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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this issue of IWIn newsletter.

The year 2015 has been a very active year for IWIn. Together with the ACT community, IWIn has achieved quite a few milestones to be proud of and I am eager to share with you those achievements. But before doing so, I would like to thank our Patron, Gai Brodtmann, MP Canberra, for her continuous support and advice that shaped today's IWIn. This is also the time to acknowledge the ACT Government's support for IWIn in meeting some crucial challenges on IWIn's way to success.

One of these challenges was to raise awareness on the domestic violence issues faced by migrant women in our local ACT community. IWIn's mission being empowering socially and economically disadvantaged women, IWIn took up an active advocacy role in 2015 in preventing crimes against women and children. IWIn organised several interactive awareness workshops on this issue, in collaboration with other community organisations. These are:

- Panel Discussion on Domestic Violence, 21 March 2015
- A Workshop on Women Health & Beauty, 5 July 2015
- Orange Day Event, 29 November 2015, as part of the United Nation's Campaign of "Orange The World" .

In addition, I participated in various radio programs, including SBS Hindi Radio, discussing the impacts of domestic violence on women and children and how we can help the victims as a community.

In the beginning of 2015, the IWIn Committee decided to look into the incidence of domestic violence in the ACT against women with a South Asian ancestry. Most of the members coming from the same community, IWIn Committee knew that these women faced a very different kind of domestic violence, which needed to be recognised correctly. In most instances, violence against these women had gone unnoticed in Australia due to the non-reporting of such incidences, largely driven by the social stigma attached with admitting such crimes committed by family members. This issue of non-reporting remained a big challenge, as existing domestic violence services and programs could reach only the reported cases. To address this challenge, IWIn developed a policy paper that discussed why South Asian migrant women were accustomed to keep quiet about the domestic violence perpetrated against them and suggested a policy framework to effectively handle this issue.

I am pleased to inform you that this IWIn policy paper was presented in the inaugural National Conference, *The 2015 Australia Stop Domestic*

Violence, held recently, during 7-9 December 2015 in Canberra. The paper generated high interest among the conference delegates, followed by a meeting invitation from the Department of Community Services, ACT Government, to discuss the suggested policy framework for non-reporting.

IWIn is now hopeful of developing a collaborative project on this issue with the ACT Government in 2016 and contributing to building a safer ACT Community. I will keep you all informed on IWIn activities along the line. We also intend to hold a range of events, so please keep an eye on your emails for IWIn event information.

I encourage you all to visit IWIn's website (www.iwinact.org) and send us your feedback. Please contact us if you have any concerns or just want to get involved or simply wish to DONATE to help our partner NGOs providing free education to socially disadvantaged children in India. Also, do share your experience and exciting pictures with our readers in future issues of IWIn newsletter and send these to: contact@iwinact.org OR h_madhumita@hotmail.com

Enjoy your holidays and stay safe.

With best wishes for the festive season and Happy New Year 2016,

Madhumita

2015 AUSTRALIA STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE

A IWIn policy paper was presented by Mrs Madhumita IYENGAR, Chair of IWIn, at the inaugural Domestic Violence (DV) National Conference in Canberra on 7th December 2015. The policy paper was entitled as:

Effectiveness of the current service provisions for domestic violence in ACT: A focus on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse(CALD) Communities



Madhumita Iyengar presenting IWIn Paper at DV National Conference in Canberra, 7 Dec 2015

Mrs Iyengar deliberated on a number of barriers – such as, cultural, language, legal, financial and social – those stop migrant South Asian women from taking help from the ACT Government's DV service providers. The presentation also discussed a policy framework to address the issue of non-reporting of DV incidences by these women and how to raise awareness on DV issues in the local South Asian community.

The presentation generated a high interest among the DV Conference delegates and quite a few organisations approached Mrs Iyengar for a potential collaboration on further research in the issue.

The Department of Community Services, ACT Government also showed interest in the suggested policy framework for non-reporting and had a meeting with Mrs Iyengar to explore the possibility of a collaborative project with IWIn in 2016.



Madhumita in conversation with Rosie Batty

MEETING ROSIE BATTY

Rosie Batty, the winner of 2015 Australian Of The Year Award, has become the most wellknown crusader against domestic violence in Australia, since she lost her only child, 11 year old Luke Batty, in a terrible domestic violence incident.

In an UN Women Australia event held on 30 November 2015, Madhumita Iyengar had the privilege of meeting Rosie Batty and discussing IWIn's activities on DV issues. Ms Batty was very supportive of IWIn activities and expressed her interest in remaining connected to IWIn's future works.



Audience participation at the Orange Day Event, Mr Kanti Jinna speaking



Audience participation at the Orange Day Event, Manaswini Iyengar speaking

ORANGE DAY 2015

IWIn celebrated "Orange Day 2015" on Sunday 29 November, as a part of the United Nation (UN) Secretary-General's [UNITE campaign](#) "Orange the world". This rare Canberra event, where the South Asian Community said "NO" to Violence against Women (VAW), was organised by IWIn in collaboration with two local ACT community organisations, GOPIO Canberra and Indian Women Welfare Organisation (IWWO) to discuss on How to End VAW .



The audience participated in the event wearing orange and included a good number of young Canberrans. All present in the event strongly agreed for community wide collaborations to make everyone in the community aware of important domestic violence issues and taking responsibility in reducing violence against women by supporting these women in need. The event received strong positive feedback from the audience expressing the need for more similar sessions in future, which will be an important community agenda for 2016.

The event was also supported by the Indian High Commission (IHC), Canberra and Mr Sonal Bajaj, Counsellor represented IHC.



Mr Sonal Bajaj, Counsellor from the Indian High Commission attended the Orange Day Event

ORANGE DAY 2015 (contd.....)

The orange colour designated by the UNiTE campaign symbolizes a brighter future for women without violence. Every year on 25 November, UN adopted International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, and Australia adopted White Ribbon Day campaigns, which are consistent reminders on how every day, women and girls experience violence in their lives and most of the time, by their own family members. Our South Asian community is no exception.



Mr Rakesh Malhotra, President GOPIO Canberra speaking at the Orange Day event

The event held at the Belconnen Labour Club started at 10:30am with Mr Rakesh Malhotra from GOPIO Canberra welcoming the audience and talking about the significance of the Orange Day celebration.

The first two speakers from the Beryl Women Inc., Angie Piubello and Lina Louis, discussed a range of issues on family violence against women and children in general.

Mrs Madhumita Iyengar from IWIn and Mr Subhas Dang from IWWO discussed the current domestic violence issues with reference to the migrant women coming from the South Asian background..



Speakers at the Orange Day Event

Mr Dang outlined the role of Indian Women Welfare Organisation (IWWO) focusing on its main objective of helping Indian women facing family violence.



Mr Dang speaking about IWWO activities

Mrs Madhumita Iyengar talked about the serious nature and high incidence of domestic violence experienced within the South Asian migrant community; that is, by the migrant women coming from countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Mrs Iyengar deliberated on the alarming increases in the DV incidence statistics in the South Asian countries, as shown by recent reports of the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).



Madhumita Iyengar speaking at the Orange Day Event



Domestic violence in the community is a collective problem that needs a collective solution



Audience supported the Orange Day Event, 29 November 2015, wearing orange colour

South Asian Women's issues : An article by Shubhra Roy, Secretary, IWIn

There is reality and there is perception. The last decade and even before that, the spotlight on South Asia has been on the negative stories there. It has been about women's safety, gender equity, infanticide, forced marriages and honour killings. In this situation, it is sometimes hard to remember that there is much more to South Asia than all of that. While we need to deny that all of these ills exist in South Asia, there is also a need to remind all of us that there is much to celebrate as well.



The bad news first. So what are some of the issues?

The role of women has been complex and tied to the traditional notions of womanhood. On the one hand, they are responsible and credited with keeping the family together. They carry traditional rituals, practices that are sometimes centuries old, help retain the roots and the identity through various means, nurture families through the ravages of time and upheavals.

However, the traditional notions of womanhood has also meant that women often are seen to carry the burden of symbolising the honour of the family, sometimes embodying the national honour as well.

This has meant that the role of women has often times been associated with antiquated notions of honour in the more traditional parts of South Asia. The difference in development in urban vs rural has also led to differential approaches to gender equity.



While the urban South Asian Women has been out in the front and centre of every progressive debate, whether in politics, commerce, policy, and industry.

As per the World Bank – 'There has been a greater recognition of the problem across the region. In most countries women have experienced improved access to services and credit markets. However, despite the recent economic growth and changing social norms, dramatic gender inequities persist in South Asia. Addressing the inequities will require greater voice of women in the political decision-making of communities and states.'



This is also true for South Asian communities in other countries where migrants have formed a new life but have carried the traditions of their own society and life. Organisations like IWIn believe that it is by joining together that we, as a community can advocate, and implement change through influencing both popular opinion as well as initiating complementary government actions, e.g. creating appropriate institutional frameworks.

Ultimately, sustainable change and welfare will need strengthening our

ability to influence decision-making both within and outside the household.

And yet, there is good news. The South Asian Work Ethic, of commitment to family values, of respect and caring of elders and retaining our heritage are all good things – in a new country where we have to forge our own identity and also give back to this community to which we belong.



A quick look at two of the most power women lists is inspiring

2015 Fortune Most Powerful Women - <http://fortune.com/most-powerful-women-asia-pacific/> - 8 of the total are from South Asia, heading large complex organisations.

It is also a time to celebrate other women who do quietly work on their little part of the world, changing it for the better. Whether we focus on our local community, or the bigger issues, we all help us live more enriched lives through a network of support and scaffolding of services at each step of the way.



Suffragette Movie Review by Manaswini IYENGAR

Release: October 12, 2015 (UK)

Director: Sarah Gavron

Screenplay: Abi Morgan

Cast: Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter, Brendan Gleeson, Anne-Marie Duff, Ben Whishaw, Meryl Streep

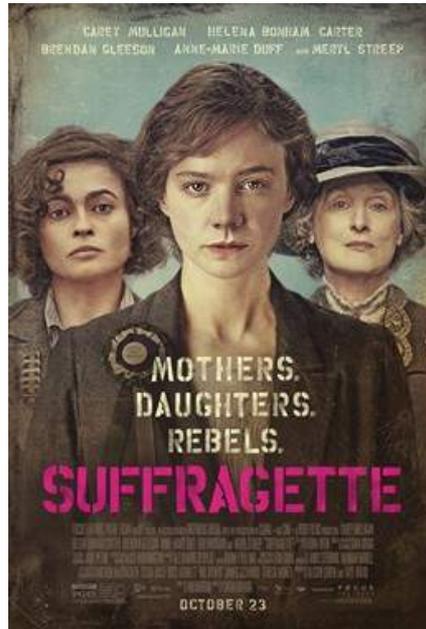
Awards:

- [British Independent Film Awards, Best Supporting Actor](#), Brendan Gleeson
- [Hamptons International Film Festival, Tangerine Entertainment Juice Award](#), Sarah Gavron
- [Hollywood Film Awards, Actress of the Year](#), Carey Mulligan
- [Mill Valley Film Festival, Audience Award, Mind the Gap](#), Sarah Gavron

This highly rated movie, a British historical period drama, was released in Australia on Boxing Day, 26 December 2015. Directed and written by women, this is the first film ever made on the feminist movement of gaining voting rights for women.

Quick history lesson: The women's right to vote was recognised in 1928. This movie is about the movement that led up to the recognition of those rights. As always, I'm more interested in the story being told than any cinematic techniques when reviewing films (purely due to the fact that I appreciate good camera shots and all but don't have enough knowledge to perform detailed critique).

So let's get the bad out of the way first – I wish that there'd been more Indian women or really any women of colour represented in the film. People always say that they don't show those women because they weren't as prominent back then ([this is called the historical accuracy fallacy and can usually be refuted by one line: "So we weren't invented back then?"](#)). But clearly they can introduce characters that didn't originally exist, so why not a character of colour?



Then again, maybe they just wanted to show the earliest time women gained their right to vote and women of colour didn't receive theirs nearly as early as white women. As Dr Paula Bartley, a historian focusing on women in history and the suffrage movement, commented to the New Statesman while confirming this film's historical accuracy, "[Britain \[in 1911-13\] was a white society in the main, and \[its\] suffragette movement reflected that.](#)"

But that's beside the point. Still, it's important to note how little media there is about Indian people that's not written by Indian people ([and Bollywood is usually too light and fluffy to cover issues of domestic violence with the gravity they deserve](#)).

Speaking of which, this movie features sexual harassment and abuse – one of the main character Maud's co-worker has an abusive husband that beats her so she can't provide a testimony in Parliament to secure the right to vote. Maud's laundry boss sexually harasses both her and other young girls -she burns him with an iron and basically starts becoming more and more radical as her home and work life collapses around her due to her participation in the movement. This movie also shows

the police beating the women who are part of the movement.

My favourite thing about this movie is that it shows how brave women can be, along with the lengths people would go to for their rights. It also shows how people continuously try to keep the existing power structures in place – while nearly all women now have the right to vote, there are still multiple violations of women's rights happening across the globe. One of course, is domestic violence – it's terrifying that the person you love (or at least live with) could hurt you the most. Others include rape, female infanticide (or foeticide), pay inequality, genital mutilation and a host of other violations – all underpinned by one simple idea that women are inferior to men. Even when men are abused, the idea that women are supposed to be inferior to men is what causes the social stigma around discussing male victims of domestic violence.

Global movements are a way to galvanise people to action and change hurtful mindsets to ensure equality. I hope that this movie, even in some small way, can manage to instil the same sense of bravery in people, to stand up for what's right and speak up against inequality. Because while the movie might be a little dull and lacking in proper race representation, it does show how the actions of a few can lead to true change and that it's important to stand by what's right. Think of it this way – you might be able to talk about social issues all you want and theorise about why and how domestic violence happens... but it won't stop until you actually do something about it. For me, this movie is about doing something to address what you think is wrong, not just about a movement about a woman's right to vote.

So, my rating for this movie is 4 out of 5, which makes it a 'must see' movie.

India's Daughter Movie Review by Manaswini IYENGAR

Release: 4 March 2015 (UK)

Director: Leslee Udwin

Screenplay: Leslee Udwin

Cast: Badri Singh, Mukesh Singh, Jyoti's Mother Asha Devi

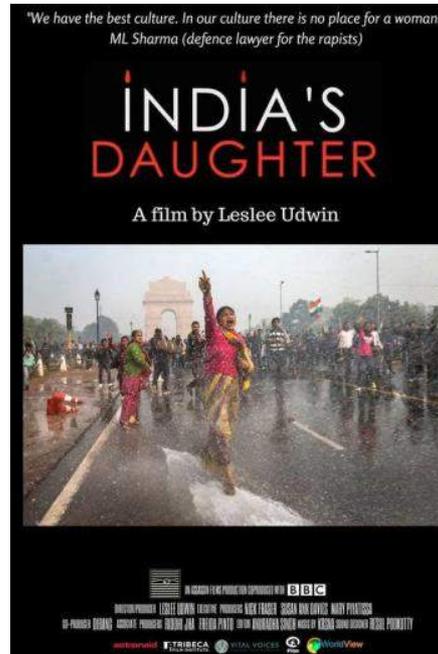
Running time: 58 min 18 sec

Language: English, Hindi

On the 16th of December in 2012, a girl was brutally raped in Delhi (India) – eventually dying of her wounds on the 29th. Jyoti Singh, a young physiotherapy student was raped and brutally assaulted on a private bus on her way home from the movies, even though she was with a male friend at the time. Her experience sparked a general outrage in India, with multiple protests and an angry outcry regarding the protection services afforded to women. But why is her story so publicised? I can only surmise that the brutality of the crime and subsequent reaction were the reasons the director made this story into a documentary, a documentary that I couldn't even watch in one go because it sickened and disgusted me. It wasn't so much the graphic content that upset me but the mindset – the victim blaming and the idea that girls were responsible for rape. So to quickly outline the case:

Jyoti Singh was travelling home by bus with a friend after watching a movie when a group of 6 men gang raped her and assaulted both her and her friend. Even though she was rushed to the hospital she ended up dying due to her severe injuries. The public began protesting India's lack of protection for women and the 6 men were persecuted. You'd think the persecution was a step in the right direction, correct? But this case is an exception to the rule. And while seeing the support for increasing protection for women, it's not enough ([Leslee Udwin, the director was specifically inspired by the protests when creating the documentary](#)). Here's the thing though – rape happens way too often.

This review is not about explaining how and why rape is bad. No one would ever say rape was a good thing. But I do want to discuss one thing that this documentary raises. And that is the idea of rape culture and victim blaming.



Here's something one of the rapists Mukesh Singh said: *"When being raped, she shouldn't fight back. She should just be silent and allow the rape..... A girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy... A decent girl won't roam around at nine o'clock at night... Housework and housekeeping is for girls, not roaming in discos and bars at night doing indecent things, wearing indecent clothes."*

Victim blaming can be seen in all the little comments you hear after a rape story breaks out. Here are some examples:

- *"Her skirt was too short"*
- *"She drank too much"*
- *"She shouldn't have been out that late"*

There are plenty more examples but you get the idea – the rapist basically says the same thing. So what does that say about us that, unknowingly, we are parroting the words of rapists? It says more about this very elusive thing called rape culture – a culture where boys are forgiven for rape and girls are blamed. A culture where girls are taught about how to prevent rape rather than where boys

are taught not to rape. A culture where a lack of consent is considered sexy and people can joke about rape. And I am here to say that it needs to stop!

Rape is not a joking matter and girls shouldn't have to feel ashamed about being raped – their rapists should be the ones feeling ashamed. But in a patriarchal culture where men feel entitled to women's bodies and women are told to just shut up and take everything – rape is to be expected. It is not to be expected because men are biologically programmed to make a move on any female. And blaming rape on biology is reductive and inaccurate. I believe that while this documentary is confrontational, it is important to at least know about because it shows the kind of backwards views that harm the movement for women's rights and also shows how we subconsciously validate rapists through the little things we do.

It's important that we remember that the fight isn't against men when it comes to rape – after all men can also be raped (but are less likely to ever report it due to the stigma surrounding such an experience). In fact, men are just as hurt by rape culture. They are told that being raped is a sign of weakness, that they are not proper men (I could explain toxic masculinity but that's a topic for another day) or better yet, that they should have enjoyed it because don't all men want sex?

So for me, this documentary wasn't about the specific case – it was about the way society imposes these ideas surrounding consent and sex and how we are all responsible for changing this mindset. To protect and help both women and men who are victims of rape or domestic violence, we must speak up when people make tasteless jokes, show support and solidarity for all survivors and be compassionate. Do not give in to the urge to blame the victims, regardless of how much the media or others do it – always remember that a rape is entirely the rapist's fault. I believe in what Mahatma Gandhi said - *"Be the change you want to see"*.

THINK About it: Domestic Violence (DV) Statistics as available for South Asian Countries

Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria, according to World Bank data



DV Statistics For India, NCRB 2005

A report by the United Nation Population Fund found that, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of **Domestic Violence** attacks and as many as 70% of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. More than 55% of the women suffer from Domestic Violence, especially in the northern states.

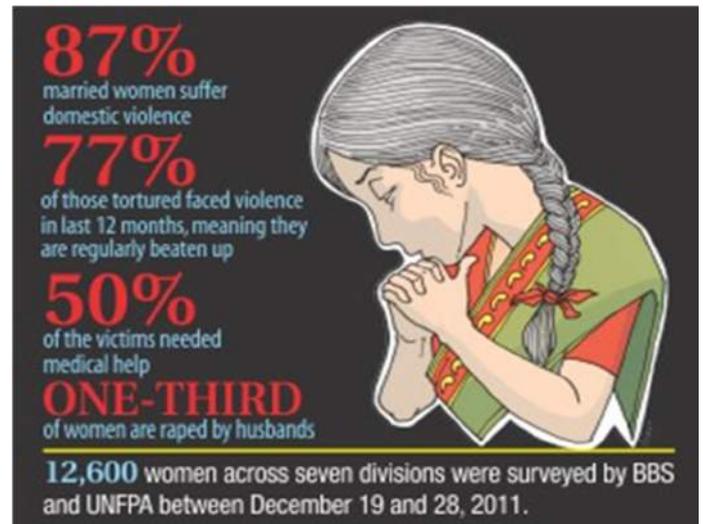
Sexual Violence

- A woman in Sri Lanka is raped every 90 minutes
- Only 600 of 300,000 perpetrators of sexual abuse were remanded, as revealed in parliament by Rosy Senanayake
- Sri Lanka is the 5th worst country in the world for domestic violence

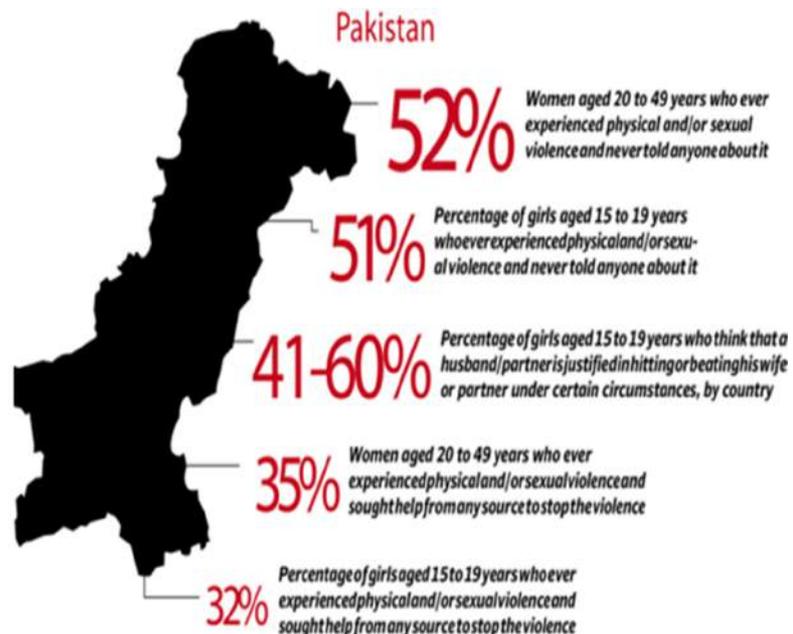
According to a United Nation's Report (UNICEF 2014), in Sri Lanka, 82% of sexual assaults to women were committed by victims' known perpetrators, while 40% happened within their home.

Nearly 9 out of 10 husbands abuse their wives in Bangladesh

The nationwide survey titled "Violence Against Women Survey 2011" was conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund.



DV Statistics for Bangladesh in 2011



DV Statistics in Pakistan, UNICEF Report, Sept 2014

Our NGO relationships



Children learning in classroom in Ek Prayas

EK Prayas, Kolkata, India

Ek Prayas school continues to be one of our the IWIn partner in India, houses about 200 children from slums, aged 4-14yrs. The School provides both academic and vocational training in English medium through a systematic curriculum, appropriate to students' specific needs. Breakfast and lunch are provided to the children in school daily, in addition to their school uniforms, textbooks and stationaries - mostly sponsored by generous donors. IWIn is supporting this school in setting up of a Computer Training Centre for the students, starting in the 2014-15 academic year.

Make a difference today!

Sponsors can choose an option as below:

- + Educate a child for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 135 per child) (Inclusive of utility pack)
- + Gift utility pack to children for one year (@ approx. Aus\$ 30 per child)
- + Sponsor a meal for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 50 (Breakfast+ Lunch)
- + Sponsor a breakfast for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 15)
- + Sponsor a lunch for all 200 children (@ approx. Aus\$ 25)



Pazhassi Raja Tribal School, Kerala, India

Pazhassi Raja Tribal School is located at Wayanad in the southern Indian state of Kerala. It is a residential school for tribal children who are among the most neglected community – providing food, accommodation, and medical needs as well as a full education, completely free of cost to the students.



Children learning archery outdoors at the Pazhassi Raja Tribal School

Wayanad has the highest population of tribal people in Kerala. The tribal people have had no access to education any time in their lives. Today tribal people are exploited as the work force for cash crop estate works like coffee and vanilla, and other illegal activities. Dr. Appanu Nambiar, a retired professor of education, founded this school in 1997 with an objective of providing a safe environment to educate the tribal children to adapt to modern day challenges and still retain their age-old cultural customs. The school that started with 41 students has more than 250 students now.

The school is following the 'Gurukula' system of education where teachers and students live together as in a family. Agriculture, stitching and tailoring, carpentry work, basket making, book binding, yoga and music are part of the school syllabus. Paddy, pulses, bananas and vegetables are cultivated by students and teachers. Significant change has come in the attitudes of the tribal community towards education and

health care. Senior students participate in rural development activities of the area.

Both boys and girls are also taught traditional martial arts for self-defense and psychological self-development. As a practical idealist, Dr. Nambiar knows the day-to-day side of life these children will face in the real world and feels teaching self-defense skills as important as the standard curriculum. The school started with 40 boys and just one girl. Today, out of 250 students, 129 of them are girls, while boys number at 121.

Another significant change that happened is about the caste system mindset which exists among the tribal people. During the initial days of the school, the divisions based on the caste were very evident among students. Students of the 'so called' upper caste did not interact or eat with the rest of the students, reflecting their family customs. Significant progress has been made in this aspect.



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WISHING ALL PATRONS AND FRIENDS



WE HOPE YOU HAVE
A WONDERFUL YEAR AHEAD
with your near and dear ones and
STAY SAFE, PROSPEROUS & HEALTHY

Please consider donating to IWIn Fund for its NGO partners
providing free education to disadvantaged children

Initiatives For Women In Need (IWIn) NEWSLETTER Vol 4 Dec 2015, Issue 4

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