

VOL 19.0 | DECEMBER EDITION

Initiative of WE Foundation

WOMENSHINE

Parul Gulati

+

SHINE GLOBAL

Mansi Mehra: Standup Comedian

TASTE BUDS

Christmas Punch

SHINING STAR

Saloni Bhardwaj-Social Entrepreneur

TRAVEL

Andaman & Nicobar

FASHION

sustainability of fashion

ZODIAC

Numerology

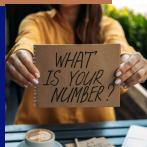


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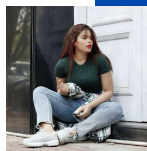
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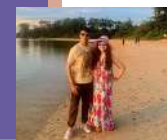
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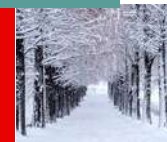
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(For editorial queries, e-mail: connect@womenshine.in)



CHIEF EDITOR'S LETTER

#SHINEON

APARNA MISHRA

Founder , Women Shine

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*Let's reach for the sky
Let's win over the world
Let's change the story*

She is shining in the glamour world, riding high in Entrepreneurship, touching lives in Social sectors, raising the bar in Corporate World.

She is a Mom, she is a professional, she is an actor, author, artist.

Women Shine salutes the Woman of today who wears and manages multiple hats smoothly.

The year 2021, has seen all phases of life with the outbreak of COVID-19 in a massive way. Many of our nears and dears have lost their lives and many have got a second life. New businesses were launched, old businesses were closed too.

A year that taught us to live the very moment of life.

We are heading towards the new year 2022 with a lot of hopes, new plans, and positivity and Women Shine helps you to read about those Amazing league of countless women who have worked on the ground level, who are filled with so much of humanity, Positivity and carving their niche.

Every Month Women Shine will present before you a beautiful set of innovative write-ups, inspiring stories of our Shining Women.

Keep sharing your thoughts, suggestions on womenshinemag@gmail.com

Show us your love and subscribe for free !!!

#Shineonwomen

Wishing you lots of love, light, and best of health in the Year 2022.

Merry Christmas and a Very happy 2022

Aparna Mishra

Founder, Women Shine

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT: 52ND EDITION OF ASIA'S OLDEST AND INDIA'S BIGGEST FILM FESTIVAL, THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI)

The 52nd International Film Festival of India, commenced on November 20, in Goa, and witnessed the participation of five significant OTT players, namely- Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5, Voot and SonyLIV for the first time in history.

The move aimed to bolster the quality and produce fresh content, since these platforms curate variety of shows and movies every year. Digital India also paved the way for fascinating the audience virtually all over the world. The latest edition of the International film festival of India was held in a hybrid format owing to the current COVID-19 situation. The festival delegates had the option to participate and watch films and other events virtually, sitting in the comforts of their homes.

Founded in 1952, the film festival is held yearly to celebrate the excellence of world cinema. Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur and Chief Minister of Goa, Dr Pramod Sawant graced the occasion. Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Dr L. Murugan was also present at the opening ceremony.

IFFI was conducted between 20th to 28th November 2021 and provided a perfect platform for understanding and welcoming the film cultures of various nations in the context of their social and cultural ethos. The festival was held jointly by the Directorate of

Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the Entertainment Society of Goa, Government of Goa.

The festival kicked off with a star-studded inaugural ceremony at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium, Panaji, Goa, with the presence of film personalities Salman Khan, Ranveer Singh, Ritesh Deshmukh, Genelia Deshmukh, Shraddha Kapoor, amongst others. IFFI this year showcased over 300 films from across the globe. The well-known filmmaker Karan Johar and television personality Manish Paul hosted the ceremony.

Movies at IFFI:

IFFI featured 148 films from about 73 countries in the International Section with about 12 world premieres, about 7 international premieres, 26 Asia premieres and about 64 India premieres. The festival received 624 films from 95 countries this time, up from 69 countries in the previous edition.

'The King of all the World' (El Rey de Todo El Mundo) directed by Carlos Saura was the Opening Film of the festival. It was also the film's International Premiere. The Power of the Dog directed by Jane Campion, Winner of Best Director at Venice Film Festival was chosen as the Mid Fest Film. Grand Prix Award-winning movie of Director Asghar Farhadi, A Hero was the closing film at the Festival.

The World Panorama Section of IFFI showcased 55 cinematic gemstones across the world. 11 Films were selected for the Festival Kaleidoscope including movies such as Titane (French) and Souad (Arabic).





Retrospective section:

The retrospective section in the 52nd IFFI featured renowned Hungarian filmmaker Bela Tarr and Russian filmmaker and stage director Andrei Konchalovsky.

Indian Film Personality of the Year 2021:

Ms Hema Malini, celebrated actor and Member of Parliament was presented the Indian Film Personality of the Year 2021 award at the opening ceremony. Acclaimed lyricist and Chairperson, CBFC Shri Prasoon Joshi has presented the honour on the closing day. Their contributions to the field of Indian cinema spread over decades and their body of work has enthralled audiences across generations.

Homage to the lost stars:

Every edition of the International Film Festival of India pays a tribute to the stalwarts that the film industry lost. The Homage section of 52nd IFFI showcased the films of Bertrand Tavernier, Christopher Plummer, Jean-Claude Carriere and Jean-Paul Belmondo as an homage to the veterans. IFFI also paid Homage to Indian film stalwarts Buddhadeb Das Gupta (Director), Dilip Kumar (Actor), Nedumudi Venu (Actor), Puneeth Rajkumar (Actor), Sanchari Vijay (Actor), Sumitra Bhave (Director), Surekha Sikri (Actress) and Waman Bhonsle (Film Editor).

The festival gave a Special Tribute to Sir Sean Connery, the first James Bond on the large screen.

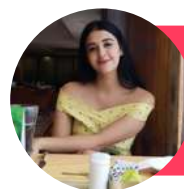
#FirstatIFFI:

75 Creative Minds:

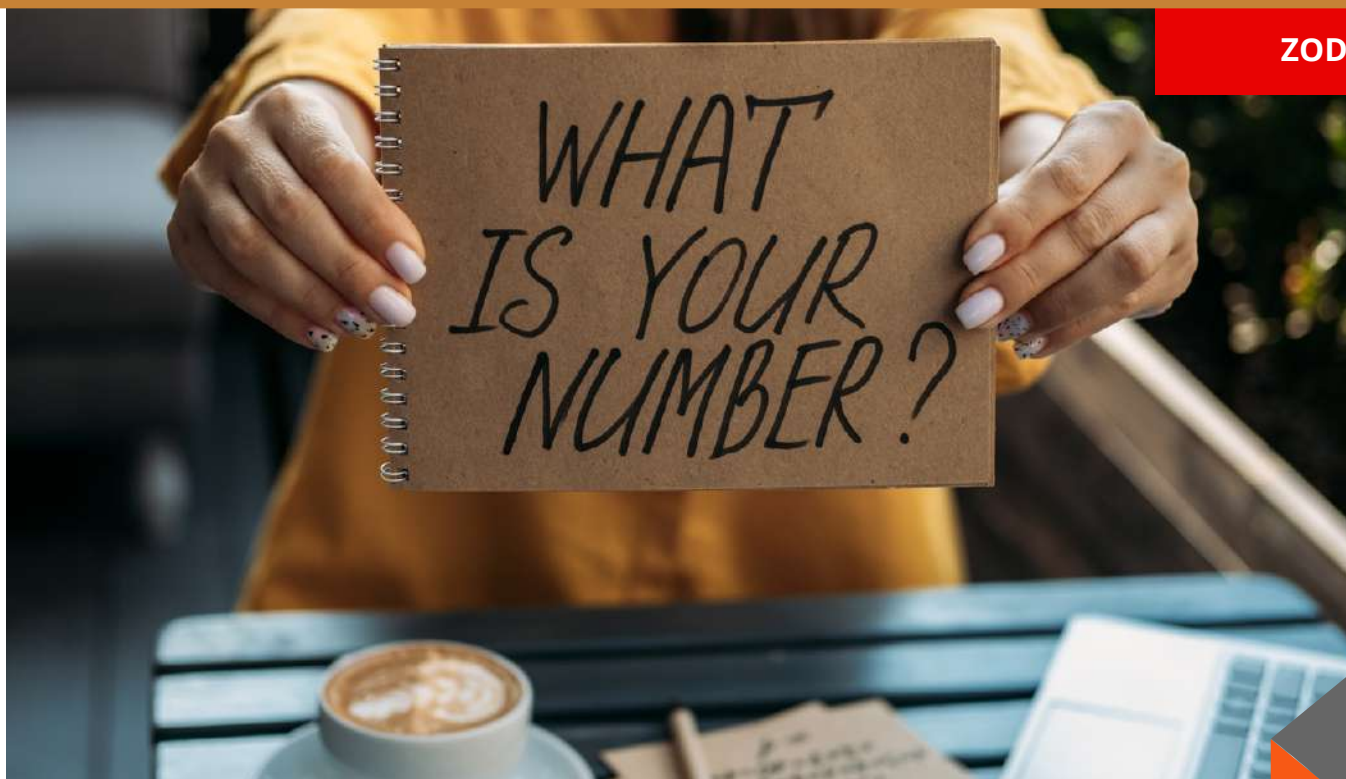
In one of the firsts, IFFI gave a platform to 75 young filmmakers, actors, singers, scriptwriters, and others to showcase their talent at the globally recognized festival. The 75 creative minds from across India were invited to IFFI to unite with celebrated filmmakers and industry experts and attend Masterclasses at the Festival. The 75 youngsters were selected through competition for young filmmakers from around the country to celebrate the spirit of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.

BRICS Film Festival:

For the first time ever, films from five BRICS nations were showcased through the BRICS Film Festival alongside IFFI. This is the Sixth Edition of the BRICS Film Festival. The five countries viz. Brazil, Russia, South Africa, China and India were also the Focus Countries of the 52nd IFFI and a total of 8 films were screened under this section. The Country of Focus is a special segment that recognizes the cinematic excellence and contributions of the country.



Written by:
Aditi Gupta
aditigupta0523@gmail.com



BRING IT ON, 2022!

The start of each year holds a special magic, with a promise of new opportunities and the possibility to change our lives for the better. Here are some tips for everyone to get an idea about the upcoming year.

Birth Number – 1,10,28

The first quarter of the year is going to be demanding and require a lot of efforts specially on the personal front. On the professional front, you will strive to find harmony and pace. In order to increase concentration, you must practice meditation. You can expect moderate finances and high expenses in the year 2022. New business alliances and new job opportunities should be expected too. The second half of the year would be more rewarding for people belonging to number 1.

Birth Number – 2,11,20,29

This year is going to be full of second chances. It's the perfect time to improvise your drawbacks and recreate yourself personally and professionally. Finances may not be uplifting in the second half of the year, however saving wisely in the first half can help you sail through easily. Matters of the past can be expected to solve in the first half of the year.

Birth Number – 3,12,21,30

2022 shall bring mixed results to this birth number. The beginning can be challenging and confusing on both personal and professional fronts. Finances to start to get better after the third

quarter ends, hence invest and spend wisely. This year will teach you to be resilient and strong in your approach towards life. If you wish to take a holiday, choose a nature's spot to regain balance.

Birth Number – 4,13,22,31

This year shall bring new hope and new opportunity for people belonging to number 4. The beginning of the year could be comparatively slow and emotionally challenging as you are completing a karmic cycle. Entrepreneurs should rework and implement new strategies in order to shine in their businesses.



Birth Number – 5,14,23

People belonging to number 5 can expect a balanced year. You shall be appreciated and paid well for your capabilities and smart work. The second half of the year will bring more positive results as compared to the first half. Some short-term investments can bring overwhelming results.

Birth Number -6,15,24

This year is about wish fulfillment and turning dreams into reality. Family bonds and ties will improve. The first quarter of the year could be slow and will have less clarity but as the year moves forward, you can expect better days. Investments give positive results by the end of the year.

Birth Number -7,16,25

People belonging to number 7 can expect easy going with lots of fun and adventure this year. Try to channelize

your energies in looking at good things in life rather than worrying about things that would conjure up negative emotions. Financial matters if stuck for some time could get resolved to your liking.

Birth Number – 8,16,26

Year 2022 could be quite adventurous for people belonging to number 8, you shall be exploring more avenues and setting new goals to achieve. It shall be a bright year for entrepreneurs. Always remember acceptance is extremely important in order to achieve anything in life.

Birth Number – 9,18,27

People belonging to number 9 would be high on energy and zeal in the year 2022. Your priorities would be clear and that makes it easy to focus on your goals clearly. Take care of finances as expenses would be higher than income. Also prioritise your physical fitness.



- By Pruthaa S Benara

Season's
Greetings





MANSI MEHRA: STANDUP COMEDIAN



Mansi Mehra is an Indian-born standup comedian based out of Los Angeles, California. She has performed more than 200+ shows around the United States including shows with Abhishek Upmanyu, Zakir Khan etc. She has shared stage with several international comedians including Maz Jobrani, Margaret Cho, Amir K, and many more. She has hosted shows across the United States with artists like Javed Akhtar, Ayushmann Khurrana, Jonita Gandhi, and many more events

In 2011 she was a Radio Jockey in L.A, a Hindi radio in Los Angeles. She has been part of several film festivals like Indian Film Festivals Los Angeles (IFFLA), American Film Institute (AFI), Newport Beach Film Festival (NBFF) etc. Then became a filmmaker with her short film being selected by various film festivals and screened at AMC in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

In 2019, she won two pageants including Miss India USA National 2019 in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Miss Exuberant Spirit 2019 in Beverly Hills, California. She graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) in Computer Science Engineering and Mody Institute of Technology and Science (MITS) in Electronics & Communications Engineering.

She believes in giving back to the community and has been involved with several non-profit organizations like OC India Association, CRY America (OC chapter), VIBHA Los Angeles, Soroptimist International Los Angeles (SILA) and many more.

Her passion for travel makes her a nomad with her travel stories being covered in Sheryl Sandberg's LeanIn.org, Brown Girl Magazine, and many more. She has also been featured in several media publications including Los Angeles Times and Orange County Times. She aims to help people, give back to the community, spread joy & love by spreading more awareness about Indian culture in western communities by breaking the stereotypes and making her own niche.



The Lead of her life: Actress & Entrepreneur—Parul Gulati



Actor and Entrepreneur **Parul Gulati** made us fall in love with her performance in much-celebrated shows like *Haq Se*, *Girls Hostel*, *Hey Prabhu*, *The Raikar Case*, and *Selection Day*. She also starred in Nikkhil Advani's TV series *P.O.W. – Bandi Yuddh Ke*, *Yeh Pyaar Na Hoga Kam*. She also gave a much-appreciated performance in her music video "Aaya Jado Daa" with Aparshakti Khurana. Currently, she is seen Voot Select's latest web series *Illegal Season 2*. With a beauty that would leave anyone awestruck, she is the perfect combination of charm and brains. She is also the founder and the sole leader of her Hair extensions brand "Nish Hair". The word impossible doesn't seem to exist in her dictionary and her fans believe that she is more than a mere mortal.

In a conversation with team WomenShine, she shares some moments of her journey and experiences with us.

WS: OTT platforms and web shows have become so popular nowadays. Being an integral part of this space, what are your thoughts on this?

PG: "A lot of projects are being made these days because the web is a medium where we will always need new content. That is why apart from new shows, there are new seasons of successful shows. The web is not biased about a few people, rather it is a space where you are hired if you are fit for the work be it actors, writers, or technicians. That is why the employment rate has also increased. The medium is also synonymous with freedom of expression.

WS: What kind of roles entice you?

PG: I really want to do comedy because I think I've done so much heavy drama. But any character that stays with me or is interesting, well written, and also flawed, interests me the most.

WS: When did you know that you wanted to become an actress?

PG: It was not planned at all. I got selected via Facebook. I went for an audition when I was studying and this was my first taste of the entertainment industry. Initially, it was all hunky-dory, but I soon got cast in a Punjabi movie and this encouraged me to focus on acting as a career.

WS: What are your future plans as an actress?

PG: Working in Bollywood is my dream. I think if I am too comfortable in one space, I will stop growing as an individual, so I want to try my luck in Bollywood films and I want to dance and at the same time be part of meaningful stories. So, I will not say I am so satisfied that I will just be working in web shows. The idea is to stay happy but hungry to grow. I would be lying if I say I do not want to be part of Bollywood movies.



WS: Tell us something about your journey as an Entrepreneur.

PG: As a part of the entertainment and beauty industry, I have seen the amount of value, work, and love that hair brings to someone but also the inevitable damage that it takes. Hair extensions have never been a new concept, but high-quality pieces have been inaccessible to the general public. The ones available were predominantly made out of synthetic hair strands and were simply not versatile enough. It was clear that there was an untapped potential here, and that is when the idea for Nish Hair was conceived. I started Nish Hair in 2017 with a belief that everyone, especially women, deserves to feel beautiful and confident and look incredible. I noticed the need for good-quality human hair extensions beyond the fashion and beauty industry. With countless women suffering from hair loss, hair thinning, alopecia, restricted growth, damaged hair or simply looking for a change in style, Nish hair extensions were to cater to them all. And what began as a team of two and a handful of clients has now grown into a global community, shipping worldwide to women of all walks of life; The Nish Family.

WS: What challenges have you faced during this journey?

PG: It wasn't easy starting something on my own. Especially in a category that was either seen as a mere fashion accessory or spoken about in hush voices to avoid garnering attention. I remember struggling to simply build awareness about how 'normal' it could be to use hair extensions. Most saw them as a taboo topic, an equivalent to wigs, or simply shrugged off the idea in disgust. But I knew from the time I wore my first set of extensions that I loved them and could clearly see in them the potential to help thousands. To me, hair extensions were a way of spreading joy, building confidence, and celebrating freedom in one of the most basic ways possible. I wear mine with a lot of pride and want to ensure that all those who wear them do the same.



WS: Why the name "Nish Hair"?

PG: It is always a daunting task to think of the perfect name. But I knew from the start that I wanted my brand to reflect me and my love for hair. It is not only something of mine but an integral part of me as an individual. Most people know me as Parul, but to the ones closest to me, I am Nishu. A name was given to me by my mother with a lot of love. So naturally, when she suggested I call my brand Nish, it immediately struck a chord. I knew at that moment, that was it. ensure that all those who wear them do the same.



Written By- Aditi Gupta

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



“I would love to take challenges which test me emotionally and mentally,” says actress Sehnoree on choosing challenging roles

Bollywood is one of those industry that has tons of content to offer the audience and for every actor to see themselves moulding into various roles is one of their biggest achievements.

Essentially an actor playing and portraying a unique character is the wish of every budding actor and our upcoming superstar also reveals her thoughts on ways she wants to portray herself in front of all her fans and want to allure them with her performance.

When asked Sehnoree about the form of content that she wants to portray as an actress and want to be known for, the actress revealed that as an artist for me it is very necessary for me to mould myself in whichever character is being, and I would really love to challenge myself as an individual by experimenting on various roles and genres.

Talking about the genre and later on, the challenges and major changes the actress exclaimed, 'I am a girl who is never satisfied with usual things in life, I really love challenging myself and testing myself as an actor that makes me describe just prominent characters. I would love to come out of my comfort zone and perform such roles which are physically and mentally very challenging as that would definitely evolve me as an actor.'

It is certainly one of the best things to see actors challenging mentally, physically, and emotionally just to make their audience happy and proud of their role models.

On the work front, Sehnoree was last seen in a music video opposite Asim Riyaz in Badan Pe Sitare 2, the actress will soon mark her Bollywood debut alongside Pawan Singh in the suspense thriller web series '**Prapanch**'. The actress has a few more web series under her kitty which will be announced soon.



Qaseem Haider Qaseem gets Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Award for Films 2021

Qaseem Haider Qaseem has been awarded the **"DadaSaheb Phalke Icon Award Films"** for his remarkable work in the field of modelling and acting. Qasim Haider Kasim was honoured with the **"Dada Saheb Phalke Icon Award Films (DPIAF) 2021"** held at Orchid Hotel, Mumbai. Where many film and TV personalities were present. Famous Bollywood producers Mukesh Bhatt, Sunil Pal were present on this occasion. This award was given to Qaseem Haider Qaseem at the hands of Sunil Pal. The organizer of this award is Kalyanji Jana who is an actor and runs an NGO. He has achieved a position in Mumbai by struggling a lot.

Congratulations and best wishes are being given to him on being conferred with this prestigious award. He said that it is a matter of great pride for me to receive the award in the name of Dadasaheb Phalke, this moment was memorable for me.

Let us inform that Qaseem Haider Qaseem, a resident of Jogipura, Najibabad, has acted in a film and some music videos, due to which he has been honoured. He is doing his next song with Shreya Kulkarni titled **"Mere Saath Chalo"**. Her poster has been shot.

Bharti Singh on The Indian Game Show on Bharti TV: I know people have hopes pinned on our YouTube show... I'm nervous, and don't want to be overconfident

Popular comedian, host and actor Bharti Singh's upcoming show The Indian game show on Bharti TV has been creating a lot of buzz. A record number of 101 celebrities will participate on the show and Bharti is super excited to start her new journey.

"Yes, 101 celebrities came to our new Indian Game show. I really didn't know that this is a record number, but yes I haven't heard about 101 celebrities coming to any other show. So it's a big achievement for me and Haarsh (Limbachiya; writer, host and Bharti's husband)," she says.

In this show a lot of people participated from the TV and music industries. YouTube celebrities also joined in. "Singers like Asees Kaur, Divya Kumar, composer Sachin-Jigar, Meet brothers, from TV, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda ji, Chandan Prabhakar, Sudesh Lehri, YouTubers like Team 07, Ashnoor Kaur, Chinki-Minki (Surabhi - Samridhi), Siddharth Nigam, Abhishek Nigam, Manav and Unnati, choreographers Terence Lewis, Kishen Bilagali (winner of Dance Deewane), actors Jasmin Bhasin, Aly Goni, Punit Pathak, Aditya Narayan, Mubeen Saudagar... I can't even remember so many names, all of them came. I am grateful and thankful to them all," Bharti sounds emotional.

People have high expectations from the show. "I know people have hopes pinned on the show and I hope I am able to live up to that. Yes, we are quite nervous, especially me. Haarsh is busy with his work so I don't know how nervous he is. But I'm sure he's worried too. We have full trust in ourselves and on our team who have been working really hard. Overconfident ho jao toh cheeze acchi nahi hoti. So, fingers crossed, hope everything will go well," she adds.

Managing so many actors and production of such a huge canvas is quite a task. "We didn't find it difficult though probably because we didn't have a celebrity manager or any agency to bring them. These all are my friends, they just came on the show when I requested them. So a big thank you to all of them for their love and support," she shares.

What is your message to Haarsh and Bharti fans? "So Haarsh and I don't ever call them our fans but family because of the amount of love these people have for us. Our show is starting November 25 onwards on Bharti TV, my YouTube channel, and I hope everyone would enjoy watching it, comment and also

share feedback, suggestions. Please shower some love to my YouTube channel and do subscribe," she urges.

The fans of the couple love to see them together. "It means a lot for us. Haarsh and I love working together. I'm a bit nervous right now, but it's a quite good feeling. Jo bhi hoga acha hi hoga, can't wait to release our first episode. (Smiles) What will be the response is the question we all have right now. The response our promo got was encouraging. We are trying our best to make it a show worth watching. Episodes will come four times a week, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. So you'll have to work for three days, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and from Thursday hum aapke seva mein haazir ho jayenge," she ends on a laughing note by cracking a joke.



Shining Star: Dr. Sejal



My Dream

My childhood dream was that I wanted to become a doctor, as my father was a doctor (General physician, M.B.,B.S.), so he always influenced me career wise. I used to see him surrounded by so many patients, working so patiently and sincerely. I pursued dentistry as a career option. At that time I was completely clueless about what Dentistry is all about?

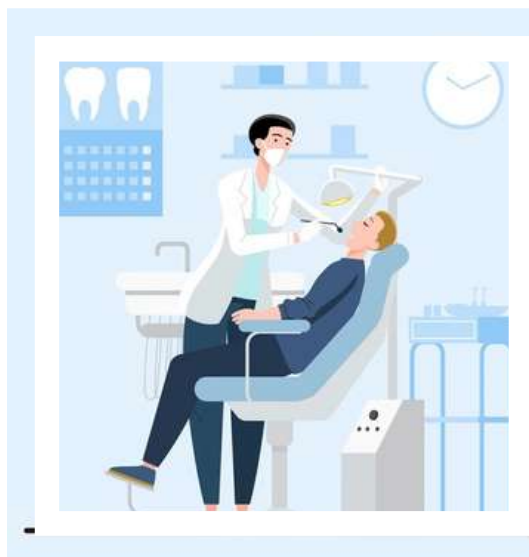
My new journey as a Dentist

During B.D.S., I did pretty well as I got 13th rank in Rajasthan University in first year B.D.S. Got 1st prize for project work competition during 3rd yr. B.D.S. in PSM – CD.

During B.D.S., only I decided that this is not enough I must do Post Graduation, so I started preparations in internship and got P.G. seat by merit in Prosthetic dentistry. This branch had only one seat in open category. I got 16th rank in AMUPMDC- MDS Entrance Exam.

During M.D.S. course I participated in many poster, paper and table clinic presentations after that I never stopped. Also I participated in essay writing competition, Annual quiz competitions and was College Representative (C. R.) During P.G. Course.

After M.D.S., I started doing consulting work in various private clinics and medical centers in Mumbai.



Rewards & Recognitions

- The great thing was publication of all the work I did during post graduation work. Publications – total 45 articles published in various dental (Famdent, guidant, IDA – JIDA, Clinical Dentistry, IDA-MWSB, IDA-DOMBIVALI) and local magazines. I wrote for non – dental magazines for public awareness about dentistry.
- Also was doing many dental check up camp activities with various organisations IDA, Rotary club, Lions club and many more. I also got appreciated by the lions club president with a certificate – outstanding dental work in lions club branch.
- Winner of Bronze Medal from ICD - Paper Presentation Contest at FAMDENT - 2014.
- Winner of ADC.inc Best Case Presentation Contest twice in 2018.
- Plaque from IDA MUMBAI for “Most Memorable Case Presentation - 2019”.
- Winner of Top Doctors of the Month of June, July, August, September, October, November, December 2019 by CHOICE AWARDS. Winner of Top 100 Doctors - 2019 by DOCTORS CHOICE AWARDS. City Winner – Mumbai 2019 by DOCTORS



CHOICE AWARDS. National Winner - INDIA 2019 by DOCTORS CHOICE AWARDS. Winner of Top Doctors of the Month of April, June 2020 by DOCTORS CHOICE AWARDS

- Awarded Excellence in Prosthodontics 2020 by GOMHA Dental Awards.
- Awarded Excellent Work in the field of Dentistry by Geniuses World Records 2020.
- Awarded India Star Award for Social Work in the field of Dentistry 2020.
- Awarded International Icon Award 2020.
- Awarded Pride of Nation Pratibha Samman Award 2020.
- Winner of Indian Women Achievement Award 2021.
- Brand Ambassador for DentalReach Magazine.
- Also got Best Humanity Awards 2021.
- Nominated for “Prosthodontist of the Year” from Famdent Excellence in Dentistry Awards 2020.
- Winner of “Excellence in Prosthetic Dentistry” “Hero of Dentistry Award” From Indian Dental excellence Awards 2021.
- Winner of Global 100 Doctors by Global Summit Class of 2022.
- I Presented Scientific Papers & Poster at various National Conferences.
- I am Special Ambassador at Healthy Hamesha and my mission is “Prevent Hunger”. I also did social work during Corona Times and got Corona Warrior Certificates from Dharadham International and WAC GLOBAL Human Rights Foundation. I also give webinars for general awareness about dentistry at various platforms.
- As a speaker invited by IDA-MWSB as guest speaker for there weekly lecture on “Cast Partial Denture – Simplified Approach”.
- My Patients consider me as very sincere, dedicated, professional and passionate Doctor. They consider that I will give them the best advice and best treatment.
- I have my private practice in Malad east, Mumbai.

Shared by :

Dr. Sejal Narendrakumar Shah, M.D.S.
Prosthodontist & Oral Implantologist

EMPOWER PEOPLE : SALONI BHARDWAJ



As far as I can remember, raising funds for charities has excited me ever since in school. While I started my career with BBC Radio in the UK and worked for television channels and print media in India, I was always looking to work with people in need.

While in the US, I found myself spending more time with non-profits like United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Ten Thousand Villages. Somewhere I was always inclined towards serving the society but it was only after running the Cincinnati Fundraising Chapter for Dining For Women, I got a structured foyer in non-profits. There was always a desire to move back to India and have my charity where people can support one another in leading better and more meaningful lives. A place where donors and volunteers can come together and experience transformation. Touch and feel the impact their contribution is making.

In 2013 I joined Lotus Petal Foundation as a volunteer. The organization was working to bring the school dropouts back into the education system and prepare them to enter the mainstream with stable jobs. I could resonate with the cause as it was a holistic approach towards changing a child's life for the better. I instantly wanted to be a part of the process.

Spending more time with the organization, made me realize that our vision was very ambitious and, we needed more resources to move ahead. This is where the biggest hurdle came along – convincing people about what we wanted to do and garnering funds. While we worked on ways to raise funds and support, I realized lowering our overhead costs without compromising on our quality could make a considerable difference.



Working with Lotus Petal made me understand how deeply I could connect with the work of the organization. In early 2017 I joined Lotus Petal as a governing council member and trustee and in another 6 months, started working full-time as an employee of Lotus Petal. It gave me more time to work with underprivileged children and deeply address their educational and nutritional needs.

As the organization started growing, I was thrown with a new set of challenges- I was no longer a volunteer but was leading the organization as a CTO and Co-Founder. It was not just about working backstage anymore but being in the front all the time, leading the team and steering them in the right direction, ensuring we never digress from our vision.

Today, as I look back from where we started, it humbles me to say that our donors and volunteers who joined us in the beginning, are still supporting us for our work and the impact we have been able to create in the lives of the beneficiaries.

From a person who found happiness in serving the needy to being able to empower people to serve, I feel I have come a long way. It has been a journey of tremendous personal growth and learning.



Shared by :
Saloni Bhardwaj,
Lotus Petal Foundation | Co-Founder & CTO



SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION

Fashion, as commonly perceived by people, is often branded as frivolous, erratic, and impractical as well. Only people in the know can see the cyclic and evolutionary pattern of constantly changing fashion. What stays stable is classified as 'Classic'.

This is a fact that TCF (Textile, Clothing & Fashion) is indeed the biggest polluter on earth right next to oil. The mindless practice of fast fashion has resulted in overflowing landfills. Synthetic fashion contributes to a large amount of textile and chemical waste, greenhouse emission that we will not be getting rid of from this planet anytime soon. If we keep going like this, we will, in no time, be surrounded by an inordinate amount of discarded textile waste that will be very difficult to dispose of.

It is an interesting paradox that we now hear a growing sentiment for 'Sustainability in fashion! Even if the concept of sustainability in fashion is fairly new compared to other fields, it is not quite late. There is still time to fix the damage and control the wave of textile waste that we soon might be buried under. Fashion by its very nature is supposed to evolve with every season and for all the Fashion leaders, anything not 'in' is 'oh-so-last-season', and who wants to be a laggard!

This brings forth a tricky question, how do we stay on top of our fashion game and yet be sustainable?! Let's explore some doable sustainable options that the world is looking at. These very practices have been so much a way of life for us in India that it's no exaggeration to say that we have been championing the cause of sustainability in textile and fashion even much before it became a fashion statement to do so! Here we shall just relive the very own mantras followed and passed on since yore.

RECYCLE AND UPCYCLE

Nothing needs to be discarded until it is in a condition where no further good can come out of it. Textiles and fabrics have the excess capacity that gets wasted when one discards a moderately used piece of clothing. Not limited to the wasted capacity, the amount of material and energy that goes wasted due to this is disastrous. This can be easily prevented.

Fabric, after completing its cycle as a piece of clothing can be put to multiple alternate uses. From turning a pair of used jeans into a stylish handbag, or using scrap pieces of your old torn t-shirt to fill inside a pillow as stuffing, to even using some worn-out cloth for dusting, one can find so many alternate uses for the fabrics that they might think belong inside a dustbin. As Indians, we have already trained ourselves to find the best use for a product after its primary lifecycle ends. Believing in the re-birth is not only deeply rooted in our philosophy but also for all products that are a part of our lifestyle. With a little bit of creativity and imagination, we can apply the same to our textile waste and prevent disposing of them completely to a great extent!



QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

As much as owning a wide range and a heavy collection of fashionable clothing sounds appealing, little do we think about the consequence of our material possessions on the environment. In recent times, owning more has become a fashion statement. The concept of using fashion and clothing as a display of 'status' has consumed and polluted our minds much in the same way as textile waste pollutes the planet. In our minds, everything is about quantity and quick look changes. This consumerist mindset has resulted in mindless fast fashion, which we need to put breaks on.

However, if we step back and take a look at how our recent habits have been affecting the environment, we will be able to see that the concept of owning more than we strive for is the biggest problem in this case. We all need to change the way we perceive fashion. It is about owning less but owning good. Switching to natural and sustainable materials is a great way to start. Instead of spending money on an absurd amount of clothes, buy what you need. Buy good and buy ethical so it lasts longer and is not harmful to the environment, while also being fashionable! Contradictory to popular belief, sustainability has nothing to do with a compromise in quality. Practicing sustainability in fashion can always go hand in hand with using fashion as a way of expression. Invest in heritage and natural textiles, exquisite handcrafted fabrics, and garments that are timeless. India's very own indigenous fabric 'Khadi' is the finest example of sustainable textile.

EXPERIMENT WITH LOOKS

The beauty and joy of fashion don't come from owning the first look of 'it' designers every single time. As much it is about a new line every season, it is also very much about experimenting with looks, styling yourself, and discovering your signature. This not only brings the best out of an individual, but it also instills confidence and saves one from investing in a whole lot of fashion merchandise that might just not be them.

It is okay to repeat your clothing. In India, we believe in cherishing our wardrobe over a certain period, it is only now that other parts of the world are discovering the same when a royalty or a celebrity chooses to repeat their outfit and it makes big positive fashion news!

One can explore their innovative side by creating interesting mix n match combinations and widening their wardrobe that may in fact house a few versatile pieces, some classics, and a few trendy. Just have fun and discover a new fresh you every time you step out, you need not make an appearance in a repeated monotonous look just because you have pledged sustainability and are cutting down on numbers in your closet.

ACCESSORISE

Better than hoarding on clothing, it is good to add and update accessories in your collections more often than apparel as they are more lasting, add and rework looks easily, can be passed on for longer use, and these too come in a lot of sustainable options.

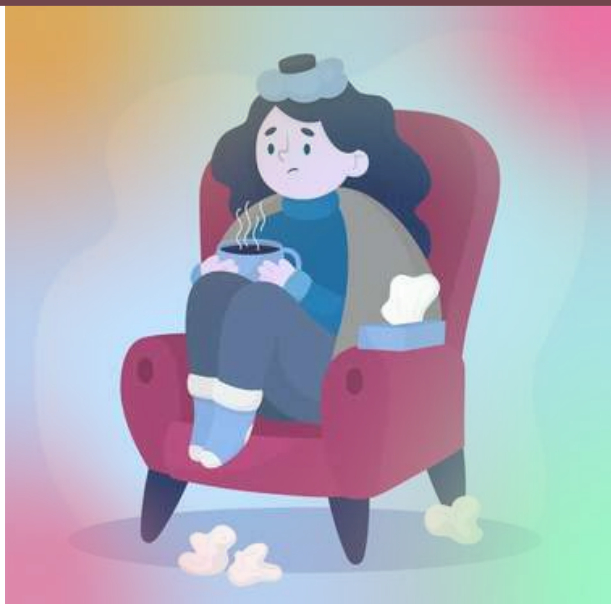
SPREADING AWARENESS

People talk about the aspect of sustainability in a lot of fields but in the field of fashion and textiles, the discussions have just begun and we have a long way to go to undo the damage we have been causing. Pledging our bit is commendable and a starting point, we must all carry this initiative to spread the word about practicing sustainability and calling out the brands that do not. Only then can we bring a change that we want to see.



-by Shipra Anand,
afclko@rediffmail.com
Founder, Academy of Fashion Careers, Lucknow."





5 Winter care tips for Arthritis

“Arthritis patients face tough times in winters. Symptoms of arthritis worsen and patients feel more stiffness in joints along with the reduced range of motion. Here are some lifestyle tips that can help manage their arthritis in winters”

Winters are surely a difficult time for people suffering from arthritis. Not only does joint pain worsen during the cold winter months, patients also experience more joint stiffness and reduced range of motion. Proper health care, diet and lifestyle measures can together help arthritis patients deal with worsening symptoms of arthritis.

Maintain optimum weight

An effective way to deal with arthritis pain is by keeping yourself active and maintaining a healthy weight. Exercise regularly in order to be at a normal BMI. Exercise will keep you warm and prevent the worsening of arthritis symptoms.

Keep yourself warm

Dressing up appropriately by covering yourself top to bottom with proper layers, can help you keep warm and reduce devastating joint pain. Wear caps and extra layers on your knees and legs to keep them warm and protected. Keeping

yourself warm can protect you from worsening arthritis symptoms.

Warm baths

There is nothing more comforting than a warm bath in winter. Warm baths can provide relief to arthritis patients. Warm baths can relax your muscles and help you feel calm. Cover yourself properly before you come out of the bathroom. Just don't step directly in the cold after taking a bath.

Stay hydrated

Drinking sufficient water can prevent muscle cramps, keep your immunity in check and also prevent the incidence of diseases. Drinking water from

time to time can help you be more active.

Sun exposure for vitamin D

Low levels of Vitamin D in the body can make you more sensitive to pain, especially in winter. Vitamin D deficiency also puts you at risk of osteoporosis. It is recommended to spend some time under the sun. Anything from 15 minutes to half an hour can help your body synthesise some amount of the sun vitamin. Besides exposure to the sun, include Vitamin D-rich foods like eggs, mushrooms, fatty fish, milk and milk products in your diet.

Source www.medicircle.in

CHRISTMAS PUNCH



CHRISTMAS PUNCH

1 cup: apple juice
2 cups: ginger ale
4 cups: Cranberry juice
1 cup: Orange juice
1 cup: Pineapple juice

Few orange slices
3 cinnamon sticks
2 star anise
Ice cubes (as many as you prefer)

Tape all the chilled juices. Put them in a jug. Mix all the juices well and add ice cubes, cinnamon sticks and star anise. Pour it in six glasses and garnish it with orange slices, serve immediately.



Recipes Shared By
Chef Neelima Kapoor
shivam1986@gmail.com



GINGER BREAD

COOKIES

3.5 (3 ½) cup: all purpose flour
 2 tsp. Ground ginger
 1 tsp baking soda
 1.5 (1 ½) tsp. Ground cinnamon
 ½ ground cloves
 ¼ tsp. Salt
 1 ½ unsalted butter
 ¾ cup: powder sugar
 ¾ cup brown sugar
 1 egg

In a bowl, whisk the flour, ginger, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Using a standing mixer, beat butter and sugar until it's light and fluffy. Add the egg and beat till smooth. On a slow speed, slowly add in the rest of the ingredients. Mixing just until the flour is incorporated Place the dough on lightly folded parchment paper. Cover it with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 3 hours. After refrigerating, roll out the dough on a floured surface. Cut the dough into your desired shape and place it onto the sheet (s) Place the cutouts of the cookies in freezer for about 5-10 minutes. Bake on 180°c for about 5-10 minutes. Decorate as desired. Store it in an airtight container



Recipes Shared By
 Chef Neelima Kapoor
 shivam1986@gmail.com



ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS: POST CORONA TRAVEL



This was our first major trip since the coronavirus, we travelled to Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

It's been about one & a half years since we boarded an airplane, because of Covid restrictions earlier and a coronavirus scare until recently. Anyway, we were still skittish. Being fully vaccinated and taking all the reasonable precautions we feel



safe or at least as "safe" as anyone can these days. Our flight to Port Blair was hopping, Lucknow to Delhi, to Kolkata and then Port Blair.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a UT of India consisting of 572 islands, of which only 37 are inhabited. The Andaman Nicobar Islands have a history of organised European colonisation. First of all, Denmark colonised, rechristening the islands New Denmark, and later Frederick's

Islands. Austria also attempted to establish a colony on them renaming the territory Theresa's Islands.

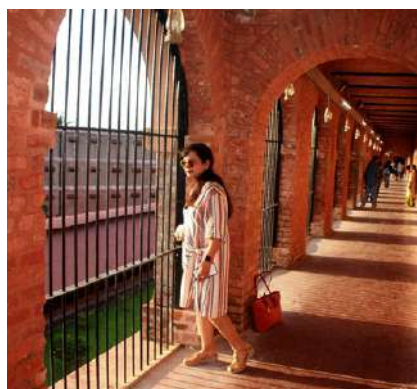
Italy too made an attempt at buying the Nicobar from Denmark. However, Denmark finally sold the rights to Britain in 1868 and Andaman and Nicobar Islands became a part of British India. After India's independence, the islands became a part of India in 1950 and a Union Territory in 1956.



Port Blair is essentially a historic town of great charms. With a native population of just about 1,14,000 spread over all of 41 sq km. The small island bears special significance in India's struggle for independence from British rule. The infamous "Kala-Pani" or Cellular jail was built in 1896-1906, a lot of freedom fighters and political prisoners were incarcerated in the dreaded Cellular jail. The jail was declared a national memorial in 1979.

We also explored Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Dweep (Ross Island) and Coral Island, both of which are a day's excursion from Port Blair.

A ferry ride from Port Blair took us to Swaraj Dweep (Havelock) which is the most exciting place to explore.



With luxuriant forests, forever coastlines and picture-perfect beaches, Swaraj Dweep has cover girl looks. You'll also discover a dizzying array of water sports and activities available only here in Asia.

Another gorgeous island is Shaheed Dweep (Neil Island). The natural coral bridge is an amazing creation of mother nature, but reaching there in the afternoon is extremely inconvenient because the treacherous track and humidity make it really difficult. Other beaches have nothing much to write home about.

We were Keen on exploring off-beat places, too. Our excursion took us to Long Island which is covered in thick jungle and is home to some of the rare animal and bird species.

There's more to Andaman and Nicobar Islands than gorgeous beaches, water

There's more to Andaman and Nicobar Islands than gorgeous beaches, water activities and touristy knick-knack. The islands are home to 5 native negrito tribes, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Shompen, Onge and Andamanese.

The route to Baratang Island from Port Blair passes through Jarawa Forest Reserve, and visitors might get a chance to see the aborigines, however, photography is strictly prohibited and vehicles have to move in a convoy under police supervision.

Lately, the Jarawa tribe is reportedly not hostile to modern civilisation but Sentinelese vehemently resist external contact and reportedly killed an Americal guy in 2018. Sentinel Island is out-of-reach for travellers. At present government has not allowed travel to Nicobar, you have to contend with what can be explored in your travels to this enigmatic archipelago.



Shared By : Ruchi Jain, an avid traveller

BATTLE OF IDENTITY



They say this is the work of a girl, do it!
 They say behave like a girl!
 What does it mean? like a girl?
 Why this difference? I am I,
 I will exist as I wish.
 You are a boy, play with cars, not dolls,
 You are a boy! How can you cry like this?
 So what if I am a boy? I have emotions too!
 My likes dislikes are already set. How to
 Laugh, cry, play, everything predetermined.
 So what is the meaning of my existence?
 Where is my identity? I am but
 A puppet of society, its norms
 This is the practice, the answer is given always
 Talk and behave as society decrees,
 Neither thoughts, nor likes, nor speech
 Are your own, your very own!
 What if the girl played with cars, climbed mountains?
 What if the boy cooked, cleaned vessels?
 Shall we try this shuffle? Shall we start? do it?
 Will the world reverse? Will it turn upside down??
 Now this campaign is for survival
 Of identity, of satisfaction,
 Speak up, step up, march ahead
 Time to bring in social changes
 Time to build a new society.



By Prabha Raghunandan

“THE UNFORGETTABLE DYEING DAY”

Okay, readers let me narrate this anecdote that we witnessed in Dehradun's home. Well...the cast of this act was my handsome old fauji father in his late sixties, then, 65 to be precise, and whose partially bald head, with scant hair on the sides of his head were grey and were to be coloured jet black much to his dismay, refusal, and annoyance. The other important actors were my sister, my mother and of course, me too.



It was a dull cloudy cold winter morning of December in Dehradun where we decided to colour dad's grey hair. Dad's no-no tactics and logic were overruled by my otherwise submissive mom. Dad's logical thinking made a sincere endeavour to make us understand that he was much too ancient for his residual hair to be dyed. But he was made to understand by his three girls that he would look far more handsome and younger. He had to humbly surrender to our wishes.

The process of hair colouring commenced. I was to play the lead role of applying colour to his head. My sister was holding the bowl containing the black magic paste. And my mother assigned herself the duty of holding a blower (heater) which would give hot air to combat the cold on dad's frail body.

Just before I started work, my mother told dad to remove the brand new embroidered Lucknowi white kurta which he was wearing. He obeyed after a little resistance and was seen in his vest. And the blower heater held by mom managed dad's thermostat.

Dad refused to change the white brand new pyjamas that he wore. He put a thick towel atop his lap and said confidently that he would ensure that there would be no stains on the pyjamas.

I began applying the black paste on dad's head. And after a few minutes, he started becoming restless. Moreover, mom too became even more restless saying that her hand could not hold such a heavy blower for long. I worried and hurried. In a panic, my sister who was holding the bowl of dye accidentally hit my working elbow with a result that the black coloured hair dye toppled on dad's head and within the split, seconds was on his face, all over, and he yelled at us.

And to imagine what my mother's priority was.....She screamed in a panic too and ordered dad to remove his impeccably white brand-new pyjamas. My father gave a murderous look to mom and screamed back at her in equal measure asking her if he should stand naked just to save the damn new pyjamas.





I was hugely upset and scared too because the black dye was all over my new quilt and the light coloured wall-to-wall carpet. I was scared as to what my husband would tell me because he had already warned me on several earlier occasions not to use the bedroom for these types of services. And I had done exactly that what he had told me not to!! I was cleaning the carpet and quilt. Mom's only concern was her new investment—the pyjamas! And I had also employed my sister for assisting in the cleaning operations. And the poor dad of mine---all alone in the washroom---trying to clean himself and muttering all the while as to how irresponsible and obstinate the three of us were!

And in the backdrop of the shower running in the washroom, the three naughty girls---the mother and her two daughters laughed the most in the quietest possible manner.

And oh yes, my handsome dad later emerged after the wash and concluded in his sharp and strong baritone that he had taken retirement from the magical black dye therapy forever and ever.



Preeti Pathak
ppkandpal@gmail.com

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Of Everest Widows and a Man Called Ang !



Long, long before my metamorphosis into a Travel Journalist, which I believe from the core of my heart to be the most thankless job on Planet Earth, I too was a normal guy-about- town wanting to land up with a cushy corporate job – Microsoft, Wipro, Infosys, Thomas Cook etc... etc...But who would have known the twist of fate!

Would you for once believe that I would be involved with what goes on at the Everest Base Camp or for that matter the debris that are dumped each year on top of Everest or even the number of death's that are

occurring every year in humanity's quest for power and glory on top of Everest ?

All these and much more.....living at least one thousand kilometres away in Kolkata! These weird phenomenon, I believe is occurring courtesy that unseen, unplanned and absolutely supreme **"Hand of God"**, where I find my school buddy Ang Tshering Lama's meteoric presence in the midst of all that is happening at Ground Zero.

My only tryst with things **"Sherpa-like"** was during my childhood days spent in Assam and India's North East and I was familiar with Nepalese customs, traditions and their rich folklore. I had numerous

Nepalese friends with surnames like Thapa, Lama, Gurung, Chetri and what have you.....Yeah, one thing is for sure, I knew they were hard working, honest and amongst the most trusted friends you would ever have in your lifetime. No wonder, the British are so fond of the dedication of Gorkha Rifles – one of the world's most elite, trusted and well-knit army brigade!

With the social media space dominating the contemporary societal fabric worldwide, life has become that much more transparent and it indeed is a connected world that we live, breathe and exist in. Dissemination of news, views and anything worth exchangeable is done in a flash – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc..... My good friend Ang Tshering Lama has been mountaineering for close to three decades and I have been working as a Travel Journalist for more or

less the same time period. However, it is just about five years now, that we are beginning to collaborate on a range of issues that concern both of us – tourism, climate change, environment and sustainability. And, to be brutally frank, each day I am delving deeper and deeper into the quintessential mindset of the Nepali Sherpas, who for centuries together have been providing food, shelter and the route map for alien explorers coming to discover the Himalayas. All these just because of one man – Ang Tshering Lama.



I cannot fathom the depths of trials, tribulations and the the arduous risks he has undertaken in his efforts to safeguard the glorious history of the Sherpa community. I shudder to think Ang Tshering Lama as the mountaineer who has summited Mt.Everest thrice, knowing fully well what it takes to summit on top! As his childhood buddy, I would be the last person to encourage him to summit Mt.Everest again? No, not at all.

I would much rather prefer Ang to spend quality time at his Kathmandu house and offer his knowledge, skill sets and significantly his fascinating insights aimed at improving the overall standard of



mountaineering in not just Nepal, but the Himalayas per se.

His last great ascent was in the year 2019 when he guided two widows - Nima Doma Sherpa and Furdiki Sherpa to the top of Mt. Everest. It made global headlines for not just being the world's first widow team to summit Mt. Everest but more significantly for raising awareness about **"Gender Equality"** and societal discrimination of widows in Nepal.

With the kind of mindset that Ang has, he is always looking for a good cause – perhaps a campaign like **"Say No To Drugs"**, Rebuilding Villages in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal Megaquake or helping Sherpa children with quality school education. As a mountaineer, he comes as a breath of fresh air and his underlying essence on kindness, compassion and benevolence for his community is worth going miles to emulate. More so at a time when just about everyone is hellbent on summiting Everest and using the Everest Summitter's Certificate as a passport to fame, name, power, glory and the arrogance that comes with it! Huh!



Let us be honest. The bottomline is that in Sherpa culture, women like elsewhere in South Asia are expected to take on the responsibility of running the household. When their husband's are away, guiding and portering clients on some of the world's highest mountains, these brave women keep the kitchen fires burning. Of course, not to mention their primary responsibility of rearing up children, which they manage to do with a great sense of gusto. In today's jet set contemporary world, the Himalayas have witnessed a rapid surge in the number of Western visitors visiting the sacred mountains and thereby bringing in Western lifestyle and culture to this part of the world and again it is the Sherpa women who take on the mantle of preserving the centuries-old Sherpa culture and traditions.

I being a devotee of Swami Vivekananda, I have come across a popular phrase that monks and devotees of the Ramakrishna Order abide by and that offers by far the best rationalisation of the qualities or virtues that a **"Guru"** should possess and it goes like this – **"To succeed , you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean', says the persevering soul, 'at my will mountains will crumble up . Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal"**. That epitomises Ang Tshering Lama – Nepal's Mountain Man – A man who as a mountaineer has not just achieved name, fame and recognition for the the fast vanishing Sherpa community, but also has been silently at work, tying his best to take the Sherpa community a few notches higher in the echelons of the contemporary global society.

In a country where opportunities for women are few and far between, the revolutionary 2019 Mt.Everest Summit by the two widows of Nepal, I reckon, will go down in the annals of mountaineering as one of the bravest **"Women's Empowerment"** initiative ever undertaken. Let us be honest. Today we live in a world where summiting Mt.Everest has become a symbol of pride, vanity and arrogance and I am compelled to quote Pablo Figueroa's no hold's barred article entitled – **"Vanity, Pollution and Death on Mt. Everest"**, wherein he quotes – Ninety percent of contemporary Everest climbers are clients who want to **"bag"** the top of Everest for selfish purposes. Rather than a noble pursuit, Everest is thought of as something that needs to be done at all costs, another item to check off in a long list of egoistic accomplishments. Figueroa further goes on to add – **"Everest has been degraded by its sheer popularity. Let us not degrade it further"**.

Well then, isn't Ang Tshering Lama a **"Messiah of the Mountains"**? I am sure he is. How many mountaineers go to summit Mt. Everest keeping in mind the cause of humanity? How many? Tell me? Barely a few!

The Himalayan Eco-System is one of the most endangered of life support systems on earth. In the shadow of the Himalayas live millions of inhabitants, who also happen to be amongst the poorest in the world. And, Ang Tshering Lama is an ambassador of the poorest Himalayan folks – the indomitable Sherpas.

I feel, with the successful ascent of the two widows – Nima and Furdiki on top of Mt. Everest, is definitely going to usher in a paradigm change of mindset within the Sherpa community and in years to come , I foresee a surge in the number of Sherpa women following in the footsteps of Nima and Furdiki. The world of mountaineering is still pretty much male-dominated and hopefully with the duo's success on top of Mt. Everest, a lot of superstitious ideas too will disappear.

Without doubt, Ang the mountaineer is traversing bravely into deep Himalayan cultural contours where very few people of his ilk has ever ventured – in terms of social welfare and upgradation of the standard of life of the average Sherpas.

Is it not time enough to join hands with him, offer him the support – emotionally, financially and logistically in shaping a brighter, more secure and a just world for the Sherpas?

If You Go:

For those of you looking to build your own adventure, Angs Himalayan Adventure specialises in catering and curating trips to the Himalayas for private groups. AHA provide high crew/client ratio ensuring personal attention and safety during your adventure.



Written By : Subhasish Chakraborty
subhas.chako@gmail.com

HOW DO I PLAN TO GET AWAY FROM THESE WINTERS?

E year seems colder than the last and then the strange weather forecast that says, “Coldest year in the last twenty five years ...!!”

I could never get this logic. They say the same thing every year! Probably that’s the only way they think they can console us. Like how they do during the monsoons. The days they predict rains, it never rains. At least not in my lane on my house. It may rain in the lane across but not here. It may rain over my nasty neighborhood but not mine. And all I do is sulk and get after my poor miyan again, for no fault of his. “Ab baarish nahi aa rahee to main kya karoon? Go sit in the shower for some time with an umbrella, make a paper boat and float it in your tub!” Says miyan each time.

Back to my story. This transpired almost two years ago when Miyan was in China working in sub-zero temperatures and here in India we were almost touching zero degrees. Exactly like how we will do in a few days from now. Yes yes, they predict temperatures to drop to surprising limits. May not be zero but not very far.

Me on a call with Miyan:

“Hello!!!” Miyan called. “Haan hello!! Bolo!!” I reply. I was irritated too.

“Why do you sound so agitated ??” Miyan asked.

“Because it is so damn cold here and it is getting on my nerves now! You know I hate winters!! Tum he Kya, tum to travel Kar rahe ho...!!!” I said.

“Even I am working in sub-zero temperatures here. So what!!” Came the reply.

“But your winters are different from here...” I said.

“And how's that?? “Winters are the same for everybody.” He tried to rationalize.

“Yours is the Chinese winters. Not real. Huh!” I said.

“Can’t believe you just said that. Just cover yourself properly and you will be fine” he suggested.

I don’t know why he suggested that? What did he think? I go around in breezy mull mully clothes in the winters.



"Dude, I am dressed like an Eskimo! Everybody laughed at me this morning when I stepped out to feed the dogs. The dogs too could not recognize their mom and started barking ...!!!" I was super annoyed.

"Ok drink a nice soup or a ginger tea or a besan kaada. You'll feel better..." he suggested.

"I have tried everything. Nothing is helping really" I complained again.

"Then what do you want to do??" He was irritated by then.

Ek to wahan cheeni uska dimag kha rahe the aur yahan main.

"I want to move to Phuket...!" I said.

"Seriously! Have you lost it really! Why, Phuket out of all the places?! Who moves to



Phuket? Its a good enough place only for three to four months of a year. Other wise, it is a pretty hot and a humid place. Also, who leaves everything and move to another country just because of some weather nuisance!" Guess, he almost fell off his chair or his metro seat or his cab seat... god knows!!

"Whatever! I just don't want to stay here anymore. I am done with the extreme weathers here and the incapacibilities of the MET department. The MET department has failed to MEET my expectations" I said.

"What are we going to do there but? I mean how will we survive? We cannot be expected to loiter around on the beach all the time, soak the sun and turn purple-brown and red!" He asked.

"Listen, when we went, we did not notice any ande waala there. Right? So we will sell boiled eggs there. Ek kiosk lagayenge apne beach waale ghar ke samne! Ande sajayenge, apne beach waale ghar ke saamneeee!" I sang.

"Boiled eggs!!! Could you not think of a better alternative! You expect a current EVP to sell eggs in Phuket. Sounds like a perfect VRS!! Miyan was sarcastic.

"You know, I love boiled eggs especially the road side ones. Unfortunately, I cannot have them and I miss them. I miss them a lot. You see, it will be a flourishing business in a place like Phuket "where no man has sold boiled eggs before!" Plus, I will appoint you as the Chief Business Officer of our Chotu sa business, which we will carry out stress free!! Sounds like an idea! Isn't it?" I was very happy and dreamy.

"Bus yehi din dekhne reh Gaye the tumhare saath!" Miyan banged his head in desperation in all probabilities or of the Chinese guy's head sitting right next to him. Phir bartan girne jaisi awaaz aayee hogi, "ting pong tangggg!!"



Written By Somali Bammi
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निर्णय



शिवि मल्टीनेशनल कंपनी में काम करती थी। वह अपने बॉस रुद्र को पहली नजर में ही पसंद करने लगी थी। कॉफी के प्यालों के साथ दोनों के बीच में नजदीकियां बढ़ती गई। लगभग दो साल तक मिलना जुलना, घूमना फिरना आई लव यू तक पहुंच गया और किन्हीं कमजोर पलों में दोनों अपना होश खो बैठे वहां तक तो ठीक था लेकिन जब कुछ दिनों के अंतराल में उनके प्यार का अंकुर उसकी कोख में सांसे लेने लगा तो शिवि के होश उड़ गये ... जब उसने रुद्र पर शादी के लिये दबाव बनाया वह नानुकुर करने लगा और उससे इस मुसीबत से छुटकारा पाने के लिये जबर्दस्ती करने लगा। उसके पैरेंट्स को भी रुद्र नहीं पसंद आया क्योंकि उन लोगों को अपने ब्राम्हण होने का बड़ा गुरूर भी था। और रुद्र तो पिछड़ी जाति का था, उसने आरक्षण कोटे से पढ कर उसी कोटे का लाभ उठा कर नियुक्ति पाई थी। इस बात को ध्यान में रख कर उन्होंने शादी से साफ इंकार कर दिया था।

प्यार में डूबी हुई शिवि, ने अपनी कोख के अजन्मे बच्चे की सांसों के लिये रुद्र के साथ कोर्ट मैरिज कर ली। एक प्यारे से बेटे की मां बन, वह

बहुत खुश थी। घर में पिता के समान रिटायर्ड ससुर और मां की तरह प्यार करने वाली सास थीं। सब कुछ बहुत अच्छा चल रहा था।

मातृ अवकाश के बाद जब उसने ऑफिस ज्वायन किया तो घर में मम्मी जी प्यारे से गोलू की देखभाल के लिये थी, इसलिये उसे किसी तरह की कोई परेशानी थी।

कुछ दिनों से वह देख रही थी कि रुद्र अपनी नई सेक्रेटरी मेहुल के साथ कुछ ज्यादा ही हंस हंस कर बात करते हैं ... कभी कॉफी की चुस्कियां तो कभी मीटिंग के बहाने देर देर तक बाहर रहने लगे थे। उसे अपने पुराने दिनों की मस्ती याद आ गई तो मन में कुछ संशय के बादल मंडरा उठे उसने रुद्र से टोकाटाकी की तो वह उस पर चिल्ला पड़े और उससे नाराज होकर दूरी बना कर रहने लगे वह एक क्लायंट के साथ मीटिंग कह कर 5 दिनों के लिये शिमला गये। मेहुल उसके पहले से ही मेडिकल लीव पर चल रही थी। अब तस्वीर पूरी साफ थी ... दोनों बीच कुछ खिचड़ी पक रही थी।

वह भी कम नहीं थी फोन के जी.पी. एस. से लोकेशन पता करके उसने दोनों को रंगरेलियां मनाते हुये रंगे हाथों पकड़ लिया था लेकिन रुद्र घर लौटने के बजाय मेहुल के साथ लिव. इन में रहने लगे थे। उसके अपने माता पिता ने तो उसके साथ रिश्ता ही तोड़ रखा थाइसलिये और साथ में नन्हा गोलू उसकी कमजोरी और मजबूरी दोनों ही थी। उसने नियति मान कर परिस्थिति के साथ समझौता कर लिया। वह अपने बूढ़े सास ससुर की देखभाल करती रही परंतु रुद्र के धोखे के कारण वह अंदर ही अंदर टूट गई थी। उसने अपनी नौकरी भी बदल ली। वह चार वर्षों तक अकेली रहते रहते अपनी जिंदगी से निराश हो गई। उसके मन में आत्महत्या का विचार हावी होता जा रहा था। वह चिड़चिड़ी और गुमसुम रहने लगी थी। वह बिना मतलब बेटे गोलू पर झुंझला उठतीकभी कभी थप्पड़ भी लगा देती, बाद में बहुत पछताती लेकिन उसका अपने पर से कंट्रोल हटता जा रहा था।

वह अवसाद से पीड़ित होती जा रही थी। उसके अकेलेपन और उसकी तकलीफ को उसके सहकर्मी मलय ने महसूस किया। उन्होंने आगे बढ़ कर उसे सहारा दिया। मनोचिकित्सक के पास उसे लेकर गये, उसका इलाज करवाया, उन दोनों की दोस्ती धीरे धीरे प्यार में बदल गई क्योंकि मलय भी इसी तरह वासु से धोखा खा चुके थे, इसलिये वह भी उसी पीड़ा से गुजर रहे थे। लगभग दो सालों के बाद एक कदम आगे बढ़ाते हुये उन दोनों ने शादी के बंधन में बंधने का निर्णय ले लिया।



शिवि अपने सास ससुर , जिन्हें अब वह अपने माता पिता समझने लगी थी , उनसे मिलवाने के लिये अपने साथ मलय को लेकर आई । उन दोनों की अनुभवी निगाहें मलय को देखते ही सब समझ गई थी ।

अगली सुबह ही उन दोनों की नजरों में , और उनकी बातचीत में अंतर आ गया था ...वह तरह तरह से दूसरी शादी की ऊंच नीच समझाने लगे , पत्नी धर्म की दुहाई देने लगे । यहां तक तो सब ठीक था , अब वह मलय से दोस्ती तोड़ने के लिये उस पर दबाव डालने लगे , “शिवि तुम अपना भला चाहो तो नौकरी बदल लो मलय सही आदमी नहीं है , वह तुम्हारा इस्तेमाल कर रहा है आदि आदि.... वह तनाव में रहने लगी थी ... वह क्या निर्णय ले , इसी पशोपेश में कुछ समझ नहीं पा रही थी ।

मलय उसे अपने माता पिता से मिलवाना चाहते थे । यद्यपि कि वह स्काइप पर उन लोगों के साथ अक्सर बात करती रहती थी । परंतु उन लोगों का कहना था कि शादी करने से पहले एक बार उनका घर परिवार और रिश्तेदारों से मिलकर एक दूसरे को समझना आवश्यक है । उसके बाद ही निर्णय लेना उचित होगा । वह इसी ऊहापोह में थी , तभी एक दिन रुद्र लुटे पिटे से लौट कर घर आ गये थे ... उसे ये कहानी सुनाई गई कि उन्हें बेटे की बहुत याद आ रही थी ...मालूम हुआ कि उनकी तथाकथित गर्लफ्रेंड ने उन्हें अपने घर से बाहर का रास्ता दिखा

दिया था और उनकी अपनी हरकतों के कारण उनकी नौकरी भी छूट चुकी थी ।

अब वह फिर से उसके साथ जिंदगी की नई शुरुआत करना चाहते हैं... रुद्र के प्यार की चाशनी में डूबे हुये शब्दों को सुनकर और नई डायमंड रिंग की जगमगाहट में एक क्षण को उसका मन डगमगा उठा और रुद्र के साथ बिताये हुये प्यारे पलों की स्मृतियां ताजा हो उठीं लेकिन जब उसने गंभीरता पूर्वक विचार किया तो समझ में आया कि दरअसल सच्चाई यह है कि उन लोगों की आंखों के सामने उसकी 90,000 की सैलरी से होने वाली ऐश और ठाटबाट तैर रहे थे क्योंकि रुद्र भी मातापिता को फुसलाकर रकम ले जाया करते थे ।

उसके मन में अभी भी बहुत हिचकिचाहट थी कि एक बार जीवन में धोखा खा चुकी है , उसे कहीं फिर से न धोखा मिले अच्छा यही है कि जैसे चल रहा है चलने दे और फिर से रुद्र को एक मौका दे

लेकिन जब उसने मलय की सूनी आंखों में झांक कर अपने प्यार की गहराइयों को देखा तो उसे तुरंत समझ में आ गया कि मलय के बिना अब उसका जीवन अधूरा है ...

अंततः उसी क्षण उसने निर्णय ले लिया और वह गोलू की अंगुली पकड़ कर मलय के साथ उसके मातापिता से मिलने के लिये एयरपोर्ट के लिये चल दी थी ।



पद्मा अग्रवाल

Padmaagrawal33@gmail.com



मेरा हौसला

ट्रि. ट्रि. ट्रि.

“आप निशा जी बोल रही हैं।”

“जी, बताइये मैं आपकी क्या सेवा कर सकती हूँ।”

“आपके लिये एक बहुत शुभ समाचार है ... आपके नाम का चयन प्रतिष्ठित अर्जुन एवार्ड के लिये किया गया है।”

प्रसन्नता के अतिरेक से वह क्षण भर को संज्ञाशून्य हो गई थी। उनके मुंह के शब्द तिरोहित हो गये थे ... मुश्किल से वह धन्यवाद कह पाई थीं।

फोन रखते ही यह शुभ सूचना उन्होंने अपने मां पापा को दी थी।

उन्होंने उनके चरण स्पर्श कर उनके प्रति कृतज्ञता जाहिर की थी।

। उन दोनों ने प्यार से उन्हें अपने गले से लगा लिया था।

“मां पापा आप लोगों की मेहनत, लगन और कर्मठता ने मुझे इस पुरस्कार के योग्य बनाया नहीं तो मैं अपाहिज की तरह किसी कोने में पड़ी सिसकती रहती। मां ने उनके मुंह पर अपनी हथेली रख कर चुप रहने का इशारा किया।

क्षणांश में ही यह समाचार चारों ओर फैल गया था और बधाई संदेशों के लिये फोन की घंटी बजने लगी थी। घर के बाहर बधाई देने वालों का तांता लग गया था, उनमें अधिकतर वही पड़ोसी और रिश्तेदार थे, जो उनके मां पापा और उनको उपहास और व्यंग्य की दृष्टि से देखा करते थे। उनके व्यंग्य वाणों के कारण उनका कलेजा छलनी हो चुका था परंतु उन्हीं व्यंग्य वाणों और तानों के कारण सफलता प्राप्त करने की जिजीविषा पैदा हो गई और उनकी मेहनत के कारण एक के बाद एक सफलता उनके कदमों को चूमने लगी थी।



वह अपने अतीत में खो गई

निशा जी की आंखों के सामने अपना जीवन चल चित्र की भांति सजीव हो उठा था ...

वह साधारण मध्यम परिवार की लाडली बेटी थीं वह लगभग तीन वर्ष की थीं, उन्हें जोर का बुखार आया और बुखार ने उनके शरीर को लकवा ग्रस्त कर दिया था। वह तो नासमझ और छोटी थी परंतु मां पापा की तो दुनिया ही उजड़ गई ... वह अपाहिज बनी हुई मां पापा को आंसू बहाते हुये देखा करती ... मां उन्हें अपनी गोद में उठाकर आज इस डॉक्टर और कल दूसरे डॉक्टर के पास चक्कर लगाया करतीं। पूरा परिवार उनकी बीमारी के कारण परेशान रहता था। न ही कोई दवा असर कर रही थी और न ही कोई दुआ। वह बड़ी होती जा रही थी परंतु जरा भी हिल डुल भी नहीं पाती थी फूरे परिवार के लिये बहुत कठिन समय था।

पापा की छोटी सी दुकान थी, मां घर संभाला करतीं थीं। डॉक्टर, दवा, इलाज के चक्कर में यहां वहां जाने के कारण दुकान अक्सर बंद रहती। पापा कर्जदार बन गये थे लेकिन उनका हौसला बरकरार था यदि कोई उनके सामने उन्हें बेचारी भी कह देता, तो वह उस पर नाराज हो उठते थे।

डॉक्टर ने इलेक्ट्रिक शॉक का ट्रीटमेंट देने के लिये बोला था। अब समस्या यह थी कि लुंज पुंज बेटी को तीन बसों को बदल कर इलेक्ट्रिक शॉक दिलवाने के लिये लेकर जाना और लौट कर लाना, कैसे किया जाये ... परंतु मां पापा ने हिम्मत नहीं हारी थी ... लगभग दो वर्षों तक उनको शॉक ट्रीटमेंट दिया गया, इसका असर भी दिखाई दिया, शरीर का ऊपरी भाग कफी हद तक क्रियाशील हो उठा था, उसमें हरकत होने लगी थी लेकिन लेकिन कमर का निचला हिस्सा वैसे ही निष्क्रिय रहा था। अब वहां के डॉक्टरों ने भी अपने हाथ खड़े कर दिये थे।

मां लक्ष्मी की आंखें भीग उठीं थीं। अब यह तो निश्चित हो गया था कि वह अब अपने पैरों पर कभी भी नहीं खड़ी हो सकेगी। उसकी दशा देख कर मां अवसाद से पीड़ित होती जा रही थी। अवसाद के लम्हों में मां के मन में आत्महत्या का विचार हावी होता रहता परंतु बेटी निशा की दुर्दशा और उसकी कठिनाइयों का ध्यान आते ही वह नये उत्साह से बेटी को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने के प्रयास में जुट जाती थीं।

तभी एक डॉक्टर ने उसकी हालत देख कर, उन्हें चेन्नई के आर्थोपेडिक सेंटर ले जाने की सलाह दी। वहां पर दिव्यांग बच्चों को निःशुल्क शिक्षा दी जाती थी। उसके साथ साथ बच्चों को खेल कूद के लिये भी ट्रेनिंग देकर प्रोत्साहित किया जाता था।

पापा प्रशांत ने जरा भी विलंब नहीं किया और उसको लेकर चेन्नई पहुंच गये। उन्हें हॉस्टल में छोड़कर आते समय मां पापा दोनों ही फफक कर रोने लगे थे, परंतु उनके भविष्य के लिये अपने दिल को कड़ा कर लिया था।

वहां पर उनके पैरों की हड्डियों की कई बार पर सर्जरी की गई। सर्जरी, दर्द, फीजियोथैरेपी और एक्सरसाइज का अंत हीन सिलसिला उनके जीवन का आवश्यक हिस्सा बन गया था। यहीं पर दूसरे बच्चों को खेलते देख कर उन्हें भी खेल में रुचि उत्पन्न हो गई। खेल का अभ्यास इनके लिये दवा से अधिक प्रभावी कारक बन गया।

उनकी सर्जरी कामयाब न होने के कारण यह तो तय हो गया था कि अब उन्हें अपना जीवन व्हील चेयर के सहारे ही



बिताना होगा। परंतु वहां पर दूसरे बच्चों को क्रियाशील देखने के बाद उनका आत्मविश्वास और जीवन जीने का हौसला बहुत ज्यादा बढ़ गया था।

वह 15 वर्षों तक चेन्नई के सेंटर में रही थीं। वहां रहने से उनके मन में कुछ कर गुजरने का हौसला पैदा हो गया था। अब मां पापा उनको लेकर बंगलुरु लेकर आये और ग्रेजुएशन के लिये कॉलेज में एडमिशन करवा दिया था परंतु मुसीबतों से तो उनका आत्मीय रिश्ता रहा था, इसलिये यहां भी वह भला क्यों उनका साथ छोड़ती उनकी क्लास ऊपर के फ्लोर पर लगती थी लेकिन पापा के आग्रह को रहम दिल प्रिन्सिपल ने मान कर ग्राउंड फ्लोर में लगवाने का प्रबंध कर दिया। अब तक उनका आत्मविश्वास बहुत बढ़ चुका था।

यहीं पर उन्हें पैरा ओलंपिक के विषय में मालूम हुआ और यहीं पर उनकी शॉटपुट और चेयर रैसिंग की प्रैक्टिस शुरू हुई। उनकी लगन और कुछ कर गुजरने की भावना के कारण उनके खेल में निखार आता गया। कड़ी मेहनत और बुलंद हौसलों के कारण कामयाबी उनके कदम चूमने लगी।

सर्वप्रथम स्थानीय स्तर पर उन्हें सफलता मिली फिर तो सिलसिला चल निकला था। प्रादेशिक स्तर पर मेडल मिलने के बाद राष्ट्रीय स्तर की प्रतियोगिताओं को जीतने के बाद ओलम्पिक का सपना देखना तो स्वाभाविक ही था। उनके कोच रवींद्र जी उन्हें उत्साहित करते रहते। ओलम्पिक में भाग लेने के लिये रैसिंग व्हील चेयर की जरूरत थी लेकिन उनके पास इतने पैसे नहीं थे कि वह रैसिंग व्हील चेयर खरीद सकती, उन्होंने किराये की व्हील चेयर से अपना काम चलाया था।

जीवन का अविस्मरणीय पल ओलम्पिक पदक जीतने का क्षण था, उनके जीवन के लिये अविश्वसनीय पल था ... उनके जीवन की दिशा बदल गई थी उनको खेल कोटे से बैंक में डिप्टी मैनेजर की नौकरी मिल गई। अब उनके घर की आर्थिक दशा सुधरने लगी थी। ओलम्पिक मेडल पाने के साथ - साथ वह कुशल वक्ता बन गई थीं क्योंकि उन्हें विभिन्न मंचों से बार बार अपनी सफलता के लिये किये गये संघर्ष की कहानियों को बताना पड़ता था।

उन्होंने बंगलुरु में एक फाउंडेशन की शुरुआत की है, जहां पर गरीब दिव्यांग बच्चों को निःशुल्क शिक्षा दी जाती है और उसके साथ - साथ उनके अंदर के हुनर को पहचान कर उसे निखार कर उन्हें आत्मनिर्भर बनाने का प्रयास किया जाता है।

मां की आवाज से उनकी तंद्रा भंग हुई और वह वर्तमान में लौटी थीं ।

“अरे , आप तैयार नहीं हुई हैं ? आप भूल गईं । आज आपके पुराने कॉलेज में वहां के बच्चों के लिये संबोधन और साथ में आपको सम्मानित भी किया जायेगा ।”

“ओह, मैं 10 मिनट में तैयार होकर आती हूं ।”

“आराम से कर लो , वहां 2 बजे लेक्चर है ।”

जब उन्हें सम्मानित किया गया तो उन्होंने कहा कि इस सम्मान की असली हकदार तो मेरे माता पिता हैं , जिन्होंने अपना हौसला नहीं छोड़ा और अपनी दिव्यांग बेटी के मन में विश्वास जगाया और उन्हीं के प्रयास के कारण आज उनकी दिव्यांग बेटी ने विश्व में अपनी पहचान बनाई है । ये व्हील चेयर नहीं , वरन् मेरी रैसिंग कार है । इसी के सहारे मैंने गोल्ड, सिल्वर और ब्रांज मेडल जीतने में कामयाब हुई हूं ।

हमारी सबसे बड़ी कमजोरी है , हमारे मन के अंदर की हीन भावना घर कर लेती है कि हम दूसरों से कमजोर हैं , कमतर हैं , तो आप मानसिक रूप से दिव्यांग बन जाते हैं । वह शरीर से दिव्यांग अवश्य थी , लेकिन दिल से कभी भी दिव्यांग नहीं थी ।



जीवन में कुछ कर गुजरने का हौसला था । उसी हौसले के कारण वह तमाम कठिनाइयों को झेलती हुई आगे बढ़ती रही । मैं सोचती हूं कि मैं दुनिया की सबसे खुशनसीब महिला हूं ... हम सब हर समय इस समाज से या दूसरों से बहुत सारी शिकायतें करते रहते हैं लेकिन कभी यह नहीं सोचते कि हम अपनी ओर से समाज को क्या दे सकते हैं या कि दूसरों की भलाई , अच्छाई के लिये क्या सहयोग कर सकते हैं ।

यदि दूसरों से लेने और छीनने के स्थान पर कुछ देने की प्रवृत्ति मन में रखें तो अवश्य मेव यह दुनिया बहुत खूबसूरत और सुंदर हो जायेगी ।

हॉल तालियों से गूंज उठा था ।

प्रिंसिपल ने धन्यवाद देते हुये कहा कि निशा जी का जीवन हम सबको जीवन में आगे बढ़ने और मुश्किल घड़ी में हौसला रखने की प्रेरणा देने की मिसाल कायम करता है । हमें कभी भी हिम्मत नहीं हारना चाहिये और न ही मन को कमजोर करना चाहिये ।

वह बहुत खुश थीजीवन का एक सफल दिन बीत गया था, उनके मन में अपार संतोष था ।



पद्मा अग्रवाल

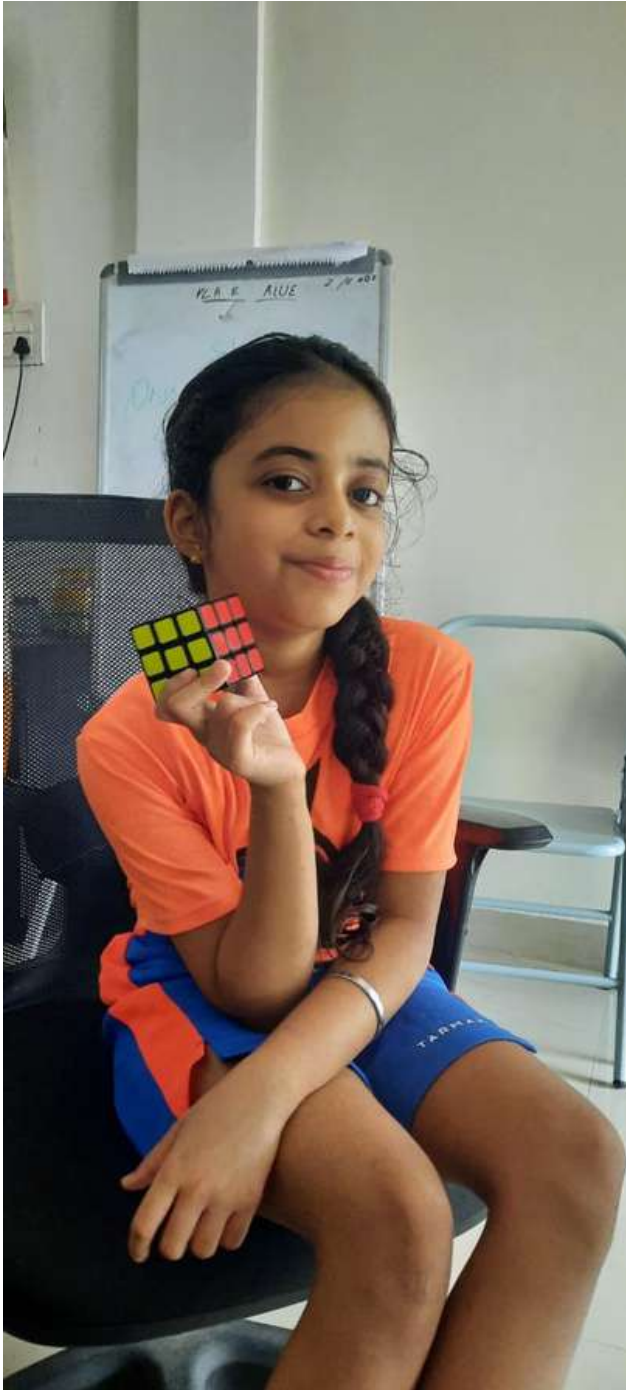
Padmaagrawal33@gmail.com

खुशियाँ

जैसे बागों में बहारों का आ जाना
कर्णप्रिय संगीत का गुंजायमान होना
जैसे आँगन में चिड़ियों का चहचहाना
चारों तरफ नजारों का खेल जाना
कोयल की कुहक से अम्बर का गूंजना
ढलते सूरज से गगन का सिंदूरी हो जाना
शामों में तितली के रंगों का उतारना
बरसात के मौसम की रिमझिम फुहार
वो तुम्हारा अपने हाथों की उंगलियों का
मेरे हाथों की उंगलियों में उलझा लेना
तेरे कांधे पर मेरा सर रखकर बातें करना
और भीगते हुए लंबी सड़क पर चलना
बस एक ही तमन्ना दिल में रखना
कि जिंदगी भर तुम्हारे पहलू में रहना



रुषा चित्रांगद



Chaitanya Krishna
Class 5th,
Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, New Delhi-3



THE WEDDING RING'S MYSTERY

I was in Dehradun to attend a family function. I was getting bored so I thought to meet one of my friend who lived in a remote area. It was night but somehow mom agreed and allowed me to go there on foot. When I reached there I got to know from uncle that my friend has gone to hostel as his aunty died some two years back .

The house was rather large, and the dining table was arranged as if uncle was waiting for someone at dinner.

We both talked for around half an hour when the phone rang. Uncle picked up the phone which was a little far in the hallway, and did not return for a while. I finally got up and went into the hallway where I saw tears dripping from his eyes! I helped him to the sofa and both of us sat down. He was still weeping and told me that his elder son and daughter in law were returning from America, but a car accident took place and they died on the spot, and the hospital had

called up for identifying their body. He also informed that the food on the table was meant for them only. Saying this he again started to weep. I thought that I should also leave along with him, but he asked me to stay in the house till he returned as it was not safe to leave the house vacant. I wanted to leave but before I could say something, he gave me a bunch of keys and went away.

It was around ten when I had my food and then went to sleep after informing my parents about the situation. At night when I was turning from one side to another I felt as if my leg landed on someone else's leg! I got soooo scared that I didn't open my eyes. I quickly covered my face with the quilt trying to be calm and show as if nothing has happened . I felt the person searching for something .





His hand went under my pillow where I had put the bunch of keys. Now I knew that thieves were there to steal. Still I could not gather the courage to open my eyes and fight with them. I lay still. Later I heard the sounds of opening and closing of various cupboards and finally the noise went dead. After around half an hour I somehow got up and came to the dining hall where I saw two more used plates. I suppose there were two thieves and they had food also before leaving.

I could not sleep for the rest of the night and waited for my Uncle. Uncle came around 5 O'clock in the morning, looking very sad and a little horrified when he told

me that the police had taken the body for post mortem and they have handed him a pair of diamond ring which they had gifted to the couple but later his wife kept them inside the cupboard as an astronomer told they were unlucky for them, although they were not willing to give. After listening to him I told him everything about the theft in the night and wanted him to check what has been stolen and inform the Police. After about fifteen minutes he came out of the room more horrified than before with an empty box of the pair of rings in his hand. Nothing else was stolen. I went pale and he kept looking at the two plates and the two diamond rings lying on the table.



**Madhavan Pankaj Srivastava,
Class X**



See you in the next edition