TALES
from the
CRYPT
'கல்லறையின்'
கதைகள்

Produced by:

Women and Media Collective (WMC)
56/1, Sarasavi Lane, Castle Street, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka.
Email: wmcsrilanka@womenandmedia.org
Facebook: Women and Media Collective
Twitter: @womenandmedia
Website: https://womenandmedia.org/

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
P.O. Box 29755, Melville, 2109, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Telefax: +27117261692
Email: info@apc.org
Facebook: APCnews
Twitter: @APC_news
Website: https://www.apc.org/

Illustrators

Sharya Wickramesooriya (Instagram: @sharyawick)
Kinara Dissanayake (Instagram: @psychoterpillar)
Gabrielle Philips (Instagram: @akascribblefox)
Shenuka Corea (Instagram: @baka.moona)
Akiel Surajdeen (Instagram: @herearepixels)

Cover design: Sharya Wickramesooriya

2020

Being single in Sri lanka 06

சிறிய வயதில் பெரிய இடத்து சம்மந்தம் **09**

Sexual harassment in the workplace 14

Lucky? 17

Attention, affection, reality, sex 21

Why I'm Leaving 24

Romance, relationships and abuse 32

My friend wrote a poem about me once 35

Experiences of traNS women in Jaffna 39

Love in the modern world 42

LIberating Love 45

Gaslighting the Intersectional environmentalist 49

Relationships and love 55

I wonder if I'll kill myself 59

Sexual Harassment in public transport 64

Consent, coercion and compliance 78

Discrimination of People Living with HIV in Sri Lanka 83

முடங்கிப் போன முதிர் கன்னி!!!!!! **86**

online violence faced by the LGBTQI community 91

Accountability and gratitude 94

I was Assaulted 106

sex work in Sri lanka 117

Paper Dolls 121

Stigma faced by faceless muslim women on facebook 124

women and media 127

"Single" is no longer a lack of options, but a choice 130

We are sometimes denied the space to share our stories by society, our communities and our families. We wanted to create a safe space for people to share their experiences, thoughts, fears and dreams. To have an outlet to share their own stories, in their own words and to be able to find a sense of belonging regardless of different backgrounds, experiences or choices.

"Tales from the crypt" is a collection of Tamil and English stories, poems and photographs on life, love, courage and healing.

We'd like to thank all the beautiful souls who shared their stories on their body and the self with us.

Healing and self care can come in many forms. Exercising your voice and agency is one such form. As is finding a sense of visibility and comfort in reading stories that mirror your own.

சில சமயங்களில் எம் சமூகமும், எம் சூழ்நிலையும், எம் குடும்பமும் எங்கள் கதைகளை நாங்கள் பகிர்வதற்கான சூழலையும் சந்தர்ப்பத்தையும் மறுக்க கூடும். தம் அனுபவங்களையும், எண்ணங்களையும், கவலைகளையும், எதிர்பார்ப்புகளையும் பகிர்வதற்கு ஒரு பாதுகாப்பான சூழலை நாம் அமைக்க முற்பட்டோம். வெவ்வேறு கலாச்சாரங்களில் இருந்தும் சூழ்நிலைகளில் இருந்தும் நாம் வந்தாலும், அனைவரும் தம் கதையை தம் சொந்த வார்த்தைகளில் பகிர்வதன் மூலம், புரிந்துணர்வினை உருவாக்க முடியும் என நம்புகிறோம்.

"Tales from the Crypt" (கல்லறையின் கதைகள்) வாழ்க்கை, காதல், பொறுமை, சக்தி மற்றும் ஆறுதல் பற்றி தமிழ் மற்றும் ஆங்கிலத்தில் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட கதைகள், கவிதைகள் மற்றும் ஒவியங்கள் ஆகும்.

தம் கதைகளையும் உணர்வுகளையும் எங்களுடன் பகிர்ந்து கொண்ட அனைவருக்கும் எம் மனமார்ந்த நன்றிகள். இந்த கதைகள் சித்திரப்படுத்திய திறமையான ஒவியர்களுக்கு எம் நன்றிகள்.

சுய ஆறுதல் மற்றும் சுய அக்கறை என்பது பல வடிவங்களில் உருவாகலாம். உங்கள் குரலில் உங்கள் கதையை உரிமையுடன் கூறுவது உங்களின் உணர்ச்சிகளுக்கு இடம் கொடுக்கும் ஒரு முறையாகும். பிறரின் கதைகளில் உங்களை அடையாளம் காணுவதும் உங்களுக்கு உதவக் கூடும்.

Being single in Sri Lanka

NADEERA
WIJERATNE

I am currently 30 years old and have been single my whole life. I made the decision to be single when I was 14 years old and no it was not prompted because of a failed relationship and no it wasn't because my heart was broken, two questions that I'm constantly asked by people when I tell them I'm single.

To be single in a country like Sri Lanka is not easy. The social convention is to marry at an early age. My mother got married when she was 23 and had me when she was 25.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILLIPS

So, imagine the gasps and the questions that one gets when you say you are single and don't have a boyfriend in Sri Lanka.

My family and friends have tried to set me up with many respectable/non respectable, suitable/not suitable suitors from time to time but I have always stood my ground on the decision I made. I have found out that it has been one of the best life decisions I have made. I remember when I first proclaimed that I was going to stay unwed, someone very close to me said "this is a very important decision, but it's your decision so stay strong and don't let others phase you by their convictions.

You will meet married people, people with children but if you are going to get sadden by it and rattled by it, then this not a decision that you should make, but if you can be genuinely happy and excited for them unphased then this is a decision for you". One of the best advices I have got in my whole life. Your life is what you create, decisions you made, but we need to be confident in the decisions that we make, stand by them, and I have found out that it makes life so much easier. Whether you are married or not, if you are confident and happy that is all that matters. Yes stigma, discrimination and weird looks will always be there but your confidence and self -worth remains important above all.

சிறிய வயதில் பெரிய இடத்து சம்மந்தம்

RASHIDA SADURDEEN

யுவதிகளின் நலன் கருதி சிறுவயதில் பெண் பிள்ளைகளை திருமணம் செய்து கொடுக்கும் பெற்றோரை விழிப்புணர்வூட்டும் வகையில் அனுபவப்பூர்வமான இந்த ஆக்கத்தை

சமர்ப்பிக்கின்றேன்.

எனது குடும்பத்தைச் சேர்ந்த 18 வயதான சகோதரி சம்ரா. (பெயர் மாற்றம் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.) வீட்டில் மூத்தவள், அவளுக்குப் பின் 3 சகோதரிகள்.குடும்பத்தின் பொருளாதார நெருக்கடியால் க.பொ.த.சா.த பரீட்சை எழுதியதிலிருந்து அவளின் சம்மதமின்றி திருமணப் பேச்சை தொடங்கியதால் உயர்கல்வி கற்கும் கனவை அவள் யாரிடமும் பகிர்ந்து கொள்ளவில்லை. சில வருடங்களின் பின் அவர்களின் ஊரிலேயே நல்ல குடும்பத்தைச் சேர்ந்த செல்வந்தரின் மகனுக்கு வரன் பேசவே சற்றும் யோசிக்காமல் சம்ராவை அந்த குடும்பத்தில் கட்டிக் கொடுக்க சம்மதம் தெரிவித்தனர். மாப்பிள்ளைக்கும் அவளுக்கும் 11 வருட இடைவெளியென்றாலும் பெரிய இடத்து வாழ்க்கை என வேறு வழியின்றி சம்மதித்தாள்.

மாப்பிள்ளை வீட்டினர் அவசரப்படுத்தவே பெண் பார்த்து ஒரு மாதத்தில் திருமணம் கோலாகலமாக நடைபெற்றது. இனிதாக வாழ்க்கை ஆரம்பித்து சில மாதங்களில் கணவனின் நடத்தையில் பல மாற்றங்களை உணர்ந்தாள். தொழில் ஏதுமின்றி பெற்றோரின் பணத்தில் மது அருந்துவதும், பெண்களை பாலியல் வன்முறைக்குற்படுத்தும் பாதகர்களுடன் நட்பு வைத்துள்ளமையும் unknown numberல் வந்த அழைப்பில் பேசிய நபரால் கூறப்பட்டதை ஆரம்பத்தில்

நம்பவில்லையென்றாலும் காலப்போக்கில் அந்த உண்மைகளை உணர்ந்தாள்.

இந்நிலையில் கணவனின் சுயரூபத்தை அவனின் தாயிடம் கூற,மகனுக்கு சார்பாக பேசி இவளை சமாதானப்படுத்தி சம்ராவை தாய் வீட்டுக்கு அனுப்பவே அங்கு அவள் கர்ப்பமாக இருக்கும் விடயம் தெரிய வந்தது. சிறு மகிழ்ச்சியிருந்தாலும் தாயிடம் தனது கணவனின் சுயரூபத்தையும், இவள் படும் கொடுமைகளையும் கூற, எல்லாத் தாய்மாரையும் போல இந்த தாயும்.."அதெல்லாம் கணக்கெடுக்கப்படாது, வாழ்க்கை என்டா அப்பிடி இப்பிடி தான் இருக்கும், நீங்க தான் அவரைத் திருத்தனும், புள்ளயொன்டாவினா எல்லாம் சரியாவிடும் அவருக்கு பொறுப்பும் வந்துடும் இதெல்லாம் பெரிசா யோசிக்க வானம்," என மனமுடைந்த மகளுக்கு ஆறுதல் கூறினாள்.

சம்ரா மதுப்பாவனையின் விபரீதங்களை அன்பான முறையில் கூறி திருத்த முற்பட அவன் கையிலிருந்த drug தூளைக்காட்டி"நான் இப்பிடி தான் இருப்பேன், எனக்கு advice பன்ற அளவுக்கு நீ பெரிய படிப்பு படிச்சவள் இல்ல" என அவளின் மனம் நோகக் கதைத்ததால் அந்த முயற்சியையும் கைவிட்டாள். இவளின் இந்த பிரச்சினைக்கு யாரும் செவி சாய்க்காததால் மனக்கவலையுடன் வெளியில் சிரித்துக் கொண்டே காலம் பதில் சொல்லும் என வாழ்ந்தாள்.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILIPS

இதுவே இன்றைய சமூகத்தில் வாழும் அனேகமான பெண்களின் நிலை.

அவளின் வாழ்க்கை போராட்டத்தின் மத்தியில் குழந்தையும் பிறந்தது. சொந்த குழந்தையைப் பார்க்க விரும்பாத அவனின் சுயரூபம் அன்று தான் வெளிச்சம் போட்டுக் காட்டப்பட்டது. எனவே சிறிய வயதில் பெரிய இடத்து சம்மந்தம் என ஏமாற்றம் அடைந்து திருமணம் செய்து வைத்த சம்ராவின் பெற்றோராலே அவளுக்கு விவாகரத்து பெற்றுக் கொடுக்க நேர்ந்தது.

பணக்கார வீட்டு சம்மந்தம் பறிபோய்விடக் கூடாது என தனது பெண் பிள்ளைகளின் வாழ்க்கைக்கு விலைப்பேசும் பெற்றோரே! பக்குவமற்ற வயதில் பருவமடைந்த பெண்கள் திருமணம் செய்வதென்பது நாட்டின் சட்டத்தை மீறும் செயல் என்பதை கவனத்தில் கொண்டு அவர்களின் விறுப்பு, வெறுப்புக்களை அறிந்து அவர்களின் கனவுகளை நனவாக்க இடமளியுங்கள். நாளைய தலைமுறையை உருவாக்கும் அவர்களுக்கு அடுப்பங்கரையை தஞ்சமளிக்காது அவர்களின் கல்விப் பாதைக்கு வழிகாட்டுங்கள்.

sexual harassment in the workplace

PRIYA NADESAN

இன்றைய காலத்தை பொறுத்தமட்டில்
பெண்கள் வேலைக்கு செல்வதென்பது
கட்டாயமானதாக காணப்படுகிறது.
பொருளாதாரத்தை மேம்படுத்திக் கொள்ளவும்,
தமது வாழ்வாதாரத்தை முன்னேற்றிச்
செல்லவும், தமது சொந்தக்கால்களில்

பயணிக்கவும் பெண்கள் வேலைக்கு செல்கிறார்கள். நாட்டினது பொருளாதாரத்தில் 32% வீதமான பங்கு பெண்களாலே ஈடு செய்யப்படுகிறது.

இவ்வாறு இருக்கையில் நாட்டின் ஒவ்வொரு பகுதியிலும் வேலை இடங்களில் பெண்கள் எதிர்நோக்கும் பிரச்சினைகளை யாராவது அறிவார்களா? 29% ஆன பெண்கள் வேலை செய்யும் இடங்களில் பாலியல் துஸ்பிரயோகங்களுக்கு உள்ளாக்கப்படுவதை யாரும் அறிவார்களா? வேலை செய்யும் இடங்களில் முதலாளியிடமோ அல்லது சக ஊழியர்களிடமோ சகயமாக பழகக்கூடிய சூழல் எல்லா இடத்திலும் பெண்களுக்கு உண்டா என்பதே கேள்விக்குறி தான்.

பெண்களுக்கான பாதுகாப்பு கிடைக்கவில்லை என்று பெண்கள் வேலையை வெறுத்தலும் வேலையை விட்டு நிற்றலும் என்றுமே இந்த பிரச்சினைகளுக்கு தீர்வாகிவிடமுடியாது. குடும்ப பெரியவர்களிடமோ, சமூகத்தினரிடமோ , அல்லது சட்ட ரீதியாகவோ இவ்வாறான துன்புறுத்தல்கள் செய்பவர்களுக்கு எதிராக பெண்கள் போராட வேண்டும்.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILIPS

LUCKY?

YOSH PERERA

A day like any other,
I told my cousins,
I'm gay, I like men,
I was just 17,
But I was negotiating,
For what may you ask?
For a cozy place,
A continued presence in their lives...
I grew up thinking,
My family would hate me,
My friends would ignore me,
My community would disrespect me,
My culture would erase me,
I grew up knowing,

Some of these things,
Would come true...
I'm lucky, I think,
I've navigated 3 decades,
On 3 continents,
Dating more than 3 dudes,
With confidence, courage and compassion.
I'm lucky, I believe,
I've come out to friends,
I came out to family,
I work toward queer liberation,
& fight for representation...
WHAT A GIG EH?
I'm lucky? Maybe...
What about partnership?

Finding love, all that disney crap I grew up watching,
That game's rigged,
Trapdoors, code names and contracts,
Is anyone lucky? Maybe...

Fighting for a place,
In family? With friends?
In community? In my culture?
Damn, that's a lot of spaces to fight for...
You got time? I got none...
Coming out on the daily,

ILLUSTRATION: YOSH PERERA

Staying out there daily,
To be seen, to be questioned,
To be examined and then validated?
You got time? I honestly don't have any...
I'm tired, I'm exhausted,
I just want to belong to a system,
That respects me, that loves me,
That will want only the best for me.

But to create such a system,
You got to be the one dreaming it.
You got to be the one fighting for it.
You got to be the one re-imagining it.
More time, more energy,
You got time? I'll make the time..
Cause every queer matters,
They matter to me,
& they should matter to you...

attention, affection, reality, sex

SHAI PRASAD

நரகத்தின் உலகிது

அசைவ ஆண்மைக்கு உணவாகும்

பெண் பூக்கள்....

தேனீக்களை கூட அனுமதிக்கா

அந்தரங்கள் வன்புணர்வு

கரையான்களுக்கு இரையாவதும்

நரகத்தின் உலகிது என்பதே.

காமத்தின் மாயை

இருவர் கலவிக்கு மாயமான மாய உடம்பு

இதில் என்ன இலட்சியம்

புகழ்

காதல்

நட்பு

மரணம் நிகழும் வரை வாழ்.....

யதார்த்தம்

யதார்த்த வாழ்வில் இன்பமும்

துன்பமும்

மாற்றத்தின் கால சுழற்சியே...

இன்பத்தை ஏற்கும் மனமே

துன்பத்தையும் கையாள சக்தி கொடு

அ ரவணைப்பு

எல்லோருக்குள்ளுமே குரூரமாய்

இருக்கும் ஒரு மிருகம் உறங்கிக்

கொண்டிருப்பதைப் போலவே;

அரவணைப்புக்காய் ஏங்கும் ஓர் அனாதைக் குழந்தையும்

சேர்ந்தே உறங்கிக் கொண்டிருக்கும்..

சமூக அழுத்தங்களினால் கட்டுண்டு போன

மனமே விழித்திடு

இருளினில் ஒளியை தேட......

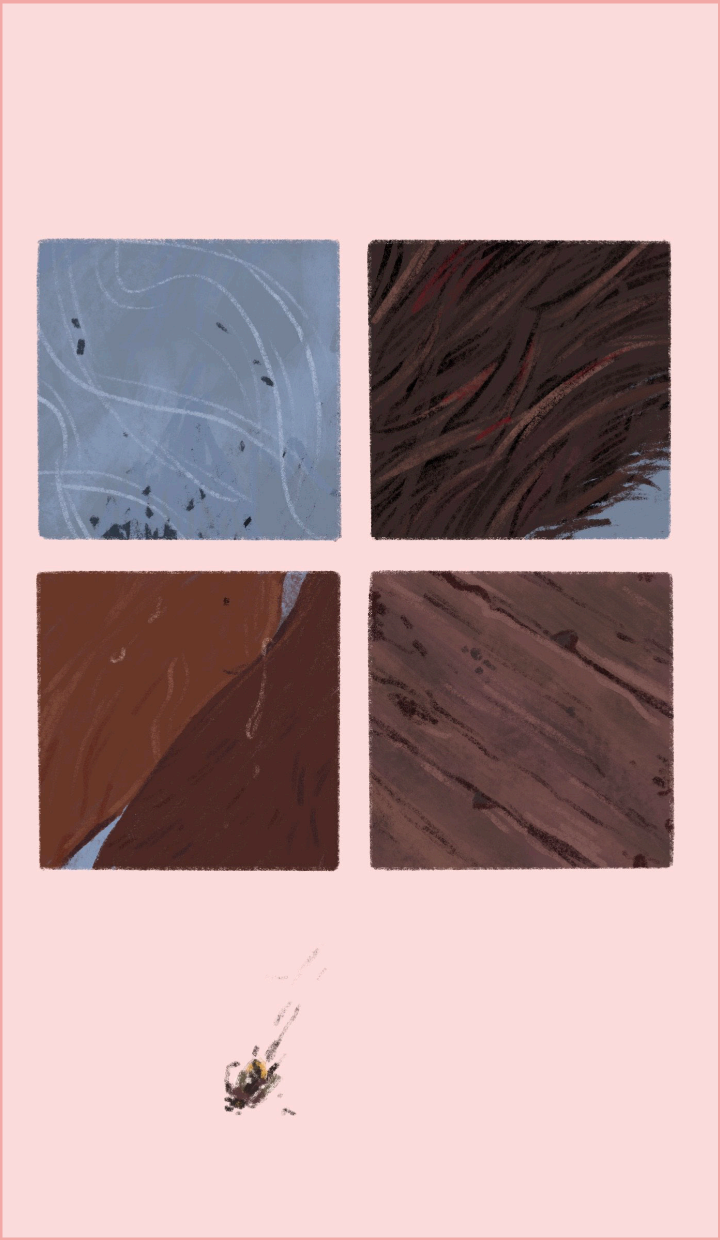


ILLUSTRATION: SHENUKA COREA

Why I'm Leaving

MADDY

1. You have never ever asked me if I have eaten. (That day you dropped me home early and we didn't have dinner, all I had in the night was a cigarette and you told me you were going to have your dinner but you never even asked me about mine) I have bad gastritis, but I don't think you remember that.

2. I was at a party, and a friend of a friend was persistently hitting on me. While I tried to dodge him, I told you this, and you said,

   "What's wrong with him, aren't there any other women there?" I said, "Um, thanks? I guess"

   And you said, "no, NO I mean – you did look really nice in your blue dress–" yeah, okay.

3. You never help carry my things when we walk, my bags, my laptop, sometimes, they're even your things, but however heavy they are you've never offered.

4. You never compliment me – and when you do, they feel like they're either

   a) sarcastic – "no babe, you're definitely the prettiest girl in the whole world"

   b) otherwise motivated – "is my amaaaazing girlfriend mad at me?"

   c) not really about me at all – "that's a nice top, babe"

5. You made fun of your friend, for carrying his girlfriend's heels when her feet hurt, because it was 'emasculating'.

6. You only respect the women you find attractive and it shows.

7. You saw me for the first time in 8 months, and while we were all talking, you turned to your friend's girlfriend (who works out aggressively, whom I had just met btw) and nodded at me and said, "OMG, this one is so lazy! Can't you drag her to the gym with you?"

8. I came to your place that day, you were in a torn t-shirt, mowing the lawn, sweat stains and all, but I complimented you on your haircut. It was the same one you always got,but I liked it.

   I wore a pretty dress that day, and your mother, your brother, even your best friend's girlfriend noticed, and I was so happy they were so nice, because I even had a wax and applied bronzer on my legs, but the only thing you said was 'why do you have these brown scars on your knees babe?'

9. I know I will always be the last errand to tick off your list, and you will always put everybody and everything else before me.

Today I rescheduled what was supposed to be my first therapy session, because we agreed to meet, only to find out I had to wait 3 hours for you, cause you were busy playing golf with your dad, and couldn't even call me during your cigarette break to let me know you were going to be late.

10. You laughed at some girl's nudes, and called her ugly, even though she's someone we know, cause apparently her tits weren't right. Somehow, that was more acceptable than 'outing' which one of your precious buddies sent them around without her knowing, (cause 'I trust you and all, but honestly babe, he's actually a good guy he just didn't think it would spread like that, babe, I don't want anyone to think badly of him')

11. You told me "Babe, I think aunty F***'s jealous of me, because look at who A***** (his friend) dates and brings home, and look at me" And I was surprised, "Aw, thankyou babe, that's really sweet of you to say"

ILLUSTRATION: SHENUKA COREA

And you said "No no, not because of you darling, but like all the girls he has brought home before have been horrible – like fat and hideous, I mean look at R******" (his friend's current girlfriend)

And I was so hurt, that only when I got home did I grasp that, you just successfully degraded all those women, & gave yourself credit for dating me, while simultaneously robbing me of any good quality, (except of course the fact, i wasn't hideous so, there's that).

12. You can be so caring and so indifferent at the same time. You tell me all the meaningless things your friends are saying on their group chat

    I reply with one word answers

    And I stay up at night wondering why I feel so unfulfilled

13. We went somewhere really fancy for dinner and there I asked you

    "What would you do if you had all the money you wanted?"

And you said, “if I had all the money I wanted, then I’d probably be everywhere on vacations with chicks, places like bondi beach, and miami and just have a mad time, you know?”

I roll my eyes, cause that’s what you expect me to do, and try to not let any hurt show cause I really don’t want you to reassure me again, that you were obviously, just kidding .

14. I told you that my friend gave me a really nice compliment, and you joked saying they probably said that, just to make me feel better, cause I overthink too much, anyway.

    You dropped me home late today, and I still gave you my last lucky cigarette that I’d been saving, cause you were too sleepy to drive, and you said it keeps you awake.

15. You just wished me for our anniversary 5 mins ago and now you’re talking about the new girl your best friend’s started seeing, apparently he’s sent you her nudes and she’s pretty. I ask you to prove it, because I doubted he’d do that, and you send me random pictures and tell me it’s a prank.

I tell you to stop messing around and prove it for real, and you tell me no way, I'd never look at that guy the same way, you don't want me to JUDGE YOU AND BE MAD AT HIM so no, you won't send.

We go back and forth, but it turns out you were "joking" and 'they were just two average harmless pictures, but she's still pretty, so he's a lucky guy, huh babe?"

16. Because despite it being such a mess,

I'm still thinking about the point of all this stress,

2 am, calculating whether I should leave,

Reasoning "Well at least he doesn't lie to me, or cheat?"

So I'm up, typing this in my notes,

and thinkin about all your god awful 'jokes'

without even a fucking cigarette to make it go away and why?

Because I fucking gave it to you.

Romance, relationships and abuse

THARINDHI DEVASURENDRA

I want to write about you the way the heartbroken lover speaks of his only heartbreak. I want to write about you the way the artist yearns for his long lost muse that he keep searching for around every corner. I want to sing about you the way the drunk man sings outside the bar at 2AM. I want to need you so desperately the way a woman does when she doesn't

ILLUSTRATION: KINARA DISSANAYAKE

recognize her abuser. I want to reach for your body and hold your soul the way an Emily Bronte novel makes you yearn for love you've never felt. I want to lay beside you and soak up your life to never forget the way your existence touched me: and I want to let you go in a way that it shreds my conscience to pieces, never to be fixed again in a lifetime. And I want you to haunt me in a way that I live through you, without you, but within you.

CONTENT WARNING ASSAULT

My friend wrote a poem about me once

AQUILAH ABDEEN

My friend wrote a poem about me once

Compared me to everything beautiful

Everything sexy and intelligent under the sun

He was not my lover

Yet He loved me like I'd love the One

When I was murdered alive
With my dressed hitched up high
In dazed oblivion
I woke up knowing I would die
If I realised why
my top was undone

So I sobbed and I fought
Like it was I who had not died
But a friend wronged instead
It was in my nature to be more loyal to a friend than myself

In flashes I'd remember
All the things that December
On my birthday
Of all days
Time of death : ?

Did you know 4 rapes are reported in Sri Lanka every day?

But this is poem is for the ones who didn't report, couldn't report, can't report:

Because:

Little girl remember the many dreams dreamt for you,
Remember the tears wept, the pain bore,

for the life you have now.

Little girl remember to conceal your pain,

and paint a smile across your face,

because little girl nothing can be not-okay when everything

was arranged for you.

Little girl smile and be chirpier,

when you answer the phone don't let your anxiety bubble through the cord,

because little girl depression is a mental illness,

and no child of mine will be called insane.

Little girl remember,

remember, the dreams dreamt for you.

Change starts at home.

ILLUSTRATION: SHARYA WICKRAMESOORIYA

EXPERIENCES OF TRANS WOMEN IN JAFFNA

SUMITHY THANGARASA

உலகலாவிய ரீதியில் மாற்றுப் பாலினத்தவர்கள் தொடர்பில் பல்வேறு எண்ணப்பாடுகள் இருந்தாலும், இலங்கையைப் பொறுத்தவரையில் மாற்றுப் பாலினத்தவர்கள் தொடர்பில் உள்ள கருத்துக்கள் வித்தியாசமானவை.

இலங்கையில் வடமாகாணத்தில் யாழ்ப்பாணம் என்றாலே, கலாசாரம், பண்பாடு, பாரம்பரியம், மதம், இனம், சாதி என்ற கோட்பாடுகள் பார்க்கப்படுவது, உலகலாவிய ரீதியில் பெரும் சேர்க்கும் ஒரு மாவட்டமாக காணப்படுகின்றது.

ஆனாலும், யாழ்ப்பாணத்தில் தற்போது, மூன்றாம் பாலினத்தவர்கள் பற்றி பேசவும், அவர்களின் உரிமைகள் தொடர்பில் குரல் கொடுக்கவும் முடியுமா என்பது கேள்விக்குறியாக காணப்படுகின்றது.

யாழ்ப்பாணத்தில் சுமார் 300ற்கும் மேற்பட்ட மூன்றாம் பாலினத்தவர்கள் வசிக்கின்றார்கள். பலர் தமது குடும்பங்களுடனும், 4 சுவருக்குள் வாழ்வதுடன், பலர் குடும்பம், சமூகம், உறவுகள் எனப் பலருக்கும் பயந்து, தனிப்பட்டவர்களாக, அனைவராலும் ஒதுக்கப்பட்டவர்களாக, ஒதுக்கப்பட்ட சமூகமாக வாழ்க்கின்றார்கள்.

ILLUSTRATION: AKIEL SURAJDEEN

Love in the modern world

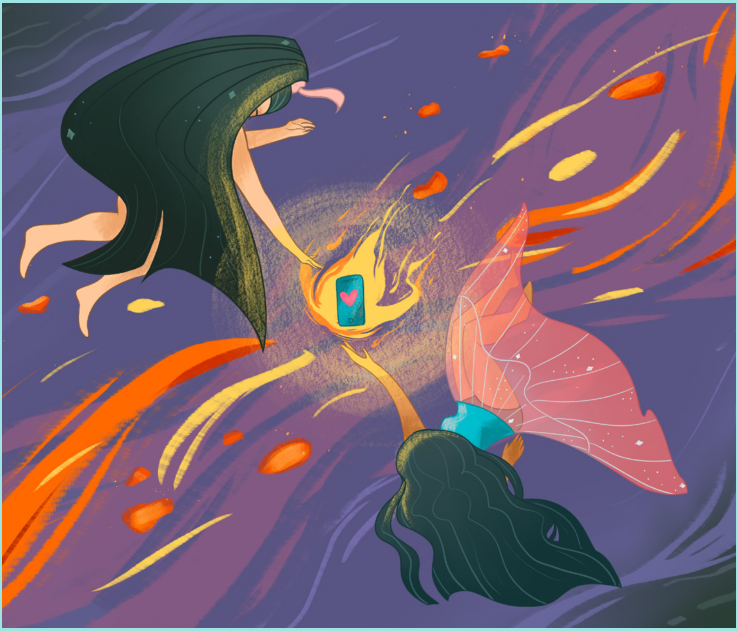
ANON

What is love? Love in the old world is very different to love in the modern world. Love in the modern world, doesn’t feel real. It feels like an illusion, and an unattainable goal. Cheating on your partner has become a matter of trend and trust no longer means the same thing. Relationships

become harder. Relationships happen without trust, without love and without respect.

But we hold on because we are too scared that we will not find someone who makes us feel as remotely comfortable as we do now. We hold on because we have no choice. We hold on because they're toxic, but they have become your kind of toxic. We hold on because they won't leave you, even if you let go. We hold on because we're scared of what they might do to themselves if we let go. We hold on for their sake, and not for our own. We hold on because we're simply afraid of being alone again. Sometimes love; love just means falling asleep next to a person you used to love, just so you have a heart to call home.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILLIPS



Liberating Love

UDA DESHAPRIYA

Today when I walked past my neighbor's window
I heard a woman scream,
Are you okay? - was my first thought.
I listened as my face turned hot

Oh baby, baby, YES, baby, YES, OH BABY OH... OH... AH.. GOD BABY!

She was okay- she was fine- not just fine- euphoric.

And I was like, ‘You go girl!’
Scream sister!
Scream!
No more hushed moans,
No more days of silence.

Scream like it’s victory because, it is!
Scream so loudly that the neighbors hear you,
And all the sisters in our village
Know that you are getting some sweet intense pleasure

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and BOOM!
Let that dopamine flood
Let the neurons light up
Let the world shut down, for a second.

We girls are told to be quiet
And to give, but not expect
Reciprocation, not from a man– definitely not.
Don’t be wild– Don’t be greedy
Be a good mom, stay a virgin, be a lady.

But today, my sister, get on top and
Get it on.
Scream.
YES!

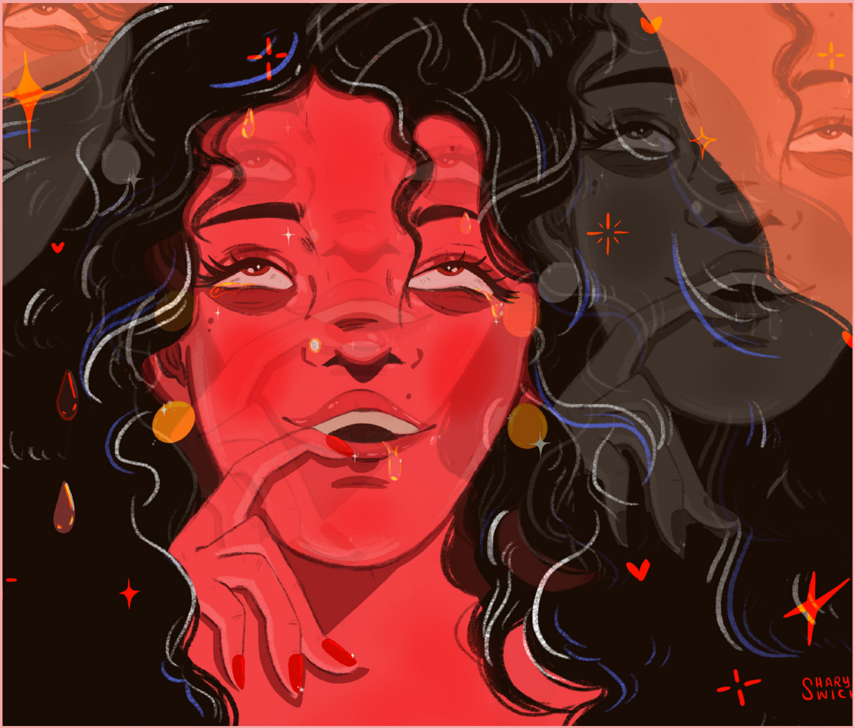
Remind me and the entire village
The power in your brain and in your body

Scream like it's victory.
Scream like you've won.

When you learn to command
The power in your body and your mind
And unchain the light
Let it shine burning blue and white
What can it be but at least a little victory
For both you and I.

So scream like it's victory.
Scream like you've won.

ILLUSTRATION: SHARYA WICKRAMESOORIYA



gaslighting the intersectional environmentalist

JEANA DE ZOYSA

This narrative might seem a little different. One might wonder how I jumped from "gaslighting and the self" as the theme for this piece to environmentalism. It's ironic that this premise to my story is the exact reason why I am choosing to write on this.

Self. Myself. MYself. I am a very sensitive, empathetic person. I didn't choose to be like this, but I am. Much to my detriment as you will soon understand. I feel very strongly about the injustice that goes on in this wide world, especially to those who cannot stand up for themselves. Ever since I was a little girl, I have been using my privilege to fight for justice. That was before I knew the words privilege or justice. So naturally, as I have grown into womanhood I have only become more radicalized as not a day goes by in this age of information where for those that seek information have not learnt of some new disgusting injustice.

I love animals. I love being in nature. The forest is my place of worship and Gaia is my God. So understandably living in a country like Sri Lanka, which is a treasure trove of biodiversity and natural beauty, but at the same time a gold mine of "resources" for money hungry, wannabe western capitalists, it gets quite hard for someone who feels as much as me. On top of this, I am at the mercy of a sick dichotomy, whereby as a woman I feel empowered and strong, but live within a culture that prevents me from exercising the totality of my strength. Sri Lanka like many places is heavily patriarchal and reeks of toxic masculinity.

While undertaking my bachelor's degree I came to understand intersectionality; the interconnectivity of all systems, the linkages of all oppression and the entwined causal links of all injustice. The revelation of understanding eco-feminism, women as nature as opposed to men as culture, how the natural world is exploited and decimated, like women are suppressed under the patriarchy and how gender disparity in governance and policy making are the reasons for the sick system we live in really added fuel to my fire and tied two of my biggest purposes together. While this made understanding the world a lot easier, it made waking up each morning a lot harder. I have tangoed with depression for years.

For someone who cannot ignore the constant signs of corruption, brutality and misinformation that surround us in our day to day lives, something as small as a TV commercial or a billboard by the road can trigger me into a rage or a puddle of tears. But every day, I pick up the pieces and continue to fight. I have overwhelmed myself with my activism, for women, for the natural world, for people of colour. I have burnt out and come back more times than I can count, and I'm not looking for sympathy, nor praise and approval... but I am sick

and tired of the fucking gaslighting.

As a femme, brown, vegan, eco-feminist activist I have at 24 already endured enough gaslighting and mockery to last a lifetime. The only thing is, until recently I didn't really know what gaslighting was or understand how it worked. Amongst my peers here in Sri Lanka, I do not have too many like-minded friends, so much of my social interaction revolves around the more trivial aspects of life. But that's just the thing, I can't stay light all time and serious shit is worth talking about. A lot of my friends have not travelled as much as me, nor have they explored the natural wonders this country has to offer, hence do not have the lived experiences, or connection to the natural world I do. I don't blame them for this. But what I have chosen to invest my life's energy into are good things and people shouldn't have a problem with that... right? Wrong.

I have been made to question myself, and feel bad for caring. I have been repeatedly questioned as to why, when I have not had a bad life (in terms of being born into a middle class family with access to education and certain luxuries) I remain so angry at the system. It's hard to explain to people who seemingly don't care

that I am angry on behalf of everyone that suffers. I have been the butt of countless vegan jokes, which have triggered me but I have had to bite my tongue and explain speciesism and the core of the animal liberation movement like a broken record. I have sat quietly and fake laughed at jokes that are really not funny, about things that affect so many people globally and in most cases are matters of life or death.

I find myself lying awake in bed sometimes and wondering whether I really am “too sensitive”, if there is such a thing as “too compassionate”, if I really “can’t take a joke”, and if I even actually make a shred of difference with what I do and how I choose to live my life. I have no happy moral of the story to end with, just the opportunity to pass on to whoevers reading this, that if you feel like me, as cliché as it may sound, you’re not alone. If you care, and if you’re fighting for what is right, despite the hardships and doubts, please don’t ever give up because you are shaping the future.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILLIPS

Relationships and Love

CONTENT WARNING
VIOLENCE
TRAUMA

SANDHIYA

இது என் கதை. சந்தியா ஆகிய நான் தற்பொழுது 38 வயதினை நெருங்கிய 15 வயதுடைய ஒரு மகளின் ஒற்றைத் தாய் (single mother) ஆவேன். என்னுடைய 20 ஆம் வயதில் காதல் திருமணம் எனும் பெயரில் எனக்கான இந்த ஒற்றைத் தாய் எனும் விதியினை நானே எழுதிக் கொண்டேன். வாழ்க்கையின் ஒவ்வொரு நிகழ்வுகளும் எமக்கு பல அனுபவங்களைக் கற்றுத் தருகின்றன. அவ்வாறான சில அனுபவங்கள் காரணமாக

பெண்கள் எந்த வயதிலும் நம்பிக்கை எனும் பெயரில் செய்யக் கூடாத சில தவறுகளையும் அந்த தவறுகளின் காரணமாக தாம் அனுபவிக்கும் வேதனை எவ்வகையானது என்பதனையும் அறியப்படுத்துவதற்காகவே இக் கட்டுரையை எழுதுகிறேன்.

என்னுடைய வாழ்க்கையில் குடும்ப வாழ்க்கை என்பது சரிவர அமையவில்லை. அதனால் ஆண் துணை என்னும் நிழலின் சுகம் எவ்வாறானது என்பதனை அறிந்து கொள்வதற்கான சந்தர்ப்பம் எனக்கு கிடைத்தது என்னுடைய 28 ஆவது வயதிலாகும். நான் இன்னொரு நபரினை காதலித்தேன். அவர் ஒரு குடும்பஸ்தர். அவர் என்னை காதலித்தாலும் நான் அவரை காதலித்தது அவரின் மனைவியின் அனுமதியுடனேயே. இதன் காரணமாக எந்தவொரு குற்ற உணர்வும் என்னுள் அப்போது எழவில்லை. இந்த உறவு நேரிடையாக இடம்பெறவில்லை. ஒன்லைன் (இணையத்தள) உறவே ஏற்பட்டது. ஏனெனில் நேரடி உறவாக இதனை ஆரம்பிப்பதற்கோ நடாத்துவதற்கோ அவரினால் கடல்கடந்து வருவதற்கான நிலை இருக்கவில்லை.

எனவே அப்போது இந்த ஒன்லைன்(இணையத்தள) உறவுகள் எவ்வாறு இடம்பெறுகின்றன மற்றும் அதிலுள்ள சாதக பாதகங்கள் என்ன என்பதனை புரிந்து கொள்ளும் அளவிற்கு என்னுடைய அறிவு விருத்தி அடைந்திருக்கவில்லை.

அப்போது தான் இந்த இணையத்தள களவி (ஒன்லைன் செக்ஸ்) எனும் உலகிற்குள் நான் பிரவேசிக்கும் நிலை ஏற்பட்டது. என்னுடைய வாழ்வில் களவி வாழ்க்கை என்பது ஒழுங்காக அமையாததால் அதனைப்பற்றிய தெளிவு இல்லாதவளாக இருந்தேன். இதனால் இந்த இணையத்தள களவி வாழ்க்கை என்பது சரியா தவறா என சிந்திக்கும் திறனற்று இருந்திருக்கிறேன். அத்துடன் சம்பந்தப்பட்டவரின் மனைவியே இதற்கு உடந்தையாக இருந்ததும் பல தடவைகள் எம்மோடு அவரும் கலந்து கொண்டதும் என்னுள் எந்தவொரு அச்சத்தினையும் ஏற்படுத்தவில்லை. அதனால் இதன் மூலம் ஏற்படும் பின்விளைவுகளை எண்ணத்தவறி விட்டேன்.

நாம் அனைவரும் வெவ்வேறு நாடுகளில் இருந்தாலும் ஒரே குடும்பம் போல் சில ஆண்டுகள் வாழ்ந்தோம். ஒரு காலகட்டத்தின் பின் அவரின் அதீத அன்பு பெரும் தொந்தரவாக மாறியது. அந்த சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் எம்மிடையே முரண்பாடுகள் ஏற்பட்டு பல சண்டைகள் இணையத்தளம் மூலமே இடம்பெற்றன. அவ்வாறான ஒரு சந்தர்ப்பத்தில் கணணித்துறையில் வல்லுனரான அவர் தான் பதிவு செய்து வைத்திருந்த என்னுடைய சில நிர்வாண படங்களை என்னுடைய தோழிகள் மற்றும் என் குடும்ப அங்கத்தவர்களுக்கு அனுப்பப் போவதாக மிரட்டினார்.

அந்த நிலை ஏற்பட்ட போதே என்னுடைய நிலை புரிய ஆரம்பித்தது. நான் நிலை குலைந்து போனேன். அப்போது அவரது மனைவியும் எனக்கு உதவுவதற்கோ என்னை ஆறுதல் படுத்துவதற்கோ முன் வரவில்லை. நான் என்னுடைய மன தைரியத்தினை இழந்து தற்கொலை செய்துகொள்ளும் நிலைக்கு ஆளானேன். பின்னர் என்னுடைய மகளின் நிலையை எண்ணி என்னுள் ஒரு தைரியம் பிறந்தது. எது நடந்தாலும் அதனை எதிர்த்து வாழும் சக்தி என்னுள் எழுந்தது. அதன் காரணமாக இன்றும் தைரியமாக முன்னேறிக்கொண்டிருக்கிறேன். இதன் மூலம் நான் கூற விளைவதுரூபவ் வாழ்க்கையில் தங்களுக்கென தனிப்பட்ட விடயங்கள் ஏராளமாக இருக்கலாம் எனினும் பெண்கள் எந்த வயதினராக இருந்தாலும் இவ்வாறான விடயங்களை மேற்கொள்ளும் நிலை ஏற்படுமாயின் கூடிய வரையில் தவிர்த்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். ஏனெனில் பின் விளைவுகள் எம் மன தைரியத்தினை கொன்று விடும். தவறுகள் இழைப்பது மனித இயல்பு என்பதால்; அவ்வாறாக ஏதேனும் நிலைக்கு ஆளாகி இருப்பின் பலி தீர்க்கும் நிலைக்கு ஆளாக்கப்பட எவரேனும் துணிந்தால் நம் உயிரினை மாய்த்துக் கொள்வதை விட அவர்களை எதிர்த்து வாழும் மன தைரியத்தினை வளர்த்துக் கொள்வது கட்டாயமாகும்.

I wonder if I'll kill myself

H.A.

I avoid mirrors and reflective surfaces with a vengeance. But at night, when my eyes are beady and bloodshot from pot (good, bud or terrible) I stare into the mirror for what feels like hours. Because standing there with my head swimming, I don't recognize me... Her. And in those small moments I can be kind to me... Her. She stares back at me. Eyes beady and

wide.

And I feel so bad for her.

I feel so fucking bad for her.

I feel bad for the way I've treated her. I've always been so mean to her.

And I'm sorry.

I'm so sorry for what I've let other people say to her.

I'm so sorry for what I say about her when I see her naked in the mirror, when I slather on brown foundation only to wipe half of it off in disgust or whenever I catch her eye in a mirror.

I'm sorry for all the horrible terrible things I've let people do to her. Just because I was broken and damaged and wanted to torture her.

Their eyes… Their eyes are always so horrid when they look at her. They look at her with such disdain, with such disgust or worse, indifference, while I laugh and crack jokes and ask questions and make conversation with them.

I've always been too sad to take care of her. I've always been too lost to fight for her. I've been so cruel to her. I've hated her so much and for so long. And she didn't deserve any of it. She was so young. She's always been so alone.

I look at her beady eyes and I wish I could apologize. I wish I could say, 'Oh my darling, I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry. I'm sorry I haven't loved you. I'm sorry I've done such irreversible damage that you feel like a monster. That no one will ever love you. I'm sorry that no-one has held your hand or told you that you were pretty and meant it or put you first. I'm sorry everyone forgot your birthday for two years in a row. I'm sorry I let them use you, that I let him bend you in two and fuck you til your thighs ached and you bled on a stranger's bed. I'm sorry I let him scoff at you the morning after, and that you had to take the pill the morning after. I'm sorry I let her call you names. I'm sorry I let him look at you like you're nothing. I'm sorry she abandoned you. I'm sorry you miss him even though he didn't care enough to reach out. I'm sorry you miss the thought of her because she needed you. I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'M SO FUCKING SORRY!
'

ILLUSTRATION: SHARYA WICKRAMESOORIYA

I wonder if I'll kill her. I wonder if I'd slit her forearms, wrists to elbow. I wonder if I'll make her climb over the railing, walk into traffic or put a knife through her throat.

I wonder if I'll kill her in the end. Or before it ever even begins.

But I'm trying to love her. I'm trying to be nice to her.

I hope she survives me.

sexual harassment in public transport

MOHAMMED FARIK

பொதுப் போக்குவரத்து சாதனங்களில் பல்லாயிரம் பேர் பல்வேறு விதமாக பயணம் செய்வார்கள், செல்போன் என்பது நமது உடலில் ஒரு ஆறாம் உருப்பாக சேர்ந்து கொண்டு விட்டது.

மனிதம் இன்று விலை கூவி விற்கப்படுகின்றது. பிறரது மானங்கள் தான் இன்று சந்தையில் கிராக்கியுள்ள விற்பனைப் பண்டமாகி விட்டன. ஒரு நாளைக்கு மாத்திரம் ஆபாச வலைதளங்களில் இது போன்ற திருட்டு வீடியோக்கள் 2000 க்கும் மேல் பதிவேற்றப் படுகின்றன. இந்த முதலாளித்துவ சடவாதிகளின் கொமராக்காளில் இருந்து தன் மானத்தை காத்துக் கொள்வதே சகோதரிகளுக்கு பெரிய தலைவலியாகி விட்டது.

அவர்கள் ஏன் தனது உடல் உருப்புக்கள் வெளிப்படும் விதத்தில் ஆடை அணிய வேண்டும்? என்று நீங்கள் கேட்கலாம்.

ஒவ்வொரு தனிநபருக்கும் இந் நாட்டில் தாம் விரும்பியதை அணியும் உரிமை உள்ளது. தனக்கு எது சௌகரியமோ அதனைத் தானே அவர்களும் அணிவார்கள், அவரவர் அவரவரின் கடமைகளை செய்தால் யாவரும் நலம்.

பாதிக்கப் படுபவர்கள் ஒரு போதும் மனதால் தளரத் தேவையில்லை.

அவர்களது மனசாட்சிக்கு விரோதமாக அவர்கள் ஒரு போதும் நடக்கவில்லை. எனவே மனதால் தளரத் தேவை இல்லை.

உங்கள் அனுமதியின்றி நீங்கள் படம் பிடிக்கப்பட்டது

உங்கள் உரிமையோடு தொடர்பானது. நீங்கள் உரிமை மீறல்

தொடர்பாக வழக்கு பதிவு செய்து சட்ட ரீதியாக உங்களுக்கான

தீர்வைப் பெற்றுக் கொள்ளுங்கள்.

ILLUSTRATION: SHENUKA COREA

The COVID-19 pandemic has left sex workers extremely vulnerable because they find themselves having to navigate the curfews, loss of income, risk of infection, complete lack of resources, state policing and community violence to survive the ongoing crisis. The following photographs were submitted by these incredible persons in hopes of raising awareness of their lived realities during these difficult times. A heartfelt thanks to the network.

කොවිඩ් 19 වසංගතය ලිංගික ශ්‍රමිකයන්හට අවදානම් තත්ත්වයක් උදාකර ඇත. පවත්නා මෙම අර්බුදකාරී තත්ත්වයක් තුළ ජීවත්වීම සඳහා ඇඳිරිනීතිය, ආදායම් මාර්ග අහිමි වීම්, ආසාදනය විමේ අවදානම, සම්පත්වල පූර්ණ හිඟය, දැඩි පොලිස්කරණය සහ ප්‍රජාවන්ගෙන් ඇතිවන හිංසනයන් යනාදිය හැසිරවීමට ඔවුනට සිදුව ඇත. මෙම අසීරු වූ කාලවකවානුව තුළදී තමන් ජීවත්වන යථාර්තයන් පිළිබඳ දැනුවත් කිරීමේ අපේක්ෂාවෙන් මෙම දිරිමත් පුද්ගලයින් විසින් පහත දැක්වෙන ඡායාරූප ඉදිරිපත් කර ඇත. මෙම ජාලයට අපගේ හෘර්දයාංගම ස්තුතිය.

கோவிட்-19 காரணமாக பாலியல் தொழிலாளர்கள் பல சவால்களுக்கு முகம் கொடுக்க வேண்டி உள்ள சூழ்நிலை உருவாகி உள்ளது. ஊரடங்கு சட்டத்தினால் வேலையின்மை, வருமானம் இல்லாமை, வளங்கள் இல்லாமை, அரசாங்கத்தால் மற்றும் பொலிஸாரால் கட்டுப்படுத்தப்படல், சமூக வன்முறைக்கு உள்ளாக்கப்படல் போன்ற பிரச்சனைகளுக்கு அவர்கள் தற்போது முகம் கொடுக்கின்றனர். தம் யதார்த்தத்தை பற்றியும் நிகழ்கால சவால்களை பற்றியும் விழிப்புணர்வு உருவாக்க பின்வரும் புகைப்படங்கள் இந்த அருமையான நபர்களால் சமர்ப்பிக்கப்பட்டது. இதனை பகிர்ந்து கொண்ட கூட்டணிக்கு எம் நன்றிகள்.

CONTRIBUTORS

වළලු meri, නාමලී, සංජු, රංජිත් (සීදේවී), මේනකා, වත්සලා, සීතා, ශාමලී, මුන්ටාස්, සිතු, ප්‍රියංකා, ලතා, සිවන්ගි, විසූ, බබී

CBL Munchee
CHOCOLATE CREAM

TOMMY

BAAANG

consent, coercion and compliance

CONTENT WARNING ASSAULT

VIDUSHI PAHANTHARAKA

I come from a very cultural, hush-hush background where I have seen the male figures in my family, close and distant, have more power than and over the females, where what the father says is law, where men are put on a higher pedestal than women. While my parents are educated, rational human beings, they still hold very cultural and close minded ways of thinking. Because of this

my knowledge of sex and the world around it was little to none. Even my middle school biology teacher didn't help any of us out when she purposely chose to skip the reproduction chapter in our textbook. Since I was a commerce student during highschool, my only aid to learning about my changing body and the emotions I was feeling was Google and unfortunately, PornHub (which didn't really help me at all and only ended up giving me body image issues.)

When I was 18 years old I started to date boys seriously. My first kiss with my now ex-boyfriend actually ended up with him groping me without my permission. At that point I didn't really know what else to do other than just sit there. I had never been put in such a position before and I didn't realize what had happened until I told my best friend about it. I remember the first thing she asked me after I told her the story was "did he ask you before he did it?" I actually had to take a minute and think about it before I finally said "I don't think he did." In the 6 months that I dated this boy this happened a few times and every time it was something new for me so I had no idea what to do. Thankfully we ended the relationship before we got to the sex stage of it.

We live in a country where many Sri Lankans including older and current generations are still bound to the cultural ways from many years ago. Sri Lanka has been a patriarchal society since the olden days where men have had more power when it comes politics, leadership and social privilege. This thinking and behavior plays a major role when it comes to sex as well. Most men will think only of how they can receive pleasure rather than thinking of ways to pleasure their partner as well. Due to this, men and even women believe that consent isn't necessary in relationships. Women and men can be pressured into sexual activities by their partners through means of emotional and verbal abuse and harassment. Most individuals prey on their partner's vulnerability and naiveness in order to coerce them into sexual intercourse. This is also one reason why communication should be an important factor in any relationship, whether it's platonic or sexual.

Since my experience with past lovers and flings, I now understand and I am still learning, how to have a healthy relationship. Being with someone who wants to break the social norms, who understands that communication is the strongest foundation and someone who accepts and respects me has definitely

helped. An important lesson I've learnt from my experience is that a relationship can affect how you grow and see yourself as a person. I have seen major positive differences in myself now than I did when I was with my exes. My current partner has helped me gain a level of self-confidence I never imagined having. As a kid I always had a hard time standing up for myself and feeling confident in my own skin. Now however, I'm the most confident I've been in years. When you find a partner who respects you and sees you as his equal in life it sometimes makes you think, "man, where have you been all this time!?"

In most cases the act of always saying 'yes' instead of saying 'no' is an Asian trait instilled in us by our parents which goes on to generations before us. As kids we have been taught to be extremely submissive, to respect our elders, to not to raise our voice, to speak only when spoken to and to be well behaved men and women. This, however, is one reason why both men and women have been conditioned to not have any objections and simply agree to things they aren't fully comfortable doing. It is my opinion that we should never hold ourselves back in any situation, to only give respect if respect is received, to always question others and voice out our opinions and

to be okay with saying no even without an explanation if we feel uncomfortable in any way. If ‘sex education’ was a word that didn’t make the aunties go “apo cheeya!” then I believe we would be better educated about the do’s and do not’s of the vast subject that is sex. Especially in a country so culturally dominated like Sri Lanka where many voices are silenced, breaking the norms and taking a stand would only benefit the generations to come.

“‘No’ is not a negative word. Sometimes saying ‘no’ can save you from life’s greatest pains.”

DISCRIMINATION OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN SRI LANKA

KARUPPAIYA
PRASANNAKUMAR

எச். ஐ. வி தொற்று தொடர்பாக எமது சமூகத்தில் இன்றும் பல்வேறு தப்பபிப்ராயங்கள் இருக்கின்றன. அவற்றை களைவதே மிகவும் சவாலான விடயமாக இருக்கிறது. எச். ஐ. வி தொடர்பான போதிய அறிவின்மையும் விழிப்புணர்வின்மையுமே இதற்கு பிரதான காரணமாகும். இன்று இத்தொற்றை தடுப்பதற்கான வழிவகைகள் தெளிவுபடுத்தப்பட்டு வருகின்றன.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILIPS

இலவச மருத்துவ சேவைகளும் வழங்கப்படுகின்றன. அதேவேளை அரசசார்பற்ற நிறுவனங்கள் பல எச். ஐ. வி தொடர்பான தப்பபிப்ராயங்கள் தொடர்பில் விழிப்புணர்வுகளை ஏற்படுத்தி வருவதுடன் தொற்றாளர்களுக்கான உதவிகளையும் வழங்கி வருகின்றன. எச். ஐ. வி தொற்றாளர்கள் முறையான மருத்துவ சேவைகளை பெற்றுக் கொள்ள இலங்கையில் வாய்ப்பு உள்ளது. சிலர் சமூகம் தன்னை ஒதுக்கிவிடும் என்பதற்காக தமது இரகசியங்களை மறைத்து தமக்கே ஆபத்தை தேடிக் கொள்கின்றனர்.

மருத்துவ சேவைகளை இவர்கள் பெறும் போது அவர்களுடைய தகவல்கள் இரகசியமாகவே பேணப்படுகின்றதென்பதை சகலரும் விளங்கிக் கொள்ள வேண்டுமென்பதுடன், எச். ஐ. வி. தொற்றும் முறைகள் தொடர்பிலும் சமூகம் கொண்டுள்ள தவறான அனுகுமுறைகளையும் களையவேண்டும். எச். ஐ. வி தொற்றுள்ளவர்கள், சமூகத்தில் புறக்கணிக்கப்பட வேண்டியவர்கள் அல்லர். இவர்களை எமது அறியாமையால் தேவையற்ற களங்கத்திற்கும் பாரபட்சத்திற்கும் உள்ளாக்குவதை நாம் நிறுத்த வேண்டும்.

முடங்கிப் போன முதிர் கன்னி!!!!!!

HUSNA RIYAL

திருமணம் எனும் நாளுக்காய்

தினம் பல காத்திருந்தேன்

தித்திக்கும் அந்நாளில்

திரு வாழ்க்கையை துவங்கவே!!!!

ஐவைந்து வயதுகள் கழிந்தும்

அமையவில்லை எனக்கு

அழகான வாழ்க்கை

அசிங்கமான சீதனத்தால்!!!!

மலர் சூடி மணந்திட

மாப்பிள்ளை எனும் சந்தையில்

மலிவான விலையில் - எனக்கு

மன்மதனை வாங்க இயலவில்லை!!!!!!!

ஓர் நாள்

உறவுகள் கூடி

உணர்வு பெருகக் கதை பேசி

உள்ளங்கையில் சீரேந்தி வந்தனர்

மாப்பிள்ளை வீட்டார்!!!!!

உச்சி குளிர்ந்து - நான்

உருகிப்போனேன்

உணர்வுகள் பகிர

உதித்து விட்டான் கண்ணன் என!!!!!!

சபையில் சீதனம் தலை தூக்கவே

சிறிதான பேச்சு

சிதறிப் போய் சினம் மூண்டு

சிதைந்தது அவை யே!!!!!!

வந்தவர் எம்மை வஞ்சவே
வாசல் படி மிதிக்க- நீ
வாய்த்தவள் அல்லவேயென
வார்த்தையினால் வருத்தெடுத்தனர்!!!!!

ஆணை மணவாளனாய் அலங்கரித்து
வாடிக்கையாளராய் அழைத்து
வருகிறார் பலர்
வருடத்தில் பல முறை
என் இல்லம் நோக்கி!!!!!!

மண்ணுக்கும் பொன்னுக்கும்
மையல் கொண்டு - என்னை
மறுத்துச் செல்வதால் - மனம்
மறுக்கச் செய்கிறது திருமணத்தை!!!!

சமூகத்தின் பார்வை
சாரசமாய் எனை பார்க்கவே
சரிந்து போகிறேன் நான்
கண்ணீரோடு வீட்டினுள்!!!!

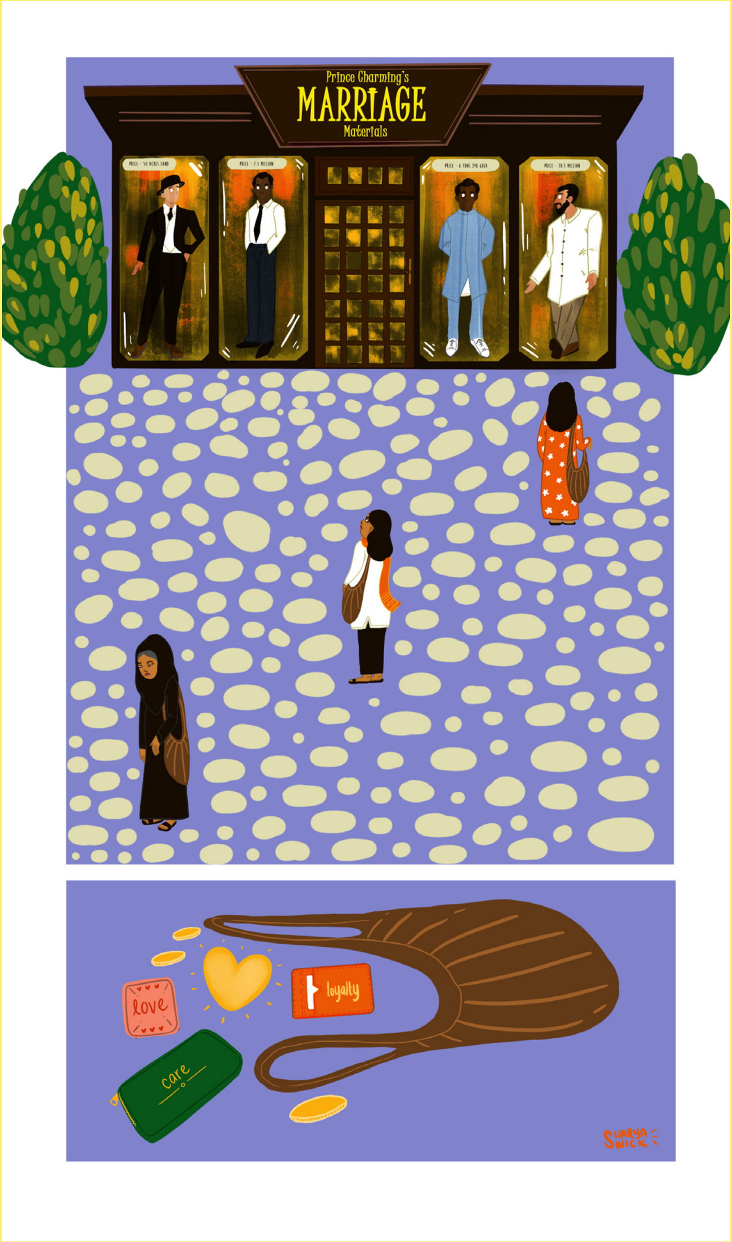


ILLUSTRATION: SHARYA WICKRAMESOORIYA

கேவலமாய் என்னை

கேலிப் பேசி பலிப்போர்

திருமணம் தடைப்பட

தன் குறையே உண்டென்கிறனர்!!!!!!

அந் நாள் முதல்

முடங்கி விட்டேன் நான்

முதிர் கன்னியாய் வீட்டினுள் - என் வயது

முதிர்ந்த பெற்றோருடன்!!!!!!!!!

online violence faced by the LGBTQI community

SUMITHY THANGARASA

LGBTIQ சமூகத்தினர் சுதந்திரமாக தனது கருத்துக்களை சமூக வலைத்தளங்களில் வெளிப்படுத்த முடியாமலும், தங்களை அடையாளப்படுத்திக் கொள்ள முடியாமலும் இருக்கின்ற அதேவேளை, சமூக அழுத்தங்களை பொருட்படுத்தாமல்

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILIPS

இணைய சமூக வலைத்தளங்களை சுதந்திரமாக பயன்படுத்த விளையும் LGBTIQ சமூகத்தினர் பல்வேறு வகையான மிக மோசமான இணைய அனுபவங்களை எதிர்கொண்டு வருகின்றனர். அவர்களின் உரிமைகளையும், போராட்டங்களையும் பிரச்சினைகளையும் முன்வைக்கும் ஓர் பொதுத் தளமாக சமூக வலைத்தளங்கள் உள்ளன. பொது வெளியில் பகிரங்கமாக பேச முடியாத பல்வேறு விடயங்களை பேசக் கூடிய ஓர் சுதந்திரமான மேடையாக LGBTIQ சமூகத்தினர் சமூக வலைத்தளங்களை பயன்படுத்தும் போது அதனை இழிவாகவும், மோசமான மனப்பாங்குடன் மற்றவர்கள் கையாளுகின்ற செயற்பாடுகளை இணைய வெளி எங்கும் அவதானிக்கக் கூடியதாக உள்ளது.

அடுத்தவர்களின் அந்தரங்கத்தினைத் தேடுவதும், தனிப்பட்ட விடயங்களில் தலையிடுவதும் மனித நாகரீகம் அல்ல என்பதே பொதுவான கருத்தாகும். ஆனால் ஒருவரின் பாலியல் நாட்டத்தினையும் பாலியல் அடையாளத்தினையும் அடிப்படையாக வைத்து அவரை வன்முறைக்கும், அவமானத்திற்கும், பாரபட்சத்திற்கும் உட்படுத்தி அந்தரங்கங்களை இணையத்தில் பகிரங்கப்படுத்துவது என்பது எந்தவிதமான மனித நாகரீகம் என்பது புரியாத புதிராக உள்ளது.

accountability and gratitude

ANON

I am well known by my peers for speaking up against things I believe to be unjust. Sometimes that is looked at as a good thing and sometimes it is not. I cannot change the way people perceive things but I can let people know my perception of things that have happened to me and to those around me. It is not my problem if people think I am ungrateful after reading this, because I know even with all of this stuff that this place I will be writing about

puts you through, it is why I feel the need to liberate people oppressed and facing the detrimental harms of power structures and that's essentially all that matters to me. People will, and can, think and say whatever they want about others, irrespective of what those others say or do.

This is an attempt by me to analyze certain small things said and done in girls' schools, or at least in mine that propagate misogyny and even though these specific experiences are about one particular school, it can more or less be applied to the structures of schools in Sri Lanka, especially Female schools in Sri Lanka. Please note, the experiences are what I feel because of these experiences are mine to feel. This is not me trying to change people's minds but merely me trying to expose my feelings through my experiences.

In my 14 years of school, I spent 4 years in two different countries and the rest in Sri Lanka. I spent the most pivotal time period of my life studying at an all-girls' school in Sri Lanka. This was from the age of 11 to 19. Childhood, nevertheless, is supposed to be the most freeing time of your life but instead it was restricting. The restrictions placed upon my peers and I were those

attributed to fear and blackmail.

My school tried to restrict girls from being around boys. They treated males as these people in society we were supposed to strive to be owned by in the future but not glance at when we attended school. Girls would be shamed for having male friends and were taught this concept of purity and self-worth, as if the male gaze upon us somehow diminished our character. What's funniest about this matter is that when we were done with school, all we were asked was if we had found a man yet.

When we were 16, my friends and I organized a project alongside a prominent boys school. After the project ended, we went to a rest house to have some tea and because of the relief and pride we had over organizing a successful project to help people, one of my best friends high fived one of the boys in the organizing committee. It was literally a high five, the slapping of two people's hands for about 5 seconds. How my school administration managed to sexualize that instance is beyond me. Our teacher in charge called upon a meeting for the whole body of members of the club with the Vice Principal and publicly shamed my best friend for

high fiving this boy. I still remember our Teacher in Charge claiming that she would not even shake the hand of a man she was not going to marry because of the indecency behind the act. She went onto say, “When your father was around you acted like an innocent rabbit but when he looked away you turned into this sort of creature.” I literally went to a school that slut shamed a girl for high fiving a boy because she had done some good to the world and was happy. I can barely even remember who the boy in question was. Why? Because even if this was a situation worth pursuing, it was on her for letting a boy do that to her, or so it seemed to be.

The problem I have with this is mainly the fact that somehow girls were expected to “know better” and somehow every little action they did was sinful or wrong or created potential harm to their reputation or to the schools. If you really want to help girls, why not just go ahead and do that by being there for them.

Very recently, a girl from my school who was just 15 was caught cutting school in school uniform during school hours in a hotel with a 23 year old boy and she was expelled for it. Keep in mind how illegal that is in the first place, for a 23 year old to go behind a 15 year

old girl. Even if the 15 year old was the one going behind the 23 year old, keep in mind how wrong it is for a man to let a child do that.

If legally, a person is not of age to consent because they are deemed too young to be able to make that decision, how are they the ones held accountable for such actions.

Now my father suggested that it was a mere work of utilitarianism for our school to expel this girl because in our principals view, she (the girl) had experienced certain pleasures in life that she could have shared with other kids and thereby incentivised them to engage in such pleasures too, and expulsion would deter such things from occuring again. The only problem I have with this is, kids are already aware of the pleasures of life anyway, and a school, that is there to be a guiding figure in a child's life should in no way punish a child by taking away their right to education because they failed at guiding the child when it mattered in a specific situation. Furthermore, guidance does not equate fear. Schools have a tendency to threaten with expulsion when a student's actions could cause "Reputable harm" to the school. Punishment does not have to be retributive, especially when it's in regard to a child. It could and

should be rehabilitative. So even if I was to conceit that this student had done something that requires a punishment, it is my belief that the punishment should be rehabilitative in nature.

Another such instance where school shamed a student for crimes committed against her was when a girl who had sent some nude pictures was “asked to step down” from prefectship because another girl, who did not get prefectship leaked her images out. Ofcourse, people should be careful with how they share their body but that does not mean she deserves to be treated shamefully for a mistake she made. Especially when someone she trusted shared something very valuable of hers without her consent. Also, more often than not, girls share these private images with the expectation of getting love in return. At a presentation by the grassroot foundation a quote that stuck with me is “Boys give love for sex and girls give sex for love.” Quite often this seems to be true.

Another point I want to touch upon in regard to the above mentioned situations is the complete lack of discretion. I don’t believe a woman should be sexualized to the extent that they currently are, but the fact of the

ILLUSTRATION: KINARA DISSANAYAKE

matter is society still does so. Therefore, in situations where a girl is being punished or made example of due to her sexuality, there should be discretion among the authorities that handle it. I was a prefect when the girls nude pictures took away her chance of prefectship. The moment I heard people, even my closest friends saying “She should have known better if she wanted prefectship” , “It’s bad for school noh if she was a prefect”, I felt shame for being a part of a group of people that said things like that and slowly took my badge off. I am not a religious follower of anything, I’m a more spiritual kind of being but there is a story that comes to mind from the bible when I think of this situation. John 8:1– 11 refers to this story of a woman who committed adultery and was brought in front of Jesus to be stoned by those who caught her because that’s what the Law of Moses states as punishment.

If she didn’t deserve to be a prefect, if everything she has worked for was useless now that her bare chest had been seen by a few people, then I guess myself and all my fellow prefects didn’t deserve to have our accomplishments valued. Everyone in my prefects guild was speaking about that girl that way and it baffled me how far this information had come. If this is between

the administration and the student, it should be that way, but instead because discretion is a myth in Sri Lanka, it was the talk of the week. According to Section 365(c) of the Penal Code of Sri Lanka, any publication of victims of sexual crimes is a punishable offence. If in principle it is against the law for publication of victims of sexual crimes, discretion should certainly be a practice followed by schools in matters related to sex, whether cyber harassment or physical harassment.

How can any girl ever feel confident enough to disclose information about any harm they have faced at the hands of men if they will be the ones punished for it. A school is a place where people are supposed to feel safe and people are supposed to be able to confide in teachers and administrative officers but instead students feel like dying because of them. This goes on to traumatize a lot of girls for the rest of their life. They end up having trust issues, or valuing themselves off of the male gaze, or not understanding that they don't owe anyone anything. Our school systems work the same way our police does, but aren't ever called out for it because of this "gratitude" we are supposed to have for all they have given us. However, we forget about all they have taken away.

Another time, I was sitting by the main hall, and a male teacher was standing in front of me and my legs happen to be facing him because I was sitting in that direction. I was literally just sitting down. I did not give a rats ass that he was in front of me and I sure as hell was not sitting that way to imply some sort of attraction. He called me over and said, in Sinhalese, “I saw what you were doing, and don’t do that, it’s wrong what you did.” All I did was sit, legs together as we girls should (my legs were together but note my sarcasm hehe). I told him I did not do anything and he said I know you know what you did. I told him I don’t know what he is implying but all I did was sit and he told me not to speak back to him. How can someone feel so entitled they think a student, at least 20 years their junior sitting down was some sexual hint directed towards them. I know he is overly hyped by his literal 12 year old students and that somehow makes his head expand but I was 18 at this time. I was not some child who thought he was a god. Honestly, any respect I had for him went down the drain. Furthermore, even if I was a child, the question that remains is, should he be sexualizing my actions?

Another teacher, in charge of a certain extracurricular activity told her students not to hug or high five their

male director because their future husbands might see and think this girl treats other men the way she treats me and therefore won't love them and then they will have to kill themselves. 2 years after a child in our school committed suicide, how can a teacher speak such things. How can she tell students, aged 12-17, that if a man does not want them they might as well just die. She also said, boys prefer girls who do not engage in extracurricular activities. They prefer women who know how to cook and clean not play sports, and these girls, who were literally participating in an extracurricular activity as she spoke, that they should be that way and not engage in extracurriculars.

I truly understand that this is the society we live in so that is why certain generations think this way, however, I do not understand why they get themselves into the sphere of education if they don't understand the value of it. Why force girls to learn if at the end all that what is worthwhile within them is being desired by men and their reputation. Why work towards making women more knowledgeable if you will measure their success on their "purity" and who they marry? Why waste your time and theirs? Why teach women they are commodities while also teaching them how to be

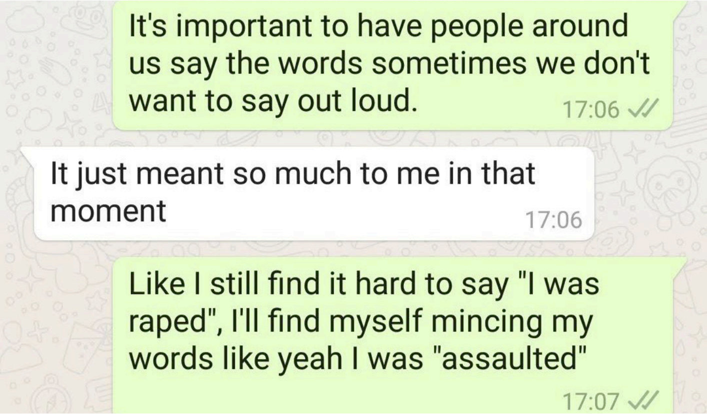
doctors, lawyers and engineers if that does not actually pave their life for them but instead what their potential husbands do is what paves it for them? Whether these questions have answers or not, and whether these things happen as a result of ignorance or not, it is my belief that schools must be called out and held accountable.

These are just a few things that have happened or been said or been heard, directly by me or those close to me. It is a minuscule amount compared to what happens at a day to day basis. These sorts of ideas being said by grown women in the education sector to young women can be detrimental to their own personal growth and growth within society. I don't know if I have the courage to post this anywhere more public because of the concept that exists that you owe it to your school not to ruin its name and reputation, but tell me one thing? If I owe that to them, do they not owe it to me, and my peers, to be a place of safety? Do they not owe it to us to be a place where we come to get away from trauma not gain it?

I WAS ASSAULTED

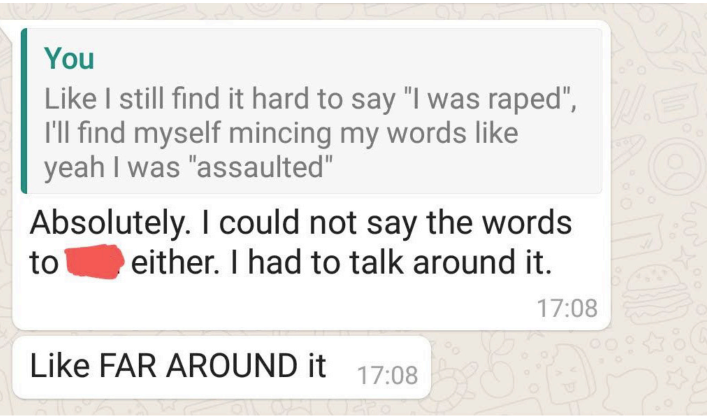
CONTENT
WARNING
ASSAULT

SARITHA & LINDA


It's important to have people around us say the words sometimes we don't want to say out loud. 17:06

It just meant so much to me in that moment 17:06

Like I still find it hard to say "I was raped", I'll find myself mincing my words like yeah I was "assaulted" 17:07


You
Like I still find it hard to say "I was raped", I'll find myself mincing my words like yeah I was "assaulted"

Absolutely. I could not say the words to [redacted] either. I had to talk around it. 17:08

Like FAR AROUND it 17:08

I hate that that's a thing, that we aren't even entitled to describe accurately our experiences 17:08

That we have to water it down so as not to offend anyone else kinda 17:09

Yes, I know exactly what you mean. Somehow we are not even entitled to our own experience and our own pain in 17:10

Maybe this is why survivors have to talk to eachother more. Yknow. Normalise the experience of saying it out loud. I don't know. 17:11

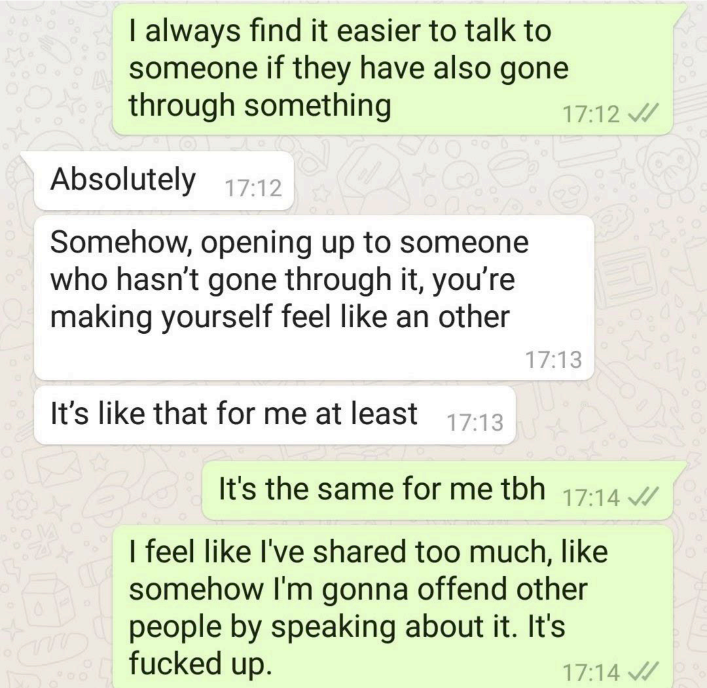
Such is the patriarchy. 17:11

You

That we have to water it down so as not to offend anyone else kinda

Yes, I know exactly what you mean. Somehow we are not even entitled to our own experience and our own pain in 17:10

Maybe this is why survivors have to talk to eachother more. Yknow. Normalise the experience of saying it out loud. I don't know. 17:11


I always find it easier to talk to someone if they have also gone through something 17:12

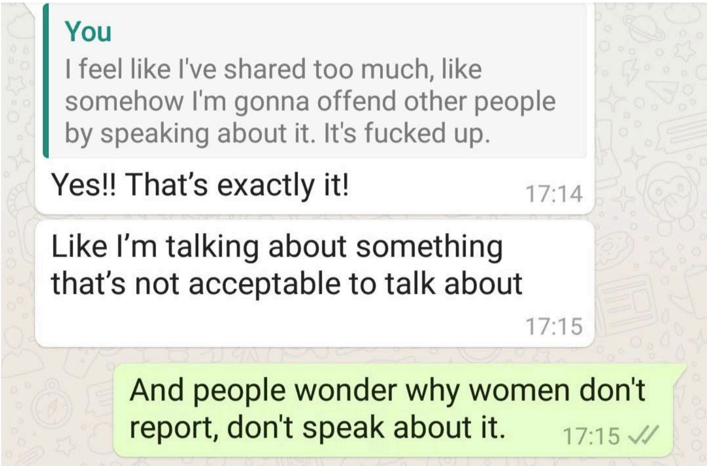
Absolutely 17:12

Somehow, opening up to someone who hasn’t gone through it, you’re making yourself feel like an other 17:13

It’s like that for me at least 17:13

It's the same for me tbh 17:14

I feel like I've shared too much, like somehow I'm gonna offend other people by speaking about it. It's fucked up. 17:14


You
I feel like I've shared too much, like somehow I'm gonna offend other people by speaking about it. It's fucked up.

Yes!! That’s exactly it! 17:14

Like I’m talking about something that’s not acceptable to talk about 17:15

And people wonder why women don't report, don't speak about it. 17:15

ILLUSTRATION: SHARYA WICKRAMESOORIYA

CONTENT WARNING ASSAULT

In the absence of violence and abuse

S.V. RANDENIYE

I came back that morning, so early that even the sun was barely out, and the first thing I did was grab my towel and go into the bathroom.

I ignored the mess inside. 1st year university bathrooms were all communal.

That should be enough to paint a picture in your heads about how it looked on that Saturday morning when I rushed in there, desperate.

In the small stall, I hurriedly ripped off my clothes, clothes from last night, clothes still smelling of the cheap vodka I'd drunk and the weed I had smoked, clothes I hated right then.Hung them on the small hook outside the shower cubicle and stepped in. I didn't wait for the water to warm up. I couldn't. Wouldn't.

But it eventually did. The sense of everything being washed away, of last night being drummed off my sweaty skin didn't come. No sense of relief would wash over me as I imagined a night melting off me. Nothing. I didn't have that moment in the shower of becoming pure.

I went hard, scrubbing and scrubbing every inch of my thin body. My face, my mouth, my neck, my legs, my chest. As my hands tracked down my body, dull memories pulsed too. With each body part I touched and scrubbed and rubbed raw, it set off more and more synapses and neurons and it was all I could do to keep at it. I needed to keep at it.

ILLUSTRATION: AKIEL SURAJDEEN

I only stepped out of the shower when I felt like I couldn't possibly spend any more time under scalding hot water. My palms were wrinkled and my entire body was flushed red, even under my darker skin.

I had forgotten about the clothes I had hung outside the stall. They assaulted me now. The reek of sweat, alcohol and drugs dripped off them. Don't make me have to touch them please.

But I did. Barely. After I'd put on a set of clean clothes, I picked up last night's get up, gingerly. As if they would come alive and devour me. As if they would force me down and attack me. Violate me. Humiliate me.

And I threw those clothes away. Never mind that I had felt amazing in that outfit, sexy even. The last thing I wanted to be was sexy. I wanted to wrap myself in the most unflattering piece of clothing ever made if it meant that no man ever looked at me ever again.

But I had done this to myself no? Gone out to the house party on my own. Replied to what seemed like an innocent conversation on my own. Agreed to that drink on my own. And then another drink. And then agreed to his offer to smoke me up on my own. Bent my own head

to hit the bong. And taken hit after hit all on my own.

Before I knew it, I was waking up the next morning, naked, in a stranger's bed. Next to a man whose face I couldn't recognize and name I couldn't remember.

There was no "assault." There was no "violence." Too often, these are the words and the language that sexual assault, abuse and rape are wrapped in. Too often, these are the expectations if you stand up and admit to being a victim, the things you have to prove and show if you have the nerve to say that you were assaulted, abused or raped. Too often have such expectations been used to silence victims, to discredit them and even cause them to doubt themselves. To protect those who commit. And not the ones that suffered.

There were no bruises on my body I couldn't explain or wounds I couldn't remember getting. I was glad, actually, that there were no marks on me that designated me as weaker than. For all too often, that's the burden placed on men who are on the receiving end of sexual assault, abuse or rape. In cultures where men are built up to be pillars of strength, fortitude and resolve, anything that blemishes that image is ridiculed, laughed at, and burnt out. Wiped away and never looked

at. Conversations avoided. Eyes averted. Let the shaming begin.

So I was glad I had nothing to explain to my friends and room mates. Innocuous questions about my Friday night could be answered with a casual “oh I went to a party.” The rest could be left unsaid for the other to guess at, to assume. Being a guy, what possibly could I have gotten up to after a party that kept me from returning home the same night? Surely nothing unpleasant, or god forbid, traumatic.

It took me a few years to learn that it wasn’t my fault. It took me a few years of turning over that night, going over each detail over and over to try and remember what I had done or said to give him the permission. It took me a few years to figure out that my inebriation was no cause for what happened that night. It took me a few years to trust myself with another person. And to trust myself too. Took me a few years to stop craving the safety of my own bed each night, no matter how late something ran. Took me a few years to wear form-fitting clothes again. Took me a few years to not look for a way out or a fast exit if the need arose. Took me a few years to learn to say no. Took me a few years for a great many

things.

I'm past those years now. Occasionally, unbidden memories of that night and the morning after will rise up again. In my sleep, in my waking hours. The smallest hair trigger will set it off sometimes. A sound. A particular scent. A label on a bottle of vodka.

I take the triggers and memories as they come. I let them play out. I no longer run from them or hide from them. I've had to teach myself that. Pound it into my mind that I cannot escape what happened that night. Cannot forget. And certainly not forgive. It's all boiled down to a formula now.

Grieve, accept, move on and repeat.

SEX WORK IN SRI LANKA

ABDULLAH NAASHIF

நான் தென் மாகாணத்தில் ஒரு பிரபலமான இடத்தில் தற்போது வசித்து வந்தாலும் நானும் கிராம காற்றை சுவாசித்த, கிராம வாழ்வியலுக்கு பழக்கப்பட்டவன் தான். எனது சொந்த ஊர் இலங்கையின் கிழக்குப் பகுதியில் அமைந்துள்ளது. நெடுந்தூரப் பயணங்கள் மகிழ்ச்சியைத் தந்தாலும் சில சமயங்களில் அவை அசௌகரிகமாகவே

அமைந்து விடுகிறது.

கிழக்குக்கும், மேற்கிற்குமான எனது பயணங்கள் இரவு வேளைகளில் தான் அமையும். ஆக கொழும்பை வந்தடைய அதிகாலைப் பொழுதாகிப் போகும். கொழும்பிலிருந்து நான் வசிக்கும் இடத்திற்கு மேலும் பயணிக்க வேண்டி வரும், அந்தக் குறுகிய பயணம் தான் இந்த ஆய்வுக் கட்டுரை.

விடிந்ததும் விடியாத இரவுப் பொழுது, தூரத்தில் மஞ்சள் வீதிச் சமிஞ்சை மட்டும் விட்டு விட்டு மின்னுவது அந்த இரவின் பிற்பகுதிக்கே அழகுதான். இந்த இராப் பொழுதை அழகூட்டும் இன்னுமோர் விடயத்தையு நான் கண்டதுண்டு. அது என்ன?

வீதியின் இருமருங்கிலும் குவிந்து கிடக்கும் பாலியல் தொழிலாளிகளின் வாழ்வியல் பற்றி நான் அதிகம் சிந்தித்ததுண்டு.

இவர்களின் உளநிலை என்ன?

இவர்களின் உடல் சார்ந்த பிரச்சனைகள் என்ன?

இவர்களுக்கான சமூக அங்கீகாரம் என்ன?

இவர்களை சமூகம் எவ்வாறு பார்க்கும்?

இப்படி எண்ணற்ற கேள்விகள் என்னுள் எழுவதுண்டு.

இலங்கையில் பெரும்பாலான பாலியல் தொழிலாளிகள் மேற்சொன்ன சட்டத்திற்குக் கீழேயே கைது செய்யப்படுகிறார்கள். தரவுகளுக்கமைய இவ்வாறு கைது செய்யப்பட்டவர்கள் கைதான பின்னர் எதிர் கொள்ளும் பிரச்சனைகள் எண்ணற்றவை என்கிறது. உதாரணமாக, இத்தொழிலில் ஈடுபட்ட ஒருவருக்கு தண்டப்பணம் நூறு ரூபாய் மாத்திரமே ஆயினும் அவர் ஆறு மாதங்கள் சிறைவாசம் அனுபவிக்க வேண்டிய நிலையும் உருவாகலாம். அவ்வாறு சிறைவாசம் அனுபவிக்கையில் இவ்வாறானவர்கள் சிறை அதிகாரிகளினால் பாலியல் தொந்தரவுக்கு ஆளாவதும், இவர்களுக்கு பிள்ளைகள் இருப்பின் நாளை அவர்களும் இத்தொழிலில் ஈடுபடுவார்களா போன்ற மனிதாபிமானமற்ற கேள்விகள் தொடுக்கப்படுவதையும் குறிப்பிடலாம்.

ஆக விபச்சாரி, விலை மாது, கணிக்காவ, வேசி போன்ற ஒரு பால் சார்ந்த சொற்கள் களையப்பட்டு, பாலியல் தொழிலாளிகள் என்ற சொல் உபயோகிக்கப்படுதல் வேண்டும்.

ILLUSTRATION: AKIEL SURAJDEEN

Paper Dolls

CONTENT WARNING ASSAULT

GRACE WICKREMASINGHE

Skirts on the road cat-called

Followed home

When these conversations open up
at dinner parties there is no women
unattended

Every woman has a story to tell

It's not a matter of if some women has
ever been raped or abused or cat-called.

It's a question of when, where and how
many times.

It's a question of by whom.

It's not a question of whether you have

met creeps and scary men entering your home or

Whether they've triggered you

By smell or how their smirks all seem too familiar

If you ever wonder why women are so defensive,

This is why.

Too many times our NO's, taken for Yes Please.

Patience and silence, for More Please

Begging saying don't, for us playing hard to get.

You laugh at rape jokes

Biting on vulnerable meat like you're cleaning up your plate of steak

We stomach in our anger because we don't want to be slut shamed or called out as Feminazis

There is not enough space in the room for both the girl and the punchline.

So we shrink in to pocket sized compatible paper dolls.

To bite sized meat sticks.

We women, always strong enough to hold a loaded gun yet patient enough not to pull the trigger.

ILLUSTRATION: SHENUKA COREA

Stigma Faced by Faceless Muslim Women on Facebook

AHSAN AFTAR

பெண்கள் தனிமனித சுதந்திரமாக உள்ள முகநூலில் தனது புகைப்படத்தை பதிவிடும் உரிமையை இழந்து நிற்கின்றார்கள். உரிமை மறுக்கப்படுவதோடு இவர்களின் கதை முடிந்து விடுவதில்லை. கல்வி, சுயகௌரவம், மனநிலை என இந்த பட்டியல் நீண்டு செல்கின்றது. இதெற்கெல்லாம்

அடிப்படை காரணம் சமூகத்தில் காலங்காலமாக வேரூன்றிப் போயுள்ள அர்த்தமற்ற கலாசார முறையே என்பது பாதிக்கப்பட்டவர்களின் குரலாகும்.

கிராமப்புர பிரதேசங்களில் வசிக்கும் தமிழ் பேசும் சமூகத்தை சேர்ந்த பெண்களே இவ்வாறு உரிமை மறுக்கப்பட்டவர்களாகவும் முகநூலில் முகம் காட்ட முடியாத நிலையிலும் உள்ளார்கள். இந்த கலாசாரம் காரணமாகவே முகநூல் பாவனை செய்யும் பெண்கள் பலரின் கருத்துப்பெட்டிகளில் ஆணாதிக்கம் மற்றும் பெண்ணடிமைத்தனம் மிகவும் இலகுவாக வேர் கொள்கின்றன.

முகநூல் பாதுகாப்பான அறிவை வளர்த்து கொள்ளக்கூடிய மற்றும் ஒரு பொழுதுபோக்கான ஒன்றாக இருந்த போதிலும் அது கிராமப்புரங்களில் உள்ள தமிழ்பேசும் முஸ்லிம் பெண்களுக்கும் ஏனைய ஒரு சில தரப்பினருக்கும் கானல் நீராகவே உள்ளது. இலங்கை சனத்தொகையில் 52% பெண்கள் இருக்கிறார்கள். இலங்கையின் பல்கலைகழகங்களுக்கு ஆண்களை விட பெண்கள் அதிகமாக தெரிவு செய்யப்படுகின்றார்கள். ஆனால் பெண்களின் டிஜிட்டல் அறிவை வளர்த்துக் கொள்ள ஒரு வாய்ப்பான சமூக வலைதள பாவனை பல பெண்களுக்கு எட்டாத கனி.

ILLUSTRATION: GABRIELLE PHILIPS

Women and Media

ANUTHARSHI
LINGANATHAN

ஊடகமும் பால்நிலைச் சமத்துவமும் பற்றிப் பேசும் போது குறிப்பாக இரண்டு விடயங்களை முன்நிலைப்படுத்தலாம் என நினைக்கிறேன். பால்நிலைச் சமத்துவம் வழங்கப்படவேண்டிய மிக முக்கியமான துறை ஊடகத்துறை. ஊடகத்தொழிற்துறை மற்றும் ஊடக உள்ளடக்கம் போன்றவற்றில் பால்நிலை ரீதியான பன்மைத்துவம்

குறித்துச் சிந்திக்கவேண்டியது அவசியம். பெரும்பாலான ஊடகங்களில் பால்நிலைச் சமுத்துவமோ பன்மைத்துவமோ பேணப்படுவதில்லை.

ஊடகங்களில் பால்நிலை ரீதியான மீள்கட்டுமானம் அவசியம். சந்தைப்படுத்தலுக்கான பொருளாக பெண்ணைப் பாவித்தலும் பால்நிலை ரீதியான மீள்வருவார்ப்பை அல்லது மாறாத்தன்மையைப் பிரதிபலித்தலையும் பெரும்பாலான ஊடகங்கள் கடமையாகக் கொண்டுள்ளன. ஊடகங்களைப் பொறுத்தமட்டில் பெண்கள் விளிம்புநிலை மனிதர்களாகத் தான் இருக்கிறார்கள். தந்தைவழிக் குடும்ப முறையைக் கொண்டவையாகத் தென்னாசிய நாடுகள் இருக்கின்றன.

தென்னாசிய நாடுகளின் ஊடகங்கள் பெரும்பாலும் ஆணாதிக்க ஊடகங்களாகவே இருக்கின்றன. ஊடக நிறுவனங்களில் தொழில் சமத்துவத்தையும் பெண்களின் தலைமைத்துவத்தையும் உறுதிப்படுத்தல் அவசியம். அதேநேரம் பெண்களையும் ஏனைய பாலினர்களையும் ஊடக உள்ளடக்கத்திலும் நேர் மறையாகக் கையாழ்தல் அவசியம்.

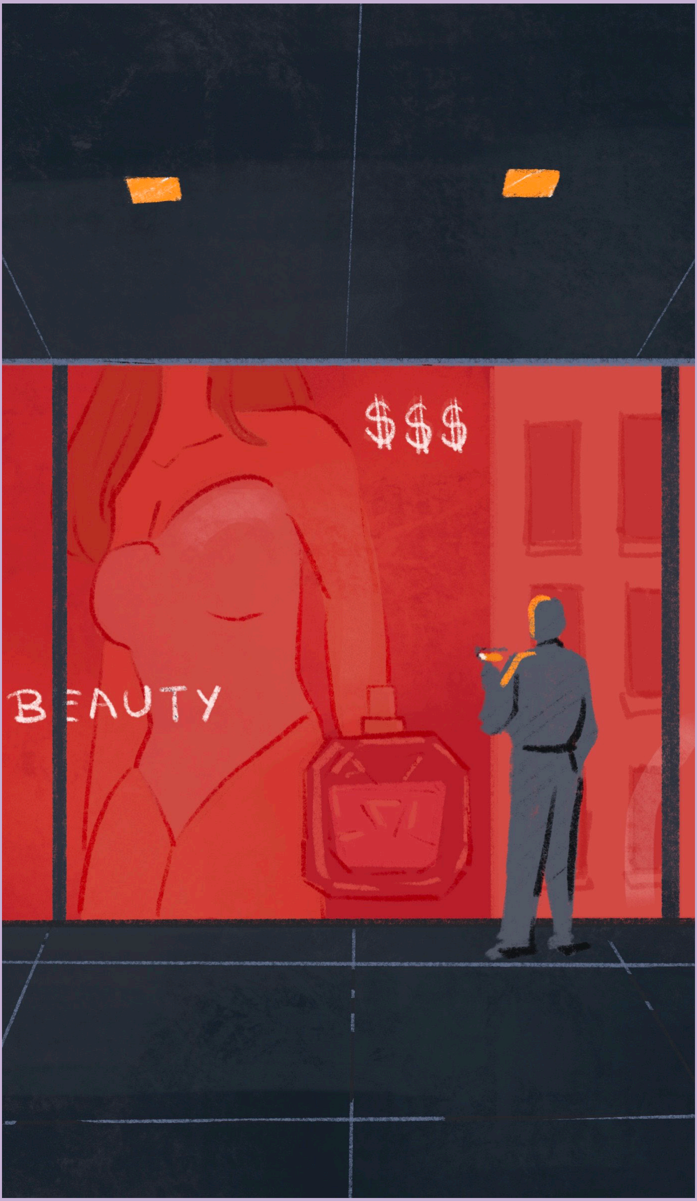


ILLUSTRATION: SHENUKA COREA

"single" is no longer a lack of options, but a choice.

S.H

Within our Asian context, being single is still heavily stigmatized and looked down upon, especially if you are an independent female with a mind of her own. Although this narrow mindset is gradually changing, it still hasn't penetrated the layer of nosy aunts, grandmothers and occasional

neighbors.

People would rather you be in an abusive, dysfunctional relationship, than being single and living your own life at your own pace. This societal pressure leads some of us single peeps to jump into relationships where we are not loved or appreciated as deserved. Are we really going to jeopardize our freedom, happiness and most importantly our peace of mind just because some snooty old women had nothing better to do than pry into your personal life?

Oh, the audacity!

Looking at where some of us went wrong, me and some friends started dating pretty young, well for me, it was because at that point I did not know how to turn a person down being the goody two shoes I was, and when you have pretty friends, you get swept up with all that drama. Anyway, I had a few friends who desperately wanted to be in a relationship, change their relationship status, receive secret gifts, sneak out, keep a secret mobile phone hidden from your parents- oh the thrill! Unfortunately, some of them turned into compulsive daters, which trust me did not end well and did take a huge toll on their mental health. I mean when you look

ILLUSTRATION: KINARA DISSANAYAKE

back, you tend to think what was the big deal of having a boyfriend anyway?

This is just to show how early our minds, either consciously or unconsciously brainwashed into constructing this idea of being single is something “bad”. Moving on to a more personal experience, do you ever think that these people who pry into YOUR personal life ever wonder WHY you are single for so long? Do you think they ever take the trauma into consideration? Do they even know what PTSD mean?

For me, on a personal level being single is a choice because it gives me a peace of mind to acertain extent. After going through two mind crumpling, soul crushing experiences, being diagnosed with severe depression and PTSD, lack of sleep, even occasional days of self-harm just to divert the pain was a different experience. This is something that a wrong relationship can do to you as well, but no one seems to care as they think finding another person can “heal” you, when two people broke you.

The reality is that being single is about being in a relationship with yourself. It is the most intimate relationship you will ever experience in your life. This

is the time to take a break, focus on your studies, your career, build an empire because you're a boss and you should not let the words and opinions of others affect you or distract you from getting where you want to be. Build yourself up and if the time is right, who knows, the universe might reward you with a man that sees your actual worth! Also, when it comes to children, yes motherhood is an amazing thing that every woman should experience, but there is no shame in adopting. It's one of the most generous acts you can ever do in life and its time that these aunties and the entire society come out of their shells and start seeing that.

We are the new generation. We are seen, we are vocal. If our body clock is running out of time, fine! We will find a solution! Life is meant to be enjoyed, not rushed into and be in a place where you are constantly feeling dragged down.

It's time people start seeing that being single is a choice and no longer a lack of options or mere stubbornness. We do what's best for us. We choose us, and there is absolutely nothing wrong in that.

TALES
FROM
THE
CRYPT