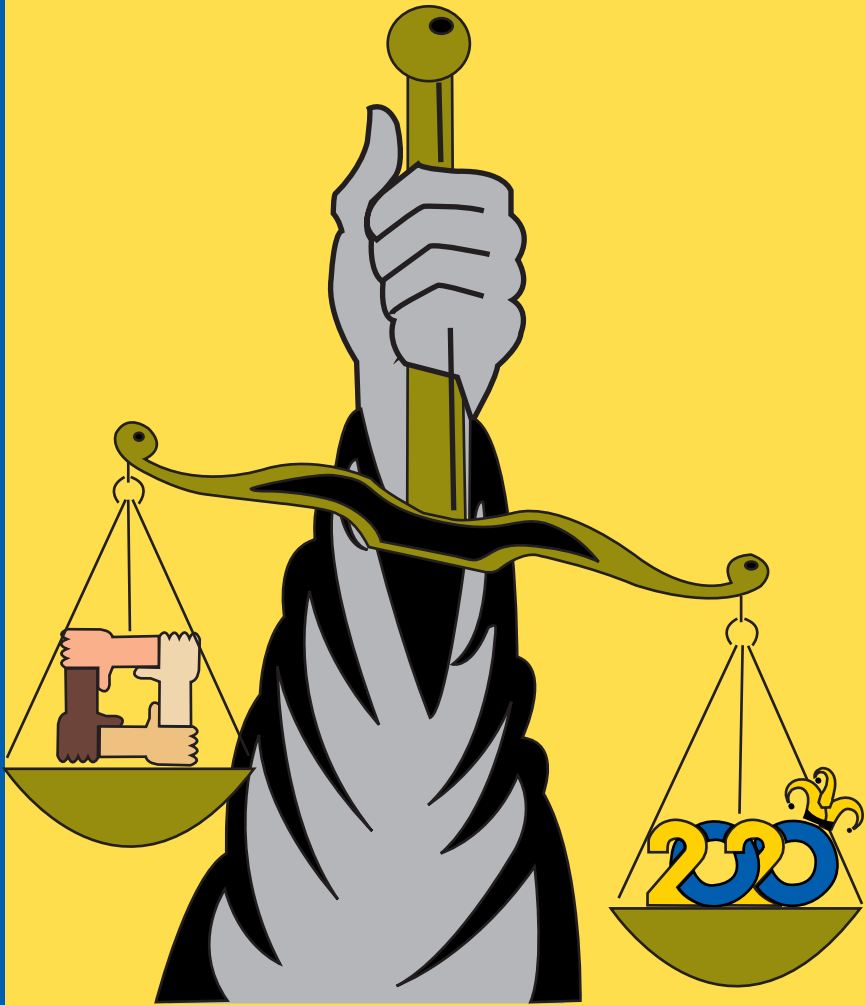


VOL. VII

THE Foolsca P JOURNAL



**THE ESSENCE OF EQUALITY IN
THE MODERN AGE**



THE ESSENCE OF EQUALITY IN THE MODERN AGE

THE FOOLSCAP
VOLUME 7
MARCH 2020

COACH HOUSE PRINTING

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

PRINTED WITH SUPPORT OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS'
UNION





TABLE OF CONTENTS

MASTHEAD

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MEET OUR WRITERS

#METOO'S PERFECT VICTIM IS WHITE: RACE AND REPRESENTATION IN CHANTEL MILLER'S *KNOW MY NAME: A MEMOIR*

BY: AMANDA CHEUNG

HOW EQUALITY LEGISLATION & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HAS FILED DISABLED PERSONS IN CANADA AND THE US

BY: MARIANNA FIGUEIREDO

GIRLHOOD ACTIVISM: MAKING YOUNG GIRLS' VOICES HEARD

BY: ISABELA VILLANOY

GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE IN TORONTO

BY: ALOYSIUS WONG PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

"OPERATION VARSITY BLUES" AND THE REPRODUCTION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

BY: CLARE O'BRIEN

FOOD INSECURITIES: REVEALING ANOTHER SIDE OF INDIA

BY: SAMRIDHI SINGH





MASTHEAD

Editor-in-Chief
SABRINA DANIELE

Associate Editors
ISHIKA BANGARI
CHARLOTTE CHELLEW
MOLLY DAWN FARQUHAR
CLARE O'BRIEN
ANNA YEE

Graphic Designer
LUCAS DANIELE





Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Hello readers!

Thank you for picking up a copy of *The Foolscap's* seventh edition, "The Essence of Equality in the Modern Age." I hope you enjoy the many layers that equality has to offer. When I was first thinking of what theme to choose for the journal, the idea of equality first came to mind. I believe that in equality, we can find roots of kindness. Living in a world that mirrors elements of injustice, we must always remember to never stop fighting for the truth. This year's journal will draw upon research, personal experience and professional photography that represent the development towards equality in the modern age. First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Felan Parker for mentoring me throughout the entire journal process. I also want to give a special thanks to my own editorial team — the editors, writers, photographer and graphic designer. All of us together made this journal possible!

Sincerely,
Sabrina Daniele
Editor-in-Chief, *The Foolscap* (2019-2020).





MEET OUR WRITERS!

AMANDA CHEUNG
MARIANNA FIGUEIREDO
CLARE O'BRIEN
SAMRIDHI SINGH
ISABELA VILLANOY





#MeToo's Perfect Victim is White: Race and Representation
in Chanel Miller's *Know My Name: A Memoir*
BY: AMANDA CHEUNG





Walking into the courtroom, about to face her attacker for the first time since her assault, Chanel Miller thought to herself: “I wonder if they were surprised I was Asian” (Miller, 2019). Miller’s memoir, *Know My Name*, presents her experience of sexual assault as an example of how racial identity intersects with the treatment of sexual violence in both social and legal contexts, contributing to an on-going discussion about the voices that are privileged within the #MeToo movement and the institutions that reinforce this privilege. Alongside Rowena Chiu’s opinion piece for *The New York Times*, which details her experience of sexual harassment by Harvey Weinstein, Miller’s memoir points to the fetishization of Asian women in media and the social expectations of the so-called “model minority” as driving factors that isolate Asian victims of sexual assault in a space dominated by white voices. In adding their own voices to the conversation, Miller and Chiu disrupt the white racial model of the “perfect victim,” established through the popularization of #MeToo by white upper-class celebrities, and begin to create spaces for Asian women to speak out about sexual assault.

One of the several stories Miller shares about her Chinese immigrant mother details her first job as a bartender in America where the “locals called her Suzie Wong,” highlighting the media tropes that real Asian women are often framed within (Miller, 2019). Comparing Miller’s mother to the fictional character Suzie Wong, a Chinese woman who works as a prostitute, reveals the fetishization and dehumanization Asian women are subjected to that reduces them to mere sexual objects — at once both inferior and desirable. This relationship between repulsion and desire manifests in the language Harvey Weinstein is claimed to have used in his attempted assault of Chiu, in which he first declared that he didn’t “do Chinese or Jewish girls,” then later invoked the same racialized language expressing interest in Chiu because “he’d never had a Chinese girl” (Chiu, 2019). Weinstein’s desire to “do” and “have” present Chiu’s body as passive, an item to be collected. Moreover, the acknowledgement of Chiu through her race renders her a caricature of herself, and thus reinforces the objectification of Asian women’s bodies. For Miller, this objectification manifests in comments made on leaked screenshots of her old spoken word videos: “Brock Turner has yellow fever [...] Asian women can’t handle their alcohol” (Miller, 2019). In each case, the complexities of sexual assault are either explained or excused by the





racialized body of the victim, undermining the individual actions of the accused.

The behavior of Asian sexual assault victims, however, is often held up to a different racialized standard — both in the courtroom and beyond. Both Miller and Chiu reference the danger of the model minority myth, which propagates an image of Asian people, and in particular Asian women, as “deferential, polite, and well-behaved” (Fang, 2019), which encourages victims to remain silent or adopt the passive role of a “secondary character” in order to uphold this standard (Miller, 2019). In explaining the lack of Asian voices within the #MeToo movement, Chiu states: “I think certainly within the U.S. we have a whole culture around a model minority that doesn’t make a fuss, that doesn’t speak up, that puts their head down and works really hard and doesn’t cause waves” (Fang, 2019). The ramifications of this myth are clear: in 2015, a study showed that 21 to 55 per cent of Asian-American women who experience sexual violence are found to report less frequently than women from other cultures (Chung, 2019). This not only reinforces an already deafening culture of silence on sexual violence in Asian American communities, but enforces an expectation of Asian women’s submission that works against them in court. For instance, in Miller’s description of watching a Chinese woman press charges against her domestic abuser, she writes: “She stood, a few feet from her attacker, fighting for her life in a foreign language in a foreign country, but was indirectly told, your problems are taking too much time” (Miller, 2019). Socialized expectations of behavior are imposed on victims of color that rob them of the justice they seek. In Miller’s case, this meant having her words taken out of context by her attacker’s parole officer, her own voice replaced with “a voice of forgiveness and submission,” which are ultimately used against her when the judge draws on these sympathetic words as a reason to give her attacker a lighter sentence (Miller, 2019). Even when victims of colour act outside of their socialized roles, actors within the court system can impose expectations that force victims back into them.

Given that Miller’s identity was not made known throughout the trial, many people, including court officials, would “[make] the assumption [she] was white over the phone without bothering to ask” (Miller, 2019). Addressing sexual violence in court is often conducted through a white perspective, which necessarily means that, while Miller was addressed as the white-sounding “Emily” in court documents





the moment she entered the court room she was reduced to “something in the category of ‘other’” (Miller, 2019). This lack of representation in the legal system isolates victims of color, creating an imbalance of power in court that strengthens the weight of the words coming from white voices. As Miller stated in an interview: “...for Brock, he may be used to having people in positions of power that look like him [...] I didn’t expect to see Asian female attorneys or an Asian female judge” (Burton, 2019).

In penning her memoir, Miller provides a potential solution to this imbalance: representation and awareness through shared stories of survival. Describing a chance encounter with comedian Margaret Cho, who Miller admired as “one of the few Asian American role models in mainstream culture” and as someone who used her platform to speak about sexual abuse, she characterizes Cho as both “unapologetic” and “honest,” disrupting the behavioral expectations of the model minority (Miller, 2019). This is one of the key moments that drives Miller to write and share her victim impact statement, which transforms her into more than Brock Turner’s victim, and allows her to move from the “secondary” character role into the hero of her own story (Miller, 2019). Reflecting on the dozens of letters she received after her statement went viral, Miller writes: “This you sounds heroic, mythical [...] They had never been tricked into seeing me as a minor character” (Miller, 2019).

The most powerful contribution Chanel Miller makes to the #MeToo movement is her name, her identity, and her voice, which provides a new perspective to survivorship as an Asian woman in the court system. In the opening section of Miller’s memoir, she not only offers her name, but her Chinese name, “Zhang Xiao Xia, which translates to Little Summer,” emphasizing how her racial perspective is as essential to understanding her experience of sexual assault as is knowing her name (Miller, 2019). Miller and Chiu add new dimensions to the #MeToo discussion, challenging the systems that privilege white voices and experiences simply by sharing their own stories of assault. Writing *Know My Name* is an act of defiance against the structures that resist understanding the humanity of women of colour, and carves out new spaces for Asian voices in the #MeToo movement.





References

- Burton, Nylah. (2019, September 27). Sexual Assault Survivor Chanel Miller Opens Up About Reclaiming Her Power and Defining Herself. Shondaland. Retrieved from <https://www.shondaland.com/inspire/books/a29255443/chanel-miller-new-book/>.
- Chiu, Rowena. (2019, October 5). Harvey Weinstein Told Me He Liked Chinese Girls': Why it took me more than 20 years to tell my #MeToo story. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/05/opinion/sunday/harvey-weinstein-rowena-chiu.html>.
- Chung, Madelyn. (2019, October 7). From Chanel Miller to Rowena Chiu, Asian Women Bring an Important Viewpoint to #Me Too. Flare. Retrieved from <https://www.flare.com/news/rowena-chiu-harvey-weinstein-metoo/>.
- Fang, Marina. (2019, October 7). Chanel Miller, Rowena Chiu And Defying Stereotypes As Asian Sexual Assault Survivors. Huff Post. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/rowena-chiu-chanel-miller-asian-women-sexual-assault_n_5d9b46dce4b0fc935eddeace?ri18n=true.
- Miller, Chanel. (2019). *Know My Name: A memoir*. New York: Viking Press.





How Equality Legislation & Affirmative Action Has Filled
Disabled Persons in Canada & the US
BY: MARIANNA FIGUEIREDO





Introduction

Bruce Feldthusen posits that equality is achieved when “members of different groups, in the aggregate, are equally entitled to the full range of entitlements, including opportunities, which society has to offer” (Banfield & Moore 1999). Rosalie Abella adds that this sometimes means treating groups differently to create an equal playing field because the notion of equality is constantly evolving (Banfield & Moore 1999). Canada and the United States are frontrunners in the relatively new disability rights movement. Both nations have implemented a plethora of equality legislation regarding access to suitable education, employment, medical and social services and independent living within our communities. However, North Americans with disabilities will not achieve equal status until society moves away from legal paternalism. This means ensuring people with disabilities are meaningfully involved in the creation of such legislation, or else inequality will continue to pervade all stages of life. First, this paper examines the education process for people with disabilities and the consistent barriers they face when trying to access appropriate education. Next, I explore more general historic and social movements and their shortcomings, where it becomes evident that relatively limited scope and disabled influence render legislation largely ineffective. Finally, the post-ADA drop in disabled labour market participation proves that legislation must be made by disabled people--as opposed for disabled people--in order to have a positive impact.

Education

The basic human right to a meaningful, appropriate education has historically been denied to people with disabilities (Zettel & Ballard 1979). The 1970s brought a movement toward equal access that continues today, but with marginal success. The first education-related disability legislation came about in 1975. U.S. Congress passed the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act* (EHCA) to ensure a minimum educational standard for disabled children. Its central tenets include: 1) the right to non-discriminatory testing, evaluation





and placement procedures, 2) the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible, 3) the right to procedural due process of law, 4) the right to a free education, and 5) the right to an appropriate education (Zettel & Ballard 1979). As of 2016, an estimated 6.6 million children in the United States have some kind of disability, but only 65% of them graduate on time, and almost all have inadequate credentials to pursue higher education (Butrymowicz & Mader 2018). Contrast this figure with an 83% graduate rate for nondisabled students, with nearly all earning appropriate credentials (Butrymowicz & Mader 2018). When U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos unveiled IDEA in 2016, 40% of special education resource funding was cut on the basis of being outdated or unnecessary. This included teaching assistants, assistive technology, and resource teachers, all done without consulting students, parents or experts (Butrymowicz & Mader 2018). DeVos justified this by adding federal private school grants. However, most disabled students do not qualify for full tuition (Butrymowicz & Mader 2018).

Canada's equal education journey has been much different, but yields the same outcomes, especially in Ontario. Unlike the U.S., Canada does not have a piece of legislation specific to disability due to education being a largely provincial power. Instead, equality is alluded to in the Charter and *Bill of Rights*, ratified the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and has since been reflected in Supreme Court rulings and provincial policies. Among the most influential is the 2012 Jeffery Moore case. Moore was a mentally disabled high school student with multiple learning disabilities who relied on special education. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that the elimination of special education services violated Moore's right to meaningful education and failed the duty to accommodate (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario 2013). The case set a national precedent. Nevertheless, Ontario's current government continues to violate all of the aforementioned legally binding decisions via budget cuts at all educational levels. Ford eliminated \$235





million in funding for special education, \$63.6 million for extra staffing, and \$10 million in staffing for education workers. These grants ensure disabled students have appropriate staff, technological, and curriculum supports for meaningful learning. Additionally, class sizes will increase with 10,000 fewer teachers (Figueiredo 2019). I believe that Ford's budget cuts go against the right to meaningful education and ignore the duty to accommodate, affecting nearly 1.85 million people with disabilities. The denial of basic human rights continues onto higher level education with the elimination of OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program) disability and university funding cuts. Under this policy, many students with disabilities have been forced to forego their right to education. Furthermore, the few who can access it are not properly supported since accessibility is one of the first sacrifices after any major funding cut (Figueiredo 2019). Equality legislation has failed for students with disabilities across North America. Rights may exist on paper, but budget cuts made without consultation of applicable stakeholders deny us the right to education and perpetuate adverse discrimination.

Scope, Definition & Broad Societal Participation

Scope and definition are the most important working parts for any given piece of legislation, but they are also the greatest failures of disability legislation and policy. Prior to the ratification of the CRPD, disability rights in Canada were inferred on the basis of the Charter. This inference was problematic, as its scope was too narrow to determine what rights could constitute equality for people with disabilities. One such example is *Nova Scotia (Workers' Compensation Board) v. Martin*; *Nova Scotia (Workers' Compensation Board) v. Laseur*, which determined that the Charter could be applied to disability-related worker's compensation depending on legislative intent. This worked for the particular case(s) but made it far more difficult for people with disabilities to access fundamental basics. Abella names the individualistic nature of Canadian human rights law (Banfield and Moore 1999). The CRPD did not and does not entirely rectify this and ensure





these rights, but rather sets a foundation for what is considered essential for persons with disabilities to access in order to live a fulfilled life (Lang 2009). These rights include political, economic and public access rights. Since its signing, the CRPD has provided the basis for numerous Liberal equality laws, court rulings and affirmative action plans on provincial and federal levels. Provincial examples include AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) and RDSP (Registered Disability Savings Plan). While these measures have been helpful, they have two major flaws. The first is their inability to account for intersectionality. As Vanhala points out, tools and resources like these create a political top-down opportunity structure (Vanhala 2009) where stakeholders with the most influence get their opinions heard first. Contrary to popular belief, affirmative action does not only impact people with disabilities. It also impacts politicians, labour unions and many more. Often, this places people with disabilities at the bottom of the opportunity structure, especially in Ontario. The Conservative government has made several changes to disability legislation including autism funding cuts and an ODSP inflation increase cut with little to no consideration given to the needs and realities of its actual beneficiaries (Figueiredo 2019). Additionally, eligibility requirements are far too stringent to account for the realities of intersectionality, particularly when it comes to disabled womanhood (Vanhala 2009). When funding schemes are created—for example, the ODSP—the average cost of living for a disabled person is based on the cisgender male body (Vanhala 2009). Applicants are asked to consider the averages of absolute necessities as a determinant for the amount received and are then subject to monthly bank account audits. Pensions can be deducted if it is found that too much is being spent on “non-essential” items, like makeup and handbags. However, this juxtaposes societal expectations for women, and can impede daily life. Women’s fashions are typically scant of pockets necessary for carrying keys and devices for example.





Federally, the newest major development is Canada's answer to the United States' ADA, the 2018 Accessible Canada Act (ACA). Scope and definition in terms of intersectionality are prevalent and controversial aspects of this law, which promise greater accessibility and fewer barriers to social inclusion, particularly in the labour market. Being a federal statute, it applies only to areas under federal jurisdiction; it only guarantees accessibility in federally maintained public spaces, and eliminates labour market discrimination in federal positions such as postal service and banking. Realistically, this is an insignificant portion of the disabled population for reasons that will be discussed later in this paper. Hence, the ACA does not have a real, meaningful impact (Snodden & Wilkinson 2019). Another point of contest is Sign Language recognition: there is concern for the exclusion of the Indigenous deaf community and how an attempt at recognition may encroach upon the greater movement for Indigenous truth and reconciliation (Snodden & Wilkinson 2019). Since so little is known about spoken Indigenous languages, it is difficult to accurately portray deaf Indigenous language (Snodden & Wilkinson 2019). In turn, little is given to Indigenous people with disabilities except a few words that make it seem like rights have been achieved for two pieces of their intersecting identities. In the realm of Canadian disability rights, scope and definition are a continuing hindrance at all levels of government. Disabled perspectives must be heard in order to achieve equality.

Labour Market

The labour market is a major focus of disabled affirmative action. Ironically, this has been detrimental to people with disabilities across Canada and the United States. The ADA is the first ever North American piece of legislation to provide provisions for disabled employment rights (LeDeire 2000). Contrarily, the disabled unemployment rate has steadily risen since its implementation (LeDeire 2000). Two factors are responsible for this consistent increase. Most prominently is that the ADA and other economic amelioration policies are





too focused on what disabled employees are owed as opposed to the value they bring (LeDeire 2000). This is also the case in Canada. Human rights codes clash with beneficiary policies, seemingly expanding the burden of undue hardship. Thus, it becomes cheaper, more desirable, and more efficient to avoid interviewing and hiring disabled employees. This creates a minefield of intentional yet adverse discrimination. Although human rights codes are technically being adhered to, these rights also give more reason for employers not to hire people with disabilities. Greater structural inequality is also responsible for labour market discrimination. All that was previously discussed results in a cycle of inequality that ultimately reflects itself in the labour market. In fact, people with disabilities, on average, earn 47% less than nondisabled workers (Maroto & Pettinicchio 2014). Mentally disabled people are at the highest risk, with many working in factories with statistically higher exposure to toxic chemicals (Breslin et. al. 2017). Technically, this follows the Ontario Human Rights Code guidelines for non-discriminatory hiring practices. It can easily be seen as a success of affirmative action but, in reality, such labour market practices go against the CRPD-backed right to a safe and fair work environment. The labour market is yet another failure of equality legislation for disabled people and I believe will continue to fail us unless policy changes are made by people with disabilities instead of for them.

But... It Is Useless?

Both Abella and Feldthusen argue that affirmative action is enough. Abella reasons that absolute equality is unattainable, while Feldthusen maintains that the notion that affirmative action is demeaning, or perpetuates inequality, is self-serving to dominant groups; there is nothing dehumanizing about asking for well-deserved help, especially when it has been owed for so long (Banfield & Moore 1999). Some degree of difference is both inevitable and required to fulfill all of society's functions. Also, there is indeed no shame in asking for earned help, and disabled persons' complaints are





already beginning to have a negative effect resulting in subtle and blatant repeals in Ontario. Regardless, Feldthusen's claim of a self-serving upper class or government is reliant on political climate, and he fails to see that inadequate supports and affirmative action is as harmful as it not existing. People with disabilities should be able to obtain it for themselves with minimally invasive and wholly inclusive policy. Studies have shown that this is possible under the correct circumstances, and it benefits not only immediate beneficiaries but the economy and society as a whole (Löve et. al. 2017). Proper conditions include a liberal government and a society with a firm belief that everybody has the right to live a happy, healthy, fulfilled life (Löve et. al. 2017). This study of Western societies, disability attitudes, and disability rights is more Eurocentric than American-centric, so perhaps there are some variables that remain unaccounted for. However, our legal and moral foundations are not so vastly different that true disability rights cannot be achieved with time. It is possible to remedy the current failures.

In conclusion, inequality is rampant in Canada and the United States in spite of both countries' outwardly progressive policy and programs. This becomes apparent in three wider areas of life: 1) appropriate education, educational attainment and barriers to it, especially when paired with the limited room for self-advocacy in that sphere; 2) the failures of broader sociopolitical and economic rights and movements, which could be resolved with more relevant, diverse and disabled viewpoints involved; and 3) disabled participation in the labour market, its decline and the fact that both the decline and the current stratification trends for the few participants directly violate all levels of human rights law. I argue that the only solution is including disabled perspectives in the process of making laws. If not in the legislature itself, governments and organizations must allow these voices to be heard through cooperation and consultation. Otherwise, cycles of lifetime rights denial will continue, and equal rights will never be achieved. Absolute equality is not feasible, but positive change is possible in the right environment.





References

- Anon. 2015. "Educational Implications of Supreme Court Ruling on Moore Case." LDAO. Retrieved March 1, 2020 (<http://www.ldao.ca/educational-implications-of-recent-supreme-court-ruling/>).
- Breslin, F. Curtis, A. Morgan Lay, Arif Jetha, and Peter Smith. 2017. "Examining Occupational Health and Safety Vulnerability among Canadian Workers with Disabilities." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 40(18):2138–43.
- Butrymowicz, Sarah and Jackie Mader. 2018. "The U.S. Education System Is Failing Special Needs Students." *Education Digest* 83(8):26–35. Retrieved November 5, 2019 (<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ehost/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=4f514df1-90b3-41f1-85ed-5b4d4224488d@pdc-v-sessmgr03&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ==#AN=128627065&db=eue>).
- DeLeire, Thomas. 2000. "The Unintended Consequences of the Americans with Disabilities Act." *Regulation* 23(1):21–24. Retrieved November 11, 2019 (<https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/210522008/fulltextPDF/6933439361CB4AD3PQ/1?accountid=14771>).
- Figueiredo, Marianna. 2019. "'For the People' vs. the Other 15%: Living with a Disability in the Ford Era." *The Youth Journal*. Retrieved November 2, 2019 (<https://theyouthjournal.com/2019/04/25/for-the-people-vs-the-other-15-living-with-a-disability-in-the-ford-era/>).
- Lang, Raymond. 2009. "The United Nations Convention on the Right and Dignities for Persons with Disability: A Panacea for Ending Disability Discrimination?" *Alter* 3(3):266–85.
- Löve, Laufey, Rannveig Traustadóttir, and James Gordon Rice. 2018. "Achieving Disability Equality: Empowering Disabled People to Take the Lead." *Social Inclusion* 6(1):1.
- Maroto, Michelle and David Pettinicchio. 2014.





- Maroto, Michelle and David Pettinicchio. 2014. "Disability, Structural Inequality, and Work: The Influence of Occupational Segregation on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 38:76–92.
- Moore, Dorathy L. and Jane Banfield. 1995. *Readings in Law and Society*. 8th ed. North York, Ont., Canada: Captus Press.
- Smith, Allen. 2019. "ADA Documentation Is Key to Compliance." SHRM. Retrieved November 5, 2019 (<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/ada-documentation-is-key-to-compliance.aspx>).
- Snoddon, Kristin and Erin Wilkinson. 2019. "Problematizing the Legal Recognition of Sign Languages in Canada." *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 75(2):128–44.
- Supreme Court of Canada. 2012. "SCC Case Information - Search." Supreme Court of Canada. Retrieved November 10, 2019 (<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/2088/index.do>).
- Vanhala, Lisa. 2009. "Disability Rights Activists in the Supreme Court of Canada: Legal Mobilization Theory and Accommodating Social Movements." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42(4):981–1002.
- Zettel, Jeffery J. and Joseph Ballard. 1979. "THE EDUCATION FOR ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ACT OF 1975 PL 94-142: Its History, Origins, and Concepts." *The Journal of Education* 161(3):5–22. Retrieved November 9, 2019 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42772958>).





Girlhood Activism: Making Young Girls' Voices Heard
BY: ISABELA VILLANOY





Introduction

Empowered youths are taking to the streets, voicing their criticisms towards global issues such as climate change, and seeking ways to combat them. Young girls are taking a stance on the global stage with a vision for a better future and a purpose to protest for their rights. The proclamations and assertions they make in public spaces are often taken as an act of defiance against both adult authority and traditional forms of adult activism a common perception of the youth due to the ways in which we are socialized to believe that girls are too young and feminine to create social change. Notable youth activists like Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai, Jazz Jennings, and Autumn Peltier are trivialized by the assumption of a lack of experience, skill, and knowledge a judgement made because of their age and gender. Authority figures demonstrate the constant need to shape youths into thinking and behaving in a uniform way. However, this only reveals the incompetence and lack of maturity displayed by these authorities. The tendency to trivialize youth activists' capacity for innovation and critical thought is facilitated by the kind of spaces—both offline and online—that prohibit youth from being heard without bias or judgement.

What does it mean to be a young girl in this new decade? How do young girls defy the status quo and reinforce new meanings of girlhood in the public sphere? How can we reconcile girlhood as an identity wrought with both complexity and empowerment? Before delving into its modern perception, the history of girlhood and its study unfolds through Driscoll's work, *Girls Today: Girls, Girl Culture and Girl Studies*.

A Historical Overview

Spearheaded by Eliza Lyn Linton, the 1868 diatribe, *The Girl of the Period* created in the context of the 1867 Reform Act provides insight into girlhood culture beginning during this period. According to Catherine Driscoll, Linton's work highlights how "girls' new access to literacy and education forcefully impacted, both rhetorically and practically, on their





economic, political and sexual life, and the other way around” (Driscoll, 2008). It is no surprise then that girls’ lifestyle and behaviour were subject to public scrutiny and criticism. This scrutiny shaped the ways in which girls performed their identities identities confined within the household or influenced by patriarchal ideals of femininity. With the emergence of the women’s suffrage movement, girlhood was critiqued as a “site for concern about the effects of cultural change” (Driscoll, 2008). The post-World War I period, in particular, influenced the teenager “to take on iconic status” as an identity represented in popular culture.

The 60s and 70s saw the teenager as a “key economic force and girls, seen to prolong this teenage phase of consuming for identity far longer and blur it into the consumer power of the housewife, had become more crucial still” (Driscoll, 2008). This history is important to understand because it shows how past ways of thinking have and continue to inform our ways of meaning making today. Girlhood history is meant to inform, challenge, and question the oppressive systems that prevent young girls from performing as their authentic selves. As young feminists look at the past, they gain the background knowledge and the impactful tools of communication (art, media, and technology) to dismantle stereotypes attached to their identities.

Resourceful Acts of Resistance

In the past decade, the world has witnessed empowered women fight against injustice, inequality, and sexism through multimedia platforms. From promoting girls’ rights to education, saving the world from an environmental crisis, fighting for the right to clean water, and to publishing an autobiography on one’s life as a transgender teen, young girls have been more vocal and transparent in their protest against adult authority, tradition, and social norms. In her most recent United Nations speech, Greta Thunberg, a Swedish climate activist, shares how the neoliberal system is impeding governments and privatized companies from acting on the global climate crisis. During the World Economic Forum in January 2019, she called world leaders to take stronger and more





immediate initiative in the fight against climate change. She states, “I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is” (Thunberg, 2019). Travelling to the forum for 32 hours via train, Greta reminds us to lead by example and to start these changes through our own personal habits and lifestyles.

Malala Yousafzai, a young girl from Pakistan, started her own fund called the Malala Fund “a charity dedicated to giving every girl an opportunity to achieve a future she chooses” with the vision to “continue [the] fight until every girl [can] go to school” (Malala Fund, 2020). Malala continues to campaign for girls’ rights to “free, safe, quality education” while studying Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at the University of Oxford (Malala Fund, 2020).

Jazz Jennings, a transgender teenage girl, digital creator, and young educator, has published a book on her life entitled, *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen*. In her work, she discusses her journey and the public response towards young transgender experiences. Her story is, in itself, a form of resistance in which she uses the written word to amplify the voices of teenagers who share the same experience as her own. It also reflects how girls themselves are the masters of their own existence they, too, have the capacity to wake public consciousness through their skills and talents.

Clean water activist Autumn Peltier is also breaking stereotypes attached to Indigenous girlhoods a girlhood that Sandrina De Finney describes as a “decolonizing force” by fighting for her people’s right to clean and healthy drinking water. During the Global Landscapes Forum, she stated, “Maybe, we need to have more elders and youth together sitting at the decision table when people make decisions about our lands and waters” (De Finney, n.d). De Finney states how “Girls enact presence when they contest their position as invisible by physically, spiritually, and symbolically (re)occupying the places that hold their ancestral connections as First People” (De Finney, n.d). This presence is described as “all relations of ancestors, living things, trees, water and other powerful energies [that draw] on generations of communal knowledge” (De Finney, n.d). Although media has publicized





these girls' work on the global stage, there are many platforms and media on which the girls themselves raise awareness for their resistance and activism.

Sites of Resistance for the Modern Girl

Today, pop culture is perceived as a site of resurgence and resistance for young girls to repair and dismantle tropes that diminish their capabilities. Online spaces such as social media networks become symbolically pedagogical resources for creating new definitions of girlhood. These advanced technologies channel the aesthetic reflections of young girls and bridge the generational knowledge gap between adults and themselves. In Jessalynn Keller's chapter, "Making Activism Accessible: Exploring Girls' Blogs as Sites of Contemporary Feminist Activism," she elaborates on blogging as a form of girlhood activism and the modern feminist movement in the lines, "While different language may be employed by contemporary bloggers, the goal remains the same to make feminism appealing to more girls and women in order to spark a feminist consciousness.... [we] should recognize the complexity of these spaces as innovative ways in which girls are producing online media to make their own voices as activists heard in a particular space" (Keller, 2016).

It's Not Over for Girlhood Activism

Although girlhood is both a concept and identity bound to certain cultural norms and stereotypes conflated with notions of boyhood, girlhood is and can be more than what we are trained to think of it as. Girls all over the world are continuously creating impact in their communities through their resilience, insight and creativity. Social change is an ongoing process and young girls are major contributors to it. They are independent thinkers with the ability to spearhead discourse that can change the future for the better.

Disclaimer: This work has been published in *The Foolscap* with permission by The Mike Publications Inc. It was originally published in Issue LXXII, Volume 6 of *The Mike Newspaper* and can be found at <https://readthemike.com/girlhood-activism/>.

This version has been adapted from its original form.





References

Driscoll, Catherine. "Girls today – Girls, Girl Culture and Girls Studies." *Girlhood Studies*, Vol.1, 2008. Accessed March 7, 2020. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233628075_Girls_To day_-_Girls_Girl_Culture_and_Girl_Studies](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233628075_Girls_To_day_-_Girls_Girl_Culture_and_Girl_Studies)

PBS NewsHour. "WATCH: Great Thunberg's full speech to world leaders at UN Climate Action Summit." YouTube: September 23, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU>

"Greta Thunberg quotes: 10 famous lines from teen activist." BBC News. September 25, 2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/round/49812183>

Malala Fund. "Malala's Story." Accessed March 7, 2020. <https://malala.org/malalas-story>

Jennings, Jazz. *My Life as a Transgender Teen*. New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2016.

Finney, De Sandrina. "Under the Shadow of Empire - Chapter 1: Indigenous Girls' Presenting as Decolonizing Force." *Girlhood Studies* 7, 1: 8-26, accessed March 7, 2020, https://www.berghahnbooks.com/downloads/OpenAccess/MitchellGirlhood/MitchellGirlhood_01.pdf

The Canadian Press. "Canadian Indigenous water activist Autumn Peltier addresses UN on clean water." CBC NEWS. September 28, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canadian-indigenous-water-activist-autumn-peltier-addresses-un-on-clean-water-1.5301559>

Keller, Jessalynn. "Making Activism Accessible: Exploring Girls' Blogs as Sites of Contemporary Feminist Activism." In *Girlhood and the Politics of Place*, edited by Mitchell Claudia and Rentschler Carrie, 261-78. NEW YORK; OXFORD: Berghahn Books, 2016. Accessed March 7, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctt14jxn16.20. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14jxn16.20?refreqid=excelsior%3A7869e9eab26a81b1e32f6bfb3787f7ec&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents





GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE IN TORONTO
BY: ALOYSIUS WONG PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY





Photo credit: Aloysius Wong

“September 27th, 2019 was a day of convergence — a day when thousands of people came together to rise and stand for a cause, a people, and a planet they believe in.

We’ve spent a long time waiting: waiting for change, waiting for the adults to protect us, waiting for the day when we don’t have to fear for a future that we might not be able to live in. But sometimes we must wait no longer.

Sometimes we have to be the ones to take a stand. This day was one of them. And I am certain that there will be many, many more.”

- Aloysius Wong on Toronto’s Global Climate Strike





The Global Climate Strike in Toronto

Aloysius Wong Photography

www.aloysiuswong.ca





“Operation Varsity Blues” and the Reproduction of Social
Inequality in University Admissions
BY: CLARE O'BRIEN





In August 2018, YouTube personality Olivia Jade Giannulli published a video answering fan questions about college. Giannulli said, “I do want the experience of like, game days, partying...I don’t really care about school” (TO-DAY 0:26-0:34). However, her mother, Lori Laughlin, was one of fifty celebrities and CEOs caught in an elaborate college admissions scam dubbed “Operation Varsity Blues.” In what the US Attorney’s Office calls “the largest such matter prosecuted in the United States to date,” wealthy parents paid large sums of money to bribe their children’s way into elite American universities (Elfman 2019, 1). Inherited wealth is a source of inequality in the American education system because it ensures that the children of upper-class parents have better access to elite institutions, regardless of the children’s intelligence or abilities. Rather than giving these spots to qualified, lower-class students, enrollment in American universities is sometimes given to students whose parents have the connections and funds to bribe their way in. The 2019 “Operation Varsity Blues” scandal is a contemporary example of this issue.

The prospect of wealthy parents using their resources to help their children succeed in school is not new. Elite parents are able to provide their children with SAT tutoring, private college counsellors, and life experiences that bolster their application essays (Ferguson 2019, 72; Heller 2019, 4). Elites are often able to be highly involved in their children’s schooling, whether that means arguing to place their child in their preferred teacher’s classroom or doing their children’s homework (Pirtle 2019). Wealthy parents can also secure spots at selective colleges for their children by taking advantage of “legacy” admissions or making big donations to the school in question (Heller 2019, 4). While these methods of persuasion are indeed sources of inequality, they are perfectly legal. However, the fifty people charged in the Varsity Blues scandal crossed the line into illegality by using bribes and altered test scores to get their children into the universities of their choice (Ferguson 2019, 72).





According to Timothy O'Brien (2019), college coaches accepted monetary rewards in exchange for awarding athletic scholarships to wealthy students. The moment that the admissions process became compromised was when these coaches “exercised their authority to allow prospective students—who were actually never going to become student-athletes—to be processed under the athletics-based preference system” (O'Brien 2019, 3). In comparison to the legal resources used by many middle- and upper-class parents to give their children a hand in the admissions process, the methods used by the parents in the Varsity Blues scandal were secretive and illegal.

Shamus Rahman Khan (2012) defines elites as “those with vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource” that gives them advantages over others (361). In the case of the 2019 scandal, those who were involved used their money—as well as their connections to William “Rick” Singer—to get their children into the universities of their choosing. Singer ran a college preparation business that consisted of paying professionals to take SAT and ACT exams on the child's behalf and bribing coaches to recruit applicants as potential student-athletes, despite having no experience in those sports (Elfman 2019, 1). It was the wealthy parents' “connections at the highest levels” that allowed them to gain access to Singer's cheating scheme (Balingit, Svrulga, and Yahr 2019). Lower-class parents, in contrast, lack both the social connections and economic status to know about and participate in such schemes.

The reason why admissions inequality is so persistent is not because elite parents are unaware of the consequences their actions have on lower-class children. Sociologist Margaret Hagerman defines “the conundrum of privilege” as parents doing whatever they can to give their own children the greatest chance of success, “despite knowing that doing the best for their children often means leaving other children, often low-income students or students of colour, with fewer opportunities” (Pirtle 2019).





Elite parents know that they are leaving other students with fewer opportunities when they cheat or bribe on their children's behalf, but they still choose not to change their behaviour. Privileged parents contribute to educational disparities "when they hoard educational opportunities for their already privileged children" (Pirtle 2019). As a result, students who do not have wealthy parents to support them are negatively impacted.

Inequalities in university admissions do not just negatively impact the lower-class individuals whose spots are taken by elite children. According to Khan (2012), elites reproduce their social power through their children's education, thus perpetuating the cycle of economic inequality. In the case of the 2019 scandal, wealthy parents used their economic influence to gain their children admission into top-tier universities, which enhances their children's chances of getting high-paying jobs once they complete their undergraduate degree. Khan (2019) calls schools the "engines of inequality" because they allow elites to navigate institutions that help credential them, rather than inheriting titles through birthright (371-72). Since wealth and status are reproduced through education, lower-class children are ultimately excluded from the cycle, regardless of their deservedness. According to Heller (2019), "the more affluent the students, the more likely they are to study with the most experienced teachers, go to the schools with the nicest facilities, have access to the newest equipment, and enjoy many other advantages" (4). Those at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy tend to stay at the top, while those who are closer to the bottom struggle to make their way upwards. When wealthy parents use their economic influence to gain their children admission into university, they perpetuate the cycle of inequality by enhancing their children's chances of getting good jobs once they graduate.

The issue of inequality in college admissions is difficult to solve because of its pervasiveness. However, there are some actions that schools and upper-class families can





can take to discourage behaviour that leads toward greater inequalities. University admissions offices need to do more careful research on the students they are letting in, checking that they are not lying about their grades or extracurricular activities. Amanda Slenski, VP for admissions at a small liberal arts college, says that she calls for references, asks for additional proof on awards (like requesting a certificate), and checks for evidence of an extracurricular activity on social media (Elfman 2019, 2). Admissions offices should create better communication networks between each other, so that if one university realizes a student has submitted false information, the other schools to which the student has applied would also be aware of it. In their admission applications, prospective students should sign a waiver that ensures they did not make any false claims in their application. The waiver should also outline penalties that could incur if they are found lying. Finally, parents who were found guilty in the 2019 scandal should face legal consequences in order to serving as a warning to other upper-class parents. If used together, these suggestions could help prevent cheating and dishonesty in university admissions.

The 2019 “Operation Varsity Blues” scandal is an excellent case study through which to examine the social inequalities created by the class system with regard to American university admissions. Upper class families are able to bribe their children’s way into elite institutions, leaving lower-class students, who lack the wealth and connections of upper-class families, with a lesser chance of being admitted. While the scandal was initially uncovered in March 2019, lawsuits are still in progress for many of the celebrities involved. Only time will tell whether or not Olivia Jade and friends will be able to continue partying at USC.





References

- Balingit, Moriah, Susan Svrluga, and Emily Yahr. "The people charged in college admissions scandal Operation Varsity Blues." *The Washington Post*. Last modified March 13, 2019. Accessed May 30, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/actors-designers-distillery-owners-here-are-some-of-those-charged-in-the-college-admissions-scheme/2019/03/12/3c2f5316-4500-11e9-8aab-95b8d80a1e4f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.80ac80d72c5e.
- Elfman, Lois. "Massive Admissions Cheating Scandal Draws National Attention." *Women in Higher Education* 28, no. 5 (2019): 1-3. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/whe.20700>.
- Ferguson, Maria. "Washington View: Money, power, and education." *Phi Delta Kappan* 100, no. 8 (2019): 72-72. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://journals-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/0031721719846895>.
- Heller, Rafael. "The Editor's Note: Equity in anxious times." *Phi Delta Kappan* 100, no. 8 (2019): 4. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://journals-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/0031721719846880>.
- Khan, Shamus Rahman. "The Sociology of Elites." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (2012): 361-377.





O'Brien, Timothy. "Limit scandals by monitoring intersection of athletics, admissions processes." *Student Affairs Today* 22, no. 3 (2019): 2-3. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/epdf/10.1002/say.30612>.

Pirtle, Whitney. "The Other Segregation." *The Atlantic*. Last modified April 23, 2019. Accessed May 30, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/gifted-and-talented-programs-separate-students-race/587614/>.

TODAY. "Olivia Jade, Lori Loughlin's Daughter, Caught Up In College Cheating Scandal | TODAY." YouTube Video, 3:46. March 14, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTDjPIP4BnY&frags=pl%2Cwn>.





Food Insecurities: Revealing Another Side of India
BY: SAMRIDHI SINGH





A day-old bagel? How easily do we toss it in the garbage? How easily do we throw away our half-finished Starbucks coffee? The answer is: without a second thought.

I am Indian, and I come from the land of the Great Taj. I take pride in coming from one of the largest democracies in the world, but I believe there are numerous aspects of India that aren't as beautiful as the Taj such as food poverty and hunger. Statistics show that about "194.4 million people are undernourished" (India Food Banking Network, n.d.) while "51.4% of women in [the] reproductive age between 15 to 49 years are anaemic" (India Food Banking Network, n.d.). The horrifying statistics are only part of the problem. The fact that Indian "Gross Domestic Product has increased 4.5 times" (India Food Banking Network, n.d.), "per capita consumption has increased 3 times" (India Food Banking Network, n.d.), and "food grain production has increased almost 2 times" (India Food Banking Network, n.d.) in the last two decades means that there are still people, mostly women and children, searching for a meagre meal for the day or going to sleep hungry (India Food Banking Network, n.d.). Even though India is "[t]he second most populous country in the world" (World Food Programme, n.d.), statistics show that it "[houses]... a quarter of all undernourished people worldwide" (World Food Programme, n.d.).

Children are the future and foundation of a successful country. Therefore, children living off \$1.90 USD (World Food Programme, n.d.) does not aid that agenda. I lived in India for most of my life and travelled to places that weren't very touristy. I got a better look at food poverty and child labour in small towns and cities. The brutal reality of life is that the people who need help and media coverage the most, are often the ones neglected. The world runs on money and power, and no matter how much we try, it cannot be changed. Many people illegally employ children to work in homes, fields, and various factories (UNICEF India, n.d.). I believe that children's little hands are made for pencils, not utensils.





On a visit to a small town called Rajgir in Bihar, I met a wonderful 11-year-old young man working hard at a small teashop. Upon speaking to him, I learned that his name was Suraj (“sun” in Hindi); his father was a drunkard and abusive towards him and his mother. His mother was the sole breadwinner of the house, but she hardly made enough to get them through the month with her job as a cook and maid at houses in nearby areas. Like many children, he was malnourished with no choice but to go through the oppression of employers. He was forced to quit school due to the lack of resources and took up anything to help his mother, but that did not stop him from educating himself. One of his mother’s employers saw the passion in Suraj’s eyes. When he came to help his mother, her employer ended up giving him all of her children’s old schoolbooks. He pushes himself to work at the tea stall during the day and comes back home to study at night. His subjects of interest are mainly science.

When I spoke to him about his days at the local government school, I was curious about the midday meals. The real story behind this painted facade was awful. Schools gave children meals cooked in unsanitary conditions that were not even up to the basic nutritional standard. He mentioned multiple cases of finding insects in the food provided by the school.

Suraj’s story tells us about the gruesome situation in India, so the question arises: is the government making any efforts to help conquer this evil of food poverty? The answer: yes. The government established the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in 2001 to provide all primary school children attending government or government-aided schools with a cooked mid-day meal of “300 calories... and 8[–]12 gram[s] [of] protein” (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2019).

Corrupt politicians and loopholes in the system infested the root of the economy and hierarchy of law, and children suffer the most. Shouldn’t there be better quality control for what the future of the country eats at an educational institute? Should this issue be treated as a human rights





violation? There are so many questions that come into play, and no one seems to have the answers.

India should not be mistaken for a country that does not produce enough food because between 2018 and 2019, the country produced close to 283.37 million tonnes of it with milk and meat production almost reaching 176.3 million tonnes and 7.4 million tonnes, respectively (India Brand Equity Foundation 2019). However, despite this high production, people waste “up to 40% of the food produced” (CSR Journal 2018) with wheat alone accounting for 21 million tonnes (CSR Journal 2018). India’s agriculture ministry believes that the country wastes “INR 50,000 crores worth of food produced...every year...” (CSR Journal 2018). On a worldwide scale, 50% of food goes to waste (CSR Journal 2018).

A single rice grain that we effortlessly toss away took hours of labour and millions of dollars to produce because there is a chain of actions. We truly start to value something only after we lose it; I hope India soon understands that wasting its resources will lead to the country’s inevitable downfall.





References

- CSR Journal. 2018. "Food Wastage In India, And What You Can Do About It." The CSR Journal, October 31, 2018. <https://thecsrjournal.in/food-wastage-in-india-a-serious-concern/>.
- India Brand Equity Foundation. 2019. "Agriculture in India: Information About Indian Agriculture & Its Importance." Last modified December 2019. <https://www.ibef.org/industry/agriculture-india.aspx>.
- India Food Banking Network. n.d. "Hunger in India." Accessed February 22, 2020. <https://www.indiafoodbanking.org/hunger>.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development. 2019. "Mid-Day Meal Scheme." Last modified February 11, 2019. <https://mhrd.gov.in/mid-day-meal>.
- UNICEF India. n.d. "Child Labour." Accessed February 23, 2020. <https://unicef.in/Whatwedo/21/Child-Labour>.
- World Food Programme. n.d. "India." Accessed February 22, 2020. <https://www.wfp.org/countries/india>.



