

BY SHOBHAA DE

HOW TO BE A CHICK

...AND OTHER LIFE LESSONS FROM SHE WHO KNOWS BETTER

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WHY OUR 'BAIS' ARE BETTER OFF THAN INDRA NOOYI...

The Budget will take care of itself as it always does. But who'll take care of Indra Nooyi? Who would have thought a time would come when we'd be feeling sorry for Indra Nooyi – often described as the most successful corporate woman in the world.

As the high-profile head of PepsiCo, the very brilliant and terrifyingly dynamic Nooyi, mother of two daughters, has triggered off a tsunami world-wide with her comment, "Women can't have it all."

This crucial confession during an epic interview with David Bradley at the Aspen Ideas Festival has got women (and men) thinking. More so because Nooyi's comments involve her own mother. A mother who thought it was fine to pack off her incredible daughter to go fetch milk at 10 pm, on the very day Nooyi had been appointed President of the company and invited to join the Board of Directors.

Nooyi's new role had made international headlines! But obviously, her awesome promotion had left her mom underwhelmed and unimpressed. Which is why this column is addressed to Nooyi's mother.

Dear Mummyji, What were you thinking? Agreed, she is your beti first and everything else next. But aren't you proud of her achievements? Her hard work? Her stupendous success? How could you NOT have given her a warm and loving hug when she came home that significant night, ready to share her moment of glory with those she loves – her family? And hello! If the milk had run out, why the hell couldn't you get it yourself? Or sent Raj, Indra's husband to fetch it? Or dispatched one of the staff members of your prosperous household?

I'll tell you why: on some level you wanted to cut your daughter down to size. You wished to remind her that she may be a great woman outside her home, but for you, she was still just a daughter – a negligent daughter at that! Maybe you still believe you did her a favour by showing her what her real worth was at home. This is how a lot of traditional mothers think. And how wrong they are! Your insensitive attitude clearly hurt your daughter's feelings. Or she wouldn't have brought up the incident in an interview, 14 years later. You also instructed her to leave her 'crowns' in the garage before entering her home.

Be honest, would you have told your son the same thing? Or would you have waited with a silver thali, laden with home-made laddoos, perhaps performed an elaborate 'aarti', to demonstrate your pride in his promotion? Maybe you would have cooked his favourite raajma-chawal? And generally made him feel like a conquering hero coming home after a hard fought battle? A king! But with your daughter, your attitude was harsh and unappreciative. That is just so unfair.

I am sure you have made it up to her in many different ways since then. But the wound has not healed. What you actually did do is make your daughter feel guilty and diminished. That's what countless ambitious women across the world are made to feel by their families – guilty. And that relentless guilt takes away the joy they deserve and have earned, not just for themselves but for their family.

I want to ask you a candid question: Do you resent your daughter's fame? Do you feel jealous and competitive? Do you think she owes her success to you for holding the fort and running the house? That's too bad.

Following this feisty debate across continents, I asked my bai whether she 'had it all'. Her simple answer surprised me. She said, "Yes!" She went on to explain, "I work hard for my family. When I go home, my saasubai serves hot food. My husband smiles and my children cling to me. What more do I want? I don't compare myself to anybody else. This is my life. God has been kind. I will continue to work hard so that my daughters do well in future."

It was a straightforward narrative which touched me a lot. I thought to myself, if she can be cheerful and experience such contentment, isn't she far better off than an Indra Nooyi? The humble bai will raise her girls differently and appreciate their efforts later in life.

So, dear Mummyji, the next time Indra comes home with one more laurel, do embrace her and tell her you love her. And yes, make sure there is enough milk in the fridge that night!



Elderly women refuse to vacate Bhendi Bazar house despite collapses

While 1,500 families have moved out from the 250-odd dilapidated buildings awaiting redevelopment, tenants continue to reside in these crumbling structures. A part of one such building collapsed on Friday

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Apparently, not even Friday morning's partial collapse can convince the Masalawala family – comprising three elderly women – to move out of the dilapidated building in Bhendi Bazar. The Masalawalas live on the second floor, part of which fell as heavy rains lashed the city.

Their refusal – they are the only residents left in the crumbling two-storied Galabhai Chawl – has thrown a spanner in the works for the Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment project that covers 250 such buildings, besides adding to fear of loss of life.

The partial collapse – the second such incident in the building since Wednesday – sent developers Saifee Buhrani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), BMC, Fire Brigade and MHADA officials into a tizzy, who spent several unfruitful hours trying to convince the family to vacate the premises.

The officials have now warned that Galabhai Chawl not only poses threat to the Masalawalas, but also to shopkeepers, their patrons and pedestrians as the rest of the building may collapse anytime.

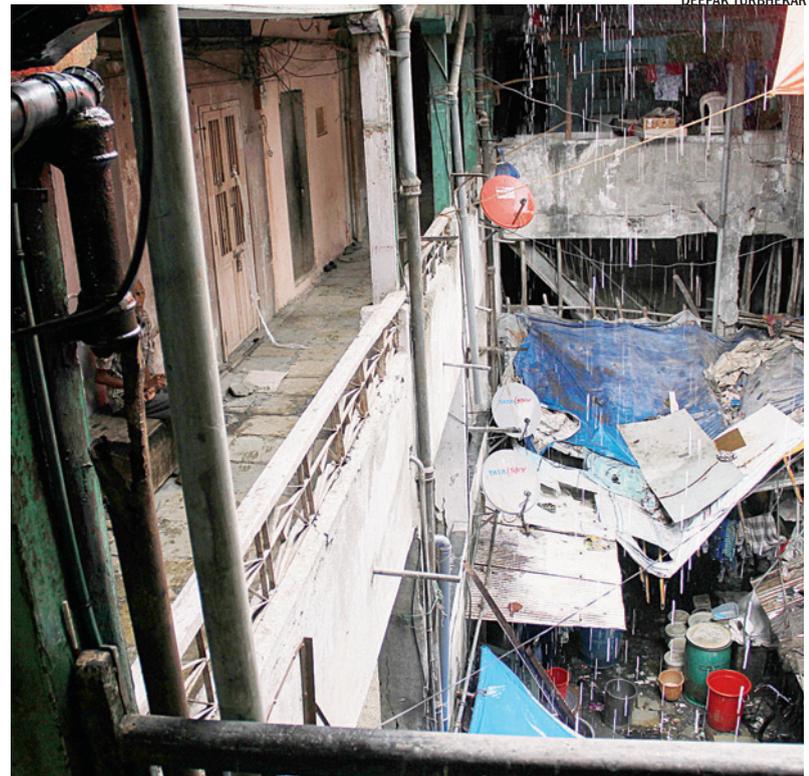
In 2011, over 50 families were moved out from Galabhai Chawl – the first building in the area to be declared hazardous – to a transit camp in Mazgaon. Two families, including the Masalawalas, had refused to vacate, but officials managed to convince one of them to leave on Thursday after a part of the building collapsed on Wednesday night.

"Our concern is that if we do not demolish these buildings immediately, hundreds of lives are at risk. The volume of people frequenting Bhendi Bazaar has gone up due to Ramzan, and if any of these structures collapse, it's not just those living there but even those walking by who face the risk of getting hurt," said Abbas Master, chief operating officer, SBUT.

The SBUT management has been working overtime talking to the handful of tenants left in these buildings, but in vain. BMC's disaster management team, which has checked on Galabhai Chawl several times since Wednesday night, has raised an alarm.

"We just cannot say how long the building will continue to stand. The pillars have given way and the slabs are crumbling. Another heavy shower, and the structure will just collapse," said a senior team member.

Sangeeta Hasnale, assistant commis-



The crumbling Galabhai Chawl at Bhendi Bazar on Friday

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DISASTER MANAGEMENT TEAM

sioner, 'C' ward and head, disaster management cell, said the building's water and electric supply have been disconnected. "Since only one family remains, we have told the police to evict them using force if necessary, as they pose a threat to many others," she said.

All that hasn't changed Nafisa Masalawala's decision to stay put at any cost. "I do not trust the developers, and their agreement is fake. Once I move out, they will never give me my house after redevelopment, so I refuse to vacate," she said.

The Wakharwala building nearby is another point of concern, with two families refusing to budge while the rest have moved to transit camps. The struc-

ture is in such a precarious condition that no one dares to go near them, other than the tenants who remain.

"These 10-odd buildings need to be brought down right away, but since we are a community-driven redevelopment project, we have been requesting and not forcing anyone. However, we are now taking the legal route," said Master.

In the past two years, around 50 of the 250-odd buildings under the project have been demolished and 1,500 families have been moved out. SBUT's plan is to start construction in Clusters 1 and 3 in the first phase. The project, worth Rs 3,000 crore, comprises nine clusters. While most clearances are in place, SBUT is yet to get the commencement certificate from the authorities, which some of the tenants are citing as the main reason for not vacating.

REBUILDING BHENDI BAZAR

The Rs 3,000 crore Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment project is spread over 16.5 acres and involves building houses and shops. The project layout plan shows several 40-storey buildings for habitation. About one-sixth of the area has been left empty for open spaces and green areas like terrace gardens and tree-lined roads. The project involves rehabilitation of 3,200 families and 1,200 shops.