

Fall

2018



# Sandesh

“The Message”

A Newsletter from IndUS of Fox Valley

## From Editors' Desk

The theme for this Sandesh is Role of Women in India. Women have historically played a variety of roles in Indian society. It is an immensely large topic. We have chosen to focus on five unique perspectives: how roles of women have changed over the past few decades, women writers and their significant contribution to English literature, a peace corps volunteer reminiscing her connection to Indian culture through domestic help, a unique matrilineal society in southern state of Kerala and women in medicine.

Enjoy reading .....

*Sandesh*

**An IndUS of Fox Valley  
Publication**

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## President's Message

*By Sridevi Buddi*

Dear IndUS members, volunteers, and patrons.

Tis the season.... for festivities like Diwali, Thanksgiving, Christmas during which we are taught to share and care. The Holiday Season is always the best time to be more generous and compassionate towards the needs of others. It warms our heart and soul during the festive season to support organizations that provide meals, clothing and shelter for needy families and children who would otherwise do without.

This warm feeling that is derived from feeling safe, secure, and loved is elusive for those experiencing domestic abuse. IndUS is extending support by giving grants to domestic abuse shelters in Green Bay, Appleton, and Oshkosh. We will present grants of \$2000 each to Golden House in Green Bay, Harbor House in Appleton, and Christine Ann in Oshkosh for their Healing space and Domestic Violence Intervention Programs. This has been possible due to generous donations and support from many of you.

I am appealing to you to adopt a 'Generous-Frame-of-Mind' year-round and support our Seva groups in Appleton and Green Bay in serving 300 meals every weekend all through the year. I applaud all the volunteers who are serving on the Seva teams and volunteering for various other programs organized by IndUS.

Our IndUS 2018 steering committee and their team of volunteers are busy organizing and working hard to give you insights into the thought provoking theme 'Role of women in India'. It is an apt theme for the times we are in, irrespective of the country we are residing in. Our volunteers couldn't have chosen a better theme for our 20th banquet!

I applaud the 'Sandesh' editorial team for putting this interesting edition together despite volunteering for IndUS-2018 in various roles and capacities. The 'Sandesh' team would like to kindle your interest with inspiring articles and stirring poems relevant to our theme 'Role of women of India' in preparation for your experience of the upcoming banquet.

Looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming banquet! Wishing you happy holidays; and a warm and safe winter!

"DELICIOUS AUTUMN!  
MY VERY SOUL IS  
WEDDED TO IT, AND IF I  
WERE A BIRD I  
WOULD FLY ABOUT  
THE EARTH SEEKING THE  
SUCCESSIVE AUTUMNS."  
- GEORGE ELIOT

## Changing Role of Women in India: Observations of a visitor over 5 decades

By Anu Varma

At the age of 9 I left India for Vancouver, Canada where my dad was pursuing a PhD. The year was 1976 and at that time, I did not know that I would never live in India again. My parents, in the interest of the opportunities available to my brother and me, decided not to go back. I am grateful for their decision but also saddened because of the family I left behind. Since then, I have been back to India for 8 visits and have watched the steady evolution of the country, the globalization and the major changes in the roles of women. My perspective is from a limited lens as it is from my personal experience in northern India, in mostly urban middle class families.

In the 1970s, I left India where my grandmothers had both been married in their early teens. They raised daughters to be educated but fully expected them to marry, live in an extended family with their in-laws, have children and manage their own households. My mother at the age of 19 had an arranged marriage to my then 26-year-old father who resolutely told his family that he trusted their choice in his bride and he did not need to meet her. Arranged marriage was the norm of the time and often, as is the case of my parents' 53-year marriage, it resulted in happy endings. My paternal grandfather was both praised and reprimanded for allowing his new daughter-in-law, my mother, to complete her final year of Masters in Sociology, a degree she didn't utilize until we left India and she started working outside the home. My mother's generation diligently encouraged their daughters to focus on education as much as their sons, however, the daughters were also expected to learn household chores.

In 1983, after 7 years, we returned to spend our summer vacation in India. Of course, much had changed; yet, it also all felt very familiar. The women in my family were still primarily homemakers but not all of them were living with their extended families. As the economy of the country grew and changed, men often left their hometowns and moved to other cities, a change that gave the women more freedom and independence. I had a couple of female cousins who were working outside of the home, mostly by necessity and an aunt who was teaching. My unmarried female cousins were still focused on liberal arts degrees and most of them had become very proficient in the kitchen, a fact that was presented to me as an example of the ideal that I obviously was not achieving. I remember my aunts often saying that their girls were well-prepared to go to their in-laws' homes. At the insistence of my feminist parents, two of my aunts had started sewing schools in their homes to earn extra money for the families and have more independence. I left India, really missing my family, but happy to come back to the frivolousness of my American teenage years. In the 1990s I visited India 3 times and the last time, in 1996, I adopted my daughter from an

orphanage in Lucknow, the same city in which I was born. Our intention was to adopt a toddler girl as we knew that girls in India were still not desired as much as boys and more than likely, those girls would not be adopted. Unable to find a young girl, my aunt found a baby girl for us instead and we met her at 10 months old. While in India, I attended a wedding for two women who grew up in the orphanage. The orphanage was founded and run by women who made sure all the girls were educated and could find jobs. They also, acting in place of the girls' families, arranged their marriages with suitable men. The celebration of their weddings was wonderfully done with donations of food, gifts and decorations from local business owners. Yes, arranged marriages were still the norm in India although there were a few examples of 'love marriages' in my family at this time. There were also more examples of women working outside the home, but primarily, women were at home and my cousins were still pursuing mainly liberal arts or teaching degrees.

Again, in the 2000s I returned to India 3 times, all to attend the weddings of my cousins. I noticed a drastic difference on these visits. The signs of globalization and the influence of western culture were everywhere. Women were wearing mostly western clothing in their casual wear and malls had sprung up in every city. Young women and men were dating, although mostly hidden from their families. Matrimonial websites had become the norm for 'arranged marriages' and unlike my parents' generation, young people were involved in the choosing of their life partner and were encouraged to meet and speak often leading up to their wedding. Many of my cousins and some daughters of cousins, years younger to me, were working outside of the home. Western ideas of female empowerment were becoming accepted.

2013 was my most recent trip to India. The transformation that had begun in the 2000s had rapidly grown. India was littered with American brands and fast food chains. My family had seen most American movies and TV shows and some that I hadn't even seen yet. Popular American music was blaring from all car radios along with the Bollywood tunes. Cell phones were in every hand, young, old and poor. It seemed to me to be a different form of colonization had taken over, one in which the people are willing accomplices, but my family didn't see it that way. They saw it as a blending of the new with the old.

In this transformed India, the younger generations of my female family members are incredibly successful outside of the home in careers such as writing in entertainment, law, scientist in corporations, professors, engineering, entrepreneurs, graphics arts, IT, fashion design, editors, and teaching. There is incredible diversity in how they are all approaching their careers, marriages, and raising of children

They share more equality with their partners; however, they still carry the lion-share of work at home. This is no different than most women in America who are juggling careers and families. Most of them have chosen their partners whether it is through dating or through matrimonial sites but never without the blessing of their families. They are challenging the norms of the past but in many ways, choosing to keep them as well. The emphasis is on the choice. For example, some of my cousins or their daughters are living in extended families, taking care of their in-laws and being respectful daughters-in-law, all while they also focus on achieving success in their careers. The assistance of servants who help as nannies, cooks and housekeepers allow these women to balance the demands put upon them. Labor in India is readily available and, especially for 2-income households, very affordable. The other major change I noticed is how many young married women carry themselves. Unlike the generation before them, who traded in their playfulness in for seriousness, as was expected of them once they were married, this new generation thoroughly enjoys themselves and don't lose their youthful exuberance just because they are married.

Certainly, there has been significant transformation over the last 5 decades and 4 generations of women in my family. I am thrilled that more and more of them are pursuing their dreams and have supportive partners by their sides as they juggle their new roles and expectations of traditional values. The one consistent trait of the women in my family is strength. No matter what their role in the family, home or career, they are all shining examples of resilience and perseverance. I'm blessed to have the heritage of my female ancestors and the friendship and solidarity of the current generation.

*Anu Varma grew up in the community of Fox Valley and still considers it home although she moved to Milwaukee in 2016 with her husband. She has followed the example of her parents and other elders of the community, in service and activism. She had been an engaged member and volunteer of IndUS and Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities. She was raised to serve the community and give voice to those who don't have one and she has passed this along in raising her daughter. She is the Segment CIO/VP of a large global company.*

## Women Writers of India

By Manjari Chatterji

Any attempt to discuss this large topic must necessarily be selective and personal, as it is not intended to be a survey (the internet does that well) nor is it a historical review of trends and growth and change, nor it an attempt to parse the terms "Indian" writing in English or regional languages, as many women writers belong to the diaspora, so familiar today. Then too, many gifted women write in the vernacular and are unavailable to us in translation, yet their contribution to Indian letters is immense. Does it count if you have read them in translation? And why do so many writers from India write in English? These questions have been well dissected ever since the various nations of the world threw out their colonial masters and grabbed a pen to tell their own stories

Thanks to digital technology, we have access to authors and the many channels they use to reach their audiences: TED talks, book excerpts, You Tube, academic lectures, book tour talks, and C-Span book TV type shows. Many of you have probably watched the current PBS The show *The Great American Read*, and may have voted for your favorite book. We might follow this and simply choose a random few texts and discuss their impact on readers in the

hopes that you may be tempted to read it too, if you have not already and to mentally vote for your favorite woman writer or book.

What makes for memorable books? Vivid and unforgettable characters, of course, but also acute observations about the Indian society and traditions, crisp prose and a memorable turn of phrase, plots that keep you riveted, and finally -- like all great art--makes you think, even feel uncomfortable.

Thus in no order or chronology, consider a classic: **Kamala**

**Markandaya's** (1924-2004) *Nectar in a Sieve*: a searing picture

of rural poverty, of men and women fighting drought, moneylenders and disasters, but retaining their humanity and courage in the face of insuperable odds. With Tolstoyan simplicity and directness, the facts and images speak for themselves. The special burdens of women facing poverty are starkly presented, but the novel is neither polemical nor political. While almost every high school assigns this sometime, it may have escaped a generation of people more familiar with contemporary authors such as Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri.

**Kiran Desai** (1971--) daughter of famous Anita Desai has won prestigious awards for her extraordinary fiction. She captures our beloved India with all its charms and faults with wicked accuracy. Here is an excerpt from *Hullabaloo in a Guava Orchard*:

*It was a summer that sent the dizzy pulse of fever into the sky, in which even rules and laws that usually stood straight and purposeful grew limp, like plants exposed to the afternoon sun, and weak. The heat softened and spread the roads into sticky pools of pitch and melted the grease in the Brigadier's mustache so that it drooped and uncurled, casting shadows on his fine, crisp presence. It burned the Malhotra's daughter far too dark for a decent marriage and caused the water, if it came at all, to spurt, scalding, from the taps. The bees flew drunk on nectar that had turned alcoholic; the policemen slept all day in the banana grove; the local judge bribed an immigration official and left to join his brother in Copenhagen.*

There you have in the fewest possible words a portrait of a society: its locale, people, beliefs and problems, with a humor that is understated for greater effect. Kiran Desai went on to write another memorable novel *The Inheritance of Loss* that tackles the possibilities and problems of our fast paced globalized world.

Another award-winning author, **Githa Hariharan** (1954--) writes on issues of social justice. She also expresses her beliefs through activism on behalf of Minorities facing discrimination in India. In *The Thousand Faces of Night* she examines the roles of mothers and daughters within the expectations of Indian society and culture, and the challenges of changing times. Her essay "When Bodies Speak" (online) focuses on the universal problem of rape, and resistance through speaking out.

Probably the most vocal and best known advocate for minorities as well as the most powerful voice against crimes committed against Adivasi women is **Mahasweta Devi** (1926-2016), winner of the Padma Bhusan and Ramon Magsaysay awards. Her themes cover historical figures Rani Laxmibai, as well as the Naxalbari movement and the realities of tribal peoples' lives despite their "protected" status. In her youth she was associated with Gananatya—theater of the people—in rural Bengal. Her classic short story made known in academic and literary circles by

renowned scholar Gayatri Spivak Chakravarti, is "Draupadi." When a tribal woman is ravaged and tortured she turns the tables on her tormentors:

*Draupadi's black body comes even closer. Draupadi shakes with an indomitable laughter that Senanayak simply cannot understand. Her ravaged lips bleed as she begins laughing. Draupadi wipes the blood on her palm and says in a voice that is as terrifying, sky splitting, and sharp as her ululation, What's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man? She looks around and chooses the front of Senanayak's white bush shirt to spit a bloody gob at and says, "There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? Come on, counter me—come on, counter me-?"*

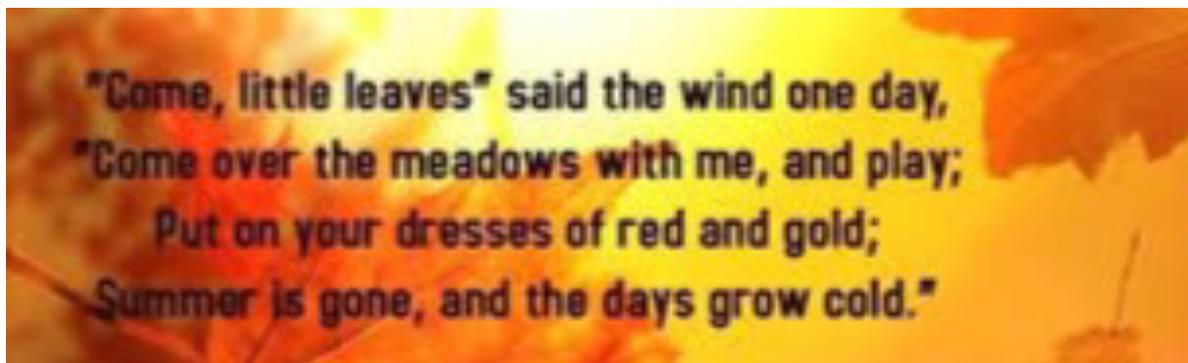
To call this work feminist is to miss the point—it is much more a challenge to the political, social and gender norms of society. The Indian Constitution by which all humans deserve respect regardless of caste and religion is unable to protect Dopdi Mejhen—why? Because she speaks funny? is a woman? A tribal? These questions raise Devi's work to a troubling level. In "Breast Stories" she again challenges middle class propriety, caste and class exploitation, and gender exploitation.

Man Booker prize winner **Arundhati**

**Roy** also takes up the problems of caste discrimination, but her novel *The God of Small Things* is profoundly satirical and therefore comic in the most painful sense of that word. It is unavoidably reminiscent of another great work, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where the vilest of human crimes are seen through the innocent eyes of children, and thus rendered less brutal but that much more terrifying. Roy also is an outspoken critic of neoliberal policies that leave most of the world and environment poor while enriching the few who can handle the levers of global institutions. Her brilliant essay "Do Turkeys Love Thanksgiving" (online) might make good reading during the coming holiday!

There are obviously many others who have enriched our lives and" held a mirror up to nature." Websites like SAWNET used to cover and list South Asian women authors but their format has changed. Certainly, no world literature course can be taught without including some of these authors and many who live and work in Britain, Canada and the United States.

*Manjari Chatterji is a resident of Fox Valley. She very much enjoyed teaching English literature and interacting with her students and colleagues. She recently retired after teaching at University of Wisconsin for 30 years. She loves gardening, reading, writing and spending time with family and friends.*



## It was 1969.....

*By Lise Lotte Gammeltoft*

It was 1969, and I had been living and working in New York City for a couple of years when I decided to apply to the Peace Corps. I wanted to “do something meaningful”, whatever that meant. I was first offered a position in Chad, which I declined. Then came an invitation to teach in India. I immediately accepted the assignment. I have to admit, that I knew very little about India at the time, except for meditation, Ravi Shankar and the sitar, Indian curry and saris. I was assigned to teach in Tamil Nadu. My group of 30 volunteers met in Putney, Vermont, where we underwent three months of very intensive training: in language (Tamil); the history and customs of India and in particular Tamil Nadu; and teaching methods, as we were all assigned to different teacher training schools in Tamil Nadu. Our assignment was to teach the teacher training students how to teach English, based on materials prepared by the British Council.

By the time our training was completed my group was down to 18 volunteers. We flew from NYC to Delhi, and then to Bangalore and Chennai (which was called Madras at that time) for more training. We arrived in Madras in the midst of a big music festival, and I immediately was captured by the music. We heard wonderful concerts.... the veena, the Indian violin, and most impressive, incredible vocalists.

After a month of training, we traveled to our individual sites. I was assigned to a woman’s teacher training school in Nagercoil, which is about 10 miles from the tip of India. During the first couple of months I was quite lonely, and I was depressed about always standing out because of my skin color (which gave me a whole new perspective on discrimination). Initially, people who were not connected to the schools at which I taught, assumed I was either a CIA operative, or a prostitute, as I wore dresses that showed my calves. (I quickly began wearing saris). Eventually I fell in love with Tamil Nadu, my fellow teachers, the students and the many people with whom I interacted. I stayed for two years in Nagercoil, and then extended my assignment for a third and part of a fourth year, during which I lived in Thanjavur.

Nagercoil and Thanjavur provided very different experiences for me. Nagercoil was close to water, and very close to Kerala, so I made many trips to Kanya Kumari, on the tip of India, as well as to Trivandrum, Cochin and other towns in Kerala. Thanjavur was an important part of the Chola Empire, and the site of several beautiful Hindu temples, as well as a center of art. In both towns I taught English teaching methods at teacher training schools, and also taught elementary school students in public and Christian schools. It was through my work at a small Christian school in Nagercoil that I met the person who changed my entire Indian experience. When I first arrived in Nagercoil, I was initially given a room in a home occupied by an Australian missionary and ate the very bland food prepared by her cook. However, a few weeks after I arrived, I was approached by the Indian headmistress of a local Christian school at which I was teaching. She said that one of the students at the school could not afford

the school fees, and she wondered if I would consider hiring the student’s mother, Saraswathi, as a cook. I was taken aback (it did not fit into my image of myself to have a cook), but I said I would consider it and suggested that Saraswathi come to my room and cook a meal for me. Saraswathi, who did not know one word of English, and I, whose Tamil language skills at that time were marginal at best, communicated in sign language and a few Tamil words, and she cooked me a meal. It was delicious (and definitely not bland), so I decided to hire her....and with Saraswathi’s help, I found a new residence where Saraswathi, her son and daughter and eventually another daughter and grandchild lived with me. Thanks to Saraswathi I learned to speak Tamil fairly fluently...and made several friends in the community. I also developed the reputation as the Peace Corps volunteer who had the best cook....so would receive regular visits from Peace Corps administrative staff, as well as other volunteers. I LOVED the food that Saraswathi prepared, and still treasure the meals that I have had at the homes of my Indian friends in Green Bay, as well as South Indian restaurants that I have found in New York City and Washington D.C.

It was also with the help of Saraswathi, that I found a “music master” and studied vocal signing. (I still have my music book, with the teacher’s hand-written ragas, which are now totally unintelligible to me).

While I was in India I took advantage of my vacation times to travel throughout the country. I was fortunate enough to see many of the wonderful sites in both the north and south. Each place I visited was unique, and so full of history.

I was in India from 1969-1972. I had always been reluctant to return, because it held such special memories for me, but a few months ago I went for a short visit with my sister and brother-in-law, who had been invited to give a presentation in Goa. Our visit was limited to Delhi, Udaipur, Mumbai and Goa, and we traveled in a manner very different from my Peace Corps days. It was wonderful to be back....to see the colors, smell the smells, watch the activities. We all had a wonderful time.

I was so pleased that my sister and brother in law were able to see and understand a little of why my sojourn in India meant so much to me.

*Lise Lotte was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. When she was 8, she immigrated to the United States. She grew up in Connecticut, and after obtaining a graduate degree in International Studies, worked in NYC for two years. She joined the Peace Corps in March 1969 and lived in India until late 1972. Upon returning to the US she obtained a J.D. degree at University of Wisconsin, Madison. She practiced law in Madison and Green Bay until her retirement in*

*2009. She lives in Green Bay area and keeps busy with volunteer activities, reading, travel and an 18-month old grandson.*

## Matrilineal Society of Kerala: A Unique and Exceptional System

By Jayashree Murali

Role of women in an Indian society spans a large spectrum, ranging from powerful women participating at the highest level of government at one end to ones who are oppressed, forced into marriages and denied a basic education at the other end. My own views of the Indian woman's role have been heavily shaped by the traditions in Kerala, the state where I was born. In many ways, these traditions are an outlier in the context of Indian society.

A unique social norm followed in some social groups of Kerala and Malabar is matrilineage, or *Marumakkathayam* in Malayalam. This is a system where the inheritance of property, including the ancestral home called *Tharavadu*, where the joint family resides, is handed down to generations through the eldest female family member. This system was followed by Nairs and some other groups in Kerala and Malabar region. Matrilineage is different from matriarchy. In a matriarchal society, the family is always led by the eldest female member of the family. In Matrilineage, a family could be led by a man or a woman depending on each family, but the inheritance always passed through the female lineage. Although this practice is in decline, to this day there are many families which practice handing down the *Tharavadu* to the eldest female member of the family.

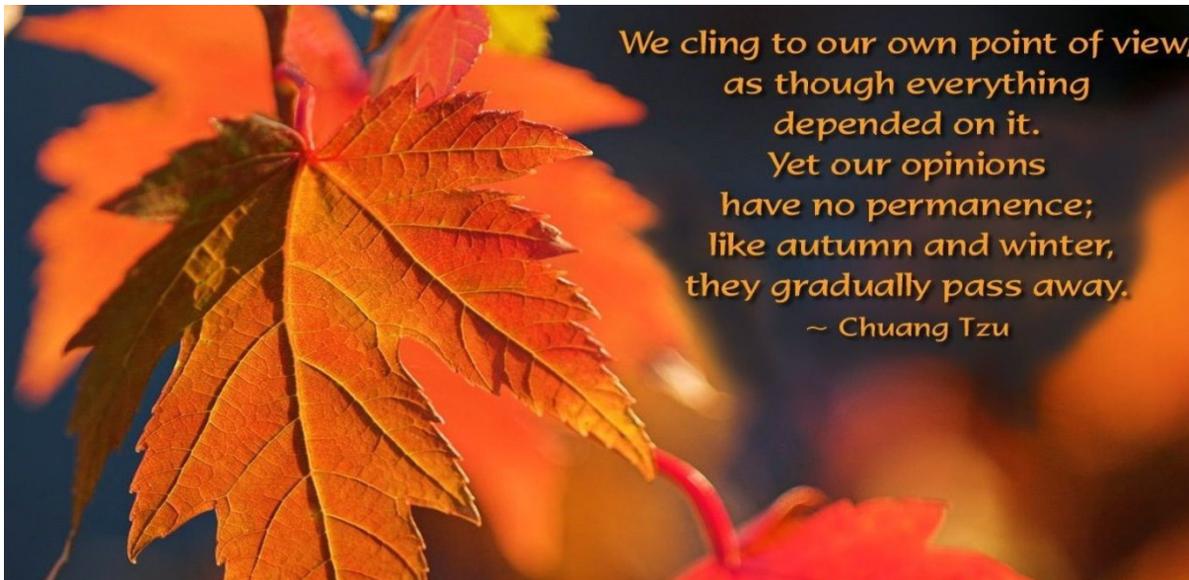
Children carry the blood lines of their mother's family in a matrilineal society. Traditionally, a woman's last name was that of the family *Tharavadu* name. My Mom's last name is Edathedath, her family *Tharavadu* name. This practice has dissipated over time since many ancestral homes were sold for various reasons and keeping the family name did not seem appropriate when it was bought by another family. Another practice is that the family observances are limited to the mother's side of the family and are not expected of the father's side. For example, in periods of *vaalaayma* (birth or death in the family when a family is not allowed to visit a temple), children observe this refrainment for relatives of the mother and not the father. Today, this is still followed in my family when it comes to refrainment from celebrations of festivals or visiting temples when there is a death in the mother's side of the family.

While there are many theories as to why this system existed, one possible explanation is that Nairs who are Kshatriyas (warriors), required men to train and travel away from home for warfare, and hence necessitated this system. Another interesting aspect is that Nair women did not go to live with their husbands after marriage. Instead, the husbands moved into their wives' homes. In the past, polyandry was not a taboo, and it was the woman who decided when a relationship needed to be dissolved.

Although these traditions are fading in the light of modernization and economic growth, the core cultural value of seeing women as powerful members of the family remains. Female literacy in Kerala is one of the highest in the country at 92%. Compared to rest of the country, women of Kerala have always enjoyed greater access to education. This does not mean that gender inequality is no longer an issue. For example, the high literacy rate does not translate to equal number of jobs. In some parts of Kerala, the dowry system is still in practice.

I have been blessed to be born in a family where empowerment of women and equality came as table stakes. Growing up, I benefited from the freedom to follow my passion whether it was art, advanced education, or a job of my choosing. I was fully supported by everyone in my family including my dad and my husband. I hope to impart this value that has been handed down by my ancestors, and nurtured by my family, to not only my daughter, but also to my son, whom I have raised to view women as equal, strong, and independent contributors to society.

*Jayashree Murali was born in Kerala, India. Growing up, she was privileged to experience micro-cultures of three different states of India, UK, and some southwestern US states before settling in the Fox Valley area 20 years ago. She has a master's degree in Management Information Systems and works as a technology manager. In her spare time, besides spending time with the family and friends, she loves to volunteer for the causes she is passionate about, listen to music and experiment with cooking.*



## Women In Medicine

*By Anupama Verma*

“For what is done or learned by one class of women becomes by virtue of their common womanhood, the property of all women.” These are the words of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. By doing so on January 23rd 1849, she forever changed the face of Medicine.

There have been many other pioneers after her. Of note is Dr. Anandibai Gopal Joshi. She left her native India to attend medical school in America. She was inspired to become a physician after the death of her infant son due to lack of medical care. Encouraged by her postal worker husband, she graduated at the age of twenty-one, despite struggling with tuberculosis. She returned to India and served for a short while before succumbing to her disease.

Even today, when education of women in India and much of the world takes a backseat--this century-old tale of Dr. Joshi is indeed inspirational.

Unfortunately, for women doctors then, practicing out in the real world was another story. People did not want to entrust their care to them. They persevered and focused on the marginalized and downtrodden sections of society. They provided care to the slaves, the laborers, veterans, children, and the poor, among others.

Even though women in medicine have come a long way from those days, there

are still several issues facing them. Women physicians are often not accorded the same respect and recognition as their male peers. A recent Doximity study showed that they also get paid an average of 27.7% less than their male counterparts, despite equal training and for the same amount of work done. Women also account for only 13.9% of department chairs and less than 20% of medical school deans.

Gender disparity in pay and leadership is not limited to the field of medicine, to the USA, or to India, of course. Addressing it is of paramount importance, however, for several reasons. Firstly, an environment that fosters the devaluation and exclusion of women, also, by default, fosters an environment where sexual harassment can, and does breed.

In addition, what message does it send to society, and to our daughters and our sons, if highly educated female physicians are dismissed and undervalued? What message does it send to all other women who aspire for equality and dignity at home and in the workplace.

What message does it send to the rest of the world if we in the United States and India, two great democracies, cannot correct these inequities.

Despite these inequalities, women in medicine continue to forge forward. More women than men enrolled for the

first time in medical school in 2017.

A JAMA internal medicine study also showed that women physicians have just as good, if not better outcomes than their male counterparts.

Women physicians are innovating in the fields of telemedicine and blockchain technology. Along with their male counterparts, they are championing political and social causes and trying to shape health care policy. They are harnessing the power of social media and making their voices heard. They are writing, blogging, and addressing burnout and suicide in the medical profession as a whole.

They are empowering young women, medical students and other fellow women physicians. They are educating, leading, and discussing topics that concern both men and women and are at the forefront of burning healthcare issues. They are doing all this and more, within the context of their very busy lives. Elizabeth Blackwell would be proud.

*Dr Anupama Verma is a nephrologist, practicing and living in Green Bay with her equally busy and active husband, a son in college, a daughter in high school and a loveable poodle dog. She recently renewed her passion for creative writing, poetry and reflective reading, with the belief that the arts enable a deeper connection to the humane aspect of medicine.*

“Everyone must take time to sit and watch the leaves turn.”

— Elizabeth Lawrence

“And all at once, summer collapsed into fall...”

— Oscar Wilde

## IndUS News

'*Mehendi and Music*' was held at the Appleton Public Library on June 27, 2018. The event was organized by the library in collaboration with IndUS for teenage girls to spend a fun afternoon understanding India's culture via Bollywood music, henna, and Indian crafts. IndUS volunteers led by Shobha Chetty applied henna tattoos and helped them with their craft projects. The girls enjoyed making henna patterns with henna cones on a sheet of paper. They also learnt dance moves to different Bollywood tunes. The event was enjoyed by the volunteers as well as the guests!



**Diversity Picnic:** IndUS of Fox Valley co-sponsored the 26th annual Celebrate Diversity Community Cookout (Diversity picnic) with Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities on the August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Jefferson Park in Menasha. Several hundred people enjoyed a perfect afternoon of music, food and camaraderie. The event was graced by the Honorable Mayor Tim Hanna and by Karen Nelson, Coordinator of Diversity & Inclusion. Anindita Neogy Anaam entertained the audience with elegant Kathak dance. IndUS' henna station was busy as always. High school and middle school volunteers made presentations about India at the picnic.



**Rhythms of the World:** IndUS of Fox Valley in collaboration with Rotary Club of Appleton, City of Appleton, Appleton Downtown Inc., Building for kids, Appleton Public library, CDFC, and Thrivent presented 'Rhythms of the World' on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Houdini Plaza during the Downtown Appleton Farm Market. The 'Dignity & respect' campaign led by the Honorable Mayor Tim Hanna and the Appleton City diversity coordinator Karen Nelson. The event featured dances and music from diverse cultures including China, India, Hmong, Indonesia, Native America, Aztecs and United States. It included all ages, and many ethnicities. Appleton Public Library, Building for Kids set up art stations for the visitors. IndUS had a station with information about India and the Appleton City had a 'Dignity & Resect' table.



## IndUS News continued..

We featured performances by the Appleton Rock school, Aztec dancers, Balinese Gammelan, Kathak by Anindita Neogy Anaam, Bharatnatyam by Meenakshi Ganeshan and Kalaanjali school of Indian dance, Bollywood dance by IANEW kids, Hmong dance, Chinese Rooster dance, vocal by Dr Dilip Tannan, Aditi Reddy, Sarah Krajnik, and Native American flute by Wade Fernandez.



Crowds gathered to watch performers and there was an air of celebratory inclusion and contentment! The Farm market vendors were also happy to be a part of this celebration and were thrilled by the efforts of the mayor and the city towards the same. We achieved our goal of diversity and education in a synergic manner through this collaborative event.



**Octoberfest:** On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 IndUS volunteers in collaboration with IANEW participated in Octoberfest. The beautiful weather brought together over 200,000 people to downtown Appleton and about 1000 customers to the IndUS-IANEW stall. We served juicy chicken tikka, crispy samosas, and delectable dosas with potato filling and chutneys. The henna station attracted many people and there were people waiting patiently for the henna and the piping hot dosas. About 40 volunteers, teen and adults provided overwhelming service in shifts throughout the day to cater to the tremendous demand at the stall. The net proceeds from the event were donated to hurricane disaster relief in US, Kerala flood relief in India and to IANEW.



**Fall Festival:** On October 12, 2018, Classical Charter School in Appleton planned a fun filled evening at the school. Kids of various grades from K-8 enjoyed games and entertainment organized by enthusiastic volunteers. Henna station led by Dr Richa Aggarwal and other IndUS volunteers was a popular attraction. All ten volunteers were kept busy throughout the evening by students waiting in long lines. Our volunteers loved interacting with many curious students while drawing henna tattoos and answering their questions.



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Visit our website at

[www.indusfoxvalley.org](http://www.indusfoxvalley.org)

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**Seva:** Appleton Seva under the leadership of Dr. B. S. Sridhar continues to serve meals at the Salvation Army for more than 26 years. Appleton Seva now has young volunteers from the 'Interact club of Appleton North High School' serving meals on their schedule.

**Non-profits Day at Downtown Appleton Rotary**  
On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, several non-profit organizations were invited to make presentations about their mission, activities and their needs to the members of Downtown Appleton Rotary Club. Dr. Sandhya Sridhar represented IndUS and answered questions after the presentation.



Green Bay Seva started serving meals at the Community shelter in Green Bay in March 2018 and has a volunteer strength of 28 families. This Seva is coordinated by Dr Sabeena Kathuria, Radhika Rimmalapati, and Jayashree Murali.



**IndUS of Fox Valley, Inc**

**Mission**

*IndUS of Fox Valley is dedicated to promoting Indo-American friendship and goodwill by serving the community through social, cultural, educational and charitable activities.*

**Upcoming Events**

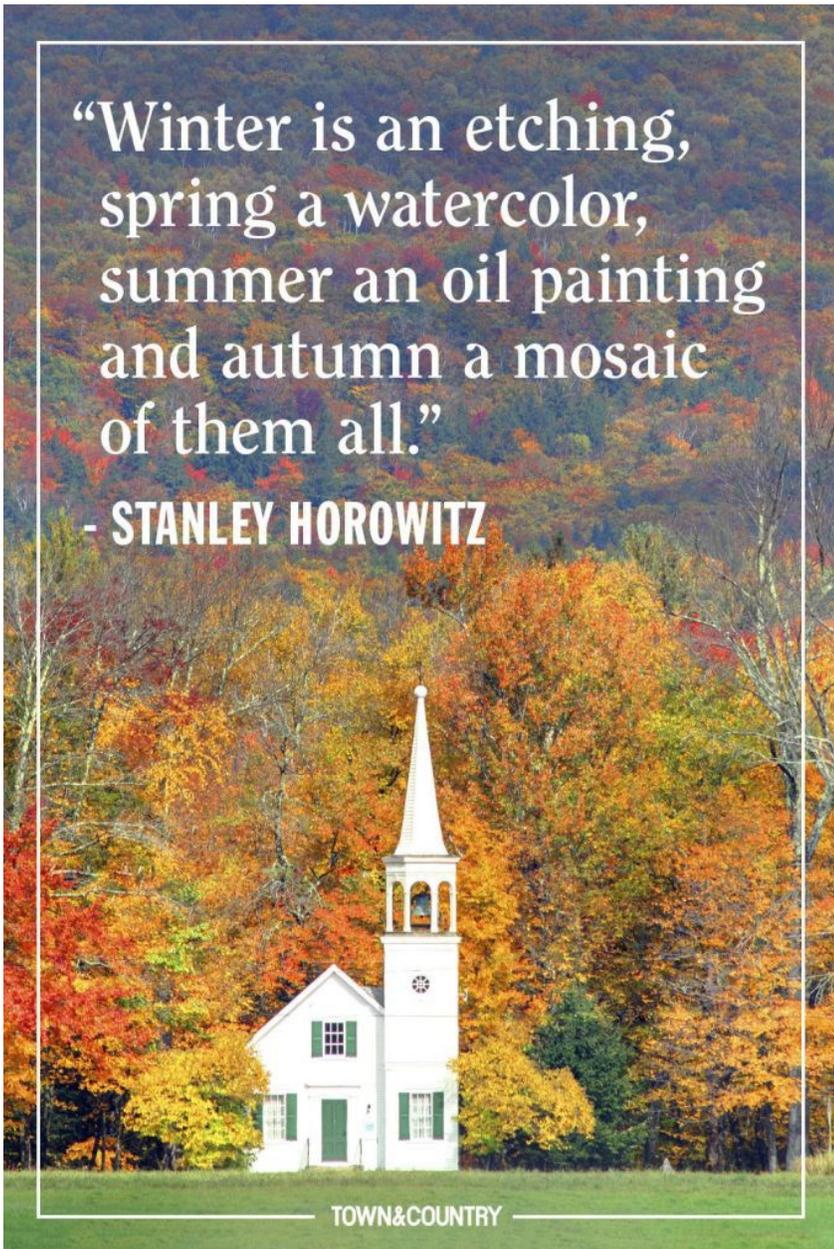
**IndUS of Fox Valley**  
Presents

**Role of Women in India**  
**Saturday, November 17, 2018**  
**5:00 to 9:30 p.m.**

**Red Lion Hotel (previously Radisson Hotel) Appleton**

*Exhibition*  
*Social Hour*  
*Authentic Indian Cuisine*  
*Cultural Program*

**IndUS - 2018**



**IndUS Of Fox Valley**  
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