

Maa, all the things I've been silent about

SARA RASHID

Sara Rashid, based in New York, is interested in how religion and politics shape art in South Asia.

MAA, all the things I've been silent about are all the things that could've saved me. They could've saved me from the thoughts that persecute me daily. Thoughts that first paralysed me with a kind of terror and agony unknown to seven-year-olds, and have now ultimately seeped into my being, stubbornly sitting on my chest day in and out, snatching away any glimmer of hope that I had for the life ahead of me.

Maa, talk about injustice, prejudiced social norms, a misplaced fear of dishonour, and sexism banding together to stack all their cards against you. In a society that refuses to equip women against this sombre reality, and instead terrorises them into silence and powerlessness, you and I didn't stand a chance. And so it's no surprise that my silence started with yours, and yours with your mother's and grandmother's, getting passed down systemically and politically through generations.

It's unfortunate that the first thing I remained silent about is the one that weighed most heavily on me in the last 29 years. Now when I look back at it, I recognise the main reason for my silence: I didn't have the words to explain something I couldn't comprehend myself. Why was there suddenly a pair of eyes always following me everywhere, why was I being taken to bathrooms, hidden behind couches and why was I being hushed as my skirt got pulled down and my chest got rubbed?

Why was there a mouth forcing open mine, why were my legs being spread, why was there a finger inside of where I peed from, and why was everything hurting? But mainly, why was this called a game, one that was so different from the games I played outside? Where was everyone else and why were my cousin and I the only ones in this game?

The silence was a weapon I shielded myself with, just like you taught me, Maa. And this shield left me no choice but to grow up at the age of seven; it stole my childhood and left me in a state of constant paranoia and mental paralysis, and most unfairly, took from me the ability to love and trust. Maa, you were right when you said it takes only a second for life to change—that was the speed at which my life upended, taking from me my essence and sense of self, turning me into a shadow of who I used to be. I went from cycling in the streets, discovering new birds and flowers in gardens, racing boys in parks to a child stripped of her soul and spirit. In many ways, Maa, those seconds not only changed both our lives, it completely took our lives away.

Over the years, as the shock and trauma settled and I began navigating a



new reality for myself, I often questioned why neither of us spoke up. I didn't because you and I had made a pact that I was bound by: the first time we spoke about it would be the last, and that I was to never utter a word of it to anyone. I believe you didn't because you hoped there would be power in silence. You were convinced that it would save me from society's judgement. After all, a girl violated is a girl damaged and damned, without the possibility of marriage and a future that no parent would wish for them. It's unjustifiably cruel, but also not surprising that it's the girl and never the perpetrator who is looked at with that lens. It's ultimately the girl who turns into an outcast and has to pull the weight of a life that can no longer be salvaged.

Maa, I've grappled with your refusal to speak up, and as someone who isn't a mother herself, maybe I'll never be able to fully comprehend your decision till I have children of my own. As the fiercely protective and nurturing mother that you were and continue to be, your priority was to save me from any further harm, which silence promised. It was a way to confine what had happened, keeping it at a distance from causing more damage.

Equally importantly, you felt it was your duty to protect your family from learning about your nephew's depraved tendencies, and prevent a potential rift in the family. Your resolve showed how much you thought of everyone around you but yourself, and given the sense of family and community you were raised with, many would argue that it was the right thing to do. However, this subjectively right thing to do came at an unconscionable price, one that took immensely from a life I hadn't even entirely started living.

As much as I tried to replicate your silence, my emotional and mental

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MONON MUNTAKA

Silence is simply the other side of complicity; it sits like a lump in your throat that first paralyses, then suffocates and ultimately erodes your sense of self and strips you of your spirit, which in the end is too high a price for any person to pay.

capacity to endure wavered, and I needed to speak my truth to save myself from further harm. However, the first thought of sharing my story was quickly expunged by the burden of concealing someone else's sins. That silence took from me any particle of strength and power I could muster to redefine my narrative, ultimately damaging my relationship with intimacy, and hurting my marriage. The more I suppressed, the more fervently it demolished me; I marinated the trauma internally as it coursed through my veins, desperate to bleed out but only managing to implode me.

So Maa, you have to know that when I did decide to speak up about what happened, it was because that was the only way I knew to take back control and power over my own narrative. As many have claimed, it was not an act of vengeance, it was not meant to malign, punish or destroy lives. Maa, there's solace in knowing that even if others don't see the truth, you know that sharing my story was never about

him, it was always about me, about my life and what was taken away from it so mercilessly and wickedly.

Women's words and voices often have a price to pay, especially when we speak up against men. Speaking up was an attempt to find the pieces that were lost, it was about reclaiming justice. It was my desperate last try at saving what had become of me and my life. To appease the fear that fermented under my skin, but most importantly to know that I did right by me and others who didn't have a voice. I shared my story to free myself from it; what I did was an act of kindness toward myself and a way to discard the weight of a crime that was never mine to bear.

Maa, if anything, my experiences have taught me that it's impossible to please and protect everyone. It's our responsibility to protect our own selves, especially in the face of injustice and inhumanity. All this to say that silence is a sin, especially for those who have the ability to bring change with their stories. It's a poison that has altered the direction of my life, plaguing the relationships closest to me. Regrets come in abundance, and I often wonder whether, had I spoken up and sought help earlier, if I wouldn't be constantly looking over my shoulder to see who's behind me, wouldn't flinch at every touch, the purest moments of intimacy with my husband would feel different, and if I'd have braved having children of my own. But healing is not a destination, it's a journey and what keeps me going is how far I've come in this journey.

People will always have something to say, often they will reprimand, shame and oust as a way to conceal truths that upset their perception of harmony and a moral society. Maa, you might not have used your words, but your actions have always taught me to find strength in the truth and seek change through the truth. And I had to start somewhere, for us; I had to break the cycle, for us. Through all this if there's anything I've learnt, it is that silence is simply the other side of complicity; it sits like a lump in your throat that first paralyses, then suffocates and ultimately erodes your sense of self and strips you of your spirit, which in the end is too high a price for any person to pay.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Line Director

Community Based Health Care (CBHC), CCHST

BMRC Bhaban (1st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

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E-mail: cbhc@ld.dgbs.gov.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sealed Tender is hereby invited from the Bidders for Supply of MSR for community Clinic. As per PPR-2008, terms and conditions are as follows:

KEY INFORMATION				
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Health Services Division.			
2 Agency	Community Clinic Health Support Trust (CCHST), Health Services Division.			
3 Procuring Entity	Line Director, Community Based Health Care (CBHC), CCHST.			
4 Procuring Entity code	224021006			
5 Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6 Invitation for	Procurement of MSR for Community Clinic.			
7 Invitation for Offer Ref. No	CBHC/Proc./GOB/MSR-44/2021-22/20			
8 Date	09.05.2022			
9 Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10 Budget and Source of Funds	GOB (Dev.)			
11 Development Partners	None			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12 Project/Program Code	224021006			
13 Project/Program Name	Community Based Health Care (CBHC)			
14 Tender Package No	CBHC/GD-11/2021-22			
15 Tender Package Name	MSR for Community Clinic			
16 Tender Publication Date	10.05.2022			
17 Tender Last Selling Date and Time	30.05.2022 at 5 pm			
18 Tender Closing Date and Time	31.05.2022 at 12 pm			
19 Tender Opening Date and Time	31.05.2022 at 2 pm			
20 Name and address of the Office	a) Office of the Line Director, CBHC, CCHST, BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. b) Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD), Tejgaon, Dhaka. a) Office of the Line Director, CBHC, CCHST, BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. b) Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD), Tejgaon, Dhaka. Office of the Line Director, CBHC, CCHST, BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.			
21 Place/ Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	N/A			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
22 Eligibility of Tenderer	As stated in TDS			
23 Brief Description of Goods	Supply of MSR (3 items) for 14100 Community Clinics			
24 Brief Description of Related Services	Not Applicable			
25 Price of Tender Documents Taka	Tk. 7,000 (Seven thousand) only by Treasury Challan (with CTR) Code No. 1-2711-0000-2366 to be deposited Sonali Bank Ltd. or Bangladesh Bank. (Non-refundable).			
26 No	Identification	Location	Tender Security Amounts in BDT	Completion time (in weeks)
Single Lot	Package: CBHC/GD-11/2021-22, MSR for Community Clinic	CBHC, BMRC Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.	Taka 8,00,000 (Eight lacs) only by Pay Order/Bank Draft or Bank Guarantee in Prescribed format in favour of Line Director, CBHC, CCHST.	10 weeks from date of signing the contract.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
27 Name of Official Inviting Offer	Dr. Masud Reza Kabir			
28 Designation of Official Inviting Offer	Line Director, CBHC, CCHST			
29 Address of Official Inviting Offer	BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.			
30 Contact details of Official Inviting Offer	BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka, Phone No-02-222280785 (Official), Fax No. 02-222282900, E-mail: cbhc@ld.dgbs.gov.bd			

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers.

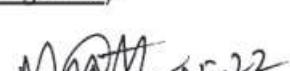

Dr. Masud Reza Kabir
Line Director
Community Based Health Care (CBHC), CCHST
BMRC Bhaban (1st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

Date: 10/05/2022

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> for the procurement of

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Procurement method	Publishing date & time	Last selling date & time	Tender opening & closing date & time
1	695890 Re-Tender ID 680546	Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories	OTM (e-GP)	10/05/2022 10:00	22/05/2022 10:00	22/05/2022 11:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender documents will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline or hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is mandatory. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branch. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal & from the e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


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