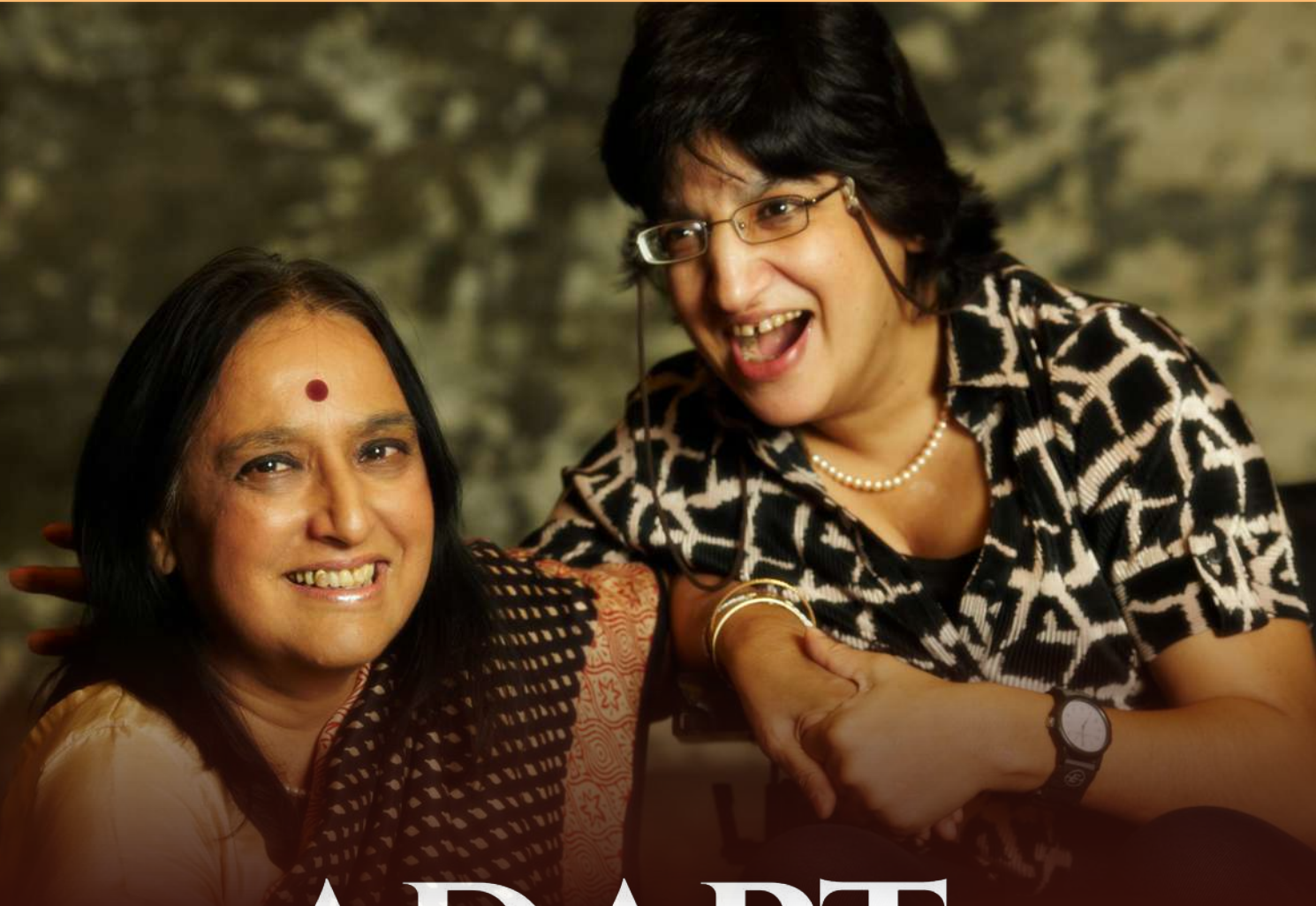


VOL 31.0 | DECEMBER EDITION

Initiative of WE Foundation

WOMENSHINE



ADAPT

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE, ACCEPTING, DISABILITY-FRIENDLY INDIA WITH

Dr. Mithu Alur & Malini Chib

DREAM SOLO

MODERN BRIDE

COZY WINTER MEMORIES

HOME DECOR

SHINING STAR

DIL SE

COZY WINTER
STORIES





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*

So we have actually changed the story. Month by month we have grown in leaps and bounds and are now geared to grow up in many folds.

We will be completing 3 years of **Womenshine** very soon...many congratulations to everyone, our readers, our associates, and our team members who believed in Women Shine every time.

We are ready with the **DECEMBER** edition.

Read wonderful stories on "**Cozy Winter Memories**".

Keep sharing your thoughts, and suggestions at womenshinemag@gmail.com

Wishing you lots of love, light, and the best of happiness.

Aparna Mishra

Founder-Editor, Women Shine

#Shineonwomen

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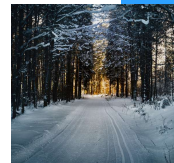
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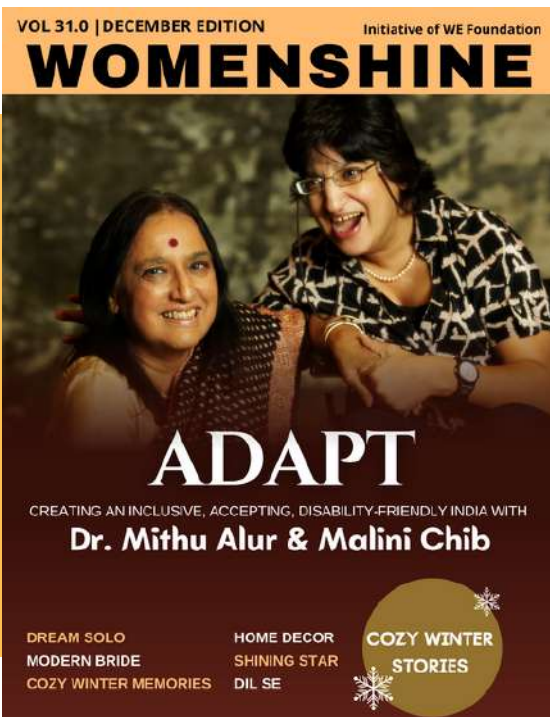
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(For editorial queries, e-mail:connect@womenshine.in)



Stree Shakti

THE PARALLEL FORCE

Stree Shakti - The Parallel Force aims at pulling together individual and collective knowledge engaged in women welfare. It is a movement to rouse and activate women of every age, class and creed to empower them so that they work as catalysts for fundamental social change. The Forum provides a platform for joint action through research, networking and advocacy since 1998.

The Background

Female mobility has always been a matter of concern for socio-cultural –economic development for both rural and urban women. Research indicates that in lower strata of society one women annually spend around Rs 2500 on clothes , 1500 on medicines , 1500 on hygiene and Rs 2000 on unforeseen expense. Total Rs annually Rs 7500 on her personal expense. Where as on the bus travel alone her minimum annual expense is Rs 8000 alone. In case of elderly women things get worse as their income dwindles and medical expense goes up they often face isolation resulting in serious health issues both physical and mental. Our research of one year conducted in different part of India pointed out that elderly women due to reasons like financial insecurity & instability confine themselves to the household only. 59% of the elderly women are widowed. Many of them have no bank accounts and levels of income are also very low. Many elderly women face desertion and live alone. Then living alone is remarkably higher among elderly women (9.6%) as compared to men (2%).

Free Travel Pass : A silent Revolution

A free travel pass on public buses to the women will encourage them to travel and link up with the world. The Free pass introduced by three prominent states of India , Delhi, Punjab and Tamilnadu have exciting findings. Different states have taken a different route to fund it.



Who is paying for the free rides for women : Delhi Model

For every free journey undertaken by a woman commuter, the Delhi government will extend a flat subsidy of Rs 10 to the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and the DIMTS (Delhi Multi-Modal Transit Ltd) under which the city's public bus fleet operates.

States with Free Travel

**AAP GOVERNMENT NEW DELHI
OCTOBER 2019
BJP HARYANA (PARTIAL)
JANUARY 2022
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
PUNJAB APRIL 2021
DMK TAMIL NADU JULY 2021
AINRC AND BJP PUDUCHERRY
(INTENTION) DECEMBER 2021**



TEAM WS



#shiningwomen

ADAPT



CREATING AN INCLUSIVE, ACCEPTING, DISABILITY-FRIENDLY INDIA WITH DR MITHU ALUR AND DAUGHTER, MALINI CHIB

The Spastics Society of India, now called ADAPT (Able Disabled All People Together) is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that was set up in 1972 by Dr Mithu Alur, a parent of a daughter who was born with cerebral palsy to address the lack of services and knowledge that existed at that time with an aim to alert the nation to its needs and show how the government and community could help them to be included in existing services.



ADAPT began a new model combining education and treatment under one roof. It moved children away from a medical hospital setting to a special school setting to demonstrate that multiply disabled children could be educated and get treatment through a holistic approach. Pedagogy, and manpower training were interwoven into the first innovative model. The organisation was unique in showing how professionalism could be delivered with care. These programmes lead the child through the academic curriculum of the SSC Board. Most of the children would move into mainstream schools during the secondary years as part of the organisation's

philosophy of promoting 'inclusive education, which is most beneficial for the child. Starting with 3 children with cerebral palsy in a small premise in Colaba, today ADAPT is one of the largest NGOs in India. There are now over a million children and families who have benefited directly from the services of the mother organization. Their alumni include PhDs, Masters, and Graduates in social sciences, in pure sciences, mathematics, computing, chartered accountancy, and journalism. The current direct services are provided In Mumbai at Colaba, Bandra, Chembur, Dharavi and Pelhar in Palghar district, Maharashtra.

DR MITHU ALUR



Padmashri winner Dr Mithu Alur began a life-changing movement with a remarkable vision. An idea of a world where children and adults with a disability would stand shoulder-to-shoulder, with normal people, as independent citizens, mainstreamed into our society. The Spastics Society of India was founded by Dr Mithu Alur in 1973. . Mithu has been working with International partners, eminent citizens, and a resolute band of dedicated, trained professionals, to create a nation where the able and disabled are equal.

Mithu's work has been mainly with the needy, the helpless, and disabled people also disadvantaged by poverty. She has worked to serve India in true Gandhian spirit, using humanism, federalism and on a spiritual level, beyond prestige, power and money. She has not worked for politics or religion, but for building a caring, disabled-friendly India. The reason for her involvement in disabled children is her daughter Malini, who is disabled. Malini has done two Masters – in Gender Studies and in Information Technology from the University of London.



countries and has organised three conferences called the North-South Dialogue. South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Hong Kong (China), Canada, Norway, U.K., Chile, Pakistan and Russia participated in the Dialogues. In the area of pedagogy, Dr Alur has initiated a course in collaboration with the Institute of Child Health (CICH) London is funded by the Women's Council, UK which reaches out to Master Trainers' in the Asia Pacific Region. This course has valuable inputs from CICH and is also supported by ADAPT. The Community Initiatives in Inclusion (CII) course is in its sixth year and has been attracting students from Mongolia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tonga, Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Tonga, Sri Lanka, China, Cambodia and Vietnam and from all over India.

Dr. Alur believed in the holistic all-round development of children working for disabled children who she described as 'an intelligent mind trapped in a disobedient body' education and health care of the child was inextricably linked and both had to be nourished for the complete well-being of the child under a social model.

Mithu is an Educationist, Social Reformer, Lecturer, Researcher and Author. On the international front, Mithu began the concept of a Dialogue between the North-South





For over 50 years Dr Alur has written and published extensively on the issues of child rights and the 'hows' of educating poor children. She has straddled the social policy dimension with cost-effective methodologies of addressing the educational needs of children.

MALINI CHIB

A woman who defied all odds to emerge victorious in spite of a crippling disability and an indifferent society; who dragged herself out of the limits of her condition.

The inspiration behind ADAPT, Chib is the founder and co-chairperson of ADAPT Rights Group, a part of the ADAPT (Able Disable All People Together) organisation. The Rights Group was formed with the belief that both "able" and "disabled" should work together to form an "inclusive" society where "all" are welcomed and included. She also heads the Library and Media Services. She is responsible for the micro and macro advocacy efforts of the ADAPT Rights Group. She lent her skills by organizing an 'Inclusive Job Fair' for disabled youth. She also conducts Empowerment and sensitization courses for individuals, corporates, parents, professionals and disabled activists

In 2011, the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment awarded Chib the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of Role Model. In 2017, on the occasion of World Cerebral Palsy Day, Chib was honoured with the first global Cerebral Palsy Day Award for ensuring the rights and entitlements of persons with disability conferred the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Australia.

One Little Finger is the autobiography of Malini Chib. As life became a tear and a smile for her, Malini tells us the story of her heroic battle against adversity, prejudice, stigmas, and stereotypes, her will to succeed and her search for an identity in a contrary world. And in the process of self-realization, she becomes a beacon of hope for everyone.



-By Aditi Gupta



MONICA K DHAWAN

Monica Dhawan serves as the CEO and Managing Director of Fusion Corporate Solutions, which was founded in 1999 and is a premier service provider in the field of 360 degree communication solutions like expositions, capacity building, design studio and AV production, and media monitoring and analytics. By combining her extensive experience Monica built a portfolio of national and international clients in the corporate sector and government bodies. A seasoned entrepreneur with varied interests, Monica Dhawan dons many hats. Monica has a deep affiliation with delivering unique concepts and stories. Starting at an early age several notable projects have emerged under her entrepreneurial prowess.



It is noteworthy to mention that she carved space on the J&K bank board at the age of 42(!). Monica was the board of Directors as an Independent Woman Director of Jammu & Kashmir Bank PSU with a 2000 crore market cap. Monica's experience in J& K Bank turned out to be of great significance in the emerging scenario in Jammu & Kashmir. She is the Chairperson of ITSC (Information Technology & Strategy Committee) and part of seven prominent committees. Demonstrating her intellectual prowess, Monica was an all-India topper among 24 colleges after graduating from the prestigious Institute of Hotel Management Pusa. She also has an MBA in Business Administration and Marketing.

As a leading woman entrepreneur, Monica combines her corporate experience with over two decades of work in experiential marketing, conceptualizing the biggest scale conventions and events and moving to



adjacencies like capacity building, project/program management, digital transformations, and IEC, building brands and campaigns within the government that India has ever seen. She has designed bespoke intellectual properties for customers throughout her career. She is progressive and a forward-thinker. She has been honing her skills in data analytics/AI, creating opportunities, and converting opportunities into strengths for organizations.

At a very young age, she started her entrepreneurial journey in the field of communication and got to work with national and international players in the field of garments, textiles, auto, defence, aero, petroleum, pharma, aviation, security, fire, infrastructure, food packaging, and telecommunications. Ms. Dhawan has worked with major corporations like Nokia, NSN, Bacardi, Airtel, Del Monte, Wipro, Denel, Armscore (leading South African Defence customers) GMR, JBM, Ambani's, Mitsubishi, etc. She has also built a successful track record of working with more than 20 ministries of the Government of India.

Along with her extensive work experience in private and public sector domain, Monica has notably been involved in programmes that include MITR - Motivate Interactions Through Relationship, Boond boond se Sagar, Mera Sanvidhaan Mera Swabhimaan, Utsav Umang Unnati, and Ganga Rashtra ki Jeevan Dhara. As a compassionate entrepreneur who values relationships, Monica is creating and making a difference in the lives of many.



Her leadership skills and business acumen keep the brand Fusion as well as the team members in great spirits. She has mentored, guided, nurtured, and entrusted many with opportunities and added to their professional and personal lives.

By combining her extensive experience in the corporate and government sectors with her ardent commitment and relentless efforts, Monica has today made sure that everyone succeeds. She continues her quest with all of her passion, steadfast in her conviction to contribute to society in a variety of ways.

TEAM WS



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Minimalism is The New Home Decor Aesthetics

New home decor aesthetics are introduced each year, so if one of your goals for 2023 is to spruce up your place, take a peek at the future trends. One of the significant trends for the upcoming year is getting back to basics, considering a lot of neutral hues and simple accessories in keeping with new beginnings and fresh begins.

Eden Morrison, the designer at Graber, expects minimalism to play a significant role in 2023. She has shared her top trends for the year and provided advice on how you may apply them to your own house.

Take the outside inside

This year's hottest trend in interior design is called Friluftsliv, a Scandinavian idea that emphasizes year-round enjoyment of the outdoors. According to Eden Morrison in a news release, "from a design perspective, Friluftsliv means incorporating elements of the outdoors into living spaces. "What better place to begin than the window—the boundary between inside and outside? Graber's transparent and layered shades are light-filtering or sheer textiles that let in natural light. Use window coverings and pillows with prints inspired by nature to bring the beauty of the outdoors inside.



“

कहानियाँ, कवितार्ये, कुछ
अच्छे पल, यादें ...
आमंत्रित हैं



EMAIL करें
womenshinemag@gmail.com



Enduring materials:

"Embracing nature while preserving it is fashionable. And that implies that when you design your home, the function is just as vital as style, says Morrison. "Add texture to the area with sustainable natural materials to make it more visually and haptically appealing. Window treatments made of eco-friendly materials like bamboo, reeds, grass, and jute may bring the textures you love outside.



Less is better

"Minimalism can make a place more liveable, which is crucial in the current work-from-home era. Clear lines and spacious, open areas highlight the primary function of a room. Shades with primary tubes and a motorized lift produce a clean, contemporary style. Sheer shades provide an airy, opulent effect while softly filtering light (and blocking dangerous UV rays) in seconds.



Happy homes:

Staying safe and healthy plays a significant role in our daily lives. A happy and healthy home is essential, and it can come from the design and functionality standpoint because we spend more time indoors.



Aparna Singh



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Modern Bride

A Classy One



Modern Bride Wore a Hot Pink Lace Pant-Suit with Bold Polki & Jewelry for Her Private Wedding



An India girls are exposed to the rich Indian culture around the teenage. At weddings they attend, girls are also informed that they will eventually have to leave their home behind after getting married. Although it is a lovely tradition, we have observed women make weddings a regular event rather than a milestone without which their lives lack the extra spice.



Women in Indian houses have been told since a young age that an Indian bride usually dresses elegantly in a suhaag ka joda and performs solah shringar. But, as we age women are now following their hearts & calling when it comes to picking an outfit. Even though the general outfit choices range from Sarees, Anarkalis to other clothing. For the first time, we saw a bride who chose to forgo the traditional Indian attire and dress in a pantsuit on her wedding day. As we interpret her gaze, let & have a look.

The bride preferred a low-key affair with close relatives and friends skipping the big fat Indian wedding drama. On her big day she went with a simple bridal outfit for her special day. She opted a hot pink, lacey, single-breasted pantsuit that gave her appearance a contemporary edge. To add to her look she added a pale pink transparent veil as an accessory.



We also caught a lovely exchange when the groom dared the bride to kiss him during the pheras. To our amazement, the stunning bride accepted the challenge and shocked her husband with an unexpected kiss on the cheeks.



Aparna Singh

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WOMENSHINE.IN | 11

Be the Fashion Trend to Standout– Actress Amanpreet Karnawal Shares Her Gripping Fashion Sense!

Model turned actress Amanpreet Karnawal will be seen in the upcoming video song titled 'Believe'. The song will be published internationally in the Czech Republic newspapers. Amidst her rising success stories, she shares her unique and casual fashion sense.

Unlike other brand-conscious artists, Amanpreet is a calculative and sensible spendthrift. Puma is one of the brands she follows exclusively as she finds their sportswear affordable, eco-friendly, and comfortable. Moreover, the red color in the Puma Logo sportswear gives her passion and fire for an aggressive workout. She finds the sign relatable to her personality as she drives herself passionately to fitness.

Amanpreet Karnawal shows keen interest and love for oversized clothes. She extends her love for hoods, joggers, tights, shorts, and other casual loungewear. Other than the oversized stuff, her usual home wear also includes jumpsuits, maxi gowns, and body cons. Sometimes, she also loves to step out in a sports look as volleyball has been her special subject in her school and college days.

Coming from a modeling background, Amanpreet doesn't restrict herself from trying and experimenting with new looks. She wouldn't hesitate to try new looks and get out of her comfort zone if the script or project demands her to do so.

Amanpreet says; "I love my body and I work hard through yoga and gym to give it what it deserves. I also pay close attention to what I consume on a daily routine." The actress also loves to cook and prepare her meals. We bet that it is a treat to the eyes to see the gorgeous Punjabi actress cooking in her oversized hood.

The bold and beautiful actress started her journey as a model and she has been the face of many ad films and video albums. She finds herself all set to mark her presence in the world of web series and movies. When asked about script choices, Amanpreet stated that she would love to do films like Gangs of Wasseypur and Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster.

Awaiting her upcoming song that will be internationally released in a few weeks. The song depicts hope and belief.



Shruti Sharma

Dream Solo

TIPS TO TRAVEL SOLO



As Suzy Strutner rightly quoted, “Solo travel not only pushes you out of your comfort zone, it also pushes you out of the zone of others.”

Every woman has that ‘Travel Solo’ dream on her bucket list. And why not? It gives us a sense of independence and decision-making power. It also lets us explore new versions of ourselves while exploring new places. Meeting new people, learning about their experiences and getting inspired, all are what excite us while travelling solo. But along with the excitement, it is also scary to travel alone, especially as a woman. Without proper planning, you could get into some serious trouble and your trip could go haywire. To prevent that and let yourself enjoy yourself without any regrets, here are some tips for planning your solo trip.

Choose a familiar destination

You might ask, why a familiar place? After all, solo travelling is all about exploring new places. But, for first-time travellers, it is much more beneficial to travel to places where the language and the culture are familiar to you. For example, if this is your first time travelling solo, then choosing a destination within the country is the most beneficial for you, as you know the language and the people there.



#shiningwomen

Do your research

Just like we plan for everything in our lives, planning before any travel is essential. Once you choose a destination, research the place thoroughly. What about this place is so special? What travel and stay facilities do they have? How safe is it? You should find answers to such questions through your research. If you are planning to visit any monumental site, make sure to check the visit timings of such places. A better way to keep all these things on track is by keeping a travel journal. Assembling all your research in your journal is beneficial.



Plan a budget

The most important thing in travelling is... Money of course! The main aspects where money is involved is the travelling and accommodation cost. While researching the places we are often blindsided by luxurious places with scenic views. But, the true essence of solo travelling comes from budget-friendly trips. Booking social accommodations like hostels, homestays etc and using local transportation for inter-city travel is safe as well as a chance to meet people from different backgrounds. Plan a budget which gives you the best trip ever, while not burdening your pockets.

Booking tickets in advance

Now, this is a major budget-friendly idea. Once your plan is set, execute your travel by booking tickets well in advance of your travel. Doing so, you get reduced prices and amazing discounts on your ticket. Also, try and choose the cheapest mode of travel. For example, if you are planning to travel within India, try to book a train ticket rather than a flight ticket as it is much cheaper and affordable. Although if you are travelling to islands like Lakshwadeep or The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, travelling during the off-season is cheaper. But be sure you don't get stuck in terrible weather. Also, try and travel during the day rather than at night as it is much safer than travelling at night.



Travel Light

As women, we usually have this tendency to pack a lot of things, thinking that we might have to use them, even though there's no possibility that we might use them. One of the essential rules of a solo trip is to travel light. Pack only essential items for your travel. Carry a first aid box, a power bank, a money belt, etc. Avoid packing any valuables or expensive things with your luggage. After all, you don't want to drag your suitcase along while sightseeing. The smartest idea would be only carrying this that fits in a backpack. Remember this rule and travel easily and carefree.

Lower your expectations

As travelling has always been your dream, you might have some kind of misconception of how solo travelling should look and how you should feel about it. But the reality could be much different than that. It could also cloud your judgement and ruin your first experience of travelling, so much so that you might never go for your second trip. Hence, it is better to lower your expectations. But that doesn't mean you should always expect the worst of everything. Try and stay positive while not daydreaming about it.

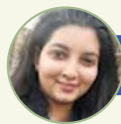


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Do not over plan

As I said above, planning is essential. But planning every minute detail of your travel might get boring. Sometimes it's better to get lost to find a new way. But along with that, it is also important that you give yourself proper rest. Over-planning can lead to stress and not achieving everything might ruin your travel. So to avoid that, plan the must-do activities but be unconstrained. Solo travel is a life-changing experience. As author Mandy Hale said, "There are some places in life where you can only go alone. Embrace the beauty of your solo journey". Travelling solo gives you a new paradigm to look from. It shows the beauty of the nature along with the touch of mankind. It gives you a sense of absolute serenity. So do not hesitate to travel.

Expand your comfort zone and travel the world. Only then you'll truly experience a wonderful life.



Ashwathi Anoopkumar



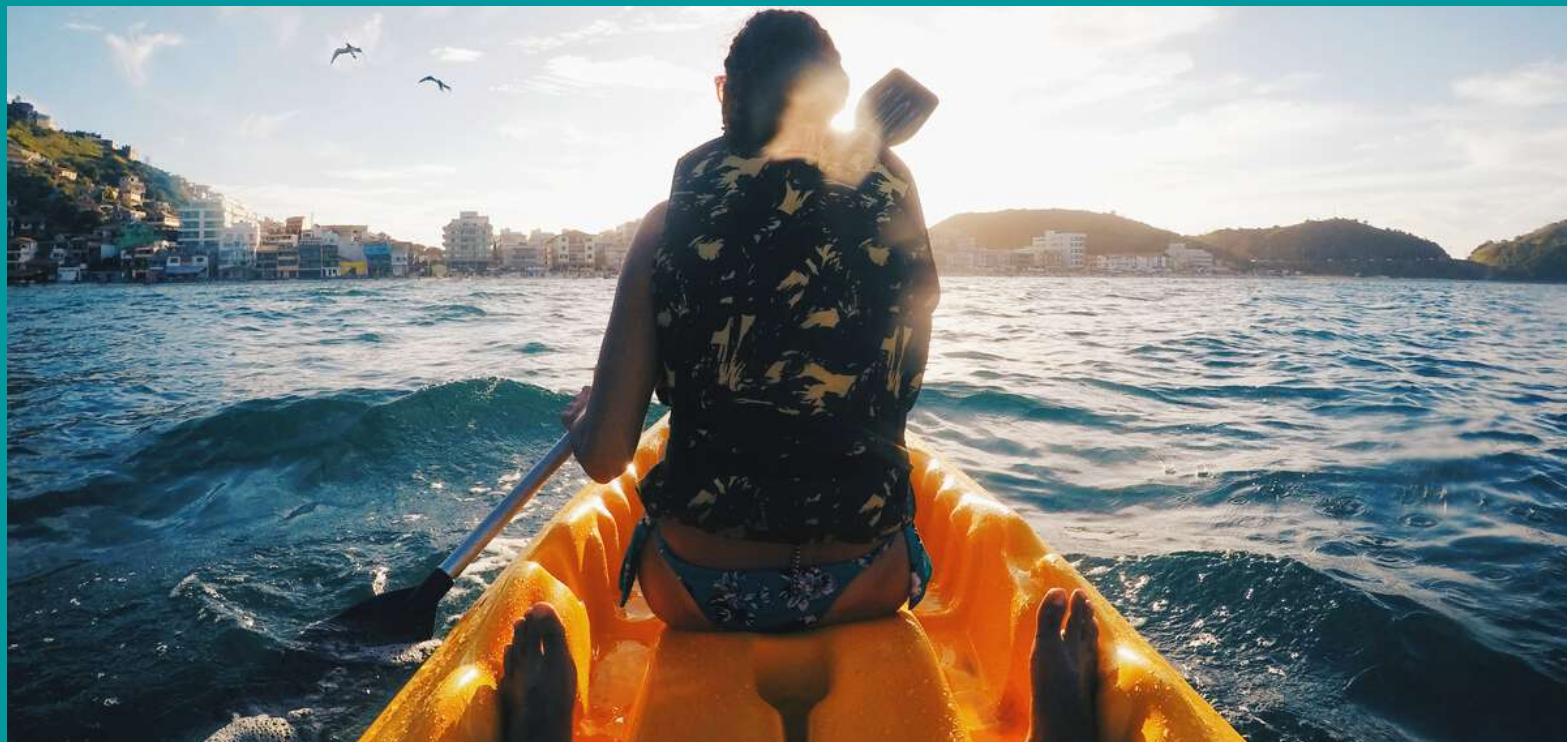
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CULTURE SHOCKS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT



All of us experience some kind of culture shock when we travel to a different place. Even when we travel to different states in India, we face different culture shocks as we are a diverse community. This culture shock may not necessarily be negative though as that's what exploring a new city is about. However, culture shock may lead to various psychological issues such as depression and anxiety.

The term Culture Shock defines as a feeling of confusion and uncertainty, that people may experience when moving to a new country or experiencing a new culture. Culture shock may make you feel homesick, lonely, isolated, lethargic, etc. Culture shock may hit different people differently. According to research studies, there are four stages of Culture Shock in general. They are:

Honeymoon stage.

This stage, as the name suggests, is the euphoric stage. Everything is new and fresh. You get very excited to explore the place, try out its famous cuisine, meet new people, etc. In short, you love everything and are infatuated with every aspect of the city. You try to find similarities between your culture and their culture and try to connect with the local people. This period may last between one month to three months of your stay.

Negotiation Stage

Once the glorious honeymoon stage comes to an end, then comes the negotiation stage. In this, you start to feel a bit frustrated and anxious. Your excitement starts to fade away and even the smallest problem may make you distressed. During this, you experience homesickness and minor physical ailments because of the transition. You slowly realize that the things that actually attracted you to the place don't seem that attractive anymore.

Adjustment Stage

After the negotiation stage comes the adjustment stage. In this, you finally start accepting your surroundings and start to feel like a part of the community. This usually hits by six to twelve months of your stay and you start getting better at going through your routines. Although you are still facing the same troubles, you are trying to cope with them rationally.



Adaptation Stage

At last, you reach the Adaptation Stage, also known as the Bicultural stage. In this stage, you finally adapt to the conditions of the place you live in and you are living very comfortably. You no longer feel any isolation and anxiety and can easily mingle with the local people and make friends easily. Although different from the honeymoon stage, you still feel a sense of belonging. Culture shock is pretty common and is part of the experience. But is there any way to tackle this? Definitely yes! But how? Here are some tips to deal with Culture Shock:

Prepare for it

As we discussed earlier, culture shock is inevitable. Hence you should prepare for it. While researching about the city you want to move into, search about the people, their behaviours, their rituals and customs, etc. Reading blogs or watching travelogues are much helpful to understand more about the place.



Learn the language

If you are visiting a country where the native language is not your language, (e.g. South East Asia countries, or countries like France, Germany, Bulgaria, etc) try and learn the language of that country, even a few words of courtesy would be fine, to converse with the local. After all, you have to converse with people daily to live there.

Create your own space

So that you don't feel like an alien, carry a few things from your homeland to personalise your new home. Things like your favourite cushion, coffee cup, or picture frames can bring the same aesthetics and also put you at ease.

Be open-minded and explore Culture shock happens when we see or hear something totally different from what we believe in. But a lot of this can be avoided if you keep an open mind and accept things as it is. Try and open up to new experiences and not hide from them. Explore the place and live the life of a tourist. Of course, your safety comes first and foremost and you should not play with it. As I mentioned in the introduction, culture shock is not necessarily a bad thing. It is, in fact, a beneficial aspect of your personal development. Experiencing these things will make you a stronger person. It will enable you to come out of your shell and help you tackle problems easily. It will make you an accepting, forgiving and adaptable person and turn you into an exceptional human being. Hence, do not fear being isolated and lonely in a different country and explore the world with enthusiasm.

KEEP TRAVELLING AND EXPLORE...



Ashwathi Anoopkumar

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A cozy winter scene featuring a fireplace with a fire, a person's feet in brown cable-knit slippers, and floral socks.

COSY WINTER STORIES

YAADON KI BARAAT

“Yaadon ki baraat nikli hai yaha, dil ke dware sang hamare”, the song played in the cab when Rita was about to get down for her stop - the concert night. After college, this was the first event that she was going to attend. The cool breeze and the sweet fragrance of ‘raat ki rani’ sent chills inside her. The stage was set and the lights switched on and there he was the crush of many girls and women. Rohan Malhotra, there he was in glittering jacket with leather pants and boots, forehead covered with white bandana.

All girls shouting - “We love you Rohan”.

“Show the ticket”, the guard asked, distracting Rita’s memories of her Christmas college fest, where she had an amazing encounter with the hearthrob of the country. After showing the tickets, she took her mobile out of her red sling jute bag, opened her Instagram Account and checked the photo she had taken then. She smiled a bit, and exited the screen to open the dial pad and called the third dialled number. The call ringed, and was picked, she could hear some low voice of instruments in background.

“Hey honey, I am back from my official trip. I am here at the venue to revisit, recreate the memory of that December when the cupid struck. All the best love.”

Divvisha Bharti



#shiningwomen



DISCOVER THE JOY OF GIVING THIS WINTER

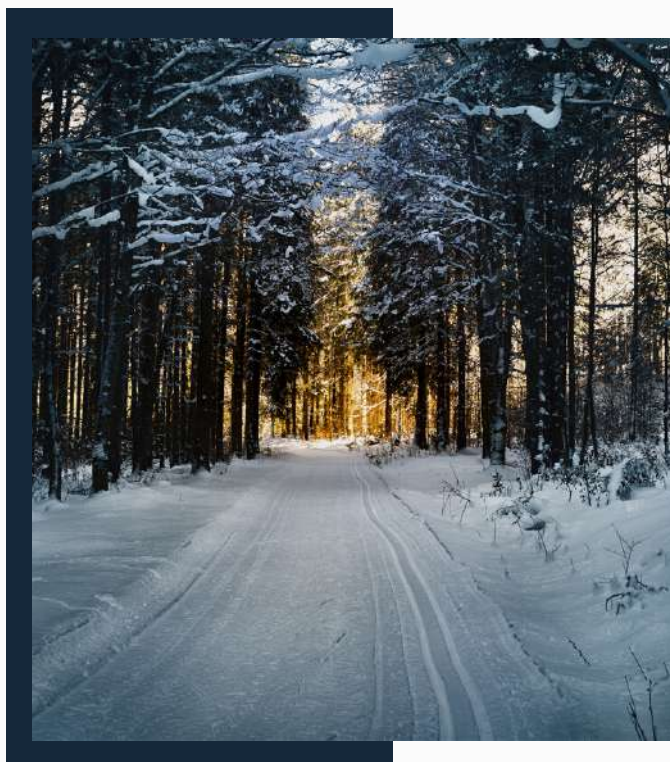


My legs were shaky when I stepped out from the Oncologists chamber. You might have just a few weeks to live, but the doctor's nervous voice would have tormented any soul to death. The cold winter breeze failed to chill my numbness. The world around me absolutely ceased to exist. I don't know for how long I had been standing on the pavement, tears tricking and soaking my pashmina and staring blankly, when I was brought to sense partly by an old woman, a beggar.

She might have watched me for a good half an hour before deciding to speak to me. Covered in sweaters full of patches and holes, her dry wrinkled hands shaking, she offered me water from a disposable water bottle.

I wiped my eyes to have a better look at her if I knew her.

No, I didn't. She was a complete stranger, who wanted to drive me out of my misery with her brave smile. Somehow, parts of me became alive because of her cold hand and at the same time equally warm touch, tenderness, and concern. I was now smiling too, sipping from her bottle. Though my brain, since it was busy with an altogether different program at that moment, was unable to decipher her words. But my eyes could feel her compassion. After some fifteen minutes, I decided to head towards my car and bade goodbye to the woman. Inside the car instead of focussing on my cancer the old furrowed face, hovered around. She did not even ask me for anything, a thought crossed my mind. From my rearview mirror, I could see them saving themselves from the bitter cold. What use would be this expensive shawl or imported jacket, or premium gloves to me, a few days or weeks from now? I stepped out of my car and paced toward her. Her toothless smile greeted me once more. But what I did next lit her face. Covered in the warmest coat, shawl, and gloves, she said daughter you can keep this as the old hag might not survive past winters, referring to herself. That might be true for me too, I said to myself, half choked I resorted to Death Cleaning to overcome my depression and pain, giving away all that did not fall in the category of comfort or necessity, whatever was extra, all the things I had in several copies, lying unused. It took me a week to give away all that was not required when the phone rang.



I checked to find my Oncologists name flashing on the screen. With trembling hands, I picked up the phone. What he told me over the next few minutes, pushing my system into still more chaos. My report got mixed up with another terminally ill patient and I need not worry as my tumors were all benign. Yes, I was happy to find out that I had maybe many more years to live. At the same time, the price tag of all stuff I donated over the last few days was hovering in my head. It was effortless to part with so much just a few moments back and just now I am making mental calculations as to how much stuff I gave. That's the human mind, its weaknesses, and its tendencies. But better sense prevailed and the next moment I

consoled myself that this was the best decision ever. Why should stuff lie at my place instead of being used by someone needier? Especially the coming winters. So many people will be chilled to the bone due to lack of warmers while there are innumerable woolens which I will use just once or twice the season. Besides, I discovered the joy of giving and feeling light. I never felt happier while wearing all those expensive and exotic stuff, but the lighted faces of those who received it really were incomparable.

Lubna Kamal



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A MEMORABLE WINTER WEDDING

Winter and weddings are said to be a match made in heaven. For & Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark on a sentimental journey and enjoy every idle hour. & Woohoo it was going to be a winter wedding, my heart did a flip. There was only a month for the wedding so there was a flurry of activity going on.

The pre wedding ceremonies began with gusto. I looked resplendent in a vine coloured suit with matching accessories , palms and feet adorned with Henna. I grooved to Mere haathon mein nau-nau chudiyaan hai to You are my soniya like there would be no tomorrow. Soon D-Day dawned with the sun shining bright. Within no time I was decked up in my bridal finery, a fuchsia lehenga with Swarovski crystal work and matching jewelry .As I made my way to the stage I saw my groom looking dapper in a black Sherwani. His dashing looks bowled me hook, line and sinker. I was welcomed on stage with the DJ playing the latest, peppy Bollywood numbers. Both my groom and myself were the cynosure of all eyes. But suddenly the DJ changed the tracks and a retro Bollywood number from a movie of yesteryears started playing.

Yeh kaun aaya roshan ho gayee mahafil kis ke naam se

Suddenly we were sidelined and the guests rushed to the entrance for a glimpse.

The cherry on the cake for the evening, a surprise for all including me. My aunt had invited the legendary actress Vyjayanthimala.

Preeti Talwar

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Those Wonderful Days

The fire crackled. I dragged myself to the kitchen. My inept hands marinated the chicken while my eyes stared at the magnificent flakes that dreamily drifted toward the earth. Through the long windows, I looked at the couple who meandered in the narrow alley with their hands entwined. That sight opened the windows to my past. Back then, winter was a gloomy season in my opinion. With a grim expression printed on my face, I spent the time wallowing in the comfort of my tiny home. Until that day. The day when my eyes met hers. Like a beautiful butterfly flapping its wings, she hovered in the park and played with the snow. I stepped out of the house hoping for a chance encounter. The stars aligned. We met. Fell in love. Got married. Spent every winter snuggling in each other's arms. Until recently. Ignoring the tears that dribbled down my chin, I looked at her. Her nerve cells seemed to hit the brick and she no longer recognized me. Not wanting to give up, I tried to perfect her chicken recipe, hoping that the aroma would jog her cozy winter memories. And we would live happily ever after.

Dr. Latha Prakash



#shiningwomen

COSY WINTER MEMORIES

"You write satire, don't you? Then why can't you tell Ankita stories while I take care of Aniket?" my wife Madhavi told me. Ankita, our daughter was four and Aniket, her bro had just happened. Now imagine the scenario - it was peak winter with the mercury around 5 degrees. Stepping out of the house was unthinkable. So, Ankita and I used to cuddle up inside a quilt as I spun yarns. I don't know whether she liked the plot more or my antics, but she lapped up my stories. Soon it became a tradition which continued even after Aniket, grew up and doubled the size of my audience. Our daily tryst with tales, specially in winters, when home was she only haven, created indelible memories. In the chilly evenings and nights, we used to laugh, jump, sing, dance and sometimes shed a tear or two as we explored the worlds of magic and mystery, action and adventure, sentiment and values. The tales created a gossamer fabric of trust and togetherness which, I am sure, we will always cherish. And today if I have 45 books devoted to children's fiction, the credit should entirely go to the chill of winter and the thrill of tales.



Ramendra Kumar



सुखद स्मृतियाँ

दिल्ली की जनवरी का महीना दाँत किटकिटाने वाली ठंड, कोहरे के कारण सूर्य भगवान् लुकाछिपी का खेल खेल रहे थे , इसलिये 72 वर्षीय कीर्ति जी रजाई में लिपटी हुई अपने अकेलेपन से जूझती हुई बचपन की स्मृतियों में खो गई थी . उनका बचपन संयुक्त परिवार में बीता था . दादी , ताई , चाची , बुआ के बच्चों से घर भरा रहता , शाम होते ही बाबूलाल (सहायक) बरोसी जलाकर रख देता और सब उसके चारों तरफ बैठ जाते और शुरू हो जाता चुटकुलों, बूझो तो जानें , स्कूल की बातें , आपस में छेड़ छाड़, रूठना , मनाना , जीभ दिखाना , चुपके से मुक्का दिखाना , पांडे जी पछतायेंगें वही लड्डू खायेंगें , हँसी के ठहाकों के साथ खुट्टा मिला भी होता और साथ में गर्मागर्म भुनी हुई शकर कंदी और भुने हुए आलू मिर्च की चटनी के साथ , आँख नाक कान सब जल जाते लेकिन सबकी नजर बचा कर खा ही लेते . दादी लाड़ के कारण जल्दी से गुड़ की डली मुँह में डाल देती थी . वह याद कर मन ही मन मुस्कुरा उठी थी . आधुनिकता की आपाधापी और भागदौड़ की व्यस्तता में अब सब लोग मोबाइल और लैपटॉप में खुशियाँ तलाश रहे .

पद्मा अग्रवाल



माघ मेला की यादें



प्रयागराज का माघमेला जनवरी की कड़कड़ाती ठंड में ही लगता है . कुहासे भरी सुबह , जब आकाश में तारे भी चमकते होते थे , हाथ को हाथ नहीं सूझता था , रिक्शे में लैंप की रोशनी में घंटी बजाते बाबूलाल के रिक्शे में अम्मा बाबूजी के साथ जाया करते . ठंड के कारण दाँत बजने लगते , होठ नीले पड़ जाते , हथेलियाँ ठिठुर जाती .लेकिन गंगा जी नहाने के उत्साह और उमंग में ठंड का ध्यान ही नहीं रहता . सफेद गद्दियों से सजी नाव हम लोगों का इंतजार करती रहती . सूर्य की किरणें जल पर स्वर्णिम आभा बिखेर देती . बोटिंग का मजा लेते हुए सनसनाती ठंडी हवा में सिहरे हुये संगम पहुंचते और पानी में पैर डालते ही कँपकँपी छूट जाती लेकिन थोड़ी देर में ही ठंड हवा हो जाती ,हम सब पानी में मस्ती करते. जल में प्रदूषण न हो इसलिये फूल चढाने की मनाही थी . अम्मा की बनाई हुई कचौड़ी और आलू मटर की सब्जी , अचार का नाश्ता आनंद के साथ नाव पर ही होता. मेला घूमते हुए घर लौट आते . ठंड और माघ मेला की सुखद स्मृतियाँ , आज भी मन को गुदगुदा जाती हैं .

COZY WINTER MEMORIES

Are memories olfactory? As I opened the can of homemade jam sent across by a friend, I time travelled, while my physical self remained sedentary on the chair. It was another winter, light years ago. Bottles of jams were being prepared by grandma from the guavas collected from our garden, especially by grandpa. Then, there was the tomato sauce. Some of the tomatoes were freshly picked from the garden while the rest were hand-picked from the market. Oh, the aroma! Winter also meant Christmas and the delicious rum, plum, and fruit cakes that father invariably got for us. Ma ensured that part of these was served almost immediately,

while the rest was stored away for gradual indulgence. And no winter was complete without the Saraswati Puja that almost heralded the winter wind-up. Those gorgeous marigolds that we used for Pujas! Suddenly, I shuddered. My glance settled on a couple of photos. My grandpa and grandma were smiling from that happy space within a frame that death cannot steal. I sighed. All the sunshine seemed to have vanished from the morning. Somewhere in the background son squealed and my husband spoke. As I solemnly gazed out of the window my eyes settled on some glorious marigolds in our flowerpots.

I exhaled slowly. The marigolds seemed to say that all is well and that the tide of life continues, replacing the old with the new.

Aditi Mukherjee

हम थोड़ा थोड़ा परेशान हैं

अब हम पचपन पार हो गये हैं
 इसलिये चिंतित और परेशान हैं
 माथे पर लकीरें बन गई हैं
 मन ही मन परेशान से रहते हैं
 लेकिन चेहरे पर मुखाँटा
 लगा कर मुस्कुरा रहे हैं
 बच्चों के कैरियर की चिंता
 उनकी नौकरी की चिंता
 नौकरी है तो लोन की चिंता
 ई. एम. आई .की गाड़ी की ...
 प्लैट की , बाँस को खुश करने की
 पत्नी की फरमाइशों की
 बच्चों के ऊँचे ख्वाबों
 को पूरा करने के लिये
 हम सब परेशान हैं
 आँखों की चमक अब
 मद्धिम पड़ने लगी है
 हर साल चश्मे का
 नंबर बढ़ जाता है
 बालों में चाँदनी छिटक पड़ी है
 उनको छिपाने के लिये कलर लगाना पड़ता है
 हेल्थ टेस्ट की भी
 डेट फिक्स करनी पड़ती है
 पहले प्रेम पत्र लिखते थे

अब बीमा फॉर्म भरते हैं
 पहले यूँ ही खिलखलाया करते थे
 अब जबर्दस्ती हँसने के लाफ्टर क्लब
 जाने की जरूरत महसूस होती है
 पेट बाहर निकल रहा है
 इसलिये सेहत के लिये
 जिम जरूरी हो गया है
 कुछ भी खाने के पहले
 दस बार सोचना पड़ता है
 रसगुल्ला और समोसा
 खाते ही मन में कैलरी
 काउंट शुरू हो जाता है
 और फिर जिम जाकर
 अधिक पसीना बहाना पड़ता है
 परंतु हम परेशान होकर भी खुश हैं
 क्योंकि दिन रात की
 भागमभाग में इतने व्यस्त हैं
 कि सोचने के लिये
 फुर्सत निकालनी पड़ती है
 लेकिन सच तो यह है
 कि हम थोड़ा थोड़ा परेशान हैं



पद्मा अग्रवाल



#shiningwomen

प्यार हो तो ऐसा

रात के ग्यारह बजे थे शिशिर सोने की तैयारी कर रहा था , तभी उसका मोबाइल बज उठा थादीदी ने रुआंसी सी आवाज में कहा , 'शिशिर , इस बार दीपावली यहीं मना लो... ' 'नहीं दी , आप जानती तो हो कि मैं आपके यहाँ आना नहीं चाहता ...' वह नाराजगी भरे स्वर में बोली , " चाहे तेरी दी कितनी भी मुसीबत में हो " ... और उन्होंने फोन कट कर बंद कर दिया ... उसकी आँखों की तो नींद ही उड़ गई थी ... उसने ऑफिस में अपनी छुट्टी के लिये मेल लिखी और सुबह मुँह अंधेरे की ट्रेन से वह आगरा के लिये निकल पड़ा था ... वह डरा सहमा हुआ जब दी के घर पहुँचा तो सबसे पहले दीदी ही सामने पड़ी थीं ... वह तो बिल्कुल भली चंगी दिख रही थीं ... "दी यह कैसा मजाक है ... " " यदि मैं यह नाटक न करती तो तू भला आता क्या ... " ' हाँ यह बात तो सही है ... " "अम्मा बाबूजी भी इस बार दीपावली पर यहीं आ रहे हैं ... इसलिये मैंने तुझे भी बुला भेजा ... तुझे यहाँ आये पूरे चार साल हो गये हैं " ... वह चुप रहा था

दीदी ठीक कह रही हैं ...उसे यहाँ आने से डर लगता है ... वह डरता हैउन यादों से जो उसका आज तक पीछा नहीं छोड़ पा रही हैं... वह डरता था... रही की सपनीली मासूम सी आँखों की यादों से और उसकी खिलखिलाती हँसी से ... रही कश्यप दीदी के मकान के बगल में रहती थी ... चार साल पहले जब छुट्टियों में दी के घर गया था तब ही उससे मुलाकात हुई थी ... गोरा संगमरमरी रंग , बड़ी बड़ी काली आँखें ... मानों आँखों में पर्मानेंट काजल लगा रखा हो ... घने लंबे काले बाल और प्यारी सी निश्छल मुस्कान वाली प्यारी सी रही वह तो उसको देखते ही उस पर लट्टू हो गया था ... वह सारी दोपहर दी के पास बैठ कर गप्पें मारती हुईं समय बिताती और वह भी उसके आकर्षण में बँधा हुआ बिना कारण ही वहाँ बैठा रहता और उसे निहारता और बीच बीच में मुस्कुराता रहता और कई बार उसका मजाक भी बना देता, चिढा भी देता..... लेकिन उसकी मासूम बातें उसे बहुत अच्छी लगतीं ... धीरे धीरे वह उससे भी खुलने लगी थी उसको हिंदी कम आती थी इसलिये वह अंग्रेजी मिश्रित टूटी फूटी हिंदी बोलती ... उसकी बातों में उसे बहुत मजा आता ... वह उसके आकर्षण में डूबता जा रहा था ... न जाने कैसे दीदी की अनुभवी आँखों ने मेरी कमजोरी भाँप ली थी ... " शिशिर , क्या तुम रही को पसंद करते हो ? " दीदी के अचानक पूछे गये सवाल से उसके चेहरे का रंग उड़ गया था ... उसकी चोरी पकड़ी गई थी 'नहीं दी , ऐसा कुछ नहीं है ... ' 'नहीं हो... तभी अच्छा है ' 'पर क्यों दीदी ...' 'रही की सगाई हो चुकी है और दिसंबर में उसकी शादी होने वाली है ...' मेरे सपनों का महल हल्की हवा के झोंके से ही भरभरा कर ढह गया था ... मैं सोच ही नहीं पा रहा था कि अब क्या करूँ ... रही मेरा पहला प्यार थी लेकिन वह तो किसी दूसरे की वाग्दत्ता थी



वह दी के पास रोज दोपहर में आया करती और मैं कोशिश करता कि उससे सामना न हो लेकिन वह किसी न किसी तरह उसके सामने आ ही जाती और बात करने की कोशिश भी करती लेकिन वह वहाँ से चुपचाप हट जाता ... हम दोनों के बीच ऐसे ही आँख मिचौली चल रही थी कि मैंने अपने जाने का टिकट करवा लिया क्यों कि मेरी जॉब के लिये कॉल आ गई थी ...अगले दिन मुझे जाना था लेकिन चेहरे पर उदासी की पर्त छाई हुई थी क्योंकि रूही से अलग होना पड़ रहा था ... दिल कह रहा था .. शिशिर एक बार तो कह दे कि रूही मैं तुम्हें बहुत प्यार करता हूँलेकिन वह मन ही मन सोचने लगा कि हर इच्छा पूरी थोड़े ही होती है ... वह छत पर गमगीन खड़ा होकर उमड़ते घुमड़ते बादलों को टकटकी लगा कर क्या बताती बताने जैसा क्या था'दीदी आप क्यों नहीं समझ पाई कि रूही को मेरी जरूरत थी और मैं उसकी दुःख की घड़ी में उसके साथ नहीं खड़ा हो पाया ..' 'मैं जानती हूँ कि तुम रूही से प्यार करते हो लेकिन पहले तो वह दूसरी जाति फिर अब वह एक विधवा भी.....अम्मा बाबूजी नहीं मानेंगे.....' 'दी उसे वहाँ अकेला छोड़ कर चली गई थी ..वह रात भर विचारों की आँधी के झंझावात से जूझता रहा लड़ता रहा था ...सुबह होते ही वह रूही से मिलने उसके घर पहुँच गया था ... रूही सफेद सूट पहनी हुई उदास अपने वराण्डे में बैठी थी ...'रूही ...' 'उसकी आवाज सुनते ही वह चौंक कर एकटक उसे निहारने लगी थी ... उसकी बड़ी बड़ी आँखों से आँसू की बूँद टपक पड़ी थी.माहौल को हल्का करने के लिये वह बोला , 'जब जा रहा था तब खुशी के आँसू बहा रही थीं आज मुझे फिर से देख कर दुखी हो गई क्या ...'

रोते रोते वह मुस्कुरा उठी तभी अंदर से आंटी आ गई थी उसने उनके पैर छुए तो बोली , 'आज कितने दिनों के बाद इसके चेहरे पर मुस्कराहट दिखाई पड़ी है .. 'उसने फिर से उदासी की चादर ओढ़ ली थी .. वह समझ नहीं पा रहा था कि इस बोझिल वातावरण को कैसे सामान्य करे ...वह चुप रही थी ...आंटी बोली , ' बस दिन रात यूँ ही बैठी आँसू बहाती रहती है ..शिशिर इसे कुछ समझाओ ... जाने वाला चला गया .. वह तो अब लौट कर आने वाला नहीं.... 'मैं चाह कर भी सांत्वना के दो शब्द नहीं कह पाया था ... मन में असमंजस था ... क्या कहूँ ... क्या बोलूँ ...क्या मैं अपने प्यार को भूल पाया हूँ प्यार को भूलना क्या इतना आसान है अम्मा पापा दीवाली मनाने के लिये आये थे देख रहा था , उसके मन में भी बादलों की तरह अनेक विचार उमड़ घुमड़ रहे थे तभी रूही चुपके से आई और बोली, शिशिर कल तुम जा रहे हो .?' 'हाँ... तुम तो खुश होगी , तुम्हें चिढ़ाने वाला जा रहा है ... तुमसे कोई झगड़ा नहीं करेगा ... तंग नहीं करेगा ... तुम्हारा मजाक नहीं बनायेगा' 'हाँ... हाँ... मैं बहुत खुश हूँ...' कहते हुये उसकी आवाज भर्रा गई ... मैंने चौंक कर देखा तो वह रो रही थी ... मैं काँप उठा क्या रूही भी मुझसे अगले पल मैंने अपने को संभाला और उससे हँस कर कहा," यह खुशी के आँसू हैं ..." जब भी वह नाराज होती थी तो फ्रेंच में बोलने लगती थी ... वह न जाने क्या बोल रही थी उसके लिये. समझना संभव नहीं थाअगले दिन रूही की यादों के साथ मैं अपनी जॉब में व्यस्त हो गया था ...लेकिन बार बार रूही को भुलाने की कोशिश करने के बावजूद इसमें कामयाब नहीं हो सका था ... कुछ महीनों के बाद दीदी ने बताया कि रूही की शादी हो गई जो उम्मीद का दामन मैं अभी तक पकड़े हुये था वह भी छूट गया .. उसके बाद वह अब तीन -चार सालों के बाद आया था लेकिन उसकी निगाहें आज भी घर के हर कोने में रूही को ढूँढ रही थी ...'कहाँ खोया है शिशिर .?' "नहीं दीउस लड़ाकू रूही की याद आ गई थी ... अब तो वह पूरी अम्मा बन गई होगी ... गोलू मोलू कितने हैं ... यहाँ आती है कि नहीं ... " 'वह तो यहीं है ...' 'दीवाली मनाने आई है ...' 'नहीं शिशिर उसके जीवन के तो सारे दिये ही बुझ चुके हैं ...' 'दीदी मैं समझ नहीं पा रहा कि आप क्या कह रही हो' वह अधीर हो कर बोला था ... 'शादी के एक साल बाद ही एक हादसा उसके पति को निगल गया ...'उनकी आवाज दर्द से भीग उठी थी... उसने दी को पकड़ कर झकझोर दिया था ... 'दी इतने दिन हो गये आपने मुझे कुछ बताया नहीं ..'



रूही से उनकी मुलाकात हुई ... दीदी मेरे और रूही के प्यार की बारे में जानती थीं... .. वह अक्सर रूही को जबर्दस्ती बुला लिया करती थीं . दीपावली की तैयारियों में रूही को मदद के लिये बुलातीं और इस तरह से अम्मा बाबूजी से उसका अच्छा परिचय हो गया था ... वह दोनों भी उसे पसंद करने लगे थे ... शाम के समय अक्सर सब साथ में चाय पिया करते ... एक दिन वह फोन पर बात करते हुए छत पर चला गया था तो अम्मा ने उसकी चाय लेकर रूही को ऊपर छत पर भेज दिया था ... वह शिशिर को अकेला पाकर कुछ देर तक मौन रही फिर पूछा , ' शिशिर तुमने अब तक अपनी शादी क्यों नहीं की ' ' अरे शादी भी करना है क्या मैं तो भूल ही गया था' मेरी बात और कहने के अंदाज पर वह खिलखिला कर हँस पड़ी थी ... जब से आया था , आज पहली बार उसको खुल कर हँसते हुए देखा था ... वह खुश हो गया था 'मजाक मत करो ... सच सच बताओ ...' मैंने भी कहा , 'तुमने भी तो शादी नहीं की 'तुम्हें मालूम नहीं कि मैं एक विधवा हूँ 'कह कर वह रो पड़ी थी 'रूही तुम पढी लिखी लड़की हो कर इस तरह की बात कर रही हो ... ये 21 वीं सदी है और तुम बातें कर रही हो 18वीं सदी की तुमने मात्र दो साल अपने पति के साथ शादीशुदा जिंदगी बिताई है फिर एक हादसे में वह नहीं रहे तो अब क्या सारी जिंदगी तुम उनके नाम पर ऐसे ही रोते हुए गुजारोगी रोते रोते जल्दी बूढ़ी हो जाओगी ... सुंदर आँखों पर चश्मा चढ जायेगा ... अभी तो आंटी अंकल हैं फिर अपना अकेलापन काटने के लिये क्या करोगी .. कुत्ता बिल्ली पालोगी ...रूही बस करो ... दूसरों के सामने अपने ऊपर तरस खाना और दया हासिल करना ...तुम रोती रहोगीलेकिन एक इंसान को अपना नहीं बना सकतीं दुनिया में तुम पहली नहीं हो , जिसके साथ यह हादसा हुआ है ... किसी के चले जाने के बाद जिंदगी रुकती नहीं ...न ही रुकेगी' 'जब मैं तुम्हें यहाँ से छोड़ कर गया तो मुझे भी यही महसूस हुआ था कि मेरे लिये दुनिया खत्म हो गई है और कहीं भी कुछ बाकी नहीं रह गया है ... पर क्या ऐसा हुआ ... नहीं न.... मैं जी रहा हूँ....कि नहीं ... इसी तरह तुम भी जी लोगी ... ' वह उसकी बात सुन कर पल भर को ठिठक गई थी ... मैं नीचे चला आया फिर कुछ देर में वह भी लौट आई थी .. दोनों के बीच में मौन पसर गया था ... दीपावली का दिन था ... मैं दीदी के घर की छत पर दिया सजा रहा था , रूही भी अपनी मुंडेर पर पहले से ही दिया सजा रही थी ... हवा के तेज झोंके से दीपक बार बार बुझ जा रहा था उसके चेहरे पर मायूसी दिखाई पड़ रही थी तभी उसके दिल में मैंने अपने हाथों से ढक दिया और उसकी रोशनी में उसका चेहरा जगमगा उठा था' रूही वैसे तो मेरे पास बहुत सारी लड़कियों के ऑफर थे लेकिन मेरे दिल में तुम बसी हुई हो ...' 'क्या तुम मेरी जीवन संगिनी बनोगी ?....' रूही की आँखों से एक नन्हा सा खुशी का आँसू छलक उठा और चेहरे पर पुरानी वाली निश्चल मुस्कान छा गई थी ... वह खुशी से वल्लरी की भाँति शिशिर के सीने से लग गई थी ... उसने भी जल्दी से अपने पास आई खुशियों को अपनी बाहों के घेरे में समेट लिया था... अचानक ही छत पर बिजलियाँ जगमगा उठी थी और अम्मा बाबू जी के साथ दीदी और सभी लोगों की तालियाँ की आवाज से वह दोनों चाँक पड़े थे दोनों ही शर्मा कर अम्मा बाबूजी के पैरों पर झुक गये थे'



पद्मा अग्रवाल



See you in the next edition