

Durga Nandini- Transcript

[0:00] I am Durga Nandini, and I am 36 years old, I work with change.org in India; I am based in Delhi. I am Director Communications with change.org. I am from the south of the country; Delhi has not always been home. I am a small town person, been born very small township. Till I had actually had my second job, I hadn't seen a big city. Every since then, I have just worked in big cities. There's no going back to the small town world that I was in. In terms of academics, I did my college education in Pondicherry and then I worked in Chennai, I worked in Hyderabad, now in Delhi. I think I am representative of the migrant population that keeps moving around in terms of job opportunities and better prospects, of course. I hold a degree in teaching and I started working as a journalist when I was a student. So I was in college and I was working for a newspaper even then. Prior to that I didn't know what journalism was, but since I had experience in that sector, natural progression took me into the New Indian Express and then it took me into the Press Trust of India, and then television opened its doors to me. So I've worked with Times Now, I've worked with India Today Television and then with Amnesty International in India and now with change.org.

[1:46] So, academics have always been in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and work has been throughout the country. Here I am responsible for both the internal and external communication work that we do. I'm responsible for the branding, for media relations. Basically talking about change.org's works and the amazing campaigns that people run on change.org, to the external world through the media. More importantly, change.org as a campaign platform is still a very new concept; digital campaigning is still a very new concept. So, I also play the role of connecting ordinary people who start petitions on change.org and want to run campaigns, to the decision makers, the people who are in power: to effect the change that these ordinary people want. I head two verticals: one is the communications and the other is the decision maker work.

Interviewer: Can you tell me to what extent has it been difficult for you to be a woman in that entire journey from leaving the college, joining your first organisation to here?

[3:08] I think the path I chose for myself, the career, was very challenging, simply because it involved a lot of groundwork; I was a reporter. Even now, the ratio of men versus women in journalism is so skewed. We were definitely one of the very few women around, especially women on the field, because you would see women in desk jobs when it came to journalism, but women on the field very less. I was one the first women reporters who covered the crime beat in Chennai for the New Indian Express and it was very difficult for people to see a woman riding a bike into the police

commissionerate, and turning up for press conferences and raids, the police raids that used to happen. But there was slowly a lot of acceptance from the men who were out there. It'll be like a room full of men and me being one woman; I've been in such situations and this is as early as 2004. Women were still rare at that time in journalism. But it was also because I realised I had to prove myself at every point. There was a new respect for me as a person, because I used to ride a bike, like a proper –supposedly- man's bike and very few women even today, do that. I was seen in a different light at that time. So I think the acceptance of me being the crime beat was also slightly higher.

[4:51] I think the one thing that really stands out is I have had to prove that I am equal to a man at all stages, professionally; that I have equal fighting spirit, I have the equal energy, and stamina to take as many challenges as a man would take. If a full nights work is required of me, standing out in the open and covering a gory crime, I would be able to that. If it is living out of a suitcase, back-to-back travel, going without food for several meals together, I would be able to do it. I have had to prove at several stages that I am able to do this and I think that's what stands out if you ask me about my career.

[5:36] Yes, it is terrible, for instance, if I am on the field constantly, and I remember - there was a Chief Minister who died in a horrific plane crash in Andhra Pradesh - I was the Hyderabad correspondent for Times Now then. The entire city shut down for 3-4 days. You wouldn't have any food; you wouldn't find a place to sleep. You were just sleeping in the outdoor broadcasting van of your office because the moment you move from that spot, your spot is taken by somebody else. So you're just stuck to right outside the Chief Ministers house for when his mortal remains are going to be brought back.

[6:17] The one thing that I have just not been able to come to terms with, and it's most difficult and I think most women would relate to it: is that you don't have a place to pee. Especially when you're on the field you don't drink water, you don't find a clean toilet. Even if you want to use the outdoor space, you will have to be in a village because you need that amount of privacy to do that. That has been terribly difficult, I spent 13 years in journalism and I ended up with a urinary tract infection. Sorry, as unpleasant as it sounds, this is the harsh reality that many women face. They don't drink water simply because they don't find clean toilets and at the end of it, it takes a toll on their health.

[7:08] I think I have been one of the very few lucky people who got to wherever, in terms of – there was no discrimination based on my gender. But I have seen several

cases where women don't get in because they are perceived as soft and not too capable. Or as you say, they might have an advantage because they are women and they are wanted in those softer positions like PR. People want to have women in those positions; they think men are not a fit there. Which is unfortunate because men are equally good in public relations and I have seen several of my friends who are very good in public relations, men, who are very good. Coming back to myself, I must say I have been able to --- somehow managed not to be discriminated, but I have heard comments, in television bureaus. They are usually very minute; there are 1 or 2 journalists who work in the same space, which is because they can't afford to have bigger bureaus. So you tend to be 1 or 2 reporters who cover the entire state; that's how it normally works. I have heard comments like - are we recruiting a second women reported in the bureau; two women can never get along, usually it leads to problems. I must say I have never had issues with my women colleagues. Here it is almost 80-90% women in change.org. We all get together; we are like pants on fire all the time. Prior to that, in Amnesty, we were a majoritarian women workforce, we had fun. Prior to that in Times Now, we were 2 people in a bureau, both of us were women, strong-headed women at that, and we still had a great time together. So I think there are a lot of prejudices that are thrust upon you and preconceived notions that you are forced to fight all through. I heard somebody saying that - we took a risk by hiring you as the other women reporter, but you seem to have done pretty okay.

[9:34] Not many women can say that they have a child-friendly workplace and fortunately when we got Maya into our lives, I was already at change.org. I was fairly new, I hadn't been around for years, and I had barely been around. It had just been under a year since I had joined change.org. The process of adoption in India is abrupt; you're not prepared emotionally because everything happens so suddenly and you're forced to make a choice within 2 days and then you bring the child home in 15 days. Which means giving a proper notice to your employer becomes very difficult. You might have a fare sense of when it might happen, but you can never predict the exact date and month. So when it happened, I was so worried that I would just have to drop most of my responsibilities and go, but my employers and especially my boss here, Preeti Herman, she reassured me that things were going to be fine. It was she who talking me through saying - it is because of who you are that you are thinking about work but this is not the time to do that; this is a precious moment of your life, just live it. Go with the flow, bring her home and we'll support you all through - then, within 20 days I was allowed to go on my maternal leave and as per company policy, whatever was given to biological mothers, was given to me. I was given the same amount of maternity leave and parental leave. Which, if you look at the system now, the Indian government has passed a 6 month parental leave policy for mothers, but

when it comes to adoptive mothers, they only get 12 weeks. Yes, but my workplace gave me equal parental leave, as any biological parent. That itself was a huge boost.

[11:47] Ever since I have been able to bring Maya to the office, initially I couldn't find a nanny and I would just put her in a basket and bring her along and put her here. When she starts wailing, folks in the office would just walk by and try to calm her down and they would pick her up and walk around. I think, when I looked around, it looked like she was a stress buster in the office. But I was so relieved to see the amount of acceptance and the openness that people in change.org brought to this, especially my boss, who I mentioned to you. I remember the former CEO of change.org saying during an interview – I never stop being a mother, and I never stop being a change.org team member. Both my lives are intertwined all through – and then she said – I never stop doing either of these jobs; if I go home and if I get an interview from a journalist I am going to pick up the call. Similarly when I come to office, if there is something at home that I need to bring to the office; if it's my child or some task that I need to finish, I'm still going to bring it. That's the culture top down and it's worked amazingly.

[13:10] If I were journalist --- I keep thinking about all my journalistic friends: people who have grown in their careers alongside me, they all have children. We're all of the same age, they all have children slightly younger or slightly older than Maya and I realise that it is a struggle. Unless you have your parents or your in-laws at home, you're not going to be at peace, because journalism is a very demanding profession. TV journalism demands that you just travel at very short notice, overnight you're tickets are booked and the next day first flight you're out, flying to some natural disaster that's happened or a political meeting that's happening. In the initial part of his/her life, a child needs stability and if your work life is so unstable and very challenging, it's very unfair to reflect it on the child. Usually the stability comes through the parents or the in-laws; some people, some women get lucky and they have good caretakers who stay with them and stuff, but in a country like India it is also very hard to place your trust in somebody external. Which is why there is always this constant fear of – have I done the right thing? Should I be trusting this person completely? What if something goes wrong? And you keep hearing so many cases of child sexual abuse. God forbid that for your career, you placed your child in somebody's hand and something really bad happens, will you be able to forgive yourself? All my friends go through this.

[14:56] I don't what I would have done because I don't have parental support, neither do I have support from my in-laws. I think it is unfair to expect that from them too, because they have spent all their lives taking care of us and to go back to them again

is like unpaid employment for them because taking care of a child is a full time job. So it's really unfair and I think India as a country is completely ignoring that, senior citizens, who are all the grandparents, are being employed without actually being paid. They do it because they have a family obligation and they want to do it for their children. Some of them are even pushed to it without having a choice. They do it, they're upset, but still they do it. I can't imagine what I would have done. I would have probably moved to a quieter job within journalism and not have done TV. Or, like what's happened now, my husband made a conscious choice of taking a sabbatical and becoming a full time father even now, because he wanted to take a break and he wanted to enjoy Maya's early years. So he's now on a break. Probably, that would have happened around that time too, with journalism.

[16:22] He's a person of Indian origin, holds a French passport, but completely has lived in India except for doing his higher studies abroad. In that sense, he is the quintessential Indian man throughout his life. However I must say that as lucky as I have been with my workplace, I think I have been lucky with my partner as well. He was the person who put his hand up saying – no, no; you are in a job that gives you full satisfaction and happiness. You should just go ahead and continue doing what you are doing because you also bring about change in several people's lives and you are able to touch them very personally. He said – you should go ahead and do it and I will take care of her. He has worked all his life; he has been a teacher and 5 years prior to getting Maya, he had been working as a language expert, he's a translator between English and French. He took a break and they are literally having a ball. He is training her in everything. In her early habits, in her language, in her play, he's shaping her cognitive skills, all of it; full credit to him.

[17:44] It is definitely unique and I must again point out that I can't say this about too many of my friends – their partners being full time fathers. I am comparing myself to my friends; we are among the privileged women of India. I can't even imagine what a woman of a lower economic strata or somebody who has much lesser education or level of literacy would be going through. I compare myself with friends of my economic strata and level of literacy and I can barely see anybody, any spouse or partner who has taken this decision of being a full time father. So, it is definitely very, very unique in my life.

[18:33] One change recently that is very positive and is something that cannot be denied as a very progressive change is the amount of parental leave that the government has now extended even to the private sector. The 6-month leave that the public sector government employees, were otherwise getting has now been extended – I don't know if the bill has been fully passed, but I think so, I think it has –

it's been extended to the private sector as well. Having said that, the kind of women that we see --- in change.org a large number of people who start and support petitions are women and we end up interacting with many of them. So we do hear of cases where women are --- returning to the workforce is a huge problem. Once you take a break, once you have your child and choose to take a break for 3 or 4 years, when you return to your workplace you either have to settle for less or you can't return at all because nobody wants to employ you. You've been out of the workforce for a considerable amount of time and they don't want to stick their necks out. There is no re-induction for women into the workforce. There is no capacity building for women who are perceived to have been completely detached from the, so-called progress the workforce might have done. These are all completely lacking.

[20:07] While it is a positive step that the government is focusing towards mothers who have delivered or lactating mothers, it is also important not to ignore the rest of it. Actually, it is really important not to ignore (them), because when there is no healthcare, there are no childcare facilities. You keep hearing of the playschools and the daycares that are unsafe for children, so there is inherently a fear among mothers to put their children in schools so early when they can barely speak and communicate. What would a child who is a year and half, or two years old, be able to communicate if he/she faces any kind of physical abuse, leave alone sexual abuse, even physical abuse. Say if the daycare is treating the child badly, she can't come home and communicate. But do we have a choice? We don't. Which is why end up sending our children to those crèches and daycare facilities. In such situations, I think, what is most important is for a wholesome strategy for re-inducting women. It is difficult to ignore women anymore as a vital part of the workforce. I am not really sure of where the statistics stand in terms of the number of women in workforce growing up, but it has considerable grown; we can see that. Step into any office, be it a corporate or the government or the development sector such as ours, or even in journalism for that matter. I see women just increasing in numbers over the years, and in this stage if we're still stuck in the archaic era where we're only talking about the first 6 months of the child being born and not have a concerted plan for later, it is really sad. We are doing gross injustice for all those women. Basically it is up to them to fight to return back, and it's unfair.

[22:13] I don't even to have to go to working mothers, I can tell you about women being employed --- my husband worked in a corporate. He was a translator, but he worked in an IT company. He would come back with stories of his manager, assessing women candidates who would apply for a position, and when they see the CV, they would first check the age and then the marital status. If the woman candidate is around 24 or 25, immediately the manager would be like - oh no; but she's not

married, which means she'll come, join, get married and then in the next 3 months, she would be pregnant. Which means, if it's a short-term project they wouldn't care, but if it's a long-term position, then they wouldn't want to even interview or shortlist the woman candidate. Ideally, you are married, you have children and you're already in the workforce. You have returned elsewhere and it is okay for you to come and join. I have heard of cases where women are asked point blank – do you plan to get married in the next year or so? If you get married, will you have children immediately? I just take the example of an IT company but this is true in journalism as well.

[23:31] Some of the top editors of India have actually walked up to their women employees and told them --- women in journalism tend to get married very late, than the normal age. So you would see a lot of women getting married at the age of 30, some even at 35 and so on. But, some of the editors, even some of my employers asked me, because I wasn't married at that time, they would ask women who find a partner or a boyfriend, they would catch them and tell them – don't plan to get married right away, and even if you do get married don't ever plan a kid because elections are coming up and we need you on the field. There have been instances like this. So it would be the work priority always and ignoring the woman in the workforce and the child. You're giving birth to a child and that child is inevitably, at some point, going to get into your workforce and contribute towards the growth of the country. So I think it is really sad that women have to bear the brunt because, where is the man's role here? Does it stop with just impregnating the woman and being done with it? Which again takes me to the question of parental leave for men. If they had equal parental leave, would they be discriminated against too? Would it be difficult for them to return to the workforce? Would they be assessed for their quality of work at that time when they try to get back into the workforce? It would be interesting to see a day when men are forced to take care of the child for the 6 months; they get parental leave and they are forced to take care of the child during those 6 months and when they get back, it'll be interesting to see what kind of workforce welcomes them back.

[25:38] Now I'm in the development sector, so I think in the development sector things have been largely been very women friendly. I have heard of stories of people working --- and even 10 years back, they would bring their children into meetings and the kids would play around while they were discussing campaign strategies and research work. I've heard of those stories. But, can I say that about journalism, because these are the two sectors that I have worked in: can I say that about journalism? Let me look at your point of how many women make it to the top. Very few women are the editors, the CEO's and the editors of a company, that kind of set the tone or work culture for the entire organisation. You might find them in the senior management teams, but you wouldn't find them as the top bosses. And even in the

senior management teams, the ratio would be say, 80-20; obviously skewed against women. The representation is very less, which means the power to negotiate or the power to fight back is very little. When that happens, when there is nobody, and there's clearly nobody to represent what women go through, which means voices are not being heard. It makes a huge difference for women to be in decisive roles in the organisation, in power; to actually set a child-friendly, women-friendly, family-friendly work culture.

[27:25] Actually, when we got her, I used to bring her to the office everyday for like, 2 months. But then, fortunately we found a good caretaker and then Raghu also quit his position. Ever since (then), she's been at home, but I must say that when she came, in the initial few months, after my parental leave, I have been on conference calls, put my video off, and I have been cleaning her potty. I would run to the loo to clean her stuff and the audio would be on and I would be listening and commenting. It's like, you focus here and you focus on something; you need some 10 hands at the same time. I have been really lucky that she wakes up early and I don't have to spend any effort in nudging her to wake up. I can't imagine what it would have been otherwise because imagine a grumpy child in the morning, getting her ready, bringing her to work and the child would be wailing all through. If the child were demanding – she isn't, fortunately – but if the child were demanding, I can't imagine myself focusing on anything, and it would be a nuisance to the office folks.

[28:46] Here, it's a very small workplace and when we got Maya it was even smaller; we were barely 5 people around. So we didn't need a crèche and we had a separate room altogether (where) we could keep her. But crèche's are something that are really missing in our workplaces. There's not a single, except maybe for an NDTV, I can't remember a single organisation that has a crèche; where you can bring your child and the child is in safe hands the entire day. There have been situations where, like I told you, a large part of my work involves external meetings, and pretty high-level meetings in terms of going to minister's offices or meeting bureaucrats. There have been situations where my husband was busy, Raghu was busy with something else and my house help either hadn't turned up or had to go home. And if the meetings were in the evening, I would just put her in the car seat, drive to the venue, again plonk her, carry her bag with all her diapers and stuff, and then walk into the government office for the meeting with the minister. It's happened twice, and both ministers have been pretty nice about this and they haven't said – oh; what's a kid doing here, shoo, shoo. That's not happened fortunately, but I wish that is the tone that's being set for the entire country, that you can just be comfortable with a child around you and still go about doing your regular job. Most of them are amused: that's the first reaction I get. Some of them find it really --- that's also because I have been

engaging with the Women and Child Development Ministry at different levels, which means naturally, their level of acceptance is very high. But I do remember one minister's office, I don't think the minister himself had a problem, but his staff wasn't too welcoming and they were pretty abrupt in saying – nahi, nahi madam, aap yahin pe reh jaye, baki logo ko andar jane deje; aap bacche ko le aaye hain. So their apprehension was that she would disrupt the meeting and I don't think they were in a position to understand that, that's not how it happens. And frankly, they haven't seen anybody bringing a child to a huge, to the minister's office, in all fairness. So, you can't blame them.

[31:11] You brought (up) the part about, beyond policies. I think, if the push in terms of a change in mindset doesn't come from the executive, it is very difficult for the corporates (to) have a change in how they perceive things or how they approach a mother, or simply just creating a wider impression that, it is okay for you to balance a child alongside your work. I think that push has to come from the executive, otherwise it's very difficult. Bottom-up is not going to work here because it'll take forever for that to happen. It has to be top-down; the acceptance has to be top-down.

[31:57] I haven't seen any other woman who has done similar things as me, in terms of taking my child around and making her an integral part of the work life. Just recently I was speaking with a journalist who is into television journalism and she was talking about how, when the child comes back from daycare if her husband hasn't made it back, because usually he comes back, if he hasn't made it back and if she has evening shoots, interviews outside, she would pick the child up from daycare, put him in the car and take him along. And that resonated with me. That is something I think every woman would want to do but wouldn't have the flexibility to do because of a clearly non-supportive work environment. I realise I am much more at peace when I have my child around, and I think it makes me work more efficiently when I see her happy and playing and stuff. And as I told you, as a personality, she's a very happy child fortunately. I have heard of several mothers who say – how do you work when you have your child around? I don't think I can ever do that because I'll be so distracted and I'll be constantly fretting about what the child is doing and trying to watch out.

[33:19] I think, both me and Raghu have chosen to take a much more chilled out approach toward parenting, so we're not excessively worried if she's bored. It's okay for her to be bored because she'll figure out what she wants to do. We're not worried if she wants to break things, we let her do it because it's all part of growing up, as long as she's not hurting herself, that we are extremely mindful of. We teach her how to be careful, very early we taught her how to be careful with doors and drawers and

cupboards and I must tell you, focusing on those kinds of early learning things made her much more independent. It's kind of weaved in well to my work atmosphere, because now people don't have to be worried about – is she going to fall? Is she going to hurt herself? Is she going to run around and damage things? That kind of concern doesn't arise and I made this conscious choice because I realised I don't want to miss out on my child's upbringing, and that too, the early years.

[34:20] I travel a lot, which means one week of the month I'm out, and I'm missing so much of her growing up. This is the stage when, in just one day she's picked up so many words, or suddenly she's picked up a new skill or she wants to communicate with you in some way, and I don't want to miss that. I think, it's really unfortunate, especially now in an urban situation you have to travel long distances to get to work, which means that 12-13 hours of the day you are out, and by the time you go back the child is already so wound up and wants to go to bed. You really are not getting any essence of that early stage of your life and it's unfortunate that we're all having to, especially the mothers are having to lose out on this vital phase of their lives. I didn't want to do that, so this was a conscious choice that I made; wherever I go, I would try to make a situation fun for her. I would have her toys or her colouring stuff and maybe ensure that there are other children around, go and plonk myself next to a mother who's already carrying a baby, maybe even a slightly older child. Those kind of tweaking I would do, but I am largely not worried about her being terribly bored and wanting to run around. I think it's worked like magic because I am so tuned in to what she does; I derive a lot of happiness in seeing her learn new things. Most importantly, I want her to see that her mother is strong, so that she derives strength when she grows up because I don't know if things are going to be drastically different when she is a young woman and she goes to work, but the kind of memory that I want her to carry right from her early life, is that her mother was working really hard to give her a good upbringing and I want her to derive strength from that.

[36:35] One thing is that I'd really want to move to a city or a semi-urban place that is healthier for my child, because I don't think I am happy with the quality of air that I am giving her and I think that is the most basic thing that one should have. Probably, I see ourselves moving in the interest of my child, moving to a less polluted city, that surely. But that would mean it would impact my job prospects. I am already preparing to take a hit that way, but the good part is if we move somewhere else, the prospects for Raghu would be much higher in terms of the kind of skill and expertise that he brings in. I think it'll be a good --- we could afford to strike that balance because now he is taking a break, and maybe sometime later I could move to a less prominent role, while he takes a much more prominent career move. In terms of what I want to do, most of my career options would be based on what kind of education we would like

to give our daughter. We are very keen to get her into alternative schooling in India and the options are very few. Especially in Delhi, it is an education hub, but alternative schools and streams of education are few and far. So, our next choice of state would definitely depend on what kind of education we give her and I think all of this is basically tuned towards – how can we ensure that she has a wholesome upbringing, and how do we weave our careers around those choices that we make for her? That's where I see myself.

[38:30] I can't imagine myself not working, not working even for a shorter period or not working at all: because I think working brings out the best in me, both as a career woman and as a mother. I think the sector that I am in gives me a lot of personal satisfaction and I am a happy person because of the work that I do, and I don't want to be unhappy at any situation. Be it at a workplace that makes me unhappy or without working at all. I don't want to be in that situation because then that is obviously going to reflect on my family as well. My personal happiness is going to reflect on my family. So I think I will continue working. Maybe when the going gets really tough, I might choose a slower approach to work; it's too premature to say that, but going off work, I don't think is an option.

[39:36] This notion is reinforced that simply because of your gender you don't have to work and that I think, begins even after college, because if you see the general trend in India – and I'm sure it's the same in several (other) countries too – that – okay you have finished college, we have invested in your education and the next step is that you get married. After that your career path is fully dependent on whether your in-laws are okay with you working, which is largely not the case, because if they think your spouse is earning enough for the both of you, they would largely want you to support them at home (rather) than going outside. That begins there, even when you finish college. By the time you get to the stage of being a mother, you've already fought so many battles that you're tired by then and you say – okay, now that there's a kid, I already have a handful, I don't want to this anymore; this fight of - I need a career and it's my choice to have a career for myself. It's so layered at several levels, that this frustration that you're talking about, I'm sure many women feel it at various stages of their lives. But ultimately, in the 'larger interest of the family', you just give it up as a sacrifice for your spouse and the family and the children. I think it's high time that we give up this notion of being those sacrificial lambs and ensure that...

[41:20] I am myself because of the personality that I am. I can't imagine myself not doing anything or not facing challenges on a daily basis or not creating that impact that we are doing at work or not touching people's lives. I can't imagine myself not doing that at any stage. I think it's really important for women to negotiate with their

partners on equal parenting. Anybody, and I speak from personal experience, fortunately I didn't have to negotiate in my case because I think that I had a more than willing partner who was taking an equal share of the work, but every woman has to -- it shouldn't be like a given fact, it shouldn't be something that is already accepted that the mother would be, not only the primary care giver, but the complete care giver in every household; usually the fathers take a backseat. I think even before planning the child, the woman should start negotiating for equal parenting. (Things like) change the nappies, spend time with the child, if you would like to take a break, go ahead and do it, I'll be the earning the member of the family. That might be like the last step, but I would still say figure out a way that will work for both of you so that the woman doesn't have to compromise on her career and end up feeling rejected, ignored, frustrated, and alone. So, the onus is on the men as well, but I think we are far away from men actually having this realization all by themselves, which is why bring (up) this fact of women having to negotiate when they are planning children on equal parenting.

[43:18] Both my mother and my father, both of them came from extremely poor backgrounds. My father was the first graduate in his family. He was from a small village in Kerala, he moved out. When my mother and my father married, my mother wasn't a graduate but both of them got together and my dad was instrumental in pushing my mother to finish her degree. She had my brother soon enough, a year or two after her marriage but my dad just did not let go. He said – I will take care of him; you go ahead and study. I think that example was set so very early in my life and it was amazing to see --- there was no talk about women empowerment in the family. There wouldn't be sessions where my father was saying – look at your mother, you need to learn from her – that's not what it was. But there was always a very subtle but strong undercurrent that a woman can do it, all the time.

[44:19] My mother, in those times, would ride a bicycle for some 10 kilometers to work. I remember my dad used to teach her because her parents hadn't taught her all this. I remember my dad running behind her, holding the bicycle and running, and she'd fall and she'd come cut and bruised. It was the same when we bought our first bike, the TVS. Long back, there would be a moped. When we bought that, my mother burnt her calf and then she'd come and say - it's hurting and stuff - but then she would still go back. I think it was a mix of the kinds of attitudes that both my mother and my father brought to the table, in terms of ensuring that both of them --- my mother was enterprising enough to try out all those opportunities that were in front of her, because at that time she had a spouse who was very progressive, certainly. Because when we looked around, we didn't see too many women riding bicycles or bikes or finishing their degrees after they got married and stuff like that. So, yeah, it is

something that is very ingrained from very early on in my life and I'm just lucky that even my spouse has turned out to be an extension of my childhood.