



Jagbir Singh <s.jagbir@gmail.com>

HALF THE SKY: oppression of women worldwide is "the paramount moral challenge" of the present era

1 message

Jagbir Singh <s.jagbir@gmail.com>
To: Jagbir Singh <s.jagbir@gmail.com>

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To all,

With the recent (now deleted) beer-porn post by Jessy Kabir it is obvious that Punjabis have this macho culture that glorifies chest-thumping manliness, all you can drink bravado that obviously is glorified in Malaysia (and Punjab, and Ottawa and Toronto and Vancouver).

Just two weeks back I had a conversation with Lalita that touched this subject. According to her friends Punjabi men are unbelievably macho. They have girlfriends that, if they are not drinking with them, are obedient pets to be stroked between swigs of beer and an occasional high THC bud.

So it is not surprising that Jessy Kabir loved beer as much as semi-nudes in saris. Must be a cultural fetish, that sari. (I wonder if Jessy has a sister or wife. I will not say "mother" because he obviously has by reason of existence.)

Obviously, Punjabis are not into HALF THE SKY, included their women. Most do not have a clue in spite of living in a digital world of instant answers of a Google search. The instant gratification of Facebook, Whatsapp and Tik Tok gossip does give a rush. *Aadat se majboor*.

(*Aadat se majboor* means someone who is compelled to do something due to a habit. It's something that is given as an excuse many times when people do wrong things out of habit. In short, there is no time for HALF THE SKY issues because so much effort is spent verifying and cross-examining the salivating facts of gossip.)

But Lalita planted that seed in my mind many years ago when she bought *HALF THE SKY: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity For Women Worldwide* which won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 2009.

"*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* is a nonfiction book by husband and wife team Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn published by Knopf in September 2009. **The book argues that the oppression of women worldwide is "the paramount moral challenge" of the present era, much as the fight against slavery was in the past.** The title comes from the pithy statement of Mao Zedong "妇女能顶半边天" meaning "women hold up half the sky"."

Carolyn See, a book critic from *The Washington Post*, said in her review: "'Half the Sky' is a call to arms, a call for help, a call for contributions, but also a call for volunteers. It asks us to open our eyes to this enormous humanitarian issue. It does so with exquisitely crafted prose and sensationally interesting material....I really do think this is one of the most important books I have ever reviewed."

Documentary

"In October 2012, the PBS television series Independent Lens presented a documentary based on the book as a two-night special. The film follows the book's authors and celebrity advocates America Ferrera, Diane Lane, Eva Mendes, Meg Ryan, Gabrielle Union, and Olivia Wilde to a couple of developing countries: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kenya, India, Liberia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Vietnam. In each country, the film introduces women and girls bravely fighting to rise above very difficult circumstances. Their stories expose the blight caused by sex trafficking, forced prostitution, maternal mortality, and gender-based violence as the authors propose that micro-finance and female education can help.

The six actresses travel to different countries to observe the mistreatment of women, physically and psychologically. The actresses and Kristof visited organizations that gave opportunities to women that are often overlooked and maltreated. They also met the victims of sex trafficking, child labor, sexual violence and genital mutilation. Most of these women/young girls did not obtain an education and some had been abducted from their families. **Throughout the documentary it is evident how men in women's lives always have the upper-hand, whether it is shown through support from the community towards them or the corrupt legal system in these countries.**

This documentary shows the serious issue of violence against women's bodies. India has the biggest trafficking problem in the world. **Because of the caste system, many women are taught to accept their fate instead of protecting their value of life.** Many of the girls are sold to brothels because their parents could not afford supporting them or use them to pay debts. These girls' living conditions are dreadful. Doors are locked from the outside, and the room is small, dark and dirty. They were treated as objects, raped and sexually abused by men. Diseases were transmitted to their bodies; however, they had no say to their bodies. They get HIV and AIDS because condoms are not provided and they take several clients in a single day. ...

One of the serious issues that was found in Somaliland is female genital mutilation. The birth attendants, in the documentary, told Kristof that once they know the practice would risk women's health and bodies, so they stop exercising it. However, they find out the truth that one of them actually cut her own daughter. Girls do not have control over their bodies. **They are taught that genital mutilation is the practice for females, and when they become mothers, they do the same to their daughters."**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Half_the_Sky

More than a decade later HALF THE SKY means a lot to me because I have a daughter, a grand-daughter and another arriving next month.

The present-day "Half the Sky focuses on prostitution, rape, education, maternal mortality, genital mutilation, micro-credit, and solutions in developing countries."

But HALF THE SKY has always been divine since time immemorial. For me, this forum and future websites are the first few steps of a ten-thousand-mile journey to make Lalita, Malika and all daughters worldwide divine. For that, they need an excellent education and a life free of drugs, alcohol, race, and religion.

They will need fathers willing to invest their lives in making Nature the Mother that gives birth to all.

And grandparents seeking to usher that future of the Aykaa Mayee (One Mother) of all humanity! It is such a beautiful journey of hope, joy, love, peace, purpose. My grandkids must know we humans are immortal souls on a journey back Home, and that there is no death. They must know that Earth is not a one-night-stand that destroys so much today.

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regards,

jagbir