



Food for Thought October 2009

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION



I was simply doing housework and living on the earnings of my husband (Rs70-80, or less than US\$2, a day). Our income was so low that it was difficult to arrange for food for my children every day. Then I joined the self-help group and got training in bamboo crafting. Now I am making various kinds of bamboo items that I sell through Matrichaya. Raw materials are provided by Matrichaya and I make the goods to fill the order. My husband helps me with finishing the crafts. The vocational training has become a boon for my family. Now I can provide the basic needs of my children. I am very much thankful to Matrichaya for giving me the light for a path through our self-help group.

-Zahida Khatoun, a member of Self-Help Group Shabnam, is a Muslim woman with six children. Her husband is a rickshaw puller.

When most girls in the United States are just beginning to learn to date, many girls in developing countries are already married, caring for children, and dealing with domestic violence and life threatening health issues. While over 85% of 25-year old women in the United States possess a high school diploma, and over half some form of college education, over 35% of their peers in India, and over half in the state of Jharkhand, are unable to read a basic sentence.

Globally, females suffer from poverty, violence and discrimination simply because of their gender. This issue is exponentially compounded for women and girls that are members of marginalized groups of society, and particularly in developing countries. The most deprived sector, in almost all countries, are females living in rural areas. Often, in these cultures, girls are regarded as less worthy of education and without substantial economic opportunities, and therefore, forced into menial labor and marriages at an early age.

The irony is that studies show that investing in girls in developing countries is one of the best opportunities to create positive economic and social growth. Specifically, evidence shows education plays a significant role in not only empowering women, but also in reducing poverty and creating healthier communities. The more education a young girl receives, the less likely she is to marry and become pregnant as a child, to be abused by her spouse, and to contract sexually transmitted diseases such as

HIV/AIDS, and the more likely she is to earn a sustainable income and raise healthy and educated children. Research also indicates that women are more likely than men to reinvest their earned income back into their families.

Young Females in Developing Countries

- Over 600 million living in poverty
- About ¼ not in school
- Represent almost 70% of out-of-school youth
- 1 in 7 married before 15; almost 40% before 18
- 25 – 50% pregnant before age 18
- Up to 8 times more likely than males to contract HIV/AIDS

- Complications from pregnancy is leading cause of death worldwide among girls ages 15-19, twice that of women ages 20-24.
- Girls under 14 are five times more likely to die of childbirth.
- When a girl in the developing world receives 7+ years of education, she marries 4 years later and has 2 fewer children.

Tribal women are among the poorest, most marginalized and uneducated people of the world. India is the home to over 84 million indigenous people, often referred to as “Adivasi” or “Scheduled Tribes.” Over 95% of these people live in rural areas and suffer from prejudice and economic exploitation left over from the old Hindu Caste system outlawed with the Indian Constitution of 1949. In spite of their important contribution in various types of labor, these women are oppressed by various traditional practices and often deprived educational and health facilities.

Matrichaya is one of the many grassroots non-profit organizations working to bring about socio-economic change through education of women and children. Working in the slums and rural tribal villages of Jharkhand, India, Matrichaya is empowering the women and girls of the region through basic literacy programs, vocational training, and hygiene education. In return, they not only are improving the lives of those individuals, but also the lives of the entire community.

Females in Rural India

- Almost ½ are illiterate
- Over 20% married by age 15; 60% married by age 18
- 75% of females between 15-24 that married by age 15 are illiterate
- Females that married by age 15 are four times more likely to be illiterate
- Over 7 out of 10 school age girls are not in school, 30% more than boys
- Over ½ females between age 15-24 think wife beating is justified

- An extra year of primary school boosts girls’ eventual wages by 10–20%. An extra year of secondary school, 15–25%.
- When women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90% of it into their families, as compared to only 30–40% for a man.



My village is far away from Ranchi and there are no roads, electricity, drinking water or even items like salt, kerosene oil, and cooking oil. [Before our store opened], we had to go 15 km to get basic things. The President of Matrichaya came to meet with us villagers. On that same day, we formed a self-help group and started weekly meetings through which each member saved a little money. Matrichaya opened a Grocery Shop for us. A member of the Legislative Assembly of Kanke came to inaugurate the shop. The President of Matrichaya asked him to make sure that water, electricity and a paved road would come to our village and he has agreed. We are very grateful to Matrichaya for helping us and doing such noble work. Now our daily needs are met through the grocery shop and we have hope of getting water, a road, and electricity.

-Parwati Munda is a member of Matrichaya’s Self-Help Group Naya Savera in the village of Dekitola in Ranchi District. The Grocery is supported by funds from DFW.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How aware are you of the issues surrounding females globally?

Do you know how females are being addressed to reach goals related to universal primary education, gender equity, and health?

As a private donor, are your current investments achieving maximum return for women and girls – and their communities? Do your funding organizations know how to reach and engage females?

How are you and your community supporting keeping girls in school?

How does supporting women around the world change how you do business?

Sources:

- <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p20-550.pdf>

- http://www.girleffect.org/downloads/Girl_Effect_Your_Move.pdf

- “The Adolescent Experience In-Depth: Using Data to Identify and Reach the Most Vulnerable Young People: India 2005/06.” New York: Population Council, 2009 (http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/PGY_AdolDataGuides/India2005-06.pdf)

BOOK CORNER



Non-Fiction:

Climbing the Mango Trees: a Memoir of a Childhood in India, Madhur Jaffrey, 2008. An appealing account of an unusual childhood. Regarded by many as the world authority on Indian food, Madhur Jaffrey is an award-winning actress and best-selling cookbook author. Includes many recipes!

Dreaming in Hindi, Katherine Russell Rich, July 2009. In this inspirational memoir, Rich documents her experiences in India – ranging from the bizarre to the frightening to the unexpectedly exhilarating – using Hindi as the lens through which she is given a new perspective not only on India, but on the radical way the country and the language itself were changing her. Fascinated by the process, she went on to interview linguistics experts around the world, reporting back from the frontlines of the science wars on what happens in the brain when we learn a new language. Seamlessly combining Rich's courageous (and often hilarious) personal journey with wide-ranging reporting, *Dreaming in Hindi* offers an eye-opening account of what learning a new language can teach us about distant worlds and, ultimately, ourselves.

Fiction:

Beneath a Marble Sky, John Shors, 2006. Journey to dazzling seventeenth-century Hindustan, where the reigning emperor, consumed with grief over the tragic death of his beloved wife, commissions the building of the Taj Mahal as a testament to the marvel of their love. Princess Jahanara, their courageous daughter, recounts their mesmerizing tale, while sharing her own parallel tale of forbidden love with the celebrated architect of the Taj Mahal. This impressive novel sweeps readers away to a historical Hindustan brimming with action and intrigue in an era when, alongside the brutalities of war and oppression, architecture and the art of love and passion reached a pinnacle of perfection

Film:

Slumdog Millionaire, The story of Jamal Malik, an 18 year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai, who is about to experience the biggest day of his life. With the whole nation watching, he is just one question away from winning a staggering 20 million rupees on India's "[Kaun Banega Crorepati?](#)" (2000) (Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?) But when the show breaks for the night, police arrest him on suspicion of cheating; how could a street kid know so much? Desperate to prove his innocence, Jamal tells the story of his life in the slum where he and his brother grew up, of their adventures together on the road, of vicious encounters with local gangs, and of Latika, the girl he loved and lost. Each chapter of his story reveals the key to the answer to one of the game show's questions.

SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS SHOPPING

MarketPlace–Handwork of India

Quality is very good. They have jackets, vests, table runners, tablecloths, curtains and accessories. All made by women and it is a non-profit.

<http://www.marketplaceindia.org/MPI/>

One of the sewing arts that Matrichaya and others are keeping alive is *zardozi* (sometimes *zardosi*), intricate metallic embroidery that originally came to India from Persia with the Moghuls. The goods made by Matrichaya's SHGs are made for the Indian market, but we can purchase zardozi made by other empowerment groups through fair trade importers. Novica carries beautiful examples of zardozi artistry in many forms, from tree ornaments to evening purses. Also check out and Ten Thousand Villages for Indian embroidery, textiles, clothing, and jewelry.

<http://www.novica.com/>

<http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/>



DINING WITH WOMEN RECIPES

Cooks please note:

The traditional way of cooking the spices in Indian cooking is usually to cook them whole in ghee and then remove them from the food before eating the dish. Personally, I think this is a pain, and, being the one who always gets the bay leaf or the bone in the stew, I have opted to use ground spices so I don't have to endure biting down onto a whole clove! Feel free to use whole spices if you like. Also, if you ever have questions, comments, suggestions or ideas, please feel free to e-mail me at crmayers@mac.com.

Aloo Matar Ka Pulao (Rice with Potatoes and Peas)

Adapted from recipe at <http://www.recipezaar.com/Aloo-Matar-Ka-Pulao-Indian-Rice-With-Potatoes-and-Peas-172775>.

A substantial rice dish that is absolutely delicious, pretty, very easy and could serve as a vegetarian main course. Allow time to soak the rice – it's an important step. Serves at 6 - 8.

2c basmati rice
4c water
2T ghee or butter
1T whole cumin seed
1T fresh ginger, minced
2T ground coriander
1t garam masala
1/2 - 1t salt
1/2 - 1t turmeric, more if you like your rice really yellow
1c green peas, fresh or frozen
1c potato, 1/2 inch dice



Rinse the rice and soak in water to cover for 1-2 hours. Drain well and set aside. In a heavy saucepan, heat the ghee or butter over medium heat and add the cumin. Stir a minute or so until you can smell the cumin, a minute or so, then add the ginger. Cook the ginger, stirring, until it begins to brown. Add the coriander, garam masala, salt and turmeric and stir. You may need a little more ghee at this point if things start to stick to the pan too much. Add the potatoes and drained rice and stir to coat with spices. Add the peas and 4 cups of water (it will splatter a little so be careful), stir, and bring to a boil, uncovered. Lower the heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 - 12 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to sit, covered, for 5 - 10 minutes, then fluff and serve hot.

I have learned how to make a profit from the food I grow and about nutrition. The women in our village do not know how to preserve the vegetables we have and thus much goes to waste. I will take my knowledge back to the women and teach them how to make pickles and sauces.

-A graduate of the Food Processing Course at the Matrichaya Center in Ranchi, sponsored by DFW

Kali Dal

Adapted from recipe at <http://www.recipezaar.com/Kali-Dal-Dahl-Dhal-Daal-340098>.

A great recipe. No Indian meal is complete without a dal as part of it. Not your usual pale brown or gold, but an interesting darker color, and a rich, authentic flavor. The original recipe called for black lentils but French green lentils (also called du puy lentils) work just as well and are similar in flavor. Serves 4 – 6.

1c whole black or French green lentils	2T ground cumin
1 onion, coarsely chopped	1T ground coriander
3 cloves garlic	1t salt, more or less to taste
2" piece of fresh ginger, coarsely chopped	Pinch to ¼ t ground cayenne, optional
1-2 green or red chilies, or both colors, coarsely chopped (jalapeno is good)	2T garam masala
2T ghee or butter	1/3c heavy cream

Rinse lentils and soak for 2 – 3 hours before cooking them (to reduce cooking time and for ease of digestion!) Drain and set aside. Place lentils and about 6 cups of water in a saucepan with a heavy base (to prevent sticking and burning). Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, for about 30 minutes, or until lentils are soft but not dissolved. Drain lentils and reserve cooking liquid. Place onion, garlic, ginger and chilies in a food processor and process to a paste. Heat ghee or butter in pan you cooked lentils (why wash another pan?) over medium to medium-high heat, add onion mixture and cook, stirring, until it starts to brown. Add cumin and coriander and cook, stirring, for a minute or so, then add salt, cayenne, if using, and garam masala and stir. Finally, add lentils and stir to coat with spices. Pour in about 1 ½ - 1 ¾ cups of the reserved cooking liquid (it may need a bit more as it cooks), bring to a boil, stir and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook for about 10 - 12 minutes, partially covered, checking and stirring periodically, adding more liquid if necessary. It should be fairly thick. At this point it can sit for a while off heat. When ready to serve, reheat gently, adding a little more of cooking liquid if it needs it, and cream. Take care not to boil dal after adding the cream or it could curdle. Just heat through and serve.

Kesar Chawal (Sweet Saffron Rice)

Adapted from too many different recipes to list! Why two rice dishes, you wonder? This one is so different and so versatile you will find yourself cooking it even when you aren't making an Indian meal. It is sweet, and the sweetness is a foil to the spiciness of some Indian cooking. It is versatile because if you vary the amount of salt and sugar you add, it can be served either as part of the meal, as dessert, or even for breakfast the next morning, reheated and topped with a dollop of your favorite yogurt. In fact, it would be lovely served with some yogurt mixed with honey as a sauce if you are using it for dessert. Serves 6.

1c basmati rice	¼ c dried currants or raisins
2c water	¼ c slivered almonds
¼ t saffron threads	¼ c shelled pistachios, coarsely chopped if desired
2T milk	¼ - ½ t salt, more if part of dinner, less if dessert
2T ghee or butter	¼ - ½ cup light brown sugar, less if part of dinner, more if dessert
¼ t ground cinnamon	
1t ground cardamom	
1/8 t ground cloves	

Soak rice in water to cover for 20 minutes, drain and set aside. Heat a very small pan over medium-low heat, add and lightly toast the saffron very carefully for about 20 seconds. Immediately remove from heat, add milk, stir and set aside. Heat the ghee in a heavy-bottomed saucepan (once again, to prevent burning and sticking – le Creuset works very well) over medium heat. Add the cinnamon, cardamom and clove and stir for a minute or so. Add the currants and nuts and cook for about another minute. Add the drained rice and cook, stirring to coat with ghee and spices, for a minute. Add 2 cups of water (watch for spattering), milk/saffron mixture and salt, stir, bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 8 minutes, covered. Uncover and add sugar, stir in well. Replace cover and cook for an additional 8 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit, uncovered, for 5 minutes or until ready to serve.

Hare Masala Vala Murgh - Chicken in Spinach Sauce

Recipe By: Madhur Jaffrey's Quick & Easy Indian Cooking

Servings: 3-4

1/4 cup vegetable oil

3 bay leaves

6 cardamom pods

1" piece cinnamon sticks

5 whole cloves

2 dried hot chilies

2 1/4 lb skinless chicken pieces -- cut into serving portions

1/4 cup golden raisins

6 T. plain yogurt

1 1/4 tsp salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1/8-1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

2" piece fresh ginger root -- coarsely chopped

1-2 fresh hot green chilies, with seeds – coarsely chopped

1 bunch fresh cilantro leaves

1 10 oz pack frozen chopped spinach –boiled until it is just defrosted and lightly drained

3 T. grainy mustard

Put oil in large wide nonstick pan and set over medium-high heat. When oil is hot, put in bay leaves, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and red chilies. Stir. Add chicken pieces and brown well on both sides. Put in raisins, stir, put in yogurt, 1t. salt, black pepper and cayenne. Stir and bring to simmer. Cover tightly, turn to low and simmer for 15 minutes.

While chicken simmers put ginger in the container of blender along with 3 tablespoons water; blend until it is a smooth paste. Add green chilies and cilantro and continue to blend. Add lightly drained spinach. Blend briefly. Spinach should have coarse texture and should not be a fine puree. Empty this green sauce into a bowl. Add the mustard and 1/4 t. salt. Mix. When chicken has cooked for 15 minutes, remove cover and add green sauce. Stir. Bring to a simmer, cover again and cook for 10 minutes or until chicken is tender. Turn chicken a few times during this period. Remove hard spices before serving. Serve over rice.

Mushroom Matar

Adapted from recipe at <http://www.indianfoodrecipes.net/vegetarian-indian-recipes/recipe-matar-mushroom.html>. The above referenced site has TONS of great recipes to choose from if you are feeling adventurous. This particular recipe is another great vegetarian main course, and could be vegan if you use oil instead of ghee or butter. Serve with either of the rice dishes in this issue of Food for Thought, or just plain basmati rice. It is creamy, smooth, a little spicy and utterly satisfying. Serves 4 - 6.

1 1/2 c green peas, fresh or frozen

1 8oz. box cremini mushrooms, quartered

1/2 t ground cardamom

1/4 t ground cinnamon

2 medium onions, diced

1 1/2 T fresh ginger, minced

4-6 cloves garlic, minced

1T ground coriander

1/2 t turmeric

1 1/2 t garam masala

1/4 t ground cayenne (use less if you can't take the heat!)

1/4 t salt or more to taste

4-5 plum tomatoes, diced

4T cashew butter or almond butter, at room temperature

2 - 3T ghee, butter or oil

Heat the oil of choice over medium heat in a medium-large skillet. Add cardamom and cinnamon and stir for a minute or so. Add onions and cook until beginning to turn golden and translucent. Add ginger and garlic and cook for a minute. Add the ground coriander, turmeric, garam masala, cayenne and salt and cook for another minute, stirring. Add the tomatoes, stir well, reduce heat to medium-low and cook for about 6 minutes or until some of the liquid has cooked off, stirring occasionally. Whisk the cashew or almond butter into 1/4 cups of water to dissolve. Pour this mixture into the skillet, stir and bring to a boil. Stir in the peas and the mushrooms, reduce heat to medium – medium-low and cook about 5-6 minutes, uncovered, stirring once or twice. Serve over rice.

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