

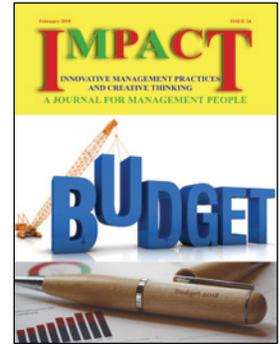
IMPACT

INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
AND CREATIVE THINKING

A JOURNAL FOR MANAGEMENT PEOPLE



Greetings from Impact



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Dear Readers,

Come February! The whole of India and its various States looking up for the Union and State Annual budgets with bated breath.

IMPACT with its normal curiosity looks at its Union Budget submitted by the Finance Minister in its own way and tries to find out its IMPACT on the economical, social, rural, urban development and so on.

A separate article touching upon some important points on Budget has been published elsewhere in this issue.

As Impact Enthusiasts put it in a lighter vein:

“Budget summary in 3 lines”

- Lower class gets Subsidy!
- Upper Class gets Rebate!!
- Middle class gets only TV debate/s!

We are fully conscious of the fact that no budget presented right from CD Deshmuk to the present FM days, can satisfy the expectations of the Society.

Society’s expectations are varied and high.

As for as the political parties are concerned less said it is better. No opposition party will accept and appreciate the budget presented by the ruling party and will find loopholes here and there everywhere! No party is different in this respect.

Every party has its own ideologies and conceptions of the welfare of the nation and budget is drawn on that basis.

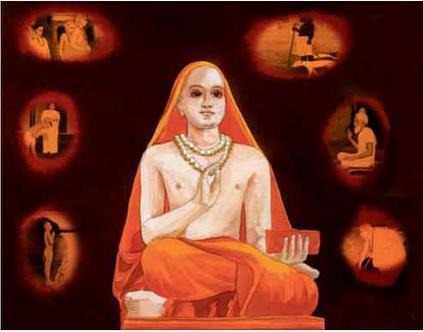
Welfare oriented, development oriented, social oriented, growth orientedyes that is how the Ruling Party will describe its budget!

Several promises will be made in the Budget and at the end of the year we will see yawning gap between the promises and the performance. People are also aware of the state of affairs and accept as a matter of routine.

The current issue of IMPACT brings you the budget in a nutshell and new articles.

Editorial Team

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Adi Shankara on Spiritual Development

We have been giving some thoughts on Adi Shankara's views on development of the individual - may be personal, spiritual, intellectual and so on. This we try to explain with Shankara's actions.

In this issue we are quoting his debate with Mandana and one can easily see the individual development through this episode.

Shankara entered Mandana's house and saw him cleaning the holy feet of Sages Vyasa and Jaimini, whom Mandana was able to bring there on account of his penance, for the conduct of a ceremony performed by him as per the Sastras. Mandana, who disliked Sanyasins, entered into a violent wordy duel with Shankara. The sages pacified Mandana and then he welcomed Sri Shankara's challenge along with the condition that the loser of the debate would become the disciple of the victor. Mandana fixed the next day for the debate and requested Jaimini and Vyasa to be the judges. But they said that Mandana's wife Ubhaya Bharati, accepted as an incarnation of Goddess Saraswati shall judge the debate. The following day, Sri Shankara initiated the debate, announcing his proposition of the unity of all existence as follows: 'Brahman, the Existence-Conscious-Bliss Absolute (Sat-chit-ananda) is the one ultimate Truth. It is He who appears as the entire world owing to ignorance, just as a shell appears as silver. When the illusion gets dispelled, the silver dissolves into the substratum, the shell. Similarly, when ignorance is erased the whole world dissolves into its substratum Brahman, which is the same as Atman. This is the supreme knowledge, as also Moksha (liberation from births and deaths); and



N V Subbaraman

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the Upanishads are the authority for this proposition.' Mandana made his proposition, emphasising the tenets of his faith thus: 'The non-Vedantic part of the Veda dealing with effects produced by Karma is the real authority; actions alone (Karma) constitute the steps leading to Moksha and embodied beings have to perform action till the end of their lives.' Ubhaya Bharati put a garland of flowers on the neck of the two contestants, declaring that the person whose garland withers will be considered defeated. The debate went on for several days. Ubhaya Bharati accepted that the cogent arguments of Shankara had overcome the contentions of Mandana and gave her verdict subjecting Mandana to defeat. The flower wreath on Mandana's neck also faded. Mandana adopted Sanyasa in accordance with the wager. Ubhaya Bharati gave Bhiksha to both Sri Shankara and Mandana, indicating that her husband was now a Sanyasin. Mandana, however, still had some questions regarding the aphorisms of Jaimini and their relation to the Absolute Truth, as propounded by Sri Shankara. When Sri Shankara clarified, Mandana prostrated and said, 'You are the nature of pure consciousness, yet for the sake of ignorant men you have assumed this human body. You have saved all with the single statement - Tat tvam asi, and explained the great soul indicated in the Upanishads, the crest-jewel of the Vedas, as indestructible and one without a second.' Praising thus, Mandana then surrendered himself at the feet of Sri Shankara.



The moral of the episode is that argument for arguments sake is not the way for success. Getting into the matter of debate and convincing or getting convinced is a sure method of self/personal development.

Readers are requested to send their management related questions.

IMPACT will get replies from management experts.

Send your questions to:

impactjournalindia@gmail.com

Fortune at our Fingertips

The fingers on our hands are our great blessings. We are able to do a great many things because of our fingers. In fact most of the things which we think we are able to do with our hands are actually done with the help of the fingers. Fingers help us in doing a countless number of things- to do our work, eat our food, earn our livelihood and communicate with others.

Human beings have ten fingers on their hands – five on each. On rare occasions we do see persons with a sixth finger on one hand or on both. The extra finger is supposed to be a symbol of good luck.

The fingers on our hands are not equal and this teaches us a simple lesson that all people are not alike in their nature and personality. One finger cannot do much all by itself but when it joins the other fingers it forms a strong and powerful fist. This shows us the meaning of the adage ‘unity is strength.’ People in management use this idea to explain the concept of synergy which means that when people work as a team they produce much more than what they would do if they worked individually.

The first thing which our fingers help us to do is to count. Children learn to count with the help of their fingers though teachers do discourage the habit and encourage them to count in the mind. People who are not able to see, use their fingers for reading Braille. Those who cannot talk manage to communicate with others using their fingers and making signs.

Another important thing we do with the help of fingers is writing. Imagine how we would have written if we did not have fingers. Normally we hold the pen or the pencil with our fingers but in rare cases we may write with the fingers themselves. Like lovers writing love letters in the sand. I remember the old Pat Boone song, ‘Writing Love Letters in the Sand.’

Fingers are also used for a variety of things – sewing, knitting, typing, painting, and playing musical instruments. In fact a part of some musical instruments is called fingerboard. Fingers help in making handicrafts though the art is called handicraft and not finger craft. In the field of medicine fingers are used for checking pulse and making many other types of diagnosis. The surgeon’s skill lies in the dexterity of his fingers. I remember a joke. A nurse was seen holding both the wrists of an old man. A doctor passing by saw this and spoke to the nurse, “Sister, what are you doing? Is that the way to check the patient’s pulse?” “No, doctor, I am not checking his pulse. I am checking his impulse,” said the nurse.



I remember an incident. A man working on an electric saw got all his ten fingers cut in a bad accident. He ran to a surgeon his hands bleeding profusely. “Where are the fingers?” asked the surgeon. “What can I do without the fingers? If you had brought the fingers I could have tried to somehow join them!” “I could not pick them up, doctor” said the man.



Clifford Martis

Former Executive Director Life Insurance Corporation of India, served for three and a half decades in Administration, Housing Finance and Investment. He is a prolific writer in English, Kannada and Hindi on various social subjects, humor, management, etc. His articles are being published in Women's Era, Alive, Yogasksbema, Vinoda, etc.

Fingers are used for testing many things like testing whether the water for the bath is hot and also for tasting like tasting pickles. The modern world is full of gadgets which have buttons. We press the buttons on the telephone, in the lift and on hundred different instruments. Most games are played with the help of fingers – caroms, chess and so on. Magic is possible because the fingers are nimble.

We eat our food with the help of our fingers. No doubt some people eat their meals with the help of fork and spoon or chopsticks. But you need fingers to hold the fork and spoon and chopsticks. Don't you? Talking of eating we are reminded of the habit of licking fingers after a delicious meal. Not a very nice thing to do but the temptation is too strong to be resisted not only for children but also for older people like me.

Fingers have names. The thumb, the index finger, the middle finger, the ring finger and the little finger. In our ancient literature also we have names for our fingers. *Angushta* for the thumb, *thargani* for the forefinger, *madhyama* for the middle finger, *anamika* for the ring finger and *kanishta* for the little finger. In our religious rites and rituals we use the fingers for various purposes. In Yoga, Karavinyasa and Bharathanatyam, fingers are used for expressing various mudras.

Individually the fingers have specific functions. The thumb is used for taking thumb impression. The index

finger, as its name suggests is used to pointing things. But it can be an accusing agent also. In fact the index finger is supposed to represent the ego of a person. They say, "Do not point your finger at others; remember when you do so three other fingers are pointing at you." The middle finger does not seem to have any great function but it happens to be the longest of the lot. The ring finger is of course the finger which adorns the wedding ring. It is said that this finger has direct neurological connection with the heart. No wonder people selected it for such a romantic purpose. Interestingly our women who wear kumkum or sindhoor on their forehead use the ring finger for placing the sindhoor on the forehead. The little finger has some lowly functions like indicating the need to go to the washroom or cleaning the ear.

There is a story about the little finger. It seems she was very sad because her functions were rather lowly and she complained to God. God asked her not to worry and pointed out that whenever anyone prayed to Him that person's little finger would be nearest to him. God also reminded the little finger that Lord Krishna had lifted the Govardhan by his little finger.

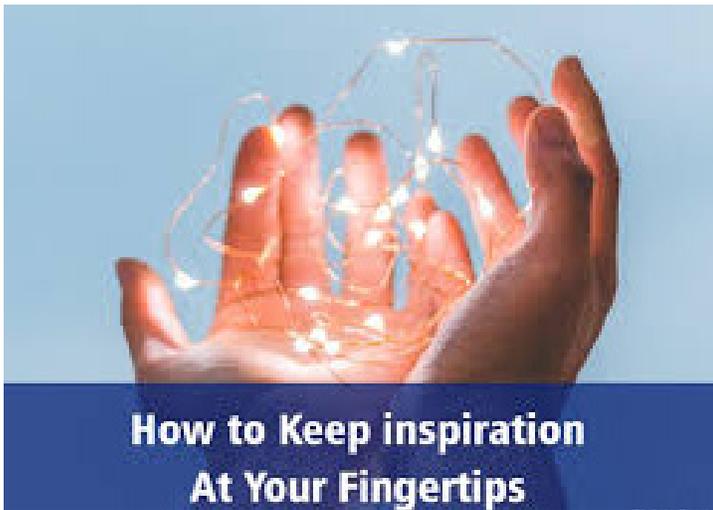
Talking of thumb impressions we recall that it is usually the left hand thumb impression. The reason appears that illiterate people do manual work with their hands and it is quite likely that their right hand fingers get worn out more. It is a wonder of wonders that no two thumb impressions are alike in spite of the fact that there are

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How to Keep inspiration At Your Fingertips

millions of people living on this earth. That is why the thumb impression is so useful in identification of persons and in the detection of crimes.

The system of using thumb impression (known as Dactyloscopy) was developed in 1888 by Jean Vucetich of Argentina. It was further developed and improved by the English scientist Sir Francis Galton. At present finger printing is used in Armed Forces, criminal investigation, government service and banking. The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US maintains a national fingerprint file. It is reported that the Ugandan government is planning to have fingerprints of all its citizens in their social security cards.

Many idioms and adages have been coined based on fingers. To keep one's fingers crossed means to hope for good luck. To have a finger in the pie indicates having an interest or involvement in some matter. Having green fingers refers to being good at gardening. Not lifting a finger means not doing even the slightest thing to help. Pointing a finger of course means accusing someone. When someone knows a subject in and out we say that he has the subject at his fingertips. Burning one's fingers refers to suffering like someone dabbling in the stock exchange and burning his fingers. In Hindi we have an interesting idiom 'unglion par nachana'.

The thumb takes the lion's share of the idioms using fingers. We use the phrase 'Going by the thumb rule' to indicate going by experience and robust common sense. Hitch hiking people request lift by thumbing a lift. Thumbing one's nose at someone indicates defiance or contempt. Thumbs up of course is a sign of encouragement or victory. The opposite of this simply thumbs down. We recall the ancient Roman and Greek arenas where prisoners were thrown in front of lions and the bloodthirsty spectators showed the thumbs down sign. The greatest importance of

the thumb can be seen when we think of what Dronacharya demanded of Ekalavya as his Gurudakshina.

Fingers do not always do only pleasant things. Sometimes they are involved in some not so pleasant things also like poking someone or 'fingering' which means manipulating or meddling with others' affairs. As I was writing this piece I asked a number of friends what they use their fingers for. Some said without batting an eyelid that they use fingers for picking the nose. Not a very nice thing to do, especially if done in the presence of others, is it? But tell me, how else would you deal with a nose which is itching inside? Incidentally, there was a report in the papers recently that two Bangalore based scientists were honoured in Harvard for their research in nose picking as a compulsive activity with adolescents. They have given it a peculiar name – *rhinotellexomania*. We have heard the story of the forest brigand Angulimal. His real name was something else. He was called Angulimal because he used to make chains with the fingers of the victims slain by him.

Fingers are apt to get many diseases. Hansen's disease (leprosy) attacks the fingers first and cripples them. Medical men say that this happens not so much because of the disease as such, but because the patient loses the sense of touch and fingers being the extremities get worn out without the patient knowing about it. Other diseases which trouble the fingers are arthritis, finger clubbing ingrown nail (vitlo?) and so on. Sometimes arthritis cripples the fingers.

Our legs also have fingers but they are not called by that name. They are called toes and they do not perform as many functions as the fingers do. Fingers and toes have nails and thereby hang a tale. Fingernails are useful to us for many purposes like scratching, sketching and as instruments of fashion. We recall the story of the lady driver who gave the right signal but did not take the right turn for a long time. The driver behind was confused and at last when he managed to get alongside he asked, "Lady, why don't you turn right?" "Who wants to turn?" asked the lady. "But you have been giving the right signal" "Oh, that? I was just drying my nail polish."

We use our fingers in a special way to create the finger alphabet. This way we succeed in making those who cannot talk to express themselves. Communication with others with the help of fingers is known as dactylogy.

Of all the multifarious things that our fingers can do for us the best and noblest is touching, feeling and caressing. We show love, care and concern with the help of our fingers!

Union Budget 2018 – Important Budget's Announcement

(1)

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Thursday that India is expected to register a growth rate of 7.2-7.5% in the second half of the current fiscal and is on way to becoming the 5th largest economy of the world.

While unveiling the Budget 2018 -19, the finance minister said, India has grown on an average of 7.5 per cent in the first three years of the current government and has become a USD 2.5 trillion economy.

Here are the important announcements made by the finance minister Arun Jaitley.

- * Rs 14.34 lakh crore to be spent for rural infrastructure. Eight crore free gas connections to women under UJJWALA and 4 crore electricity connections to the poor under Saubhagya Yojana
- * Agri-Market Development Fund with a corpus of 2000 crore to be set up for developing agricultural markets. 470 APMCs have been connected to #eNAM network, the rest to be connected by March 2018
- * Minimum Support Price of all crops shall be increased to at least 1.5 times that of the production cost. Allocation in for Ministry of Food Processing is being doubled; specialised agro-processing and financial institutions to be promoted by the government
- * India now a \$2.5 trillion economy and firmly on path to achieve 8% plus growth soon. Government to invest Rs 1 trillion in development of premium education infrastructure over next four years
- * From Rs 10 lakh crore to Rs 11 lakh crore credit for agricultural activities
- * Fishery and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Fund to be set up with corpus of Rs 10,000 crore
- * Restructured National Bamboo Mission to be launched with allocation of Rs 1,290 crore to promote sector in a holistic manner
- * Rs 500 crore for Operation Green



- * Eklavya schools to be started for Scheduled Tribe population. Integrated B.Ed programme to be initiated for teachers to improve quality of teachers
- * Propose to set up Rs 3 trillion crore: plan for lending under Mudra scheme in 2018/19.
- * Eight crore free gas connections to women under UJJWALA and 4 crore electricity connections to the poor under Saubhagya Yojana
- * Have decided to take healthcare protection to a new aspirational level. Launching a flagship National Health Protection Scheme to cover 10 crore poor and vulnerable families, benefiting approximately 50 crore people



Senior Citizens

- Exemption on interest from bank and post office deposits be **increased to Rs 50k**
- **TDS not to be deducted** on such income **under section 194A**
- **Medical expense** deduction (80D) **raised to Rs 50,000**
- For certain illnesses, **medical expense deduction (80DDB) raised to Rs 1 lakh**

- * Providing Rs 5 lakh per family per year for medical reimbursement, under National Health Protection Scheme. This will be world's largest health protection scheme
- * Air pollution in Delhi NCR is a cause for concern; special scheme will be implemented to support Haryana, Punjab, UP and Delhi NCT to address this and subsidise machinery for management of crop residue
- * Scheme for revitalising school infrastructure, with an allocation of Rs 1 lakh crore over four years. Called RISE – Revitalizing Infrastructure in School Education
- * Government plans to construct two crore more toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission
- * One government medical college to be ensured for every three parliamentary constituencies by upgrading 24 district-level colleges
- * Govt. will evolve a scheme to provide a unique ID to every enterprise on lines of Aadhaar
- * Rs 1,48,528 crore capital expenditure for Indian Railways for 2018-19
- * All trains to be progressively provided with Wi-Fi, CCTV and other state-of-the-art amenities



Jai Kisan

- Agricultural market fund of Rs 2,000 crore
- Kharif MSP at 1.5 times produce price
- Food processing sector allocation almost doubled to Rs 1400 cr
- Rs 10,000 cr for fisheries & aquaculture, animal husbandry funds
- Rs 500 cr for Operation Green

(2)

Finance Bill, 2018

1. No change in Tax Rate. All persons including individuals, HUF, Firms and C[14:15, 2/1/2018]
Divya: finance Bill, 2018
No change in Tax Rate. All persons including individuals, HUF, Firms and Companies to pay same tax . However Education cess is being increased from 3 to 4 % to be known as Education and Health cess.
2. However for Domestic Companies having total turnover or gross receipts not exceeding Rs 250 crores in Financial year 2016-17 shall be liable to pay tax at 25% as against present ceiling of Rs 50 crore in Financial year 2015-16.
3. Long term Capital gain exemption under section 10(38) in respect of listed STT paid shares being withdrawn.
4. However capital gain up to 31.1.2018 shall not be taxed as cost of acquisition will be taken as Fair Market Value as on 31.1.2018.
5. Tax on STT paid long term capital Gain will be 10% under Section 112A. Further such tax will be liable for TDS.
6. Standard Deduction of Rs 40,000 for salaried employees. However benefit of transport allowance

Income Tax

- No change in personal income tax slabs rates
- Standard deduction of Rs 40,000 for medical expenses for salaried class
- Senior citizens get Rs 50,000 exemption for medical insurance
- Senior citizens get Rs 10,000 exemption in income from FDs

of Rs 19,200 and Medical Reimbursement of Rs 15,000 under Section 17(2) are being withdrawn. Thus net benefit to salaried class only Rs 5,800

7. Provision of Section 43CA, 50C and 56(2)(x) being amended to allow 5% of sale consideration in variation vis a vis stamp duty value. On account of location, disadvantage etc.
8. Provision of section 40(ia) and 40A(3) and 40A(3A) are being made applicable to Charitable Trust . Hence expenditure incurred without deduction of tax and in cash will not be eligible as application of income under section 10(23C) and section 11(1)(a).

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Operation Green

To promote Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs), agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management

Rs 500 crore

9. Agriculture Commodity Derivates income /loss also not to be considered as speculative under section 43(5).
10. Income Computation and Disclosure Standards(ICDS) being given statutory backing in view of decision of Delhi High Court decision.
11. Marked to market loss computed as per ICDS to be allowed under section 36.
12. Gain or loss in Foreign Exchange as per ICDS to be allowed under new section 43AA.
13. Construction Contract income to be computed on percentage completion method as per ICDS.
14. Valuation of Inventory including Securities to be as per ICDS.
15. Interest on compensation, enhanced compensation. Claim or enhancement claim and subsidy, incentives to be taxed in the year of receipt only as per new Section 145B.
16. Conversion of stock in trade to capital asset to be charged as business income in the year of conversion on Fair Market value on the date of conversion.
17. 54EC benefit of investment in Bonds to be restricted to Capital gain on land and building only. Further period of holding being increased from 3 years to 5 years.
18. PAN to be obtained by all entities including HUF other than individuals in case aggregate of financial transaction in a year is Rs 2,50,000 or more. All directors, partners, members of such entities also to obtain PAN.
19. All companies irrespective of income to file return and in case it is not filed, such companies will be liable for prosecution irrespective of the fact weather it has tax liability of Rs 3,000 or not.
20. Assessments to be E assessment under new section 143(3A)
21. No adjustment under section 143(1) while processing on account of mismatch with 26AS and 16A.
22. Deemed dividend to be taxed in the hands of the company itself as Dividend Distribution of tax @ 30%.

UJWALA YOJANA

8 cr poor women instead of 5 cr to get free LPG

SAUBHAGYA YOJANA

Power to 4 cr poor households at Rs 16,000 cr

SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN

To construct 2 cr more toilets



Budget Snapshot: Key Numbers

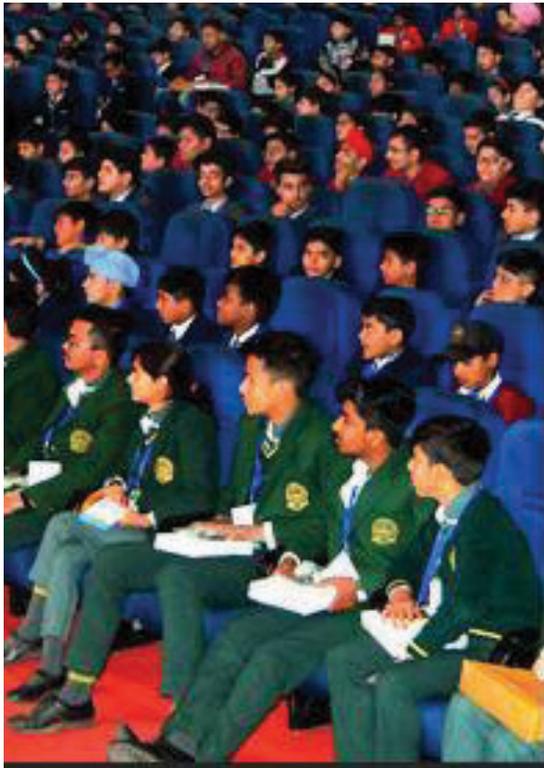
Figures in
₹ crore

| | 2016-17 Actuals | 2017-18 Budget Estimates | 2017-18 Revised Estimates | 2018-19 Budget Estimates |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Revenue Receipts | 13,74,203 | 15,15,771 | 15,05,428 | 17,25,738 |
| Capital Receipts* | 6,00,991 | 6,30,964 | 7,12,322 | 7,16,475 |
| Total Receipts | 19,75,194 | 21,46,735 | 22,17,750 | 24,42,213 |
| Total Expenditure | 19,75,194 | 21,46,735 | 22,17,750 | 24,42,213 |
| Revenue Deficit | 3,16,381 | 3,21,163 | 4,38,877 | 4,16,034 |
| Effective Revenue Deficit | 1,50,648 | 1,25,813 | 2,49,632 | 2,20,689 |
| Fiscal Deficit | 5,35,618 | 5,46,531 | 5,94,849 | 6,24,276 |
| Primary Deficit | 54,904 | 23,453 | 64,006 | 48,481 |

*Excluding receipts under Market Stabilisation Scheme

PIB/KBK

23. Penalty for non filing financial return as required under section 285BA being increased to Rs 500 per day .
1. [15:54, 2/1/2018] +91 98404 77552: Great . It is indeed an honor to Tamil, as a language and the Tamil abroad..
[20:48, 2/1/2018] +91 94899 21226: companies to pay same tax . However Education cess is being increased from 3 to 4 % to be known as Education and Health cess.
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8. Provision of section 40(ia) and 40A(3) and 40A(3A) are being made applicable to Charitable



Education

- Rs 1 lakh cr to revitalise and upgrade education sector
- Eklavya schools by 2022 for blocks with above 50% ST population
- Black board to digital board schools by 2022
- 1000 PM Research Fellows every year

Trust . Hence expenditure incurred without deduction of tax and in cash will not be eligible as application of income under section 10(23C) and section 11(1)(a).

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the government, regulatory bodies and political parties brought pressure on Jet management. Succumbing to this pressure, Jet Airways had to 'eat crow', to use a modern phraseology and take back their employees.

Some of the most frequently used methods to reduce overall head count include:

1. Attrition: Positions rendered vacant through voluntary resignations, retirement, death are either abolished or merged with other roles and in any case not filled up.
2. Spin-offs: Transferring employees to other group companies, subsidiaries etc thus reducing headcount in the original company.
3. Voluntary Retirement: Under this employees are offered attractive monetary and other incentives and encouraged to resign from their jobs. This is generally offered to employees who are near their superannuation age. Resultant vacancies are not filled up.
4. Buyouts: Offering attractive lump sum monetary compensation and other benefits to encourage employees to voluntarily leave the services of the Company
5. Sabbatical: Employees are encouraged to take a long leave from service (usually more than a year) usually with no pay or substantially reduced pay with a guarantee of job once they return from the sabbatical.
6. Lay-off: Enforced separation of employees usually due to circumstances not attributable to the individual employees. Compensation is usually paid to employees who are thus laid off. In the Indian context, lay-offs are governed and regulated by legal provisions. Lay-offs are also seen as a temporary downsizing where the employees would return to work once normalcy is restored within the organization.

Downside of Downsizing

Many analysts believe that many downsizing causes more harm than good to the companies because it results in:

1. Low morale amongst the retained employees and fear about their future career in the company
2. Retained employees may leave soon for better opportunities outside if they are not confident of their future in the company
3. Loss of loyalty

4. If not handled well, it may lead to loss of critical expertise and brain drain to competitors
5. Uncertain job environment post downsizing affects quality of work
6. Unhealthy changes in working relationship where competition replaces cooperation.
7. Nature of employer-employee relationship changing fundamentally from being stable and long term one to contingent and short term.
8. 'Profit first and people later' is the clear message that the downsizing companies seem to send out.

In the early days of the phenomenon of downsizing, especially in the 80's, this practice was adopted by 'weak' companies who had to cut costs to stay afloat. Hence any company implementing downsizing found unsavoury response in stock markets. But interestingly since the 90's, even companies perceived 'strong' took to downsizing to improve productivity or profitability even when there was an economic boom, their labour costs not high and the outlook was bright.

Critics also point out to two important aspects which have encouraged many companies to downsize even when it was not warranted by its own circumstances

1. The market perception that downsized company has intrinsically higher value than in reality has actually has led many companies to downsize. Hence these companies saw downsizing as a method to enhance share value.
2. Post downsizing, compensation of senior managers were revised markedly upwards in many large corporates. Executive management of other companies saw an incentive in this to downsize their own companies irrespective of the need for it. An example is made out of Delta Airlines where between 1980 and 95 the Company saw highest lay off percentage but their senior executives salaries increased by over 1000% during the same period. AT&T removed 40,000 employees in 1996 and the Chairman's compensation was doubled during the same year.

Jet Airways's experience should tell us that companies must give it a deep fore-thought and micro plan for implementation of any downsizing effort as otherwise the consequences may prove to be more costly than carrying additional manpower on the rolls.

Stopped Dyeing Started Living

There is no spelling mistake in the title- Stopped Dyeing. It is correct only. It is not “ Stopped Dying”. When I had spent a few days in the hospital recently for an operation in my urinary bladder, I could not shave with the result I began growing white hair in my head, white moustache and an evening shadow of white beard. I have been avoiding this white ‘look’ for quite a few years by taking the help of Godrej Dye, whose advertisement always attracted me “ We dye for you!” I was not only trying to look younger but also avoiding the neighbourhood young girls calling me ‘ Grandpa’. I did not mind them addressing me as ‘Uncle’!

Looking your actual age

How long will you hide behind your ‘Unclehood’?

The time has come for calling a Spade a Spade, in my case calling an old man as Grandpa!

But it was not so easy- I found it required a lot of courage, because from childhood I have been always trying to appear young in my dress, in my moustache style and in appearance. It is customary in India for young boys to pose like adults and for young girls to act like the ‘ever sweet sixteen’! What will happen to my youthful image? Will people recognise me? Of course, I can escape the ‘unwanted’ friends and persons who have given me hand loans- very convenient indeed!

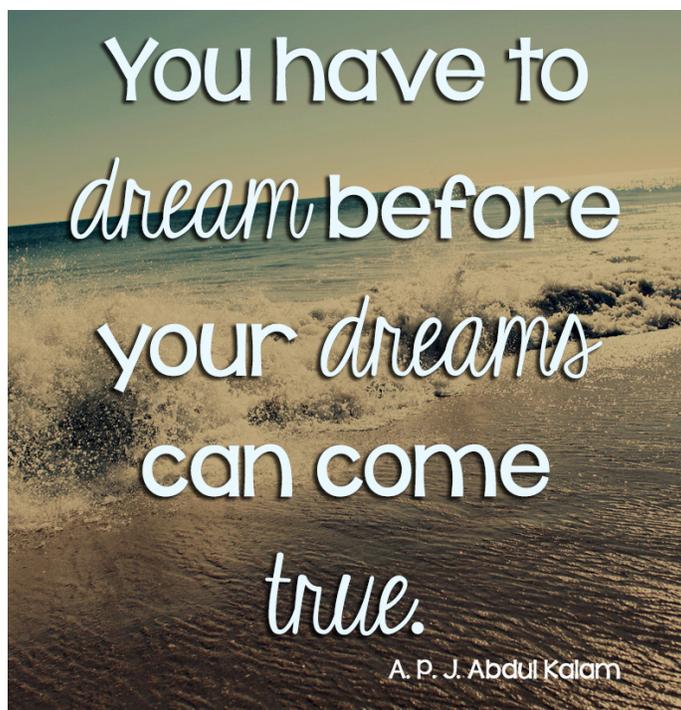
Anyway, I took the crucial decision, even without consulting my better half! But I did not realise that I could not escape her ‘hawk’ like eyes. Not only did I throw off my Dye bottle and allowed my hair to remain milk white but also shaved off my white moustache and looked clean like a North Indian old film star.



R Venugopal

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Then he served as the Profaember of the Syllabus Committee for the MSc- Actuarial Science course at the Christ University as well as one of their guest faculty. He is one of the editorial consultants for the Insurance World magazine.



Before and After

I was avoiding going out for a few days, afraid to show my new ‘look’ to my walking mates and neighbours. I gathered some strength when a few friends mentioned that I was looking ‘younger’! I wonder how this is possible. But many people remarked that I appeared ‘different’. I liked this comment because this is what I always want when I differ with a person- Your views seem to be unique and different. When you say like that, who can refute this ‘compliment’?

But the matter did not end here. I began thinking of old age as an inevitable part of everyone’s life. A

time has to come when you have to slowly start reducing your movements, travels, eating outside food etc to maintain your health. Even as ageing takes its own toll, falling sick and becoming dependent on others at home is more tortuous and anybody would like to avoid this predicament.

Anti-ageing tips

I found the following tips in a Health Supplement of the magazine- The Week:

- Meditation
- De-stressing
- Positive Thoughts
- Walking
- Yogurts
- Yoga posture- Savasana
- Yoga exercises
- Turmeric
- Leafy Greens
- Pepper
- Pomegranate
- Green Tea
- Coffee
- Vitamin C
- Sleep
- Avoid Sugar
- Avoid Smoking
- Avoid drinking
- Nuts
- Maintain good posture
- Give
- Stay hydrated
- Keep Learning

George Carlin on Ageing

Here are some more:

1. Throw out non-essential numbers including your age, height, weight etc.
2. Keep cheerful friends.

3. Enjoy simple things in life.
4. Laugh often, loud and long.
5. Tears happen- Endure, Grieve and Move on.
6. Surround yourself with what you love- family, pets, music, plants, hobbies etc.
7. Cherish your health. If good, preserve it. If unstable, improve it. If it is beyond improvement, get help.
8. Tell people whom you love that you love them at every opportunity.
9. Always remember- Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. Let us not arrive at our grave safely in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally used up and worn out shouting “ Man, What a Ride!”

Age is just a Number!

Age is an issue of mind over matter.

If you don't mind, it does not matter!

Actually between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of the World's population over 60 years will double from 11 to 22%. It is expected to raise from 605 million to 2 billion over the same period. The world will have more people who live to see their 80s or 90s than ever before.

At nearing age 72, I feel “The Best is yet to come!”

This visit to the hospital for a surgery- first time in my life- has been an eye-opener and a Rebirth to me. I have started living a new life.

I recall the following words read somewhere:

Life is like a note book,

Two pages written by God- the First page giving the date of birth,

And the Last page mentioning the date of death.

All the Centre pages are empty.

It is for you to fill them up with Love and Smile

Or with Hate and Frown!

CEO and The Seed

A successful businessman was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over the business. Instead of choosing one of his directors or his children, he decided to do something different.

He called all the young executives in his company together. "It is time for me to step down and choose the next CEO," he said. "I have decided to choose one of you."

The young executives were shocked, but the boss continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today - a very special seed. I want you to plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from the seed I have given you. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next CEO."

One man, named Anil, was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly, told his wife the story. She helped him get a pot, soil and compost and he planted the seed. Every day, he would water it and watch to see if it had grown.

After about three weeks, some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Anil kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew.

Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by, still nothing. By now, others were talking about their plants, but Anil didn't have a plant and he felt like a failure.

Six months went by - still nothing in Anil's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed.

Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Anil didn't say anything to his colleagues, however. He just kept watering and fertilizing the soil - he so wanted the seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the young executives of the company brought their plants to the CEO for inspection. Anil told his wife that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she asked him to be honest about what happened.

Anil felt sick at his stomach. It was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life, but he knew his wife was right. He took his empty pot to the boardroom. When Anil



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arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful --in all shapes and sizes. Anil put his empty pot on the floor and many of his colleagues laughed. A few felt sorry for him!

When the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives. Anil just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown," said the CEO. "Today one of you will be appointed the next CEO!"

All of a sudden, the CEO spotted Anil at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered the financial director to bring him to the front. Anil was terrified. He thought, "The CEO knows I'm a failure! May be he will have me fired!"

When Anil got to the front, the CEO asked him what had happened to him. Anil told him the story. The CEO asked everyone to sit down except Anil. He looked at Anil, and then announced to the young executives, "Here is your next Chief Executive! His name is Anil!"

Anil couldn't believe it. Anil couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new CEO the others said? Then the CEO said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed.

I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds; they were dead - it was not possible for them to grow.

All of you, except Anil, have brought me trees and plants and flowers." When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Anil was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive!"

- If you plant honesty, you will reap trust.
- If you plant goodness, you will reap friends.
- If you plant humility, you will reap greatness.
- If you plant perseverance, you will reap contentment.



- If you plant consideration, you will reap perspective.
 - If you plant hard work, you will reap success.
 - If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.
- So, be careful what you plant now; will determine what you will reap later.

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Feminist Struggle for Identity- Selected Novels of Indira Goswami

ABSTRACT:

Indira Goswami's novels depict the endless sufferings of widows who were heaped in the city of Vrindavan. Most of them left there in the city were by their dears and nears. A few of them came to the city hoping to get a peaceful life till death. Such people had a poor knowledge about the various trusts owned by private temples of various communities. Those trusts were exploited by various Paandas and nothing was left for the poor widows. They suffered even for their basic needs. Their sufferings become endless. Their struggle to prove their own identity prolonged. It was because one crisis leads to the other.

KEY WORDS

Feminism – a byproduct - never suggest solution -sufferings of young widows-her fictions-soulful lament. The moth eaten howdah of the tusker-vaishnavate sattra-Durga-paternal aunt-deprived of her share-forsaken by her in-laws-anxieties-lost identity-shadow of herself-Saru Gossainee-young beautiful widow-deteriorating wealth-trusted Mahidhar—trusted agent-Durga's jewels stolen-misused Gossainee's signature-Mahidhar was killed-Giribala widow girl-married to irresponsible son-introduced to Mark-collected manuscripts for Mark-threat of calling back-met Mark at night-a scandalous drama-The Blue Necked God-Vrindavan-Roychaudury's family-Saudamini young widow daughter-radheshyamis-unable to forget her lover-Roychaudury permitted- meets her Christian lover-swept away by Jamuna-Mrinalin middle aged spinster-burden like over loaded donkey-sold Behari kunj temple-thakur sahib died—cried out in utter desperation-Sashiporva-protection of Alamgarhi-love towards young swamiji-sale of the temple-death of Alamgarhi-struggle for shelter at night-Mrinalini's hovel-Goswamy-a streak of hope- healthy vriksha-unfathomed abyss-struggle for identity.

Feminism is defined as a theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. This theory does not subscribe any difference between men and women. A feminist is one who believes men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. National Organization for Women points out the core of feminism status as, "women must be granted some special privileges and men should not be the central issue or barrier in feminism." Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation who was also a great feminist said, "Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in all debates, deliberations and activities and offer her suggestions along with men for bringing about a better social order and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him."

It is very unfortunate that most of our religious books, literature and social sentiments hold that women are the personification of self sacrifice. Women are made to believe that they are inferior to men and they cannot survive without the active help of men. Such a belief is the root cause for all social evils such as child marriage, cruel domination of men



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and the isolation and subjugation of widows. All our social circles gradually became man centered then.

Feminism cannot be comprehended without mentioning male chauvinism. The HABEAS CORPUS WORKING GROUP of the European community in its book named, "Every day male chauvinism" points out that sexism is related to ideologies based on discrimination. It has brought a destructive effect to its community. It is common in every Hindu society exercising a mysterious control over women. It gradually developed in the form of evils like abusing power, domination and violence. And sexual violations. Such evils prevailed in almost all parts of India in the 19th and 20th centuries. A few authors like Indira Goswami have exposed such evils boldly to the public light.

Becoming a wife and bringing up children alone never assures a woman's identity. The various manifestations of woman's domain such as self-empowering, self-determination, love, compassion, leadership qualities, intellectual abilities, and individuality prove their identity. But if a society refuses such entries how can a woman prove her identity. Similar are the situations faced by the protagonists of Indira Goswami's novels THE MOTH EATEN HOWDAH OF THE TUSKER and THE BLUE NECKED GOD. Feminism in Indian writing in English is a byproduct of Western Feminist Movement. Usually women characters in novels reveal the writer's emotions and aspirations. It is very unfortunate that most of the writers never suggest any solution for the sufferings of the female characters. Similarly Indira Goswami gives a vivid narration about the sufferings of young widows in the Indian Hindu society without suggesting a solution. As she had been a living example of a young widow, her fictions depict the sufferings of young widows with a soulful lament. Her heroines longed for love, affection, sympathy and caretaking. Many authors are duly interested in the political and social problems of their times. They submerge themselves into certain moral ideas and values. Indira Goswami's moral idea influences her style and her mode of presentation and characterization.

She has written sixteen novels, more than one hundred short stories and an authentic autobiography. Most of her works have been translated into English and Hindi. Her contribution to Assamese literature and Indian writing in English is significant.

Her novels depict the conditions of widows in the early 19th century. They lead a punishing quality of isolated life. They exclude themselves from the communal world. They were often given up by their mother-in-law's house. This is well picturised in Goswami's novel, The moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker and the Blue necked God. She has expressed her childhood memories and the deep rooted beliefs of feudal vaishnavite sattras in the southern Kamrup district in Assam. The author picturises the silent sufferings of three widows in 'The moth Eaten howdah of the Tusker'. Durga, an elderly widowed sister of the Gossain family, Saru Gossai the young and beautiful widow and the third widow is the youngest one Giribala. She is the sister of Indranath.

Durga, Indranath's paternal aunt, had lost her husband and was staying in Indranath's house. She was married to Chikarhati Gossain's family. It is painful that they refused to take her back after the rituals were done. She was also deprived of her rightful share of property. Indranath's mind had lost peace of mind long before and especially soon after the widowhood of his sister Giribala. When Indranath was warned about his late comings and spending time at Bolo's ganitrling den, in his anger towards Durga, he said "Leaving your husband's house at Chikarakati was a serious mistake. Now you won't get even a single penny of your share of the property. Just you wait and see! They won't even come and take you back! I have heard way down at Dakhala, that the part of the land has been sold off. Have you received your share?" (8) Though she replied hopefully that she would be taken back by her husband's family one day or otherwise and she would get her share. But her heart tells it not possible. But really she was hurt by Indranath's words. Actually he was a good natured guy and had a soft corner for his aunt Durga. Getting away from her mother-in-law's house, she used to sit hours together brooding over her misfortunes. She spent sleepless nights with anxieties. She had become a mere shadow of herself. Her mind had become like a graveyard. All these misfortunes made her a little adamant and quarrelsome. She followed all her customary rituals of widowhood and it aroused a sort of fear and hollowness in her mind. She lost herself in a gloomy world.

Durga spent a miserable life after becoming a widow in her mother-in-law's house.. She was childless and she

had become thin like a skeleton. Indranath brought her to his house. When Indranath brought her from her husband's house her father-in-law assured her "After the yatra festival, I will send the bullock cart to fetch you back"(13) so many yatras have passed. But no one from her husband's house showed their face, once she left her husband's house from chikarhati, her in-laws refused to take her back.

Durga's mother-in-law thought that Durga had brought the shadow of death to the house and killed her son. Her mother-in-law accused Durga's father the Gossain of Ameranga for manipulating his daughter's horoscope to get her married to her son. She suspected Durga's real horoscope had "three papagrahas" that is three stars or planets. She was never invited for any auspicious occasions in her family or elsewhere. She was considered inauspicious because of her so called 'Papagrahas'. The poor creature gradually accepted all these taunting words and started to believe it herself. In course of time she lost her own identity and became a mere shadow.

Her daily routine is to go to open-air toilet early in the morning and have a bath in the morning in the side of the well. When her clothes are drenched with water she has to go to the sandal room where her fore father's and her husband's sandals are kept and offered prayer. It is considered that the most sacred duties of a widow is to keep her memories alive about her husband by worshipping her clogs. She helps the Gossainer in her kitchen work. All these obsessions made her a pessimist. She often quarrels with the senior Gossainee, her sister-in-law. Durga desired to go to Jagannathpuri and prayag with the pandas. She wants to immerse her husband's ashes in the sacred Gange. She asked some money from the Gossainee for the pilgrimage. She asked for one hundred and twenty rupees. She doesn't get a favourable reply. She decided to sell her golden ornaments after brooding over a long time. She kept her wooden box under Saru Gossainee's cot. When those ornaments were stolen she wept bitterly by tearing her hair and beating her breasts in anguish. Everyone suspected Mahidhar Babu a Brahmin who helped Saru Gossainee to collect revenues. Durga showered a terrible curse. She said,

"Gods above are my witness, I am a widow of chikarhati's. Gossain who will die from the sorrow of

not offering her husband's funeral bones to the holy river. Let my curse fall upon those who have done this harm to me"(181) she was entangled by pain and frustration. It affected her health considerably. She expressed her last wish to go back to her mother-in-law's house to die there. Her departure touched everyone's heart. The only identity she got was A FRUSTRATED WIDOW. She started to believe herself as an ill-fated woman.

Saru Gossainee was a young and beautiful widow of Indranath's family. She was the wife of his uncle. His uncle died in a firework display during one of the annual festivals of Sathra. Saru Gossainee had a loving relationship with her husband. She was an exceptionally good looking lady. The author describes her beauty as follows. "she is so fair that even on the darkest night her form can be discerned by alert eyes, looking like an ivory statue"(75)

When her husband was alive the family was heaped with wealth. The paddy sacks used to be stacked properly and measured with meticulous care. After her husband's death the family had to meet out deteriorating wealth.

Saru Gossainee enjoyed all comforts when her husband was alive. After her husband's death land has been divided and she was given a share by the Gossainee. Mahidhar a young brahmin widower stayed in the outhouse of her establishment for her. "Mahidhar was a handsome man with a thick map of hair and straight nose. He had bright shining eyes"(77) Durga once told her that people were gossiping about Saru Gossainee and Mahidhar Babu. But Saru Gossainee was courageous and never minded those gossips. They whispered that Mahidhar drew water from the well for Gossainee's evening both and even holds kerosene lamp for her when she went out in the night for nature's call.

She was from a prosperous family of pathaldia. The palanquin in which she finally came to her-in-law's place had magnificent handles of silver (79). But she had to part with her gold ornaments for the treatment of her sick husband because of the unscrupulous doctor from Palasbari.

Mahidhar Babu, a Brahmin from Haramdo became her trusted agent and estate manager. Though she maintained a distance from him, she could not

control her inner most emotions towards him. Gradually he became part of her dreams. In spite of Durga's warnings her fantasy continues. Once she watched him sleeping "like Shri Ramachandra himself after a day's exhausting march through the forest during his exile"(105). She trusted him to such an extent that he would successfully remove the tenets from pathaldia land and would regularize the family revenue.

She had never seen such a robust physique in the South Bank. All of a sudden an owl swooped over her head and brought her to her senses. Self reproach mixed with sorrow overwhelmed her and she realized it is a grave sin. She asked forgiveness from God. She cooked meals for him and waited anxiously in the evening for his arrival. When Durga opened her box to sell some of her jewels to go to pilgrimage, she was shocked that her jewels were found missing. Though everyone pointed at Mahidhar, the poor Gossainee's heart refused to hear the truth. She felt isolated and helpless. She felt as if somebody was peeling off her skin from top to bottom. She took Indranath's hand and said "Believe me bapa! When she brought the box here I didn't see what was inside. It's the truth! Believe me!"(181). A Bhagat from pathaldia informed her that, her trusted Mahidhar bapa spread the rumor that Saru Gossainee is planning to take advance for land selling (baina) she said she gave a list of her lands to Mahidhar and signed on a blank paper foolishly. She also understood there was scandalous talk about her. At night a group of people gathered along with the Home guard. They brought Mahidhar's dead body. The Home Guard handed over a paper in it was written Saru Gossainee had given the authority to collect land advance from all her lands. They threw a bag from which one of Durga's gold ornament came out. They declared that Mahidhar bapu was the thief who sucked her blood. The innocent lady understood that the man whom she had dreamt of spending her whole life with had been stripping her off leaving her naked. She understood that love, religion and sacrifice had become meaningless. Though she maintained her identity being a bold widow Gossainee, everything proved to be futile and meaningless. Once again she remembered her husband who loved her endlessly. In one of her poems titled "Love" Indira Goswami presents her emotions towards love as follows.

"When my beloved died "

I felt as if my body's garment-

Had been dispensed with!

My flesh, my skin, all peeled off.

The garment was gone!...

Love is that garment!

If you are wearing that garment!

Try to hold it tight!

Because once you care to wear it

Death will not be a stranger to you."

Tears filled her eyes when she remembered
her dead husband.

Third widow Giribala was a beautiful pretty young woman. As she had attained puberty before her marriage, she was married off much against her wish. She was married to the most irresponsible son of the adhikar of Bangara. He used to spend much of his time with a theatrical group and had illegal contacts with a low caste woman... After her husband's death Giribala was tortured by her mother-in-law and was sent back to her parents after her miscarriage. As she was too young to observe her widowhood, Indranath her brother introduced her to Mr. Mark from American missionary who was doing research on the missionaries in Assam. Even Durga helped him to read old manuscripts in Assam. But being a widow she carefully maintained her dignity. The work handed over to her was to put an end to the gossip about his beloved sister. When she came back from Bangara people raised so many questions as "you have brought her back from chikarhati. What will be her fate? She will be like another Durga"(28). "What will happen to her share of property?" Her mother the senior Gossainee said boldly". It is only one girl. I can keep four or five other girls like her. God has given me more than enough!"(28). When Giribala was goaded by the gossiping servants, about her puberty, she came out like an angry lioness and cried out scornfully. The two daughters of Harmodo school master Nanichampa and Boomichampa raised so many doubts about her unfriendly relationship with her husband, Giribala screamed "you came here to see me, didn't you? You

have seen me now. I am still alive! I will live on and have a better life than you all. Her relationship with Mark is out of sympathy and friendship. Mark was identified as sanyasi sahib. He wanted to write the history of Satra. He did some social service also to the natives. Indranath introduced her to Mark and instructed her to help him in his endeavour. Giribala was observing Mark. She found him very handsome. His eyes reminded her of those water hyacinth flowers which in the monsoon flourished everywhere. His head was covered with a profusion of honey coloured curly hair. Mark also felt a mute pain in his heart thinking of the tragedy of her youthful widowhood. Her fresh alluring beauty stirred his senses.

Giribala had gone to collect old moth eaten manuscripts from village to village. She went in a covered bullock cart with the escort of a young bandha boy with a thick set body. Giribala's friend and others were afraid of the rogue elephant. It was reported that in that particular stretch of road from Majikuchi he had attacked many a traveler. Mark followed the cart in his old cycle. She stopped the cart and showed a ruin household of once prosperous Mahajan. The cart driver warned her when she got down from the cart and moving towards ruined house hold. He even said that the ojhas warned him that the old Mahajan's dead family was haunting that terrible place. While Giribala was telling about the story of murdered merchants Mark leaned closer to Giribala. Mark told his future plan to write the life history of Santa Dev Mahaprabhu in English. Giribala said in a broken voice "I cannot reach the depth of your heart! And religion! I don't know what it actually is, but if, if I can stay always with you by becoming a chris..."(193).

When the cart driver shouted at the arrival of the mad elephant Giribala was terrified and hysterically clung to Mark. She heard a whisper from her inner most heart as, "Kill me! Kill me now! When I am holding this sahib in my arms! Kill me now! At once! I'll be most happy!..." She fainted in the arms of Mark sahib. Mark knows very well that Giribala's family would never tolerate his attraction towards Giribala. He tried to maintain a formal relationship between them. Once Giribala was bitten by a snake, no one was there at their immediate help. Mark saved her life by sucking off the poisoned blood from her foot inside the sacred sandal room. Giribala's aunt Durga and others were

shocked at his behavior. Giribala who took vegetarian food after becoming a widow was lured by the delicious meat curry prepared for the annual memorial function of the Gossain. She ate some and was caught red hand and was punished for violation. Rumours about her, reached her in-laws. They decided to take back Giribala. Mark understood that he was responsible for her turmoil. One night Giribala visited Mark's cabin and said, 'My father-in-law has sent two men. But I am not going.' She appealed him to take her away from her community. Mark recalled the sufferings of young widows in Satra. "Widows who have stretched out their existence within four walls, who never seen the road outside, widows racked by deprivation and unknown diseases brought on by harsh and cruel rituals, Widows who had died without fulfilling their craving to learn the rudiments of reading and writing, without drinking in the nectar of written words, out of fear and social censure oh! There are hundred thousands of such women on the banks of rivers like Jagalia!..."(295).

Mark did not go near Giribala and never took efforts to lift her. Purshottam Bhagwati like yama the God of death created a great mess of things and staged a scandalous drama. He shouted Giribala was ruined by Mark. The darkest scandal in her life had been revealed and exposed to the shocked public. Mark was helpless and was chased away. At last they performed a ritual expiation. A straw hut was built in open field in which a sacrificial goat was going to be burnt alive. Giribala was asked to enter the hut for a symbolic sacrifice and come out after rituals. But she never came out. She choose a cruel and painful death and ended her life among the flames. She was never allowed to complete her ambition and prove her identity to the society in which she lived. The greedy and vicious banda manipulated the situation and brought ignominy to spoil her character. In her 1st novel 'The Blue necked God' she presents the characters of the pathetic condition of three widows. Vrindhavan is the backdrop of her novel. Vrindhavan the city of God. When Lord Shiva drank the poison to save the world from destruction it turned his neck into bright blue colour due to the pain. Goswamy describes how the pathetic life of the destitute widows created a pain in every reader's heart. The bloody history of Vrindavan was described through Charanbehar's words.

The orthodox and God-fearing Roychoudhry's family lands in the holy city with their young widow daughter Saudamini. It was the famous Jhulan time in Braj so pilgrims from far and near converged there. There were many devotees of Radha and Krishna. The idols of Radha and Krishna were the symbol of endless love and eternal happiness. Dr. Roychowdri had a hope that his daughter Saudamini will find peace in the environment. He started working in the dispensary. Saudamini helped her father in the morning time and in afternoon. She was roaming around the ashram in the neighbouring areas. She learnt that the radheshyams who sing in the temples were not assured of food. The fat accountant swindled their money. He knows who will die soon and how much she had saved for her funeral. When Saudamini approached the radeshyamis with love and compassion they behaved indifferently and almost ripped her off. She was saved by some sadhus. She was trying her best to forget her loneliness. Roy choudhury and his wife were very careful about their daughter. They never want to see the shadow of grief in her face. Anupama her mother once took her to a Holy Baba. He said, "Remember you are your own friend or foe..." Saudamini was a lovely soft young body, even her sad days had not left any permanent mark in her body. She had fallen in love with a Christian youth violating the strict code of Hindu widows. Though she made sincere attempts to surrender herself to the will of her parents, her heart was filled with rebellious mood and a sense of loneliness and despair. She lost interest in the hospital work. The author describes the condition of sick people through Saudamini's point of view. "There were innumerable half-dead and starving persons were waiting to die in the sacred Braj..." One day she openly confessed that she could not pass her life serving society like her father. Pointing an accusing finger at her father, she screamed "you are all hypocrites. You are all butchers"(71). She wept bitterly banging her head against the wall. Her mother also cried in frustration. She walked aimlessly. She was afraid of her future. She knew very well that she could not lead her life as dehumanized ghost like radheshyamis. She shared her depression with the artist chandrabanu but never found solace. Compassion and desire engulfed her when she watched young couples making love on the banks of Jamuna. One day she came across charanbehari who suggested her to visit the five thousand temples of Brindhavan. When he enquired

about the Christian youth she said "...In a way he is the one who motivates me, inspires me. He is very much there yes, he is there! I don't think I can explain you what his 'being there' means to me...I have not actually fallen in love with him. Yet the very fact of his being out there is motivation enough."(79, 80)

Dr. Roychaudhuri invested all his money into his small medical centre. One day Anupama told her daughter "There is a vacancy in Shahji's Girls school and Gyan Godar's Laxmibai Balika vidhyala might also appoint you if you ask them. Remember, no one has left any fat inheritence for you! The only thing your father will leave for you will be the burden of his beloved dispensary"(98). Saudamini understood that her mother's life was getting dimmer and had the least time at her hand to decide her fate. Once she asked a pious middle aged Radhasyami whether she had overcome all her desires she realised frankly that she could not have struggled a lot in her youth. She also said some times when she touched her prayer beads which remind her chameti blossoms which signifies youth and desire. Once she glanced a bhangi widow women tried to enter Ranjaji's temple and garland the idol of Shri Venkateshwar. The security chared her away. The crowd also shouted at her angrily. A mighty kick was landed on her chest as she was a harijan. The women started to dance and expressed all one hundred and sixty mudras. When stopped and asked for water an elderly radheuhyami warned her with anger. Once she heard a upanyasa from a devotee who told her that love is not a matter of pleasing the eyes. It is matter fraught with feelings and thought. She also said "My husband used to enjoy me and take pleasure in me. And now Gokulachandra takes pleasure in me. In this way with His protection. He has made my life worth living", (111) Even the artist chandrabanu carves and paints beautiful images. She understands that everyone was covered under some soft white sheet.

One late night Dr. Roychoudhury knocked Saudamini's door. He gave her permission to meet her Christian lover who waited at the vaishnab Chhatra near the ghat. He took her to bank with a lantern. He pointed at a boat. As she ascended the boat her father became invisible. Her lover extended his hand towards her and in a dream like situation they hugged each other. She moved towards the edge of the river.

After some time her white cloth entangled with the colourful chaddar of woman with a living husband. Though she lived as a widow, she died as a married woman. Though she was suppressed in the name of religion and society, she successfully came out of it and proved her identity. But the trails of her identity was washed away by nature without leaving a trace of success.

Mrinalini an aged spinster in her fortys came to the city of God to settle her family. Her father Thakur sahib an ill-fated man, who lost his wealth, became blind and crippled and her mother became insane due to the deteriorating wealth. The responsibility of these poor creatures fell on the head of the spinster. Her dreams of family life shattered into pieces after meeting successive failures. Her elder brother was killed during the troubles at Maulanapur and her younger brother had gone astray. The author describes her as “she felt like a beast of burden, like an over loaded donkey at the end of her tether.”(41) Shashiporva a young widow who gave her company understood that she could not be at ease with the elderly woman. Mrinalini decided to raise money by selling Behari Mohan Kunj temple which belonged to their great grand fathers. She decided to run the family by using the trust fund and interest. They stayed in one of the small rooms used by radheshyamis. The young and greedy pandas and some middle men swallowed the major portion of the money. Mrinalini was left out with a meager amount. Thakur sahib felt so much at the sale of the temple.

Mrinalini spent sleepless nights and started collecting old tins and bottles from the roadside. Mrinalini's insane mother showered endless abuses on Thakur sahib and said that his mind was full of sin. At the peak of her fit she tore off her clothes and stood naked. None of the radheshyamis had the courage to control her. Thakur sahib's health started to decline. One day his mad wife had vanished from the hovel. The radheshyamis blamed Thakur sahib for being negligent to his wife. Poor Mrinalini rushed around frantically looking for her mother. She scolded her miserable father for their misfortune. In utter desperation she cried, "Tell me, all of you tell me! Could I not have become a mother? could I not have given birth to a divine child? Why did I have to spend my whole life taking care of these two old scarecrows, being 'keepers' of these old creatures?"(141). One of

the radheshyamis brought her sense back by telling that she has been doing the pious job by looking after her old parents. With enough patience she must look after her parents till their last rites. Meanwhile Thakur sahib submitted himself between the wheels of Ranji's rath at Rathyathra. He heard a few sympathetic words during his death. Mrinalini's prolonged sufferings never allowed her to prove her identity. But she got a mild recognition as a dutiful daughter.

Sashiporva the youngest of the widows in the novel is the most pitifull character. She was a young widow who determined to lead a decent life. She felt she is too young to beg at the gate of the temples or sing bajans. Alamgarhi, the priest of the Behari Mohan Kunj temple gave her food and shelter to assist him in his holy rituals. She accepted the offer because it is not new to Vrindavan. Moreover he was a eunuch and he could not molest her. Her condition became pathetic at the sale of Behari Mohan Kunj Temple. Alamgarhi gave up his position in the temple and settled to assist a holy man. The poor girl tried to seek the mercy of the rich Sherafi Sethni who visited the temples and helped the poor and needy to get away from her sterile curse. Unfortunately she could not seek her help. The young swamiji whom she loved secretly was beyond her reach. She stayed in one of the hovels like other radheshyamis. During navaratri festivities her door was banged at night. A drunkard threatened her to accept his proposal and compelled her to assist him in his works and fulfill his lust also, if he needs. The other radheshyamis knowing this, advised her to seek a safer place. The poor girl went to Rangaji's Temple. Her eyes involuntarily filled with tears. She murmured to herself, "God grant that you will always be like this, that you will always be blessed with deep human sympathy to understand the sorrow of others, and to be able to see into their very hearts."(120). One night she heard that Alamgarhi died. Because he was affected by cholera. So far Alamgarhi had been a source of strength to her. After attending his funeral she walked aimlessly She met Roychaudhury on his way to look at the patients. She expressed her wish to live a healthy and clean life. After taking bath in the Jamuna she started to walk. But she did not know where to go. The time was bad. There was a group of goondas from Mathura wandering around to chase helpless widows to fulfill their lust. She came across drunkards and at last she reached Mrinalini's hovel.

She consoled her and gave her shelter. The author describes, "In the deep darkness these two wounded hurt souls lay on the floor arms entwined around each other. But at this moment, crushed with fears of an unknown and fearsome future they looked more like two innocent children."(136).

Becoming a widow is an unexpected accident in a woman's life. But the worst treatment imposed on them in the name of religion, rituals and social violations cannot be forgiven. If a widow is not allowed to plan for her future and unable to come out from the narrow circles of society, how can she prove her identity? The failures that her heroines met pulled them in to unfathomed abyss. Indira Goswami though has not mentioned any salvation to the troubles of her heroines, she is successful in bringing awareness in the reader's mind She sowed a powerful seed to a healthy female society.

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