

#CONSERVATION

Social Media Helping To Protect Biodiversity

"We hope our research can inspire development of technology such as an app that transfers biodiversity data posted on Facebook directly to the global biodiversity databases."



ature photographers, posting to social media, are helping improve biodiversity conservation mapping in South Asia, and the method could go global.

Dr. Shawan Chowdhury, from UQ's School of the Environment, led an international team which scoured images on Facebook nature photography groups in Bangladesh, to add to the existing *Global Biodiversity Information Facility* database.

"We found 44,000 photos of almost 1,000 animal species, including many birds and insects, 288 of which are considered threatened in Bangladesh," Dr. Chowdhury said.

"This has vastly improved 'habitat mapping' across the country where only 4.6 per cent of land is designated as protected."

"We identified many more high-priority areas for conservation, spanning 4,000 square kilometres for birds, and 10,000 square kilometres for butterflies."

"We've been missing out on the distribution data of hundreds of endangered species in Bangladesh, so, this is a big result."

"This could change the way scientists gather biodiversity information in the future, especially in regions where there is a lack of reliable and up-to-date, structured monitoring to inform conservation efforts."

"This way, conservation scientists can easily access that data and use it."

The research is published in *BioScience*, One Earth, and *Conservation Biology*.

Dr. Chowdhury is also a researcher at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) Halle-Jena-Leipzig, the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research and the Friedrich Schiller University Jena.



Bijana Plavsic.



Dilshad Parwani
Relationship Expert

In a world where men, mostly, rule the roost, women are often seen as meek, docile creatures who are incapable of most things, including inflicting violence or cruelty. However, this is one gender stereotype that has worked in their favour for ages. With time, people realized that women could be as cruel and violent, sometimes even more, than their male counterparts.

Born in 1593, Italian painter, *Artemisia Gentileschi*, was the first woman to establish herself as a successful artist in a profession long dominated by men.

One of the most striking aspects of her work is the way she paints women. Her male contemporaries tended to portray women as passive victims or tentative actors. Artemisia's women, on the other hand, defend themselves, scheme and relish in perpetrating violence.

When Italian painter, *Caravaggio*, painted the biblical scene of 'Judith Beheading Holofernes', he depicted Judith as uneasy, even squeamish, as she decapitates him.

But in *Artemisia's* rendering of 'Judith Beheading Holofernes,'



Artemisia Gentileschi.

Artemisia paints 'a determined Judith slaughtering the Assyrian general.' 'The brutal and bloody act' takes place with the assistance of Judith's female accomplice, who pins Holofernes down.

In the book, '*Women as War Criminals: Gender, Agency, and Justice*,' the author chose 'Artemisia's depiction of Judith' for the cover because the painting shows that women, just like men, are capable of perpetrating violence and inciting genocidal acts.

Yet four centuries after *Artemisia* painted Judith, gender stereotypes and outdated assumptions about women, as peaceful and innocent, prevent 'women' from being seen as 'blameworthy'.

This matters, because if women are treated as less capable in one regard, even, one that involves horrible atrocities, it can extend to other realms, too.

In many courts, women criminals go free. International courts, military trials and domestic criminal justice systems often ignore or downplay 'women's acts of violence.'

Take the Nuremberg trials, the series of international military tribunals that prosecuted Nazi war criminals. Many *Nazi women* escaped trial and punishment for their roles in the Holocaust because prosecutors focused on high-level Nazi leaders, exempting those in roles, commonly held by women, such as secretaries and clerks.

Decades later, the United Nations international tribunals that investigated atrocities, committed in Rwanda and Yugoslavia

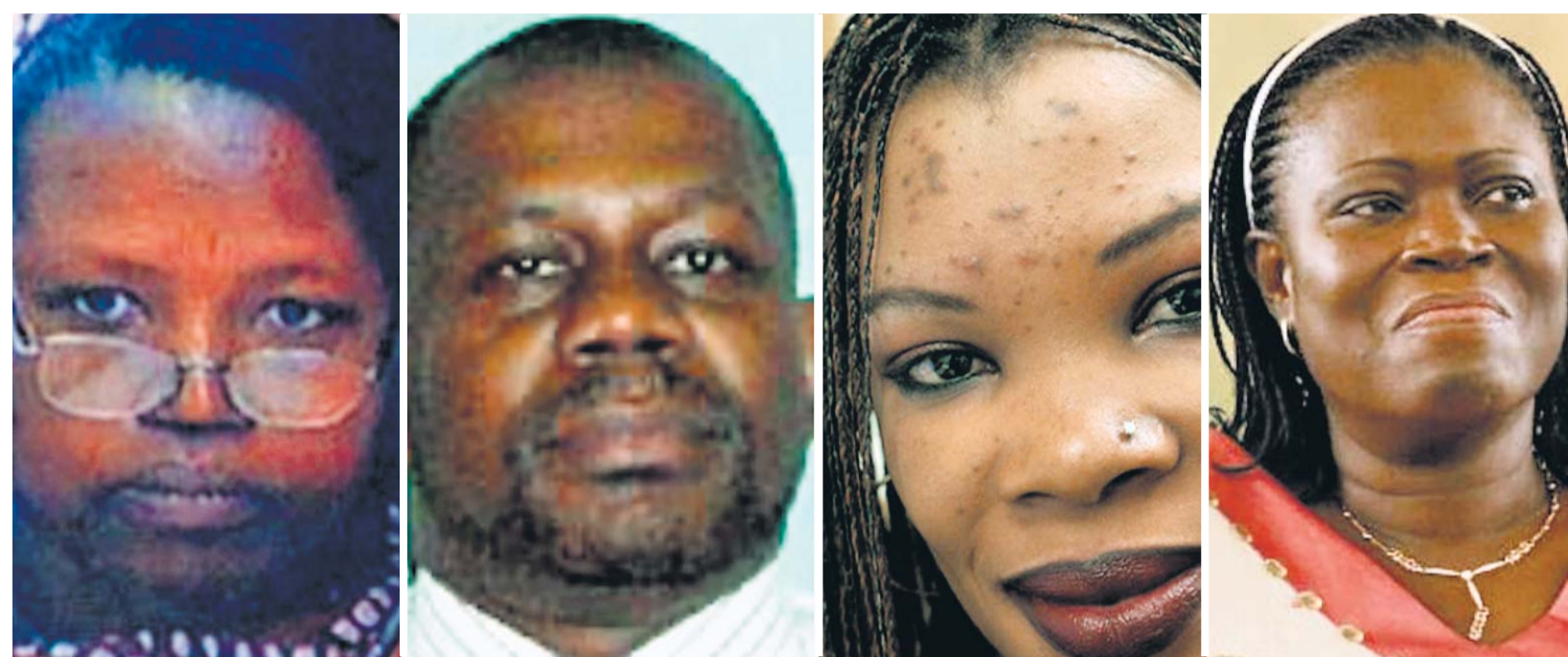
in the 1990s, brought in each instance only one woman to justice.

Women were overlooked by international tribunals despite their involvement in perpetrating violence because they were rarely in positions to command others. Nonetheless, *Rwandan women* participated in murders of adults and children, revealed hiding spots to killing squads, and refused to feed refugees. Some of the thousands of women, who served in military units, across the former Yugoslavia, participated in ethnic cleansing by committing extrajudicial killings and acts of torture.

The same double standard prevails in the 21st century. The only woman indicted, in the 20-year history of the International Criminal Court, is *Simone Gbagbo*, the former first lady of Cote d'Ivoire.

Gbagbo was indicted in 2012 on

While 'gender stereotyping' often creates problems for women, sometimes, it works to their advantage. For ages, women have been regarded as incapable of many things including violence and atrocities, just because of their gender.



Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, her son, Arsene Shalom Ntahobali, and her daughter-in-law, Béatrice Muryenyenzi. Simone Gbagbo.

Women are let off for being women

#FAIRER SEX



Caravaggio's 'Judith Beheading Holofernes.' Photo credit: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica.

four counts of crimes against humanity, sexual violence and persecution, for her role in the violence that followed her husband's loss in the 2011 elections. In 2015, she was convicted of undermining the security of the state and was sentenced to 20 years in prison by an Ivorian court. She was later acquitted of crimes against humanity and in 2018, received a presidential pardon. She was, ultimately, never brought before the International Criminal Court.

When women are taken to court, some will use gender, strategically, in an effort to secure favourable treatment. They have well-developed strategies to avoid the blame.

Some, for example, claim that men made them do it. Despite her political rank, *Bijana Plavsic*, former co-president of Republika Srpska in Bosnia, argued, during her trial, that she

was manipulated by men in similar leadership positions. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994 to 2015) also had a single female defendant, *Pauline Nyiramasuhuko*, Rwanda's former minister of Family and Women's development. During the Rwandan genocide, Nyiramasuhuko played a central role in the regime's extermination plan by directing the Interahamwe militia in Butare province and managing a road-block with the assistance of her son, Arsene Shalom Ntahobali. Using a loud speaker to incite killings of Tutsi men and the rape and murder of Tutsi women, Nyiramasuhuko travelled throughout Butare to ensure that local government offices were abiding with the government's genocidal plan. After her arrest in Kenya, she was prosecuted in a group trial

with five male co-defendants. Like Plavsic, Nyiramasuhuko's legal team portrayed her as a pious woman, a caring mother, and a defender of Rwanda's women and families. However, the court did not accept her lawyers' attempt to distance Nyiramasuhuko from the other government officials who were held responsible for the genocide. As a result, Nyiramasuhuko is thus far the *only woman* convicted by an international tribunal for genocide and for rape, as a crime against humanity'. She received a life sentence, which was later reduced to 47 years, and is currently in prison in Senegal.

Lesser-known women have used similar arguments. *Samantha Elhassani*, an American, sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison, for aiding and abetting the Islamic State, had her sentence reduced by arguing that her husband, who was killed fighting for the group, had misled and abused her.

Similarly, the defence team for *Lyndia England*, who was court-martialled and sentenced to three years in prison by the US Army, after she posed in the infamous photos of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, argued that she was just following the lead of her manipulative boyfriend.

Studies have also shown that when women choose to plead guilty or show remorse, they are more likely to see reduced charges and sentences, especially if their behaviour contrasts with defiant male defendants.

For example, after Plavsic

pleaded 'guilty to one count of persecution on political, racial and religious grounds,' the prosecution dropped the remaining eight charges, which included genocide. In contrast, Radovan Karadzic, who served as co-president alongside Plavsic, pleaded 'not guilty to all charges' against him. He received a 40-year sentence that was increased to 'life in prison,' on appeal.

Advocates of criminal justice reform argue that societies around the world and the United States, in particular, would benefit from lighter sentences and less punitive criminal justice systems. Justice, then, would not imply harsher sentences for women, but rather, fewer disparities in the treatment of men and women.

The fact that women can occupy 'dual role of oppressor and oppressed' is a reality that is still not fully understood. Yet, 400 years ago, Artemisia skillfully portrayed women as 'victims and as victimizers.' Admired for her own capabilities, she once told one of her patrons, "I will show you what a woman can do."

Centuries later, her words are just as resonant. Though Artemisia was popular in her era, art historians tended to overlook her contributions to the canon. No longer. This winter, the National Gallery in London finally devoted a full-scale exhibition to this 'Baroque master.'

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Get A Balanced Life Month

Get A Balanced Life Month is for those hoping for a new start to get their lives into some sort of order and balance, to relieve the stresses of everyday life. To those who are unfamiliar with the concept, balancing work and life involves adjusting priorities and balancing personal and professional commitments. By better balancing your time, you can ensure an equal distribution of your mental capacity between the two areas. While time and energy aren't always split evenly, finding a balance that works best for you, is the key.



#COMMUNITY

JAIPUR READS

Beyond the bustling events of Jaipur, discover the silent revolution of *Jaipur Reads*. The rustle of pages and the shared silence create a unique sense of community under the sunlit canopy of Central Park.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

In the vibrant cultural landscape of Jaipur, where literature events and festivals abound, there is a distinctive community that deviates from the typical book club norm, offering an unconventional haven for book lovers, 'Jaipur Reads.'

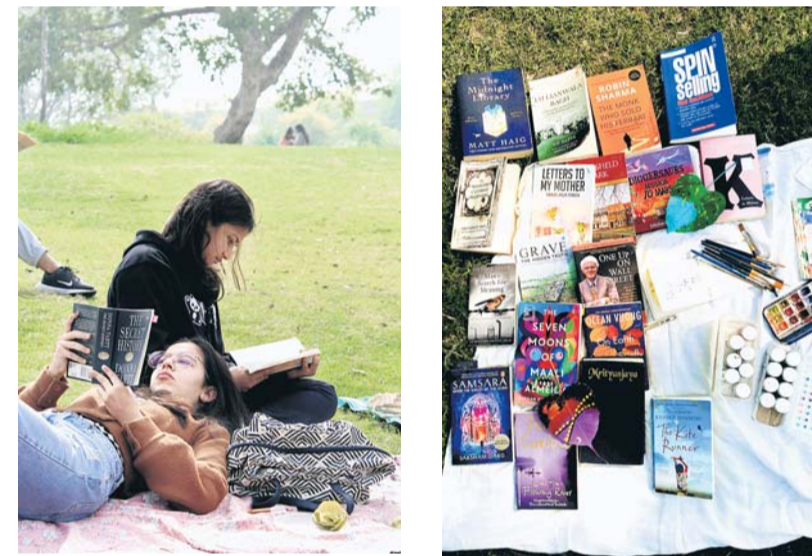
This literary initiative, born last year in July, has blossomed into a gathering that marries the tranquility of libraries with the warmth of home. Founded by Nishkant and Karan Beniwal in Jaipur, the community started with a modest four participants but has since grown steadily with an average attendance of 15-20 members, every Sunday morning.

What sets 'Jaipur Reads' apart is its departure from the expected book club dynamics. In a city teeming with cultural events like art, theater, and the famed Jaipur Literature Festival, this community embraces a serene reading experience. Unlike the traditional book club setting, where members discuss a predetermined book, Jaipur Reads fosters a sense of community without the need for active conversations during reading sessions.

The roots of this community can be traced back to 'Cubbon Reads' in Bangalore, where Shruti Sah and Harsh Snehanshu began a silent reading ritual every Saturday in Cubbon Park, in December 2022.

For Anshi, who has been a part of 'Jaipur Reads' since its inception, the experience can be encapsulated in one word, 'joy.' "The joy of reading under the open sky, the joy of companionship, and the joy of forming lasting connections. This community has not only rekindled my love for reading but has also brought beautiful connections into my life," says Anshi.

As 'Jaipur Reads' looks to the future, the vision is clear, to become the go-to community for anyone looking to embark on a reading journey. It is not just about the books, it is about finding joy, companionship, and a sense of belonging in the quiet communion of fellow book lovers, under the Jaipur sky.



Their initiative, posted on social media, sparked a movement that has now reached over 70 cities worldwide. In July 2023, Nishkant and Karan, inspired by 'Cubbon Reads,' brought this reading revolution to Jaipur.

The membership of 'Jaipur Reads' spans a diverse spectrum, currently ranging from 18 years to 45 years, encompassing voracious readers, writers, and newcomers alike. Inclusive and beginner-friendly, the community offers a platform for those who seek solace in the written word. Like Karan, who, due to his shy nature, had been hesitant to join other book clubs in the past, "There are no forced conversations or awkward small talks during these sessions. Participants are free to come and go, as they please, with no subscription charges. Held in a park, the sessions are accessible to

everyone, providing a much-needed respite from hectic schedules amid nature and sunlight," tells Karan.

Beyond the pages of books, Jaipur Reads has become a catalyst for forming connections. The community has birthed another group, 'Jaipur Paints,' and members often extend their camaraderie by going for coffee or tea after the reading session. Even as the co-founder, Nishkant, moved away from Jaipur for his educational pursuits, Karan continues to nurture and expand the community, ensuring its longevity. "The group members are also well versed with the activities that are currently being carried out by me such as keeping the Instagram page active or making other members feel comfortable when they come. So, even if I am not there for a few weeks or if I decide to move out of Jaipur, anyone else from the group can easily take up my role," elaborates Karan.

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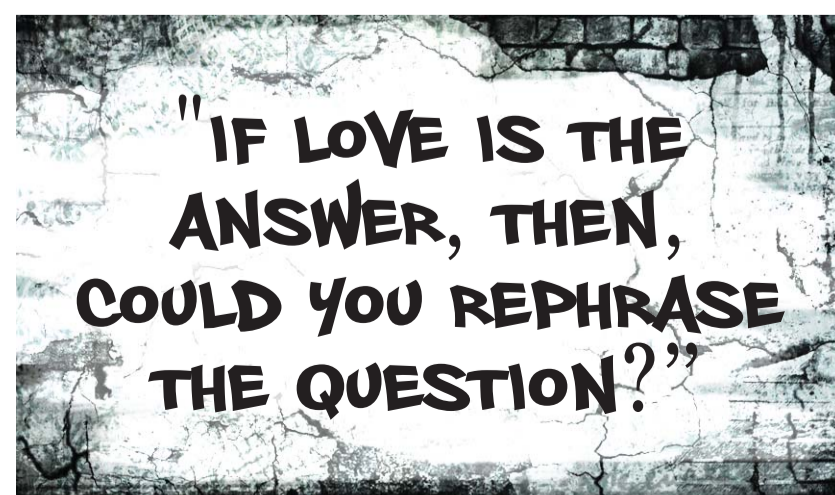
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THE WALL

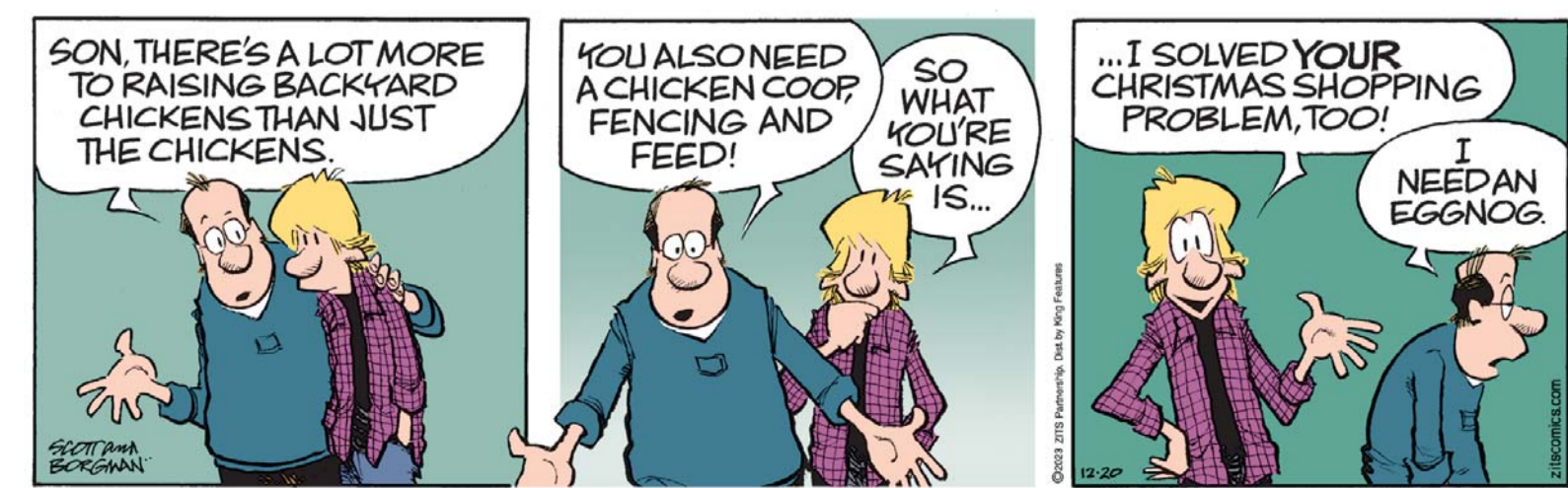


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman