

It's time to brew up 'A Little Revolution'

Ramaninder K Bhatia | TNN

Chandigarh: Before you dismiss filmmaker Harpreet Kaur's "A Little Revolution" as yet another film in this season of documentaries on farm suicides in Punjab, think again!

The US-based film-maker, who was one of the first to make the thought-provoking and award-winning "The Widows colony" on the widows of 1984 riots living in Tilak Vihar of Delhi, and who also captured the trauma of Gujarat riot victims, has been working on this one for four years.

The film, to be released in Chandigarh on March 11, is best described by her husband, Manmeet Singh, the producer. "It's a story of suicides and dreams, and follows the journey of Harpreet from the villages of Panjab to the capital accompanied by the children of farmers who had committed suicide. She confronts Sharad Pawar, the minister of agriculture, with the hope that he will understand the effect of the government's policies and help the children."

The US-based couple took the help of former legislator-turned-activist Inderjit Jaijee to shoot the film in suicide-ridden belt of Sangrur and Barnala after studying the shocking phenomenon in Punjab's



Harpreet Kaur at work

hinterland. "Vast areas of rural India are currently facing a crisis that few outside of the subcontinent are aware of. At the centre of this are thousands of Indian peasant farmers who have taken their lives," Manmeet explains.

"Like many other crises facing the world there is no single solution

to the farmer suicides in India. However, the general consensus is that a farmer takes his life due to high interest loans, and his expenses far exceed his income," he pauses before adding, "It's like an economic human violation."

The movie does not stop at simply chronicling the tragedy of these fam-

ilies. "Harpreet does not to limit the dialogue to economic, environmental or political side of the issue but focuses on the plight of farmers' children. This is a story of hope, empowerment and simple dreams," says Manmeet with an obvious pride in his wife's work.

The movie is more about the shattered homes of these families where the children have accepted their fate but aspire for a better future. She gives them an opportunity to share their stories with the world and confront the government with their letters, that offer a raw portrait of the impact their parent's suicides have had in their lives. Harpreet travelled along with children to meet Pawar and confronted him, asking questions about the policy, for which he apparently had no convincing answer.

"The title of the film is not limited to what is presented in the film, but is more about what we are expecting from the audience. We need advocacy on the issue, pressure on the government with the help of media and the diaspora and immediate rehabilitation and relief for families on Baba Nanak Educational Society's list. I hope our audience don't just watch, but join - A Little Revolution," says Manmeet.