are not new at BHU has caused many protests by the students. Many students gathered at the Lanka gate of BHU, staging a dharna, screaming slogans like "stop victim-blaming" and protesting the discrimination. This led to violence as the protesters were lathicharged and made to disperse by the police.

Tripathi claimed the protests were 'politically motivated' saying it was all to create a sensation.

The incident and protests have shed light on the inefficiency and disregard of the administration. Reports suggest that G.C. Tripathi has been asked to go on leave by the HRD ministry. But we do find ourselves asking, is going on leave enough? Is stepping down as Vice Chancellor enough for violating the rights and jeopardising the safety of the students at BHU?

Sanah Kapur, 10

WHICH RIVERDALE CHARACTER ARE YOU?

What quality traits do you think best define you?

- A) Reserved, quiet, distant, perceptive
- B) Confident, responsible, smart, bold
- C) Impulsive, caring, extroverted, idealistic
- D) Fun, outgoing, stubborn, opinionated

Which sweet food item appeals to you the most??

- A) Cookie shake
- B) Chocolate cake
- C) S'more shake
- D) Salted caramel squares

What is admired most in you by your friends?

- A) Your big heart
- B) Your sense of loyalty
- C) Your easygoing nature
- D) Your sense of humor

What is your dress sense most like?

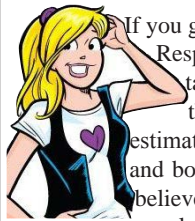
- A) Baggy jeans and a sweatshirt; comfort is key
- B) Classic and casual: jeans, canvas shoes or a simple dress with a throw
- C) Sporty, usually the first thing you see in your wardrobe
- D) Usually formal, majority of your clothes are black

Which of the following would you be the most interested in?

- A) Creative work (like writing for a newspaper)
- B) Performing arts (drama,singing,dancing etc)
- C) Football
- D) Debate



If you got mostly A's, then you are Jughead Jones: Quiet, distant and reserved, you take some time to open up to people. You are a very good judge of character and have a very strong intuitive sense but are often cynical and mistrusting. You have number of innovative ideas along with a very caring nature and big heart. You can make an amazing writer or painter one day!



If you got mostly B's, then you are Betty Cooper: Responsible and practical you are willing to undertake any challenge. You are a perfectionist and the biggest mistake someone can make is underestimating you. You are smart, intellectual, confident and bold and are not afraid to stand up for what you believe in. Your loyalty and integrity is what draws people to you!

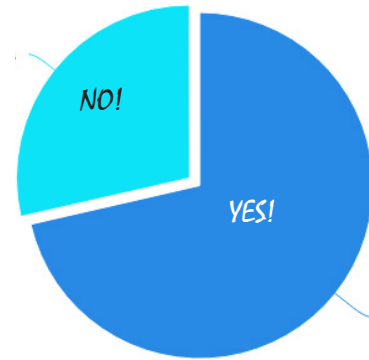


If you got mostly C's, then you are Archie Andrews: Sensitive, extroverted, athletic and talented, you have an easy and outgoing nature with a kind heart. You can be pretty complex to figure out and at times can also be gullible and naive. You are idealistic and impulsive, doing what you want and not thinking things through. Indecisive, sure, but you will not give up on something you have dedicated yourself to, no matter how hard it gets.



If you got mostly D's, then you are Veronica Lodge: Strongly opinionated, it is very hard to change your mind if you truly believe in something. Even though you can often be stubborn and slightly rebellious, you are one of the most fun and outgoing people to be around: the life of the party! You are a loyal friend. You are strong, confident and truly iconic.

Do the students of Vasant Valley support the ban on fire-crackers?



LOOK CLOSER TO HOME

America's deadliest mass shooting committed by an individual was witnessed by Las Vegas, on the first of October, this year. Stephen Paddock (64) opened fire on innocent concert-goers, killing 58 and injuring just short of 500. The mass murderer unleashed his semi-automatic rifle from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Hotel, from where he had a direct line of sight over the concert. And so ruthlessly he pulled the trigger. Upon hearing of these atrocities, what angered me the most that was that the authorities have not as yet figured out the shooter's motive.

Dear readers, when I hear of unthinkable massacres of this sort I catch myself feeling winded. And I know that all of our hearts go out to those lost in the crossfire in Las Vegas. So when I implore you to, perhaps, see things from a different perspective, do not think for a second that I am insensitive or care less about such heartbreaking, international issues. But, on this note allow me to probe a question: Why is it that we snap our heads to attention when something happens in the States or Europe, but our senses are dulled to equally horrendous happenings within the walls of our own nation?

Here's a quick taste of tragedy from just ten days before the Vegas shooting, a couple of doors over: Upon the breakout of a stampede on a crowded pedestrian bridge in Mumbai, 22 lives were lost and 38 people sustained injuries.

This fatal accident occurred within India, our home. Yet it receives only half of the importance when compared to global crises. Be it through informal interactions, class discussions or media platforms, we skip the welfare of our own country and often care to keep informed of only international current affairs. And Dearest Readers, this is inherently unacceptable. Our empathy on national and international forums may have the same value, but our actions and resources could so efficiently be used to aid those wronged in India, which would simply be improbable on a greater scale. We can donate belongings to those suffering in Mumbai, but shipping over a carton of canned goods from New Delhi to Las Vegas seems highly unlikely.

Therefore I suggest that we do, with all that we can, empathise with the rest of the world and sorrow and rejoice with them; however, we must help ourselves to help others. We must look closer to home.

Anoushka Clays, 10

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