

KIRAN BEDI

India's highest ranking Woman Law Enforcement Officer
Founder of India Vision Foundation running

Women's Empowerment programs, Drug Rehab Center and Gully Schools for children in Slum areas
Raman Magasaysay Award Winner for Prison Reform



IF YOU WANT TO BREAK BARRIERS, make girls play with boys and sensitize boys to play with girls. It begins with co-ed education, not to fall in love, but to compete with each other on equal terms.

IRAQ'S SUCH A FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER...MONSTERS- how do you bring them back into the bottle? I think that's one act of history which would never ever be forgiven, when our children sit down and analyze history.

WHEN I WAS VISITING AMERICAN PRISONS, I looked around for mission statements outside the buildings. Not a single one said: 'We're here to reform.' All said: 'Heightened security.' Nowhere was the word: 'Reform.'

THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CHANGE THIS COUNTRY IS A WOMAN; A WOMAN WITH POWER WHO DOESN'T BECOME LIKE THE MEN.

SELF HELP GROUPS

Navjyoti/India Foundation

If we do Purdah, we open our eyes also, No? Nobody can see from outside whether eye is open or not. We square our eyes and talk Madam! That's why we keep Purdah, so he doesn't know whether she's meeting his eyes or not! OUR SELF ESTEEM HAS RISEN! It's risen a lot!



- *ONLY A WOMAN KNOWS THE PAIN OF ANOTHER. When mine drinks a little bit, and I have a problem for ten minutes, then those whose men drink a lot, what must happen to them? I want that from my village, liquor and all intoxicating substances should go away. Everyone should spend their days with each other in affection and happiness. There should be good savings. And there should be no torture on women. And we don't have to spread our hands in front of men.*

-GyanvatiJi, President of Self Help Federation



Mrs. MEENA BALDEV

Social Worker at Family Counseling Center outside Delhi
Grappling with the new face of HIV/AIDS

I think if Government pays attention to FCC's and supports them, so many problems that are coming on the women can be improved.

- **IF people just get tested- and know at the time of HIV- then we can be saved. So stop it at HIV. Don't let it turn into AIDS. But it is the misfortune of our country, that we only know when it turns into AIDS.**

- *WHEN BOTH HAVE HIV, THE WOMAN IS KEPT TILL THE MAN IS ALIVE, for his service. The day the husband dies, she's turned out along with the kids.*
- *BEFORE we used to get 1 case in a month, now 3 or 4 people come in a month, and for that through your medium I WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE GOVT. TO OPEN REHABILITATION CENTERS for these women thrown out on the streets.*

ANJALI GOPALAN
Founder, Naz Foundation

Providing a space for discussions on topics like Sex, Sexuality and Sexual Health
Enabling persons affected by HIV/AIDS to gain access to health care services.
Project 'Goal:' Empowerment of Girls through Sports



I think we need to experiment more in what we can do to work with young woman, because that may be the only thing that would protect them finally.

ONCE YOU CREATE THE SPACE for people to talk about sexual issues- people don't stop talking! Everyone wants information. So its key for us to create those spaces, I think. Because that's the first step towards combating HIV. Women are facing the brunt of the epidemic. Because again look at it in the larger context of male female relationships in this country. The poor woman who 9 out of ten cases gets infected by her husband and is taking care of him, she gets kicked out once he dies.

THERE's ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR THESE CHILDREN who are orphaned and infected. They are out on the streets and this is what really riles me- most donors don't want to look at care for children. And we're expecting people who are already overburdened- who are dealing with poverty themselves- to take care of children who have a terminal disease! What are we thinking?

JUSTICE LEILA SETH

First Woman High Court and State Supreme Court Justice of India

First woman to top the English Bar Exams

The first thing my father said when I was born was that there's going to be no dowry. She's going to go just as she is. And we're going to educate her and make her as good as the boys.



YOU CAN IMAGINE THE KIND OF COURTROOM TENSION, two women arguing a case on the subject of rape! I suddenly felt- why, I am as good as her- why can't I say all these things? I had prepared but the confidence to say them, I learnt during that argument which went on for two days.

MAKING A LAW FOR THE MINORITY is always difficult unless the minority wants it. And the minority always feels that our religion is in danger.

ONE OF THE THINGS I MOVED FOR REFORM into the law commission was women getting a part of the joint property, and the law has been passed. What I had hoped for was that it would kill the dowry system, and it would make women equal and I had hoped that many of these ills would die out. But its not happened yet!

We had a child, so I decided I would find a course that did not require too much attendance. So I bought this book called- Careers Encyclopedia- and I read up and found that in the legal profession- they didn't mind if you didn't attend any lecture as long as you attended their dinners!

Dr. Ranjana Kumari

Founder, Center for Social Research

President, Women's Power Connect- Body of National Women's Organizations



Gender is a different kind of concept than a sexist concept, and in Indian women's movement, we are totally different in our perspective from the Western women's movement.

IT IS THE WAY SOCIETY IMPARTS VALUES and trains you. You tell your brother not to bring the water for the sister, but the sister must bring the water for the brother. So the mindset! It is inferiority that is inculcated in the minds of men and women differently.

- **498 IS A PROVISION OF THE DOWRY LAW-** any mental, physical, sexual or economic cruelty against a woman in relation to dowry, she can complain. It's a civil law, so it really provides compensation to the woman- and you don't have to go to the police which is very insensitive in this country.
- **GIRLS MUST BE SEXUALLY EDUCATED** because in India the biggest issue at the moment is that women have no possibility of negotiating a sexual relationship in marriage.

PROF. ZOYA HASAN

Member, Minorities Commission of India

In fact, the Indian Constitution prohibits any kind of preferential or special treatment on the ground of religion which is seen to be going against the secular basis of the constitution. So there's a very interesting relationship in India between Secularism and Affirmative Action.



The issues close to my heart really don't have to do with women or minorities for that matter. The issue close to my heart is Equity.

WE SEE AMERICAN ACADEMICS WRITING ABOUT INDIA, AND THEY SEEM TO ARGUE that the Indian state has done reasonably well vis-a-vis these minorities and have these elaborate affirmative action programs, state interventions, quotas. And that gives the impression that indeed we have one of the world's best regimes of affirmative action, which of course we do, but it is a regime pertaining only to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes and now 'Other Backward Classes', and it excludes from its purview religious and linguistic minorities, (many of which are as disadvantaged.)

MUNAZZAH

A young Muslim Urbanite and Social Advocate

MAYBE IF YOU KNOW THE STRONG LINK THAT PEOPLE HAD BETWEEN HINDUS AND MUSLIMS EARLIER in Old Delhi- it was very good. They were like brothers and sisters. I knew Hindus who didn't know Hindi at all but knew how to read and write Urdu, which is rare, and they'd be so good to you that you'd never feel the difference. Now they're a little reluctant. The old people are fine enough. But the young generation has something in their mind which will not come on their face, won't come into their actions, but there is something that will make you feel- why not that much warmth? It is both sided.

AS FAR AS UNIFORM CIVIL LAW IS CONCERNED, I want to read about it, before I say yes or no. I want to know what Islam says before commenting on anything. I have heard. I don't want to believe it. I want to see things for myself.

I SEE A LOT OF CHANGE- DIFFERENCE IN OUTLOOK AFTER EDUCATION. Maybe a Muslim family who is not educated will follow things rigidly without understanding it, while I believe that you should first understand the thing and then follow it. Things are more rigid in Muslim families because people who are propagating things are only giving you one part of it.

ALICE JAMES MEAD

Activist, Author, Artist

Anything that interferes with empathy and imagination of kids is cutting off their sense of humanity and their ability to problem solve.



"I have always been interested in writing about children who--for some reason--live on the edge of the mainstream society. I feel that authors and artists should travel to these edges, to widen the circle of inclusion through empathy and art." - quote from biography

I STAYED IN KOSOVO FOR A WEEK. Embedded myself in a group of 7th graders and took pictures for a week. When I got back- the State Department called and asked if I could bring my pictures because no one had seen Kosovo! People came from all over the place: Democracy Institute, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, Foreign Affairs committee... I showed the pictures, described the conditions, and made this movie from the slides and video I found in a Box- of when Serbs came into Kosovo five years ago- this compilation of horror!

MY BOOK 'SOLDIER MOM' was about the 1st Iraq war- It is so eerie to the second one- same names keep popping up- and its even more critical that it be read today! Parents are going on double triple combat duty- Horrible ! Both parents Oh! Thousands of them and then coming home maimed, mutilated, not being treated- its a huge issue!

ELIZABETH MITCHELL

First woman in America to serve as both President of the State Senate and Speaker of the State House



It sounds very odd but I worry about us not having a 'Draft' whether it's for public service or military service like many foreign countries do. Because otherwise, the poor people- the people who want to go to college, who see no other way out are doing all the fighting for us! But if everybody is involved in the fighting then people who are leaders of this country will have to deal with the war in a very different way. —'2007

STATE CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH. We can get out of the way, provide regulatory fairness and make sure there are no unnecessary barriers, but that does not mean that our environment can get polluted. A race to the bottom does not serve Maine people well. If we lose the environmental qualities that make people love Maine by saying you can pollute our rivers, then we have lost everything and gained nothing.

HOW DO YOU GET OUT without unleashing this massive bloodshed I have nightmares about. Do I want us to stay there making it worse? No! But I never wanted to go in the first place. But now- How do you get out- because Iraqis are victims too? Women and children and their men are being shot everyday- so I worry about that, and the sectarian violence. I wish I had an answer. If I had an answer I would be running for President.

HANNAH PINGREE

Maine House Speaker

We are just so far as a country from where we should be. We have totally divided the Middle East ...Totally demonized groups of people... US should really be a diverse exciting center of intelligence and democracy– but we are becoming a most ridiculous fear driven angry society and I find that disappointing as a Politician.



Some level of funding educational institutions and helping people understand that Democracy is a good thing makes sense. I don't think imposing Democracy on people makes sense.

WE ARE ONLY ONE OF THREE STATES THAT HAVE 'CLEAN' ELECTIONS. That makes a difference. When I recruit people for office I can tell them you don't have to raise too much money, don't have to know rich people- you just have to go meet people and knock on doors.

I DON'T THINK WE UNDERSTAND what some of the poor parts of the world are like or what it is to live in them with a war going on around you. We are comfortable, but I think we are less comfortable than we were ten years ago.

I WOULD SUPPORT GAY MARRIAGE. I think health, social security, inheritance benefits are very important and Gays should have the same rights as everybody else.

CINDY AMATO

Executive Director, Sexual Assault Response Services

As bad as it seems in this country it's so much better than it was. Its hopeful when you see so many people survive the trauma and do wonderful things in their lives because they had somebody there who believed them.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT is that 27 years ago it was outside of my realm to even think that there was a Rape Crisis Center that I could call. That's the difference now- that today, it is mainstream.

WE HAVE HAD A LAW PASSED in Maine that we can have somebody get their forensic evidence collected at the hospital for free anonymously and to have the sex-crime kit held at the hospital for 90 days while they make their decision about whether or not they want to report.

THIS IS NOT REALLY A SOCIAL SERVICE. It is more a political issue about why women or the vulnerable are raped and looking at the equality between genders. I see it as gender equality that if men and women were equal then there would be no need to have power over me sexually. That's the way to hurt somebody, to humiliate and shame them, in order to gain power over them.

■ **SOMEONE COULD LOOK AT MY SITUATION** and say that I put myself in that situation so its my fault- like in India where there is social stigma attached to it. Maybe not to the same degree as there, but it is here as well, unless you were the perfect victim. That is, you had fought and run and it was a stranger that had raped you- any of that- which doesn't happen very often. 80-90% of the time, it is people you know.

■ **IT HAPPENS BECAUSE** in a social context we allow it to happen and we all stand by and let it happen. We need to bring in men to be part of the solution. Even though they think and say it shouldn't happen they will stand by if it isn't happening in their lives. They need to talk to their friends. To intervene if they can.

ELIZABETH SZATKOWSKI

Vice President, Youth Alternatives Ingraham

I am interested in programs that create equal access for people and help people achieve what they can or want to do.



POVERTY IS RELATIVE. If you live in a place where the standard is that there's no running water, well, you don't go on wishing that you had running water. We don't have that many pockets in the United States where people could be living where they wanted to be living without being told- you're poor!

I DIDN'T SEE MY JOB AS CHANGING PEOPLE. I saw it as being a tool to help somebody do what they wanted to do. It was also my job to reflect back to them the positiveness I saw in them. And so I really felt that at the Preble Street Homeless Shelter, most of the time, people really showed their best selves. You know people there- who were constantly being picked up by the police- but yet- we liked them.

MAINE HAS USED FEDERAL FUNDS IN A MUCH MORE LIBERAL WAY than other states. The services do catch a lot of people- but there really isn't a safety net. There really isn't a bottom line that says- no matter what – you'll have a place to live and food to eat and education- there isn't!

GAIL DUFFEY

One of the first Women VPs in a Fortune 500 in Corporate America

I was good at organizing efficiently and motivating people. And I was willing to make decisions!

Lot of people don't want to do that. I just don't think they want to be held accountable.

MUST HAVE BEEN in the early 70s that they made this big deal about promoting women into management that they came around and pinned corsages on us! It was awful when I think about it now!

AT THAT TIME, if you worked hard and showed initiative, you could progress. I worked my way up until I became a Vice President. Today, they have developed profiles- like who's a successful salesperson for selling insurance- so now they select people based on this profile. I don't know if today someone could work their way up the way I did. Now I would have to fit the profile.

- I THINK MARRIAGES ARE MORE EQUAL NOW than they were in my time. I definitely feel that a woman should have an equal voice in the household. People's likes and dislikes should be taken into consideration and you should get to a compromise- Marriage should not be a dictatorial thing!
- I THINK a lot of people in society do not feel that they have any value- they have lost hope. They should be given a job and let them earn their keep no matter how small the job, so people would feel that they have value. They weren't just being given charity.