

## Pinjra Tod Kar

### Domestic Violence: India's hidden pandemic

*This is a Suno India production and you're listening to Pinjra Tod Kar.*

*"Ye dil udaas ho gya mere paon kisne kass diye? Mere haath bhi jakkad gaye, Ye dil udaas ho gya mere paaon kisne kass diye? Mere haath bhi jakkad gaye, ye ungliyaan kyun sundh hui, ye kaun rokta hai aaj, mera ghar bana, mai zinda jal rahi hun aaj, ab zawaan mai nahi rahi, mere bhaazuon bhi dhhal gyi, ab uske kaam ki nahi, wo chal pada bade shaan se ki ek aur byaah fir, mai chup rahi, sehan kari, mujhe maut bhi qubool hai, fir kya hua ki raat ko mere haath kyun jakkad diye, mai yahin kahin daffan hui, mera naam kahin nahi mila, pehchaan meri kya rahi. Mai mitt gayi fahaan hui mai kukunz bani uth khadi, dil mera jawaan hua, hazaar auraton me mera naam leke ji uthi, mere paaon firse chal pade, naye raaste bana liye."*

**Padma Priya (Host):** Sultana is used to the staring that follows her wherever she is and that's because when Sultana walks into a room, the most striking feature is the big scar across her face. But when you sit down and begin a conversation, you quickly realise that the scar hardly defines her or her resilience. She makes sure you know that the scar doesn't define her. That the incident that led to her getting that scar is just one part of her life and not her entire life.

Welcome to episode 4 of Pinjra Tod Kar. I am Padma Priya, editor for Suno India, this podcast is conceived and produced by Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad with the support of Suno-India and Bol-Hyderabad. In this episode we discuss one of the toughest challenges facing women and their right to dignity and life- violence against women and specifically domestic violence.

Sultana is a survivor of domestic violence. Her story began many years ago as a young 17-year-old. This is her story.

**Trigger warning: Some bits of this episode may be upsetting for some listeners as it contains physical and sexual violence.**

**Parts of this episode are in Dakhni & Telugu. We have provided translation wherever possible.**

Mai us waqt me intermediate complete kr chuki thi aur aage mai padhai ke liye college me daakhila le chuki thi lekin meri family me ladkiyon ki taleem ke upar bahot zada pabandhi thi badi behen jaise ki wo 7th class padh chuki thi uske bad wali ladki jo thi 8th ya 9th thi toh meri 10th class hote hi meri apni shadi ke bare me mere zehen ko banana shuru kiye fir family ke jo hmare problem hote hain wo bahot se alag hote hain.

***For Sultana, her dream of pursuing her education after plus two was cut short and she was convinced that she had to get married as this is what all girls in her community do. And it didn't help that she had 4 brothers who were reinforcing patriarchal mindsets in the family.***

Meri shadi ek aise situation me hui jahan mai mentally prepared nahi thi mai apni padhai ke khwab dekh rahi thi lekin mai aapke guardianship me thi, mere nazariye ke hisab se kisi ke guardianship me rehna koi buri baat ya badi baat nahi hai jinke parents unko proper rights nahi dete hain toh family ke koi member unko adopt krte hain lekin shadi ko jab humara puberty start ho jata hai aur usme hmare ko ek safe nahi samjha jata hai ki ladki hai jo humari yeh pehchan banayi jati hai ek ladki hai ab uske zimmedaariyan humse nahi ho rahe ya fir hath se Khisak jayegi kahin kisi se love kar baithegi ya fir kahin bhaag jayegi ya fir yeh bahot zimmedaariyan hai fir isko padhai likhayi kyun ghar ke andar hi rakh lo toh yeh baton ko lekar humare zehan ko banaya jata hai wo darasal hum ladkiyon ke liye bahot hi roka toki wala mamla hai aur wo bhed bhaav wala ahi mamla hai tur gender discrimination wala bhi mamla hai toh usme humare apni shadi ko lekar baat jab hoti hai toh humse nahi pucha jata hai ki hum kisse kaise insaan se aur kab kahan shadi krna chahte hain.

***Sultana described her life leading up to her marriage and after marriage as "darkness".***

Aapko wo din yaad hai jab apke paas aake apke chacha ji ya aapke papa ne bola ki apki shadi hone wali hai ikke sath, wo din ke bare me thoda batayenge?

Jis din mai college se aayi thi uss din bilkul nahi pata tha ki meri shadi ki baat ghar pe baat chal rahi hai haan yun toh aisa hota tha ki umar aa gyi hai shadi karna hai wo 12 sal se hi chal rha tha lekin jab mai 17 sal me aayi koi ghar me dekhne aye aur wo relative hi the toh maine socha ye meri apni family hai chalo isne thoda hass bol lete hain aise toh wo dekhte hi ekdum attract hue aur seedha propose krne lage ki yeh ladki hume passant hai our hum isko byaah krke leke jana chahte hain. Toh wahan mujhe ekdum shock hua ki usi waqt mai suddenly keh baithi ki nahi mujhe Abhi shadi nahi krna hai jaisa hi mera yeh kehna tha ghar me ek kehram se mach gaya yeh keh kar ki ladki badi ho gyi hai ladki college Jane lagi hai aur bohut badi badi battein kar raai hai lehaaza usko ab ghar pe baithaya jaye toh ghar pe baithne ki tab baat hui toh uske liye politically tareeke se ghar pe hota hai ki agar tum ghar ke bahir niklogi toh parda system ke sath niklogi nigaahon ko neeche rakhogi zada kisi se mel milaap nahi rakhogi toh maine kaha mujhe ye sab pasand nahi hai aisa rok tok lekin mai sabhi se milna chahti hun ek dusre se isme mere liye toh kuch buri baat nahi hai itna kahan gaya tha ki mujhe parda system ke tehat community ko follow kroggi to hi aage padhoggi toh wo din bhi mujhe yaad hai ki wo burkhe me girte padhte tab mai apna nakaab laga kar kabhi aada andar kabhi bahar toh ghar se toh mai burkha pehen leti thi par mujhe pasand nahi tha baahir jaa kar burkha utar ke mai apne college bag me dalna aur freedom ke sath me ghumna, itefaaq se mere chacha ne mujhe kahin deki liya tur usi din undone mujhe apni cycle pe baitha ke ghar lekar aaye wo kahe ki ab ye shadi ke liye inkar jo karti hai aise hai ki

wo awara ghumna firna pasand krte hai toh wo awara awara aur awargi ka naam dia jata hai wo humare society ki o ek patriarchal mind set kya gya hai wahan se wo words Nikal ke ate hain toh mai ekdum se kehne lagi mai aisa kuch galat nahi kar raai hun agar jo mujhe nahi acha lag rha hai toh mai wahi krna chahti hun toh nahi tu mere guardianship me hai agar tumhe kuch ho jayega toh saare humare khandaan pe baat aa jayegi humari aur dusri ladkiyon ka khandaan kaisa hoga ladko ko ladkiyan kaun degi yeh sari bato ko lekar bahot uchala gya bahot blame kiya gya tarah tarah ki baatein kiye fir wo din aa gya ki jab mai achanak college se aayi aur baat cheet chali aur 8 din ke andar rishte ko tey kiya gya aur usi beech me mai college ko jate ate hue bhi mai teaching krte thi mai evening college jati thi toh teaching krte krte uss beech me ye bataya gya tha ki padhai ko aage krna ho toh apne paiso se padhna hai toh us waqt me mujhe paise ki kami thi azaadi chahiye tha toh maine apne ek chote se school me teaching krna shuru kya tha primary level pe toh esse jo mujhe salary aati thi usse mai apne college ki fees, school bag fees sabhi use maintain krte thi. aur mujhe paidal chalna bahot pasand ata tha aur aaj bhi mai bahot paidal chalti hun kyunki kya hota dekhna karna toh usme mai maintain kr paayi jaise hi jab meri shadi ki baat aayi toh mujhe aisa laga jaise ek ladki ko tod diya aya hai us waqt mera koi sath dene wala nahi tha aur sabhi kehte the ki har taraf se ki yaa toh ghar ki char deewari chuno ya toh fir padhai kro toh us waqt mujhe char diwari ka matlab b khul ke samajh nahi ata tha toh aise aise situation rakhe gye hain mere samne ki mai us chunotiyon ko samajh na payi aur maine kaha ki mai karti hun shadi dastoor hai aur mai apki beti nahi hun mujhe shadi krke aap de rahe hain toh mai ye challenge accept krte hun lekin shadi ke bad bhi mujhe padhai krna hai. Toh jab mere chacha ne muskuraya aur kaha ki theek hai hum waise hi rishte ko leke aaye hain aur abhi tumhe taiyaar hoke ana hai aur han Kenna hai toh padhai ki baat aate hi maine khushi se haan keh diya aur meri shadi do mahine ke andar hi ho gyi decide hote hi uske bad me shadi ke bad ka jeevan jo tha wo bilkul ek andhera jaisa tha ek umeed ki kiran thi ki shadi ke bad mujhe koi toh mujhe pana samjhega koi toh mera apna gam baatega ya mere khwaabo ke bare me puchega ya mujhe aage le Jane ke liye rasta dikhayega lekin wahan par mera jo ana life partner tha wo mere liye hi durüst nai tha kyunki mere aur uske khayalaat mentality humeri bilkul match nahi ho pati thi aur wo alag tarah ka samajhte the.

***Sultana talks about how humiliating and degrading her life became post marriage. Not only was she forced upon sexually by her husband but she was also not allowed to continue with her education.***

Us waqt me shadi ke bad maine kaha ki Hyderabad me hi rahungi mai aur yahin se mai padhai krungi aur abhi maine BA ka degree ke examination ke liye maine fees b bhara hai toh un logon ne kaha ki theek hai shaadi ho gyi aur shadi ki raat bhi mere upar se bahot kathin guzri jo first night kehte hain wo bahot mere liye khatarnaak thi usme mere liye pain tha ek andhera sa tha dard tha ek chuban aur ghutan thi jo mujhse bardaasht nahi ho paa rahi thi isi tarah meri zindagi ke aahista aahista 3 mahine guzar gye uske bad me meri apni nand jo thi wo meri ek saheli ki tarah thi unhone ne kaha ki abhi tum padhai ke bare me soch rahi ho toh aisa krte hain ki tum aage kuch krna chaho toh bata skti ho. Jaise hi maine

apni nand se apni padhai ki baat ki toh mere husband ko bilkul achi nahi lagi aur unhone usi din se kamre me kar jana aur sexual relationship forcibly mere hath me rakhna our kehna agar tum meri ahi hui 3 baton pe Amal nahi krogi toh wager wagers toh mai samajh nahi pati thi yeh kehte the ki meri ma ek sub registrar ki beewi hokar ghar se bahar nahi nikalti aage padhai ka nahi meri

***She recounts how within months of their marriage, she was subjected to domestic violence & was shamed for speaking up about the continuous sexual violence. The silence and stigma surrounding marital rape in the society added another layer of violence for Sultana and she continued to suffer in silence. Domestic violence leads to isolation of the victims and exerting physical, psychological, and at most times financial control over them, leading to many women being trapped in abusive marriages.***

***While there are many policies addressing the safety of women, they most often don't reach women like Sultana in time. Adding to this are several issues like microaggressions, marital rape, etc. that don't even have separate provisions to be dealt with. Laws such as Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) have helped some women but largely remains flawed with no uniform protocol for service providers that the victims have to go through. Due to this lack of seriousness, little focus has been provided to most of the systemic measures related to gender-based discrimination in India. Vasudha Nagarajan, a prominent women's rights lawyer tells me that on paper the laws are very much available but where they become ineffective is in the time it takes for each case to be resolved.***

Oh, yes, we have criminal laws section 498 A, all of you would be aware of it. We have family laws. I mean, you go to family courts and you ask for divorce, restoration of conjugal rights, maintenance custody, that then we also have something called domestic violence laws, which came in 2005, I think. Yeah. So, we have so we have three sets of laws. If you ask me if they are sufficient, actually on paper, they are really very good. They are very, quite adequate, quite sufficient. But if you go to the court, any of these cases will last not less than five years. That's the time lag in each of these cases is what is making these laws inaccessible for women. That is the problem.

***Even in today's age, Divorce and separation from an abusive husband continues to be looked down upon even in today's day and age. It increases tenfold depending on the caste and class and religion one belongs to. For Sultana too, silence and compromise were forced upon her.***

Lekin unko acha nahi lagta tha ki jab bhi mai baat karun bolun to wo mujhe hamesha chup hi karate the aur rat me hum dono ke beech me jo hota tha wo bahot hi ek khaufnaak rehti thi hum dono ki sur jab bhi mai aakar apne father family me kehti ya in laws family me kehti toh ek achambha sa banaya jata tha ki yeh parde dari ki bat hai yeh secret bat hai isko bahir

ladkiyan nahi kehna chahiye yani ki jo ek women sexuality ki jo bat hai usko daba ke rakhna aurat ko bolne ka mauka nahi dena toh mujhe bilkul acha nahi lagta tha toh us waqt mai sochti thi ki meri zindagi yahan se ab bekar hai kuch nahi hai mai surf char diwari ke kaid khane me hun uske bad mere husband aise hi talukaat rakhe sur shadi ke 3 mahine ke bad ki din guzzre usi halat me Mai ek tailor shop start kari thi lady tailor shop mai aur mere husband toh mujhe wahan laga ki hum dono milkar kam krenge toh kuch buri baat bhi nahi hai aur hum dono ek dusre ke sath me rahenge toh wahan mere husband ko yeh bat bilkul hazam nahi hui unhone mere sath dene ka waad Kiya aur mujhe Dhoka diya aur kaha ki ab aurat ki zindagi shadi ke bad kuch nahi hoti hai.

***I asked Vasudha why there is so much pressure on women to stay quiet about domestic violence.***

I would say that in today's world, that is we are Speaking about 2020 there's quite a lot of awareness about women suffering violence, okay? There's a lot of awareness, now whether women will take a step to address that violence or not, There are several factors. In that the aspect of stigma or taboo or silence, I would say is only one part. See there are several said on a scale of 1 to 10. If we take on one hand at one level, women think that probably I need to give this man some more time, and probably with the first child or with the second child, the issue will settle down and somehow the marriage will stabilize. Because there's also I mean, you don't want to break a marriage. So there is hope and there will also be intermittent episodes of love and affection. And again, it will be followed by violence. So the episodes of love and affection enable that trust in the marriage. And so you think probably I did something wrong. Probably I should give him some more time. Probably he had a bad time in his office, or probably he is the world is treating him very badly. So let me give him some time. Okay, that is one reason. Second is, the children are like 10 years, 12 years old, and the woman has become economically dependent on the husband, and she can't walk out. If I walk out of this marriage, and if she particularly doesn't have support from her Natal home, then who's going to finance this, this high level of education for the children. So I have to stay back and let this child finish his 10th class. Several women have postponed the decision to take some action. Just on this thing that let him finish his education anyway, I suffered so much, let it let this child finish her education and then probably I will, I will probably do something about it not necessarily going to court do something about it. That is the second thing. Third thing is third thing is not all women feel that kind of, it requires a lot of energy. So, I don't have that kind of energy. I don't have that kind of energy to go back to my return to my Natal home to sit down and talk to my parents to convince my brothers and sisters to walk away from this home and to tell my friends and then I don't want my children to be called as children of divorced parents. So, a lot of energy from you walking out of a marriage is not easy. So these are some of the factors which, which makes women way, whether I should walk out or not, whether I should take some action or not.

***Sultana's life post marriage continued to worsen. She had become pregnant within 3 months of her marriage. Her husband continued to abuse her during this period too, she told me.***

Shadi ke 3 mahine baad me pregnant ho gyi thi toh mujhe ajeeb sa lag rha tha kabhi kuch kabhi kuch tab mujhe health awareness bhi zada nahi tha mai intermediate Padhi likhi toh thi lekin jo overall hota hai zindagi me jo zindagi change hoti hai jo ek ladki, ladki se ek aurat banti hai ek ma banne jati hai toh kya kya cheezon ka Dhyan rakhna hai toh mujhe ajeeb sa hota tha toh meri nanad hi mujhe support karti thi kabhi kabhi mere husband tinae aggressive ho jate the ki khane peene ke liye bhi kuch nahi dete the. Jab hi mai unke sexual relationship ko refuse krte thi toh wo muhe khane peene nahi dena, kaam par nahi Jane dena yeh sare cheezein hoti thi toh uske bad yehi hota tha mai apne shikaayat kana nanad se complaint karna apne father family se fir usi ghar me mujhe bhej diya jata tha aisa hi halat me mere zindagi ke yana ki shadi ke bad ke 11 mahine guzre tur wo 11 mahine me mai 8 months pregnant thi us waqt mujhe doctor ne bed rest kaha tha aur itna hard work mujhse nahi hota tha mai krne ke liye taiyaar thi but doctor permission nahi de rha tha uske bad me meri nanad ne mere father ke pas chhoda toh do hi din me mere husband ne poora tailor shop sell kr diya aur jhoota wada kiya ki maine lease par ghar liya hai aur separate family me rehna hai us waqt hum log humare jeth ki family me jo hai brother in law ke sath rehte the toh maine kaha ki theek hai kyunki father family poori humari patriarchal mindset ki hai wahan nanad toh support krte hai mai chali gyi jaane ke do hi din bad unhone mujhse ye quboolaya ki tumhe bahot azadi se rehna pasand hai independently zindagi guzarni hai padhai ka bahot shauk hai mai tumhare saare khwab ko pura krne wala hun toh jab ke aur ab ke halat ko mai jab dekhti hun toh mai aaj bhi shock ho jati hun ki mai kitna bada dhoka kha gyi hun ek humara life partner jo hota hai wohi hmara kitna jisse hum saari zindagi jod lete hain usko naa jante hue bhi lekin wo kitna asani se hume dhoka de deta hai usne kaha ki sabhi kuch barabar hoga lekin dusre din hi mai usko kehti hun ki ghar ke haalat aise hain aur mujhe bed rest ki zarurat hai toh wo apne jo desire hai sexually wo share krta hai aur mai refuse krte hun toh mujhse itne pyar se bat krke bahir jata hai aur dudh laakar pilata hai aur bada sa pathhar laakar de maarta hai sir par aur sir phatne ke baad me uss haiwaan ne ye bhi nahi dekha ki mai chakkar kha rahi hun aur poora bleeding ho rahi hai sir se paer tak bheegi hui hun.

***In her 8th month of pregnancy, amidst repeated disagreements and fights, one fine day, Sultana's husband, after giving her a glass of milk, took a big boulder and hit her on the head with it. Sultana believes the violent act took place because she refused to become intimate with him. She remembers being hit, seeing the blood flow out of her head, her husband sitting on her chest and nothing else. She slipped into a 21 day coma and when she came to, she couldn't recollect a lot of the day when she was attacked by her husband. After she was attacked and became unconscious, Sultana says the neighbors upon hearing the commotion informed the police and rushed her to the hospital. Her husband was soon arrested.***

Jee han tab usne mara uske baad me fir usne mere apne seene par baitha aur thodi der bad mai utna weight nahi bardaasht kari behosh ho gyi toh kya dekhti hun ki 21 din ke bad coma me se mai nikli hun Osmania general hospital me aur sare taraf machineries lage hue hain har taraf doctors hain mujhse baat cheet nai ho pa rahi hai toh jab maine bahot chilli rahi hun tod fod kr rhi hun toh doctor ne kaha abi tumhe glucose aur khoon diya ja raha hai 21 din ke bad jab mai coma se nikal kar aayi toh mai din taare aur kahan hun yeh bhi mujhe yaad nahi aa raha tha ek ye log puch rahe the ki aapke sath kya hua hai kabi media aakar puch rha tha kabhi doctors aakar puch rahe the toh kabhi koi na koi aakar puch rahe the toh mujhe khud kuch yaad nahi tha toh mai kisi ko kuch kya hua nahi bata pa rahi thi bahot zor dene par mujhe itna yad aa pa raha tha ki wo pathhar jo uthaya ja raha tha firse mai behosh hona unconscious hona.

***The blow on her head also led her to have a deep cut on her upper lip and nose permanently disfiguring her face. After she regained consciousness, a medico-legal case was filed on her husband taking into account her testimony of her 11-month marriage and all the harassment that was meted out to her. A couple of days later, she delivered her son, now 18-years-old.***

Aise hi mai hosh me ayi toh sabe pehle doctor se pucha ki mere sath hua kya hai toh unhone kaha abi 3 din tum rest lo hum tumhe batate hain fir unhone mujhe wahan se delivery ke liye baat ki ki tumhara koi hai tum apna nam janti ho Kahn ki renne wali ho, toh mujhe jaise mai asaani se bata pa rahi hun ki mai proper Hyderabad ki rehne wali hun mera nam so and so hai tab mai apne nam ko bhi soch rahi thi yaani mujhe aisa lag rha tha ki mai insaan hun ya kis duniya me hun kuch bhi nahi pata chal rha tha aur surf rona aur cheekhna hi aa rha tha toh fir doctor aake mujhe rest de rahe the injections de the the treatment de rahe the, treatment tumara yahin pe hoga lekin after delivery tum apni zindagi ko kaise aage badhaogi yeh jaanna zaruri hai tur hum aapke family parents our jinke pas aap jana chahti hai aap ja skti hai lekin aapke husband ne appui ye disha ki hai jo aapka holiya bigda hai apke husband ki wajah se usko aap zada mat sochiye lekin ek normal usme aap bataiye ki aapko delivery ke baad me bache ko khud ke paas rakhna hai ya kisi ko dena hai? Toh mai samajh nahi pa rahi thi ki kaun bacha? kidhar bacha? aise ek pagal si ho gyi thi mai fir uske bad mera ek medical test hua hospital 5 din ke bad bhejaya gya fir maine ek ladke ko male baby ko janam diya aur wo abi padhai kr raha hai college kar raha hai mere apne sath me hai.

***It took nearly 7 months after the incident for Sultana to get a full grasp on her situation. By this time, Sultana told me, not only was she destitute but she had no support from her family too.***

Haan 7 mahine baad mujhe jab samajhme aya ki ye mere sath me hua hai toh mera aise kisne kiya hai? mera husband hi kr skta hai aisa toh tab maine bolna apne bhai se apni nanad se shuru kiya toh nanad ne kaha ki court me case tum file kar skti ho lekin mere

family me jab bolna shuru ki toh log bole ki humare khandaan ki ladki police station court kachehri kabhi nahi gyi hai sabse pehle toh kisse kahaaniyo me humne padha tha naak aur choti kisi ladki ne nahi katwaya tha, husband ki baat maan kr subordinate ho kar rahi thi tum bahot apne aap ko clever samjhi thi sur aage jana chahti thi ab tum bhugto.

***Even worse, Sultana was blamed for the situation she found herself in and she was boycotted from her community, denied shelter & support with elders in her community saying she had brought shame to their community. She says no one asked her what she wanted or how she was too single-handedly to raise a child. Many a times, during this period, Sultana contemplated suicide. For many women like Sultana, there are tipping points when they simply cannot return to their husband's home and often the tipping point comes when there is a child in picture, says lawyer Vasudha.***

There are several tipping points; you can't say one tipping point. Sometimes with one instance the woman feels that I can't trust this man. There are also cases like that. But generally that is a minority. I would say that's a very small fraction. Women give a lot and women tolerate a lot. The problem is women have grown up, women have changed. Women are educated, women are earning. And women are like we are like full citizens of this world. As men, I'm fortunate for men, you know, it's really unfortunate. Men don't think that women have grown, that we need to change the terms of connecting with women. Unfortunately, it's really sad for men who know that they don't see that we have to treat women differently. I can't treat my wife the way my grandfather treated his wife. I mean, my grandmother or my father treated my mother. We have changed. I mean, nah, men and women are walking on the road with the same kind of confidence. So you can't treat her like a second class citizen. So that problem is there and that is where the tipping point you said it's difficult to answer. But I think women give a lot of two or three more a number of chances. And then they feel that I can't live the rest of my life with this man. It's not possible. And when the tipping point is when they think that my child doesn't deserve this violent atmosphere, that is for several women, that is a tipping point. I can't let my child grow up, seeing me beaten up, seeing me traumatized like this. I can't.

***Shift in attitudes takes time but more importantly regaining confidence after such brutal incidents takes time. For Sultana, it was timely support from Shaheen that helped her. Sultana also began skilling herself to support herself financially and emotionally with the help of Shaheen. But more importantly, Sultana says it was the legal awareness that she received from Shaheen about her rights and her child's rights that changed the course of her life.***

Kyunki mere saamne Shaheen khada tha aur shaheen me jamila madam jaisi jab ek mazboot aur feminist hoti hain aur auraton ke jeevan ke bare me wo jo bahot gehraayi se sochti hain wo mujhe acha lagne laga tha uske bad me madam ne kaha ki aap humare yahan pe aaiye aur training lijiye toh sabse pehle maine Shaheen me yeh yun kaho ki jaise bacha paida hota



hai aur maa ki godh me jab aankh kholta hai toh Shaheen ne mujhe ungli pakad kar chalna sikhaya, duniya dekhna sikhaya baat karna sikhaya, jeena sikhaya tab maine wahan pe mujhe rehne ke liye aur apne bache ko behtar sahara dene ke liye zaruratein chahiye tab madam ne mujhe sabse pehle as a humanity mujhe ek silaayi machine gift di thi aur us machine ke sahare maine apne bache ko school me admission karaya kyuni us waqt bache se mai bahot attached thi ek second b bacha juda hota tha toh mai pagal ho jati thi toh fir madam ne bhi kaha ki haan fir tum baby ke sath reh skti ho jab jee me aaya yahan aa skti ho tumhare liye shaheen humesha khula hai tumhe kabhi shaheen aati kabhi bache ko dekhti kabhi hospital jaati alag alag se cheeze hone lagti toh ek training thi jo meri zindagi ko palat ke rakhi wo thi legal awareness training. Maine intermediate me social toh padh liya tha aur sociology me samajh nahi paayi thi toh shaheen ne mujhe wo support diya legal awareness deke jab crime hota hai toh uske liye kaun doshi hota hai toh tab mujhe samajh me aya ki mera koi dosh nahi hai jo mere sath hua hai galat hua hai mujhe ab sir pe kafan baandh ke meri ab khud ki jung ladna hai zindagi ek jung hai uske liye ladna hai toh tab maine himmat laayi aur bina kisi ladayi jhagde ke mai usi ghar me apne bhai ke ghar me aakar mere bhai ka support lekar us father ki family me rehkar maine court me apna case darj kiya sabse pehle police station gyi aur FIR darj ki aur chargesheet daakhil krwa kar court me arzi di ki mere sath yeh yeh hua hai aur mai justice chahti hun jisme mere apne bache ke sath jeena chahti hun.

***Vasudha says that legal awareness and legal literacy is important but will be a different learning experience for every woman and acknowledges that it may never be "enough".***

It would be impossible to have a sufficient understanding of the law. It's because you don't know how, how you're the let us we are since we're talking about domestic violence, so no woman will ever know how the husband will respond. Whether he will quietly pay maintenance, share child custody and respectively have visitation rights, or is he going to fight it out every stage of the stage of the I'm in the proceeding? So one never knows, and women will not have an understanding of the law. It's their first case I have fought so many cases and sometimes I feel even I don't have a good enough understanding of the law, or how the judges because it's not just something law that is on the paper. Each of the cases is heard by a particular judge. And that judge brings her own framework to the evidence in the case. So one is how best the woman can produce evidence. And sure, the critical issue is women rarely have evidence to show that they have suffered violence, because this is violence within the four walls of the house. So where do you get the witnesses to see that whether you have been humiliated or whether you have been beaten up or whether you have been mentally traumatized and not always you will have this bleeding injuries on your body and show that yes, violence was inflicted on you No, so what what kind of evidence the the kind of fighting capacity in the wife and in the husband and the framework of the judge all these three going to making case, now this poor woman has just no moving out of a bad marriage. She'll have no sense about how this is going to pan out. If she's lucky, it will amicably settle. But if she's unlucky, it will settle maybe after three years, but if she's

terribly unlucky, it can go on for 10 years. So it depends on her luck, her evidence, the judge who is hearing the case, the staying power, the money that you have the lawyers that you bring the competence of the lawyers, all these factors are involved in one case.

***This is echoed by Satyavathi of Bhoomika Women's Collective, a Hyderabad based organisation which helps distressed and vulnerable women and one of their primary objectives is to provide legal assistance to the women in distress. They also run a helpline number and run 10 "Special Cells for Women" in collaboration with 10 police stations across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States.***

It's been so many years that the domestic violence act has come. You ask women in Urban slums they probably have an idea about this act but educated women don't know about the domestic violence act. We are surprised a lot of times that it has been so many years since the Sakhi centre has been established. Earlier there used to be domestic violence cells instead of Saki centers. Protection officer used to be in the office and they had to go there and file the DIR or domestic incident report just like FIR that we file in a police station. If we put DIR we will get all the orders from the court.

***While legal awareness is critical in supporting women, ultimately it is the shift in attitudes that is of utmost importance. Dismantling patriarchal attitudes will take longer but are more effective in the fight against violence against women, says Vasudha.***

There is schooling at home. Parents should tell their sons ,should educate their sons about housework, should educate their sons as much as we educate our daughters. Learn to do the vessels, learn to sweep the house, bend your back and sweep the house. Why is it that we don't tell our sons? Why is it that we still even though girls are getting educated guards are going to school girls are getting degrees. But still, our advice is limited to girls. our advice doesn't move over to boys is one thing. Second is, I mean one is the schooling at home as parents, what we do second is our curriculums, how I mean work we need to survive in order to survive, we need to do a lot of work, that is, one is housework. Second is respect for women, and not to treat women as sex objects, not to treat women as sexual beings, and to, to really to take women seriously. And so that is something which has to come up in curriculums. Gender sensitized curriculums should be part of our growing up. But if we focus all our energy on science and mathematics and political life, it's not going to work out. We have to, we have to, we have to have these issues opened up in school classrooms. That is the second thing and the third Very Very big thing is the trivialization of women in our films and in our media. You have to chase a woman, a woman's no is actually a yes. So things like this, you know. So these are all all these form part of men's minds and women's minds also. So we know that there has to be an effort on all these levels. So we can't just ask this newly wedded wife now to educate that husband. It's impossible. No, there are though marriages do educate both wives and husbands, but it cannot be the responsibility of the wife, who has come much later in this journey of this socialization of the man. So both men and

women have to learn all these and have to unlearn several things about our society, because society has very clear roles for men and for women, and we have to unlearn them. We have to have new stories, new accounts of living together, of respecting each other, of loving each other, of being married to each other.

***Sultana agrees and says that she sometimes uses her own life's story to educate her now 18-year-old son about gender discrimination and need for equality.***

Kabhi kabhi me apni khud ki story ke sath batati hun lekin bache ke mood ko dekh kar baat krti hun kabi kabi bache ko lagta hai ki aurat aur mard ki duniya alag hoti hai aurat bahir hati hai kaam karti hai toh wo achi aur buri nahi hoti wo society usko bana deti hai samaj usko bana deta hai lekin samaj jo dhancha hota hai wo aurat aur mard dono ke liye barabar hota hai aur dono ko samaaj me involve rehna zaruri hota hai lekin samaaj ke banaye hue khokle usoolo ko todna zaruri hota hai toh ek aisa nahi hai ki usme equality na ho gender discrimination na ho balki dono barabar ke hain chahe hum bachpan se ho ya naujawaani ki umar me aao ya fir hum boodhe ho jao dono barabar hona chahiye jis tarah se humare taraazu ke do palle barabar hote hain usi tarah se hume use measure krna chahiye ki dono ke liye barabar hi hai dono ke liye suraj nikalta hai toh barabar ki kirne lekar ata hai aur dono ke liye jab dishaaye milti hain toh choices alag alag ho sakti hain lekin raaste bahot alag alag ho sakte hain lekin disha ek hi hoti hai wo hoti hai gender equality ki insaanियat ki, hum duniya me ladka ladki ban kar aaye lekin usse pehle hum ek insaan ban kar aaye wo humare andar barkaraar hona chahiye.

***Sultana is now an active member of Shaheen and speaks in different forums about violence against women. She also counsels other women who are in vulnerable situations. For now, she continues her fight for justice for other women like her. She now enjoys singing in the country's first women-only Qawali troupe by Shaheen which regularly uses Qawali to raise awareness about different challenges facing women.***

***Unfortunately, the current pandemic situation has worsened the situation for women across the world. Vasudha says she is worried about women who are trapped in abusive marriages and whose cases are pending in courts.***

Women are calling me up since March 22. All the courts are closed. family courts are not working. magistrate courts are not working. Sessions courts are not working. It's so when women call up, I tell them just try to be safe. We can't litigate now. And it's the most painful thing to tell women that just be safe. If you are feeling unsafe in your husband's home, please return to your natal home, buy some time. And then once the courts reopen, let us try and litigate. But there have been instances of having several instances where more I mean versus women's cases that are pending in the courts. One is women who are yet to file two is women who are trapped in violent marriages and courts are close as it is the pendency in the courts is so bad. Now added to that we have four months courts have not

worked. I dread to think what it is going to do to our pendency. I'm terrified. Earlier it used to take four years for a divorce case to be heard, and actually gave it? No, I don't know. I'm scared to even think. So one is in pending cases. And second is women who are unable to come out and go to the courts. And the third worst thing is the loss of jobs. I'm terrified of women who are planning to leave, but lost their jobs. So once you lose the job, you also have to shelve your plans of leaving the home.

**As per the United Nations, domestic violence cases increased by 20% worldwide during the lockdown which termed this rise a “shadow pandemic”. According to a report in The Hindu, data from the National Commission of Women revealed that Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded between March and May of this year than recorded in the last 10 years. Delhi alone saw around 1,600 women calling emergency helpline numbers between March and April to report domestic violence, as per various reports. Other reports reveal that in India, about 86% women who experienced violence never sought help, and 77% of the victims did not even mention the incident(s) to anyone. Data further reveals that women who were subjected to both physical and sexual violence seek help relatively more than those who suffer from only one form of abuse. If you or any other women you know are in abusive marriages or relationships and need support, please log on to <http://www.ncw.nic.in/helplines> for helpline numbers and organisations offering legal services. The NCW has now launched a WhatsApp number 7217735372 too. If you are in AP or Telangana, you can also reach out to Bhoomika Women’s Collective Helpline on 1800-429-2908.**

*Thank you for listening to this episode of Pinjra Tod Kar. This podcast is conceived and produced by Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad with the support of Suno-India and Bol-Hyderabad. You can listen to all the episodes of Pinjra Tod Kar on our website [SunoIndia.in](http://SunoIndia.in) or any other podcasting app of your choice. The podcast is also available on Goethe Zentrum Hyderabad and Bol Hyderabad websites. You can also find additional resources on our website [www.sunoindia.in](http://www.sunoindia.in)*