

Is the Festival Of Holi Gender Biased?

"Mom I am going out to play holi with my friends. I might come late."-Lakshya started his bike and left. The sound of bullet alarmed entire colony.

Megha, Lakshya's sister came to the porch to see her brother leaving, her mother called her in and asked to stay behind the window. "Mom, why cannot I go out and play with my friends."-Megha asked with sad face.

"It is not safe for girls."-her mother told while cleaning the dining table.

Lakshya took sweet boxes with him and a packet of color to enjoy the day with his friends. On the other hand Megha stayed home and helped her mother clean the house which brother and his friends left messy.

"But I could go with brother? I was safe with him. Or he does not want to take a responsibility and ruin his day looking after me?"

Mother did not say anything. Perhaps she had nothing to say. She went into the kitchen with dirty dishes.

Megha had to stay at home and help her mother with the daily chores.

According to a famous traveler on instagram-"Holi is an excuse for molesting women in Vrindavan. I am appalled to hear what trauma women go through on the name of culture and tradition. Young men in Nandgaon, UP, follow old-age tradition where Krishna would tease Radha and her friends on Holi and many stories and songs were written about them, but I am sure Krishna never grabbed, groped and outraged the modesty of Radha and her friends."

I also want to ask brothers/husbands/male friends, are not you confident enough to take your sisters and female friends out with you to play holi and ensure they are safe and happy. You do not actually have to take us out with you. We can have our own little party, but at least deal noble with us.

Since childhood I have seen holi from my window. Even if there is an event of holi in the society where both the genders are welcome, a crap incident will ruin the party.

I called my male colleague for some official work and asked in the end, what is your holi plan? on which he said, "We are going to Jagdish Chowk to play holi. Female foreigners enjoy playing holi with us. We are allowed to hug them and they do not bother."-and then he giggled over phone.

On Holi, in Udaipur, not a single woman is seen outside her house. There is the noise of bullets and clamor of boys screaming loud while scaling all the streets. So, the festival of holi is for whom? I do not know about your answer, but my answer is 'boys'.

Cultures of India Nepal are closely related- Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



Spiritual leaders' founder of Art of Living Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti Jain Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni, President of All India Imam Organisation Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi and President of Mahabaudhi International Buddha Bhikshu Sanghsena in a meeting with Prime Minister Nepal Shri Pushp Dahal Kamal invoked Indo Nepal friendship and discussed the issue in detail.

Welcoming leaders of different religion Prime Minister Shri Pushp Dahal Kamal said that this historical meeting will encourage Indo Nepal friendship. This will strengthen the cultural, spiritual, religious and economic unity of India and Nepal.

Eminent Jain Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni said that peace is necessary for development. It is also important that all the sections of the society should develop together. Poverty and deprivation is one of the major factors which lead to violence and terrorism. India and Nepal should together fight with poverty and deprivation.

Eminent Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said that Cultural and Spiritual heritage of India and Nepal are closely related. Together India and Nepal can regenerate this heritage and spread it in the world. India and Nepal have many similarities from the point of view of history, art, religion etc. Together we can give important contribution towards establishing world peace and harmony.

International Buddha Bhikshu Sanghsena said that Bhagwan Buddha was born in Nepal and he gave the message of humanity in India and took it to the world. Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi said that religion and culture has important contribution in economic development. Religious unity can lead to economic development.

Relief to Sonu Kunwar

Udaipur: A student of 10th standard allowed to sit in the board exams after the court issued orders to the school.

Civil Judge-South Sweta Sharma issued orders to the Principal of Gyan Mandir Senior Secondary School and District Education Officer to allow the student Sonu Kunwar, D/O Chandan Singh Sarangdevot resident of Gundia Bheru, to appear for her Board exams. The student's mother had sought help from the court in this matter.

Director of Education Department, Assistant Director and Secretary of the Board of Secondary education were the accused as per the report. As per the allegation, Sonu Kunwar was not able to attend school because of a severe injury in her foot. On recovery, she had presented a 45 day medical fitness certificate from the Maharana Bhupal Hospital.

Board exams for 10th and 8th began on 9th March with English paper. There were 38 thousand students on 183 centres for 10thBoard exams , 45224 students on 223 centres for 8th Board exams and 3329 students for 12th Board exams on 8 examination centres.

Students who were not able to submit online forms can go to the nearest DIET centre or the nearest examination centre and fill in the applications. Roll numbers will be given to the students from DIET on the spot, said DIET Principal Om Babu Vyas.

FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS IN LAKE CITY

Ashok Mathur

Lake City is thronged by a huge number of visitors from within the country as well as abroad. Some visit it for its scenic beauty while others are attracted by its valient past. Its unique rich heritage and religious places have a special charm for some others. However, lesser noticed are small groups of volunteers from distant lands who come here to work with some NGOs to gain more experience and return home to benefit their people with the newly acquired knowledge and skills. It would be fascinating to meet with some volunteers.

Emily Davidson who hails from Arlington Heights, USA is studying Political Science and Legal Studies (majors) and Global Health (minor) at Northwestern University. She has worked in Northwestern Study Abroad Office and as Crate and Barrel Sales Associate, Seasonal Caretaker, and Soccer Referee. Her desire for exploration and immersion in Indian culture brought her to Udaipur. As also working on women's empowerment in a traditionally-patriarchal culture. Her group spent four days a week in the Kherwara field office, and from there travelled to different villages every

day to interview girls to compile a group of case studies that represent the stories of girls involved in the program who have endured noteworthy struggles. The collection of case studies could be used for future information-gathering, applying for grants, and inspiring other girls in the program.

Emily says that through her experience in a new culture, she learnt several skills and she would use them to make an impact on her community because there are issues there that need to be addressed. Additionally, she hopes that her interaction with an entirely new culture and community would guide her in her future endeavours, as she wants to pursue a career in international law or global health, where these

skills would be very applicable.

Emily adds that interviewing the girls was so eye-opening. There were vast differences of issues (whether it was early marriage, dropping out, or seasonal work migration) between villages, and even within each village based on the family of each girl. Getting to know the sector coordinators in Kherwara, was a great experience in itself. They were all so helpful when it came to their project, and when they were doing other things after our serious presentations (like card tricks), they really got to know them on a friendly level.

Jacob Salomon from Burbank, California (Los Angeles County), USA pursued a course in Biomedical Engineering and a Minor in Global Health Studies from Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois, USA). He has previously worked with other community-based organizations, especially in connecting people to health resources/information and in increasing awareness around issues of health equity.

Salomon chose Udaipur because many of the NGOs here do work that was related to his interests. Also, he was drawn to Udaipur and Rajasthan due to the culture and history of the area. He feels that generally, working in another country with a different culture would be greatly beneficial in the future. Hearing stories directly from adolescent girls, their family, and other community members about their struggles, triumphs, and daily experiences challenged and expanded his perspective. He would take back with him what he has learned from the stories along with the experiences relating to grassroots field work and interventions working to improve social and health outcomes in a community.

He adds that it was especially interesting to hear about the reasons many girls had to

leave school (financial burden, lack of support from family, demotivation from peers dropping out, etc.). Also, it was interesting to learn about the stories of girls who had internally motivated themselves to reenroll in school and to encourage their peers/family members to also continue their education.

Itzel Ivania Rosillo Robles, who holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations came to Udaipur to have a rich intercultural exposure and gain experience on Social Development by getting involved in different projects of Seva Mandir.

She says that in Udaipur she had the chance to interact with local population, and other international volunteers, which allowed her to learn from other people's perspectives and approaches to social issues. She also gained greater respect for both, other cultures and her own culture, as she had diversified her thoughts and values and reached a new understanding of her own cultural heritage. She also tested her ability to adapt to different contexts and showed willingness to face challenges and fears. Having these skills would be a huge asset while applying for further academic degrees and jobs. About some of her interesting experiences in Udaipur, Robles says that the most interesting moments were when she was working in the field, collecting data for studies, since it brought her closer to a lifestyle and reality that she was not familiar to before. Exploring the city itself was an amazing experience since it's a beautiful, easy going place to live. She adds that Udaipur is full of warm, helpful, welcoming people everywhere that made her feel like home. Willing to meet new people, usually led to great conversations about absolutely different lifestyles and experiences. These conversations of course came with a great 'chai' cup and delicious meals that



were a great experience itself. MSc Social Anthropology from London School of Economics, Laerke Blom Madsen came to Udaipur to volunteer for Seva Mandir, because it promotes a participatory approach to rights and development. Back home she works for the Village Institution Program, which is at the core of this approach.

Her stay in Udaipur would benefit her work back home as having previously worked with refugees' rights in Denmark, she would return to this field with new perspectives on direct democracy and facilitating access to rights. Madsen says that as she spent most of her time doing fieldwork south of Udaipur, the most interesting experiences in the city itself were the everyday encounters and getting to know the local community in Fatehpura, where Seva Mandir is based. She loved the bustle of Fatehsagar in the evenings, the early morning climb to Nimach Mata, daily heckling at the vegetable stands and drinking 'chai' on the corner.

She feels that she has been lucky to be in Udaipur for both Holi and the Gangaur Mewar Festival, which was both joyous and vibrant. The old city was breathtaking and she never tired of watching the sunsets over Lake Pichola or roaming the little streets, but it was the friendliness of the people in Udaipur, which made her feel at home instantly.

Aranzazu Martinez Galeana, Bachelor in International Relations, says that her main purpose was to come and volunteer at Seva Mandir and staying in such a wonderful and beautiful city was an unexpected gift. Her work in Udaipur would benefit her back home as she got more experience in the social development sector and a more accurate perspective of the challenges, strengths and obstacles that need to be overcome in the field.

Besides the professional goals, living in this country was a personal aim so it certainly has given her a deeper insight about Indian culture and society making her more able to adapt to different situations and environments. About her interesting experiences in Udaipur, Galeana says that the time she needed to get used to the city was surprisingly short and it made her feel at home easily. Her family and friends were constantly jealous every time she sent them a picture of the places she loved here. And that was quite often, she concludes.

A mechanical engineering and economics student at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, USA, Maria Elena Perez who hails from Panama City, came to Seva Mandir as she wanted to work in the field of women empowerment. She wants to use her experience here to get more understanding of other NGOs

working on such issues in Latin America and also how partners such as UNFPA work with local NGOs. Her most interesting experiences during her Indian stay included working in the field and visiting girls at their home and interviewing them as also working with the field staff.

Chicago based Leon Downs, who is studying history and international studies as majors at Northwestern University has experience of working as Concert Operations Manager and Clerical Aide.

For purposes of exploration and cultural immersion, she chose to come to Udaipur where she is compiling case studies for an adolescent girls programme. She thinks that her greater capacity for inter-cultural exchange and ability to adapt to new environments would help her in using her learning back home.

Downs feels that interviewing all sorts of girls and learning about their lives and aspirations helped her learn to put things into perspective and reassess her own privileges.

She adds that learning about and getting to know the sector coordinators who made her time in the village very interactive was full of fun.

The visits of foreign volunteers result in a win win situation for them as they get learning opportunity, as well as for Udaipur where people benefit by their services.

Over 400 Students & Budding Entrepreneurs Participates At Empresario 2017



Ahmedabad, EMPRESARIO, the annual flagship event at Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) kicked off on March 9 at EDII Ahmedabad campus. The event is organised by the EDII every year, and is an exclusive, one-stop platform for start-ups, new-age entrepreneurs, industry mentors, investors and students to dish out their entrepreneurial endeavours and experiences, gain new insights and pledge to become an invaluable part of the ever-flourishing start-up ecosystem in India.

Over 400 students and budding entrepreneurs will participate over two days in brain storming sessions on entrepreneurs. About 150 start-ups will share their business ideas, which will be evaluated by experts, entrepreneurs, angel investors and faculty of EDII.

The two-day event was inaugurated amid fervour and enthusiasm by Mr. Dinesh Yadav, CEO, Arvind Accel Limited. EMPRESARIO was first launched in 2012 and has since then went on to emerge as one of the largest entrepreneurship fests celebrated in India. Held over two days every February, the fest witnesses thousands of participants from every part of the country. The focus this year is on fostering the start-up ecosystem of Gujarat as well as India.

This will be brought into action by supporting and collaborating with ideas and start-ups of high-performing businesses, foundations, investors and individuals who are delivering solutions with market-oriented approaches for global development. The event will help

start-ups turn their ideas into viable businesses.

The theme of this year is Escalating Growth of Start-up Ecosystem while the sectors in focus are healthcare, artificial intelligence, IoT, augmented reality, virtual reality, food & water, education, MSMEs, fintech, manufacturing, e-commerce, travel & tourism, on-demand services, agribusiness, waste-tech & renewable energy, analytics & big data, Software as a Service (SaaS) and security marketplace.

Mr Bipin Shah, Senior Faculty, EDII welcomed the guests and gave a brief introduction of the fest. He said, "EMPRESARIO is in its sixth edition this year. Akin to previous editions, this year too, the line-up of events is well suited to lay more emphasis on start-ups. The interactions with various speakers and mentoring sessions will give the necessary fillip to the start-up environment."

Mr. Dinesh Yadav, chief guest for the occasion, remarked, "In this age of new technologies, youth entrepreneurship can lead to global progress. With start-up ecosystem in focus, young entrepreneurs are dominating the landscape everywhere. Youths must reach their

full potential and that is where being in Gujarat, the land of entrepreneurship, and EDII, a place where start-ups mushroom, helps." Mr. Yadav added that more start-ups should focus on healthcare, food, solid waste management and environment. Encouraging more youngsters to take up entrepreneurship, he added that an entrepreneur has access to a vast set of resources, has network and can be a job creator. All of this helps one to not only achieve own objectives but also meet the needs of the society. Mr. Mayank Patel, Faculty, EDII while proposing a vote of thanks said, "Youths are well versed with technologies. And, a start-up is a place which brings together the technology and youths. Hence, the sector rightly deserves attention and EMPRESARIO attempts the same."

EMPRESARIO will create value among all those who are associated with the start-up ecosystem directly or indirectly. This time the focus will be to provide 'Prototype Funding' to 25+ start-ups through EDII's partnership and to make funds available to these early and growth-stage start-ups through the institute's network of venture capitalists.

Belan Brigade handed over a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner



Ludhiana: Today on occasion of International Women Day Belan Brigade handed over a memorandum written in the name of Prime Minister of India in which demanded that the murder of Mata Chand Kaur and born a baby to eleven year old girl is shame to government on the celebration of women day.

On this occasion president of Belan Brigade Architect Anita Sharma has asserted that Indian women are still deprived of their basic rights in the society in spite of living in 21st century. Now the time is come that we leave the old narrow mindedness attitude and fight for our rights in the new century. Also, we have to show this to the world that womanhood is a great strength rather than a weakness because she gives to the male as well after having the baby in womb for nine months. So, therefore, she is not weak at all.

Anita Sharma holds the point of view that the present computer era has given us much exposure to the whole world and we can watch whatever is happening around the world sitting at the home. However, it is quite unfortunate that unlike the western countries which have law and order, good sources of employment and safety for the citizens, Indian people suffer from unsafe lifestyle, illiteracy, old orthodox traditions and values and greed. In this situation we cannot move ahead like western countries. On the flip side, Indian women have become insecure due to internet as many Indian males are indulging into crimes against women such as molestation and rapes as a result of watching porn videos and naked pictures of females.

The entire Police administration and judicial system is ruled by corruption redtapism and mafia. Females are treated disgracefully everywhere in the society. Their Plight is like a cry in the wilderness. They are referred to as "Jugni and Maa di Mombatti" in the songs to make fun of them. They are presented as a sexual object in the movies and TV programs which is a sheer insult to them.

Anita Sharma has commented that the time has come that females have to show their power to the world and get the opportunity to participate in the development in the country and enjoy equal rights with males. Also, usage of Vulgar lyrics in songs against the women character should be banned. Girls should get self defense training such as karate etc. so that they get rid of the feeling of insecurity and be able to protect themselves.