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EDITOR'S LETTER



WITH THE
VACCINATION
DRIVE IN
FULL SWING
AND TRAVEL
PICKING UP,
THE WORLD
IS ENTERING
PHASE 2.0,
WHICH IS THE
'NEW NORMAL'
NOW

India is slowly coming out of its COVID slumber, and everything is opening up, paving the way for a new and a better tomorrow, with precautions in place, of course. With the vaccination drive in full swing and travel picking up, the world is entering PHASE 2.0, where life will be as close as possible to normal, which is the 'new normal' now. It is really fascinating to see how our planet has adapted itself to change and braced itself for a brand-new world, where permanent restrictions and safety measures will be a must. I also hope this pandemic has taught us a lesson to never mess with nature and earn its wrath; else nature has its ways to unleash its vengeance. And the last thing we all need is another natural catastrophe of this magnitude.

Keeping change in mind, the theme for this issue is change makers, and we feature some inspiring women who have brought about significant change in many ways. Meet Adwaita Nayar, the dynamic daughter of Nykaa founder Falguni, who, by introducing a fashion vertical, has added a new dimension to her mom's super successful online beauty business. Then there is Rani Rampal, captain of the Indian women's hockey team, who hails from a small town in Haryana, and who has gone on to become the first-ever hockey player to win the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year award. Learn what makes Chef Garima Arora so special, besides the fact that she is the first Indian woman chef to win a Michelin star for her restaurant, Gaa, in Bangkok. And, finally, the story that truly inspires us is of 15-year-old, US-based Indian-American Gitanjali Rao, a "brilliant" scientist and inventor, who has been named the first-ever 'Kid of the Year' by TIME magazine for her astonishing work using technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying.

In our other features, we capture the gorgeous Radhika Apte and her raw beauty in a stunning fashion shoot, while the young and vivacious actor Amyra Dastur shares her beauty secrets in rivetting photographs. We also talk about the season's current trends and shades for everyone to follow. With the colours of Spring being splashed all around, can Holi be far away? Here's wishing everyone a very happy and healthy Holi; may this festival of colours bring joy to everyone.

Ruchika
RUCHIKA MEHTA

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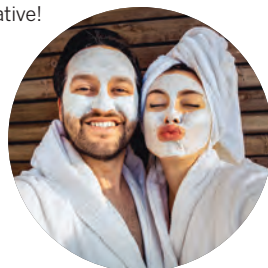
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What an inspiring story Sania Mirza's feature is in the latest issue of *Femina*! We only see her on the courts as a strong, competitive player; this interview reveals her to be a relatable woman like us, beset with the anxieties and preoccupations we all share as women and mothers. A very inspiring read! Indeed, each of the women in The Big Story who have mastered the work-life balance has lessons for all of us. Kudos to them all! Also loved Athiya's Shetty's flamboyant photographs, and the advice from style diva Sonam Kapoor-Ahuja. And the places to go to find love, even just by yourself, had me starting yet another travel list. Thanks for the push!

Meera Mistry, Coimbatore

I enjoyed reading the interviews with and stories about women who've made it big in their respective fields, shattering all stereotypes. The Big Story was so inspiring because it shows us how so many trailblazing women work hard to balance their personal and professional lives much like how many of us do. It was interesting to read about such real-life experiences. Such stories give most women a push to stretch boundaries and challenge redundant societal norms. It's good to have content that is over and above what's trending!

**Mihika Awasthi,
Aurangabad**

Reading about Sania Mirza has always been so inspiring for me. She, being a sportswoman who is also a mother, and has overcome her fair share of



obstacles is something that I find very motivating. Her story pushes me to go a step further in my endeavours. The stories about women who have bounced back from motherhood were fresh and aspirational reads too! Team Femina, great job! Looking forward to more such stories!

Sushma Parekh, Goa

It was thrilling to read about how Sania Mirza has progressed in her life and career, and it made me feel inspired. Even the imagery used where she is shot on the court looking glam is such a fabulous idea. The Big Story featured several powerful women who are also mothers and revealed how they balance their life and careers, which was amazing to discover.

Parineeti Das, Mumbai

I loved The Big Story with its Indian and international celebrities and women achievers. It's so great to get inside the minds of these powerful women from various fields of business, especially since they are also mothers, and to find out how they try their best to manage work and their children in current times.

Simran Patil, Pune

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MEET THE ROPOSO STARS

Roposo, the short-video sharing app owned by Glance, powers the first ever Virtual VLCC Femina Miss India

A few months back, if someone had told Juhi, a 25yr old fashion and beauty influencer from Delhi, and Shivam, a young lad from Nangal, a small town in the Rupnagar district of Punjab, that they would one day get a chance to share the dais with Femina Miss India winners, they would have laughed it off as an impossible dream.

But, in today's times, it pays off to dream the impossible. Because these two did just that last month and came back with a lifetime of memories after winning the Roposo King and Queen contest on the app.

This was made possible due to the

collaboration between Roposo, the short-video sharing app owned by Glance and Femina Miss India.

Femina Miss India represents the young and ambitious woman in India. It exemplifies what it means to be a pioneer and give wings to the dreams of young women in the remotest corners of India and from different backgrounds. So for the first time in its history, the VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 partnered with Roposo to host its first ever digital pageant, giving contestants across far flung regions a platform to compete for the title of their dreams.

Roposo played an important role in helping the contestants participate in the pageant. From enabling them to share their videos with the organisers at just a touch of a button to helping state winners during their grooming and training sessions, by making the related content available to them – including modules on Q&A, rampwalk and inspirational videos from

previous winners, this video sharing app played a nuclear role in making the pageant a success.

The pageant received thousands of applications, with a significant number of those coming from Tier-2 and 3 cities as well. Post the selection of the 31 state winners, they were provided with virtual training and grooming sessions. Alongside the state winners, Roposo's influencers also received exclusive access to attend various Masterclass sessions by industry experts.

"We had never imagined a pageant like VLCC Femina Miss India to go virtual. We have been delighted by the tremendous response we received to the pageant on Roposo. As the largest short video platform in the country, our goal was to encourage participation from the farthest corners of India and provide participants with an opportunity to be in the limelight. With this initiative, we hope to see more creators join the platform and showcase their talent," said Bikash Chowdhury, Vice President – Marketing at Glance.

The Roposo King and Queen contest was open to all Roposo users and saw huge participation from all over the country. The contest consisted of a series of five challenges that tested creativity, passion, fun and engagement quotient of all participants. The contest allowed content creators to showcase their talents in fashion, fitness, creativity and wit. Thousands of participants shined through, creating some amazing videos, gathering numerous likes and followers and building their personal brand. The top two content creators, Juhi Chawla and Shivam Vashisht, went on to win the coveted title of Roposo King and Roposo Queen.

"I got so emotional and of course excited to attend my dream event. The best part was going on stage and presenting ROPOSO plaques to the winners. It actually became a lifetime memory for me which I am going to cherish forever," says Juhi who learnt about the beauty pageant while posting content on Roposo one day. "It just flashed on my screen and I got fascinated about



this contest. And the moment I read about the perks that the winner will be getting, I quickly decided to participate."

"I was awestruck. Talking ain't a task for me but there were moments during the pageant event when I could barely find words," says Shivam. "It was like a dream come true."

The Roposo King & Queen winners were invited to attend the Grand Finale of VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 and got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact with the

IT IS REALLY HEARTENING TO SEE HOW ROPOSO IS HELPING OUT IN THE DIGITAL INDIA MISSION BY IDENTIFYING TALENT FROM SMALLER CITIES, PROVIDING THEM THE PLATFORM AND MENTORSHIP TO HONE THEIR SKILLS AND MAKING THEM STARS AND INFLUENCERS," SAID PIYUSH SHAH, CO-FOUNDER OF INMOBI GROUP WHICH OWNS GLANCE AND ROPOSO.

three winners. "So, everything happened all together because of this amazing contest. After attending the pageant finale, I have become more enthusiastic about my content creation and how Roposo is recognising talent and giving such huge opportunities," said Juhi.

As the exclusive social video partner for VLCC Femina Miss India 2020, Roposo also organised another contest called 'Roposo Shining Star' to recognise the best content creator among the 31 state winners. Karuna Singh, the state winner from Punjab, was adjudged as Roposo Shining Star after garnering the maximum votes, views and likes from her Roposo fans.

"It is really heartening to see how Roposo is helping out in the Digital India mission by identifying talent from smaller cities, providing them the platform and mentorship to hone their skills and making them stars and influencers," says Piyush Shah, Co-founder of InMobi Group which owns Glance and Roposo. "It is our objective to democratize content in the country and to bring every internet and smartphone user in India to the digital economy."

Looking at the smiles of the winners, Roposo has surely managed to make the stars shine.



Lauding the CHANGE MAKERS

They bring Gandhiji's maxim "Be the change you want to see" to life, not just with hard work and determination, but with an unmatched vision that drives them to achieve loftier goals with each passing day. Femina salutes these women for leading the way and inspiring us all to change too

NEETU SINGH

The face of change

10 Women Entrepreneurs in Art, Craft & Design" by Women Entrepreneur India, "Samman Patra" by Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, are the few feathers in Neetu's cap that are distinctively inspiring to say the least. Blazing the trail for modern Indian women, she has been climbing the ladder of success, taking her women workforce along.

Making a mark with her ecommerce vertical "SINI Lifestyle", her exclusive clothing collections ranging from kurtas, dresses, tops, jumpsuits, jackets, skirts & pants, are rapidly garnering attention for its quality and comfort. Incorporating subtle colors, rich textile and intricate sewing into its pieces, Neetu's fashion sense is influenced by her love for traditional crafts and sustainability. On one hand she offers fuss-free, functional and consciously crafted cotton outfits which is making her platform the go-to place for youngsters, while on the other hand, she is putting her heart & soul to revive the ancient art of Madhubani with 3D hand embroidery on shirts, tops & jackets, and using the grace of ikat motifs with zari embroidery on chanderi cotton outfits to add vibrancy. Such awe-inspiring fusions has undoubtedly opened the doors for skilled artisans in her factory to young India & rest of the world. In this era of fast paced demand focussed businesses, the digital consumers seek unique designs & innovative ideas at affordable prices. SINI Lifestyle is slowly becoming the solution for the same with multifold rise in its users. Today, when digital technologies are reshaping the world of online fashion, and everything from how clothes are designed, manufactured & promoted is being altered by techniques and strategies, Neetu is optimizing all channels to immerse itself into market with innovative and fresh ideas being churned out every month. From

production to the last mile (client's wardrobe), her personal touch has been the reason of the tremendous response of her businesses. Catering to the demand of SINI's digital clientele, she is in the process to ramp up her production range and introduce high-end garments like evening gowns & bridal wear into her collections.

With a deep sense of cultural intricacies & flair for a fast-moving fashion business, her journey to launch SINI & to place it onto the global map as is today, has been anything but easy. For more than a decade, not only she stood behind her dream but with utmost willingness & determination, she fearlessly became a sole powerhouse behind a workforce whilst influencing an entire generation of women. Currently serving as an empanelled designer with Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) & Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, Neetu has significantly contributed to the upliftment of women through her companies. SINI's corporate social responsibility brought the existence of another vertical - "SINI Foundation" in recent years. Being at the forefront of bringing change by encouraging and empowering women from the lower strata of economy to have a balanced, respected & holistic approach to their work and life, the foundation believes in coaching and supporting women across all walks of life, and not a single stone is unturned in ensuring that the under privileged and unfortunates are benefitted.

Sustainability being the pillar of her brand, Neetu believes in safeguarding the interest of environment via upcycling and waste management initiatives. In order to reduce the outgoing waste stream from the factory, Scrunchies, Headbands and Pouches are made out of waste textile fabrics and distributed amongst the underprivileged girls.

In manufacturing space, where women entrepreneurs are often under presented, Neetu Singh's advice to women is simple and motivational. "The key to achieving something truly transformational is to be different in what you offer while being your own role model, because even though education & specialized degrees are important, but your skills are innate and no one can stop you from utilizing them and turning them into your livelihood".

For a woman in this world, every single day is a challenge to create a niche for themselves. While India is in dire need of people who can rise above individual gains, there exists a rare breed of persevering women like Mrs. Neetu Singh, whose spirit has redefined and transformed the lives of thousands of women while scaling heights.

As a pioneer of change in the society breaking every societal stereotype, she is adept at leading with a fortitude that actively empowers women through her export house, SINI Designs Pvt Ltd. As its Founder & MD, Neetu Singh has made the world stand up and take note of her vision. Charting the path for women entrepreneurs & business owners, her dedication and passion in the last decade has led to a thriving business of manufacturing and exporting casual garments & resortwears. Employing more than 5000 artisans across Indian cities, while serving to more than 50 countries, Neetu & SINI are on a mission to unfold the ancient techniques & designs and infuse them into modern outfits and accessories.

"Times Power Women 2020" by Times Group, "Asia's Greatest Leaders 2017" audited by PwC, "Top





The Game Of HER LIFE

RANI RAMPAL, captain of the Indian women's hockey team, has a singular goal when she goes on-field—to win for the country. She talks of this and more with Shraddha Kamdar

As I prepare myself to speak to her, I can't help but wonder at the superstar that Rani Rampal is! The 25-year-old captain of the Indian women's hockey team is not just grounded, she is also endearingly humble. She signs off on our interview by thanking the readers who will take the time out to read it, adding, "I wish you all the best and God bless."

Hockey player Rampal's story can motivate an entire generation. Hailing from the small town of Shahabad in the Kurukshetra district of Haryana, she has turned all the odds in her favour to become the face of Indian women's hockey. Her father worked as a handcart puller, and, from that background, she rose to train in field hockey, starting at the age of six, and consistently proving herself of being deserving of all the positions she got. She has played 212 international matches and scored 134 goals, and is now looking forward to leading the team at the Tokyo Olympics this year. The Padma Shri and Khel Ratna awardee knows the game takes her all, and she willingly gives it. Over to the super athlete.

Last year, you became the first-ever hockey player worldwide to win the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year honour. How does it feel?

Every honour is a big honour, but, as it was the World Games Athlete of the Year, it's quite special because no hockey player has received it before! Also, being a woman hockey player, if it's bestowed

upon you, you feel like the world is recognising women's hockey. It makes me feel great as it helps women's hockey create an identity of its own in the sports world. I take this opportunity to thank all those who voted for me; they are the ones who got me the award. I felt the love people have for hockey as the votes poured in.

Everyone's eyes are now on the Olympics. What are you looking forward to this year, for you and your team?

Any athlete and team would dream of representing their country in the Olympics and winning medals! The team has been working hard for quite some time, and we have a great staff that looks after the team. During the lockdown, we lived together and spent time with each other. After almost a year of not playing, we have now started to get some exposure, and we need to make the most of it. Hockey India and the Ministry of Sports see us as capable enough to be able to do something in the Olympics, and we are happy that we are on the right track.

The team has received the ticket, so to say, for the Olympics under your leadership. What changes did you bring in to foster new enthusiasm and motivation?

I like to believe that I lead by example. I don't believe in talking a lot, I want to set a good example every single time I am out in the field. There are many mature players in our team, so, whenever we are on the field, everyone is a captain in their own way, everyone has a role to play, everyone >



*"I don't believe in
TALKING A LOT, I WANT TO SET
A GOOD EXAMPLE every single
time I am out in the field"*



*“On any given day,
ANY TEAM MEMBER, INCLUDING ME,
CAN SLIP in her performance
for many reasons”*

has a responsibility to fulfil towards the team. Our players understand this responsibility. Ultimately, we all know we are representing the flag, we play for respect to that flag. Sometimes, things do go awry, we lose or do not perform our best, then I also have the responsibility to motivate the team, especially to take the youngsters forward with us as they do not have as much experience.

You have played over 200 matches for the country; you have seen quite a lot of changes, you are a changemaker yourself...

Whenever a sport grows, many have their hand in that happening. Women's hockey has improved itself significantly in the last few years, in every aspect. It is a great feeling! Individually, when you have been given such a responsibility, you should do it justice. Overall, our team has played a big role in this as have all the staff that is working for us, all the exposure that we have gotten over the years; these are things that really help bringing a change.

What is your strategy when you face some of the toughest teams across championships?

Our coaches enable us by creating strategies. For example, to prepare against our opponents in the Olympics, we analyse their past matches, the structure, and we train accordingly, knowing how to be able to play against them. We also watch videos to train, and the coaches lead us on how a particular opponent plays, and discuss with us on how to play against them. Ultimately, they are the ones who plan the strategy. If a particular practice does not work out, we discuss what we need to change in it.

Are those changes implemented properly?

Yes, they are. To bring about change in anything, you have to train for it. The more you train, the more it becomes habitual for you. Saying 'we have to do it, we have to do it,' is not how it works. Ultimately, we have to do it on the field based on our training.

Personally, when you are down and need to be motivated, where do you turn?

It does happen; after all, I am human too, but I know I can confide in my teammates, who are my close friends. I also rely a lot on our staff to resolve issues that I might be facing. I feel blessed to be around such supportive people, but I also know that, often, I simply need some time alone to get out of whatever's on my mind. And I allow myself such time. I also fall back on chanting or recitation to bring me out of my problems.

As the captain, you understand why someone's game is not its best on a particular day. How do you motivate them?

On any given day, any team member, including me, can slip in her performance for many reasons. Every athlete tries their best to do the best for the team. When a player is unable to do it, I have to be sensitive, and figure out how to boost her confidence. I remind her of all the positives, of the winning moves she has had in past matches, and of how she has it in her to make them in the present. The player automatically starts feeling, 'Yes, I have done it and I have these qualities, I can do it now too!' She starts being more focused. Most importantly, I know I have to always speak positively because anybody can be going through this 'down period'.

What kinds of challenges have you faced to become the sportsperson you are today? >



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How did you overcome these challenges?

There have been many challenges so far. I come from Haryana, and the first challenge was being in sports while being a girl. Then there was the challenge of coming from an economically-disadvantaged family; it was difficult to even think of playing hockey with no means to have two square meals a day. Later, when I did manage to get playing, we did not have the correct equipment, the shoes, sticks, etc. Post that, even on the national team, there's the challenge of injuries, ones that you recover from and other new ones that are forever lurking around the corner. One of the worst challenges to handle mentally is the one of losing out on a medal; a player always goes onto the field hoping to win a medal.

Those problems you spoke about when you started, being a girl and facing financial challenges, not knowing where you will find the money for training, how did you overcome those?

It was difficult, very difficult, but, in life, if you have passion, you will be able to face and fight anything. Looking back, I think that's what I did. I knew we were not well off, and I had no other option. If I were to see this passion through, I would have to put in the hard work. Saying it now seems so easy, but it wasn't as easy at the time, because you can do it for a day, a month, even a year, but it's not easy to overcome hurdles for many years. My passion for the game of hockey helped me do it, I wanted to play at any cost, I wanted to do something in my life and change my circumstances.

If you could implement one change in women's hockey, what would it be?

I think the Olympics medal—I hope we bring it home!—will change everything. The one change I would want to bring about is that more women and girls in our country could and would play hockey, it is our national sport. Hockey doesn't just teach us about the sport; playing a team sport gives us many life lessons. I want more girls to represent the country and carry on the legacy.

What is your message to children who want to become hockey players or make a life in sports?

Start believing in yourself, that you can do something in life, and bring pride to the country. Until girls believe in themselves, no one else is going to believe in them. Never should they think that coming from a poorer background automatically means they can't do anything; if there is passion, anyone can do



"The one change I would want to
BRING ABOUT IS THAT MORE WOMEN
AND GIRLS IN OUR COUNTRY *could*
and would play hockey"

anything in life. So, there should be a goal and, for that goal, have faith in yourself to do it, no matter what kind of hard work it takes.

Which sportspersons do you look up to?

I follow Mary Kom very closely, because she is an icon, a six-time world champion, a mother of three, and yet she has the same hunger to learn!

How do you like to unwind?

I don't get much free time, but I love listening to music. I enjoy Punjabi music, and old Bollywood melodies, also music from the '80s and '90s. Other than that, I like to spend time with my family whenever I have the time to be with them. >



launch, Kakde said that the products had been introduced with the idea that they are useful for everyone across age groups to help them be healthy and develop healthy eating habits without incurring high costs.

Further to that, Praveen Shukla, CEO of FoodHeal said that the company is in the process of coming up with few more unique and exciting range of food products in the near future.

FoodHeal has a range of easy-to-cook products that take only about two to three minutes, all available at an affordable price. The patented product, Walnut Ragi Instant Soup, is available in five different variants: Walnut Ragi Soup with Flax Seeds, Walnut Ragi Soup with Masala Oats, Walnut Ragi soup with Cheese & Black Pepper, Walnut Ragi Soup with Ginger, Garlic & Lemon, and Walnut Ragi Soup with Salty Mint Makhana. Another option is the Premix Instant Chilla with four variants: Chilla Coriander, Chilla Spinach/ Palak, Chilla Lalmath, Chilla Rajgira. Both the products are rich sources of iron, calcium, protein, and dietary fibre.

GET HEALTHY

With these easy-to-cook options from FoodHeal, healthy meals are only minutes away!

With the mission of providing healthy, tasty and easy-to-cook food products to people, FoodHeal, a Gravittus Corp Group company launched its unique range of food products.

The products were launched by brand ambassador of FoodHeal Gauri Khan in Mumbai in presence Usha Kakade, a well-known businesswoman and Chairperson of Gravittus Corp; Dr Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro Chancellor, Symbiosis International University; and Purva Kothari, jewellery designer.

On the occasion of the



Zarine Manchanda

Poised to become India's Princess of the Poor and Mother of Millions

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we take time to reflect on the greatest and most beloved women who rose to the spotlight and became iconic world figures as champions for empowerment, justice, education, service and other worthy ideals. In the last 50 or so years, most people around the world would probably agree that the most loved and admired women were Princess Diana and Mother Teresa. The world was a much better place because of them, they were the brightest lights that shined on this earth. They both were born in Europe but came from vastly different worlds and thus were the unlikeliest of friends. Yet they both shared a deep commitment to help the poor and less fortunate. They were friends for over 5 years, met twice (once in India), but then – in a shocking and unbearably devastating coincidence, both died within 5 days of each other in 1997. The world has not been the same since, with their golden light sadly dimmed.

Imagine then, if India - and the world - could come to know of a vibrant, stylish, irresistibly appealing, charismatic young woman who embodies the very best traits of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, a new golden light on the horizon in these turbulent and troubling times. Imagine a woman possessing the beauty, glamour, sophistication and regal aura of Diana, the "People's Princess", but also a tireless commitment to serve the poor and be an advocate of the underprivileged like Mother Teresa. And even better yet - what if that woman was India-born and raised, one we can be proud of because she herself has abundant pride in being Indian...

Meet Zarine Manchanda. This remarkable woman has a life story

that seems out of a movie. She's now a media star, having appeared in newspapers and magazines all over the country as an award-winning philanthropist and entrepreneur, respected social worker and fashion showstopper all wrapped in one dazzling package. The closer one looks; it is easy to see how Zarine's life, values and accomplishments effortlessly blend the lives and legacies of her inspirations: Princess Diana and Mother Teresa.

Born into a prominent political family in Himachal Pradesh, Zarine did in fact enjoy a Princess, fairytale life growing up - just as Lady Diana Spencer did five decades earlier. It was a life of luxury, courtesy of her father, a Minister and successful businessman. Explains Zarine: "I was in fact blessed growing up in the lifestyle I did. My parents provided me a loving and privileged life; it was every girl's dream."

Immersed in a life of luxury fit for a Princess, it would have been easy, even logical, for Zarine to hold on to such a grand lifestyle. But, in a life-changing decision, Zarine gave up that glamorous life of opulence to move to Mumbai, to try to make it on her own and to fulfill her dream of becoming an actress. However, while her decision was courageous, this transition proved to be far more difficult than she expected, and for the first time, Zarine experienced mounting challenges and struggles as she tried to crack into Bollywood. Zarine explains: "my days were filled with auditions. There was always so much competition, with so much talent and beauty all around amongst my fellow actresses. Sure, I was offered roles in B-grade movies or web series, always featuring "bold



scenes". So, I had to turn down those roles due to my family's respected stature. And yes, there were those unwelcome, "Me Too" type moments which only added to my despair. Many of my friends in acting classes and in auditions said I was "gutsy" for leaving the privileged life as I did, but I must confess my courage was waning, and I was beginning to question my choice to pursue. Still, I did not want to give up and return home. I had something to prove to myself, and something to prove to the world."

Two years after her move, at her lowest point, she made another courageous choice that seemed to change her life forever. "I knew I had the right DNA to enter politics someday, thanks to my father. The advice I kept hearing was to open a charity NGO, to expand my base among constituents, to be a social worker helping the poor. And so, I opened the Zarine Manchanda Foundation in 2019. When I look back, what I'm proudest of is that during my worst times and deepest struggles, I opted to do something I always wanted to do even as a little girl: to help the poor. I truly believed my life and fortunes would change if I brought good karmas and good intentions into this world."

The rest is history. The Zarine Manchanda Foundation is one of the most prolific, respected charities in Mumbai. It has now administered over 150 charity donation programs, mainly in the slum cells and tribal areas of Aarey Colony, where the Foundation's office is located. Its website showcases hundreds of photos and videos of these programs, where the glamorous Zarine receives rock star status in the slum cells, with adoring crowds chanting her name and young children rushing to her at each event - just as crowds would do for Princess Diana decades earlier. Says Zarine: "it's amazing each time I do a program. I only want to return the love these residents give me. I want them to have hope. While they see me as a modern-day Princess, I think they also know my intention is to serve the poor, to improve their lives anyway I can until my last breath. I believe these are the same intentions as my other inspiration, Mother Teresa."

What's next for Zarine? "My Foundation will soon be providing ambulances, and other medical and health care necessities for the poor.



Along with schools, medical clinics, shelters, and orphanages. I listen to my constituents - this is what they desperately need. I have grand ambitions and believe I am uniquely positioned to be a positive force in this world. Whatever I do in my life, I always strive to be different, to be unique,

to chart my own path. I will make my Foundation much larger and on a grander scale in India first, and then globally, so that I can truly be seen as India's Princess to the Poor and Mother of Millions. That is my solemn goal this International Women's Day, and all days to come."



Food in the HERE AND NOW

In 2018, CHEF GARIMA ARORA became the first female Indian chef ever to receive a Michelin star for her restaurant Gaa in Bangkok, Thailand. She speaks to Primrose Monteiro-D'Souza about how she is driven by her pride in the culinary complexity of Indian food

She loves pickling, strong and unusual flavours, and making her guests feel the power of Asian hospitality. All of which can be experienced at Chef Garima Arora's Gaa, a Michelin star restaurant in Bangkok, Thailand.

Arora grew up in Mumbai, in a Punjabi family whose love for food she has described as "insane". Her father used to travel extensively, bring home exotic foods, and cook a variety of dishes—including risotto and hummus, rarities at the time—from different cuisines to share his experiences with the family. With such inspiring culinary traditions at home, there was no getting away from her own love for food. Even though she worked briefly as a journalist, Arora soon went to follow her heart by completing a course at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, and then moved across the planet to get her experience in the kitchens of the world's best chefs, among them René Redzepi of Noma in Copenhagen, Gordon Ramsay, and Gaggan Anand. In April 2017, she opened her own

restaurant Gaa in Bangkok, Thailand, and the fact that she was more than ready for this enterprise was proven by a Michelin star in November 2018, making Arora the first female Indian chef to receive this distinction. More accolades followed. In February 2019, she was named Asia's Best Female Chef for the year by World's 50 Best Restaurants; the next month, Gaa debuted at No 16 on the list of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants. Through it all, Arora has always been sure of one thing: that she and her team must bring their A game to the table every day. And a very tasty A game it is too...

Change is a theme in your life. You moved from journalism to food...

It was always at the back of mind that I wanted to become a cook. I studied to be a journalist, and figured that I would make that switch at some point in my life; it almost was part of a plan. But, then I read somewhere that being a cook was a young man's game. I realised that it demanded years of dedication to acquire skills, a lot of physical work, and sacrifices that come >

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white chef's shirt and a dark brown apron, is sitting on a dark wooden Windsor-style chair. She is smiling broadly, looking slightly upwards and to the right. Her hands are clasped together in her lap. The background is a warm, textured wall in shades of orange and brown.

*Young chefs are
now starting to
explore more
OF THEIR OWN
TRADITIONS, AND
LOOKING FOR NOVEL
WAYS TO CHAMPION
their food cultures
*everywhere**



I don't think anybody knows
EXACTLY HOW MICHELIN WORKS; THEY
NEVER REVEAL THEMSELVES *when they*
dine at your restaurant

easier when you are younger. I was naïve in many ways, but, somehow, this struck a chord, and I decided to leave journalism to pursue cooking professionally. Of course, I wouldn't be where I am today without my parents. My father always said that he wouldn't pay for my wedding, but would happily and willingly pay for any education I wanted. Well, he did end up paying for the wedding too, but it was a great life lesson in priorities that every parent should teach their child.

You've also had plenty of geographical change: you've moved across the world as a chef, and worked in the kitchens of industry giants like Gordon Ramsay and Rene Redzepi, before opening Gaa in Bangkok. Tell us how that came to be.

Serendipity, I'd say. I had originally moved to Bangkok for six months to spend some time in the Gaggan kitchen (run by Michelin chef Gaggan Anand), with the idea that I would be heading his Mumbai restaurant when it opened. That plan didn't end up coming to fruition, but the same set of investors approached me to open a restaurant in Bangkok instead, and that was it.

On Award-Winning Food

Winning a Michelin star is usually a process long in the making, and you won one for Gaa within two years of opening. Tell us how that unfolded.

I wouldn't be able to tell you even if I wanted to! I don't think anybody knows exactly how Michelin works; they never reveal themselves when they dine at your restaurant. I think that's the point. You have to maintain your standard of practice every day. If there's one thing that I always instill in my team, it's to keep your head down and work hard. In this industry, there really is no shortcut. Every guest walking into the restaurant deserves the best you have to offer. You do that every day, day after day.

At Gaa, the menu showcases the Indian and Thai cuisines, reflecting your Indian upbringing and an international perspective. What does this translate to on the plate?

I have always said that, if Gaa wasn't in Bangkok it would not taste this way. As much as we remain true to Indian techniques, we make it a point to reflect the place in time we are at. I believe Indian techniques can be applied to any geographically-limiting ingredients; you are bound to discover new flavours and textures. It is simply because Indian techniques are fundamentally strong and independent of ingredients. You can't cook French food without butter perhaps, but you can cook Indian food without ghee. We have at least 50 different fats to begin cooking with as part of standard recipes. The repertoire of techniques is the highlight of our cuisine. >

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During the lockdown, you launched HERE. How is it different from Gaa?

HERE is a casual all-day eatery and bar, born out of my mission to make people fall in love with the high-spirited and playful flavours of our Indian cuisine through everyday food. On our breakfast menu, we serve homely and nutritious dishes such as oats *chilla*, black rice *dosa*, and *gobi paratha*, while our lunch and dinner menu focuses on dishes that are punchier and more robust in flavour. Even though the two restaurants present themselves in completely different formats—one being casual and one fine dining—our approach to cooking is very much the same. Both Gaa and HERE remain true to Indian techniques, and take pride in sharing our culinary heritage with our guests.

On Indian Food and Its Star Power **You've said there should be no shortage of star chefs out of India...**

There will be more Indian chefs coming out of this time; I am sure of it. Young chefs are now starting to explore more of their own traditions, and looking for novel ways to champion their food cultures everywhere. It's simply a matter of time. However, I have to say government support and recognition is long overdue to preserve and promote Indian food.

You launched Food Forward India, an initiative prioritising Indian food, in August 2019. What is the change you hope to see through this initiative?

Food Forward India is aimed to give the whole world a taste of India's culinary complexity by cataloguing and mapping our astonishingly varied urban, rural and tribal cuisines. Ultimately, we want to rediscover and rewrite the narrative around the cuisines of India.

At Indulge Fest 2020, Chef Alfred Prasad spoke of the need for more women in the food industry. What is your take on this?

The final demographics of an industry have less to do with exclusive policies, and more to do with general working conditions. If it is kitchen jobs we are talking about, in the past, being a cook has always been considered a blue-collar job. This is changing. Today, you have Harvard graduates as R&D cooks, even food scientists trying their hand at line cooking. The nature of the job is changing; it is becoming more cerebral than simply back-breaking, brutal work. With this change in



*The nature of the job is changing; **MORE WOMEN WILL NATURALLY FIND THEIR WAY** into the professional kitchen*

perception, more women will naturally find their way into the professional kitchen.

In becoming the first Indian woman to win a Michelin star, you are an inspiration to women. Who are the women who inspire you?

I have such a strong support system around me, right from my mother to my friends. They are all women who have an unwavering sense of self and determination to make something of their lives. >



GRITTY, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR – MS. SEEMA SINGH

Meet this inspirational woman who is on a mission to empower the lives of the underprivileged.

Ms. Seema Singh is a prominent Social Entrepreneur in Mumbai. She is the founder of NGO 'MeghaShrey,' which works towards the betterment of underprivileged people and to feed the hungry in India.

As a Homemaker turned Social Entrepreneur Seema was prompted to set up a NGO in the year 2000 to work with the underprivileged children, youth and young women and their families with an aim to build a better future for them, with the promise of a stronger India.

She has made a significant contribution to humanity at large through her contribution and operation of the NGO 'MeghaShrey,' which has been working in the areas of children's education, women empowerment, food donation and much more.

Currently Seema has organized a unique initiative of a fitness marathon for underprivileged kids. The goal of this campaign is to promote 'healthy living' through a fun marathon run amongst the needy children. These kids have fewer resources to participate in such events. This campaign will boost kids enthusiasm while encouraging them to stay fit by running. Team MeghaShrey are also excited about the upcoming Fitness marathon for Kids. Seema has organized practice session for participating kids. Children are practicing in the ground and having fun too.

Since her early days, she always wished to bring about a positive change in the society and make the world a better place to live in by helping the needy people. To fulfil her mission in life, she started various social initiatives 15 years ago. Over the years MeghaShrey NGO has organized many food distribution drives, education related initiatives, sapling distribution drive, blanket distribution drives and conducted many other social activities.

Seema is deeply blessed to have a family who not only supports but also contributes to her cause of making a difference in the world in their own small way. She has always received immense support from both her children in all her social activities.

Seema and her team at NGO MeghaShrey are working on their mission to develop a better and brighter future of Young India.





“We need to show that SCIENCE IS COOL TOO”

Having grown up watching science channels, TV shows and reading technology magazines, could there have been another calling for young innovator GITANJALI RAO? Kalwyna Rathod chats with the world's first 'Kid of the Year' about her innovations, world problems, and more

Usually inspired by issues with a personal connection, Gitanjali Rao does her best to understand them and to look for ways to address them. She knows that she might not always be successful, but, the few times she *has* succeeded, she knows she has contributed in some way. Which is truly an understatement coming from someone who has incredible innovations like Tethys, Epione, and Kindly to her credit, which address issues ranging from drinking water contamination and drug addiction to cyberbullying! Over to this young gun.

You've been named Kid of the Year, the first person to earn this title. Tell us how you feel about having been selected from over 5,000 others.

I'm honoured, humbled, and beyond excited to

be named Kid of the Year! There's something so exciting about being able to share my story, especially since I'm representing peers from all walks of life, no matter their gender, age, or where they come from. I'm hoping that I can prove that anyone can be an innovator.

Time and Nickelodeon have done an amazing job highlighting optimism, kindness, and positivity, especially in these tough times, highlighting the work of our generation. Each of us has different talents, and we try to light up the community with whatever we can. You can start with one step at a time.

While kids your age have other preoccupations, you have been engaged in coming up with ideas to solve bigger issues, be it cyberbullying or water contamination. Tell us about your childhood and how you were inspired to help others.

Solving problems became a habit because our >



*"There's something so
exciting **ABOUT BEING**
ABLE TO SHARE MY STORY,
ESPECIALLY since I'm
representing peers from
all walks of life"*



“Solving problems became a
HABIT BECAUSE OUR FAMILY WATCHES
THE NEWS TOGETHER *and we talk*
about issues”

family watches the news together and we talk about issues. There was a time, when I was between six and 11 years old, that my mom would share issues we heard about in the news or experienced that day such as disease, the homeless issue, food contamination, etc, and we would all compete to come up with the best solution. At the end of it, our recognition was an outing for ice cream. We loved playing those games. My most memorable solution was to build a restaurant with the latest technologies. Hence, creating something new is always fun because I associate it with those games. At the same time, as I grew up and understood the process better, I did more research. The toughest part is when I reach out to people who have gone through the problem to understand it from their perspective. It makes me realise that many of us are very privileged, and we have taken things such as clean drinking water and internet access for granted, and have contributed to the contamination of natural

resources. This inspires me to keep working on solutions and to bring awareness to these issues, to as many as I can.

What, according to you, are the most important challenges the world is facing right now?

If I had to choose from the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the following are our main challenges and we need to come up with solutions.

- ◆ Contamination of our natural resources and (lack of) access to clean water: Detection is more necessary than prevention, given that we have already contaminated, so we can take action.
- ◆ Education inequality: Through the internet, we need to collaborate, share and provide resources, including a global curriculum to include innovation earlier in education.
- ◆ Newer pandemics: It would be best to capture what we did this last year and where we need to improve, so we can repeat the same quickly and effectively, while working on vaccinations and faster distribution.

You've said that it's usually “older, white men” who are scientists. Please share your views on inclusivity, especially for girls and women.

I grew up watching science channels, TV shows >

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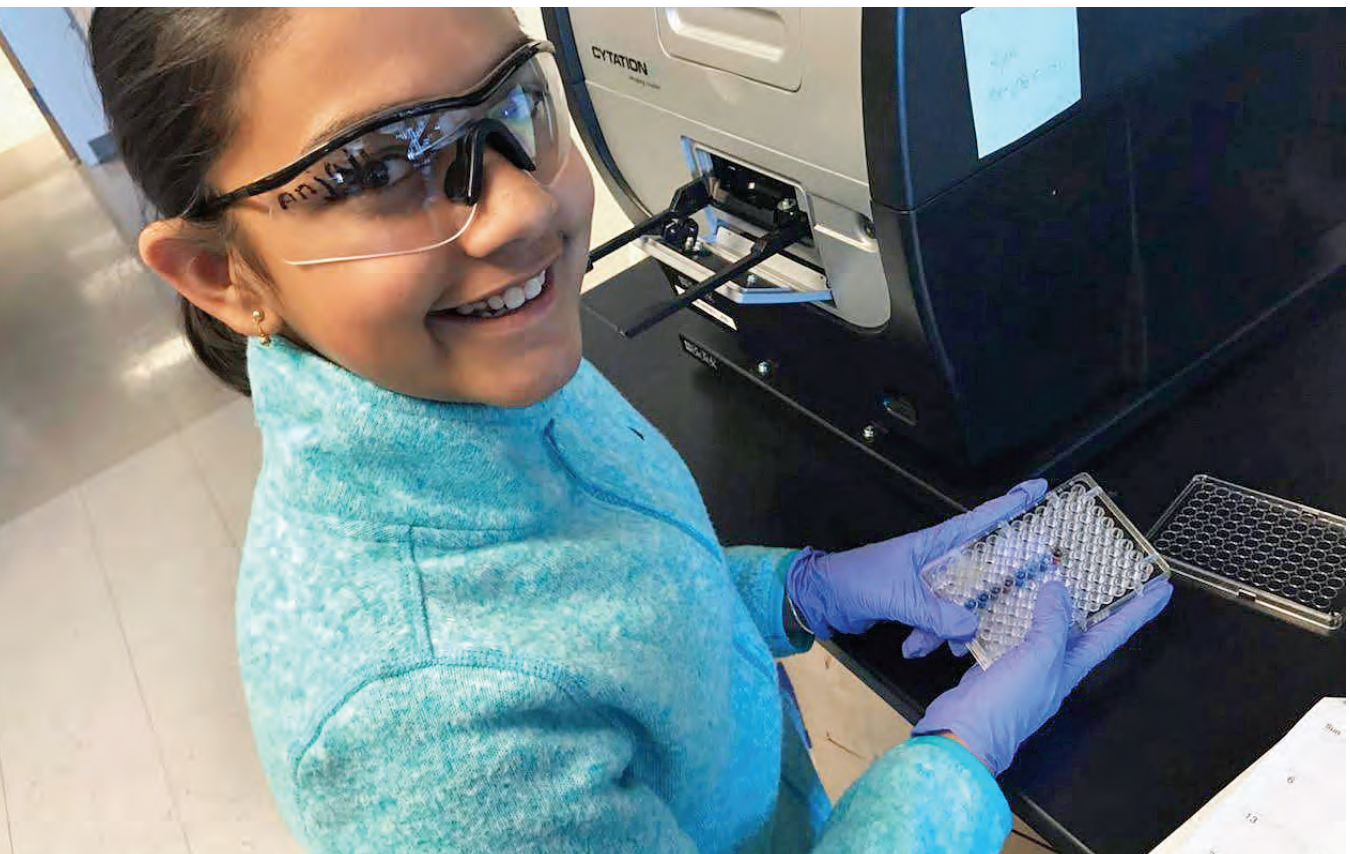
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and reading technology magazines. However, I did not see many women in the roles of scientists and researchers, which always made me wonder. On the other hand, interior decoration and cooking shows were usually populated by women. In my elementary school, I also noticed that there were clubs such as the American Girl clubs, sewing clubs, princess clubs, and drama clubs that were filled with girls, while science and coding clubs were filled with boys. Unconsciously, my mind somewhere decided that I cannot be interested in science, in technology. But, when I was much younger, my mom would sometimes mentor a few students in science subjects, and she would make a conscious attempt to include equal representation of boys and girls. We learned from each other and that's when I realised that there are no boy or girl subjects.

Today, even if shows portray women as scientists, they are nerdy with glasses, and not interested in anything other than academics. But that's not the case; my friends and I have several interests and are equally interested in STEM. We need to show that science is cool too, so others can see themselves in this field!

*“Today, if shows portray women
AS SCIENTISTS, THEY ARE NERDY WITH
GLASSES AND NOT INTERESTED IN
ANYTHING other than academics.
But that’s not the case”*

What do you think needs to be changed for more youngsters to be able to make a difference in the field of science and technology?

I think the need for science and believing in science is slowly gaining respect across the world after the COVID-19 pandemic. We have a lot to do, but the pandemic has taught us to think, act and be different. Things we took for granted such as education in classrooms, travel, and food availability are being challenged now, and every sector is doing their best to adapt and adopt. The world has come together like never before, and we need to look at that positivity to move forward. >

SOUL *STRINGER*

ANURITA RATHORE JADEJA TALKS TO **AMITA DALAL** ABOUT SITAR LEELA AND WHY WE THINK IT COULD TURN BUZZ-WORTHY

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Of the many memories in her musical journey, the stage performance at 18 is one she cherishes most. Not because it was the first but because she won the Pt Omkarnath competition following which she was sent to Russia by Gujarat government to perform at Moscow Olympics.

“You see, my mother used to play the sitar when she was expecting me. I grew up in an atmosphere of learning music; Pt Ravishankar had *riyaaz* camps, Kishori Amonkar was very fond of me... their being around in my teenage years made me watch them teach and sing. Once I showed interest in learning sitar, my mother took me straight to Manju Mehta, my *guru* till date,” she shares.

NAMING AMRIT VARSHINI

Like with a human being she felt “sitar too should have a *naamkaran* as it responds differently when you name it”. Amita treats it like her child and after naming it Amrit Varshini over 10 years ago feels “it not only resonates but even converses with me.”

INSTRUMENTAL FUSION AND YOUTH

After 30 years of music, there was resistance to experimentation but, says Amita, “My mentor Pt Vishwa Mohan Bhatt inspired and encouraged me to go ahead with instrumental fusion and Sitar Lounge took form.” Packaged in small, peppy compositions, it has had recall and “the youth tend to connect with it”. Be it workouts or an evening soiree, parties or a special occasion, Sitar Lounge is a thematic systematic fusion based on classical *ragas* that drew mass appeal.



CONCERTS ABROAD

Be it at the Reitburg Museum in Zurich, Mozart Hall in Vienna, Prince Carlz in Germany, Monte Carlo Terraces near Cannes, Phila Harmonica Gardens in Rome or even the several embassy concerts, Amita has extensively performed, but what she enjoys most is that the international audience is very well prepared. “I like how the organisers want to know which *raga* I will play; the audience knows what they will get to hear. They come well prepared with many even pointing out a *bandish* or two. For an artiste, that’s a big deal!” she deliberates.

THE ROAD AHEAD

This lockdown made her more mindful, meditative and observant. “I feel a deeper connection to music and am coming up with Sitar Leela, a project with Saurabh Bhatt,” she says, further sharing, “Compositions for this range from Zoom that depicts new age music keeping youth

in mind. The lockdown effect gave birth to Jhankar, a composition that chimes into the beats and rhythms where I softly tread on the notes of music. It is the fast life and the slow pace, both of which we witnessed during the lockdown, that has resulted in this work. Another piece based on Holi carries the vibrancy of the popular festival; Shringar’s mood depicts the adorning of God while Nostalgia is reminiscent of walking down memory lane.”

INSPIRATIONS AND INFLUENCES

Once her renditions are composed, it has usually been her father she has rushed to. “Even for Holi made in March 2020, I had first gone to my father and it is only he who has heard it yet. Call him my friend, philosopher, guide, inspirer, supporter, I dedicate Sitar Leela to my father, she fondly says, adding, “The serenity sitar-playing offers, the me-time it provides, I am driven to creating and playing more. And, that’s a sitar-promise.”



Of Success, SUSTAINABILITY AND STABILITY

ADWAITA NAYAR, CEO of Nykaa Fashion, talks to Sukriti Shahi
about changing the e-commerce landscape in India

Adwaita Nayar started her entrepreneurial journey at the age of 21. One of the founding members of e-comm giant Nykaa and daughter of Nykaa's CEO, Falguni Nayar, she has been instrumental in making Nykaa one of the industry leaders in the ecommerce space. Adwaita is also responsible for the brand's physical presence around the country, having executed the opening of 30 retail stores before moving to Nykaa Fashion. And she's all set to make it big there too! The confident risk-taker gets candid about working with her mother, her own business acumen, and crucial lessons she's learned so far.

Your journey with Nykaa so far...

Has been incredible! It is a blessing that we were able to build something like Nykaa. My mother really wanted to be an entrepreneur; that's what she had always dreamt of. When it all started in 2012-'13, I had just graduated and moved back to India. I jumped on the idea and became her 'right hand'. It started with a simple idea and we kept executing our plans systematically over the next five years to get Nykaa to where it is today. The first couple of years were really difficult,

because success was not guaranteed. Now I feel grateful for that experience, because, it keeps me grounded in the sense that I know that all businesses go through rough patches. I was personally involved with the opening of our retail stores. I went to different cities to understand the market; for me, that's been one of life's most enriching experiences—I got to understand the country better and, therefore, our consumer. The experience made me as confident with understanding retail business as I am with e-commerce. Then, about two years ago, we started Nykaa Fashion; the credit goes to my mother who convinced us to foray into that category. There is a gap in the fashion market; no one is selling fashion in a way that is about inspiration and curation, and we are trying to bridge that gap.

On mother-daughter dynamics at work...

My mother is incredible; she is a mentor to me in every possible way, both in my personal and professional life. Every role that I will ever have in life, I feel like I already have a great mentor and role model for that. She taught me a few important lessons—the first is the importance of thinking long term about your business, and having a plan that extends upto at least five years. Another lesson that I've learned from her is the importance of being detail-oriented and >



*"My mother is incredible;
SHE IS A MENTOR TO ME
IN EVERY POSSIBLE way,
both in my personal and
professional life"*

rigorous. It's not enough to have a plan or a strategy, but also to know the business down to its finest detail. On the personal front, she has taught me that it's important to learn to be fine with being average once in a while. On a day-to-day basis at work, we are fairly independent of each other. She has a wonderful style of trusting people and giving them freedom to operate. It is very empowering! I love being around her in the office.

On her decision to be a part of Nykaa

Growing up, I watched my parents having jobs; we weren't a business family! I graduated from college in the US, and had started working with a consulting firm there when my mother mentioned starting a business of her own. The idea excited me, and I had nothing to lose at that time as I had just started with my career. It felt like a measured risk. Within a year of coming back and working on Nykaa, I realised that I would never go back to anything but Nykaa. It was a decision—I didn't even realise it at that time—that would change my life forever. I am blessed to have made that decision at the age of 21, because we have a company we are so attached with.

On building a sustainable relationship with work...

There are two parts to it—first is that, fundamentally, the business is your own. It's deeply intertwined in our lives. The conversation at the dinner table is always about work. I think, to an extent, we will never have that divide between work and life. It's a blessing to be able to pour your heart and soul into it. But you need to have a sustainable relationship with your work, because, if you are trying to run it for decades to come, you cannot afford to get burnt out.

In my first few years, I was not able to strike that balance. The lows of work were the lows of my life, and the highs translated to the highs of my personal life. I've worked on that in the last six years and, now, it's different. I've learned from my mother that not every issue has to be solved immediately. What we are building is long-term so, if something is broken today, it will get fixed in the days to come.

The second big change in me is that I put a lot of effort into not reacting immediately. As the leader of a large business, I get a lot of >



*“On the personal front, my mother
**HAS TAUGHT ME THAT IT’S IMPORTANT
TO LEARN** to be fine with being
average once in a while”*

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we did away with the
'perfect body' myth? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/fitness](https://www.femina.in/fitness)

*“The world and businesses have
CHANGED DRASTICALLY IN THE
LAST ONE YEAR, and we cannot
sit on our laurels”*



inputs from my team, both good and bad. I try to absorb the information, listen more, think over it, and not react impulsively.

On Nykaa Fashion's business growth during 2020...

The fashion category performed better than we expected, so we were able to achieve our budgets for the year. E-commerce adoption during the lockdown was tremendous, and we did reap the benefit of that. When the lockdown started, there was a ton of uncertainty, and it was extremely stressful. We did work on various permutations and combinations but, fortunately, it wasn't such a bad phase for us.

Learnings from 2020

One lesson that I think a lot about these days is that the world and businesses have changed drastically in the last one year, and we cannot sit on our laurels. We never know when business can get disrupted, and how things around us will change tomorrow. Thankfully, I have always had an acute understanding that a business can turn up and down very rapidly. Last year gave me an acute awareness that we need to be ready to respond constructively in tough times. I think being a little bit paranoid about how we need to keep up is important.

On doing things differently at Nykaa

There are two things to remember—always keep the customer's trust as a priority. At Nykaa, we put a huge emphasis on authentic products and customer service. The second pillar we believe in, in both beauty and fashion, is that there is a joy in shopping, and it doesn't have to be about price. You can create that joy in the form of videos, on social media, and in many different ways but you have to invest time on it.

On changing one thing about the industry

It would be 'discounting'; it is a global issue. Discounting is really depleting value at every leg of the supply chain, and everyone, right from the person making the product, is being impacted by the whole craze around discounting. I would like to see all countries stand up against mindless discounting and ask for a price that's right for the right quality. **F**

THE HAIR GROWTH QUEEN

DR STUTI KHARE SHUKLA,
IS A NEW RAY OF HOPE FOR
HAIR LOSS PATIENTS



India's renowned cosmetic dermatologist, Dr Stuti Khare Shukla also known as 'Hair Growth Queen of India' is a new ray of hope for hair loss patients worldwide.

Dr Stuti's signature non-surgical, Hair Growth Booster™ is the future which is replacing hair transplant surgeries. Just a five-minute non-surgical and exclusive treatment formulated by her for hair growth is a boon for millions suffering from baldness and hair loss issues without undergoing any pain related to surgery.

Being a post graduate in Dermatology from India, she has four international fellowships from top cosmetic surgeons and hospitals around the world. She is also the recipient of the Youngest Dermatologist of India in 2017 by the Indian Leadership Conclave, Power Woman of India in Medical Field of Non-Surgical Hair Restoration award, and one for the excellence in non-surgical hair restoration at Times Healthcare Leaders Award.

She runs the well-established clinic

chain, The Elements of Aesthetics in Mumbai, Nagpur, Jabalpur, and Balaghat, while there are many coming up in Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru. Dr Shukla also consults with international patients via online consultations from the US, Canada, Australia, Middle East, and in Asia. Her treatments are affordable and show quick results (as soon as 45 days). She has now treated over 25,000 hair growth patients. Her daily consultation including in-clinic and online include 100-120 patients.

New York-based Andrew Henry, a patient once suffering from advanced baldness could see great improvement in hair density, and his hairline restored in four months. Mrs R. Jain, suffered from hormonal issues and advance baldness recovered in three months. Manohar Mandal, a young army officer, suffering from Alopecia universalis a condition involving loss of all body hair developed hair in four months thanks to Dr Stuti's non-surgical hair treatment. Not just these, Dr Shukla has handled cases of hereditary, rare genetic, hormonal and PCOD-related hair loss; skin conditions, anti-aging and body contouring treatments successfully.



Alopecia Universalis Case



Dr Stuti continues to be an active researcher working with accomplished scientists and doctors globally with over 10 international research publications in American journals. She is also a key opinion leader for many international companies, and represents India in conferences in Paris, Spain and US. In fact, her signature Hair growth Booster™ treatment has inspired doctors worldwide to train under her. She is now accepting fellowship requests of many international doctors to train in non-surgical hair restoration techniques. Her Instagram and YouTube handles are testimonies to patients sharing positive stories about their experiences with her. To know more visit her Instagram Page @dr.stutikhareshukla

DR. STUTI KHARE SHUKLA

MBBS, MD, Dermatologist

Medical Director, Element of Aesthetics Chain of Clinics, India

Fellowship in Advanced Skin Health Care,

Zein Obagi Centre, Los Angeles, USA

Preceptorship in Lasers, Gold Skin Care Centre, Nashville, USA

Fellowship in Dermatosurgery, National Skin Centre, Singapore

Fellowship in Cosmetic Dermatology, Lasers, Siriraj University, Bangkok

To book an appointment and for more information WhatsApp or call on:

+916261967835



Ritu Chhabria

SPREADING HOPE, MULTIPLYING SMILES

Established with the aim to make society a fairer place, **Mukul Madhav Foundation** offers holistic support to one and all. Femina speaks to Founder **Ritu Chhabria** and **Trustee Gayatri Prakash Chhabria** about her mission, vision, and more

1. PLEASE TELL US HOW MUKUL MADHAV FOUNDATION CAME INTO BEING AND THE PURPOSE BEHIND IT.

'Live to Give' has been my prime motto in life. My paternal grandparents imbibed the morals of generosity and benevolence in me since a young age. Moving to Pune after marriage, I was lucky to be immersed in the same ideals all over again – an anthem to share and care was sung by my in-laws too! This early induction to the power of doing our bit for the society led me to form Mukul Madhav Foundation, an NGO that aims to make this society an equal and fair place for all.

2. PLEASE ELABORATE ON HOW WORK AND CHALLENGES CHANGED AT MUKUL MADHAV FOUNDATION ON

THE HEALTHCARE FRONT WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

I would like to explain the challenges with a framework that we adapted to combat these multifaceted issues of a global health pandemic.

● Being proactive helped save lives

The management officials consulted professionals from the medical fraternity, authorities and those that are working in the social arena to ascertain the most important need that will arise due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The Foundation began to work with Sassoon General Hospital, a tertiary government hospital, by providing them with life-saving medical equipment, thereafter ordering masks, sanitisers, PPE suits and various other things that were needed. The Family



Gayatri Chhabria

Planning Association of India, that provides a livelihood to HIV+ women in Pune, have been supported by the Foundation in the past. These ladies, along with other self-help groups and Skilling Centers that are run

by the Foundation, united to make masks, which in turn, helped them earn an income.

- **Thinking out of the box to touch more lives**

We collaborated with Punyadham Ashram which houses senior citizens in the outskirts of Pune. The head of this organisation had been supporting Sassoon Hospital and the police force with their generous donation of hand-made masks, and stepped forward to help Mukul Madhav Foundation distribute these to migrants and ASHA ANM nurses in Primary Health Centres that are associated with the Foundation.

- **It's all the little things and their timely supply that has helped us tide over this tough time**

Over the past few months, innumerable associations, collaborations and support has been provided in terms of medical equipment, masks, sanitisers, ration kits, medicines and patient support for surgery, chemotherapy and blood transfusions.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON PHILANTHROPY AND HOW ARE THEY ALIGNED WITH THE WORK BEING DONE AT AND THROUGH YOUR FOUNDATION?

Once you plunge into it, it's important to be immersed passionately to ensure that you are being honest with the role of calling yourself a philanthropist. Philanthropy has been aligned 110 per cent with our



Cycle donation for school girls at rural Sholapur



Inauguration of Digestive centre at Sassoon General Hospital at the hands of Dr. Abraham Gastroenterologist, Hinduja Hospital Mumbai, Ex Divisional commissioner Mr. Chandrakant Dalvi



Waiting area shed at Sassoon General Hospital

mission and vision at MMF with sustainable and scalable plans. MMF does not make a one-time donation but follows through till the end, supporting each section holistically.

4. WHAT, ACCORDING TO YOU, ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES THE WORLD AND OUR COUNTRY IS FACING RIGHT NOW?

According to me, as a country, there is dearth in healthcare facilities. Upgradation needs to be done at rural level. Awareness needs to be brought amongst rural and urban individuals. In terms of employment, there has been a rise in the number of jobs being lost and many have not able to regain and revive their businesses. Apart from this, mental health issues are on the rise. This has given rise to domestic violence, more so in well-established families. Children have not been able to receive medical treatment in time and don't have space for recreation. All these issues have been prevalent, but due to the pandemic, are being brought to the forefront. Every age group has a specific problem or issue attached to it.

5. YOU'VE BEEN RECOGNISED FOR THE WORK YOU DO THROUGH THE FOUNDATION. TELL US ABOUT YOUR GOALS AND AMBITIONS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.

My team and I should be recognised for the work we do. In addition, I am lucky that both my daughters are aligned with the vision, and even happier that my husband is supporting my vision and mission. There are a couple of things that I would like to specially emphasise when it comes to goal mapping and planning. Mukul Madhav Foundation is working for many causes. We believe that societal problems are very complex. Gender issues and poverty are tightly linked, as are education and poverty. In a world of such correlated social issues, we believe in catering to multiple problems by being agile



Asian business leadership award received at London

and quick at diversifying our campaigns.

6. WHAT MOTIVATES OR INSPIRES YOU TO KEEP GOING?

The satisfaction of making a difference through our care, compassion, and intervention makes me highly motivated. The impact made on an individual or an initiative that gains cure or success is truly the highlight of my journey. I repeatedly say that I must work 'Jab tak hai jaan'! I am truly blessed by my daughters Gayatri and Hansika who have joined MMF, and they are my biggest inspiration and who keep me motivated.

Ritu Chhabria's daughter, Gayatri Prakash Chhabria, Trustee, Mukul Madhav Foundation and Marketing and Communications Manager at Finolex Industries, is a third-generation problem solver and social changemaker. Together, this dynamic mother-daughter duo are committed to bringing about change with empathy. We speak to Gayatri Prakash Chhabria about what she brings to the table. "I'm focused on making a societal impact by bridging inequalities and improving the lives of those marginalised and left behind. Be it transgender equality to improving the accessibility of healthcare and education infrastructure for the marginalised communities, I'm determined to bridge the accessibility gap by streamlining processes that help reach more people in need with effective solutions."

**Facebook and Instagram :
Mukul Madhavfoundation**



FEMINA SPARK TO SHOWCASE AND INSPIRE

Femina launches the Femina Spark initiative to narrate powerful and inspiring stories of women in Uttar Pradesh

F*emina* begins a new chapter in its 61-year-old history of empowering women with a novel initiative called Femina Spark. In the first edition of its initiative, we join hands with the Uttar Pradesh government to shine the spotlight on the awe-inspiring and powerful stories of its fearless female leaders and iconoclasts. The effort also aims to spread awareness about women's safety and dignity, which dovetails with the Mission Shakti campaign driven by the state government.

The Femina Spark campaign seeks to spotlight a host of societal issues related to women, as well as identifies and celebrates achievers from every walk of life. The core idea of #MainBhiShakti is being explored through thought-provoking stories, spirited anthems, and the testimonies of the female leaders of Uttar Pradesh, alongside workshops helping

women empower themselves with self-defence moves and financial literacy. *Femina* has also curated a series of videos featuring celebrities and influencers, as well as an exclusive interaction with the Honourable CM. The Femina Spark campaign amplifies its underlying message of women's empowerment, the very crux of the #MainBhiShakti campaign, on ground by travelling across the state and visiting schools, universities, public and government offices, commercial establishments, *anganwadis* and hospitals.

By having such inspirational leaders highlight their vision to make a difference for the better, along with reaching out to as extensive and diverse an audience as possible, *Femina* aims to reach millions of women across the country and instil the change we all want to see. As woman achievers share powerful stories with Femina Spark, it reiterates our commitment to making every woman unstoppable. Here are some women who have been inspiring women across borders...



RENUKA MISHRA, IPS

With over 30 years of experience in policing, human resource management, recruitment and training, criminal investigation, maintenance of law and order, community policing and trans-national crime control, Ms Mishra, **Additional Director General of Police** with the UP Police Recruitment and Promotion Board, has been an inspiration to many. "I believe that all of us are products of our own socialisation processes and, when we wear a uniform or hold positions of responsibility, we need to rise above our socialisation to ensure a non-judgemental response based on trust that the victim is speaking the truth," she avers.



PUJA GARG

As Chairperson of the FICCI FLO Lucknow chapter and Co-Founder & CEO of Amara Exhibitions, Ms Garg has been empowering lives through FLO, and creating opportunities for women in the state. "I have been empowered through my education and my work as an entrepreneur, which has given me a sense of accomplishment," she reveals "For me, empowerment comes from taking responsibility to bring a positive change in my surroundings."



PRIYANKA GOSWAMI

Ms Goswami recently created a national record in women's 20km race walking and was felicitated with the Rani Lakshmi Bai Award. She has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and is prepping for them. "I feel proud to have been able to represent Uttar Pradesh on a national level and, soon, I will be representing India in the Olympics," Ms Goswami enthuses.



DR. SHARDA DUBEY

Upset that people don't play traditional music at weddings anymore, this well-known Bhojpuri singer, English teacher and cancer survivor is currently working towards bringing these traditions back. "I'm empowered by my self-confidence and dedication towards my work, irrespective of my age and health issues," says Dr. Dubey. "Being a cancer survivor, I often motivate girls and women by telling them 'where there is a will, there is a way'. If society educates girls and trusts women, they can do the impossible."



SAGRIKA RAI

As founder and creative director of Warp 'n Weft, Ms Rai has been working with the handloom industry and some of the most skilled craftsmen across the country for over two decades. Her clothing company has been delivering some of the finest Banarasi saris across India. "Being a woman is empowering, but perhaps the most uplifting thing for me is sharing the artisanal craftsmanship of Banaras and its incredible cultural legacy with the world," says Ms Rai. "It's a responsibility to safeguard, promote and re-establish love for our own Indian handmade textiles."

**FEMINA AIMS
TO REACH
MILLIONS OF
WOMEN ACROSS
THE COUNTRY,
TO INSTIL THE
CHANGE WE ALL
WANT TO SEE,
TO REITERATE
OUR
COMMITMENT
TO MAKING
EVERY WOMAN
UNSTOPPABLE**



PANKHURI GIDWANI

The second runner-up at the Femina Miss India contest in 2016, Ms Gidwani went on to score 92.7 per cent in the ISC examination 2017, and is currently the brand ambassador for khadi in Uttar Pradesh. "I feel empowered every day because of the rock-solid support that my family has given me to pursue the career of my choice," she says. "UP has been a land of opportunities and culture for me, and I have always received so much love and encouragement from my people that it keeps me connected to my roots and makes me feel empowered every day." **F**

JOIN THE
Women
WHO
Broke
THE
Bridal
Beauty
RULES

WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXPECTED BY SOCIETY TO CONFORM TO CERTAIN NORMS OF BEAUTY, AND NEVER MORE SO THAN WHEN LOOKING TO MARRY. IT'S TIME WE DID AWAY WITH THESE STEREOTYPES. TIME WE EMBRACED OURSELVES AS WE ARE. TIME WE WORKED WITH DOVE'S **#STOPTHEBEAUTYTEST** TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE WE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL, CONFIDENT AND EMPOWERED THE WAY WE ARE

Words: **TANYA MEHTA**
Photographs: **SUSHANT CHHABRIA** at **INEGA TALENT MANAGEMENT**
Junior Fashion Editor: **SURBHI SHUKLA**





DEEKSHA SINGH,
Etawah,
Uttar Pradesh

NOOR ZAHIRA,
Bengaluru,
Karnataka

RAJESHWARI ROY,
Delhi, NCR

MAHAK WADHWA
Delhi, NCR

HEMALI DAVE
Mumbai,
Maharashtra

THE SEARCH FOR BEAUTY CAN OFTEN BE UGLY AND DEMEANING. A RECENTLY-CONDUCTED SURVEY REVEALS SOME UNSETTLING STATISTICS ABOUT THE PRESSURES AND ANXIETIES AROUND CONFORMING TO THIS NARROW DEFINITION OF BEAUTY IN THE RUN-UP TO MARRIAGE. AN ALARMING 9 OUT OF 10 SINGLE WOMEN IN INDIA FEEL THAT THEY ARE JUDGED BASED ON THEIR LOOKS DURING THE MATCHMAKING PROCESS. THESE UNPLEASANT INCIDENTS ARE BOUND TO SHATTER ANY YOUNG WOMAN'S SELF-ESTEEM AND BODY CONFIDENCE. THE PRESSURE TO ADHERE TO A SINGULAR VISION OF BEAUTY IS INTENSE. WITH AN AIM TO END THIS #BEAUTYTEST, WE SPOTLIGHT THE PERSONAL JOURNEYS OF FIVE WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED BEAUTY BIASES ON THE BASIS OF BODY TYPE, SKIN COLOUR, HEIGHT, SCARS, AND HAIR TYPE AS THEY SHARE NARRATIVES OF HOW THEY'VE RISEN ABOVE THESE AND LOVE THE SKIN THEY ARE IN.

DEEKSHA SINGH, Etawah, Uttar Pradesh



YOUNG AND RESTLESS

The pressure to fit into the societal standard of beauty starts very early on in a woman's life, and she is conditioned to become critical about how she looks from her early years. It starts in the form of innocuous advice at a very young age (below 10 years) and intensifies as she becomes an adolescent (10 to 18 years), dealing with her changing body, peer pressure, and the innate need for acceptance in society. For Noor Zahira, a freelance journalist hailing from Bengaluru, colour-shaming is something she has had to contend with, with her family and relatives nudging her to lighten her skin tone. "Because my mother is fair-skinned and my father is of a darker complexion, I've grown up being told to scrub my face with turmeric, curd, or multani mitti in order to get fairer skin. When I entered my adolescent years, I was told that I would have to compromise on my choice of men for marriage—I would probably end up with somebody who isn't well educated or in a high position at a company, all because of the colour of my skin," she says.

The result of the negative comments girls hear at a young age is why a large number of them feel less confident about the way they look and are likely to experience stress, anxiety, and depression due to lower self-esteem.

"I was a chubby child, I was always told that if I lose weight now it won't create a problem in the future because when you grow up it is harder to lose weight," shares Mahak Wadhwa, an MBBS student based in New Delhi. "I never understood the relevance of those few kilos, but I have been subjected to this criticism for several years. Many times, my relatives pass these comments off as a joke, but they still sting."

Deeksha Singh, a news editor from Etawah, in Uttar Pradesh, recalls how she was treated differently from her peers because of the birthmark on her face. "When I was a child, I really enjoyed dancing but, despite being a talented dancer, I was always made to stand at the back of the class on the basis of my appearance. Being young and bogged down by the criticism, I used to try all sorts of remedies—I've used peel-off masks thinking that would erase my birthmark. People were very insensitive over the years—they would verbally mock me as well as physically pick and poke the spot asking me what had happened to my face. These were questions I was not ready to answer. I spent many moments crying alone in the bathroom."

The experiences faced in these impressionable years are known to have a deep impact on self-image and self-esteem for years to come. Explains Dr Anupama Kapoor, a psychologist, "There is a barrage of negative comments right from childhood. Children form these impressions at a very young age, from six to eight years, and wonder, 'Why am I like this? Why was I given this colour?' This creates a negative predisposition in everyday life." It is no surprise that 45 per cent of women interviewed recall being told: "You are not beautiful enough" and "Who will want to marry you" when they were young.

A SUITABLE GIRL

As a woman enters her twenties, the official time period of marriageable age, these issues and the outwardly criticism only seem to intensify. This is the time when years of societal conditioning come into play, pushing beauty stereotypes to the fore, a time when a woman is put under the ultimate scanner, not just by prospective grooms but also by their families. In India's conventional marriage system, beauty is a combination of height, weight, compatibility, and societal approval. The physical attributes are the number >



The pressure to fit into the societal standard of beauty
STARTS VERY EARLY ON IN A WOMAN'S LIFE,
and she is conditioned to become critical about
how she looks from her early years

NOOR ZAHIRA, Bengaluru, Karnataka



Appearance-related pressure
HITS AN ALL-TIME HIGH
AROUND THE TIME
when women seek a partner
or husband

one priority and, without a good photograph, 50 to 60 per cent of matches 'bomb' immediately, matchmakers say. Appearance-related pressure hits an all-time high around the time when women seek a partner or husband. Rajeshwari Roy, a Delhi-based dietician who was born and raised in Assam, shares how she was turned down by a prospective groom due to a sole focus on her height and without any consideration of her merits and education. "When you're working outside your hometown and you're of marriageable age, your family takes it upon themselves to look for a boy for you and, because I wasn't dating anyone at the time, they asked me to consider this route," she recalls. "But we didn't even end up meeting or communicating with each other; the guy was an NRI and he shot me down after merely looking at my photograph—rejecting me on the basis of being too short. It was truly cringe-worthy for me to witness well-educated men abiding by the beauty stereotypes of women needing to be tall, fair, and thin," she shares.

The rituals and processes that surround matchmaking play into these beauty stereotypes. The to-be-bride is told to take care of her skin, use home remedies, lose weight through exercise or diet, and asked to try makeup to hide any skin blemishes. Visits to specialists like dieticians, dermatologists, or cosmetologists are not uncommon. And it all comes down to the day of the first meeting between the potential bride and groom, where she takes the final beauty test under minute scrutiny from the groom and his family.

Hemali Dave, a Mumbai-based makeup artist, remembers being fresh out of college and meeting potential grooms in her early twenties. A naturally curly-haired girl, her hair turned out to be the subject of constant curiosity and criticism during these experiences. "I was introduced to this guy through a matrimonial website; we decided to meet at a coffee shop," she tells us. "Meeting somebody with the intention of getting married can already be awkward, however, from the very beginning, this guy started talking about my hair—he kept asking about how I manage it, how I comb it. This went on for 15 minutes; he couldn't seem to talk about anything else—it was quite annoying."

Even though their first meeting wasn't

*Today, self-esteem among girls is not just
a significant issue,*
**BUT ONE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES
OF OUR TIMES**

pleasant, Hemali decided to give it a second shot, and the suitor came to visit her at her home along with his family. Unfortunately, the conversation didn't seem to move beyond her physical appearance. "The boy's mother also started talking about my hair," Hemali recalls. "Neither of my parents have curly hair, and she went on to comment that I didn't resemble either of them, almost indicating that I was adopted. They didn't want to know anything about me or my interests; they solely focused on and criticised the way I looked. It was demeaning."

Deeksha, too, met with a similar reaction. She began seeing a boy introduced to her by a relative at a wedding in the hope of tying the knot in the imminent future. "The situation took a bad turn when, one day, on a phone call, he casually said to me, 'We can remove your birthmark post marriage; it will make you look more beautiful.' I was absolutely shocked, I remember hanging up in order to process the shock. Once I felt more composed, I texted him saying what he had said was absolutely awful and that we should end things; that was the last time we spoke," she shares.

THE DEEP IMPACT

Today, self-esteem among girls is not just a significant issue, but one of the biggest issues of our times—just 11 per cent of Indian girls claim to have high self-esteem (The 2017 Dove Global Girls Beauty and Confidence Report). "Women shut down and retreat into their inner world," explains Dr Chand, a psychologist and marriage therapist. "They read a lot, seek safety in innately solitary activities, and avoid social interaction."

This pattern proves true for many women. Noor recollects studying harder and undergoing immense pressure to over-perform in order to compensate with her achievements and draw away from her looks. Similarly, Rajeshwari began drowning herself in books, to give herself >

HEMALI DAVE Mumbai, Maharashtra



Tackling body image issues NEEDS TO START FROM A YOUNG AGE, *with* *counselling and self-esteem education*

perspective and wisdom. But, for many, the peer pressure and the constant judgement on appearance compels them to make alterations that serve more damage than improvement in the long run. “Fatigued by the texture of my hair, I went on to have it permanently straightened,” Hemali shares. “I spent a lot of money in the process, but the results didn’t last for long. I thought the straightening would tame my dry and frizzy hair but, when the new hair started growing

**MAHAK
WADHWA**
Delhi, NCR

in a span of a few months, it looked an absolute mess. By then, I had damaged my hair so much, there wasn’t anything more I could do to it.” The studies and data collected by Dove have shown that low self-esteem has an impact on all aspects of women’s lives, including social engagements, sense of self, decision-making, personal relationships, and professional interactions—and, therefore, on society at large as well. Appearance-related anxiety—the fear of negative evaluation of one’s appearance by others—can have serious, long-term repercussions. It can interfere with a woman’s daily functioning, leading to severe emotional stress, eating disorders, and social anxiety disorder, with the girl self-isolating in order to avoid social situations.

BEAUTY BEYOND THE TEST

Indian women want change, and it’s in our hands to change the narrative. We need a two-pronged approach—lower the sources of anxiety and raise body esteem. For all the wonderful women we interviewed for this story, empowerment came through a shift in perspective and through their own coming-of-age experiences. Noor’s breakthrough moment occurred at an office lunch table. “It was on Christmas day that I decided to defy my usual ‘colour palette’ by wearing a green kurta. One of my colleagues went on to say how surprised he was that this colour suited me. This comment triggered another colleague, who brought it to his attention that it was extremely inappropriate to pass such a caustic remark about how I look. Pleasantly, the entire lunch table backed him up. Later that night, I reflected on this and I realised I needed to take a stand for myself and not be silent. Gradually, I started going out in all those outfits I had bought but never worn. It has been a very long journey but it’s been worth it.”

Hemali faced a similar turning point. “My perspective shifted when I realised how much character my hair added to my personality. I realised I had to be confident and comfortable in my skin and not be bogged down by the constant comments. I also didn’t need to seek validation.





It's time we work with
DOVE'S #STOPTHEBEAUTYTEST TO CREATE A WORLD
where we can be beautiful, confident and empowered the way we are

People are always going to be judgemental. What we all need to go on is a mental diet; parents are so obsessed with giving their children an education through academics but what really fuels them are life lessons—we need to be kinder, more empathetic. Beauty doesn't have to have definition; everything can be beautiful. Don't be a victim of a doctored mentality; your confidence will take you places," she exhorts.

Tackling body image issues needs to start from a young age, with counselling and self-esteem education. A majority of women and health experts Dove spoke to agrees that there is an urgent need for change in how women are portrayed in the media and in pop culture. "I feel like Hindi cinema and advertising have a large role to play in breaking the stereotypes," shares Rajeshwari. "There need to be more narratives centred on women who might be small in build but have dynamic personalities.

If they start portraying stories like this, it will shape the mindset of a lot of people. It depends on today's writers and directors to make this happen." Eighty-four per cent of the women Dove spoke to said they believe that media and brands can play an important role in changing the way society defines beauty, while 68 per cent said matrimonial ads should ban the use of the words 'slim', 'tall', and 'fair'.

It's time to shift our focus from traditional, regressive and patriarchal standards of beauty, and see the beauty in every woman. It's time to chime in for change; we need to join forces to create a society where women feel beautiful and comfortable in their skin. Whether you're a parent, sibling, spouse or a friend, you can be the voice of change. There is a Noor, Rajeshwari, Mahak, Hemali and Deeksha among us all, and she's fabulous, stunning and gorgeous. The beauty test stops with us. **F**

How much beauty is enough?

It starts at an age when you are only playing 'house house'. They run fine-tooth combs through your hair, forcing your curls into submission. They scrub you with magic potions, to lighten the colour of your skin. Aunts in cheery voices shout suggestions to lose weight. They promise all this is for your own good. For a good match. You will thank them when you are of a marriageable age.

When you hear this for a decade, every day, you start believing it's true. By the time you are of 'marriageable age', you are already wondering if you have a 'marriageable face' and a 'marriageable body'.

On this journey to find a suitable boy, all eyes will be on you. His eyes. His family's eyes and sometimes even the eyes of your own family. They will weigh you with their eyes. Look down at your height. They will try to match the colour of your skin to the colour of their expectations. Or look up at your curls, only to imagine you with straight, silky hair.

Young lady, don't let somebody else's gaze decide whether you are beautiful. When their eyes speak to you, don't let them tell you, they think you are fat, dark or short. That you are anything short of beautiful.

Imagine spending a lifetime with those eyes following you. Silently pushing you towards changing the face and the body, that you own and love.

Their rejection is your liberation. Your beauty is not a decision, someone else can make. Your marriage is not a test, your beauty has to pass. So tell yourself, you will only say yes, when you are sure their eyes are on you to seek out your beauty, not your flaws.



Join the movement. Take the pledge.

#StopTheBeautyTest



Rajeshwari,
Nowgong (Assam)

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worldwidemedia.in

FEMINA

BEAUTY

SUNSHINE CANDY

Spring colours are invigorating, lively and boost positivity.

Bright hues like yellows, tangerines and reds, along with soft pinks, are shades that can transform your beauty game this season



SPRING SOUL

AMYRA DASTUR

brings in the season of spring with a riot of colour.

By **Eden Noronha** Photographs: **Vinay Javkar**

Fashion styling: **Yukti Sodha**

Fashion coordination: **Radhika Gattani**

TANGERINE DREAM

Celebrate colour with a blend of blush and eyeshadow pigments in shades of peach. Place reds at the inner corners of your lids, yellow on the outer corners, orange on the cheekbones, and tie them all together with shimmer dust.

Ivory tone-on-tone embellished gown, price on request, **Gaurav Gupta**; diamond stud earrings, ₹4,800, Gemstruck at **Minerali**; the rockpool mini ring, ₹3,200, **Studio Metallurgy**; silver-plated baguette ring, ₹2,800, excessive bling ring, ₹4,250, both **Anaqa** >



ETHEREAL BEAM

Look like an angel with soft hues of pink alongside light-reflecting shimmer pigments for a soft glow that is unrivalled. Place pink shimmer on your lids and cheekbones, and drench those lips in pearlescent gloss.

Stackable pebble rings, ₹9,800,
Cascade earrings, ₹14,800, both **Misho**



SUNSHINE BLOOM

Own the colour of the year 'Illuminating', which is a bright yellow, by contouring your lids with its vibrancy. Break away from the regular, and leave the centre of the lids bare for a negative space effect. Pucker up with popsicle-stained lips.

White plisse top, ₹9,500, **Zwaan**;
The universe of charms personalised
necklace, 15,500, **Outhouse**; Tritone
ring, 1,350, **Antares Jewels** >

BUBBLEGUM SCOPE


Graphic eyeliner is a winning aesthetic for the season. Opt for a pastel candy-pink eyeshadow as a transition shade, and draw along the eye socket with strokes of blue and white liner. Keep the lips fresh and moisturised with a pearly pink finish.

Frill blouse, ₹3,499, **H&M x Simone Rocha**; pearl earrings, ₹10,000, **Gemstruck at Minerali**



FREEDOM MARCH

Express yourself with those eyes! For an edgy and fresh avatar, make your go-to black liner define that gaze with squiggly impressions that trace along the eye sockets. Pair this with hydrated skin and lips.

Ruffle top, price on request, **Jade by Monica & Karishma**; convertible knotted flower choker, ₹18,800, **Misho** 

SHUNNING *stereotypes.* EMBRACING *beauty*

Beauty stereotyping—we've all fought it or succumbed to it. Very few women have been spared the horror of meeting the ideals of beauty dictated by the world. But change has to start from within, be it in the way we see ourselves or others. It's time to acknowledge that 'beauty' cannot be defined by or limited to certain characteristics. With Dove's **#StopTheBeautyTest**, we're urging you to take the onus on yourself. Celebrate your beauty and that of others around you. Grow from your struggles, grow with those of others as you uplift them. And, while you're at it, take inspiration from these strong women who went from being books judged by their cover to changing the narrative themselves!

BY KALWYNA RATHOD



“WAKE UP
EVERY DAY AND
LOVE YOURSELF...
THE NEXT STEPS
LINE UP”



Sharanya Iyer

Traveller

Beauty stereotyping followed travel content creator Sharanya Iyer (@trulynomadly on Instagram) all the way from childhood into corporate life! She says, “Growing up, I was told to stay out of the sun lest I tan (more), told to eat more because I was too scrawny, and casually short-shamed by schoolmates. Even when I entered corporate life and spent seven years working hard to climb the ladder with my talent and dedication, I was often thought of as an intern because of how ‘small’ I looked.” Believing, since a young age, that she

didn't meet beauty ideals, Iyer's confidence and self-esteem took a hit in big ways. She did what she thought would make her feel attractive and loved, be it using heaps of *chandan* and *haldi* to turn a few shades fairer, eating a whole lot of cheese to try and put on weight, or shaving her facial hair, albeit shabbily. It was only in her mid-teens that her life took a turn for the better. “I started reading authors like Jane Austen who were known for their work in furthering the narrative around women's empowerment and feminism,” Iyer says. “I realised that the work needs to start with me, before I can preach it to anyone else. That I need to de-condition my own mind and slowly erase all the beauty stereotypes that I had internalised.”

Cut to today. She gives herself an 8/10 when asked how comfortable she is in her skin. She says, “As a professional scuba diver and all-around, outdoor-crazy traveller, I love the stories my tan lines tell. I love how my skin reflects light and shines in the sun. I love how strong and fit I am to hike, swim, jump off cliffs, and rappel down mountainsides. I don't ever take low-angle shots to look taller, or wear high heels much anymore. This has all taken years of work, but I'm getting there. I still deal with adult acne, which comes in the way of my job when I'm on camera making travel videos, but, again, that's got a lot to do with me ‘allowing’ it to be a hindrance.”

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: “Once you've made that choice to not just accept yourself, but wake up every day and love yourself, the next steps line up,” Iyer tells us. “I now call out people around me who casually comment on something that doesn't fit their beauty ideal. I question them and don't just let it pass. The key is to stand up and not allow for this to be normalised in your immediate circles. You might feel like a small cog in the wheel, but change begins at home, and that's got to happen. We're all complicit, we're all victims of deep conditioning, but there is enough out there today to learn from and grow with. All you've got to do is start!” >

Sakshi Sindwani

Model & Content Creator

Keeping it real, body positivity proponent and plus-size model Sakshi Sindwani acknowledges that she still has her bad days, but she always bounces back to her bubbly self with a little time and a lot of affirmations. Recalling her school days, she says, “I was always a big girl, and I never got any attention from the boys, while all of my batch mates were getting these new crushes and proposals. I was just the cute, fat girl of the class—who would be interested in her? I suffered from excessive bullying growing up too, whether it was because of my body type—I have always been pear-shaped—or my height; I was the tallest and biggest in the class.

We all tan a lot in school, so I was a dusky child as well. With all this stereotyping, I thought the world was against me.”

Speaking about dealing with the stereotyping, Sindwani says, “I did not deal with it; I was, unfortunately, a victim of it. I developed an eating disorder because of the bullying in school and I lost a lot of weight. And, then, I started getting a lot of attention from the boys! I saw that everything revolved around beauty standards, so I told myself that when I fell in love, I’d fall in love with the heart, with the person, not for superficial characteristics. Deeply-ingrained thoughts like ‘success or love would all come to me depending on my looks’

can be dangerous for a 16-year-old. I needed to create the change that I wanted to see,

typically based on all the bad experiences I had growing up.” After six months of losing weight drastically, it also hit Sindwani that she’d been living an unsustainable lifestyle; she couldn’t go on with it. She says, “I started eating like a normal person and working for my health from there on. Usually, people aren’t

aware about their eating disorders until the time they are out of them; I dealt with things by acknowledging that I had an eating disorder and that I was going to end it. I also realised that gaining or losing weight was going to be a part and parcel of my life, because I tend to stress eat and I have anxiety too. So I became aware of the situation and told myself that the only constant in my life was going to be fitness. As long as I’m fit, capable of doing all the activities I’m assigned in a day, I’m good.”

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: “At 25, I started healing myself of all the things that I had heard as a 15-year-old. Whether it was related to eating or digesting food, going out anywhere, wearing anything, talking to anybody, opportunities that you get, fitness, everything had to be redone, and fundamentals had to be rebuilt for me to be able to love myself. Now, I get inspired by trolls and create content out of their negative comments! My advice to others: don’t take life too seriously, don’t form opinions about yourself based on other people’s opinions. Surround yourself with positive people, cut toxicity out of your life, accept yourself, give yourself affirmations, and, with time, things will be better.”

“AS LONG AS I’M FIT, CAPABLE OF DOING ALL THE ACTIVITIES I’M ASSIGNED IN A DAY, I’M GOOD”



no digital distortion





Aranya Johar

Spoken Word Poet

Her *Brown Girl's Guide To Gender* made Aranya Johar a viral social media sensation. Speaking of being a brown girl having to face beauty stereotyping, she says, "Often, it comes from people who are your well wishers. It doesn't even come as a critique, it comes as a solution to a problem you never knew you had. For example, when I was younger, someone told my mother that she could use a *haldi-dahi* paste for my dark elbows. My mother even went through with it, despite trying to shelter me as much as she could, because an insecurity she never knew was birthed in her." Talking about other instances, Johar adds, "In school too, I was called '*kaalu*' because I used to get tanned from swimming. I also remember this certain summer camp I had gone to; I came back super tanned and people made jokes about it. Another summer, I gained weight because of some medication.

"WHAT
I'M TRYING TO
CHASE IS JUST
THE BEST
VERSION
OF MYSELF."

When I put up a video online, many comments were primarily discussing my weight gain, even though the number on the scale corresponded with my height. Just because I was skinnier in my previous videos, it set this precedent that I had to be skinny in all of my videos, which is very unrealistic."

Johar notes that stereotyping is internalised and takes constant unlearning to deconstruct. She says, "It's brought up at an age where you are just consuming, learning, from other people, and you don't have a mind of your own. As a kid, I was not bothered about my looks, but, as I started getting older, I used to ask my mother to get fairness creams for me, used to apply *haldi* paste on Sundays, and the like. I also feel our insecurities come from seeing other women being insecure about things they have. For example, when I was growing up, I heard an older cousin of mine critiquing her own stretch marks, and, now that I have stretch marks, my first thought is to be a little shy or embarrassed of them."

When it comes to dealing with the stereotyping, Johar feels it's all about letting herself be. She says, "It's easier said than done, and I still look at certain parts of my body as flaws, but it takes realising that I would not look at them this way if someone didn't tell me to or someone didn't look at them like that in themselves. It's about reminding myself, 'No, this is what they want me to believe, this is what they want me to think'. There is a subtle rebellion, a protest in just embracing yourself as you are."

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: "We shouldn't be chasing the idea of perfection; it's something we are never going to achieve," avers Johar. "What I'm trying to chase instead is just the best version of myself, which is not as per mainstream media, but simply the kindest, smartest and most caring I can be. To others, I'd like to recommend reading *The Beauty Myth*; it really helped me challenge my idea of beauty, of what is expected of me, and helped me understand how beauty is a currency to the world we live in. Finally, it boils down to people profiting off our insecurities, so I would suggest people experiencing such stereotyping ask themselves what birthed this thought, where it came from, why it exists. You can't change the Internet, you can't change other people, but you can change yourself and the way you think." >



"I ONLY HAVE THIS ONE BODY AND SKIN, AND I HAVE TO RESPECT IT!"

rejected for their height, weight, and whatnot, and I knew I couldn't put myself through it."

Growing up, a lot of Kapila's self-worth came from how others viewed her. She says,

"Others' perceptions of me became my perception of myself. Because no one

tells you that this isn't the right or productive way of thinking, you end up internalising all of it and it becomes toxic. As you grow up, these issues amplify and affect every sphere of your life from love and relationships to career. I didn't know any better,

I didn't know how to deal with the

stereotyping, and I didn't have any

answers to it. You're not equipped with

skills, not taught empathy lessons, not taught knowing your self-worth; it's something you learn along the way." And it was only when Kapila was pursuing her undergraduate studies that she started learning the right things! She says, "It was a women's college, and, there, I saw liberated, emancipated women who were comfortable in their own skin. The image of women who had discarded their bras or quit shaving was a stark contrast to the flawless women depicted in pop culture. That was liberating for me, and that's where my journey of exploring, understanding, and accepting myself began."

Kapila is super comfortable in her skin today, noting that her body has always been with her through her ups and downs, negativity and trolling, when working out or having fun, giving her the support she's needed to do it all and helped her be what she is today. She says, "I do have my off days, but who doesn't! I only have this one body and skin, and I have to respect it!"

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: "I usually don't have the time to pay heed to negativity. Years of self-hate and self-doubt have dissipated just now, and, if I take nonsense seriously, I'll be regressing. I only want to move in a direction that's uplifting and progressive. What others say about you is what they think about you; it's important to know what you think of yourself. Your personal growth matters, and what other people think of you is not going to benefit you, unless it's constructive feedback, which rarely comes. Ignore the toxicity that, at times, comes from a place of insecurity; you can only hope such people find peace and acceptance. Recognise and appreciate what adds value to your life, and distance yourself from people who focus on bringing you down."

Kusha Kapila

Digital Content Creator

Believe it or not, our beloved Billi Masi, aka the sassy Kusha Kapila, often had to tell people she was older than she really was because they wouldn't believe she was just a 10-year-old. She says, "I matured early, so I looked like I was 15 years old. I faced plenty of prejudices growing up; I used to feel like an anomaly. My elder sister was a big girl, and I had started showing the same signs. the pressure really gets to you at family functions with relatives casually commenting that I'd turn out to be a big girl too, because my sister was the same. As a child, you don't know how to process these things, but I had seen my sister and cousins go through meeting potential suitors and being

Tahira Kashyap

Writer & Filmmaker

Coming from a progressive family and being biologically closer to accepted standards of beauty, you'd think Tahira Kashyap had it all. But was it really like that for her? She replies, "There were few things that were not said but understood. For example, playing too much out in the sun was always an issue; I remember my grandmother telling me that I would turn dark. At that point of time, you don't realise that you are actually looking down upon a certain colour. Overtly, I was never told that being fair is better or being a certain height is better. But, as a sensible kid or adolescent, you do understand that there are a lot of praises that are heading towards a certain type. That type then becomes your role model, and, at a very subliminal level, the prejudice sort of creeps in. I'm not proud to say this, I was closer to that concept of acceptable beauty, but there was a time when I had a growth spurt, and, suddenly, I shot up from 5'6" to 5'8". I became very conscious because there were boys of that height, and girls aren't supposed to be very tall or anything that can intimidate the other gender."

Kashyap is happy that the right conversations are taking place now, and that people are trying to break stereotypes. Elaborating on her own experiences, she says, "I have a strong, medium build. So, later on, I also inflicted a lot of pain on myself in terms of the number of hours I put into working out, the kind of stupid diets I did. I did become a certain size, but it was so against the anatomy of my body that there was a big conflict, and it was something that I wasn't. That really affected my self-esteem and happiness quotient."

Today, Kashyap has made friends with herself, but she accepts that she's still a work in progress. She says, "There are still days when I hit rock bottom, but the awareness is there to not to give up on myself. I pull myself up because I know that there is life beyond feeling low and miserable about myself. And, though that feeling is not correct, I am not going to brush it under the carpet because that's what makes us human! We are bound to feel happy and also to have self doubts about ourselves. But what I can definitely say is: I'm better than what I was 10 years ago!"



"HAVE
UTMOST
GRATITUDE FOR
EVERYTHING, AND
SAIL THROUGH
WITH HIGH
SPIRITS"

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: "I think we first need to clarify our own notions of beauty. Accept yourself because no two people are the same; once you enjoy, identify your uniqueness, you'll be able to extend the same feeling towards other people. I realised with time that I am not supposed to look a certain way, because looking my own way is also special and unique, and I need to celebrate

that. A self-check, to begin with, will have a ripple effect, and that happiness quotient will multiply once you accept other people too, and the world will become a better place. Another way of getting through a bad phase in life is knowing that it's going to turn around.

The idea is to maintain a very stable head when you are in your highs and to not feel defeated when you are in your lows. Embrace challenges, because these are the opportunities given to us to go one level higher in life. Have utmost gratitude for everything, and sail through with high spirits. And, when it comes to people who are happy whiling away their time trolling you, don't take them seriously; they'll eventually give up!" >



"I NO LONGER LET NEGATIVE ENERGY OR NEGATIVE COMMENTS AFFECT MY ENERGY."



Priya Malik

Artist

When the feisty Priya Malik recites one of her intense poems, you shut up and listen. But how was it for her having to listen to prejudiced comments about her looks and being subjected to comparisons using so-called beauty ideals as the standard? She says, "I've lived in a joint family, and I think it all starts at home—you start getting compared to others, your height is measured, your hair, skin colour, facial features are compared. I was always told my nose is too big, my eyes are too small, and that, though my skin colour is fair, my features are not sharp. What happens next is you start internalising all you hear, so, when you look at yourself in the mirror, especially when you're growing up, you start believing those things. And it took me a long time to accept myself as who I

am!" Speaking further about how the stereotyping affected her self-esteem, Malik says, "In the '90s, when I was growing up, the media was very white-washed, so you only saw a particular kind of beauty being promoted in mainstream literature and films. So I began to compare myself with what I saw and with other teenage girls around me. It was also a time when the beauty pageant industry grew, and I remember

this funny incident—my mom had told me that a girl's height stops increasing once she starts menstruating, so, when I got my first period in school, I was crying out loud to my friends and my teacher saying I could never become Miss Universe now because you have to be 5'7". for that and I was 5'2". From finding all this strange to venturing outside without applying makeup to reaching a point where she's comfortable even shooting without it, Malik is now in a revolutionary love affair with herself. She says, "Instead of combating the stereotyping externally, I had internalised it to such a degree that even until my late twenties, I didn't find myself beautiful. I was not self-accepting, and, in order to compensate for those insecurities, I would find external ways to validate myself, be it via social media or in other ways. Now, I think there is an absolute beauty in my imperfections, and I think the more flawed I am, the more beautiful I am. I also feel that my skin, hair, nails have become so much better since I entered this relationship of self-acceptance with myself."

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: "On social media, I follow a policy called 'delete or defeat'. Earlier, I used to end stereotyping by defeating people with clever comebacks, but now I believe in deleting, muting and blocking as I think what angers you controls you. I no longer let negative energy or negative comments affect my energy because I don't want that to control my narrative, my beauty, and my relationship with myself. And my advice to the younger generation: comparison is the thief of happiness. Remember that, be it on social media or in real life, everything that you see might have a filter on it, what you see might not be real. It's also important that when you see yourself in the mirror, you should know that this is real, this is what we all look like—puffy eyes, untamed hair, swollen face. Uniqueness is beautiful, difference is beautiful, and the beauty of beauty—it's not the same for everybody."

Natasha Noel

Yoga Instructor

Stereotyping all through her childhood had little Natasha Noel believing she had to be a certain way to please everyone in her life. The now happy, fit and fabulous yoga instructor says, “I had to deal regularly with statements like, ‘You need to have nice, long hair’, and ‘Never cut your hair’, and notions that a woman needs to be skinny but also curvy in the right places for her man to be happy. When I was younger, my legs were

bigger compared to the rest of my body, and I used to get called ‘fatty’ a lot, which used to be very embarrassing, to the point that I wanted to chop off part of my legs just to fit into smaller shorts or jeans!” Noel eventually learned, the hard way, that her legs weren’t really that big, her thick sideburns weren’t that much of a concern, and how she looked didn’t even matter in the first place. She says, “The stereotyping had got to me, so I would not eat. I still have some scars on my thighs because I was trying to cut the excess off. I dealt with it very badly because I had severe body-image issues and I would think the worst of myself. I couldn’t be who or what I really wanted to be. And it made me feel even worse about myself because I constantly wanted to be skinny! But, as I grew up, I realised that, regardless of my mental conditioning, I just wanted to be strong, mentally and physically. I wanted to be happy, fit and healthy rather than being a contorted notion of someone else’s idea of ‘beautiful’ or rise to their standards of beauty.”

How to #StopTheBeautyTest: “For me, therapy and yoga helped a lot, but nothing would have helped me if it weren’t for the willingness to change from within,” says Noel. “I also had this breakthrough—when you feel bad about what people say when they try to bring you down, that is when you realise your insecurities. And you can work on them to get stronger! Today, if anyone tells me I have big thighs, I’ll say, ‘Yeah, and I can crush you and the whole patriarchy with them!’ And this isn’t coming from a place of resentment; it’s just that I have become that much more secure about myself and resilient, so, if you’re trying to break me, that’s not going to happen. Also, know that a lot of people want to bring others down because they themselves are hurting, so don’t take it seriously. Understand that you are gorgeous, amazing, brilliant. Always choose to be a good human being. Don’t hurt people just because you’re hurting. Because, at the end of the day, who you are and what you do matters most.” **F**

“IF YOU’RE TRYING TO BREAK ME, THAT’S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN”

no digital distortion





ALL INCLUSIVE!

With gender-neutral products, the new wave in the beauty industry is moving a step closer towards inclusivity, writes **Sukriti Shahi**

For as long as we can remember, makeup and beauty have been associated with women. From the colour of the packaging to ads and brand billboards, beauty products have primarily been targeted at women.

Last year when global pop singer Rihanna launched her skincare range Fenty Beauty with a video that featured her alongside a couple of male models, it seemed different, to say the least. That was soon followed by the much-anticipated launch of Humanrace by American singer Pharrell Williams, who describes it as “a collection of all-gender skincare products”. The beauty industry is now untagging gender on products with phrases like ‘all-gender’, ‘genderless’, and ‘gender-neutral beauty’.

Men and Makeup—Down The Ages

Contrary to the idea that makeup is synonymous with women, history shows how men of different ethnicities used makeup centuries ago.

For instance, makeup was deep-rooted in Egyptian culture; it was unusual for men to leave home without putting on their eye makeup. It’s interesting to note that they used pigmented colours to create





an almond-eye shape, and that the colour on their nails indicated their power and status in society. Similarly, Roman men were quite known back then for their elaborate skincare routines. The use of fragrant oils and mud baths was common, but they also used powder to lighten the complexion and put rouge on their cheeks.

It's equally interesting to note that even Indian men were not oblivious to the

power of makeup. While kohl was one of the products most widely used by Indian men (the tradition is still prevalent among a few cultural groups), they also flaunted a *bindi* (now associated with married women) for spiritual purposes.

So, when did makeup become gender-specific? Beauty products have certainly been sold to men for years, but under the repackaged category termed 'grooming' or with tags like 'for him' and 'for her', which worked to create the gender divide.

Tapping On The Change

The global industry took note of genderless beauty when a brand as big as Fenty >

Beauty products have certainly been sold to men for years, but under the repackaged category termed 'grooming' or with tags like 'for him' and 'for her', which worked to create the gender divide





Beauty started that conversation, but this change isn't recent; the industry has been welcoming the concept of gender fluidity for a few years now. The process, however, has been slow. It was an iconic moment in the history of beauty when, in 1994, Calvin Klein launched CK One—"a fragrance for a man or a woman". It ignited an entirely new conversation around gender-neutrality in the beauty industry. In 2016, when the globally-regarded makeup brand CoverGirl chose James Charles as its 'cover boy', it led brands to talk about the wide scope of makeup for men. The bigger players in the industry are certainly keeping the conversation alive. Last year, Gucci Beauty launched Gucci Mémoire d'Une Odeur, a fragrance positioned as genderless with Harry Styles as the face of the campaign.

So, to what do we owe this change? Khayl Reis, co-founder and CEO of Glutaweis, believes that gender-wise categorisation of beauty products will soon become a thing of the past. "The main impetus to develop genderless beauty brands is to fulfil the future market need of the shifting consumer mindset of Gen Z who are more socially conscious and oriented towards broader lifestyle choices. Eighty per cent of new consumers from the current generation adhere to the ideology that gender doesn't define a person but is a reflection of culture. With shifting mindsets, and cultural and boundary blending, this new generation of potential consumers does not buy into the

concept of traditional identity markers," explains Reis. "In this day and age, the concept of gender is rapidly evolving and becoming more inclusive," agrees Dhruv Bhasin, Co-Founder, Arata. "We aren't restricted to traditional gender norms anymore."

And, more importantly, men today are not averse to the idea of wearing makeup, and social media is helping them build confidence. Influencers like Ankush Bahuguna and Siddharth Batra have gained a fan following eager to consume relatable content about men wearing makeup and their skincare



**Men today
are not
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the idea
of wearing
makeup, and
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is helping
them build
confidence**

routines. "Influential campaigners and representatives of the beauty segment have used social media platforms as their mouthpieces," Reis points out. "They have actively campaigned for genderless products and inclusivity, and what started out at one point as a bold or progressive idea has now become very acceptable." The idea is to break stereotypical shackles, which, in turn, is fuelling the idea of gender fluidity among beauty brands. "Social media has always played a key role in disrupting pre-existing gender norms and pushing for a genderless societal view," agrees Bhasin. "It is such an essential tool in this regard, and we ought to use these platforms to promote inclusivity, tolerance, and a genderless worldview."

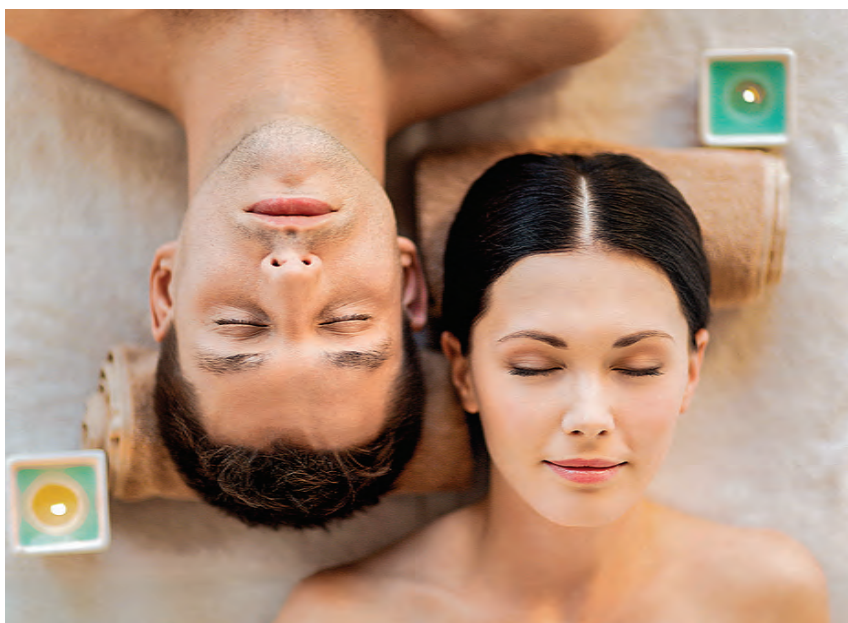
Stepping Ahead

While Gen Z and the influencers are challenging gender-based norms, we still have a long way to go. Brands need to diversify their product offerings and rework their marketing strategies. Gone are the days when products were labelled for the use of

a specific gender. “We also need as many male models and creators as we have their female counterparts in the beauty industry,” aver Megha Asher and Pritesh Asher, founders of Juicy Chemistry, a range of certified organic products. “This will help everyone resonate better with the concept of beauty and self care.” The duo also talks of the role of packaging in fighting the gender-based divide. “We have grown up to believe that certain colour palettes belong to a particular gender, but times have changed and we are all evolving now.”

Reis talks of how we still attach colour theory to branding and, at the outset, as consumers, we immediately typecast products and packaging based on their tooling, colour, look, and design. “For example, think of a pink box with satin lace; there is no way packaging like that can claim to be unisex. It just does not work with the mindset of the unisex target audience, who would already have labelled that product for feminine utility,” he explains.

It's time for brands to embrace the change. Today's consumer is young and enthusiastic, and doesn't want to accept the beauty norms



put forward by the generations before them. Their style icons are unique too; they hype personalities like Billie Eilish and Ranveer Singh who are constantly challenging stereotypes through fashion. Needless to say, they expect nothing less from the beauty industry. **F**

TRIED & TESTED

TEAM FEMINA HAS EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS OF THE ALL-NEW MAD ABOUT CURLS HAIRCARE RANGE BY SCHWARZKOPF PROFESSIONAL

Curly hair demands different treatment, especially when it comes to hair care -- for definition and bounce, and frizz control, all of which are factors that define healthy, natural, textured locks. The new Schwarzkopf Professional MAD ABOUT CURLS hair care range promises to liberate all curl patterns with its high-foam cleansing shampoo, butter conditioning treatment and a leave-in defining curl cream. This hydrating hair care range has just dropped in India, and Team Femina went in to discover its potential. They share their experiences.



“As someone with curly hair, I am on a constant lookout for products that enhance my natural curl definition, and that also last and help to moisturise and eliminate frizz at the same time. The MAD ABOUT CURLS range by @Schwarzkopf Professional does exactly that and helps me maintain a soft, bouncy mane with its shampoo, conditioner and twisting definition leave-in CURL CREAM. Each product helps my locks to look and feel their best in just three steps. Shop at Nykaa.com”

– **Eden Noronha** (Beauty Writer, Femina)

I BROKE UP with my straightener this lockdown and I couldn't be happier! I learned to embrace my naturally wavy hair. The transition wasn't easy. I was bombarded with so many techniques and a long list of must-have products, but I pulled through. and the Schwarzkopf Professional MAD ABOUT CURLS SULFATE-FREE shampoo and the super-hydrating BUTTER treatment became my hair heroes! The sulfate-free shampoo gently cleansed my hair while moisturising and helping to give my hair definition that lasts. And the best part is that, while the butter treatment deeply nourished my hair, it also tamed my frizz! We use butters for lips and skin, so why leave our hair out? So, if you're a wavy-haired girl like me, go straight for specialised products that give amazing results! Shop at Nykaa.com.”

– **Simran Gandhi** (Script Writer, WWM Brand Solutions)

HOT RIGHT NOW

All that's fresh and fun on the beauty shelf



CROWNING GLORY

While 2020 was about skincare, in 2021, it is time for some TLC for hair. E-comm giant Nykaa has recently launched its all-natural hair care product line—Nykaa Naturals Hair. The range includes a shampoo and conditioner in two variants—apple cider vinegar and ginger, and onion and fenugreek. Get ready to bid adieu to hair and scalp concerns such as dandruff and hair fall with products that are gentle on your locks.

Price: ₹399

Available at: [Nykaa.com](https://www.nykaa.com)



EYES ON YOU!

Increased screen time, lack of sleep, and stress take a toll on the under-eye area. Dark circles and fine lines are the two common issues almost all of us are dealing with right now. Kiehl's new launch, Powerful Strength Line-Reducing and Dark Circle Diminishing Vitamin C Eye Serum, is perhaps the skincare solution we need. With powerful ingredients like vitamin C and tri-peptide complex, it helps reduce puffiness and dark circles.

Price: ₹3,600

Available at: [Kiehls.in](https://www.kiehls.in)



LUSCIOUS LOCKS

Looking to infuse some life into your dull and brittle hair? Treat it with the goodness of Indian gooseberry with WOW Skin Sciences Amla Hair Oil. Blended with cold-pressed oils rich in omega fatty acids, vitamin E, minerals and antioxidants, the hair oil helps boost circulation, treat scalp irritation and strengthen hair roots.

Price: ₹329 onwards

Available at: [Buywow.in](https://www.buypow.in)



POUT PERFECT

What's better than the right hint of colour on your lips with optimum hydration? Benefit launches California Kissin' Colorbalm moisturising lip balm in 12 vibrant shades that are perfect buys for the season. Its lightweight formula, with wild mango butter, hyaluronic acid and loofah seed oil, provides eight hours of lasting hydration.

Price: ₹1,950

Available at: [Sephora stores](https://www.sephora.com)



GLOW GETTER

There's nothing better than well-hydrated, naturally-glowing skin. Clinique's new Moisture Surge 100-Hour Auto-Replenishing Hydrator is a gel cream designed to provide hydration, over 10 layers deep. With aloe vera and hyaluronic acid, it promises to boost hydration and strengthen the skin barrier in four weeks.

Price: ₹950 onwards

Available at: [Clinique stores](https://www.clinique.com)



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Schwarzkopf

MAKEUP

How do I prevent makeup from oxidising?

The oil secreted by the face reacts with the pigment in makeup and oxidises it. To prevent this, one must use a facial mist pre makeup and a setting spray post. This helps to keep facial oils down. Using a compact for frequent touch-ups will also help. Basically, a matte base will keep oxidising at bay.

KAPIL BHALLA

Renowned celebrity makeup artist



SKIN

How do I reapply sunscreen over makeup?

It's best to apply a thick layer (half a teaspoon) of tinted sunscreen on the face and neck before applying makeup. Opt for a foundation and a concealer that has SPF. To reapply sunscreen over makeup, opt for powder-based sunscreens. These will not only protect your face from UVA and UVB, but also keep sweat in check.

Dr JAISHREE SHARAD

Celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and CEO of Skinfiniti Aesthetic Skin & LASER Clinic, Mumbai



HAIR

Does frequent hair colouring accelerate greying?

The chances of an increase in greying due to excessive colouring is a myth, but one should use professional hair colour brands that are free of ammonia. Greying of hair is largely due to genetic factors. Deficiencies of vitamin B6, B12, D and E can also lead to premature greying, as can an improper diet! 🍌

SAVIO JOHN PEREIRA

Celebrity hairstylist and founder and creative director of Savio John Pereira Salon



YOU ASK

The one-stop panel for all your skin, makeup, and hair questions

Send in your queries to femina@wmm.co.in

From the *HEART*

SHAHNAZ HUSAIN'S journey is nothing short of pure inspiration. We look at how the Founder, Chairperson & Managing Director of the Shahnaz Husain Group did it all



Five decades ago, Shahnaz Husain set out on her phenomenal journey, becoming one of India's leading women entrepreneurs and carving out her global empire for Ayurvedic Beauty Care. Indeed, on International Woman's Day, she symbolises Woman Power. Husain became a Harvard Case Study on Brand Creation and now she is a Harvard Subject on 'Emerging Markets', in recognition of the international market created by her for Indian

HUSAIN
BECAME A
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Ayurvedic products. She has done India proud by receiving several prestigious international awards. The one closest to her heart is the Success Award. She became the first woman in the world in 104 years to receive the World's Greatest Woman Entrepreneur Award from Success, the US-based business magazine. She recently received the Promoting Ayurveda Worldwide and Ayurveda Excellence Awards in the British Parliament.

Among her other prestigious awards are the Woman of the Year award in the UK; Leading Woman Entrepreneur from National Foundation of Woman Business Owners, USA; Featured in the UN sponsored Woman of the Decade; Selected Woman of the Year by the American Biographical Institute, USA; Outstanding Woman Entrepreneur award from Global Quality Management, UK; Woman of the Millennium award from Global Indian Congress, USA; Woman of the Year award from the Governor of California, USA; Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by Enterprise Asia, Malaysia; Asian Women Power 100 Award in Lloyds Top 100 list for distinguished achievement in the respective field; Women Entrepreneur of the Year Award Winner of the Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards from Enterprise Asia, Malaysia; Asia's Leading Woman in Business Award from WIL Forum Asia, in Malaysia; Woman of the Year Asian Achievers Award in London from Asian Business Publications Ltd (ABPL). She also received the New York based IWECA Award for Global Woman Entrepreneur.

Husain's Ayurvedic formulations have sold at leading international stores and retail outlets worldwide, achieving record-breaking sales and receiving Awards for Quality Excellence in London, Paris, New York and Geneva. Indeed, Shahnaz Husain's forays into the international market, promoting Brand India and Ayurveda, have been a phenomenal success story. To quote *The Washington Post*, "Shahnaz Husain is a name to reckon with. To her exclusively goes the credit of bringing the therapeutic values of herbs out of the mists of antiquity and legend, and combining them with scientific research and practice. Shahnaz Husain has done so much for India's image abroad that she truly deserves the sobriquet of India's Beauty Ambassador." ■

PURPLE HAZE

Get groovy with impactful colours, says **Eden Noronha**



Lime Crime Venus XL Eyeshadow Palette

Maybelline New York Color Sensational Lip Liner



Kiko Holiday Gems 4D Lash Mascara

Revlon Kiss Cushion Lip Tint



MyGlamm Manish Malhotra Haldi Eye Gel

The look
VIOLET ROSE

Wear it to
A DATE



Kama Ayurveda Rose Jasmine Face Cleanser



ENN Rice There Face Toner



Too Faced Diamond Light Diamond Fire Bronzer



Colorbar Perfect Selfie Primer Oil



L'Oréal Paris Revitalift 1.5% Hyaluronic Acid Serum 3



Clinique Beyond Perfecting Foundation + Concealer

Charlotte Tilbury Legendary Brows

FACE

Cleanse, tone, and moisturise your face.

Prep your skin with a hydrating primer. Create a flawless, light base with skincare-infused concealer or foundation. Spritz on a setting spray to hold your base intact.

EYES

Apply an eye primer on your lids. Blend a bright red shadow shade on the lids, into the crease of the lids, and on the lower lash lines. Next, apply a violet eyeshadow shade on the lids, leaving the inner corners with the red pigment. Blend well. Define the lashes with mascara.

CHEEKS

Contour with a shimmery bronzer below the cheekbones, and at the hairline and jawline. Highlight the high points of your face such as the cheekbones, the bridge of the nose, and Cupid's bow with a liquid highlighter. Blend the blush on the apples of your cheeks.

LIPS

Scrub and moisturise your pout to get rid of dry, chapped lips. Line your lips with a neutral pink-hued lip liner. Fill in your lips with a light pink lip tint. Swipe on an iridescent shimmer-infused lip gloss. **E**

Bring about an energising change by using electrifying hues that captivate at first glance. Shades of violet, when paired with deep red, create a kaleidoscopic effect that will effortlessly elevate your makeup game, especially when incorporated as the dual eyeshadow trend. The results are intensely alluring.

USE AN EYE GEL TO REVIVE TIRED EYES

Guerlain Eye Stay Primer

EYE-STAY PRIMER

Perfect Selfie Primer Oil

Base de maquillage de l'huile Selfie Parfait For All Skin Types 35ml / 1.18 fl. oz. e

BASE PAUPIÈRE LISSANTE LONGUE TENUE

SMOOTHING & LONG-WEAR EYE PRIMER

Guerlain

MIRACLE GLOW

PRO-ILLUMINATOR

MAX FACTOR



Max Factor Miracle Glow Universal Highlighter

CAREER CHANGERS

662 full-time employees from varied sectors responded to an Indeed Survey exploring the biggest reasons for a shift

81%

were unhappy in the previous job or sector.

79%

wanted greater flexibility.

79%

wanted more compensation.

78%

didn't feel challenged.

77%

needed more opportunities for professional growth.

MAKING THE RIGHT MOVES

Changing careers can be daunting, but it's doable if you plan well. Career counsellor **MONALISA SINGH** shares tips on making the change with **Radhika Sathe-Patwardhan**

Change is scary, and it can affect you quite drastically. A career change can be all the more intimidating because it affects your financial stability, your life possibilities, and status. It is easy to stay in your comfort zone, but making big shifts over the course of your career isn't uncommon today. More people are making career changes. As the perceived comfort of lifelong job security has unravelled over the last year, expectations have grown, as has dissatisfaction. The temptation to change careers is now more widespread, and it can involve moving sectors, firms and occupations for better opportunities and in pursuit of new challenges.

There are certain factors that drive one to make a career change, ranging from the need for a new work environment, for career progression and to meet new interests; it could also simply be that you need a new boss. Changing your career might make you happier at work, it might boost your salary prospects, and it can prove to be a good decision for your professional life and overall well-being.

All this is dependent, however, on your making a well-thought-out and informed



IT IS EASY TO
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ZONE, BUT
MAKING BIG
SHIFTS OVER
THE COURSE
OF YOUR
CAREER
ISN'T
UNCOMMON
TODAY

decision, rather than an impulsive one that could prove counterproductive. Read on to ensure that you make the process of a career change a smooth one...

QUESTION YOURSELF

Do you find your current job boring? Is there no growth potential? Is work-life balance hampered? Do you not get along with your manager or colleagues? Do you not find respect and trust at your workplace? Ask yourself these questions first and answer honestly. Ask yourself this additional question: is this job adding any value to your life? The answers that arise to these questions will make it easier to make a decision. Analyse your reasons, review your values, interests, your personality traits, and skill sets, and only then take the plunge.

Make an informed decision and stay true to it



FACE YOUR FEARS

Whether you're thinking of changing your career after just a year or many years, you will feel some anxiety. Think about what you are giving up, and what you have to gain. Assess the overall value proposition. Ask yourself why you are at this juncture, and what your next move should be. Being in the same career or setting for years can often limit your ambition, your will to excel, and make you complacent. The great thing is that you are in the driver's seat and you get to decide which action will enable your career pivot.

CONSIDER THE AGE ANGLE

There is a direct correlation between an individual's age and their risk-taking appetite. Your responsibilities increase as you grow older, and this decreases your ability to take risks. Moreover, the soundness of your financial status is also a key parameter that impacts your decision to change careers. There have been many people who have gone in for a successful career change quite late in their lives,

because they had the financial stability to back them up.

UNDERGO PERSONALITY AND SKILLS ANALYSIS

Check and evaluate your personality, skill sets, values and interests. Research the skills that are in demand within the industry you are hoping to move into. It's very important that you keep yourself abreast of the advancements in technology, the changing skill sets, and the evolving demands of different job profiles. Do your homework so that you know what kinds of skills and training your new industry demands.

TAKE STOCK OF MONEY MATTERS

Any career change comes with a certain amount of risk. Think about your current financial situation before jumping. It is important to understand that you could be starting from scratch, and it could be tough on your finances. It is always wise to be financially stable before you jump ship.

UNDERSTAND YOUR CONSTRAINTS

Carefully consider the resources available to you when you're thinking about making a big professional move. Every individual mulling a career change will be faced with various constraints: financial and psychological >

CASE FILES

SONALI KOTHARI: She made a drastic career change when she became a chocolatier from being the COO of an aviation company, where she used to look after international business. Too much travel, and paucity of time for family and kids, prompted her to take this call. Being an aviation expert was her profession's requirement, but she also had exceptional culinary skills, which worked to her advantage. She was also financially well covered, when she took the calculated decision to turn entrepreneur.

SUDHANSHU: He worked as an engineer with a cement company. When the dot-com boom came, he developed IT skill sets, struggled for two years, and landed a job with a giant IT firm. Working there for 15 years or so, he developed financial acumen, learned financial skills and the nuances of the stock market. One fine day, he thought of starting his own venture, a financial investment support company. His calling stemmed from his need to do something new and challenging.

- Provided by Monalisa Singh

IT IS ALWAYS
WISE TO BE
**FINANCIALLY
STABLE
BEFORE YOU
JUMP SHIP**

anxieties, skill set mismatches, the demands of family life, the fear of venturing into uncharted territory, logistics, etc. Work out what these barriers are, whether these constraints are surmountable, what the work-around is. Assessing constraints and planning for those will help make the transition smoother for you. It will also help you in negotiations.

EXPLORE THE OPTIONS THOROUGHLY

Create a list of all the career options that interest you and meet your skill sets, your career aspirations and goals. Explore those carefully and diligently. Weigh all the opportunities vis-a-vis your expectations. Make a short list of the most suited ones. There is no short-cut to exploring career change; it has to be methodical, calculated, informed and decisive.

KEEP PLAN B READY

What would happen if you don't make the change well? While we always dream about the brighter aspects of a new career, we tend to forget to think about the darker side. Visualise yourself in your near future, and keep Plan B ready for if things don't work out. The career change might not work for any number of reasons, and you have no control over that. You do, however, have the chance to have a back-up plan in place to fall

ACCORDING TO LINKEDIN'S CAREER PATHWAY SURVEY, 2019...

33% Millennials changed their jobs within the last five years

20% Gen X changed jobs within the last five years

40% Gen Z were in their last job only for six months to one year

28% Gen Z are likely to change their job in less than a year

61% Millennials would consider switching careers

18% Baby Boomers would consider switching careers

44.91% Millennials are more likely to change companies while considering a career change

Reference: Gen Z: 22 years and below, Millennials: 23-38 years, Gen X: 39-54 years and Baby Boomers: 55 years and above



Be patient and give 100 per cent to your new career

back upon. A plan without a back-up is never a plan.

NETWORK!

To successfully change careers, it is important to be out there and network with other professionals. Not only do you connect with people who might give you a helping hand, you might also find your support group or mentor who will share their experiences and knowledge. And a recommendation never hurts!

DON'T EXPECT INSTANT GRATIFICATION

When you start on a new career, you will not start reaping dividends from day one. You will have to work hard, prove your mettle, and make a mark for yourself. Only then will you be appreciated in word and pay packet.

A career change brings with it more friction, disruptions and risk than simply staying on a more linear, traditional career path. Yes, it might feel a bit scary to switch things up, and will involve balancing work and other aspects of your life, but, once you get to where you want to be, you will be exhilarated with the pay-off. **F**

VISUALISE
YOURSELF IN
YOUR NEAR
FUTURE
AND **KEEP
PLAN B
READY FOR
IF THINGS
DON'T
WORK OUT**

ALIA BHATT

Movie: HIGHWAY

Just a film old at the time, Alia Bhatt was offered the now-famous role of Veera Tripathi who falls in love with her kidnapper, played by Randeep Hooda, in *Highway* (2014). The romantic drama by Imtiaz Ali gave Bhatt the canvas to explore her abilities as an actor very early on. It was a film that could easily have gone astray, but it and Bhatt's performance won rave reviews from audiences and critics alike.

VIDYA BALAN

Movie: THE DIRTY PICTURE

Up until *The Dirty Picture*, Vidya Balan made the news for her fashion faux pas rather than her performances. All that changed when she took on the role of popular South Indian actor Silk Smitha. Despite having people call her 'mad' for taking on this film, Balan followed her gut and broke all records with the film. From that role on, everyone has been forced to take notice of the talent powerhouse that is Balan.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROHAN SHRESTHA



PHOTOGRAPH: ERIKOS ANDREOU (DEU - CREATIVE MANAGEMENT)

THE GAME CHANGERS

Take a cue from these actors who challenged convention by attempting challenging roles early on in their careers. By **Aishwarya Acharya**

Following a set routine or finding yourself in a rut can be scary, especially if you are in a creative field like acting. The only way to break the monotony is by daring to attempt to make courageous and mould-breaking cinema. Today, more actors are willing to take the plunge into

serious or non-mainstream roles that end up working for them.

Moral: taking risks is the only way to know your limits. Take a cue from these celebrated B-Town celebs who took a chance on an unconventional role very early on that paid off for them, and how!

ANUSHKA SHARMA

Movie: NH10

Although Anushka Sharma was already an established name, turning producer at just 25 was a gamble. The first film from her production house Clean Slate Filmz was *NH10* in 2015 in which she starred opposite Neil Bhoopalam, receiving appreciation for its meaty content. "It appealed to my core of doing something different, and entertaining audiences with disruptive content. I was 25, I had no knowledge of producing films, and I didn't know what I was getting into, but I knew that I had to do it," Sharma shared on Instagram when the film's release completed five years.



PHOTOGRAPH: ERIKOS ANDREOU (DEU - CREATIVE MANAGEMENT)



PHOTOGRAPH: TARAS TARA PORVALA

BHUMI PEDNEKAR

Movie: DUM LAGA KE HAISHA

Bhumi Pednekar chose to go with script in her debut film rather than big banner, budget and co-stars. Starring in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, Pednekar had to put on quite a few kilos to look convincing for the part. Luckily for her, it was a risk that worked; the flick also began a run of strong content-backed films.



PHOTOGRAPH: ABHISHEK VERMA

TAAPSEE PANNU

Movies: PINK

Taapsee Pannu starred in National Award-winning *Aadukalam* alongside Dhanush, which received rave reviews. She chose differently with *Pink*, a movie with a strong script and subject, and, almost unheard of in Hindi flicks, no song-and-dance sequences. Pannu received positive reviews, and became the poster child for niche cinema.

“WE WANT TO BUILD A SOCIAL ECOSYSTEM WHERE WOMEN LIVE WITH SELF-ESTEEM AND WITHOUT FEAR”

In this exclusive interview to *Femina*, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, **YOGI ADITYANATH** reiterates his own and his government's strong commitment toward the safety, security and dignity of women and girls in the state

Please share your thoughts on Mission Shakti? What is it all about?

A *mantra* in the Yajurveda says, ‘*Sa visvayuh sa vishvakarma sa vishvadhayah indrasya twa bhagam somen aatnachmi vishno havyam rakshi*’. It means: she (lady/woman) is the life of all universe, she is the creator (*vishvakarma*), she is the one who holds all as a mother (*vishvadhayah*), she is the part of the one who has controlled senses (*Indra-male*), the one who is full of life (*Som-male*), the one who brought her up properly (Vishnu)... You must all protect her, as she is the solution, the medication.

Mission Shakti is a women's empowerment and sensitisation campaign that our government launched on October 17, 2020. It is a six-month-long programme to ensure safety, security and dignity to the girls and women in the state, along with self-reliance and empowerment. The idea behind the campaign is to sensitise the entire population of the state about girls and women and their issues, create awareness across the genders about the laws concerning them, and, thereby, build a social ecosystem where women might live with self-esteem and without any fear.

When and how did the idea of Mission Shakti come to you?

Time and again, women have proved their mettle in every sphere of life. Be it as homemakers or at work outside, as taxi-drivers or CEOs of multinational companies, women have shown that, with just a little encouragement, they can touch great heights. However, harassment and gender violence have a debilitating effect on them.

Ever since I took office in March 2017,



“TIME AND AGAIN, WOMEN HAVE PROVED THEIR METTLE IN EVERY SPHERE OF LIFE”

the safety and security of women were uppermost in my mind. Previously, we had experienced a social atmosphere in which women and girls were perpetually apprehensive about their safety, security and self-respect. I decided to straighten out the system.

Our *betiyan* (daughters) were being harassed in public spaces by roadside Romeos, stalkers and eve-teasers, hence I ordered the setting up of ‘Anti-Romeo’ Squads in the state, which brought a great deal of sanity into the social environment. I felt that there were many laws that protected, nurtured and supported the rights of women, but women themselves were not even aware of them. Intending to create awareness in this regard, I thought of engaging the whole machinery as it had to be a holistic approach. After I toned up my system for three years, I decided to launch Mission Shakti, which aimed at the sensitisation of the



whole population about the rights of girls and women, and the duty of society per se towards them. Since Uttar Pradesh is a huge state with a population of about 24 crores, the duration and participation of the campaign had to be of matching volume. With this objective, Mission Shakti was launched for six months.

You chose October 17, 2020, as the day to launch Mission Shakti to reaffirm the state government's faith and resolve towards women and women power. Is there any reason behind this launch date?

Women are the symbol of strength, and they are sacred as per the traditions of the *Sanatan Dharm*. We celebrate Navratra as a festival of 'woman power'. To us, every girl and woman has Goddess Durga, or Goddess Lakshmi, or Goddess Saraswati in her. Therefore, we chose the first day of Shardiya Navratra, October 17, to launch our most ambitious campaign—Mission Shakti. Also, Navratra symbolises the victory of good over evil as Goddess Durga defeated the demon Mahishasura. We also decided to continue it until the next Navratra, Basant Navratra.

What were the major guidelines for the Mission Shakti initiative?

The underlying idea behind the campaign was to instil a sense of self-confidence among women and a sense of duty among all citizens towards protecting the dignity of women and trying to

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, launched Mission Shakti on October 17, 2020

“THE UNDERLYING IDEA BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN WAS TO INSTIL A SENSE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG WOMEN”

make them secure and self-reliant.

In the first phase of Mission Shakti, we focused on spreading awareness on women's safety and dignity. In the second phase, the mission will target eve-teasers and perpetrators and punish them with stringent punishment.

The directives included the use of every platform to disseminate the message that girls and women are to be protected, and every citizen has to be made aware of every existing law related to women. The whole exercise was to be carried out from the *gram panchayats* to the industrial units, from school campuses to government offices, from the Durga Puja *pandals* to the *Ramlilas* to reaffirm the faith and resolve towards woman power.

You have made Mission Shakti a movement at all levels of governance across Uttar Pradesh. What are the ways in which state government departments have been briefed to take this campaign forward holistically?

We wanted to take this initiative to every citizen of the state, hence it required large-scale participation. With that in mind, I involved as many as 23 departments, including basic education, secondary education, higher education, MSME, and other government and non-government agencies like UNICEF in the programmes, with the Department of Women and Child Welfare department being the nodal department. Private cab operators, radio channels and other media entities were also made partners in this initiative to disseminate the message as far as possible.

All sorts of communications have been planned to send across the message. Short films, street plays, safety pledges, sensitisation about women's laws, and a public display of inspirational stories of women have also marked the events during the on-going campaign.

The safety, security, self-reliance and empowerment of girls and women have now been made a priority across Uttar Pradesh. How will you ensure your initiative will confirm the above?

Barring a very few, the majority understands the cause of women and girls. I feel, as a society, we are highly sensitive to human issues. It's only that we lack awareness. The campaign has been in place only to sensitise people, mainly women, about their rights and the legal protections >



available to them. The laws and regulations checking female foeticide, child marriage, sexual assaults, sexual exploitation at workplaces, domestic violence, and dowry are largely unknown to many. Similarly, the facilities of self-employment to women by way of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), MSME and other employment-oriented schemes for women, provisions of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', One Stop Centres, Kanya Sumangala Yojana, Women and Girls Helpline services and the Women Shelter Homes need to be brought to their attention.

Once awareness is spread far and wide among the masses, the rest will fall in line. Precisely, this has been the whole spirit behind the campaign. I hope and believe that society will emerge as more sensitive and responsible towards women's rights and dignity.

You have also strongly emphasised the need for speedy prosecution of cases relating to women's complaints, and promised that prosecuting officers will be penalised if these cases do not move fast enough. Has there already been a noticeable

Women leaders at every level and in every department are being empowered and celebrated for their ability to bring change

**"I BELIEVE
THAT SOCIETY
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TOWARDS
WOMEN'S
RIGHTS AND
DIGNITY"**

difference due to this directive?

Yes! Even before the campaign, I put a lot of emphasis on effective prosecution. In 2017 itself, I had formed a committee to find out whether crimes against women and children were being probed in a time-bound manner. There was a lack of coordination and synergy between probe and prosecution at the district level. While the accused were getting arrested and charge-sheeted on time, cases were pending for years. If the prosecution is done on time, the accused will be punished soon. Due to these proactive steps, Uttar Pradesh has already become the first state to punish offenders within six months of the crime committed by them. Moreover, the government has set up more than 218 fast-track courts across the state for the speedy trial of crimes against women and children.

Even on the crime front, since 2017, the state of Uttar Pradesh has become one of the safest places for women. UP has the lowest figures of crime against women as compared to the 21 major states of the country, as per the report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). According to the report, in the year 2016, as many as 3,289 rape cases were reported in UP, which dropped to 2,232 in the year 2020. My government has been successful in bringing the rate down by 32 per cent. Similarly, there were 11,121 cases of female abduction in 2016, and the government brought it to 11,057, reducing it by 27 per cent in 2020. Effective prosecution saw to it that five rape accused have been hanged; others in 193 similar cases are serving life sentences since I took over. Besides, the government has also given strong defence on the basis of which the punishment was handed to culprits in 721 cases.

In addition to this, deployment of Anti-Romeo Squads across the state, the deployment of women cops in plain clothes, the UP 112 emergency service, Pink Patrolling, Pink Booths at main intersections, women help desks at police stations, and other similar steps taken by the government clearly indicate its stand on the issue of women safety, security and dignity. Now, over 1,500 police stations all over the state have a separate room for women's complaints. In these dedicated rooms, the complainants would be attended by a female constable and would be acted upon with urgency.

Since dark and lonely stretches are the best places for any kind of crime and rape, my government has also focussed on the installation and maintenance of streetlights, so that streets are safe to use.

You keep yourself abreast of the successes of women leaders in gram panchayats across Uttar Pradesh. What do you believe will be the outcome of showcasing these strong leaders?

It is extremely important to remain in touch with the women *panchayat* leaders, because they are the ones who will be catalysts for other rural women. The women leaders spell out the benefits of various government schemes, especially for women, in the villages.

The self-reliance component of Mission Shakti has much to do with rural UP. The pandemic witnessed how my government promoted the cause of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), mostly in the rural areas. The experience of local women leaders came in handy as over 10 lakh SHGs have been formed with the potential of self-employment for one crore women. Also, the rural women are being given jobs to handle ration shops, distribute *panjeeri* (a nutritional supplement made with wholewheat) in schools, and collect electricity bills in the villages.

Due to a lack of toilet facilities, women had to go outside for defecation, and going out in the evening or night hours was not safe for them. Every household has now been provided with a toilet facility, so that women do not have to go outside anymore.

Uttar Pradesh has been the birthplace of strong women who have made their mark and made the state and India proud. Do you believe Mission Shakti's campaign to find 100 women role models will also bring forward a new breed of women to be proud of?

Motivation plays an important role in personal grooming. Social dynamics have gone through a sea change. Women are coming forward in every field. They, of course, will be motivated by eminent personalities.

My government's decision to pick 100 role models during Mission Shakti was geared toward using them as facilitators for others who are trying to come out of a conservative mindset. Sudha Singh, the athlete from Raebareilly, has been chosen for the Padma Shri award. The younger generation will be inspired by her. There are numerous other examples that we have tried to highlight.

Although Mission Shakti is a six-month initiative, what do you foresee as the long-term benefits to the women of Uttar



Mission Shakti encourages girls and women to stand up for themselves and for each other, with the help of the government



Pradesh through this campaign?

Our key objective will be achieved as it spells out loud and clear that the government stands solidly behind the well-being of girls and women. If the government in power gives you such an assurance, the confidence level and trust of an individual are bound to increase manifold. This, in any case, will benefit the state as a higher female workforce will bring more productivity. To reiterate, the government cares for girls and women, and the perpetrators of crime against women will have no place in the state.

What do you believe will be the mission's outcome?

The government's message is clear: it is concerned about women, and no one will be spared if they try to breach the dignity and safety of girls and women. Mission Shakti, even after it is over, will have given us a stronger and more confident woman, and a sensitive and more responsible man for all times to come. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." **F**

**"WOMEN
PANCHAYAT
LEADERS
WILL BE
CATALYSTS
FOR OTHER
RURAL
WOMEN"**



WHICH CHANGE MAKER ARE YOU?

If you love making a difference, take this quiz to find out what type of changemaker you are. By **Aishwarya Acharya**

While we revel in Kamala Harris becoming the first woman of South Asian and Jamaican descent to take the second-most coveted position of power in

American politics, we must remember that every change, however small, is a change. If you're bubbling with ideas to change the system, take this quiz to find out which changemaker you are.



WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SEE A GARGANTUAN HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD?

- ☐ **A** Quickly devise a plan with ideas to troubleshoot the situation.
- ☐ **B** Walk up to the local governance body and bring it to their notice.
- ☐ **C** Dial up your contacts in the governance body, and push for it to be handled.
- ☐ **D** Tweet! Tweet! Tweet!

WHAT WORD COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN SOMEONE SAYS 'CHANGE'?

- ☐ **A** Create
- ☐ **B** Help
- ☐ **C** Act
- ☐ **D** Talk

ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, YOU WILL MOST LIKELY

- ☐ **A** Be cooking a meal for a sleepover
- ☐ **B** Be hounding your peers to join an event you've organised
- ☐ **C** Be hitting up your connections to stay networked
- ☐ **D** Be chatting with your friends and family



WHAT ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO DO WHEN YOU'VE MOVED INTO YOUR NEW HOUSE?

- ☐ **A** Set up mood boards for how you want it to be.
- ☐ **B** Get the details ready once you're done with the mood boards.
- ☐ **C** Look for competitive services that offer the best.
- ☐ **D** Vlog about your experiences, so that it helps others.



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

- ☐ **A** Artistic, because you love thinking outside the box
- ☐ **B** Easy-going. You're very approachable!
- ☐ **C** Social. You like making new connections. It helps!
- ☐ **D** Oratorical. You have the gift of the gab!



CHECK OUT YOUR SCORE!

Mostly As:

CREATOR

You shift focus by creating or coming up with something completely outside the box. You like to keep the creative juices flowing.

Mostly Bs:

ENABLER

You are more focused on enabling the people around you to be their best. Creating that atmosphere that inspires people to give 100 per cent energises you.

Mostly Cs:

NETWORKER

You might not be creative, but you know very well how to get things done. You have the sources and contacts who can lighten your burden.

Mostly Ds:

COMMUNICATOR

You are fit to be in the political space, because you know how to captivate an audience. If there was a penny for every time you impressed with words, you would probably be Jeff Bezos by now. **F**

FEMINA

FASHION



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Like the fashion she wears in this issue, RADHIKA APTE is a woman who takes the unconventional route



Trench coat,
₹9,999,
H&M x
Simone
Rocha



Moonlight
bag,
price on
request,
Fendi

TURNAROUND TIME

Who said basics have to be boring?
Take inspiration from the SS21 runways
to give everyday dressing a cheerful twist



The universe
of charms
personalised
galaxie earrings,
₹10,500,
Outhouse



Leather crochet
pumps, ₹8,999,
Charles &
Keith



Configure
ring, ₹7,400,
Misho



MAX MARA

LITTLE GIRL WITH DREAMS BECOME WOMEN WITH VISION

EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, A STAR EMERGES FROM THE UNLIKELY OF CORNERS AND LIGHT UP THE WORLD AROUND THEM WITH THEIR BEAUTY AND BRILLIANCE. MEET ASHLEYSHA YESUGADE, A SUCCESSFUL INDIAN-IRISH MODEL AND ENTREPRENEUR. BY **SHRUTI KOTHARI TOMAR**

Ashleysya Yesugade, director of AAY India, a model grooming and personality development academy in Pune. AAY India curates luxury fashion events, conducts model grooming, personality development and image makeovers. At the helm steering AAY India is the young, enterprising and all of 26 years Ashleysha who is herself one of Asia's top models. Ashleysha, being India's first petite supermodel herself, is pioneering a new trend in the fashion space by being one of the few, if not the only modelling agency that's signing shorter models also, because after all, dynamites come in small packages. Armed with years of rich experience in carrying out fabulous fashion shows and events, Ashleysha has already etched her mark in the fashion arena with her vision



and immense creativity.

"Being a woman means being free to be whoever you want to be with thoughtfulness, grace and compassion. I love both the innate strength and sensitivity we have as women. A woman can not only succeed in anything she sets her mind to, but also accomplish that while juggling multiple roles," says the young Ashleysha. She hopes to one day be able to inspire other women to follow their dreams and pursue all that their heart desires.

Ashleysya is also the recipient of several honours, the latest one affording her recognition in the Times Power Women 2020. Hailing from a simple family, Ashleysha always strived to be financially independent. From doing summer jobs as a teenager to becoming a globe trotting model and now leading AAY India, Ashleysha now plans to start an outfit rental store soon.

More power to you, we say!



Ashleysya Yesugade



Women's
belt, ₹699,
H&M



Horsebit leather
belt, price on
request, **Gucci**



Snakeskin
textured
belt, ₹1,799,
Mango



Studded waist belt,
price on request,
**Alexander
McQueen**

CINCH IT UP

Belts are a great way to pull a look together. Here are statement pieces to consider investing in...



Textured
leather belt,
₹13,220,
Anderson's



Fringed woven
leather waist
belt, ₹17,529,
Caravana



Metal chain
link belt,
₹1,990, **Zara**



Lecce leather
belt, ₹12,101,
**Isabel
Marant**



Croc-effect leather
belt, price on
request, **Saint
Laurent**



Beige solid belt, ₹795,
20Dresses



Dr Rashmi Shetty, Celebrity Dermatologist

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

for healthy skin, hair and overall well-being

Acne, hair fall, skin dullness, pigmentation, irritable gut, hormonal imbalances, bloating, insomnia, and more are caused by an unhealthy foundation.

HOW DOES ONE FIX THIS UNHEALTHY/ DAMAGED FOUNDATION?

Aiming to lead a healthier lifestyle is the first step. However that is not always fully possible. Here is where supplements come in. Nutritional supplements help give you that extra support and nourishment that can help fix the unhealthy foundation that has taken a beating for years. Fixing this internally will help address both internal and external issues.

WHAT CAUSES THIS INTERNAL DAMAGE AND HOW CAN RA SUPPLEMENTS HELP?

Oxidative stress or free radicals are one of the major contributors to almost every issue - whether it is ageing, acne, hairfall, a weak immunity, pigmentation. Hence, we have RA supplements like RA Skin Bright and RA Vitamin C that are packed with the best, most powerful antioxidants to help fight the free radicals and reduce oxidative stress. Free radicals and oxidative stress can be caused by stress, UV exposure, pollution, alcohol consumption, smoking, and even day to day metabolic reactions in the body.

Another factor that can kick start many issues is Inflammation. Chronic inflammation can lead to serious illness, and issues like irritable gut, weak immunity, acne, pigmentation, rashes, allergies, eczema and more. Here, RA supplements like RA Defence which have strong anti-inflammatory properties can help reduce inflammation and inflammation related issues.

Finally, it is important to provide your body with essential nutrients, amino acids, minerals that can help heal, repair, rebuild and replenish your cells from all the damage that they have been put through. Here is where RA supplements like RA Anagen and RA Skin Hydrate come in. Improving your body's healing ability and strength to fight off damage.

SUMMARY / QUICK FACTS :

RA Supplements are one of the first and only dermatologist created beauty supplements. Created by Dr. Rashmi Shetty, they aim at fixing the root cause of all your skin, hair and health concerns.

RA Skin Bright, with powerful antioxidants, helps reduce oxidative stress, protect from damage and reverse the damage done over the years, leading to healthy, even toned, clear and bright skin.

RA Anagen, a combination of essential amino acids, micro nutrients and minerals helps repair rebuild and replenish every cell.

RA Defence, an anti inflammatory, that helps reduce inflammation and inflammation related issues.

RA Vitamin C+, is one of the only sugar free Vitamin C made from all organic sources. It helps improve body's intake of nutrients, boosts collagen production, immunity and radiance.

RA Skin Hydrate helps hydrate the skin from within, therefore rejuvenating your collagen, elastin and ground substance. A hydrated skin heals faster and looks more youthful and dewy!

RA Primerose+ especially made to help issues related to PCOS, PMS and menopause, including hormonal breakouts, bloating, breast tenderness, mood swings, hot flashes and more. It has ingredients to help give your skin the oils it needs to stay healthy and calm.

PUTTING ON THE GLITZ

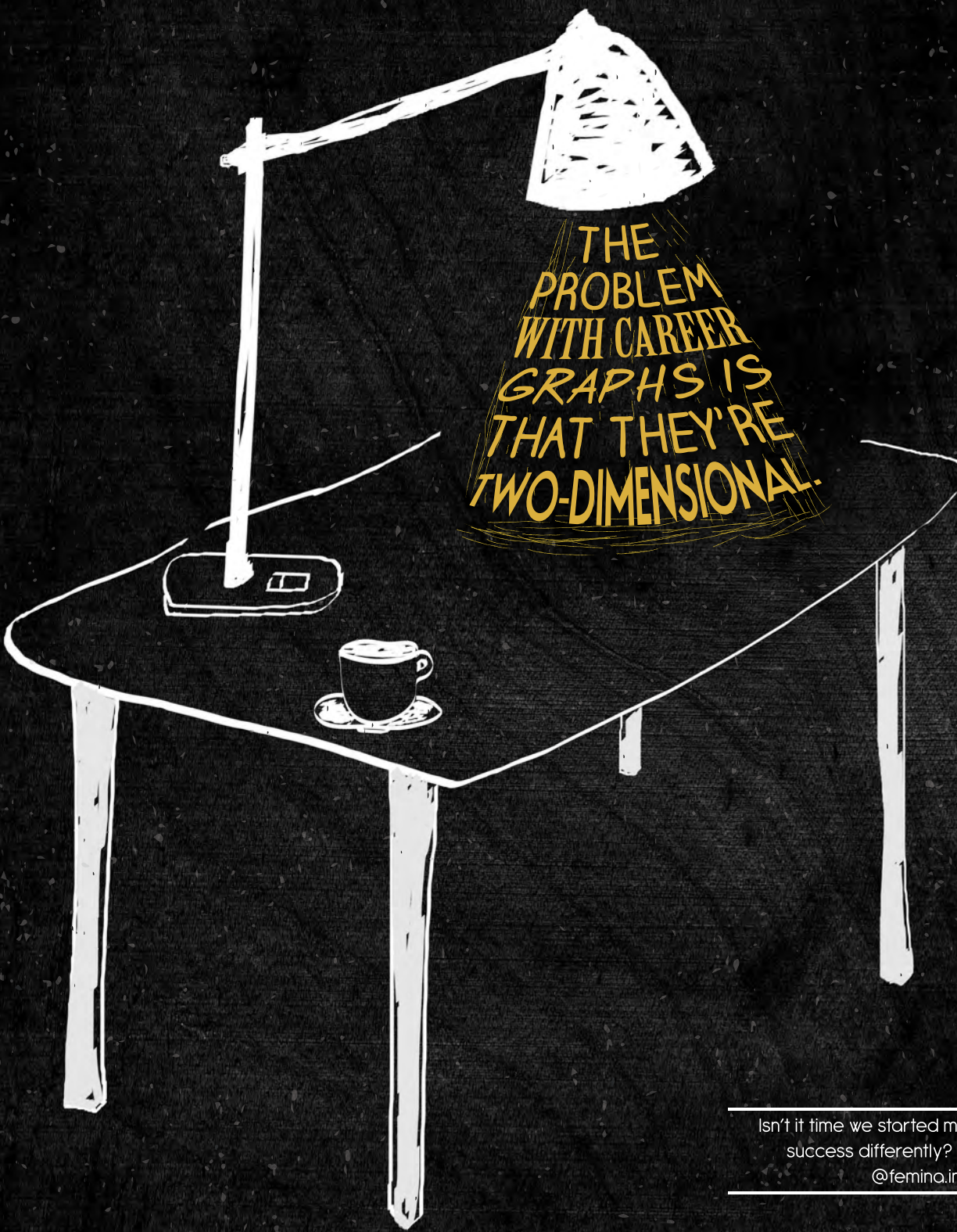
Find the season's best pieces in multi-dimensional silvers and whites



1. Mini froufrou pendant, price on request, **Chopard** **2.** Diamond collar set in 18k gold using pear and round diamonds, price on request, **Mahesh Notandas Fine Jewellery** **3.** Necklace, price on request, **Platinum Evara** **4.** Serpenti viper bracelet, price on request, **Bvlgari** **5.** Vittore mini hoop earrings, ₹5,490, **Swarovski** **6.** Floral cluster diamond ring, price on request, **Goenka** **7.** Diamond earrings set in 18K white gold, price on request, **Renu Oberoi Luxury Jewellery** **8.** Ascher-cut solitaire with round diamonds in white gold, price on request, **Mehta & Sons**

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



THE
PROBLEM
WITH CAREER
GRAPHS IS
THAT THEY'RE
TWO-DIMENSIONAL.

Isn't it time we started measuring
success differently? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/lifestyle](https://www.femina.in/lifestyle)



MONO HOUR

Make a statement with monotone watches this season. These are some of our favourites



1. Navy blue analogue watch, ₹45,900, **Versace** 2. Giulia watch for women, ₹10,000, **Armani Exchange**
3. Maroon analogue watch, ₹2,799, **DressBerry** 4. Octea lux chronograph watch, ₹31,000, **Swarovski**
5. Reine de Naples, price on request, **Breguet** 6. Parker chronograph watch, ₹19,500, **Michael Kors**

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great *returns?*

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FEMINA
FLAUNTTM

STUDIO
SALON

NEW DAY

NEW YOU

The Times Group invites Business Partners with 'vision' & 'capability-to-scale' for an exciting franchising opportunity of its marquee lifestyle brand Femina FLAUNT Studio Salon

FOR ENQUIRY: +91 7304963991 | franchisee@feminaflaunt.com



After making a place for herself in the film industry, **ADITI RAO HYDARI** has co-designed a sustainable athleisure line that's every bit as fashionable and quirky as she is. She talks to **Radhika Gattani** about this exciting collaboration



ANOTHER FASHIONABLE FEATHER IN HER CAP

In the midst of the lockdown, an exciting collaboration unfolded between Aditi Rao Hydari x Cancelled Plans. Aditi and Mallika Reddy joined creative forces to bring quirk, fun and comfort to sustainable clothing. Read on to find

out how her cancelled plans for the lockdown turned out.

Tell us about this exciting collaboration with your designer friend Mallika Reddy. So I was stuck in Hyderabad when

the lockdown started with just a small suitcase with shoot-related things, a pair of tracks and a T-shirt! Mallika, being a close friend, was well aware of this situation, and sent across a gift from Cancelled Plans, which turned out to be a sweatshirt. I liked it so much that

I would basically wear, wash, repeat. One day, I told her I'd like to see what else she had in the store and, in response, she said, 'You tell me what you want and I will make it for you.' That's how I started making stuff with her, which led to her asking me to start a line together.

Cancelled Plans is committed to the creative reuse of waste products, which is a significant step towards upcycling. Do you agree that reusing and recycling should be the way forward for fashion labels?

I believe we are wasteful as human beings, and, although that sense of responsibility and awareness is getting better, it still has a long way to go, especially because people within the industry might understand the meaning, importance and effects of these concepts, but the question remains: does the consumer understand them? So, yes, I believe in order to move forward, sustainability is the need of our times, and awareness has to be created at all levels of the fashion chain from manufacturer to consumer to achieve it.

Today, when consumers are more particular than ever about the longevity of their clothes, how important do you think sustainability is when it comes to fashion?

The whole mindset of reusing, rewearing and understanding what materials we are wearing in the first place and knowing where they come from is dependent on an individual. The person has to arrive at a place where they feel it's important enough to understand and learn more about it, and incorporate it into their own lives. Because, ultimately, each person has to do it for themselves. The concept of sustainability in fashion needs to be in the limelight mainly because we come from an industry where people



“**SUSTAINABILITY IS THE NEED OF OUR TIMES, AND AWARENESS HAS TO BE CREATED AT ALL LEVELS OF THE FASHION CHAIN**”

constantly talk and write about what people are wearing, and there is a constant pressure to not repeat a piece of clothing. It is especially wonderful that sustainability has become a trend and a movement, and that more people and brands are getting involved in it.

What does it take for a successful creative collaboration? How difficult is it to align two creative minds in one single direction?

The first thing would definitely be knowing if you want to work with each other, respecting one another and actually liking what and how the other person thinks or does things, followed by giving each other due space and listening to each other. For instance, Mallika comes from a design background and

has that expertise, but, despite that, she lets me be my dreamy self, lets me explore and test different concepts that she actually takes into consideration, before adding her creativity and practicality. Together, we've found just the right balance that creates wonders.

What part of the designing process did you enjoy the most?

Ideating and just planning all that we were going to do, finding pictures that could be used, and the whole visual depiction was something that I really enjoyed and, of course, seeing the final result made me really happy. Since all of it was homegrown and created during the lockdown, the whole process of shooting and making use of whatever resources we had at our disposal, like using our iPhones for the shooting, was quite exciting and fun.

Now that you have collaborated on such a cool collection, do you have any plans to take up designing again in the future?

I would actually love to do it, because this collaboration gave me the confidence I needed that I didn't have when other design houses approached me in the past. Now I'm quite excited and slightly surer about designing. I look forward to giving this my time and attention in the future. **F**



Outfits: Cancelled Plans

THE DRAMATIC CHANGE

TAKE THE ROAD LESS
TRAVELLED WITH
DRAMATIC TAILORING
TO EFFORTLESSLY STAND
OUT JUST AS ACTOR
RADHIKA APTE DOES

PHOTOGRAPHS: **SHELDON SANTOS**
FASHION STYLING: **YUKTI SODHA**
FASHION COORDINATION: **RADHIKA GATTANI**

CASCADE FROM AFAR

This voluptuous silhouette could be a stylised way to remind everyone to maintain a safe social distance, but what a stylish way it is!

Black and white one-shoulder multi-layered organza dress, price on request, **Gaurav Gupta**; Demi goddess abstract mirror and abalone flower stud earrings, ₹5,799, **Isharya** >





FEATHER UP

Be a birdie in black, with just the right hint of gold in your accessories.

Feather detailed dress, ₹65,500, **Rocky S**; O.H. crescent half-wrist cuff, ₹12,000, **Outhouse**; Mound ring, ₹1,900, **Anushka Jain Jewellery**; Kaia pinky gold ring, ₹3,999, **Tanzire**; Veau Velours knee-high boots, price on request, **Christain Louboutin**

SHAPESHIFT WITH 'SHROOMS

Let your imagination run wild,
and glitter through life with flair
and flare.

Turkey tail short cape, ₹49,500,
and turkey tail skirt, ₹79,500, both
Rahul Mishra; Sunday snug ear
cuffs, ₹3,800, **Misho**; gold Papilio
button tops, ₹6,500, and the O.H.
monogram spin ring, ₹6,500,
both **Outhouse**; 18K gold-plated
symphony ring, ₹7,899, **Tanzire** >



LOVE LILAC

Opt for delicate lilac and the unparalleled grace of pleated sleeves. Add a gold choker, and you're ready to steal the show.

Hand-embroidered 3D dress, price on request, **Amit Aggarwal**; luna mini hoops, ₹8,500, and the nymph's charms necklace, ₹6,500, both **Misho**; O.H. monogram choker, ₹11,500, **Outhouse**





TRY PEEK-A-BOO FUN

Channel your inner diva with this sculpted asymmetric-shoulder number; add a red lip for some drama.

One-shoulder top with a sculpted metallic sleeve, ₹38,000, and pants, ₹18,000, both **Rimzim Dadu**; Lynx mini hoops, ₹6,850, and the OH V birdy airpods case, ₹15,500, the OH birdy phone bag, ₹24,250, all **Outhouse**; the rockpool midi ring, ₹3,800, **Studio Metallurgy**; pearl bracelet, ₹2,100, evil eye bracelets, ₹1,500 (each), all **Minerali** >

GIVE ROUTINE THE SHOULDER

Exaggerated sleeves call for attention and let you shine in mood-lifting colours.

Asymmetrical blazer with an exaggerated volume sleeve, and Chantilly lace bodysuit, price on request, both **Nikhil Kolhe**; Reborn: the salt rock earrings, 4,999, **Studio Metallurgy** 

BREAKING THE RULES

Actor **RADHIKA APTE** talks about her journey and her years in the industry with **Yukti Sodha**



Forty-one films, six short films, three television series, 13 plays in seven languages, many accolades later, Radhika Apte is still going strong. The self-confessed workaholic has spent the lockdown in London, occupied with setting up a new home, watching films, reading, being inspired, and writing a lot. The lockdown, she tells us, was a good opportunity to get back to regular sleep cycles, take a break from work, and be with herself.

Excerpts from an interview...

In 2020, you were seen in the international film *A Call To Spy* and the wide-appreciated *Raat Akeli Hai* on Netflix. Tell us about these.

A Call To Spy was a very inspiring story. Taking up the film made me read a lot about the legendary Noor Inayat Khan. I am so grateful that playing her made me learn so much about her. Working on a diverse set also gave me a very good friend in Lydia Dean Pilcher (American producer), a relationship I will always cherish. And I got to travel to places such as Philadelphia and Budapest. Because it was such a small film, everybody put their heart and soul into the project.

Raat Akeli Hai gave me the opportunity to play a North Indian girl for the first time; I'm usually cast in Marathi, Hindi or South Indian roles. I had to work on my accent; that was a great learning experience. Honey Trehan is such a great director, and that really reflects in his work a lot. Even Smitha Singh is a great writer; it was the whole team that came together to create the magic. >

You've carved your own path in a very competitive industry while maintaining the integrity of your craft. What has been the most difficult part of the last decade and a half?

I've learnt over a period of time that the film industry is a business, and people don't only create because they love the art. When you find work that is in sync with your thought process, you are motivated to be better at it. Also I can never imagine getting surgeries done; that has been my biggest fight.

You've claimed that, left to your own devices, you would live in your comfortable clothing. Still true in a post-pandemic world?

Very true. In terms of fashion, I own very limited items; I would call myself a minimalist in that sense. I never own what I wouldn't use. I like to spend my money on food, travel, and my hobbies.

What are your tips for a healthy mind and body?

Exercise, sleep and good food are very essential. I believe that your body is your instrument, and keeping your body healthy also reflects on your mental well-being. The last year has taught me acceptance, to not live in denial, and to let go of the anxiety of not being able to control things. Building a good support system is also important for mental health.

What is your mantra to deal with uncertainty and stress?

Uncertainty is the spice of life. And stress is something that needs to be constantly worked on. Exercise is a great stress-buster for me. I also try to invest my time in something constructive. I indulge in learning new languages, writing, running house errands to add value to myself.

What makes you wake up every morning with vigour and zeal?

I love waking up to the thought of breakfast! And when I'm occupied with some great work, or have planned



**“UNCERTAINTY IS THE SPICE
OF LIFE. AND STRESS IS
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CONSTANTLY WORKED ON”**

to meet somebody I am looking forward to meeting!

What can we look forward to from you?

There is a futuristic series I shot last year that is scheduled to release this year, and I absolutely love that project. It's a comedy mystery and extremely exciting. **F**

ONE SHOULDER TOP WITH A SCULPTED METALLIC SLEEVE: ₹38,000. AND PANTS: ₹18,000. BOTH FROM DADA LUNX. MINUTENESS: ₹6,850. AND THE CHIRBY ALPHAS CASE: ₹15,500. THE CHIRBY PHONE BAGS: ₹24,250. ALL OUT HOUSE: THE ROCKFOL MID RING: ₹3,800. STUDIO METALLURGY: PEARL BRACELET: ₹2,100. EVIL EYE BRACELETS: ₹1,500 (EACH). ALL MINERALI

Whenever Megha Bhatia feels low or demotivated, she thinks of

one instance—one in which a young girl was able to open up about being abused by her older cousin. “Young girls lack vocabulary, so she said he touched her chest; we later found that she was being raped by him, and that it had gone on for a year,” Bhatia states. “We were able to prove it, and now the culprit is behind bars.” It was her reason to set up Our Voix, an organisation that works on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

As a legal intern with an NGO in the final year of her studies, Bhatia learned about the issues of child sexual abuse. “My role was to go to the police station, interact with the children, and take them for the medical examination. It was a traumatising experience to see what these abused children go through. One can’t even imagine the trauma.” Post her internship, the experiences stayed with her and, soon after, when in London for her masters in human rights and child rights, she researched the topic for over a year. Post her dissertation on *Sex Education as a Tool to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse*, she realised the way to make a difference would be to work for prevention by



“It was a traumatising experience to see what these abused children go through. **ONE CAN’T EVEN IMAGINE THE TRAUMA**”

MAKING VOICES HEARD

MEGHA BHATIA'S Our Voix spreads awareness about sexual abuse among children with child-friendly content. The youngster talks to **Shraddha Kamdar** on her ideas and motivation

educating children about it.

Bhatia came back to India to set up her organisation without really knowing how she would do it. She mobilised volunteers and conducted workshops, only to find that a standalone workshop has no impact without appropriate content. The core of Our Voix was then formed—creation of child-friendly content

with inputs from all stakeholders: children, parents, psychologists and members of various commissions, using the voices of children to make it more relatable.

“We understand from children the issues they are facing and create inclusive animated films and comic books, to spread the message via superheroes.” Bhatia adds, “We have created our super buddies to spread the message.” The content is then piloted and passed through the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), to be used to conduct workshops in schools with teachers. Post the workshops, children have one-on-one sessions with the volunteers and often are able to speak up about what they were unsure was unsafe behaviour towards them.

Our Voix has faced many hurdles, especially when families are in denial when instances of abuse surface or when schools refuse to conduct workshops for fear of being entangled in a case. “Parents need to know that it is happening, with both girls and boys, no matter which strata of society they belong to,” Bhatia says. The way forward is to generate more conversations and bring the topic out of the shadows of being taboo.



Weaving LEGACY

SUCHITA OSWAL-JAIN, Vice Chairman and Joint Managing Director of Vardhman Textiles, means business, particularly when it comes to weaving success in the world of textiles. By **Radhika Sathe-Patwardhan**



Suchita Oswal-Jain is all about breaking stereotypes, while ensuring that business reaches greater heights under her leadership. She has been successfully running Vardhman Textiles—which has a turnover of \$1.1 billion and is the country's biggest textiles conglomerate engaged in the manufacture of yarn, fabric, threads, fibre and garments—for 20 years. In that time, she has also woven connections between Vardhman and global brands such as GAP, Esprit, Marks and Spencer, Uniqlo, Target, and Kohl's.

Working her way through various departments after joining in 1990, and streamlining processes along the way, it took just a year for this dynamic lady to turn the company on its head (in a good way) and to introduce a woven fabrics division that is now the growth engine for the group. Today, the fabrics business contributes to about one-third of the group's turnover, and ranks Vardhman among the top fabric manufacturers in the world. Here's looking at her journey to date.

Armed with a masters in commerce from Punjab University, the Accelerated Development Programme from the London Business School, and the Leadership Development Programme from INSEAD, Paris, you could have easily started your own venture. What inspired you to join the family business?

As a child, I used to visit the factories with my father; I was smitten with the potential of the textile industry. I knew there was so much I could do, and I had made my mind up to incorporate my ideas and creativity to contribute to this great institution. My father S P Oswal, chairman and managing director of the Vardhman Group and a Padma Bhushan awardee, is my mentor. I was brought up with values that taught me to overcome challenges and to navigate through obstacles, to make a path for myself and others.

My zeal, as well as the challenges, motivated me to join the family business.

Did you ever face any obstacles based on gender while working?

Potential has no gender. Your capability is what results in a promising career graph. Restraints and challenges are there only to be overcome. If you believe in yourself, in your goals, such limitations disappear.





You also work to empower women. Tell us more.

We have several initiatives to empower women, aiming at holistic development that includes skill development, competency building, soft skills, MHM awareness, etc. To increase women's participation in the economy, our teams visit families of women in rural areas and counsel them to permit their girls to come and work with us. We organise visits to the organisation for the parents and elders in the villages to help them feel secure about sending their girls to our facilities. We provide hygienic living conditions and an active lifestyle to these dynamic girls.

Do you think your ideas as a woman makes the brand stand out better?

The significance of vision and approach need not be overemphasised. Your ideas and thoughts are the projection of your personality; it is how you think. Just as an optimist will see the positive, and a pessimist will remain gloomy no matter what, the reflection of the entrepreneur's vision is certainly seen in the brand. As a woman, I do value variety a lot. Change is something we all crave when it comes to fashion and dressing. We want to look pleasant, glamorous at times, professional at others. So, yes, a woman's perspective in the fashion and textile industry definitely stands out.



“THE CHANGE
BEGINS WITH
YOU. KEEP
DOING YOUR
THING.


**LISTEN TO
YOUR HEART,
FOLLOW YOUR
PASSION, AND
YOU WILL DO
GREAT”**

What keeps you occupied when you are not working?

My days are usually tightly packed, but you always make some time for the things that matter to you. I like listening to audiobooks, playing table tennis, watching a movie with my family, taking a walk, doing yoga, etc. I value relationships and love spending time with my family and friends.

What is your advice to young girls looking to be frontrunners in business, especially in family businesses?

When I joined the family business, there were very few women who were leading from the front. There has been a great change ever since, be it in terms of education, opportunities, or outlook, thanks to all the amazing women who have proved their merit and advocated equal opportunities for all. I have actively worked to prepare my girls for the future, but never influenced their choices. My work as a mother is to give them the strength and confidence to spread their wings and fly high. They have themselves taken initiatives in the family business, and have started contributing already.

So, to young girls aspiring to join their family businesses, my advice would be: The change begins with you. Keep doing your thing. Listen to your heart, follow your passion, and you will do great. 

“EMPOWERED WOMEN *are the best* CHANGE MAKERS”

ZARINA SCREWVALA believes in ensuring that progress and empowerment are achieved by one and all. She tells **Radhika Sathe-Patwardhan** how she is achieving that and more through the Swades Foundation



Empowerment is the key to a better future, and the Swades Foundation is ensuring that rural India is being empowered via holistic and sustainable growth using its unique 360-degree model. Zarina Screwvala co-founded the foundation with Ronnie Screwvala, and she is also its managing trustee and director. Apart from her work with Swades, she is also the co-founder of the media company UTV where—among other ventures—she has created many TV channels like Hungama, Bindass and UTV Movies. She is also a member of the UN Women Business Sector Advisory Council (BSAC). In an interview with *Femina*, she shared more about her work with Swades Foundation, lockdown, and being a changemaker.

Tell us about the vision of Swades Foundation.

Ronnie and I have a dream to lift one million

people in rural India out of poverty. Today, we have a force of 270+ full-time staff, most of whom live and work in the villages, and thousands of community volunteers, impacting over five lakh people. We have a unique holistic model of development with interventions in water and sanitation, health, livelihoods, and education.

We believe poverty is both material and mental, and, while, sometimes, it is possible to remove material poverty, mental poverty remains. To us, mental poverty is a lack of hope, the inability to dream of a better world. The key to Swades Foundation is to create a ‘can-do’ attitude in our communities. ‘Swa Se Bane Des’ (I make my country) is what we believe in and what we tell them all the time! And, today, after six years, I am deeply proud of the thousands of village development committees, hundreds of Swades Swaraksha Mitras, or voluntary health workers, mostly ladies, who are our true heroes, and show us what a truly empowered India looks like.

“THE KEY
TO SWADES
FOUNDATION
IS TO CREATE
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ATTITUDE
IN OUR
COMMUNITIES”



Clockwise from left: a woman at her farm, at an eye camp and Zarina and Ronnie at a meet

What has been the main learning of the foundation in its work with women?

Women can be economically independent when they have water in their homes. Women and their oldest daughters often walk for two to three hours every day to fetch water. Once we completed our water interventions—and they got a water source available nearby—women had free time and started to practise poultry, goat-farming, dairy and other livelihood opportunities.

A toilet is also a necessity for women to safeguard their health and dignity. Twenty years ago, when we started going to our villages, we met women who defecated in open fields before sunrise and then after sunset! For them, snake bites were common, and they developed kidney issues and urinary tract infections. By building more than 24,000 toilets, we have enabled our communities to live life with dignity and respect.

During our initial visits, only men were actively participating in the meetings, but, within two years, we had an equal number of women participating as well. They were actively taking charge of the development of their villages.

Recently, tribal women from Dharechiwadi, Poladpur in Maharashtra banned the sale and purchase of illegal alcohol in their village with support from the police.

We all know empowered women are the best changemakers. For instance, our Swades Mitras are community health volunteers who go door-to-door helping their village with primary healthcare. They are truly exemplary role models, and a source of inspiration for many women.

Can you share an instance showcasing the success of Swades's work?

Let me share the example of Kasarwadi, a village in Maharashtra. The Village Development Committee (VDC) here is led by women. We have an intensive training session followed by a little test for every VDC before we start to work with their village—this test allows them to prove to themselves and us that they can convene the community for a cause. They decided that each house should prepare a healthy meal, and roped in their *anganwadi* worker to conduct a nutrition awareness session. Later, they arranged for our eye-care van—that goes door-to-door to conduct tests—to come to their village for screening. They also invited residents from 12 nearby hamlets for the eye screening. The impact of that day was massive on the residents of the other hamlets and, finally, they also agreed to form a VDC in their village. The VDC also prioritised the economic development of the poorest of poor households.

One more example is of Bhavshetwadi, a tribal hamlet, where people were extremely shy and hesitant at first. After attending the meets, they were early adopters of the Swades mason training programme. Today, they are a registered vendor with Swades for building sanitation units! >

**WOMEN AND
THEIR OLDEST
DAUGHTERS
OFTEN WALK
FOR TWO TO
THREE HOURS
EVERY DAY TO
FETCH WATER.**





During the lockdown, what were the hurdles that the foundation faced and how did you overcome them?

I'm proud to say that, after just two weeks during which we were uncertain about how to proceed, we started to plan and work and went full steam ahead initially with 14 brave volunteers. Today, our entire team is back at work in Raigad, as well as in our new block, Nashik. We have all safeguards in place, and I am happy to report that, so far, all our team members are well and safe.

I believe this work is a true testament to the resilience of the wonderful Swades team, as well as several large donors who have come forward and, above all, a testament to the empowered communities we have built.

We began by getting connected with all our 1,000+ VDCs to ensure they were safe and had basic amenities. Through them, we were able to help with a massive food aid scheme, and

Above: Zarina at one of the villages; below: an ongoing session

**"GIVE
YOUR TIME,
VOLUNTEER,
OR START
AT HOME,
HELPING
THOSE
YOU CAN;
TEACH YOUR
CHILDREN
TO GIVE"**

distributed over 17,000 grocery and daily essential kits to over 10,000 of the poorest families whose daily wages were impacted by COVID-19. We were also hit by the Nisarga Cyclone and, as part of that relief, provided solar lights to 400+ VDCs and 350+ individual households. The value of our unique idea of VDCs truly became clear during these difficult times.


How do you manage a work-life balance with so many things on your plate?

I enjoy working hard, I love to study, reflect on the day's learnings, try to see where I could have done better. I also enjoy reading, playing with my dog, being with my husband, friends and family. I make time for what is needed.

As a changemaker who has made a difference, what would you say drives you? And what advice do you have for other women?

I am driven by a strong need to help others. If we can, then we really should... it is truly a source of real happiness. You don't need to be old or rich to give; everyone has something to give. Give your time, volunteer, or start at home, helping those you can; teach your children to give. Once you experience the joy of giving, you will not stop!

What are the changes that you'd like to see in the coming future?

I think 2020 brought many eye-opening learnings. Many people I speak with have had the time to reflect on what really matters to them, to ask questions that perhaps they never had the time for earlier. Questions about whether life has a purpose, whether things happen for a reason, whether life is a random series of unrelated, separate happenings, and, importantly, whether their actions make any difference. If you believe, as I do, that life has a purpose and meaning, that what we do matters, that our thoughts, words and deeds carry some significance and meaning, that they impact our own life and that of others, then one needs to act accordingly. I think we need to recognise how much we are all connected, and responsible for one another. The immediate outcome of this thought is to help to overcome this crisis by alleviating the pain of the most vulnerable. Help wherever and however you can. Start with those around you and expand your circle of caring as wide as you can. Remember it might not always be money that is needed but something else. 

MAKE A CHANGE: EAT MINDFULLY

FEMINA

LIVING

Practising mindful eating helps in the cephalic phase of digestion, that part of the process in which your stomach prepares digestive juices in response to the smell, taste or sight of food. Rooted in the Buddhist practice of mindfulness, mindful eating means you must give your full attention to your food, which, in turn, gradually trains your body to get back in touch with its internal appetite and digestive rhythms. It's simple to do, and the rewards are discernible after a while.

Here's how to practise mindful eating:

1. Get rid of all distractions before you settle down to eat.
2. Ask yourself whether you are eating out of hunger, just boredom or habit. Pay attention to your hunger cues.
3. Take note of what is on your plate—the textures, colours, smells, flavours...
4. Be grateful for what you have received.
5. After you eat, take a moment to review how you feel. Whether you feel satisfied, bloated, tired, or energised will help you decide what to choose when you eat next.

Mindful eating will take about a week to settle in; give it that time.



EAT TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Make a lifestyle change to eating healthier with these delicious recipes from
Karishma Sakhrani of Atom Box

MIDDLE EASTERN CHICKPEA WRAP

1 tsp oil (divided usage)

For the chickpea patties:

100 g chickpeas,
soaked, cooked and
coarsely mashed

50 g potato, boiled
and mashed

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 green chilli,
finely chopped

20 g feta cheese

20 g finely-
chopped onion

10 g finely-chopped
mint leaves

5 ml lemon juice

Salt, to taste

For the coating:

2 tbsp maida

Water, as required

3 tbsp white
sesame seeds

3 tbsp black
sesame seeds

For the mint dip:

10 g mint leaves

1 green chilli

2 small cloves garlic

Salt, to taste

50 g Greek yoghurt
(or hung yoghurt)

To serve:

Wraps or
homemade rotis

Mixed lettuce leaves

Mint leaves

Red chillies,
thinly sliced

Pickled onions



**Calorie
count:**
240 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 4 > PREP TIME: 15 minutes > COOKING TIME: 5 minutes

1. To prepare the chickpea patties, combine the chickpeas, potato, garlic, chilli, feta cheese, onion, mint leaves, lemon juice and salt, and shape into four equal-sized patties. Set aside.

2. Stir a little water with the maida to make a slurry.

3. Combine the black and white sesame seeds on a flat plate.

4. Dip each kebab into the maida slurry and then into the sesame seeds to coat them all over.

5. Heat a non-stick pan on a low-medium flame. Add half teaspoon of the oil, and cook the patties for about four minutes on all sides, or until light golden brown.

6. To prepare the mint dip, blend together the mint leaves, chilli, garlic and salt in a small blender until smooth. Place the yoghurt in a bowl, add the mint paste, and mix well.

7. Heat a pan on a medium-high flame, spread with the remaining oil, and heat the wraps or rotis. Remove from the flame, and layer with lettuce leaves and mint. Top with the chickpea patties and a dollop of the mint dip. Garnish with the red chillies and pickled onions.

TIP: ADD BEETROOT POWDER TO THE FLOUR FOR THE ROTIS TO GIVE THEM A DISTINCTIVE COLOUR.

LENTIL & CELERY SALAD



50 g whole black masoor dal

50 g pearl barley

25 g pomegranate arils

5 g chopped celery leaves

5 g chopped celery root

5 g chopped green onion whites

5 g chopped green onion leaves

10 g raisins

15 g almonds

2 large handfuls arugula

For the dressing:
1 tsp wholegrain mustard

2 tbsp honey

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Salt, to taste

Calorie count:
367 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 10 minutes > COOKING TIME: 15 minutes

1. Boil the masoor dal and the pearl barley separately like you would cook pasta—in a large pot of water with salt and oil.
Drain, and set aside to cool.
2. To prepare the dressing, combine the wholegrain mustard, honey, lemon juice, olive oil and salt, and whisk well.
3. Place the pomegranate arils, celery leaves and roots, green onion whites and leaves, raisins, almonds and arugula in a large mixing bowl. Add the boiled masoor dal and pearl barley, and the dressing, toss to combine, and serve. >

TIP: DON'T OVERCOOK THE LENTILS AND BARLEY; COOKED AL DENTE, THEY GIVE THE SALAD A NICE BITE.

THAI CURRY LAKSA BOWL



Handful of
rice noodles

1 tbsp oil

½ onion, cubed

½ green bell
pepper, cubed

½ red bell
pepper, cubed

6 baby corns, cubed

10 mushrooms,
steamed

50 g tofu, steamed

2 red chillies, sliced

1 lime wedge

For the Thai curry:
1 tbsp oil

30 g finely-
chopped onion

10 g crushed ginger

10 g crushed garlic

5 g kaffir lime leaves

5 g finely-
chopped shallots

5 g crushed
lemongrass

5 g dried Kashmiri
chilli, crushed
into a paste

200 ml coconut milk

10 ml light soy sauce

Salt, to taste

Stock, as needed

**Calorie
count:**
564 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 15 minutes > COOKING TIME: 10 minutes

1. To prepare the rice noodles, boil them in hot water for three to five minutes until al dente. Drain, and set aside.
2. To prepare the Thai curry, heat a pan on a medium-high flame. Add the oil, and then the onion. Sauté until translucent. Add the ginger, garlic, kaffir lime leaves, shallots, lemongrass, and chilli paste, and mix well. Add the coconut milk, and stock as needed to get the consistency you want, and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the soy sauce and salt, and simmer for two to three minutes. Discard the lime leaves, and blend to a smooth curry.
3. Heat a tablespoon oil in a pan, and sauté the onions, bell peppers, and baby corn separately for two to three minutes. Add the steamed mushrooms and tofu, and mix.
4. Add the veggies to the prepared curry, and pour into a bowl. Top with the sliced red chillies, and a squeeze of lime. Serve hot with the rice noodles. **F**

TIP: ADD THE SAUTEED VEGGIES TO THE CURRY ONLY WHEN SERVING TO RETAIN THEIR COLOUR AND CRUNCH.

"FOOD MUST SATISFY ALL THE SENSES"

Chef Sarah Todd's newest cookbook has released this month, and it is filled with recipes that she has developed over her six years in India



As we write this, Chef Sarah Todd sits in faraway Melbourne, Australia. The many months in lockdown have been the longest period that she has spent away from what she thinks of as her second home. Six years ago, after Todd put out an *aloo gobi* on the sixth season of *MasterChef Australia*, she realised that she had a whole lot of fans on a subcontinent thousands of miles away. Since then, she has fallen in love with the people, food and culture of India, and posts on her Instagram profile, redolent with the spice and variety of Indian fare, show how deeply she misses the country. Fittingly, *My Indian Kitchen* releases like a precursor to her long-awaited return in a few months. Excerpts from an interview...

I am fascinated by the incredible diversity in flavours, methods, and culture in the art of Indian cuisine. Having spent six years working and travelling around the country, I've been to every corner of India. Indian food is savoured all around the world but is often regarded as labour-intensive and complex. If you are not



Cumin spiced beetroot salad

THESE RECIPES
WILL TRANSPORT
YOU TO
THE STREET
STALLS IN MUMBAI
OR THE BEACHES
OF GOA

brought up using the intricate blends of spices, cooking a traditional Indian meal could appear daunting.

In *My Indian Kitchen*, the recipes are easy to prepare while maintaining the traditional flavours and aromas of Indian cuisine. They will transport you to the street stalls in Mumbai or the beaches of Goa. You will see and taste India from my perspective with the typical Sarah Todd twists.

Today, people's palates have become more adventurous. Food is not simply just to satiate our appetites but must satisfy all the senses. Experimentation and adaptation of traditional recipes is commonplace. We want quick meals to cook at home while maintaining the flavour. I incorporated elements of my travels in India to create recipes that portray the land that I have grown to love. Each recipe has a story behind its creation.

*This is the ultimate guide to an Indian summer barbecue, full of Indian summer barbecue recipes from grilled corn to tender prawns and beautiful salads. **F***

KIKKOMAN IS NOW IN INDIA!

Now around for 100 years, **Kikkoman**, the naturally-brewed soy sauce that is synonymous with Japan, has designs on your plate. It's brewed using the Honjozo method that uses just four organic ingredients—water, soybeans, wheat and salt—in a fermentation process that lasts over months to create 300 aromatic components (including hints of flowers, fruits, vanilla and coffee). Browse www.kikkomanindia.com to see how you can use Kikkoman in everything from appetisers to desserts.

Price: ₹319 for 150ml

Available from: Online stores like Amazon, Flipkart



TREAT YOURSELF TO GOURMET CHEESE

Fancy a *soirée* with wine and cheese? Now, get both the culinary stars of the evening from one company! In a collaboration with artisanal cheesemaker **Käse**, Fratelli Wines brings you **Fratelli Cheese** in three preservative- and additive-free varieties: *Gusto*, *Sunburst* and *Cheddar*, made

from ethically-sourced A2 milk. Time to party!

Price: ₹465 for 150g

Available from: www.fratelliwines.in



ON THE MENU

ALL THAT'S NEW
AND TASTY IN THE WORLD
OF FOOD AND DRINK

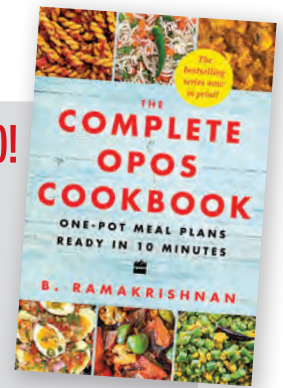
A DISH ON YOUR TABLE IN 10!

Butter chicken in six minutes! Mutton biryani in 12 minutes! In print for the first time, **The Complete OPOS Cookbook: One-Pot Meal Plans Ready in 10 Minutes** is made for us *jhat-pat* cooks who have other things to do in life! Says author B Ramakrishnan, "OPOS (One-Pot One Shot) makes cooking at home fast, fun and easy. Started as a small group trying to create foolproof recipes, today, it is a movement that has gone global, embracing hundreds of thousands."

In OPOS, ingredients are layered in a pressure cooker, and the food cooks in its own juices at the highest possible heat in the shortest possible time. If you love cooking fancy only on weekends, this is a great way to get a jump on weekday meals in a hurry.

Price: ₹399

Available from: Online stores



BAKE WITH NADIYA

We love **Nadiya Hussain** (an MBE, no less) for how different she is, and how unapologetic she is as a British Muslim icon, who also happens to be an amazing chef and a woman with such a relatable presence and a great sense of humour. Hussain is back on Netflix with *Nadiya Bakes*, and, we must warn you, you will want to make everything she throws so colourfully at you! Team Femina has already tried the croissant pudding, and it is amazing!

Watch *Nadiya Bakes* on Netflix

INGREDIENT ALERT: OGIRI

When we travel again, let's put tasting *ogiri* on our food bucket lists. Popular among the Igbo people of Nigeria, *ogiri* is made from fermented sesame seeds or *egusi* (dried melon or squash) seeds. Think of it as an African miso; it works the same way to enhance dishes as a fermented condiment. **👉**



FIGHTING ALL ODDS

MEENAKSHI GOEL, the founder of Label Eena, talks about standing on her own feet even without family support. By **Ravina M Sachdev**

Meenakshi Goel, founder and owner of Label Eena, dreamed of becoming a woman entrepreneur ever since she was a little girl, but her journey wasn't easy. "I remember seeing my father take export orders; all his overseas travel for his work and everything that came along with it always fascinated me," she recalls. "That's what I wanted for myself – to become a woman entrepreneur."

They say that the hobbies you take up in childhood often have something to do with your career later in life; that's exactly how it happened with Goel. "During the summers, my parents would encourage me to join embroidery and cooking classes. The skills I picked up then are what I utilise now; they enabled me to develop this passion for embroidered things," she reminisces.

She completed her

Bachelors in Business Administration a year before she got married. Despite being a topper throughout her school life and topping her school in grade 12, getting married was what the family expected her to do. But she wasn't a woman to sit idle though.

Goel experimented with multiple career paths over the years in an attempt to become more financially independent, but nothing felt right. She designed a few potlis for herself from time to time as she "always loved and treasured my own collection of potlis which were my trademark accessory with my saris. And I would always get complimented for them."

It wasn't until much later though that she thought of introducing her creations to the rest of the world. "Now, it gives me immense satisfaction to be working on something I am truly passionate about," she says. She shares that Eena

Eena "is about celebrating our heritage, an attempt to **make our age-old forms of needlework more accessible.**"



"is about celebrating our heritage, an attempt to make our age-old forms of needlework more accessible to a generation that has a more Western approach to fashion," explains Goel.

Building a brand from scratch was no cakewalk. "I have realised how much actually goes on behind-the-scenes for just a single piece," she reveals. Ever since they started online, it was a long wait of trying to increase their reach on social media to make themselves seen. "Apart from my husband and children, not a lot of people around me were encouraging of this venture," she rues. Even

now, many of her family members believe a woman should restrict herself to housework and be dependent on her partner. "Procuring finance, dealing with the legal hassles of setting up a home-grown brand, leaving home to showcase it at exhibitions and still not receiving a huge response—these were all difficult situations," Goel recalls. The COVID lockdown, she adds, did make her appreciate their online start and made her more ambitious to grow in a space that has so much potential. "We tried to be positive about the situation and do our best," she signs off.

The art of Healing

What is art therapy, and why should you take it up? **Rashi Chaudhary** has the answers



Art therapy, also known as expressive therapy, is a kind of therapy that uses art as a means of communication and of expression of thoughts and emotions. It is an ideal way to channel one's feelings and thoughts in a tangible manner, and to safeguard your emotional, physical, and mental health. The art produced is extremely personal, abstract, and an embodiment of one's deepest fears, thoughts, and feelings. People taking part in art therapy can use materials like chalk, paints, markers, pencils, crayons, clay, and paper to create multiple pieces of art such as stress paintings, portraits, still lifes, clay sculptures, collage journals, abstract art, and sketches. It is appropriate for any age group as it is quite versatile. It is perfect for people who have not had luck with traditional therapies. It helps bring out any repressed thoughts or emotions, which you can then take notice of and take action on. Art therapy is extremely helpful for people suffering from mental health conditions like schizophrenia, people diagnosed with dementia, autistic people, people with learning difficulties, inmates serving time in prison, and people who find it hard to express their emotions. And, of course, even you and me. Here are five types of art therapy that you can indulge in.

It helps bring out any repressed thoughts or emotions, which you can then take notice of and take action on.

Painting

Probably the most fun and easy way to express oneself, painting bestows a great sense of calm. One can paint anything that they feel like, or their therapist can offer prompts. If you're trying this on your own, there are multiple random prompts to be found on the internet.

Collaging

Collaging is simply cutting out and pasting random bits of paper to create art. It can be done in a journal or on any large sheet of paper to express one's feelings. Cutting up paper and pasting is extremely therapeutic and creative. You can also make vision boards to map out your life dreams, goals, and ambitions.

Digital Art

When everything from shopping to studying has gone digital, why should art be left behind? There are many applications available for tablets and phones that allow you to create digital art such as cartoon characters, scenery, flat scenes, illustrations, or even abstract art. It is a great way to boost your self-esteem and increase skills.

Pottery

Creating ceramics can be really fun and therapeutic for people suffering from mental illnesses, and even people who are stressed. The act of getting down and dirty, and focusing for longer periods of time, can bring out the best in people.

Photography

For those of you who are not into painting or getting your hands dirty, photography is the perfect outlet for creativity. Most of us have access to phones with quality cameras, or even to professional cameras. Go out and take pictures of what you love, people you love, things you are thankful for, or just things or places you find aesthetic. Combine photography with collaging, and create a perfect vision board. **📸**

Choose To Challenge

The theme of International Women's Day 2021 is "Choose To Challenge," and the campaign this year encourages both women and men to challenge and call out gender bias, discrimination, and stereotyping. While the internet, television, and social media are always negatively influencing our self-esteem and body-image, Dr. Noopur Jain, founder, and chief dermatologist at Skinzest, Gurgaon, believes that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder and the beholder should only be you.

As opposed to unattainable physical ideals that the media constantly bombards us with, Dr. Noopur Jain and her team of specialists at Skinzest believe that "less is more," and being the best version of ourselves is the best way to challenge self limiting notions of beauty. This team includes Dr. Ankit Jain, MS, MCh a Plastic surgeon who specializes in burn surgery, cosmetic and reconstructive breast surgery, maxillofacial surgery, and body contouring.



Credited with bringing aesthetic dermatology, eyebrow Microblading, Laser Hair Removal, and Hair-loss Therapy to Gurgaon, Dr. Jain advocates subtle feature enhancements over changes that make a person's features look artificial or plastic. Armed with an MBBS from Bangalore and an MD in dermatology from NCR, Dr. Jain and her team are always upgrading their techniques in accordance with cutting-edge research from all over the world.

Challenging conventional methods like waxing and shaving that are both time-consuming and repetitive, the latest update to Skinzest is the Soprano ICE that offers a permanent solution to unwanted hair. Featuring ALMA's proprietary ICE™ technology that cools the skin surface and ensures your session is pain-free, this multi-wavelength laser platform operates at 3 different wavelengths and emits much shorter pulses than conventional lasers. It does this at a high repetition rate, ensuring that skin isn't in contact with the laser long enough to be damaged.

In addition to stocking elite Derma brands like Obagi and IS Clinical, Skinzest also has Hollywood's favourite clinical facials such as "Fire & Ice" and Biomiracle facial. Other available treatments range from laser toning, to the diagnosis and medical treatment of all dermatological diseases including acne and scars. There's also platelet-rich plasma therapy, microdermabrasion, chemical peeling, stretch-mark treatment, growth factor treatments, and hair transplant.

As opposed to short-term improvements that are superficial and ignore the real underlying issues, Skinzest is about how every person is unique and requires a customized and holistic approach that addresses root causes.

"Self care is Self Love"

Let's make 2021 about choosing to care for ourselves, and being the best possible versions of ourselves.



Skinzest

4305, DLF Phase 4, Next to Galleria Market, Gurugram.

Tel.: +91 9999132947, +91 9929614056

Email: drnoopur@skinzest.com. Website: <https://skinzest.com/>

Clinic Timings: Monday-Saturday; 10:00 am to 7:00 pm

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*Readers Engagement Initiative



QUESTIONS BEFORE SELECTING CAREER

Are you stuck into dilemma and can not ask yourself the questions that are quintessential for selecting a career path. There are some questions to help you out. By **Sanjukta Mandal**

Your career is what will shape your future, identity, livelihood, income. Either in or out of school, students always think about their career and future endeavours.

However, while considering your career you should list some basic questions to yourself. Ask yourself these following questions before choosing your career;

What are you interested in?

No person can survive at work without interest. Prioritising interest should be the priority while selecting a career. Ask yourself about your interests. Go after the topics that interest you. You can be interested in sports, science, politics, photography, commerce or even fine arts. Before your 11th begins be clear about your area of engrossment.

Dream and aim will give you the reason why you want to pursue a career. It can be a passion or a serious desirable aim. But you need to love the career option. It is difficult to survive in a field you are not attached to. Before selecting a domain as your career introspect thoroughly and ask yourself the cliché question: why do you want to pursue the career? Have a definite answer that can justify your target.

What are your skills and personality traits?

Different jobs require a separate set of



skills. The strength of a doctor is holding his/her nerves during critical situations. A journalist requires the skills like command over languages, good analytical and colloquial skills and acclimatising to new conditions easily. Bankers should have the knack for accounts and should be great at understanding the policies and money related issues. Know your skills and think about the career and how you can apply the skills you already have, and what you can learn.

What education background do you need for the chosen career?

Understand what you need to learn to take up the career of your choice. What courses - degrees, certificate, etc you need and can help you learn more about the subject. Know which institute - college, university, etc - offers the course you need and research more on that. To get to that university, you might need to do appropriate studies before hand too. So be prepared.

How much profit do you want to make?

Monetary reward is different for different career options. Monetary valuation should always be considered while selecting a career. If you want to make a high amount of money then certain career options like MBA, Engineering or technical lines are the suitable. These options can enable you to a luxurious lifestyle. Always be sure of your monetary and materialistic desires and aims and work out accordingly. **E**

THINK ABOUT
THE CAREER
AND HOW
YOU CAN
APPLY THE
**SKILLS YOU
ALREADY
HAVE, AND
WHAT YOU
CAN LEARN.**

MAKING EVERYDAY HEALTHY



HAVE A HANDFUL DAILY TO MAKE EVERYDAY HEALTHY

When it comes to starting a good habit, California walnuts is the right choice with nutrients to support your heart, brain, gut and a healthy immune system. They are an excellent source of plant-based omega-3 ALA and also contain key nutrients like protein and fiber that makes you feel full and energized all day long.

PLANT-BASED OMEGA-3 (2.5g/28g) | PROTEIN (4g/28g) | FIBER (2g/28g)

*For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3qAuqKH>



e-Party time!

Here are five ideas for those virtual parties with your friends. By **Rashi Chaudhry**

One thing that the lockdown showed us was that there are ways you can party with your friends without meeting them in person. But what can you do beyond talking to each other in the video party? Here are some ideas that will liven up your e-parties!

20 QUESTIONS

Do you think you know your friends very well? Well, this game could reveal some hidden things about your friends; you never know which of your friends could be Superman in Clark Kent's attire! It is a very simple game to play; each one of you has

to prepare some questions for the others and simply ask them turn by turn. The spicier the questions, the more the fun!

MOST LIKELY TO...

This drinking game is another one that will help you get to know your friends much better. Pose different "most likely to" scenarios — for example, "most likely to go skydiving" or "most likely to own a zoo" — and decide which friend would be most likely to do that thing. You can add some provisos like whoever ends up drinking the most will have to do whatever everyone decides.

NAME, PLACE, ANIMAL, THING

This game will remind you of your school and college days, and will evoke nostalgia, and how! It is a very simple game; someone chooses a random letter of the alphabet, and everyone has to think of a name, place, animal, and a thing starting with that letter. Obviously, you can't use paper and pen for this, so the first person to type all the things correctly in the chat box will get the point for the round. Eventually, whoever has the maximum points wins!

CHARADES

This classic game is the perfect way to spend some

quality time virtually and have a good time laughing at your friends' bad acting skills. The rules are simple: split the participants into two separate groups. One team gives a movie name to a member of the opposite team. That person has to act out the movie, and their teammates have to guess the name within a set time.

DANCE IT OFF

What party is a party without dancing? One person from the participants can become your virtual DJ, or everyone could play their favourite party songs one by one. Everyone has to just turn on their camera and dance it off. **F**

HAVE A BERRY BLAST

Grab some berry-flavored ice creams before they are all over



What: Berry festival

What we love: Summers are incomplete without relishing on the creamiest ice creams. Naturals Ice Cream is here to delight your taste buds with a variety of berry-flavored ice creams as a part of their Berry Festival launched recently! One can enjoy some of the most delectable flavors such as Mulberry, Blueberry, Raspberry, Black Currant and Gooseberry. All these berry flavors will be available as single scoops, double scoops (cup and cone), and family packs (500 g).

Available: All Naturals Outlets across India

SAY GOODBYE TO BORING GIFTS!

Discover unique and extraordinary gifting ideas for your loved ones

What: Bonjour gift boxes from Confetti Gifts

What we love: What can be a better idea than expressing your love for your precious ones with unique and handpicked gifts? Confetti aims to provide a refreshing gifting experience by providing unique gifts in a box - Bonjour

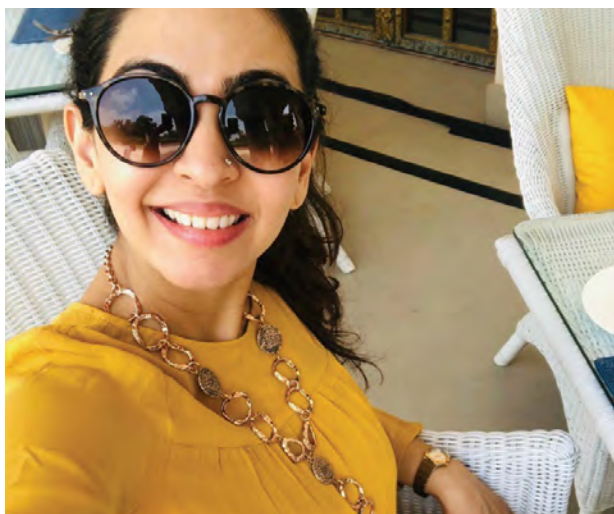
gift boxes. These boxes come with exquisite Zara man and woman perfumes, delicate British Rose body wash by Body Shop and lip-smacking Almond and Cranberry granola mix. This black box of passion is a wonderful way to celebrate togetherness, forever.

Available: confettigifts.in



KEEPS YOUR SKIN HEALTHY AND HYDRATED

Skin care brand Nohoooh was recently launched in India which takes its name from the abbreviation for *No Hydroquinone*. It is conceived and adapted to all skin types and addresses all skin care problems. This skin loving formula was specifically designed to remove small imperfections, spots, acne treatment and unification of complexion. Their products are formulated with a combination of natural active plant based ingredients to reduce irritation, preserve epidermal balance and result in shining radiant skin.



ONE-STOP SHOP FOR PREMIUM FASHION

Ambika Puri Malhotra, Founder of *The Style Closet*, is a PR Professional turned Jewelry enthusiast who has an eye for fashion and the latest trends. She believes in redefining fashion in the most luxurious yet affordable way. *The Style Closet* is a premier online shopping and a one stop shop for women to have a go at the latest trends and exclusive styles of high-quality clothing, semi-precious jewellery and fashion jewellery. A wide range of new styles are added weekly. Her collection of costume jewellery is a combination of western jewels and traditional polkis along with her newly launched luxury collection of diamonds and polki statement pieces worn by the fashion enthusiast of Delhi.



Dos and don'ts of **A VIRTUAL WEDDING** in the time of coronavirus

Big, fat Indian weddings are undergoing a sea of changes during the coronavirus pandemic. More and more people seem to be willing to cut the frills and focus on the virtual world says,
Hemchhaya De

The bride-to-be and the groom-to-be can be in different locations, but there are some wedding portals which are helping couples with 'wedding from home' rituals on multiple video messaging apps. And guests are joining in from different parts of the world. Okay, there may not be any grand khaana-peena, but couples and their guests are ensuring that the essence and spirit of marriage ceremonies remain intact. So, if you are in no mood to postpone your wedding despite the lockdown, you can consider a virtual marriage. Just keep the following points in mind.

A MUTUAL DECISION

Talk it out with your partner-to-be. Both of

you need to be on the same page when it comes to deciding on a virtual wedding. Be clear about what you can expect and what you need to forego. Don't decide in a hurry.

FAMILY MATTERS

Include everyone in your virtual wedding planning. Not everyone will be comfortable with using social media. So, explain how the virtual space functions to elderly members of your families. Allay their fears - they should understand that this virtual wedding can be as real as the actual one.

E-INVITES IN ADVANCE

Notify your guests well in advance and give them ample time to plan their schedules. Everyone is going through a difficult phase during the lockdown. So, give them time to make arrangements for attending your wedding virtually. Also, tell them that they shouldn't plan to send you any gifts - they should just be there as friends and well-wishers.

PROFESSIONAL HELP

Find out which wedding online portals and wedding

planners are facilitating such virtual marriages during lockdown. Plan a budget for roping them in. The point is, these professionals can help you host the virtual wedding in an organised manner. They can come up with tailor-made or customised plans for you.

MAINTAIN QUARANTINE RULES

Don't be over-enthusiastic. Even for virtual weddings, you need to maintain social distancing strictly. Do not step out of your house unless it's necessary, and do not let a large crowd assemble at your home when the virtual ceremony is being held. Just stick to the immediate family members and frequently sanitize the venue and maintain protocols. **F**

Not everyone will be comfortable with using social media. Explain how the virtual space functions to elderly members of your families

Flavours just right!

Four talented authors from Kolkata, **SIREESHA KADIYALA**, **VIDHI KHERIA**, **RACHNA KHERIA** and **SARIN MATHUR**, have come together to craft a contemporary prompted fiction book, *The Masala Box*. **Kayalvizhi Arivalan** tracks their journey in the making series of stories that are short, sharp, and strong.



It was a humble beginning on a Whatsapp group. Four aspiring authors came together to explore a daily dose of bewilderment in each other's works. Sireesha Kadiyala, Vidhi Kheria, Rachna Kheria and Sarin Mathur hail from diverse backgrounds. During this lockdown, they didn't have the luxury or the liberty to step outside the confines of their homes; all they had were memories, wild imaginations and a burning desire to see where these took them. A steady stream of encouraging words from each other kept them going. All the masala from their personal journeys and collective stories brought them together as a motley group of authors who enjoyed every single aspect of this collaboration.

Sireesha Kadiyala is a short film producer, and a boss at investing. She speaks five languages fluently, and her crazy hair and even crazier imagination propelled her stories into baffling realms.

Sarin Mathur is a vice principal and mentor, an educational superwoman. A soft, gentle soul, she makes the world feel welcome through her words and actions. Vidhi Kheria is a master of all acts. From cooking up a storm in the kitchen to designing paper products, this Kanpurite turned Kolkattan has the world in her palms. Her stories speak to many emotions, and create a narrative that is charged with a fine balance of time that takes us back to cleaner air and simpler days. Rachna Kheria's stories draw inspiration from her travels across the globe, long chats with friends and her belief that everything happens for a purpose. All the four authors wrote through lockdowns, COVID-19 attacks, and dull dreary days when the only breeze they felt against their cheeks was the one they imagined. They might have lacked each other's company, but the chemistry was rock solid. The Masala box is truly a spicy one.



City of Joy welcomes **Burma Burma**

Your go-to place to experience the culture, tradition and flavors of Burma in all its authenticity. By **Kayalvizhi Arivalan**

NAME: Burma Burma
LOCATION: 18 M, Ground Floor, Stephen Court, Park Street Kolkata - 700071
AMBIENCE: Your favorite Burmese restaurant with colonial style interiors, a live dessert counter along with a tea-bar, awaits you
WHAT WE ATE AND DRANK: Burma Burma is known for its bold flavors which bring together the freshest of ingredients to serve to you an array of delicious salads (thoke) and soups along with our mains which are centered around rice, noodles, and curries. Burma Burma offers Burmese specialties without the typical meat broths and sauces associated with the cuisine.

The flavors are flamboyant yet perfectly well balanced for the Indian palate. On the appetizers menu, there is the Laphet Thoke / Tea Leaf Salad (Fermented Tea Leaf salad is a staple in Burma), and the Tayat Thi Thoke/Raw Mango Salad amongst several other delicious offerings .The

mains category is complete with several platters, curries, bowls, like the national dish of Burma, Mohingar and a large selection of authentic Khaw Suey from different regions of Burma. A combination of small and sharing plates has also been introduced in the Kolkata menu. The brand highly



recommends, Avocado with Pappadam, Tofu topped with Burmese Dressing, Tofu Crackers, Bamboo shoot & Ginger Paste, Black Rice crackers with dip and Tea Leaf & Sticky Rice Crackers Ichakoi. The desserts at Burma Burma leaves you spoilt for choice. The Kolkata outlet features the brands first live dessert kitchen, for patrons to enjoy a one of a kind experience. While there is a variety of traditional Burmese desserts such as Pa La Ta and the Ye Gethoo, a Burmese Falooda made with condensed milk, assorted coconut jelly, colorful noodles topped with tapioca, there are also unique handmade ice creams such as Avocado & Durian Ice cream to highlight a few.

WHAT WE'D EAT AGAIN: Khaw Suey and the Burmese Falooda

TIMING: 12 – 3 pm & 6:30 – 10:30 pm (Mon – Fri) and 12 – 3:30 pm & 6:30 – 10:30 pm (Sat & Sun)

PRICE POINTS: ₹1,500+ taxes for a couple. **f**

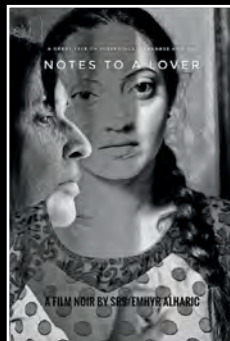
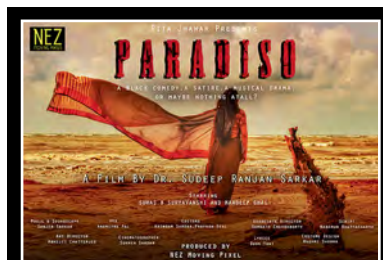
MAN WITH MISSIONS *UNLIMITED*

A SELF-TAUGHT ARTIST, POET AND FILM DIRECTOR FROM KOLKATA **SUDEEP RANJAN SARKAR** BRINGS HIS VISIONS AND THOUGHTS INTO LIFE WITH HIS CREATIONS.

An Indian Filmmaker Sudeep Ranjan Sarkar has been able to truly go beyond Tollywood, Bollywood and the regional cinema into an arena of Global storytelling. His movies are a melting pot of Indian, European, American actors sharing equal screen space with a mélange of dialogues in Hindi, English, German and Italian in one cinema. Sarkar is known for making classical Hindi cinema in the footsteps of Satyajit Ray and Rishikesh Mukherjee and created a platform with his filmmaking styles where he himself is considered as a genre.

His first full length Hindi feature film is Umformung – The Transformation which has already won 19 awards so far and his multilingual international film Glorious Dead was screened at Marche Du Cannes 2019. Dr. Sarkar did not study from a film school nor did he assist any film makers. All his stories are unique, original and conceptualized by him. While his stories are uniquely women centric yet he doesn't publicise it to have an attention pull. In order to recognise his unique work for cinema and storytelling, one of the oldest Festival of Italy, Premio Internazionale Apoxiomeno will be held in September 2021 to showcase his last two feature films Glorious Dead and Death of Spring in a special category this year where he is invited as the

**HE IS A SELF - TAUGHT
PAINTER (STYLE
IMPRESSIONIST),
POET, PHILOSOPHER,
FILMMAKER AND
STORYTELLER.**



Guest of Honor along with a host of international celebrities.

Out of the six feature films made by Sarkar, three feature films have been shot using a smartphone, which are a study in unique cinema making. He founded NEZ Moving Pixels with Rita Jhawar and is the Founder of seven years old art house film festival NEZ International Film Festival, which is the sister festival of Italy's prestigious Premio Internazionale Apoxiomeno. He is a self-taught painter (style Impressionist), Poet, Philosopher, Filmmaker and storyteller. This master film-maker has already broken Academy awarded Hollywood Director Steven Soderberg's record of two feature movies shot with iPhone, Unsane and High Flying Bird. Glorious Dead, Death of Spring and Notes to a Lover shot with iPhone add to the list of this master film-maker.



CLEAN, CLASSIC AND ELEGANT

Aesthetically-designed collections for the new beginning

What: Neha Gandhi's NGB Designs

What we loved: Having worked in Kolkata as a fashion stylist over the past five years, it was a dream come true for Neha Gandhi when she launched NGB Designs. The USP of the brand is that Neha Gandhi designs clothes based on an individual's body type and structure. She feels that the NGB designs cater to everyone. Her festive collection is called La Estrella; in Spanish, 'estrella' means star.

Price: On request

Available at: 25, Park Lane, Kolkata 700016

SHADES OF NATURE

A stunning collection of diamond jewellery inspired by Mother Earth

What: The Moods of the Earth collection from Tanishq

What we loved: Tanishq, one of India's most trusted and loved jewellery brands, has unveiled an exotic contemporary line embracing Mother Nature called Moods of the Earth. The collection is inspired by four poetic moods the planet exhibits: Earthy Browns, Lush Greens, Blushing Pinks, and Serene Whites. The Moods of Earth collection beautifully weaves the story of nature's mesmerising hues to celebrate the Earth and all her myriad moods. The collection boasts innovative techniques like gemstone bunching, use of dual-tone gold, 3D printing, and so on to add a touch of charm and modularity to the pieces. The collection features 28 exclusive pieces of contemporary neckwear, embellished with breathtaking diamonds and gorgeous coloured gemstones.

Price: ₹4,00,000 onwards

Available at: Select Tanishq stores and tanishq.co.in/moodsoftheearth



ONE TOUCH TECHNOLOGY

An audio experience like never before



What: ZEB-Sound Bomb Q Pro by Zebronics

What we loved: Enjoy the festivities with a treat for your ears, tackle work calls, sink into entertainment sessions, and do it all with the power of crisp audio and upto 35 hours' battery life with the Zebronics Zeb-Sound Bomb Q Pro latest wireless earbuds from the Sound Bomb series, a range of

premium earbuds designed to give you a wireless audio experience like never before. It features a sleek and lightweight earbud designed for maximum comfort with a snug fit that stays firm in the ear. The earbuds come with deep bass to enhance your audio experience.

Price: ₹2,799

Available at: E-commerce sites 

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

Men have always been at the helm in the real estate industry, but **Nidhi Marwah** of The Executive Center has never let that stop her, says **Kayalvizhi Arivalan**



Last year was filled with turmoil, but Nidhi Marwah, the South Asian Managing Director of The Executive Center, used it to broaden her horizons with a positive outlook toward a life beyond limits. According to her, 2020 had been a year of learning, realisation and awakening. Last year taught Marwah to

embrace uncertainty. Thanks to technology, the countless Zoom meetings kept the zeal of working going. The Executive Center is a company where most of the regional directors are women. The company has constantly tried to develop current occupancies while working remotely.

"As career women, we live with this

perpetual guilt trip, in a world where we're always trying to be the best in our professional life, as well as being great moms. We usually find ourselves wanting in both fields!" says Marwah, who spoke about the array of generic assumptions that society has thrust upon women. People have looked up to her as a 'woman in power' instead of just a woman. Avers Marwah, "As a woman, as a professional, as a mother, I think I've made a lot of mistakes and I've learned a lot from them. Again, it's all part of the journey, and the journey is ongoing," she adds.

When it comes to creating an alternative workspace, in this case, working remotely, women have been able to maintain a very delicate balance. However, the managing director believes that the WFH culture has been very disruptive, and she would prefer going back to office to work over anything else. To conclude on a positive note, she exhorts all young women leaders to, "Stop identifying yourself with gender. It doesn't have to do with one's success or failure. As long as you are breathing, it's never too late to have a new beginning."

**AS CAREER WOMEN,
WE LIVE WITH THIS
PERPETUAL GUILT TRIP,
IN A WORLD WHERE
WE'RE ALWAYS TRYING
TO BE THE BEST IN
OUR PROFESSIONAL
LIFE, AS WELL AS BEING
GREAT MOMS.**

THE ULTIMATE DERMA GUIDE TO REJUVENATE YOUR SKIN!

One doesn't need to burn a hole in their pocket to have good skin. Choose wisely on the skin-care regimen you want to spend on, says **Aparupa Mazumder**



eye-cream just fine. Just pick one you like.

Where to spend money?

1 Antioxidants and sunscreens – Antioxidants protect our skin from harmful UV rays, toxic gases and pollutants. They also keep our skin hydrated. Using a good antioxidant PRODUCT? will help you retain a healthy skin. A good sunscreen will neither leave an oily after-effect nor make your skin look dry.

2 Serums – Serums are preferred over lotions because they can penetrate deeper through the skin. Using a serum with a good SPF content and ingredients such as argan oil, green tea, olive oil, etc is always ideal for people who are exposed to the wear and tear of daily life.

Skincare is not just about preparing yourself for a date by putting on the best makeup products at your disposal; it is way deeper, both literally and metaphorically. Hence, we need to be smart while choosing products that will truly take care of our skin. **F**

Good skin care and healthy lifestyle choices can help delay natural ageing and prevent various skin problems. You can pamper yourself by aching the basics. Skincare is essential for men and women of every age, says Pamela Ghosh, MUA and beautician. "We often forget to take care of ourselves while coping with our hectic schedule. Stress, anxiety and less sleep always have an adverse effect on the

way we look and also on our dermatological health."

There are plenty of products that you might prefer not to use, but selecting the ones that are indispensable is the real hassle. The global beauty industry is worth billions of dollars, so going easy on your pocket is a decision that only you can take for yourself. This ideal derma-care guide helps you decide on what to buy and what not to, depending on your skin care routine:

Where to save money?

1 Face masks – Brace yourself because this might sound ancient, but homemade face masks work great! Make your mother's rustic honey-and-oatmeal pack for a great glow at very little cost.

2 Eye creams – Any moisturiser or face cream containing cocoa butter and cucumber serves the purpose of an

That flawless feeling

If you look up the definition of the word blemish, what you get is “a small mark or flaw which ruins the appearance of something.” While it may sound simple, the message cuts deep. A small mark or flaw is all it takes to ruin the appearance of something? Unfair as it may sound, we all know it's the truth. A beauty spot and a mole are both the same thing, why then is one considered a flaw, and the other an enhancement? The answer, perception.

Spotless, clear, clean, and flawless, are all adjectives that we generally associate with good skin. Asian and Indian skin tones have not only been documented to be more susceptible to pigmentation disorders, but further exposure to ultraviolet radiation (which we have no shortage of) only exacerbates the situation. While sunscreen lotions, masks, and gloves do keep radiation away to a degree, they do nothing to address any on-going pigmentation disorders

What causes pigmentation and is it harmful?

Dermatologists can identify over 20 different medical conditions under the category pigmentation and causes can range from avoidable circumstances like damage caused by sun or chemicals to unavoidable circumstances like aging, hormonal or hereditary disorders and diseases like acne or Lichen Planus. While most of the unwanted pigmentation is often harmless, studies suggest that patients with pigmentation disorders have a higher prevalence of illnesses like anxiety and depression which in-turn bring down the overall quality of life.



What is the quickest way to deal with pigmentation, safely and effectively?

When compared to conventional Q-switched Nd:YAG lasers that feature a nano-second pulse rate and are used by the majority of dermatologists in India, the ALMA Pico Clear uses fewer treatments with less downtime to more effectively deal with all kinds of pigment problems including unwanted tattoos. The Pico Clear delivers ultra-short “pico-second” pulses of energy that are long enough to shatter unwanted pigments, but short enough to not cause any skin damage, redness, or burning. It also features 4 different wavelengths that are ideal for different skin types and can reduce post acne scars, open pores, fine facial hair, tighten and rejuvenate facial skin, and even clear up Rosacea.



Why can't I just use creams and give it time?

Unlike creams and chemical peels that must stay on the skin for longer durations of time, the PICO Clear is in and out in “one-trillionth” of a second, with no damage to the surface of the skin. Faster results can also facilitate an early withdraw of oral medications and certain potentially toxic skin lightening creams.



Is there a PICO Clear in India?

Fortunately, situated on Whitefield Road, Bengaluru, is the Skin. Health Advanced Dermatology Center that features India's first installation of the ALMA Pico Clear. The Centre is run by Dr. Sunaina Hameed, Diplomate of the American Board of Laser Surgery, who is pushing the boundaries of technology in order to give you that flawless feeling! Go to www.dr.sunaina.com, for more information.

Dr. Sunaina Hameed
MD, Dip.ABLS (USA)



For Appointment:

Dr. Sunaina Hameed, MD, Dip.ABLS (USA)

Skin.Health Advanced Dermatology Center

Plot 7A, Rustamjee Layout, Hyde Park, Whitefield Main Road, Bengaluru - 560066

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*Readers Engagement Initiative

A GOURMET KITCHEN TAKEOVER SERIES

A planned, well-thought-out kitchen takeover series that addresses the gaps in the Chennai food scene



NAME: Curate by On the rocks

LOCATION: Crowne Plaza, Chennai Adyar Park

WHAT WE ATE AND

DRANK: Keeping in line with its USP of breaking away from the standard restaurant routine, the team at Crowne Plaza Adyar Park started working on a unique global gourmet-on-plate experience with invited chefs and conceptualised Curate by On The Rocks.

The first Curate series was in collaboration with Chef Virginie, originally from

Normandie, France. The series showcased French tasting menus available during dinner, and featured classic French dishes like soupe a l'oignon (French onion soup), ratatouille et purée de pommes de terre (ratatouille and mashed potatoes), tarte aux pommes (apple pie) and many such hearty dishes. While we enjoyed the French cuisine, Chef Virginie passionately explained the history and importance of French techniques and the prominence of certain ingredients like butter,

mustard and wine while cooking, which immediately whetted our appetite.

The takeover series has been planned for the next six months with mouth-watering menus curated by celebrated chefs from Bengaluru, Puducherry and Mumbai.

PRICE POINTS: A five-course non-vegetarian menu is priced at Rs.2,590 plus taxes. The vegetarian menu is priced at Rs. 2,450 plus taxes

TIMINGS: 7:00pm onwards

**Social distancing is strictly practised and the restaurant is frequently sanitised.*

-Kayalvizhi Arivalan



Chef Virginie





Working late,
too many coffees,
unhealthy snacking...
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you worry,
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Sample Pack



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[†]As compared to regular refined sugar

UNWIND IN THE LAP OF LUXURY

A destination within a destination, the villas are designed to meet the requirements of luxury vacation seekers.



WHAT: Newly-launched villas at Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa

LOCATION: 280, East Coast Rd, Vedanamelli, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 603104

WHAT WE LIKED ABOUT

THE VILLAS: A vibrant resort on East Coast Road in Tamil Nadu, Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa is perfectly located overlooking the pristine beauty of the Bay of Bengal. Nestled on the calming shores of the picturesque Coromandel Beach, the magnificent property is immaculately landscaped against the horizon, far removed from the chaos of city life. The newly-launched villas come with a private pool, deck seating, walk-in

wardrobes and large living spaces, offering the perfect combination of privacy and luxury. From the single-bedroom Bay Villas to the two-bedroom Amara Villa, they are the epitome of luxury and sophistication with rustic reminders of a bygone era. Built to blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment, everything from the thatched roofing to the furniture and interior design offers a sense of old-world

charm that lends a soothing effect to the aesthetics. With excellent ambience, lip-smacking fare and warm guest service, the sea-facing, newly-launched villas promise an unforgettable stay and loads of memories to take back with you!

PRICE POINTS:

On request

**Social distancing is strictly practised and the resort is frequently sanitised.*

-Kayalvizhi Arivalan



A MASTERCLASS OF AUTHENTIC FLAVOURS

An enticing range of ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook product ranges from The House of Chettiyars, **ARPATHAM** will surely leave you craving for more!



THE CHETTIYAR SISTERS

Two enterprising sisters-in-law (Yes! You read it right!! Sisters-in-Law) Vidula Naresh and Bharathi Mathiyalagan, set on their entrepreneurial journey which gave birth to The House of Chettiyars showcasing the food and cuisine and the authentic flavours of Chettiyars. They ideated the concept of podis, pre-mixes and marinades* under Arpatham which is entirely a home-run venture. While most of the business faced crisis during the pandemic, Vidula and Bharathi

kick-started their business venture during the lockdown. “We never thought about any huge- scale investments as our idea was to stick to basic, something that can be a home-run venture with limited investment yielding a decent turnover” says Vidula, who suggested they experiment with Podi’s which is also her mother-in-law’s specialty.

“The samples that we made, just sold off the rack like hot cakes which boosted our morale to get things rolling” she recalls. All the raw materials for the podis and

masalas are procured locally and they are made without preservatives or added colour.

Traditionally, the Chettiyars are bankers, and traders of salt and spices which reflects wonderfully in their food. This is exactly replicated in the flavours of Arpatham. From podis, masalas to the different varieties of ready rice mix, Arpatham caters to most South Indian delicacies. Their specialty however is their variety of Podis — Special Idly podi, Paruppu podi, Poondur podi, Ellu podi, Kollu podi, Karuvapillai podi, Murungai podi. They use a combination of traditional and modern methods to make their products. Arpatham products come in 3 variant sizes 200g bottles, 50g bottles (apt for creating hampers and

gifting options) and 300g refill packets.

“Currently we are making close to 300 bottles where the production happens at Bharathi’s kitchen. Even if we go up to a 1000 bottles, we will only break into many smaller kitchens and not get into an industrial manufacturer setup keeping our core mission in mind, *To provide food made at home, the way it is made at home,*” concludes Vidula.



Product available and can be shipped all over India

Social media handle:
Thehouseofchettiyars

Contact to place orders:
7904299688

Email:
thehouseofchettiyars@gmail.com **F**



PRODUCTS OF ARPATHAM

ALL THINGS NATURAL

Keep your room and life well lit with candles that not only look pretty, but smell fantastic too!

What: Happy Soul launches a range of naturally-crafted, hand-rolled incense sticks, scented candles and agate coasters.

What we love: Happy Soul, an e-commerce and retail start-up, is all set to provide diverse multi-vendor products like incense sticks, scented candles and agate coasters that are organic in nature with no added chemicals to provide a wholesome experience to its users. Its first range of incense sticks comes in 10 aromatic scents including Sage, Nagchampa, Frankincense, Tulsi, Palo Santo, Sandalwood, Agarwood, Lavender, Rose and Patchouli. The candles are crafted with pure soy wax and 100% pure essential oils such as Lavender, Ylang Ylang, Kaffir Lime and Lemongrass. These candles come in three different aromas, namely Rose, Oud Cardamom, and Jasmine.

Available at: <https://www.happysoul.in/>



Calling tea aficionados

More options in the beverage that will keep your mood elevated at all times

What: Fernweh Agro offers different types of premium organic tea

What we love: With an array of flavours such as the Firenze Lavender Tea, Chamomile Tea, Bleu Amor Tea, Kashmiri Kahwa Green Tea and Ayurvedic Healing Tea, Fernweh Agro is all set to help you bond with your loved ones. The products are locally sourced and ecologically packed, and available both in India and internationally.

Available at: www.fernwehagro.com

FOR HIS GLOWING SKIN

Pamper your man with these luxury skincare products

What: HIVADO launches a luxury skincare range for men crafted with fragrances that you cannot forget. These will keep your man fresh and scintillating for hours.

What we love: "Modern and fresh yet subtle and strong," is how we describe these skincare products for men. This range consists of a gentle pore-purifying face wash, a non-greasy face cream that protects skin from UVA/UVB and IR rays, a hand cream, a low foaming cleanser, and a body lotion.

Available at: <https://thehivado.com>

Price: ₹2,000 onwards



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BREATHE FREE, BREATHE HAPPY

Use these antimicrobial protective aids to ward off germs as well as breathe freely



What: Swaas, a design-centric lifestyle and home brand, now offers protective gear, masks, bed sheets, towels and candles.

What we love: Swaas is a lifestyle brand that brings you eco-friendly and anti-microbial home décor products such as bed sheets, towels, tote bags and sets of pure beeswax candles. It also has protective gear that allows for comfortable breathing while wearing it. All the products are organic in nature, and made with fair-trade and sustainable cotton. The designs will appeal to kids, pre-teens and adults.

Available at: <https://swaaslife.com/>

Keep your skin happy

Your skin will feel rejuvenated with these delicate scrubs and cleansers



What: Ador Multi Products has added one more product called Anatomical to its range of skincare.

What we love: AMP's Anatomical is made of natural ingredients, is paraben-free, and comes in colourful packaging. The new additions to the range include body scrub and cleanser in five different variants, along with a brand-new hand wash to be launched in India soon.


Available: On Amazon, Flipkart and Nykaa, beginning at ₹299

FRAGRANCES THAT SPREADS THE CHEER

Enhance your happy-go-lucky vibe with these charismatic fragrances

What: Skinn by Titan has launched a 'nude' fragrance to allow your skin to smell refreshing and rejuvenating.

What we like: Titan's recent addition to its perfume product venture Skinn is all set to take your breath away with mind-blowing fragrances. You can now show your loved ones how much they mean to you by gifting them with these unique-smelling perfumes because some things are #bestsaidwithskinn.

Price: ₹1,950 



ALL SET TO RULE IN VOGUE!

As a woman of substance, **Nidhi Goenka** has always enjoyed all things related to fashion and lifestyle. Her multi-designer studio Nidhi's, in Rutland Gate, Chennai making ingenious fashion that has been perfectly fabricated with Indian craftsmanship and contemporary ideas

The whole inspiration behind opening a designer couture label in Chennai came to her when she spotted the gap in reasonably priced occasion wear in Chennai. That is when Nidhi Goenka realized that the world of glamour is her actual calling. She wanted to design a place where women could get their hands on a wide range of updated fashion and quirky attires in their very own Chennai city.

Being an avid traveler from childhood exposed her to both traditional and western fashion brands. "Travelling allowed me to spot the extraordinary one of a kind piece in each brand and curate them in harmony spreading happiness and sharing joy selflessly," said the designer.

At Nidhi's, you will find a variety of idiosyncratic and quirky bridal attires. Each and every piece of clothing available here has something unique about it and the designer promises that the clothes at Nidhi's are bound to make every bride and bridesmaid feel at the top of the world.

Nidhi has worked with many fashion designers in the past but launching this studio was a collaborative effort. Along with her were other designers, like Amit Aggarwal, Rajdeep Ranawat, Shweta Kapur, Abhinav Mishra, Tanieya Khanuja, Kavita Bhartia, Namrata Joshipura, Siddhartha Tytler, Poonam Bhagat, to name a few. "The designers I have worked with are very supportive, friendly and talking to them has always resulted in positive and constructive answers," said the designer.

She believes that fashion is a form of expression that has never ending possibilities. "You can decipher so much of a person based on whether they're in sneakers or stilettos, bow ties or neck ties.



Alternatively, you can masquerade as a completely different identity. I think that's what drew me to the industry," says Nidhi, who added that the store will display bridal, prêt, luxury prêt, Indo-Western attires with accessories, footwear, bags, clutches, home décor, etc.

"With Jennifer Lopez dawning Falguni and Shane Peacock, Katy Perry in Manish Aurora and Queen Bee in Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, Indian designers are at their peak," exclaimed the designer. She also said that India's eclectic color combinations and material studies have made the country a fore-runner by global standards. Besides being a textile powerhouse, India has a robust bunch of upcoming designers. Shivan and Naresh, Cuin and Amit Aggarwal represent only a portion of the brewing talent and Indian designers have started to take inspiration from their own rich roots instead of turning to other countries and this is their biggest awakening yet, said Nidhi. **F**



EMBRACE THIS SUMMER IN STYLE

Get ready for some serious retail therapy as we approach summer 2021

What: Westside launches its Spring-Summer 2021 Collection

What we love: The new Spirit of Spring collection by Westside

If you're looking to revamp your wardrobe with stylish new essentials in fresh tones and breezy hues, Westside has you covered. You'll get a chic utilitarian look with the collection from LOV in fresh spring and pastel tones, and trendy traditional pieces in the collections from Vark and Utsa. Explore an array of breathable fabrics by Wunderlove, Y&F and HOP. For the men in your life, WES Formals will provide the ultimate smart look, and the collections from Ascot, NUON Men and ETA, which consist of cotton tees, relaxed-fit shirts and knit-wear, is what will make their summer 2021 perfect. That's not it; brighten your home up with splashes of green from Westside Home, and get great skincare products from StudioWest to take on the summer heat.

Available at: All Westside retail stores



SILKY SMOOTH HAIR

Hair-care couldn't get easier with these 100% vegan and cruelty-free products

What: Brillare hair-care products

What we love: Brillare claims to be a 100% natural hair and personal care brand that campaigns against chemical-aided products. Its hair-care range includes the Hair Fall Oil Booster, which is a solution made of powerful ingredients like coffee, onion, basil and geranium seeds in a light coconut base. There is also the Dandruff Oil Shots Booster, which controls dandruff and soothes an itchy and flaky scalp. This oil is made of neem, tulsi, tea, celery seeds and clary sage in a light coconut oil base. The Heavy Moisturising Oil Shots Booster helps in controlling dryness and frizzy hair. It is a potent oil blend made with powerful ingredients like argan, shea, soyabean and neroli oils in a light coconut oil base, which keeps your hair healthy and natural. **Available at:** <https://www.brillare.co.in/collections/oil-shots>



Parenthood couldn't get any better

Bring home a range of oral care that will make your baby's teeth healthy

What: Chicco's Oral Care Range for your baby's oral health

What we love: Oral hygiene is one of the most important and, sadly, the most neglected parts of childcare. Chicco has a big range of oral care products specially designed for your baby's oral health. The range of products includes a gum gel that provides soothing comfort during milk-teeth eruption, a toothpaste that should be used twice a day, a learning toothbrush set for babies over the age of six months, a regular toothbrush, and an electric toothbrush.

Available at: E-commerce and stores

Price: ₹179 to ₹499 INR **F**





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SETTING BOUNDARIES

Thinking of getting into a live-in relationship?
Ravina M Sachdev shares some dos and don'ts



One are the days when an unmarried couple would be looked down upon for staying together. Times have changed, and people's thinking has, for the most part, evolved. Live-in relationships are now being accepted in most parts of the country. In fact, more couples these days are opting to live in to check how compatible they would be together before taking the plunge into marriage. However, every relationship, be it marriage, friendship or any other, comes with its own set of rules, and live-ins are no exception.

Here's how you can ease the way in your live-in relationship...

→ **Do be clear about what you want**

Moving in together is a huge step forward. It would be best to at least be in a relationship for a year or two before taking that step. It is also vital to talk with your partner about what this step forward means. Make sure that the two of you want the same things- be it

just living together or getting married eventually. Discuss and communicate with your partner, as this will only benefit both of you later.

→ **Do split the house chores**

From doing the laundry to shopping for groceries, it would be best to divide the chores or get them done together. It won't work out if one person does everything, and the other just lazes around all day. It's best to talk this out before you move in together to avoid unpleasantness later on.

→ **Do chart out a budget**

The two of you will now be responsible for running a home, and money matters are often tricky to work around. Before you step into your love nest, decide who will take care of what expenses. Since your spending and saving habits will differ, it would be wise to draw up a budget chart and stick to it. Work out whether you will have a joint kitty for some things, too.

→ **Don't assume it will be easy**

Don't assume that living together will be easier than getting married. Learning to live alongside another human, regardless of the relationship, is always a little difficult. It's okay to take a little time to get accustomed to each other's habits and routines.

→ **Don't get clingy**

It's easy to fall into the same routine and depend too much on your partner; but that is, in fact, something that you should avoid. Don't look to your partner to be your last living contact; stay in touch with your friends and well-wishers, and make it a point to meet your friends frequently. In fact, there's no rule that says that, if your partner doesn't like doing something that you are fond of, you cannot do it by yourself. Make sure to not lose your identity while sharing the roof with your sweetheart. **F**



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For Every
Woman



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PRIME CHOICE FOR A PROUD WOMAN

How to take care of *your gynecological health during lockdown*

As the lockdown gets extended, an emerging trend is of gynecological health, which has become the top concern for a lot of women across the country says, **Hemchhaya De**



A recent study by online doctor consultation service Practo shows that right after the outbreak of COVID-19, online queries for gynecological issues have increased by more than 250 per cent on the telemedicine platform. In fact, Practo spokespersons say that one in every three consultations requested by women pertains to gynecological problems. According to the portal's findings, most of the queries are being raised by women in the 21-30 age group. What's more, gynecology has become "the most

consulted specialty among women", with 50 per cent of the consultation requests coming from Tier 1 and 50 per cent from Tier 2+ cities over the past few weeks, following the lockdown announcement.

COMMON AILMENTS

If we look at the most common queries, menstruation problems like irregular periods, pregnancy complications, birth control techniques, and miscarriage top the list.

Explaining the possible reasons behind the surge in gynecological queries

during this period, a Practo spokesperson says, "With the pandemic dominating our lives, many women are being compelled to multi-task, straddling home and career responsibilities. This added pressure of managing household and work commitments simultaneously during the lockdown can be triggering stress and anxiety." The spokesperson further says that many routine gynecology and prenatal care appointments have transitioned to virtual visits, thanks to social distancing during the lockdown. "Especially for pregnant women, it

is not safe to venture out except for emergencies or screenings. But at the same time, it is important that they get all their doubts cleared with a gynecologist, in order to make sure that no symptom goes undiagnosed. Therefore, an increasing number of women are consulting doctors online,” the person stresses. Further, some of these problems cannot be self-diagnosed or self-treated and need proper medical attention.

So, how does one maintain proper gynecological health during these trying times? Experts say that women in all age groups concerned should follow a strict health routine during the lockdown period. “They should preferably start their day with some exercises like jogging or yoga for 45 minutes—the idea is to keep active,” says Dr Ambuja Govindaraj, consultant, obstetrics and gynecology, Columbia Asia Referral Hospital, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore. “They should also focus on a nutritious and balanced diet—their meals should include more protein, fiber, and calcium. Plus, one has to ensure sufficient intake of fluids.” Dr Govindaraj also cautions against spending an inordinate amount of time in the cyberspace. She advises curtailing screen time and focusing on indoor hobbies instead, in addition to getting adequate sleep, at least six to eight hours every day.

NEW-AGE HEALTH MONITORING

Others recommend logging on to health apps. “There are many video tutorials which are helping individuals to keep fit,” says Dr Sunil Eshwar, lead consultant, obstetrics and gynecology, Aster RV Hospital, Bangalore. “These apps have seen a surge in demand for their live exercise sessions. We do need to adapt ourselves to these new age technologies while in home isolation,” he adds.

Since contraception queries account for a large part of telemedicine



CONTRACEPTION IS TAKING A HIGH PRIORITY DURING THIS PERIOD AS COUPLES SPEND MORE TIME WITH EACH OTHER CONFINED TO THEIR HOMES.

consultations (according to the Practo study), women need to keep in mind certain basic points about birth control techniques. “Contraception is taking a high priority during this period as couples spend more and more time with each other confined to their homes. The basic thing couples can do is follow the Calendar method, where they figure the days of ovulation and refrain from having intercourse on their most fertile days,” says Dr Eshwar. This poses a challenge to women with irregular cycles, and hence he advises them to use oral contraceptive pills as well as barrier contraception like condoms to prevent pregnancy. He strongly advises against frequent use of emergency contraception pills. “These are to be used only once and for actual emergencies like condom breakage,”

he stresses.

Gynecologists also urge women to keep common menstrual problems like Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) strictly under control during the lockdown period. “PCOS is a metabolic syndrome, associated with obesity, hyper-androgenism (acne and hirsutism) and irregular cycles,” explains Dr Govindaraj. “The incidence rate is 10 per cent in women of reproductive age. Treatment mainly focuses on lifestyle changes—physical activity, weight reduction, and diet modification, focusing on protein- and fiber-rich diet. These things normalise metabolism and help in regularising menstrual cycles. Women whose cycles extend over 45 days should consult their doctors,” she advises. **F**



THE BENEFITS OF EATING **LOCALLY-GROWN** FOODS

Local foods don't travel a long distance before they reach your plate nor do they need preservatives, which makes them better for health and the environment, says **Kayalvizhi Arivalan**

When you buy from local farms, you're more likely to get products that are suitable for growing in that particular soil, which is adapted to certain weather conditions. The crops are picked in the right season at

the peak of ripeness rather than harvested early so that they can be shipped to a retail store. Here are some of the environmental and community reasons you might want to consider eating more local foods.

Seasonal Eating

When you select local foods,

you eat with the seasons. "The cycle of seasonal produce is perfectly designed to support your health,"



says Dr. Sheela Narayanan, nutritionist. "Eating seasonally is the most natural way to eat and beneficial to our bodies. In summer, our bodies require cooling foods like fresh fruits and vegetables that are rich in water content, while, in winter, we need rich and warming high-fat foods and root vegetables," she adds.

Easy On Your Pocket

Local produce doesn't incur extra costs on fertilizers, transportation and storage, hence it is usually much cheaper than imported goods. Homegrown veggies and fruits don't take much effort to produce, as they are grown in soil that suits them. Therefore, the cost taken to produce them comes down drastically, which benefits the end user—you!

Fresh!

Keeping health benefits, sustainability, and the need for organic ingredients in mind, the chefs at the Sheraton Grand, Chennai, cultivate local herbs, vegetables and fruits in an in-house garden area. "The freshly-picked ingredients are innovatively used in our menus to offer guests a nutrient-dense meal while showcasing local cuisine made with natural organic produce," says Executive Chef of Sheraton Grand, Mukesh Sharma. He adds that guests

are also invited to visit the chefs' garden and get a detailed tour of the organic herbs, vegetables and fruits, and an explanation of the health benefits of in-house farming. Catering to current sustainable food trends, restaurants and chefs are passionate about using locally-grown and sourced foods in their cooking.

Enhanced Flavour And Nutrition

Foods simply taste better when they ripen on the plant. When they are transported from a faraway location, they are often harvested and shipped before they are ready

**HOMEGROWN
VEGGIES
AND FRUITS
DON'T
TAKE MUCH
EFFORT
TO PRODUCE.**



to eat, which results in bland-tasting fruits and vegetables. "The concentration of most vitamins and minerals begins to deteriorate as soon as a fruit or vegetable is picked," explains Dr. Narayanan. "So, the longer it takes for a food to get from the field to the grocery store to your plate, the lower its nutrient level will be."

Supporting The Local Economy

Local farmers are generally

far more sustainable than industrial scale farms as they practise methods such as cover cropping, crop rotation and intercropping with trees to put nutrients back into the soil for the health of their crops and land. When you buy from a local farmer, at a farmers' market, or from a local shop, you are supporting your local community, and the money goes back into producing more local food for you. **E**

PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Born and raised in Mumbai, Farah Titina always knew she wanted to be a model and actor. After graduating in commerce from Jai Hind College, she pursued her LLB from KC College, but the desire to pursue her dreams stayed strong. “I used to stand in front of the mirror and act,” she recalls. “I would smile widely and be overly excited whenever I faced the camera, even as a kid.”

From winning her first dance competition in school to doing many noteworthy commercials, the Libran has been unstoppable. “As a schoolgirl, I accompanied a friend to an audition one day, and they asked me to audition as well. That was it. I did commercials during school and college days, along with studies. I only got into the field full-time after my post-graduation.”

Mumbai holds a very special place in her heart. “I like how so many people from different parts of India with diverse cultural traits come to the city to fulfill their dreams,” she explains. “It lives up to its name—the City of Dreams. Mumbai always makes you feel at home. It is the city that never sleeps, and that’s the best part about it!”

Titina has been seen in TVCs and digital and print ads print ads for many well-known brands over the years. She has also done a couple of TV promos, and was a finalist at the Femina Style Diva Pageant in Goa in 2012. She shot her first South project, a bilingual movie named *Two Friends* in Telugu and *Snehave*

Preethi in Kannada. “The moment I hear the three magical words, ‘lights, camera, action,’ I am in sync with the character that I am to portray,” says the hardworking model. She has been blessed with supportive parents and friends who are her biggest cheerleaders.

Titina loves planning

her meals, and balancing them perfectly. “I am not an emotional eater; I love food, but I do not tend to overeat if I am feeling a little emotional or moody. I work out regularly,

FABULOUS FLAIR

Actor and model **FARAH TITINA** tells **Seher Campwala** about how she lives her life



and eat healthy. Although I do have my cheat meal in a week, I balance it with a healthy meal the next day. The biggest eating tip would be to eat small portions but every two to three hours.”

The beauty tips Titina swears by is to drink plenty of water and to moisturise. She preps for her important shoots by cutting down carbs, eating light meals, and drinking green tea. She also exercises for two hours daily; weight training thrice a week and cardio two to three times a week.

Staying happy and confident is key for her. She enjoys her work-outs and likes going for brisk walks. She spends her recreational time dancing, travelling, watching movies, and baking. Destressing comes with watching her favourite films and eating sushi, her favourite food. Moisturising, Instagram and, finally, praying make up her nighttime rituals.

“Be kind to people; treat them as you would like to be treated,” is the best advice she has ever received.

Her ever-positive attitude towards life never lets her spirits down.

“I would choose love over money, because that’s the foundation for everything else, even for money. For instance, if you love what you do, you’ll give it your all and it’s eventually that love that brings you success, and possibly the money or fame or popularity or even a plain sense of fulfillment along with it. So, love always!” says the graceful model. **F**



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