



Ending Violence through Gender Equality

In this Issue of Food for Thought:



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*“Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.”* **Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General**



**Violence Against Women:** Domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women (VAW). However many forms of violence haunt impoverished women daily. The 1993 UN General Assembly

*Declaration on the Elimination of*

*Violence against Women*, defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

*EndViolence.un.org:*

**Up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime.**

*The World Bank:*

**Women 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria.**

*UN Fact Sheet for MDG 3:*

**Incidents of gender violence can result in the loss of 25-30% of the monthly income**

**MDGs and Violence Against Women:** The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) believes that VAW is not only a gross violation of human rights but also an obstacle to the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### **MDG Info**

**Who:** Developed by the UN

**What:** 8 goals for improving social & economic conditions

**When:** Reached by 2015

**Where:** In Developing Nations

**Why:** To End Poverty

#### **Gender Equality and Violence Against Women**

- UNIFEM reports, **“At its most basic level, VAW is about power; it establishes the dominance of men and the subjugation of women. It is both an example of gender inequality and a means by which it is perpetuated.”**
- Gender inequality is linked to VAW, so this month DFW will focus on the role of **MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women** – in ending social and domestic violence against women in developing nations.
- To reach the MDGs, the UN developed specific targets that would clarify the focus of each goal. Goal 3’s target is “to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education.” Providing women and girls with safe and affordable education is essential in ending domestic and social violence for many reasons, including the following, from UNIFEM:
  - Sexual harassment and assault of adolescent girls by teachers or other students as well as on their way to and from school is commonplace in many countries.
  - Lack of separate sanitary facilities in schools exposes girls to harassment and assault.
  - Concerns about physical safety impel some parents to keep their daughters out of secondary school, especially after they start to menstruate, in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
  - Violence and the threat of violence limit women’s freedom to participate in public life, in politics, in employment, and in decision-making.

#### **Time for Women in India**

Every 3 minutes a crime is committed against women.

Every 15 minutes one woman is molested.

Every 29 minutes a woman is raped.

Every 77 minutes a woman becomes a victim of Dowry death.

Every 9 minutes a woman becomes a victim of cruelty by her husband.

*-- Data from ActionAid International*



### What Needs to Be Done & How We Can Help

The UN Fact Sheet for MDG 3 reports that **developing nations must adopt comprehensive laws on all forms of violence against women** and support awareness campaigns to prevent violence against women and girls. Empowering women and furthering gender parity requires the funding of adequate services and access to justice and redress for female victims of domestic and social violence. Developing nations must also ensure a supportive environment to encourage the enrolment of girls in school and reduce absenteeism and drop-out rates, therefore providing a safe educational environment and foundation upon which a woman can safely build her voice for freedom and knowledgeably change her society.

#### From the World Health Organization Report on Promoting Gender Equality to Prevent Violence against Women

The relationship between gender and violence is complex. Evidence suggests, however, that gender inequalities increase the risk of violence by men against women and inhibit the ability of those affected to seek protection.



♀ **School-based programs** can address gender norms and attitudes before they become deeply ingrained in children and youth. Such initiatives address gender norms, dating violence and sexual abuse among teenagers and young adults.

♀ **Community interventions** can address gender norms and attitudes through, for example, microfinance for women and methods that empower men as partners against gender-based violence. Community programs with male peer groups show promise in changing attitudes towards traditional gender norms and violent behavior, but they require more rigorous evaluations.

Well-trained facilitators and community ownership appear to boost the effectiveness of these interventions.

♀ **Public awareness campaigns** and other interventions delivered via television, radio, newspapers and other mass media can be effective for altering attitudes

towards gender norms. The most successful are those that seek to understand their target audience and engage with its members to develop content.

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### Questions for Discussion

- ♀ What societal, cultural or individual mores, other than male superiority, promote violence against women?
  - ♀ How can the other 7 MDG's reduce violence against women?
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### Voices

**Poonkabati Bidi** is a poor tribal women living in Heduka village. She was a victim of child marriage, who married at 15 and lost her husband at the age of 18. Her in-laws seized her property after her husband's death. Among other things, MBBCDS is helping her to fight the property rights case against her in-laws in court.

*I have two children, a boy and a girl. After my husband died, his family sent me out of my home with my children. MBBCDS helped me and gave me training in hand-embroidery. Now I earn INR 2200\* per month and I live in a decent life with my children.*

\*About \$50



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### Meeting Resources

UNIFEM provides posters, short films and other advocacy tools about VAW in India, which you may download at [http://www.unifem.org.in/advocacy\\_tools.html](http://www.unifem.org.in/advocacy_tools.html)

**Videos:** If you would like to learn more about AID's Philadelphia chapter, check out their informational video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aebCYy-R1Q&feature=related>

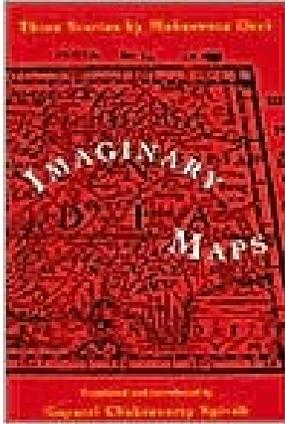
A short, striking film by Action AidIndia on the realities of sex selection in India: <http://www.madtube.org/v/363,sex-selection-in-india.html>

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## Books

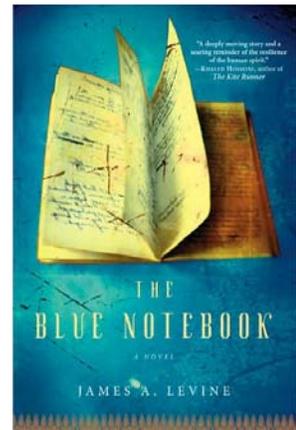
### ***Imaginary Maps* by Mahasweta Devi, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Translator)**

“Weaving history, myth, and current political realities, these three stories by noted Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi explore troubling motifs in contemporary Indian life through the figures and narratives of the indigenous tribes in India. Both delicate and violent, Devi's stories map the experiences of the "tribals" and tribal life under decolonization. Devi's texts are examined and amplified by Gayatri Spivak. Her essays explode the scope and impact of these stories, connecting the necessary "power lines" not only between local and international structures of power (patriarchy, nationalisms, late capitalism), but tracing them to the very door of the university. While written for a general audience, *Imaginary Maps* will be particularly compelling for those interested in feminism, postcolonialism, and the fate of indigenous peoples.” – The Publisher



### ***The Blue Notebook* by James Levine**

“Levine, a doctor at the Mayo clinic, was inspired to write this heartbreaking and terrifying novel when he was interviewing homeless children in Mumbai as part of his medical research. In the "Street of Cages" where child prostitutes ply their trade, literally engaged by their neglectful and abusive overseers (who pocket all the profits), Levine was struck by the sight of a young girl sitting outside her cage writing in a notebook. Batuk is a 15 year old girl who was sold to Mamaki Briila by her father when she was 9. Forced to service up to ten men a day from her "nest," and subject to deplorable treatment by the men who pay for her services, she's even abused by the doctor who examines her; her friend Puneet, meanwhile, nearly dies after being sexually assaulted by two policemen and is castrated at the first signs of puberty. While painful to read, Batuk's story puts a face on the mistreatment and disregard for children worldwide, as well as a testament to the hopefulness and power of literacy. All U.S. proceeds from the book will be donated to helping exploited children.” *Publishers Weekly*



## Fair Trade Shopping

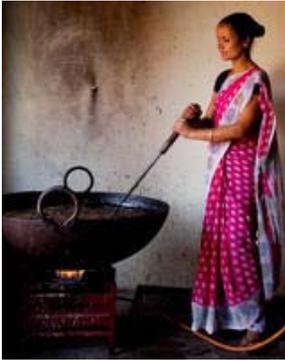


Table runners crafted by women in the West Bengal region of India  
[www.serrv.org/Sale/Home/LastTextilesTapestries/35506.aspx](http://www.serrv.org/Sale/Home/LastTextilesTapestries/35506.aspx)

Beautiful products, including tablecloths, napkins and runners, crafted by women. Dress up your July meeting and support Indian women artisans.

[www.marketplaceindia.org/MPI/Items.aspx?hierId=CGRP053](http://www.marketplaceindia.org/MPI/Items.aspx?hierId=CGRP053)

-- Shopping courtesy of Carolyn Mayers



## Indian Cooking – Bengali Style

We're focusing on the cooking of the West Bengal region of India this month, where our program is located. We have "visited" India so many times it seemed a good idea to focus more specifically on a region. The link below takes you to a site that provides a great deal of information (and recipes) on the cuisine and food culture of this area.

[www.deshicookingrecipes.com/intro.html](http://www.deshicookingrecipes.com/intro.html)

## Recipes

### Bengali Chili Green with Coconut milk and Mustard Seeds

Adapted from <http://www.waitrose.com/recipe/Bengali-Chilli-Greens-with-Coconut-Cream-and-Mustard-Seeds.aspx>

Uses black mustard seeds – I used yellow, which were not authentic but delicious nevertheless. Black mustard seeds may be found at any good gourmet store and some supermarkets. This doesn't taste like coconut – just creamy.

Serves 4-6 as part of a meal.

3T ghee (clarified butter) or oil of choice

1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

1T black mustard seeds

1-2 jalapenos, deseeded and diced

1lb. chopped greens of choice, escarole, kale, savoy cabbage, etc.

1c coconut milk

Heat 2 tablespoons of ghee or oil in a very large skillet or wok over medium heat and add the onion. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and mustards seeds, and cook, stirring occasionally, for about ½ hour or until very soft and golden. Remove to bowl and keep warm in oven. Heat remaining ghee or oil in same skillet over medium heat and add chilies. Cook for 2 minutes then turn heat up to medium high. Add the greens (you may need to do this in batches), lightly salting and stirring to encourage wilting. Add a few tablespoons of water, reduce heat to medium and cook, covered, for about 5 – 10 minutes depending of the type of greens you are using. They should be soft but not mushy. Uncover, add coconut milk and simmer for a few minutes more until slightly thickened and very hot. Heap the greens and some of the sauce into a large bowl, and top with onions.



### A Grilled Version of Adraki Gosht (Gingered Lamb)

Adapted from [www.quickindiancooking.com/2010/05/25/eating-words/](http://www.quickindiancooking.com/2010/05/25/eating-words/)

Normally served as a sort of stew, this recipe uses most of the same ingredients as the traditional version, but the meat is grilled rather than stewed after marinating for a summer twist. The marinade makes for a very tender result. Chicken would also work here, though marinating time should be less, maybe 2 hours max. Spicy and very good! Serves 4.

1 ¼ lb. lamb kebab meat, cut into 1 1/2 inch chunks, or chicken  
3 inches piece of fresh ginger, minced  
½ c plain yogurt  
1t ground coriander  
½ t turmeric  
¼ t ground cayenne (or more to taste)  
1/8t ground cinnamon  
pinch ground cloves  
¼ t salt  
Ground black pepper

Minced ginger for garnish, optional

Combine all ingredients except lamb in a bowl. Add lamb pieces, stir well to coat and cover. Refrigerate and marinate for at least two hours, preferably 3 or 4 if you have time. Remove lamb from refrigerator while you are heating up the grill. Place lamb on skewers. Set grill heat to medium. Grill kebabs about 8 minutes, turning after 4 minutes, for medium lamb. (all grills are different so the time is approximate) Serve with minced ginger sprinkled over the top.



### **Prawn (or Scallop) Curry and Cashew Rice**

Adapted from

[www.deshicookingrecipes.com/recipe5.htm](http://www.deshicookingrecipes.com/recipe5.htm) -

lots of other great recipes here, too. This is very different from the other version given in this edition, and I used scallops so as to not be redundant. The rice is perfect with this.

Serves 4

### **Scallops**

2T ghee or oil of choice

1 lb. sea scallops, halved, or quartered if very large, or medium shrimp, shelled & deveined

1 small onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1t ginger, minced

½ t ground cumin

¼ t turmeric

½ t red pepper flakes

1/8 t ground cayenne (optional)

½ t garam masala

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

1t flour

1 ¼ c coconut milk

Minced parsley or cilantro for garnish

Heat 1 tablespoon of ghee or oil in skillet over medium high heat. Add scallops (or shrimp) and sauté for about two minutes. Remove from pan and set aside. Heat remaining ghee or

oil over medium heat. Add onions and sauté for 6 minutes. Add garlic through garam masala and cook another minute or so. Add flour and cook another minute, stirring. Increase heat to medium high, add coconut milk and cook, stirring, for about 2 - 3 minutes, or until thickened. Reduce heat to medium, add scallops or shrimp and heat 1 - 3 minutes, until cooked through (do not overcook). Serve with cashew rice. Garnish with parsley or cilantro - very pretty!

### **Rice**

1T ghee or oil

1c basmati rice

1 3/4 c low sodium chicken broth

1/4 c sliced scallions

3T chopped salted cashews

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Melt ghee or oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add rice and sauté 2 minutes, stirring. Add chicken broth, increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Add salt, stir, reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for about 18 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit 5 minutes. Add scallions, cashews and black pepper. Stir gently. Serve with scallop/shrimp curry.

### **Bengali-Style Oven Fried Potatoes**

Adapted from [www.deshicookingrecipes.com/recipe9.htm](http://www.deshicookingrecipes.com/recipe9.htm). There is a great looking zucchini curry recipe on the same page.

This was our favorite recipe of all this month! Crispy and spicy! YUM!! Serves 4

1lb. russet potatoes

olive oil spray

3T olive oil

1/4 t turmeric

1/2 t ground cumin

1/4 t ground cayenne

Salt (generous) and ground black pepper to taste



Preheat oven to 375. Spray a baking sheet with the non stick oil spray. Scrub the potatoes and slice into slices about 1/3 inch thick (no thicker). Place them in a bowl large enough to toss them in and add the olive oil. Toss to coat. Sprinkle with the spices and black pepper and toss to coat well. Place slices on cooking sheet in a single layer, drizzling with oil left over in the bowl. Sprinkle generously with salt. Place in oven and bake for about 20 - 25 minutes or until browned and crispy.

### **Bengali-Style Green Beans**

Adapted from "World Vegetarian" by Madhur Jaffrey

2 T. whole brown or yellow mustard seeds (or a combination of the two)

3 T. mustard oil or any vegetable oil (olive oil is a good substitute)

1 medium onion, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced

¾ pound green beans, cut into 1-inch long pieces  
1 ¼ t salt  
½ cup (1 ounce) chopped fresh cilantro  
1 fresh hot green chile, cut into long slivers (do not remove the seeds)

Put the mustard seeds in a clean spice grinder (or clean coffee grinder) and grind to a fine powder. Empty into a small bowl. Add ¾ cup of water and let soak for 20 to 30 minutes. Do not stir. Set the mustard mixture aside.

Put the oil in a frying pan and set over medium-high heat. Add the onion. Saute on medium heat until the onion is soft and just begins to take on color. Put in the beans, salt, cilantro, and green chile. Stir 1 minute. Carefully pour the watery top of the mustard mixture over the green beans, making sure to leave all the thick paste behind (you do not need the thick paste). Stir to mix well. Bring the beans to a boil. Turn the heat down to low and cover. Simmer very gently for 25 minutes, or until the beans absorb all the spices and lose some of their wetness. (I did not cook the beans that long) Serve hot with rice or couscous. Serves 4 to 6.

### **Bengali Fish or Shrimp Curry with eggplant, potatoes and moong dal**

Adapted from ifood.tv

For the panch phoran (makes 5 T. but you only use 1 tsp)

1 tbsp brown or black mustard seeds  
1 tbsp nigella seeds (kalonji)  
1 tbsp cumin seeds  
1 tbsp fennel seeds  
1 tbsp fenugreek seeds

For the fish curry

500g/17½oz thick, firm white fish fillet, skin on or shrimp  
salt, to season, plus 1 tsp  
2 tsp turmeric powder  
3 tbsp vegetable oil  
200g/7oz small waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ in-thick slices  
100g/3½oz moong dal (mung beans; available in some supermarkets and Asian grocers. I used green lentils)  
1 tsp panch phoran (see recipe above)  
1 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder  
1 tsp freshly ground cumin seeds  
1 tsp freshly ground coriander seeds  
900ml/1½ pints water  
150g/5oz eggplant, cut into ½ in-thick pieces  
4-6 hot green chillies, halved lengthways  
4 tbsp roughly chopped fresh coriander



For the panch phoran, place all of the panch phoran ingredients into a small screwtop jar and mix well. (The spice mix will keep for up to a year in this jar if placed in a cool, dry and dark area.)

For the fish curry, cut the fish fillet into pieces 1 inch thick, then season the fish pieces or shrimp on both sides with some salt and dust with half the turmeric powder. Heat the vegetable oil in a medium-sized pan over a medium-high heat. Add the pieces of fish or shrimp a few at a time and fry for one minute on each side until lightly browned all over. Lift out onto a plate and set aside.

Add the potato slices to the pan and fry for 2-3 minutes on both sides, or until golden-brown. Lift out and set aside on a plate.

Add the moong dal or lentils to the oil left in the pan and leave to sizzle for a few seconds. Add the panch phoran, the remaining turmeric powder, the ground ginger, chilli powder, ground cumin seeds and ground coriander seeds and cook for a few seconds, or until aromatic.

Add the water, the fried potatoes, eggplant, green cayenne chillies and the remaining teaspoon of salt and bring to the boil. Cover the pan with a lid and simmer for ten minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.

To serve, add the pieces of fried fish or shrimp and simmer for 2-3 minutes, or until the fish and lentils are cooked through. Stir in the fresh coriander and serve. Serve over jasmine or basmati rice.



### **Payesh (Rice Pudding)**

Adapted from the blog "Cooking in Calcutta"

1 quart whole milk  
1 cup water  
1/3 cup sugar  
3 bay leaves  
1/4 cup rice (basmati)

1/4 cup cashew nuts, roughly chopped

1/4 cup raisins

6 small cardamoms, crushed

Put half of the milk, bay leaves, rice, water, cashew nuts and raisins in a pot and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring, until the rice is cooked, about 15 minutes on low heat.

Put the rest of the milk and sugar in the pot and continue stirring until the milk thickens, about 15 minutes, on low heat.

Add the cardamom, stir, and turn off the heat. Serve warm or chilled, garnished with a sprig of mint or a swirl of thick honey.

*-- Special thanks to Carolyn Mayers and Shannon Gordon for contributing the recipes.*

As always, if you have any questions or comments concerning the recipes, feel free to contact Carolyn at [crmayers@mac.com](mailto:crmayers@mac.com)

## Sources

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— Changing the world one dinner at a time