



TV

# UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

UN IN ACTION

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## INDIA: FORGOTTEN WOMEN

### VIDEO

ARTI SHOTS

WOMEN PRAYING AT RIVER

FUNERAL PYRES ABLAZE

GIRI ON-CAMERA

DR. GIRI CHATTING WITH  
WOMEN

### AUDIO

*CHANT/MUSIC/NATSOT – RIVER IMAGES*

#### NARRATION

On the banks of the Ganges River...women pray to the Gods in the name of good health and prosperity for their husbands. // Being a widow here is like a death sentence. 15

In some parts of India, widows commit Sati - throwing themselves on their husbands' funeral pyre in an act of self-immolation. 9.5

GIRI (ENGLISH)

F

"No woman would want to do that; leaving her children behind." 2

#### NARRATION

Dr. Mohini Giri is a human rights activist. She laboured for four decades, fighting for these invisible, forgotten women. 9

GIRI ON-CAMERA  
ANIMALS ON STREET  
PEOPLE ON STREET

GIRI (ENGLISH)  
*“There was one widow who was lying dead on the streets. //And the vultures were coming and eating her flesh, dogs were coming//and the people were walking by and nobody was picking up the dead body//And that really shook me absolutely.” 15.5*

BUNDELKHAND VILLAGE

NARRATION  
In 1829, Sati was banned by the British. But even though it was banned it still happens in some areas. 8.5

KAMLA WALKING IN STREETS

A temple was even built in the name of one such woman. Priest Ajay Tiwari guards the temple around the clock. 8.5

TIWARI ON-CAMERA

TIWARI (HINDI) M  
*“People keep coming from far and near to visit the temple every day to get a glimpse.” 4.5*

WIDOWS ON STREETS OF VRINDIVAN

NARRATION  
While women committing Sati are considered goddesses, living widows face widespread discrimination says Dr. Giri. 8

WIDOWS IN VRINDAVAN

More than 16,000 of them settle in Vrindavan...secluded...and obedient to customs relegated for widows. // They wear white, cut their hair short, and eat only once a day. 14

SINGING

NATSOT SINGING

## NARRATION

...many stay alive on bits of food and a few rupees daily they may get from singing. 5

BEGGING

And those who can no longer sing resort to begging in the streets...living one day at a time.

6

DR. GIRI WALKING IN NYC,

Haunted by the image of the dead body in the street, and determined to help widows, Dr. Giri traveled the world...raising funds. 8

ASHRAM

In 2008, she built an ashram – or shelter for widows. 4

## GIRI (ENGLISH)

WIDOWS LIVING IN ASHRAM

*“What am I trying to achieve? To give dignity in death to these women; to give them a healthier life.//Women are now totally empowered.”* 6.5

## NARRATION

ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

The ashram, also located in Vrindavan, is home to some 500 widows, including Kamla, widowed for 40 years. 8

## KAMLA: (HINDI) F

KAMLA ON-CAMERA

*“It looks nice. We get to eat and drink here. Everybody lives together here.”* 6

## NARRATION

UN CONFERENCE

And to raise awareness of the plight of widows worldwide, Dr. Giri lobbied the United Nations for 10 years. In 2010, the UN declared 23 June as the International Day for Widows. 13.5

DR. GIRI ON-CAMERA

GIRI: (ENGLISH) F

*“... for the whole world so that this lot of widows who have been neglected so far can also come into some kind of a focus.” 6.5*

WS. OLDER WOMAN  
WALKING INSIDE ASHRAM

NARRATION

But Dr. Giri, says there’s still one thing she must do. 3.5

CU. OLDER WOMAN WALKING  
INSIDE ASHRAM

GIRI (ENGLISH)

*“...change the mindset of men that they should not look down upon these widows.” 3*

KAMLA GOING TO PRAYER  
WITH LIGHTED CANDLE

NARRATION

For now, Kamla is content on settling for inner peace and spending her final days at Dr. Giri’s ashram. 7

KAMLA ON CAMERA

KAMLA: (HINDI)

*“When I get sick and my hands and feet stop working, I will live and die here.” 6.5*

UN LOGO

NARRATION

This report was produced by Mary Ferreira for the United Nations. 4