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'Making' children nation builders

A debate on how children can contribute to democratic governance, and make the political process take up issues of concerns to children



Learning basics of grassroots democracy in Shantiniketan, West Bengal

Kavya Mukhija of Class XI, Tagore International School, New Delhi, talked to some children and teachers to find out what they have to say on this...

We often say "Children are the future nation builders." To become good nation builders, the children have to be given the right education - and that includes education on democratic participation by the young. That's how children can contribute to strengthen the democratic processes. To understand this process,

Every citizen of the country has equal rights, and so do children, says Mahima Trehan, of Class 11 studying in Tagore International School, East of Kailash - New Delhi. "The participation of young children in democracy, if provided, can be taken as mile stone. We know that children are the future of mankind, sour participation in the democratic process can be beneficial," she acknowledged.

Mahima has charted some pointers -so that children become "storehouses of positive energy so they can be a part to any awareness programme, and it will take the campaign to a great height."

- Children observe things very minutely, so they should be able to freely raise questions on the ongoing processes.
- Children are not biased, so they give or share without asking anything in return.
- They are good patriots,so they desire

to work for the country wholeheartedly.

- Child participation can bring unity and equality in democracy.
- They are goal oriented, so they will bring seriousness to any movement.

Don't lower the voting age

But Mahima's classmate, Manya Malkotia has a different perception. She feels that Involvement in the democratic processes -- before attaining a certain age and substantial knowledge -- will hinder in the decision-making altogether, particularly the electoral process.

Pointing out that India's Census clearly shows that the proportion of young adults in India is more than that of adults - and this will continue, she asks: "Should we change the voting age by two years - which is 18 years now?"

"Usually, children with less knowledge about the current governing scenario will tend to have no particular stand on the political parties. If we give them the right to vote, they will certainly not use it to the fullest. Their vote, or decision, would be guided by an influential adult. So, actually we are giving that adult the power of two votes," Manya points out.

Her argument is: "By lowering the voting age to 16, we are clearly giving the adults power of two votes -- which is against the constitutional ethics, isn't it?" It is better to follow the "already given path" when it comes to crucial decisions like democratic processes, feels Manya.

Dealing with problems

Vaishali Bidhuri takes the debate further by countering Manya and supporting classmate Mahima, saying: "Youth participation leads to better decisions and outcomes."

Many of the profound difficulties faced by young people around the globe illiteracy, poverty, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, discrimination

and forced engagement in armed conflict—are subjects of widespread concern at the national and international levels, says Vaishali.

Her argument is that, globally, young people now have to deal with:

- increased unemployment and insecurity at work,
- greater family instability, and
- reductions in social welfare programmes.

"Thus, it is important for young adults to take part in the crucial process of decision-making," says Vaishali.

Danger signal

Agreeing that "only the young have the ability to make a change that can revolutionize the nation," classmate Saif Nizam puts up a red flag on the "quality of education on democratic participation that the young and teenagers are getting in today's world." This, he strongly feels, "is actually discouraging us from contributing to the democratic processes in the country."

By nature children are patriotic, says Saif, "and do not want to leave the country helpless and unsupported, which is not good for a country like India at all." So what is the way forward?" By making the laws on Children's Rights more efficient."

"The young are the 'Element X' of Indian politics," points out Saif. So, it is important to involve the children who "have a mindset which is equal to everyone and is unbiased towards others."

"If we apply this ability of the children to the Indian politics, we can surely achieve a better political condition in the country," feels Saif.

Biases, Action Points & Inclusiveness

The debate progresses from students to teachers.

"On politics," says Richa Bhardwaj, who teaches English in Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi, "most of the opinions our youth and children form are re-enforced by media -- or are based on biased viewpoints of people around them."

To change this, feels Richa, the very first thing which India -- or any democratic country for that matter -- needs is "to get rid of its tendency to tolerate because that is where corruption, poverty, unemployment, etc stem from."

Pointing out that the youth, and even the children, need to be conscious about such things, the English teacher says: "It is indeed sad, that even after being a part of a democratic country, many people -- especially children and the rural population -- tend to be unaware about their rights and duties."

"A curriculum which focuses on the economic, social and political concerns of any democratic country would go a long way in ensuring maximum child participation and making children aware about things happening around them," says Richa.

Reiterating that children are the inheritors of the democratic tradition and their contribution starts early, Political Science teacher Maya Ray of the same school lists the following 'action points':

- ✦ Young students should be taught about the days celebrated as national events. For example, the Republic Day,

Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti could be celebrated in drawing and colouring, poems and songs. This way, the students are bound to develop love and patriotic feeling for their nation. This love will translate into commitment towards the nation as they grow older.

- ✦ To make them learn about the values of democracy, they must be told again and again about the importance of democratic participation.
- ✦ Citizenship must be taught to young students in a way that it becomes engraved into the psyche of the students as they grow older. Discussion and debate must become set in their lives. Their Right to Expression, Freedom of Speech and Freedom to Protest must be encouraged so that they become good citizens.
- ✦ The cornerstone of Democracy is popular participation. If this is encouraged among the young, it would lead to shaping of a vibrant and responsive democracy.
- ✦ Students must be given the 'Right to

Question' their teachers, and the 'Right to share their own opinion' with their classmates. This will allow them to demand a responsive and accountable government. They must be made aware of their Rights and Duties, so that they can effectively express their expectations from the government.

- ✦ Participation and awareness alone is the key to solve so many patterns that is our world.

Nandini Sharma of 'Times Internet' says: "By including education in a child's life, we shape them into responsible and conscientious citizens, which is the base for democracy. Similarly, when we include educated children in the process of democracy, we are adding a perspective on how to shape the future of our country.

"The freedom, the rights, the participation in social development and the role one plays in a democracy -- everything can be zeroed down on how included a person feels in the democracy, which is why including young people in democratic processes can ensure that they are well aware -- and bright enough -- to tackle the challenges that lie ahead," says Nandini.

A Journey to the Tribal Roots In the land of Birsa Munda



Ulihatu in Khunti district – the *Janamsthali* (birth place) of the great tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda, who is revered in Jharkhand as *Dharti Aba* and 'Birsa Bhagwan'. Excitement ran high amongst the select group of students of Guru Nanak School, Ranchi. February 10 was the red letter day for the 'pilgrimage'.

Boarding a Bolero, the students reached Khunti Sadar in no time. From here on, everyone was told to observe things minutely. The road to Ulihatu was in good condition, though single track. The vehicle stopped in front of gate. Above it was a board proclaiming *Bhagwan Birsa Munda Janamsthali*.

A person from the *Bharat Sewashram Sangh* was waiting to guide the students. Finding the main door locked, the guide asked for the keys – and soon, a young lady came with the keys. "Johar", the students greeted in Santhali. "Johar", she answered, smiling – as the students introduced themselves.

Now it was the lady's turn. "Savitri Munda", she said. "Do you know who she is?" asked our teacher. Everyone became very excited to learn she was the "great grand daughter of Birsa Munda."

The students took off their shoes before entering the house. "Birsa Bhagwan stayed

in a hut. But no hut can last a hundred years. Later, a hut-shaped cottage was designed and built," the students were told.

The cottage had a single room leading to an open verandah. Adjacent to the main door was a small podium, on which stood a small bust of 'Birsa Bhagwan'.

The students with their teacher folded their hands in prayer, lit a candle, garlanded the bust and showered flower petals. "Pray that you become an achiever and successful in whatever you do," the students were told.

Making friends in Ashram school

From there, the group went to Pronavananda Vidya Mandir, where the staff and students were eagerly waiting. Then the school principle asked the visitors to take a seat. The Ashram students, both boys and girls, came and sang a welcome song in *Santhali*, an ancient tribal language. Then, a girl holding a metal pot containing water and a bunch of mango leaves on top came forward to sprinkle water on the visiting group. This is a traditionally auspicious way to greet visitors.

Group Activity: Wallpaper

The teachers, mentors and youth volunteers of the area initiated a discussion on different aspects of violence against children. The Peace Gong Coordinator, Mr Sujay Sarkar

talked about how using the modern means of communications and the indigenous communication methods could be used in villages to create awareness on violence against children.

Then followed a group activity where Ms Rashmi from Maa Foundation asked the children to form groups of three and sit in a circle. Each group got a chart paper, colour crayons and a pen. After that, she asked them to make wallpapers on five topics.

The topics given by the visiting teacher were:

- a) What do you understand by Child Labour
- b) What do you understand by Child Marriage
- c) Environmental Degradation
- d) How is education a life-building measure
- e) Birsa Munda -- an inspiration

Though just few kilometer away from Ranchi, the Ashram school was completely different from the Ranchi school. There was no internet and no TV. The children had very little exposure to the outer world.

Seeing the children's bewilderment, Mr Sujay Sarkar asked them to draw or write whatever they understand about the topics. This increased their confidence. He also asked the Ashram school teachers to explain the topics, and what a wallpaper is in the local Mundari dialect which these children spoke – as the place is inhabited by the Munda tribe.

They were also asked to write about themselves, and the problems they faced

when coming to school. The time allotted was one hour. Once the time was over, they were asked to sit in their respective places.

Hidden Talent

Some of the wallpapers did pick up the themes that had been given. A few showed environmental degradation, and some showed child labour. Most of the wallpapers showed nature -- plants, animals, birds etc.

This was because they lived in a place which had so much natural beauty and very little exposure to the outer world.

The best thing to see was the finishing. The shades and colouring was really appreciable. This showed that these children really had talent, and what they needed was assistance and guidance. Three groups were declared winners and given prizes.

Despite their poverty and despration the children were very happy

and content with what they got. The school authority had arranged lunch for us --*dal-bhaat* and *aloo-chokha* (boiled potato mashed with salt, mustard oil and onion pieces).

The children had a gift for us before we left – a papaya from their school tree. That token of love showed their simplicity, love and affection, which left us all overwhelmed. We really hope that in the coming days these children from the remote village of Jharkhand would spread the message of The Peace Gong amongst their peers and actively participate in our efforts as other team across India.

Raushan Kumar

*Class X, Guru Nanak School
Ranchi, Jharkhand*

‘Children make better Ambassadors’

Though Children’s Rights are a new concept in Bhutan, the Himalayan Kingdom fares better than others in this region -- and is actively raising awareness and understanding, says

Phintsho Choeden, South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) Country Coordinator for Bhutan, in an interview to *The Peace Gong*

Can children help South Asia to face, address and overcome violence and choose peaceful dialogue?

Of course -- in any kind of violence or disaster, children are the most vulnerable, and therefore, the most affected. Children are also the love of their parents. Naturally, no parent or adult would like to see their children suffer and be harmed. So, I strongly believe that everyone will be better inclined to listen to them, rather than to adults saying the same on their behalf. Therefore, children can make the best ambassadors of peace and non-violence.

What role can children play in highlighting the urgency of ending violence against children –and in developing an information-sharing platform to raise awareness and commitment on the five key issues of South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)?

Children can play a critical role in this, since they are the ones who are affected -- and are at the centre of all this. Children all over the world, in general, experience similar acts of violence against them. If they take up the role of voicing their problems, the adults will sit up to listen -- and eventually act.

On our part, we must provide them with the platform to connect with each other -- to share, to learn, to support, and to impress upon the adults, and the governments, of the fact that they are the potential citizens, and leaders, of the future. Investing in them will bring positive impact in every way.

What are the most serious issues of violence against children in your country?

Bhutan comparatively fares far better in the region in this aspect. Nevertheless, there is evidence of our children facing small doses of different forms of violence – be it child marriage, child labour, or corporal punishment. There are various organisations, both government and non-government, working in the area of child protection.

What has been your effort to overcome such violence?

The National Commission for Woman and Child (NCWC) is, at the moment, the only national machinery working towards the protection and promotion of children and women’s rights. It has already conducted the mapping and assessment of the child protection system in Bhutan. It is currently in the process of conducting a nation-wide study on violence against children.

The findings and recommendations from these two studies will help us to plan and chart out the relevant and pertinent activities to combat violence against children.

Please share initiatives that facilitate children raising their voice against violence in your country – which contributing towards peace and nonviolence?

Child rights and protection are fairly new concepts in Bhutan. The NCWC is carrying out numerous activities to raise awareness and understanding in the children, as well as in the general

public, on these themes. We are happy that, within a few years, we have been able to achieve a certain level of awareness and sensitisation.

Moreover, Bhutan -- as signatory to the United Nation Child Rights Convention (UNCRC) -- is obliged to fulfill the provisions of this Convention. We have been submitting our Periodic Reports to the CRC Committee – and, in the process, have been proactive in our actions.

A few initiatives worth mentioning are:

- Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2011 which calls for the formation of Child Welfare Committees, both at the central and district levels;
- The amendment of related legislations;
- The mapping and assessment of the child protection system in Bhutan;
- The VaC study;
- Formation and existence of various youth and children forums such as Y-VIA, DAISAN etc.

Now that Malala Yousufzai and Kailash Satyarthi have jointly got the Nobel Peace Prize, how do you think we can reinvigorate our efforts for a child-friendly South Asia, wherein all kinds of violence against children become history?

Both Malala and Kailash are now South Asia’s pride. So we must live up to the reputation and honour bestowed upon them, by working towards the full protection and promotion of the children’s rights. This region has to set a good example to the whole world.

'Dialogue amongst children is the key'



South Asian Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIVEC) is the platform to share good practices amongst South Asia nations, says **Dr Md Aminul Islam**, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh in an interview to the Peace Gong.

Can children help South Asia to face, address and overcome violence and choose peaceful dialogue?

Children of South Asia have been facing a lot of violence over the years. They have to face violence both in and outside their homes, so they are able to address violence but the scope is very limited. Education is the key factor to empower a child. An educated empowered child can raise her voice against violence.

How can children contribute to expanding the dialogue across the region to promote a culture of peace and non-violence?

Dialogue amongst children of South Asia can create a space, and allow them to raise their voices against violence. Also, children can create a culture of peace and nonviolent environment in this region --and Malala Yousofzai is one of the significant examples from this region.

Each country has a few good practices on reducing violence against children, and SAIEVAC is the platform for South Asian children to share their good practices among countries to make everyone aware about preventing violence against all children.

What role can children play in highlighting the urgency of ending violence against children --and in developing an information-sharing platform to raise awareness and commitment on the five key issues of South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)?

A regional summit for children can create a platform through SAIEVAC, and perform as an Information Hub that would help to assess violence against children. Thereby, a plan could be developed to raise awareness on the five thematic area of SAIEVAC.

What are the most serious issues of violence against children in your country?

In Bangladesh, child marriage most critical issue of violence against children. To overcome the issue, the Government is going to amend the existing law -- and is creating awareness among the stake holders.

What has been your effort to overcome such violence? Please share the initiatives that facilitate children raising their voice against violence in your country -- which contribute towards peace and nonviolence?

Breaking the Silence (BTS) has introduced the 'Window Method' which is more focused on preventive measures of child abuse. These methods have empowered children on how they can address physical, mental and sexual abuse. It teaches them how to prevent all types of violence focusing on 'body boundary'. It also focuses on life skills of children -- and by these life skills they can share their feelings with parents, and through a systematic approach they can prevent violence.

Now that Malala Yousufzai and Kailash Satyarthi have jointly got the Nobel Peace Prize, how do you think we can reinvigorate our efforts for a child-friendly South Asia, wherein all kinds of violence against children become history?

Nobel peace prize winning of Malala Yousoufzai and Kailash Sathyarthi will encourage child activist and children volunteers. Their initiatives can be replicated in other countries of South Asia. The two Nobel Prize winners should travel across South Asia, and encourage both children and adults to prevent violence against children -- like child sexual abuse and exploitation, child marriage, corporal punishment, child labour, trafficking etc.

You are everywhere

Your blood is on my hands
Your blood is on my clothes
Your blood is on my face
Your blood is on the bullet

You are everywhere

On the Taliban hit list
On the bloody pages of history
In my dreams

In the beads of my rosary
On my chapped dry lips
As I feverishly call out your name

They say you are no longer here

They are wrong

Your blood is here
Your bones are here
Your bloody uniform is here
Your shattered dreams are here

Your shroud is here
Ready to be wrapped around
Your fragile body
Ridden with bullets

You'll always be here
In the walls of schools

Resurrected
In the laughter of children
Studying in classrooms

In the ink of the pen
Used to educate
In the voices of revolutionists

In our memories
In our prayers

You are not lost
We have lost you

Groping in the dark
Drowning in ignorance
Crying in vain

Digging tiny graves
Looking up at the bloody sky
With 141 clouds drifting
Looking down at the bloody ground
With 141 bodies lying

Staring at us

Asking us

What they were guilty of

But right now

You are very much present
In the coffin that I carry

On my shoulders

Let the Earth take you in

Let your marble tombstone shine in the moonlight
But right now

You are very much present
In the wind that blows away
The rose petals from your grave

Syeda Rumana Mehdi
Coordinator, The Peace Gong

Year that Kashmir lost...and what it taught

It is the first time since decades that Kashmir has entered a New Year without leaving the last one behind. The common feeling that usually comes while entering a new year is just not there, which can be seen amidst the traces of last year in every house, street or corner.

September 2014, Kashmir encountered something what no one could have predicted. The massive floods which inundated almost the whole of the valley – the talking point for all the residents, as to what last year was all about.

Needing an in depth perspective on the floods, I visited a village to meet the victims – and saw the havoc and tragedies everywhere.

On a warm and sunny early October morning, 70-year-old Fatima Begum was grieving silently amidst the rubble of what used to be her three-storied home in the village of Aarigatnoo, district Kulgam. This is one of the worst affected villages in Kashmir -- not far from Srinagar, the capital.

She has lived here all her life, and so have her three sons who weave carpets to make a modest living for their families. The floods that ravaged Kashmir for about a month — the worst in more than a century here — razed her house to the ground.

“We lost everything in this house,” Fatima Begum says, wiping away tears. “We don’t know where to live now,” she said looking around uncertainly. Winter was around the corner then, and everyone was apprehensive of how to survive the harsh weather.

This story of a 70-year-old flood victim is enough for the readers to understand the hardcore misery suffered by the people of so called ‘Paradise on Earth’. Fatima Begum stands as an example here, but there are more -- many more – such victims in the Valley.

Though not an economist, this writer managed to collect a few details that convert the terror brought by the flood. More than 559 bridges, 4350 miles of roads and hundreds of irrigation canals were heavily affected. In Srinagar alone, 91,000 houses were damaged.

Jammu and Kashmir’s chief secretary, Muhammad Iqbal Khanday, told the media recently that a preliminary assessment suggests the floods have cost the state “US \$16.3 billion!”

Without harping too much on the trauma, I think the time has come to think out of the box. To take something out of it; to take something positive -- because our only way to survive is to be ‘Positive’.

Year 2014 is regarded by many in Kashmir

as the ‘Lost Year’. But I do not agree.

What happens if we change this stance of “The year that was lost” to “The year that has taught us!”

Yes, the year did “teach” us something, didn’t it? As I said earlier, we have to look on the positive side of this painful affair -- and see where we stood then, and where we stand now.

Everyone has their own story, their own loss -- and most importantly, their own motivation. I was myself a victim of these floods. We lost our house, suffered big losses to our business. But despite that, I have something else to tell you about the floods that ruined us.

Remember the maxim: “What doesn’t kill you, only makes you stronger.” The ones’ who managed to live despite all the odds against them have actually grown up to be more stronger than ever.

So this is my motivation: I survived.

The only way left is the hard way now. We have to take our small pieces that were thrown on the ground, and build ourselves once more. To reinvent ourselves into something better, humbler and stronger.

Sheikh Meelad

*Class XI, Delhi Public High School
Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir*

Faith – an anchor in life

These memories are still fresh in my mind! Getting up in the middle of the night. Watching my toys floating out. A great flow of water that sucked all the ink of my books and just left them blank. One can’t even write new words on them.

Destruction was all around. Roads spaced with huge mounds of debris. Heart-rending stories were being told. The flood was merciless to everyone.

I remember the date -- September 14. That was the day when even the elite were searching for shelter amidst the poor in their neighbourhood. None was spared by this disaster. Those who didn’t face it directly were worried about their kin. The tragedy was evenly distributed to all, in handsome amounts!

Everyone was trying to escape from the flood waters. We too tried to get somewhere safe. Some of our relatives had reached points of safety.

My relatives made every possible effort to comfort us, but we were completely immersed in our thoughts. “We have lost our home. Every possession of ours has been washed away by the waters. It took a lifetime to collect these savings, but now we are left with nothing behind,” ran my thoughts. “Ah! Crazy thoughts they be,” my inner voice chanted.

“If God takes a bit from anyone, he has planned something huge in replacement.” My mother suddenly started whispering these words. Perhaps her senses started working in the right direction, as she started chanting her prayers.

Good news followed. Floods had affected our place the least. Moreover, all the family members and relatives were safe. Materialistic possession hardly matter. It is the family which matters.

Hope is immortal, and materialistic wealth is available in abundance.

Have faith and live a life full of life!

**Sariya Rashid (Class VIII) & Aaminah Bashir (Class VI),
Srinagar**

Children’s Initiative

Redressing Water Woes

**Bal Panchayat Team
Bapudham Colony, Chandigarh**

An awareness campaign on the need of water conservation in their area – that’s what the Bal Panchayat children’s team of Bapudham Colony in Chandigarh has been initiated.

Inadequate water supply has made life miserable for a large number of children of the locality. Many a times, they have to go to school without a bath. This has been affecting their health and studies.

The Bal Panchayat held on January 26 , the Republic Day, this year discussed the problems faced by the children of the colony. Access to quality education, increasing cases of eve teasing, menace of drugs, and access to adequate clean water were the main concerns expressed by the children. They felt that they themselves should take the initiative to respond to some of these problems.

The children felt that lack of clean water supply in the area was becoming a serious problem, and they decided to launch an ‘ Awareness Programme’ immediately.

Now, they have started going from house to house, explaining the importance of water conservation and the ways to prevent misuse of water.



Moina Parijat: Building a Children's Paradise

Roseline Farnaz Hussain, Class X,
Sankardev Sishu Niketan, Tezpur, Assam

**"In search of light
Pervading the dark**

We wonder what's on the other side..."

Moina Parijat literally means children's paradise!

Just like paradise, Moina Parijat is a pure, evergreen entity -- an organization founded by Mahadev Sharma and Nalini Bala Devi that leads young children from darkness to paths of bright shining light, and teaches them to tie the strings of unity.

Two wonderful people -- Mahadev Sharma who have been conducting the 'All Assam Children's Meet' (Xodou Axom Pradexik Moina Mel) and Nalini Bala Devi who is nurturing Parijat Kanan since 1950 -- decided to work together, and on 27 June 1954 was born the 'All Assam Moina Parijat'.

In this present age of technology, children have almost given up physical activities and games. In the midst of an almost mechanical life, Moina Parijat encourages children to discover the pleasure of playing in the open, explore a world of their dreams, and find light in the midst of darkness.

Moina Parijat helps in the children's physical, mental and intellectual growth -- by giving them a platform to explore and exhibit their talents through activities and competitions. For an all-round development, activities include physical exercise, competitions, fun and games, quiz, debates, exhibitions

etc. Chittaranjan Dutta, Tezpur district unit secretary, says, "Moina Parijat is for strong character building, and not just for institutional education."

Every child is special in his or her own way and has many unique qualities. Moina Parijat gives them a platform to develop these very qualities. It strengthens the children physically and mentally, in order to facilitate them towards becoming responsible citizens of the future, as well as developing themselves as brilliant personalities.

Moina Parijat harnesses the power of mental bonding of the children of the region to unite. The organisation develops their skills and talents through fun activities and games. The aim is to help them mould their future through strong social, moral and cultural roots.

Overall, the organisation focuses on developing universal bonds with children globally through their activities, and to play a participatory role in creating values amongst the children as they grow up in society.

Discussions on wide-ranging topics -- from education to development of the society -- give these children the confidence to participate in conversations that ultimately lead to important changes in their lives, as well as of the society.

Children gathering from different provinces of Assam get a chance to meet new friends, and exchange their thoughts and ideas with each other. This way, they get to build their confidence level, as well as their sense of independence.

This way, the children of Moina Parijat not only get the opportunity to travel across the state, but also the chance to learn new things about the history and culture of these places -- leaving them with rich experiences that last a lifetime.

Jaffrin Farnaz Hussain of Tezpur district is one such beneficiary who grew up under Moina Parijat's guidance.

"Moina Parijat develops each child to be a true human being, because only a true human being can advance and find the light at the end of a dark tunnel," says Hussain.

Group Discussion

Children: Active citizens

The Peace Gong Bureau, Kanpur

"Seniors never take our views seriously." A common refrain of the children found voice at the group discussion held to celebrate this year's Republic Day, organised by The Peace Gong Bureau. Everyone agreed that children's views need to be heard seriously to ensure their contribution in the democratic process. Without respecting their rights, and by not giving them adequate opportunities to voice their concern, issues of violence against children will always be difficult to address.

Suchi Shukla, a Class 10 student, said "We too have a right to express our ideas on improving our surrounding." But whenever she and her friends tried to discuss with their teachers -- about how, as a collective unit, they can help improve and develop their surroundings -- the teachers dismissed them saying: "You are too young to think of contributing to the community".

Children too have a right to be heard, said Simran Soni, a student of Class 10. "Are we not citizens of the country? So why can't we be consulted on what should be our education process," she asked.

Carrying heavy school bags is a burden on the young shoulders. "But the adults say only this type of education is right," she complained. Another important issue raised by Soni was that there was too much of pressure of exams, coming one after the other, "which makes it difficult to use our talents for creative pursuits."

Political parties use children during elections, said Abhay Sahoo, a student of Class 8, to shout slogans and carry the flags of political parties during rallies. "But when it comes to hearing our problems, the seniors do not give respect to our rights," he pointed out.



Javed Naqi, The Peace Gong J & K Coordinator conducting a media workshop



Flood affected families of J & K

Children with Disabilities

They just need a chance

To mark the World Disability Day: December 3, the *South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)* organised a conference on 'Stepping Up Protection of Children with Disabilities in South Asia' recently in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Bhim Prasad and **Kavya Makhija**, two young students from Bhutan and India, who attended the conference as Child Observers, and came away with many learnings which they share with *The Peace Gong*...

'Consult, share & interact'

Kavya Makhija



What was the impact of the Colombo Consultation on you, and your work plan as a child representative of India?

The Colombo Consultation was an eye-opener for me. Earlier, I used to present my own experiences and difficulties faced in my everyday life. But now, along with my own viewpoints, I also put forth the experiences and difficulties of my friends.

What is your impression about the Conference?

The conference was a very memorable one, with loads of experiences. It was a big thing -- consulting, sharing the experiences, and interacting with the child delegates from different countries of South Asia region, particularly with the children having disabilities. I...rather everyone of us...were like one big group -- and I think this worked as the best motivator in helping the children speak about their worries, and their concerns about the children with special needs in their own countries as well.

Has the Conference made you see the Rights of Children with Disabilities differently, to what you understood or felt before?

Earlier, I used to see the children with special

needs differently. But after attending the Children's Consultation in Colombo, I have realized that all of us children have rights -- just like the adults. Now it's like, "We can do this."

Did this experience change your idea of what a child with disabilities can do in life?

A child with special needs is valuable in him/herself. I have realized they can work wonders. They just need some additional resources or help, and then what they are capable of doing is just unimaginable. They just need a chance.

Name the most important things a SAIEVAC Child Observer or Member should do.

My top five things are:

- Be a leader - We should be leaders of the present. Only by becoming leaders will we be able to guide the other children towards the right path of the future.
- Be friendly - A friendly member is able to connect with all the children, and understand them and their discussions.
- Encourage participation - It is not enough to encourage children's participation only during such consultations. They should be encouraged in all the activities of our society.
- Be creative - It is necessary for the members to be creative, as their work involves them in fields related to children. Children like creativity and easily get attracted to it. This will help them in establishing a rapport.
- Organize regular meetings - A SAIEVAC Observer or Member should organize regular consultations with children with special needs to get an update on the improvements and developments in their respective countries.

How can we make children's participation an inclusive process in community building--and children with disabilities take up social concerns?

To ensure inclusive participation of children in community building, we should have regular consultations or gatherings. Not necessarily on a large scale all the time. There could be one in each and every city, in which the children present their views on what type of community they wish to build.

Children with special needs opportunities -- like performing street plays that will raise awareness about the social concerns, and contribute to the community building process as well.

Of late, there have been a number of cases of girls becoming victims of violence in their schools. What steps can we take to make our schools truly child-friendly? How can we children contribute in this effort?

Violence against girls has increased over the recent years. Violence is not only physical but could also be verbal, emotional or mental. There should be a special training for the teachers, particularly in the girls' schools. Also important is knowing how to make friends with children with special needs.

Schools can set up special groups of adults and children-- and children facing violence in the school would be able to report and receive help from the members of this group.

How to ensure protection of the Rights of Marginalized and Excluded Children in South Asia?

By setting up a toll-free 'helpline' run by the children of South Asia, assisted by adults whenever required. Good publicity about how this 'helpline' works will help the people to come forward in aid of the marginalized and excluded children.

Would you like to join The Peace Gong team?

Well, even if you hadn't asked me, I would have. Of course, I would love to be a part of The Peace Gong and write for it in the forthcoming editions. I would also like to request you to have a creative column, for which the children can send their creative ideas.

'I learnt that disability means extra problems'

Bhim Prasad

What is your impression about the conference?

It was fun. I found it very interesting, consulting and interacting with children who came as delegates from different countries of South Asia.

Has the experience made you see the Rights of Children with Disabilities differently to what you understood or felt before? And will you now change your own work plan as a child representative of your country?

I always thought as children we all face similar problems. But after hearing their experiences, I have realised that in addition to the problems we face as children, these children face extra problems because of their disabilities.

Yes, I will definitely change my own work plan – now that I got the chance to know about the issue and difficulties faced by children with disabilities in different fields. This conference gave me the opportunity to spend time with children with disabilities, and know their problem and the difficulties that they face.

What can a child with disabilities do in life?

Everything ... everything that a child

without disability can do.

What were the most important messages that you learnt from the conference?

First, all children, and that includes children with disabilities, need to be treated equally in all kind of activities. Second, we -- including the adults -- must provide the platform for children with disabilities, so that they participate in every field and have access to equal opportunities.

Please share some of the issues faced by children with disability in your country.

Most important thing is that these children are not given the same kind of opportunities as other children without disabilities get. What hurts me more is that they are often made fun of by their own friends, and also by adults, and some people take advantage of their disabilities and try to harm them.

What is your action plan after attending the conference in Sri Lanka?

I will share my experience and the recommendations of the conference with all the children of my school in February, after the winter vacation – and on my Facebook page also -- to make everyone more aware about the children with disabilities.

What more can be done?

Let us form a network of children across South Asia to take up the Rights of the Children with Disabilities, and those who are marginalised and excluded in society. We must make these children members of this network, and include them in all the programmes.

Name the important things that a SAIEVAC Child Observer or Member should do.

My top items are:

- › Provide a bigger platform for children with disabilities.
- › Spread awareness on kind of discrimination children with disabilities face, and what we can do to help them.
- › Include children with disabilities in every consultation, and give opportunities to raise their voice.
- › Make the school, parents and also other children aware of what children with disabilities can do.

Finally, would you like to join our newspaper *The Peace Gong* team?

Of course I want to join, and spread the message of *Peace Gong* in Bhutan.

Reality Check: Child Labour

'Dreams !! What dreams?'

I don't have the right to dream. I will have to spend my life living on roads and working in dhabas."

– A 13-year old girl working in a roadside dhaba (eatery)
Interviewed by *The Peace Gong Aligarh Bureau*
Ayesha Ehsan, Zaman Ghorri & Sauma Afreen (all Class XII)



There can be no dreams for girls like Farzana (name changed). She is forced to accept her destiny -- that she can never get what she wants. She doesn't recall where she came from. So she lives alongside the

roads, and wherever she can find shelter.

Farzana was one of the many children, The Peace Gong Aligarh Bureau team interviewed, as part of a 'Reality Check' on Child Labour in Aligarh. The problem

of child labour is not just in Aligarh but in the entire country. The number of working children (age group: 5-14 years) is 43.53 lakh as per the 2011 Census, while the previous Census of 2001 recorded that there were 1.26 crore working children (age group: 5-14) amongst the 25.2 crore children in India.

The very fact that children are being made to work violates our Constitution's Fundamental Right to

- ❖ Education,
- ❖ Right to Childhood &
- ❖ Equal Opportunity to participate as equal citizens of the country.

During our 'Reality Check', the team found only one of the five children engaged as child labour was getting paid. Moreover, these children were being forced to work in exploitative conditions, and subjected to various forms of cruelty and violence.

For instance, the team found a small boy -- not more 10-11 years of age -- working in a tea stall. It was clear that he had been beaten by the owner of the stall. When asked where his parents were and why he was working, the boy said he did not have any knowledge

about his parents, and that he was living with the owner of the stall ever since he came to his senses. "He treats me the way he likes," was the boy's candid comment.

The team met another boy at another roadside tea stall -- also of similar age, and living in the same pathetic condition. "How I wish I could go to school like all of you and live a normal life," he said when asked about his desires.

One of the shocking facts discovered by The Peace Gong team was that educational institutions' canteens employ a large number of child labourers.

"Isn't it an irony that so many children

are working in canteens of schools and colleges, when they should have been studying in these institutions," asked Asif Khan, a research scholar in the Social Work Department of Aligarh Muslim University.

The team also found poverty and lack of social security are the most important causes of child labour.

Ayaz Ahmed, another research scholar, observed that deprived of education, the world of opportunities and rights are forever closed for these children – and that collective effort of the society is very important to ensure the end of child labour menace. "We have to work hard to educate

these children, so that they become productive citizens of the country," he added.

Elizabeth Lawrence, an American author, has said, "There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colors are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again." But for the children that The Peace Gong team spoke to, there is no garden in their childhood.

In the light of the 'Reality Check' findings, The Peace Gong Aligarh Bureau plans to work with these children and initiate literacy programmes-- so that they are exposed to some kind of education.

Horror in Peshawar

A GRIM REMINDER OF CHILDREN'S INSECURITY

Kanupriya Gupta

Class X - Carmel Convent School, BHEL
Bhopal

The gunning down of more than 130 school children inside the Army Public School – Peshawar in Pakistan once again underlines how children across the world fall victim to violence. How and why the terrorists entered the school, and mindlessly killed the children between the age group of 8-18, belies any logic, or human values!

As the horror unfolded on the TV screens and over the social media, we felt utterly shocked and anguished at this mindless act of barbarism. This cold-blooded killing represents inhumanity at its worst. All those who used children as shields cannot be termed 'human'. A chill of dread engulfed our consciousness. But the tragedy is that this was not the first time such a heinous act was committed against children, and this won't be the last time too.

Whether it is the abduction of innocent girls by the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram, or the shocking rapes of minor girls in Bengaluru, all these are a poignant

reminder that we, the children, are not safe even in our homes, schools or institutions -- where we ought to be safe.

Last year in November we celebrated 25 years of the 'Convention of the Rights of the Children'. But the picture of safety and security of children continues to be grim. Time and again, children have stressed that they have the right to protection from different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation – but the horror continues!

Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 'Adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child', Ms Marta Santos Pais (the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children), said, "For millions of children around the world, life is defined by two words --fear and pain. For them, the world has no safe haven. And nations are missing the chance to build a better world for all."

Ms. Pais also pointed out, "Violence compromises all children's rights. It goes hand in hand with deprivation, high risks

of poor health, poor school performance and long term welfare dependency." She has rightly echoed our views -- and together with our seniors, we must highlight the cost that society pays for violence against children.

The introductory lines of the UN Secretary General's Report on Violence against Children say: "No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable." This should stir all of us to find ways and means to ensure an end to violence against children.

We join all the children of the world to express our deep anguish and condolences to the families of the children who died in the violence in Peshawar, and elsewhere.

Violence has no place in the ethos of our civilization. So, should we choose to come together, fight the menace of such mindless killings and spread the voice of nonviolence? Or just say a few words of condolences and forget about it tomorrow? The choice is ours – and ours alone!

Together, we stand!

Ramsheena

Class XII, Farooq College,
Calicut

The Peace Gong team strongly condemn the barbaric and gutlessness terror attack of 16 December last year that led to the death of 148 school students in Peshawar, Pakistan. There have been periods of history in which episodes of horrific violence occurred. But this brutal attack on the innocent children is one of the most haunting inhumane acts.

It is for us children to stretch our hands forward -- regardless of nation, religion, caste and creed -- to the affected families.

We believe that the world does not suffer because of bad people -- or bad actions. It suffers due to the silence of the good people.

Tragic incidents involving child victims show no sign of decline. As concerned citizens, let us all take a pledge of making an earnest effort to support non-violence.

Hand that rocks the cradle

The shadow of God

The future of a nation

A child shapes the destiny of civilisation.

Such is the irony that children, the beautiful creations of God, continue to be victims of unending violence -- one of the gravest concerns facing humanity today. We deplore this, and stand beside the families of the children killed and injured in this craven act.



A new beginning of fresh hopes

Let's welcome year 2015 with renewed energy and hope that something more substantial will be done for the safety and security of children across the world. May this new year bring new and exciting opportunities for all of us to contribute to global peace, and help us realize not only our rights enshrined in many national and international instruments, but also our responsibilities, as good citizenship dictates.

Looking back, the previous year was quite horrifying to many of us. Continued violence against children in different parts of the world kept reminding us that we are not safe. Not just in India and South Asia but across the world, we came across ghastly stories of how innocent children fell victim to lust, hatred, stereotype prejudices, enmity and revenge. Children, after all, have always been soft targets in all kinds of conflicts and divisions.

But if the dusk was dark and frightening, a brighter landscape is visible because of enlightened ideas. So, as we enter 2015, our hopes are fresh-- and we, the children of the

world, are highly excited and confident that we can all work together to turn the whole world towards enlightenment.

This year is going to be crucial for all of us, especially the children. The Millennium Development Goals will make way for the Sustainable Development Goals. This can determine how the world will shape in the next 15 years. All countries who converged at the Rio+20 Summit had agreed that "sustainable development must be inclusive and people-centred, benefiting and involving all people, including youth and children." The importance of active participation of young people in the decision-making processes was also stressed in this Summit.

Boosting enormous hope, this new development makes all of us commit, in partnership with the adults, to work towards carving out a society which is just and equal for all. We hope that this year will usher in a new chapter that involves children in all aspects of the functioning of our democracies,

and that our voices will be heard with utmost sincerity and seriousness. We are not pawns and puppets of anyone. Just as the first rays of the Sun bring a new prospect every day, similarly we hope that all our effort and endeavour shall be recognized and promoted.

Therefore, the children of this world have to strive hard together for the realization of global peace and strengthening of our democracies. And to do that, we the children must learn and understand the functioning our democracy, and our role in it. It is relevant to recall what Mahatma Gandhi said: "The true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty, and therefore, his country's -- and ultimately -- that of the whole of mankind."

Kanupriya Gupta

Class X - Carmel Convent School, BHEL (Bhopal)

'Empower children to raise their voice against violence'

By behaviour and awareness, children can become messengers to end violence, says **Anand Prakash**, South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) Country Coordinator for India and Deputy Secretary in the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, in an in-depth interview with *The Peace Gong*

Can children help South Asia to face, address and overcome violence and choose peaceful dialogue?

Yes, definitely. Children can play a very important and effective role in ending all forms of violence -- not only against them in different settings, but violence against any person in society at large.

How can children contribute to expanding dialogue across the region for promoting a culture of peace and non-violence?

Children are the citizens and leaders of the future, They should develop good moral habits -- particularly patience and confidence in themselves, sympathy and a helpful attitude towards others, and always choose the path of dialogue and persuasion to stop violence against them.

How can children become messengers generating awareness of the importance of dialogue over use of force in settling differences, and thus building the possibility of ending violence against all children?

If despite all humility and persuasion, children are subjected to any type of violence -- physical, emotional or sexual -- at home, school or any other place, they should boldly speak out, seek the help of Government/non-government organisations, and peer groups. They should not come into conflict with the law. Thus, by their own behaviour and awareness, children can become messengers to end violence against children -- not only in South Asia, but wherever they go.

In what way?

Children can utilise their schools or any group of which they are a part, as a platform to empower their friends and encourage them to spread the message. The National Action Coordination Group (NACG) is a network of organisations across the nation which has been working to end violence against children. They would be more than willing to support the children in their efforts.

What role can children play in highlighting the urgency of ending violence against children, and in developing an information-sharing

platform to raise awareness and commitment on the five key issues of South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)?

Media, in all its forms, is a very effective mechanism to raise awareness among the maximum number of people. Here are some initiatives that children can think of undertaking.

- Contact leading newspapers and request them to bring out news, features and interviews on the subject, and publicise the message that children want to send across.
- Get in touch with local radio stations with the aim of having a discussion on the issue to sensitise the community.
- Request NACG to help establish networks with media houses, corporates and social entrepreneurs to create impactful Public Service Announcements on the subject.
- Contact story-tellers to create child-friendly stories on the subject, and request the schools to these messages in story time activities.

- Use social media as a tool for advocacy against violence.

What are the most serious issues of violence against children in your country?

In India, the Ministry of Women and Child Development conducted a study on Child Abuse in 2007. This study brought to light various forms of violence against children prevalent in our country —and the most serious were sexual abuse and corporal punishment or beating.

What has been your effort to overcome them?

After that study in 2007, the Government of India has, put in various laws, policies and schemes to ensure that children are protected against all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. Some of these are:

- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 which addresses sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography;
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme which aims to build a protective environment for children in difficult

circumstances;

- Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which prohibits corporal punishment in school settings;
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 -- which was amended in 2006. This law is like an umbrella for children in need of care and protection, and for children in conflict with law. This law is now being changed again to keep up with the changing needs of our society.

We are constantly striving to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence -- and that is the reason why we regularly sensitise and build up the capacities – of the authorities and communities both -- on their duties and responsibilities.

For this, we have our National and States, Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR and SCPCRs) to protect, promote and monitor child rights across our country.

Please share initiatives which facilitate children raising their voice against violence

in your country – which contribute towards peace and non-violence.

To curb sexual offences against children, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 has created awareness amongst the community, that such offences are also a kind of violence against children. Our Government has also issued guidelines to stop corporal punishment in schools.

Now that Malala Yousufzai and Kailash Satyarthi have jointly got the Nobel Peace Prize, how do you think we can reinvigorate our efforts for a child-friendly South Asia, in which all kinds of violence against children become history?

It was indeed a moment of celebration when Kailash Satyarthi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It will be an inspiration to all of us to stand against violence against children in all settings.

Media, in any form, is a very strong and tested platform to bring about change. The efforts of children can be strengthened by using this tool effectively to empower them, sensitise adults, and thereby ensure that violence against children does become history.

‘Adults should empower children to be leaders’

A new Child’s Rights Bill will soon be passed by the Maldives Parliament, says Ms. Aishath Sadhyqa, National Coordinator, South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) & Senior Social Service Officer, Ministry of Law & Gender, Govt. Maldives in an interview to The Peace Gong.

Can children help South Asia to face, address and overcome violence and choose peaceful dialogue?

Children are undoubtedly capable of bringing a change a change to the situation of violence against children in South Asia. At school level, children can form groups such as children’s societies. These groups can then start activities that help children to empower themselves in protecting and promoting their rights. Also, through entertainment programmes, they can provide important messages to the general public on child protection. This way, a large population of children and their parents can be reached easily.

How can children become messengers generating awareness about the importance of dialogue over use of force in settling differences, and thus building the possibility of ending violence against all children?

Children in South Asia region can make an enormous contribution to end or minimize violence against children in this region. There are many ways in which they can contribute to this process. Nowadays, many children have access to internet -- and social media is very popular among

almost all of them. This can be used as an opportunity to spread information about child protection – through Facebook and Twitter. They can provide information on how to protect themselves from violence against themselves, and how they can help children who are suffering from such situations.

What role can children play to highlight the urgency of ending violence against children, and develop an information sharing platform to raise awareness and commitment on the five-key issues of South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)?

Children can work as advocates, as well as help the people who are helping children who have been identified as victims of child abuse, neglect or any other type of violence. That means it is we, the adults, who need to empower children so that they can be leaders and guide other children to carry on with this process.

The Government and private media should encourage children to use these resources – print, radio and TV -- to inform the general public about such acts of violence against children. It is equally important to encourage children to take the initiative in helping other children who are younger -- protecting them from all forms of violence against them.

What are the most critical and compelling issues of violence against children in your country, and what is your effort to overcome them?

Child sexual abuse, according to available

statistics, has been the most reported type of violence against children in my country. Children of very young age, even toddlers, have been victims of these abuses. It is also a concern that child sexual abuse cases, occurring in their own homes, are being less reported.

Moreover, adults forcing children to engage in major crimes such as prostitution, substance abuse, murder and gang violence has been a real concern for the Government, parents and the whole community as well.

Then, there are some emerging issues such as parents refusing to send their children to schools, to provide vaccination or getting children married at a very early age. These issues are rooted in extremist religious beliefs amongst a number of people in many communities around the country.

There were also rumours that some children were sent by their parents – or some parents forced their children to go with them -- to places like Syria and Afghanistan in the name of Jihad.

In 2009, the Maldives Parliament passed a Bill which specifically focuses on taking special action against perpetrators of child sexual abuse. This Act has helped the authorities to ensure that most of the perpetrators of sexual abuse are held accountable for their actions.

The Government has also taken steps to keep children away from criminal offenses. To help children who are not so academically bright, we now have Civic Education and Creative Arts as compulsory subjects in the new national curriculum.

A new Child Rights Bill has been drafted, and is in the final stage of being put up to the Maldives Parliament. This will replace the 24-years-old Child Rights Act that has not seen any change.

Please share examples of innovative initiatives from your country which facilitate children raising their voice against violence, and contributing towards peace and nonviolence?

Till the recent past, sadly there were very few such activities. Now this is changing. A theatre forum was conducted last year in the capital Male, to create awareness about child rights and abuse. Children presented dramas based on topics related to child abuse, neglect and other forms of violence against them. Also, consultation sessions were held with children -- in different areas of the country -- to allow them to express their opinion on the newly drafted Child Rights Bill.

Now that Malala Yousufzai and Kailash Satyarthi have jointly got the Nobel Peace Prize, how do you think we can reinvigorate our efforts towards a child-friendly South Asia wherein all kinds of violence against children become history?

Creating awareness is the key to end violence against children. However, it is always a huge challenge to deliver the information we want to all the members of the community. When awareness sessions were conducted in Maldives, very few men attend to these sessions. That has to change.

We need to find ways to reach them with the message we want. Social workers, who work for the protection and promotion of children's rights, have to be trained more on this area -- as most of them have a very basic training or learning experience on these issues. That's how SAIVAC can contribute to the professional development of these social workers, in order to enhance a quality service to children and their parents.

Please show us how this can be done?

There are very active NGOs who work for the betterment of children in Maldives. There are such NGOs in other countries of the region as well. What SAIVAC can do is to encourage these NGOs by giving special rewards or financial assistance. It would be a huge boost to the NGOs working to protect and promote children's rights.

Another step is through the media, which is a powerful tool for advocating child rights. With the assistance of SAIVAC, a series of radio or TV programmes can be produced – which are then

broadcast by the State television and radio of each country of this region. These programmes can be a standard one for all the countries, and should be in the local language of that country.

Serve others, remain happy

Akash Kumar, Bihar
(Translated from Hindi)

How can we be happy? By serving others. We children should take the lead in helping others in need. It was only sometime back that it was raining heavily in the streets of Patna, Bihar. The whole area was waterlogged. Though we were enjoying immensely, it was very difficult to move around due to the poor conditions. A group of children from the nearby slums were also playing in the streets splashing water. In one corner of the street, they saw an old lady trying to cross the street. It was difficult for her to cross.

The boys who were playing started talking about the old lady. One boy said they should not go and help her as their mother had said to be careful about water. Another said by helping her, both they and their parents would be happy. Still another said helping a person in distress will ensure that they got accolades in school. Finally, they collectively decided to go and help the old lady cross the streets. It was the best way to remain happy and satisfied, the children felt.



The Peace Gong Gurgaon team members volunteering for children with visual impairment

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