

Interview 30: SRI LANKA: Subani

Ms. Subani is the daughter of a furniture manufacturer. She is also a 32-year-old mother of one and reading for her external degree.

What do you think of the policing system of Sri Lanka?

It is difficult to say that the policing system is good. The police make a lot of errors in their work; there is a tendency towards supporting wrongful acts. Most of the time, they do not enforce the law in a proper way. They should concentrate on law enforcement because they are the guardians of law. But today, there is no law to protect. These things should be changed from the beginning. I do not understand how they should be changed; I just know that the way which prevails right now is good.

What do you think of the use of torture by the police?

The small people are those who are most affected by torture. There is a tendency to think that more people commit wrongs when they are unemployed, because they are poor and uneducated, so these are the people whom the police assault to find answers. But the people from higher classes and senior levels also do wrong things, but they are not harassed to find out the truth. If they were harassed, the police officer responsible would be transferred or would lose his job. The majority of those who undergo torture are small people. To find out who has committed the crime in question, they practice torture. This is wrong and unreasonable, because we don't know whether the person who was tortured to obtain the truth is the same person who has committed the crime. Sometimes people are assaulted even though they have not done anything wrong.

How is the relationship between the police and the public?

Generally, people who are not very wealthy are afraid of the police. But the majority of people who commit wrongs have no fear of the police. They know that they will be released by who are in higher places, so they feel that the police are on their side. Because of political power, the majority of those who commit wrongs have no fear of the police. But the small man is always affected; they are the ones who are afraid of police. This type of situation prevails today. The only option when we deal with the law is to involve the police. We go to the police station for everything. But the enforcement of law is not done properly. According to me, our safety inside the police station depends on various circumstances.

What do you think of the law against domestic violence?

There is a law for the prevention of domestic violence. If it is implemented properly, women will go to complain. Nowadays, if a woman goes to make a complaint about domestic violence, the police will not pay attention to her or to the complaint. The people who live in shanties undergo this type of thing; these people are neglected by society. There are poor people who go to the police very often, but the police do not care. The people who belong to higher classes very rarely make complaints to the police. Instead, they go directly to the courts and not to the police. The people who are uneducated and poor go to the police because they have no other way of dealing with their problems.