

March 2023

Issue No. 2

# Break the Chain

## Welcome back to the Pudumai Penn newsletter!

### In this issue...

- Meet Kaviyapriya, one of our girls!
- Interview with Preethika, who recently was promoted to sub-inspector in the police service!
- Student Journalism Spotlight
  - This month, Megala discusses the 'Honour Killing' practice in India

... and more!

Hi everyone,

There have been some inspiring events over the past few months. Many thanks to Geetha Premkumar, an HR professional and PP volunteer, for conducting the informative workshop on 'goal setting and interview skills' on February 19th.

March was also lively: Mr. Natarajan, another valued PP volunteer, began an English language class from the 19th, for the 2022-23 batch of students. On the 26th, we also had a full day session on Life Skills at Cognizant Technologies in Thoraipakkam (arranged by their Outreach team). We are excited to launch weekly digital classes by Cognizant, commencing April 2nd for the 2022-23 batch.

Take this newsletter as both a piece of reflection of the successful months passed, and as an optimistic token of our girls' literary calibre. Happy reading!

# In conversation with Kaviyapriya

Kaviyapriya is 20 years old, studying for her undergraduate degree in computer science. In our conversation, she struck me for how engaged she was with current affairs, and how well spoken she is – which this interview exhibits...

## What's something you're proud of yourself for?

I am proud of my ability to handle any situation, since I can see both the positive and negative sides of a situation.

I don't have my mum – she died when I was 14. I have two younger siblings. I handled my studies and my family, and for that I am proud of myself.

## If you were prime minister, what would you do?

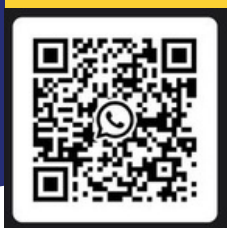
I would do some changes in the agriculture sector, since agriculture is the backbone of our economy. For me, this is visible. My native town is near Thiruchendur and is an agricultural sect, so I am inspired by that. But, compared to other countries, the Indian economy is developing. Methods like enhancing seeds, by using hybrid seeds for example, would help improve production.

## What does 'female empowerment' mean to you?

Accepting womens' points of view and making effort to rise their statuses through education, awareness, and making them feel self-worthy. Education is the most important thing for women improvement.

## On a lighter note, what's your favourite movie?

I prefer movies which are interesting and thrilling – more suspenseful. I recently watched a movie called Khaidi, which I would recommend!



If you are a student and are interested in being interviewed for Break the Chain, scan the QR code to join the WhatsApp group!



# Honour Killing: Cultural Customary Crime

Honour Killing is a cultural customary crime, murdering an individual who has brought dishonour to their family to retain their pride for pursuing an inter-caste marriage. This Killing is done by the family members itself, because the family's so-called image has been demolished in the society: it is also termed a Customary Killing for this reason. They assume that this will set out an example to others, who would consider an inter-caste marriage. These weddings are considered to be a shameful, where a person has violated those principles of a religion or community. Even if the family leaves the matter aside, their clans force them to commit murder or they themselves commit it for their nobility and fame.

Honour Killing is subjected to proscription, essentially contravening the fundamental rights that are enshrined in our Indian Constitution. Yet, Honour Killing still plays a considerable role in India, with plenty of cases being reported every day. When people stop following all those customs and practices, Honour Killing would not be in existence.

Many practices have been banned in India which violates a human's basic, natural and inalienable rights. Many social evils – systems like the Sati system, Devadasi system, Purdah system, or Child Marriage – were either abolished by the British Government who ruled our land for more than 80 years, or by Indian reformers and the Indian Government later for the welfare of the society. Likewise, the Government should put an end to Honour Killing effectually. Though many laws are present in India to protect the victims from Honour Killing, but the Government must take necessary steps to make it effective.

Caste plays a very important role in Honour Killings. As according to Hindus, this caste system is said to be the four Varnas which is divided into Brahmins (Priests/ Teachers), Kshatriyas (Warriors/Noble/Rulers), Vaishyas (Commoner/Merchants/ Cultivators) and Shudras (Servant) and this is further divided into sub-castes. Various castes have their own different principles and norms to be followed by their members. If the members violate it, they may be boycotted by the whole society. Inter-caste marriages are considered a violation of customary rights.

People can change according to the environment: take technology, which has drastically changed everyone's life. Nowadays, many illiterate even use technology. But why has the idea of Honour Killing been inculcated in the roots of many? An adult is taught about his caste and religion by his own parents. They make him choose a circle of boon companions only to whom their caste matches up. This results in him taking decisions in a biased way.

*[continued on the next page]*

The United Nations estimated that 5,000 women were victims of Honour Killings each year. The United Nations Human Rights Chief states: "So-called 'Honour Killing' are an extreme symptom of discrimination against women, which – including other forms of domestic violence- is a plague that affects every country". The extent of Honour Killing varies from state to state and country to country, but has been largely found in many countries in South Asia, and India has one of the highest rates of Honour Killings. It is currently extensive in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and South India. People still trust the supremacy of their castes, even though we have got freedom from the British rule.

Thereby Honour Killing must be lowered and not uplifted. There is manifestation away from this practice, but still, it is a built-in aversion in the society that inter-caste marriage means to kill them for keeping up their pride.

By Megala S.

### Quote of the month:

"You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."

- Rabindranath Tagore



### Issue 2 Special:

## SMRITI MANDHANA

March being Women's History Month, I want to draw attention to Smriti Madhana, the exemplary Indian cricketer. She plays for the Indian national team and for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the WPL. In her career, she has smashed records. What most encapsulates her brilliance is that in 2018, she was adjudged the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year and the ICC Women's ODI Player of the Year.

The sports industry on an international scale is commonly understood as male-dominated. This is a cycle which begins as a child. It is through figures like Mandhana in the spotlight that young girls can understand their potential in sport.

More, sport can be taken as a metaphor for life. Mandhana's journey teaches us the necessity of bouncing back from career lows. And, the capability of women in positions of responsibility!

# From student to sub-inspector: Preethika's remarkable journey



Preethika graduated from SIET College in Teynampet, Chennai, in 2018, with BA History, and was a Pudumai Penn scholar since 2016. She was also a junior national medalist in pole vaulting (with a personal best of 3.50m). She currently doing her sub-inspector (SI) training for the Indian Police Service.

## Why did you want to be a police officer?

It's not my ambition, but I really like the uniform! I also have good physical fitness, which is why I like the uniform. My first ambition is actually journalism, but now I don't really have any other option, which is why I'm here. I wanted to do journalism once upon a time, but I've been working in the police department since 2017.

## How is your experience being a woman in the police force?

In society, 'women' are considered soft, humble... they don't have any powers. They are not supposed to leave the house, their role is in housework. In the police, it's completely different. Every day we go to face all new problems, new people, so day by day the confidence level and people-skills are developed.

In terms of the women who come to the police: I have three or four years experience, so now when a woman comes to see me, I can understand what she is thinking. The subtle way she speaks, I can understand what her problem is. Every woman who comes to the police has a bright future in life, and I feel responsible to help.

## So tell me about your college experience, studying History.

Indians consider History the very lowest subject – compared to other countries, where History is one of the highest subjects. I am not like that, I find History a very good subject and very useful. It helped me write my SI exam: it teaches about the Indian Constitution, which is important. I'm honestly proud to say I am a History student.

## What did you learn from Pudumai Penn?

Pudumai Penn is my backbone. They sponsored all of my equipment for pole vaulting, giving me a pole, spikes, shoes, food, everything. Starting, I didn't know English, but now I am so much more comfortable. It has been a long journey, but I am only here because Pudumai Penn sponsored me.

## What advice would you give to current students?

99% of people will work hard, but only 1% of people will do **smart work**. You need to apply your practice, and **apply everything to you learn your life**. That's your job.

# FEB/MAR headlines

Selected by the editor, on topics which Pudumai Penn students expressed interest in on a recent survey.

## 24/02/2023: Supreme Court refuses proposals for menstrual leave

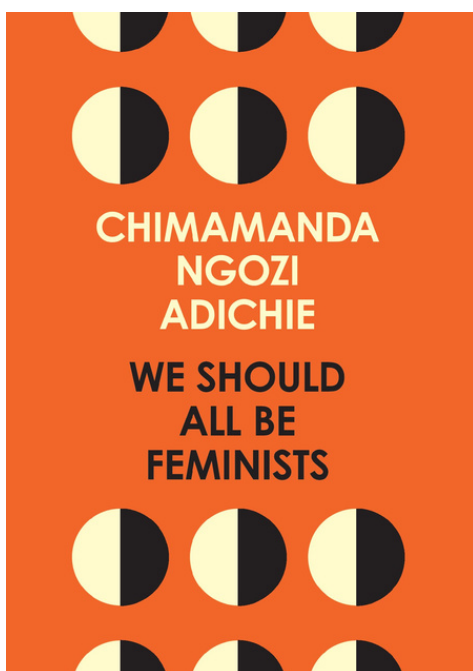
The Supreme Court of India redirected petitioners about the issue of menstrual leave, to the Ministry of Women and Child development – essentially saying it is not an issue of national concern. Menstrual leave (a.k.a. period leave) refers to policy which allows women to take time off work during their period, which as we know, can be a time of physical strain. Menstrual policies give women time to recover if pain is debilitating. However, some believe these policies will disincentivize companies from hiring women at all. In India, Bihar and Kerala are the only states to introduce menstrual leave, and companies like Zomato, Swiggy, and Byjus also have paid period-leave in place.

## 08/03/2023: President Droupadi Murmu's speech on International Women's Day

President Murmu acknowledged how significant the contribution of women in the Indian work-sphere is, particularly at the grassroots level. The indomitable spirit of Indian women has allowed for vast strides in female empowerment. However, going forward, President Mumru suggests that there isn't as many women in decision-making roles in higher positions of authority. Going forward, she says, "we must understand and break free from ingrained prejudices based on gender inequality".

## 13/03/2023: Historic Oscar wins for India

The 95th Academy Awards, or the Oscars (awards for merit in the film industry), filled Indians around the world with pride. 'Naatu Naatu' stole Best Original Song, and 'The Elephant Whisperers' took the Oscar for Best Documentary Short Film. The performance of 'Naatu Naatu' during the ceremony just showcases how captivating Indian music is, earning it credibility on a global stage. This is a long overdue acknowledgement of the Indian film industry, but marks a change in the international perception of Indian culture.



### Book of the month: 'We Should All Be Feminists' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

This book-length essay discusses what it means to be a 'feminist' in the twenty-first century. Adichie is an author from Nigeria. The book was adapted after [Adichie's TED Talk on the subject](#) went viral. 'We Should All Be Feminists' argues that feminism means equality. It truly changed my life when I first read it aged 16 – it will undoubtedly change yours too!

Please send any donations to our bank account:

# Get in touch!

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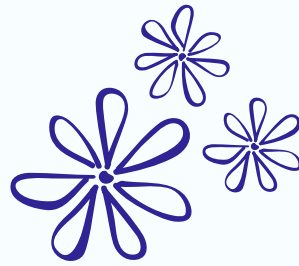
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