

Course correction – The movement to make workplaces safe for women must involve us all

In what has been called India's MeToo moment, the social media is thick with women coming forth with stories of sexual harassment. In the quick aftermath of actor Tanushree Dutta's allegations, in an interview in end-September, of harassment at the hands of actor Nana Patekar on a film set a decade ago, women have been speaking of their experiences and the trauma, mostly on Twitter and Facebook. The testimonies so far have mostly concerned the film world and the mainstream media, and cover both the workplace and private spaces. They range from stories of assault to propositioning, suggestiveness to stalking. In the vast majority of cases, the naming is a result of the failure to receive a just response from the system, a signal that it is no longer possible for such behaviour to be breezily dismissed or excused because boys, after all, will be boys. The MeToo hashtag gained currency a year ago in the U.S. when women came out one after another to first corroborate allegations of sexual assault against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, with each further account making clear that there was a systemic pattern of abuse and silence. In the outpourings in India too, a year on, a disturbing picture is emerging. It is not only that many of the allegations are extremely grave — for instance, against M.J. Akbar, a star editor who left journalism for government, to become a Minister of State for External Affairs. What is perhaps of even greater disquiet is that for so very long an official silence was kept around what were, in many instances, open secrets.

Now that women are speaking up — picking up the stories where others have left them, making public suppressed memories, breaking free from the helplessness or a false sense of humiliation that kept them quiet for so long — there can be no looking away. It is important to identify the exact transgression in the various cases that are being outed, and to ensure that action is taken with due process. No one can be deemed guilty only because he had been named and any punishment must be proportionate to the misdemeanour. But the larger issue perhaps is the message sent out by the outpouring — namely, that there has been a systemic disregard for making workplaces and common spaces free of harassment. It must disturb us that a thread that binds so many allegations now coming out is that many women thought that their words and feelings would be dismissed, their careers would suffer, or their families would pull them back into the safety of home. This fear of making a complaint needs to be overcome in all workspaces, not only the media and the film industry. All of society needs to internalise a new normal that protects a woman's autonomy and her freedom from discrimination at the workplace.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Workplace** - the place where you work
- **Social media** - platforms such as Facebook and Twitter that allow people to interact on the Web or using mobile phones
- **Forth** - forwards, or out
- **Sexual harassment** - the offensive or threatening behaviour of a person who regularly makes sexual comments or touches someone in a sexual way
- **Aftermath** - the effects and results of something bad or important

- **Allegation** - a statement that someone has done something wrong or illegal even though this has not been proved
- **At the hands of someone** - if you suffer or die at the hands of someone, they make you suffer or die
- **Trauma** - a bad experience that makes you feel very upset, afraid, or shocked
- **Testimony** - a formal statement about something that you saw, know, or experienced, usually given in a court of law
- **Concerned** - involved in something, or affected by something
- **Mainstream** - considered ordinary or normal and accepted or used by most people
- **Assault** - a physical attack on someone, or the crime of physically attacking someone
- **Propositioning** - to offer to have sex with someone, especially in an offensive way
- **Suggestive** - making you think of or remember a particular thing
- **Stalking** - the crime of following and watching someone in a threatening way
- **Vast** - extremely large
- **Majority** - most of the people or things in a group
- **Breezily** - in a lively and confident way that can seem careless
- **Gain currency** - to become more commonly known or accepted
- **Corroborate** - to support what someone says by giving information or evidence that agrees with them
- **Abuse** - forced sexual activity with someone who cannot prevent it
- **Outpouring** - the act of expressing a strong emotion
- **Emerging** - just beginning to exist or be noticed
- **Grave** - so serious that you feel worried
- **For instance** - for example
- **Perhaps** - used for saying that you are not certain about something, or that something may or may not be true
- **Disquiet** - a feeling of being very worried or nervous
- **Instance** - an example of something happening
- **Open secret** - something that should be secret but is not because a lot of people know about it
- **Break free** - to escape from an unpleasant person or situation that controls your life
- **Humiliation** - the unhappy and ashamed feeling that you get when something embarrassing happens
- **Transgression** - to do something that is not allowed by a law, custom, or religion
- **Ensure** - to make certain that something happens or is done
- **Deem** - to consider that someone or something has a particular quality
- **Proportionate** - correct or suitable in size, amount, or degree when considered in relation to something else
- **Misdemeanour** - an action that is bad or wrong, but not in a serious way
- **Outpouring** - the act of expressing a strong emotion
- **Disregard** - the attitude of someone who does not respect something or consider it important

- **Internalise** - to accept or absorb an idea, opinion, belief, etc. so that it becomes part of your character
- **Autonomy** - the power to make your own decisions
- **Discrimination** - unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race, or other personal features

Course correction – An economics fix

The Nobel to work on growth and long-run sustainability frames a crucial priority

American economists William D. Nordhaus and Paul M. Romer were jointly awarded the 50th economics Nobel prize this week in recognition of their work on economic growth and its long-run sustainability. The Nobel committee noted that the duo's work "brought us considerably closer to answering the important question of how we can achieve sustained and sustainable economic growth". The committee's praise is fitting as both economists devoted their careers to the study of the various "externalities" or "spillovers" that affect economic growth in a market economy. Mr. Nordhaus, for one, has been a pioneer in the movement towards quantifying the impact of economic growth on the climate and, in turn, the impact of climate change on economic growth. To correct this problem, he recommended imposing appropriate carbon taxes to curb pollution that was detrimental to growth in the long run. Mr. Romer, on the other hand, studied the importance of technology in achieving economic growth. He proposed the endogenous growth model where technological progress is seen as the outgrowth of businesses and other entities investing in research and development. At the same time, he recognised ways in which the market economy may undersupply technological innovations. Consequently, he recommended the use of subsidies, patents and other forms of government intervention to encourage economic growth through increased investment in technology. In essence, the Nobel committee's decision is a recognition of economic research concerning market failure.

Of course, critics have highlighted flaws in the works of these two noted economists. For one, it may often be impossible to arrive at an objective measure of the carbon tax rate or the ideal amount of pollution to allow in a developing economy. It is equally troublesome when one needs to determine how much subsidy, or other forms of government support, should be allotted towards research and development. Even though mathematical models have been devised to address these problems, they are only as good as the data fed into them. Further, such decisions regarding the perfect carbon tax rate or the ideal subsidy allocation are likely to be determined by political considerations rather than simply pure economics. So the threat of government failure may have to be taken as seriously as the effects of market failure. These concerns lead to questions about the real-world impact of the policies supported by the pair. Nonetheless, many would argue that Mr. Nordhaus and Mr. Romer's works are an improvement from the past in that they try to use the market mechanism itself to address its failures. The Nobel committee has done well to recognise important work on issues that are particularly relevant to the developing world.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Long-run** - not immediately but at some time in the future
- **Sustainability** - capable of continuing for a long time at the same level
- **Duo** - two people who work together or who often do things together
- **Considerably** - a lot
- **Externality** - damage caused by a company's activities for which it does not pay, or something positive created by it for which it does not receive payment
- **Spillover** - an effect that spreads more than people expected or intended
- **Pioneer** - one of the first people to do something important that is later continued and developed by other people
- **Quantify** - to measure or describe something as a quantity
- **Impact** - an effect, or an influence
- **Impose** - to introduce something such as a new law or new system, and force people to accept it
- **Carbon tax** - a tax on vehicles or factories that produce a lot of carbon emissions
- **Detrimental** - harmful or damaging
- **On the other hand** - used for giving two different opinions about something
- **Endogenous** - found or coming from within something
- **Outgrowth** - something that develops from something else
- **Undersupply** - an insufficient stock or amount of something
- **Innovation** - a new idea, method, piece of equipment etc
- **Consequently** - as a result
- **Subsidy** - an amount of money that the government or another organization pays to help to reduce the cost of a product or service
- **Patent** - an official document that gives someone who has invented something the legal right to make or sell that invention for a particular period of time, and prevents anyone else from doing so
- **Intervention** - a situation in which someone becomes involved in a particular issue, problem etc in order to influence what happens
- **Investment** - the act of putting money, effort, time, etc. into something to make a profit or get an advantage, or the money, effort, time, etc. used to do this
- **In essence** - used for emphasizing what is the most important feature of something
- **Concerning** - about a particular subject
- **Critic** - someone who does not like something and states their opinion about it
- **Flaw** - a mistake or fault in something that makes it useless or less effective
- **Economist** - an expert in economics, especially one who advises a government department, business, or organization
- **Troublesome** - causing problems or difficulties, especially in an annoying way
- **Determine** - to control what something will be
- **Devise** - to invent a method of doing something
- **Address** - to give attention to or deal with a matter or problem

- **Determine** - to control what something will be
- **Consideration** - careful thought before making a decision or judgment about something
- **Real-world** - ordinary life with all its practical problems, rather than theories or policies that do not seem relevant to it
- **Nonetheless** - despite what has just been said
- **Relevant** - directly connected with and important to what is being discussed or considered

SOME IMPORTANT IDIOMS AND PHRASES

1. In high spirits

Example – He was in high spirits when I met him in the office.

Meaning – In a cheerful mood.

2. Struck several bad patches

Example – He struck several bad patches before he made good.

Meaning – Had many professional difficulties.

3. A chip off the old block

Example – Truly he is a chip off the old block.

Meaning – Very similar to his father.

4. Bitten off more than one can chew

Example – Suresh has unknowingly bitten off more than he can chew.

Meaning – To take up a task which one may not be able to accomplish due to lack of ability.

5. The bare bones

Example – The bare bones of the conversation had been that he hated my performances in that project.

Meaning – The main point.

6. Takes no prisoners

Example – The Indian Army's order was to take no prisoners.

Meaning – To kill the enemy rather than seize them as prisoners.

NOTE: Generally 'takes no prisoners' is associated with war, but we can use it in other situations too. For example – The new manager takes no prisoners, he is very determined and ruthless. (Here the proverb means 'to be extremely ruthless with the opposition')

7. Pandora's box

Example – Unfortunately, his decisions opens a Pandora's box of domestic violence.

Meaning – To do something that causes a lot of new problems that one did not expect.

8. Beat a dead horse

Example – Do you think its' worth sending the reapplication to the company or I am beating a dead horse.

Meaning – To waste time doing something that has already been attempted.

9. Left to his own devices

Example – Sumit's father left to his own devices for the new project.

Meaning – To allow you to decide for yourself what you do.

10. Shoestring budgets

Example – The restaurant is running on a shoestring budget, so they can't afford more stuff.

Meaning – Characterized by a small amount of money.

11. In the same boat

Example – Suddenly Rohit was in the same boat as any other employees who had lost their job.

Meaning – Experiencing the same situation or condition.

12. Keep one's word

Example – Keeping one's word is necessary to the legal profession.

Meaning – To do what you promise to do./To uphold one's promise.

13. Knocked over

Example – I didn't mean to knock you over./The thief knocked over the television set from my house.

Meaning – To push or strike someone or something./To steal something.

14. To catch a tartar

Example – Our neighbor thought I would give up if my complaint had to go to the court. They will soon realize that they have caught a Tartar.

Meaning – To deal with someone or something that proves unexpectedly troublesome or powerful.

15. To lose face

Example – He denied that he made a mistake because he didn't want to lose his face.

Meaning – To do something which makes other people stop respecting you.

16. The rank and file

Example – The party leadership seems to be losing the support of the rank and file.

Meaning – The ordinary members of an organization and not its leaders.

17. Once in a blue moon

Example – Once in a blue moon day, I get time to travel.

Meaning – Something that happens very rarely.

18. Beating around the bush

Example – The politician was beating around the bush when people demanded a reason for the scam.

Meaning – Avoiding the topic.

19. Chip on your shoulder

Example – He has a chip on his shoulder for being abandoned by his friends in school days.

Meaning – When someone is upset about something that happened a while ago.

20. A piece of cake

Example – Music is my piece of cake.

Meaning – Something that is easy to understand or do.

21. Blessing in disguise

Example – The course that I took was a blessing in disguise and I realize it now.

Meaning – Something good or useful that did not initially seem that way.

22. Come hell or high water

Example – I have decided that come hell or high water, I will finish my work.

Meaning – Possible obstacles in your path.

23. Taste of your own medicine

Example – Bad people will surely have a chance to taste their own medicine.

Meaning – When someone receives the same treatment, usually negative, that he/she gives to others.

24. Golden handshake

Example – It's better to offer a golden handshake to the aged employees.

Meaning – A big amount of money given to a person when he/she leaves a company or retires.

25. Apple of one's eye

Example – My mother is always an apple of my family's eye.

Meaning – Being cherished more than others are.

26. Feeling a bit under weather

Example – I am not going to gym today as I am feeling a bit under weather.

Meaning – Feeling slightly ill.

27. Mean business

Example – The border is surrounded by forces who mean business.

Meaning – Being serious/ dedicated.

28. The best of both worlds

Example – I had the best of both world since I worked as an ordinary member but got to learn from the leaders.

Meaning – The benefit of widely different situations, enjoyed at the same time.

29. Hear it on grapevine

Example – I heard it on grapevine that he has cheated the organization.

Meaning – To hear rumors about something or someone.

30. Can't judge a book by its cover

Example – It is wise not to judge a book by its cover.

Meaning – Can't judge something primarily by it's appearance./ Don't judge someone based on how the person looks like.

31. as cold as stone

Meaning: Being very cold and unemotional.

Example: "In the Victorian times, many women were told to suppress their feelings and, thus, appeared as cold as stone."

32. between a rock and a hard place

Meaning: In difficulty, faced with a choice between two unsatisfactory options.

Other phrases with a similar meaning are "the lesser of two evils," "between the devil and the deep blue sea," "between Scylla and Charybdis," "Hobson's choice" and "Catch-22."

Example: "I can understand why she couldn't make up her mind about what to do, she's really between a rock and a hard place."

33. nip something in the bud

Meaning: To stop a bad situation from becoming worse by taking action at an early stage of its development.

Example: "When the kid shows the first signs of misbehaving, you should nip that bad behavior in the bud."

34. barking up the wrong tree

Meaning: Doing something that won't give you the results you want.

Example: "If you think she's going to lend you money, you're barking up the wrong tree. She never lends anyone anything."

35. out of the woods

Meaning: The situation is still difficult but it has improved or gotten easier, the hardest part of something is over.

Example: "The surgery went very well and he just needs to recover now, so he's officially out of the woods."

36. can't see the forest for the trees

Meaning: To be unable to see the whole situation clearly because you're looking too closely at small details.

Example: "He's worried because the flowers haven't all arrived, but everyone says the wedding has been perfect and beautiful. He just can't see the forest for the trees."

37. to hold out an olive branch

Meaning: To offer to make peace (with a rival or enemy).

Example: "After years of rivalry with her cousin, she decided to hold out an olive branch and go have fun together."

38. beat around the bush

Meaning: To spend a long time getting to the main point of what you're saying, especially because it's embarrassing.

Example: "I don't have much time, so stop beating around the bush and tell me what actually happened."

☞ **PRACTICE** isn't **THE THING** you do once you're good.

it's **THE THING** you do that **MAKES YOU GOOD** ☞