

Editorial

Imphal Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Let adopted child knows the truth

There are not many people who would not agree that an adopted child must be told that he or she is adopted. In the rare case where adoptive parents have, for one reason or another, refrained from doing so, the consequences have been disastrous. With so many people involved in the exercise, an adoption can never be kept a total secret, and sooner or later the child involved will discover the truth. It is not difficult to imagine his or her reaction to this belated discovery. So shattering is the experience that youngsters in this situation have been driven to suicide. In fact, such is the importance placed on a child knowing that he is adopted. There is a strong movement in the West to encourage White parents to adopt a negro or Asian child rather than one of their own kind. The rationale is that since the child looks so different from his parents, there is no doubt in his mind, or anyone else's that he is adopted and from the very start he is accepted as such. With the shroud of secrecy thus removed, the whole business of telling the child of his antecedents becomes easier to handle.

Yet the temptation for adoptive parents to suppress this information must be considerable, if only to protect the child from hurt. Their own feeling for an adopted child cannot be any different to those they would have for a biological child. The parental bond are as strong and their love as great. For them, nothing can make the child less their in any way.

Yet for the child, it is different. Much though this child may love the adoptive parent and feel a secure, intrinsic part of the family, there are two factors that are bound to influence his or her reaction to the situation a natural curiosity about the biological parents and an over whelming feeling of rejection at the thought of having been abandoned or given up by them. This last is what makes telling an adopted child the truth so difficult. W. Shyamsunder who adopted a son over 20 years ago, when adoptions were still not very common or organised, tells the advice he was given by both the gynaecologist who delivered the baby and the society that arranged the adoption. "When the time comes to tell your son that he is adopted," they said, "he will want to know how and why he came to be adopted, and why his parents did not want him. The simplest, and least damaging way to deal with this is to tell him that his parent were both killed in a car crash. This way, he will not feel rejected. Nor will he be tempted when he is older to look for his 'roots.'"

Whether this friend took this advice or not, and had the courage to ask. But the pros and cons of this advice for sometimes now should be well look upon. If the end justifies means telling a lie to protect your child may be acceptable. But can it be acceptable when the lie is told to the child himself? Shouldn't a relationship between a parent and child always be based on total truth? But apart from the ethics of the situation, there seems to be a very practical reason for sticking to the truth. In the remote event.

Pakistan: 10 killed in blast in Kurram tribal region

PTI Peshawar, April 25: At least 10 people, including six children and two women, were killed and 13 others injured on Tuesday when a passenger van was targeted with a remote-controlled bomb in Pakistan's restive northwest tribal region. The improvised explosive device (IED) blast targeted the van in Kontara village in central Kurram Agency. Ten people, including six children and two women, were killed in the blast, officials said. Thirteen people were injured in the explosion. The injured were shifted to a nearby hospital. The military's media wing, Inter Services Public Relations, said a special Mi-17 helicopter has been sent to Kurram Agency headquarters

Parachinar to bring the injured to Peshawar for treatment. Security personnel rushed to the blast site and cordoned off the entire area. A search operation was also conducted. No group claimed responsibility for the attack. However, the area is frequently hit by sectarian violence. Last month, at least 28 people were killed and 100 others wounded when a suicide bomber detonated a car "rigged with explosives" outside a Shiite imamabargah in a busy market in Parachinar, the main town of the Kurram tribal region. The grisly violence sparked angry protests by residents in Parachinar, the administrative headquarters of the agency, which is prone to sectarian violence.

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End of Red Beacons : A big blow to VIP culture

By : Nivedita Khandekar

"Well begun is half done." That was what the famous Greek philosopher said. Union Cabinet's decision of doing away with the *lal batti* culture is a good start for a battle that can prove to be a long one.

On Wednesday, April 19, 2017, the Union Cabinet decided to amend the Motor Vehicle Rules to end the use of red or any coloured beacon by all, including the President, Vice President and the Prime Minister. "Every Indian is special. Every Indian is a VIP." Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted soon after.

"The Union Cabinet, in its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today decided to do away with beacons of all kinds atop all categories of vehicles in the country. The government is of the considered opinion that beacons on vehicles are perceived symbols of VIP Culture, and have no place in a democratic country. They have no relevance whatsoever. Beacons, however, will be allowed on vehicles concerned with emergency and relief services, ambulance, fire service etc. In the light of this decision the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways will make necessary provisions in the law," was the brief statement by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.

Immediately, the next day, i.e. on Thursday, April 20, 2017, gazette notification was issued.

Soon after, the television channels and news portals were flashing the breaking news even as the social media was full of gleeful messages. The wide spread joy at the news that had a direct bearing on few thousand people – those whose cars were allowed beacons, red, orange or any other colour – sent a message to the scores of tens and thousands of others. The message that can be seen as assurance. The message that can be seen as promise. The message that signifies a change. The message that can be seen to end discrimination.

The Supreme Court Ruling

The government has taken forward a Supreme Court ruling of December 2013. It had sought to restrict the use of red beacons even with an amendment in the relevant law. The Supreme Court, while hearing the petition on VIP culture, observed, "One of the issues highlighted in the note was that if the instinct of power is concentrated in few individuals, then naked greed for power will destroy the basics of democratic principles. But, what we have done in the last four decades would shock the most established political systems. The best example of this is the use of symbols of authority including the red lights on the vehicles of public representatives from the lowest to the highest and civil servants of various cadres. The red lights symbolize power and a stark

differentiation between those who are allowed to use it and the ones who are not".

The Amicus Curiae in the case had informed that the red beacon had actually become a status symbol and those using such vehicles treat themselves as a class different than ordinary citizens. He also told the Court that "the widespread use of red lights on government vehicles in the country is reflective of the mentality of those who served British Government in India and threatened the natives as slaves."

Cabinet Announcement brings cheers

Soon after the announcement by the Union Cabinet, Chief Ministers of several states announced removal of beacons from their cars. These included Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand to name a few. Several other states too followed suit. It was an attempt at redemption so to say. Some others like the Chief Ministers of Tripura and Delhi have not been using red beacons earlier too. More recently, soon after their swearing in as Chief Ministers of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, both Amarinder Singh and Yogi Adityanath declared that they will not be using any red beacon cars. Newspaper reports indicate that the Supreme Court Judges and the Election Commission of India have also ordered removing of beacons from their cars.

***Every Indian is special. Every**

Indian is a VIP'

The Union Cabinet's decision to do away with the *lal batti* culture is indeed a welcome step in right direction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Every Indian is special. Every Indian is a VIP." Every Indian is special. Every Indian is a VIP. <https://t.co/epXuRdaSmY>

Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) April 19, 2017

After this, one can hope that the access or the privileges that come with the VIP tag would soon be gone and each Indian would have opportunities on par. One can hope the poor is not deprived of good education for his child because of some VIP quota snatched away his ward's admission to good schools funded by government. One can hope that a patient from remote hamlet will get treatment for a rare heart problem and not be sent away because some people with influence are to be given preference at public health facilities.

We can take pride in the fact that it is the Prime Minister who has himself promised: "Every Indian is special. Every Indian is a VIP." Let us hope that this step will bring an end to the clout that red beacon symbolized.

Author is an independent journalist based in Delhi. She writes on environmental, developmental and social issues. The opinions expressed above are her personal. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

National and International News

Sadhvi Pragma Thakur gets bail in 2008 Malegaon case; Bombay HC denies any relief to co-accused Purohit

PTI New Delhi, April 25: The Bombay High Court, on Tuesday, granted bail to Sadhvi Pragma Singh Thakur, accused of plotting the 2008 Malegaon blast, but denied any relief to co-accused former Lt Col Prasad Purohit.

The court directed Sadhvi Pragma to surrender her passport to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and not to tamper with the evidence. She has also been asked to report to the NIA court as and when required.

Pragma Singh Thakur is to furnish Rs 5 lakh bail amount and two sureties of same amount, according to the news agency ANI.

"The appeal filed by Sadhvi Pragma Singh Thakur is allowed. The applicant (Sadhvi) is directed to be released on bail on a surety of Rs 5 lakh. The appeal filed by Prasad Purohit stands dismissed," said a division bench of Justices Ranjit More and Shalini Phansalkar Joshi. "We have said in our order that prima facie there is no case made out against Sadhvi," Justice More said while refusing to stay Tuesday's order.

Eight persons were killed and nearly 80 others were injured when a bomb strapped to a motorcycle had exploded in Malegaon on 29 September, 2008. Sadhvi Pragma and Purohit were arrested in 2008 and are in jail since then.

Welcoming the order, Sadhvi's brother-in-law Bhagwan Jha said the

family will celebrate nationwide. "Finally, we have won. Nine years she was in jail without evidence. Now we will celebrate nationwide," he told reporters outside while distributing chocolates.

The court was hearing the appeals filed by Sadhvi Pragma and Purohit challenging an earlier order of a special court rejecting their bail pleas.

The families of the victims, who had filed an intervening application challenging Sadhvi Pragma's bail plea, on Tuesday, sought from the court a stay on its order so that they can appeal against it in the Supreme Court.

According to the investigating agencies, the blast was allegedly carried out by right-wing group Abhinav Bharat and a total of 11 persons are at present in jail in the case, including Purohit and Sadhvi Pragma.

In her appeal, Sadhvi Pragma argued that the lower court failed to take cognisance of the change in circumstances in her case considering that NIA had declared in its charge sheet that it had not found any evidence against her and that prosecution against her be dropped. The NIA, which was handed over the case much later, had earlier submitted to the high court that it has "no objections" to Sadhvi's plea.

On 17 April, the NIA told the Supreme Court that there was no need to keep the accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case in police custody, as a charge-sheet has been filed in the

matter. When asked by the court for its opinion, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad had said that the ball was now in the NIA's court and it wasn't the prerogative of the terrorism squad anymore to support or oppose the plea.

The families of some of the victims of the blast argued that the plea be denied for there exist ample evidence in the ATS' charge sheet to establish that Thakur was one of the main conspirators of the blast.

The NIA had opposed Purohit's bail plea and argued that there was prima facie evidence in the form of audio and video recordings, call data records and witness statements that prove his involvement in the case.

According to NIA, Purohit had taken active part in the conspiracy meetings and even agreed to arrange explosives to be used in the blast.

Purohit had argued that the NIA was "selective" in exonerating some accused persons and that the agency had made him a "scapegoat" in the

case. The probe into the blast has brought into focus the activities of right-wing Hindu groups.

A special court had earlier ruled that the Anti-Terrorist Squad had wrongly applied MCOCA in the case against Pragma, Purohit and nine others.

Last year, in its secondary supplementary charge-sheet, the agency had cited lack of evidence against Sadhvi as the reason, and also stated that the draconian MCOCA was not applicable in the case. Purohit, however, remained a key accused in the case.

The NIA has recommended prosecution against Ramesh Shivaji Upadhyay, Sameer Sharad Kulkarni, Ajay Rahirkar, Rakesh Dhawde, Jagdish Chintaman Mahatre, Prasad Shrikant Purohit, Sudhakar Dhar Dwivedi, Sudhakar Chaturvedi, Ramchandra Kalsangra (wanted) and Sandeep Dange (wanted) under the Indian Penal Code, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Arms Act and the Explosives Substances Act.

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