

VOL 34.0 | MARCH EDITION

Initiative of WE Foundation

WOMENSHINE

*Simmy
Goraya*



**Women's Day Inspiring
Journeys**

**Ecofriendly Destinations-
North East**

**Cake and Bake
Lifestyle**



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.

Hope you had a very colourful and safe Holi.

Our March edition is dedicated to the Women tribe who are shining in their own worlds.

So get ready receive dose of Inspiration and enjoy reading interesting articles.

I am sure you will love this edition.

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

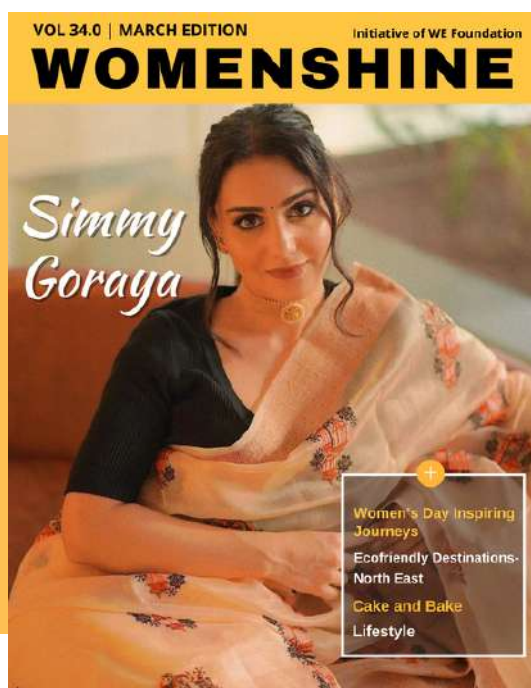
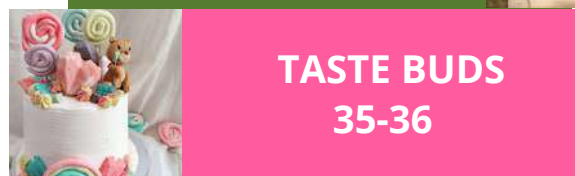
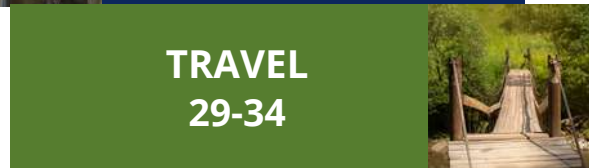
Wishing you lots of love, light, and the best of happiness.

Aparna Mishra

Founder-Editor, Women Shine

#Shineonwomen

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Love is the energy for life

As quoted by Mahatma Gandhi "Where there is love there is life." We experience different kinds of love in our life, they range from parental love, sibling love and romantic love. These different kinds of love make our lives worth living. They are bonds of love which hold human beings together and drives away any kind of loneliness a human being feels in life.

What is love:

It is a complex emotion experienced by human beings but we do not have any control over this emotion. It simply happens. It is a good chemistry which one has with another human being. The positive vibes from both the sides attract each other and two people gel well. Be it a child with his parents, child with his siblings or a couple with each other. This is a neurological condition imbued in human beings by birth. Love can be even for materialistic things, people, pets, plants etc. It is about receiving and reciprocating the love. It becomes an important aspect of one's life. One's happiness in life depends on love. It brings about positivity in the life of the receiver and giver. One gets the sense of security, safety and contentment with love in one's life.

Advantages of love:

Love makes a person more communicative and expressive. Love helps a person to acquire self-confidence in oneself. Love makes a person elated, always over the moon and adventurous in life. Love brings out the best in a person. Love brings out the softer side of the person. The person becomes responsible, supportive and caring. Love they say is a great beautifier, anyone in love is always on the high. Love is like an addiction and anyone jilted in love can take extreme steps, even develop suicidal tendencies.



Different forms of love:

All relationships have love in ubiquitous forms. Love is experienced in various forms in the life of a person—a mother's tender touch, a father's strong hand on one's shoulders, sibling's affectionate touch, care and compassion shown by a friend or a hug by a soulmate. This wonderful emotion has the power of changing a person's life. It is an essential ingredient to lead a happy and healthy life. A loveless life has no meaning whereas love can bring back warmth and vibrancy in one's life. Similar to a food chain love is an essential part of our life chain. We human beings depend on love to live our life. No love no life.

Signs of love:

There is exhilaration, excitement, boundless energy, insomnia, loss of appetite, nervousness, a racing heart and fast breathing, there are signs of anxiety, panic, despair if there are hurdles coming in the relationship. People experience a lot of mood swings.



What falling in love does to the brain:

When one falls romantically in love, the person becomes smitten and shows weird symptoms. One day dreams, one longs to be with the person always, meeting of lovers brings about an exhilaration, the tummy is tied into knots, there is anticipation, only one gets thoughts for that special person, people only focus on the beloved's positive points and tend to overlook any negative points. There is emotional and physiological instability, intense attraction for the loved one, show obsession for the love object, they become over possessive and even show signs of jealousy if their loved one interacts with someone else. There is a sense of empathy for the love object and one only imagines a rosy future with that beloved being.

It is seen by scientists that being in love causes the human body to release the feel-good hormones and neuro-chemicals that trigger positive reactions.

The levels of dopamine, adrenaline and norepinephrine which are the feel-good hormones enhance when people are in love. These hormones create the magical chemistry between two people.

Why is so much importance attached to romantic love in life:

- Romantic love helps two people to connect with each other
- Gives a chance to two people to self-discover themselves
- They get a chance to get intimate with each other
- Each gets motivated by the other
- Love is a great teacher and one learns unique life lessons
- It gives each person a high and a feel-good feeling about oneself
- One dreams of a rosy future with each other
- Gives one a sense of peace & prosperity

Life without love would become meaningless and one wouldn't ever feel secure and the sense of belonging. It is said love is the essence of life. The love of family, friends, work and life are also aspects of love which help to nourish one's soul.

In the lines of Khalil Gibran 'Life without love is like a tree without blossoms or fruit.'



Written By : Dr Preeti Talwar



#shiningwomen

Literacy India celebrates 'Women for Women'

Felicitates active women volunteers on International Women's Day for their efforts and contributions to various CSR initiatives



March 07, 2023, Delhi: Celebrating women for their unstinted support towards the community, Literacy India today felicitated women heading the CSR initiatives of various corporates houses with a **'Women for Women, Certificate of Appreciation'**. With their sensibility towards social causes, coupled with an eye for details these women have made well-informed decisions and driven CSR campaigns within the organizations to bring about a change in the lives of thousands of underprivileged women and children, thus impacting several families at large. Their consistent efforts have led to a surge in

volunteering exercise among corporates and individuals.

During the pandemic and lockdown, these women were leading various campaigns from front to minimise the negative impact that was plaguing various families amid death and disease. With their persistent efforts in their respective organisations, they ensured ration supplies, medicines and study material was made available at the baseline. Some even came forward with tabs and computers for underprivileged children, offering them the much-needed technical support and encouragement for attending online classes uninterrupted.

Literacy India executed many impactful engagement projects and events in partnership with notable corporate volunteers from the likes of Mastercard India, Dell International, DELL EMC, Teleperformance India, KPMG India, KGS, RBS, Microsoft India, Cvent India, Clifford Chance, Aristocrat Technologies, Accenture, GE, UPS Foundation, American Express (AMEX), SVP India and more.

Speaking on the occasion, **Captain Indraani Singh, Managing Trustee, Literacy India** said, "Over the 26 years of Literacy India's journey, 'Volunteering & Employee-giving contributions' has been many things in many ways for us. We duly acknowledge our partners in this journey who offered not just financial support, but their time and expertise that enabled us to bring about change in the lives of many. In our mission to empower the underprivileged with education and employable skill set a major credit goes to our corporate volunteers who add value to our projects with their support on the ground through various activities, workshops, counselling sessions, and much more."

At the ceremony, Singh also expressed her appreciation for more than 1000 corporate volunteers who spent quality time and conducted workshops under various Literacy India projects to pave way for a better future for the weaker section of society. The women volunteers have often led counselling sessions for exchange of ideas and offer solutions to women at grassroot level, empowering them with knowledge that can be instrumental in improving their lives and thus society at large.

Lending support to Literacy India, **actor Vidya Balan** in her video message said, *"Our nation can progress only when our children are literate and the women are empowered. I encourage volunteers to join hands with the various pathbreaking projects being undertaken by Literacy India and contribute towards the nation-building exercise."*

Working in synergy with this year's **International Women's Day theme DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**, Literacy India's Grass-root Skill to Future Skill project builds technical competencies that go beyond the scope of the curriculum and expose learners to the tremendous



possibility of technology along with Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship workshops, Mentoring, and Creating Learning-aid materials, are all the activities executed pan India with volunteers support of several Corporates.

Literacy India's Social Enterprise Indha speaks volume on building capacities of women in the communities along with showcasing their quality work for the world to choose. Scores of women entrepreneurs of companies have made Indha their choice in employee gifting. Infact, Indha's work has been chosen in G20 Summit being hosted by India this year. Indha symbolises 'walk the talk' for women empowerment.

With 66% of India's population under the age of 35, the youth can prove to be a game changer in the economic development of the country. Literacy India understands the onus that lies with the educators and takes pride in its association with the corporate volunteers who share the vision to identify opportunities and prepare these women and children to adapt to an increasingly connected and autonomous world.

QUOTES FROM THREE OF THE WOMEN FROM CSR LEADERSHIPS, BEING FELICITATED BY LITERACY INDIA –

PRITI SINGH, Mastercard India

Mastercard's association with Literacy India started in 2012 and it has been a wonderful partnership. We work in four broad areas with Literacy India – education of children, empowerment of women as Mastercard CSR initiative is focussed on educating women entrepreneurs on financial inclusion, enhancing the employability of youth to make them job ready for the corporate sector, and environment where we support a lot of tree-plantation drives.

Till date we have supported 22,500 women, youth and children through our association with Literacy India. It has been a strong partnership between Mastercard and Literacy India so far and we will continue to take this forward in the days ahead."



MS. VENITA SAJWAN, Dell CSR Lead & Volunteers

My association with Literacy India has been an enriching and humbling experience for me as a volunteer. I learned so much about the community, their experiences and the challenges that they face everyday. This association gave me a sense of purpose and fulfillment which always propelled me to do more. Most importantly, how we could harness 'the power of us' as a team to support the cause of transforming lives in our community, especially women and girls. Volunteering your time, skills and resources can be just as rewarding for you as for those you are helping and is one of the most powerful ways to make a difference in your own community.

ANANDITA PAHWA, Head, CSR, Pahwa Group

We have been doing a lot of work with Literacy India in the field of education since the past 10+ years that we have partnered with them. This association between Bry-Air and Literacy India started in 2011 with Bry-Air Pathshala to provide access to bridge courses to out-of-school children in a classroom setting and later supported in securing admission in mainstream schools.



In the same Pathshala setting, women are also provided access to stitching and tailoring courses. Both these programs uplift the community by supporting learning and empowerment of children and women. We also provide scholarships to deserving students for higher studies through Literacy India in fields like paramedical training, radiology, etc.

Gyantantra Digital Dost, the learning application developed by Literacy India is also supported by DRI to take forward the idea of creating an inclusive and digital learning environment for children."

About Literacy India:

Literacy India is a non-profit organization that are working towards imparting education and skills to rural and semi-rural women, youth, and children.

Launched in 1996, the non-profit organization is putting its best foot forward in providing selfless services that bring a smile to the faces of the unprivileged section of society.

Literacy India is meticulously working across 17 states and has served over 8,00,000+ people through its different projects in the past 25 years.

The organization is following the mantra of four very powerful yet basic human rights that includes Education, Employment, Empowerment, and Environment. With a focused mindset and a result-oriented approach, Literacy India, a notable non-profitable organization is introducing the students to vocational skills and alternative models of education that value their needs and rights.

- Team WS*Subscribe Now!**Womenshine***WOMENSHINE.IN**

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Does your daughter has a 'HOME'!!!

In a profession with relationship counseling as my core, I feel blessed to speak in length with people not only in India but also in countries across the globe. I have seen married couples going through immense pressure and tension on both sides in a strive to keep their mutual lives ongoing sanely. It is wrong to highlight that women suffer more. There are some issues in the world which have complete gender equality. Hence to say that only women suffer in marital relations sounds partial. However when I connect with women of different origins and religions through my sessions, I do find, it is more



challenging for the women to hold on to a falling marriage and a fragile home because she still has a long struggle to be economically independent or sufficiently earning to take care of herself in a fall out whether she is still a wife or a mother to her children.

Compromise to a certain extent for the sake of so many reasons is understandable. While most important ones among them are not having the courage to part ways, social stigma, a length of societal queries, finances to keep life going the same way and most important where to go? Moving back to what once was her parental home is not always the solution for many women torn apart in a marriage that botched up completely two lives those once got united with big pomp and show and the pledges of being partners for a life!



As a life coach, at the most I can help them maintain their emotional balance and give them the much-needed confidence and moral support to move on from the wounds of a separation or a marriage that stands no reason to be together any further. I do often think after speaking with these very well educated, well spoken, independent women living in the most developed countries of the world, about the most challenging question with them. When the women who decides or is given the decision of going their separate ways, where to head towards while picking her suitcases and a fragmented heart?

This makes me realize as a woman myself, we all do remain optimistic about our eternal love stories and family life yet life is uncertain at every moment. It is good to be positive, but can you choose light and ignore darkness? This makes me often conclude that what if instead of mindlessly spending on our trousseaus, larger than life marriage celebrations with uncountable-unnecessary expenditure, won't it be wiser that every parent should build at least a 1 or a 2 bedroom home for their daughter so that if life ever throws bigger challenges on her, she can keep her head high, pick her bags and pieces of life and move into her own **'HOME WITH GRACE AND DIGNITY'**. While sons already have their inherited homes, when life becomes difficult for them, they have the blessing in disguise of their own roofs.

In the glamorous world that we live in, I am one of the few who sees daily that virtual is an illusion. Real is not as beautiful as the Insta profiles. Hence, it is mindful to see life as it exactly happens. Let our daughters have the power to exit from a meaningless marital chord; gracefully. A no rental no EMI space for her is the greatest gift that parents can give to their daughters'. It doesn't matter where she settles, she should know that the key to her dignified life and home rests with her forever!



Written By : Meenu Chopra



#shiningwomen

HEY WS READERS
EXPLORE OUR
WS MARKET-PLACE ON OUR
WEBSITE



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SHOP NOW

SIMMY GORAYA

Simmy Goraya is a self-taught makeup enthusiast. She creates content on beauty and lifestyle. Before turning to her passion, Simmy was part of the corporate rat race after completing her MBA.

She started her journey as a podcast host with Simmy Said Whatt?! where she gets the cats out of the bag with India's first unfiltered podcast. SSW is one of top ranked podcasts on all audio platforms with more than a million downloads and continues to grow till date. WomenShine got into an interesting conversation with her, and here is how it went.

1. How did you get started as a beauty/lifestyle influencer?

Simmy Goraya is a self-taught makeup enthusiast. She creates content on beauty and lifestyle. Before turning to her passion, Simmy was part of the corporate rat race after completing her MBA. She started her journey as a podcast host with Simmy Said Whatt?! where she gets the cats out of the bag with India's first unfiltered podcast. SSW is one of top ranked podcasts on all audio platforms with more than a million downloads and continues to grow till date. WomenShine got into an interesting conversation with her, and here is how it went.

2. What moment in your career are you most proud of (thus far)?

I think I am very proud of the fact that the podcast started because I felt like I was standing apart from a crowd you know and I was really owning my voice. I was owning myself and I didn't really care about what people had to say, it made me a very strong individual, it made me see things clearly, it made me rationalize things, it made me very logical as not to be emotional about things and not to be very touchy or sensitive about if anybody saying anything to you etc. This is something that made me feel proud for the rest of my life. I did I know for the fact that it's not easy and I have had those moments in the beginning where have broken down on set and I have had my moments of anxiety and nervousness but then I think all of that faded eventually when I had no other choice but to own what I was doing and I literally did every bit of it.



3. What's your favourite beauty product at the moment? And Why?

My favorite beauty product at the moment is a blush, actually there are two blushes and a concealer. I cannot live without these two. I think they just change the game; they can just make you look alive in a second.

4. Aside from your wallet and phone, what do you keep in your bag at all times?

I think in my bag you will always find one lipstick like in all of my bags you will find one new lipstick, one lip balm and one hair crunches so that is mandatory in all of my little purses that I carry.

5. What is the biggest challenge you face as a content creator?

I think the biggest challenge not only me and I know that for a fact every creator goes through is when you are going through those phases where you know this is creative block and either that or you are overworking to yourself to the point that you reach that mental blockage and you know you're not able to think of things more creatively and this becomes routine. I think

for any person when your creative work becomes routine that's little the death of the process so I think because the content that we create is consumed at such a rapid rate that we have to come up with something interesting and creative every single day. So, I think that is the biggest challenge that you feel as a content creator and for me what I have realized that I have to keep switching between things trying out so I have never stopped myself, I have always allowed myself to go in the direction that I have a gut feeling about so yeah I mean I go from one extreme to the other from beauty to podcast now I am doing hair care very very seriously so I mean like the world is your oyster just go out and explore.



6. Your message to all the women outside there reading about your journey.

I think the message that I would like to give all women is to literally follow your gut and if there is something that you really want to pursue and you know that it's important for you. Then I think you need to sit your family down first and tell them how important that is, tell them your plan, how you want to execute it, tell them how it's going to be beneficial for you financially otherwise etc. Whatever the work is and give them time sometimes they will not really agree to it in the beginning give them time, show them how serious you are about it. Trust me your parents can surprise you so yeah I don't think I can ever do anything without my family support so family support is number one and try to get them on your side by doing whatever you can.



Written By : Aditi Gupta





RASHMI KULKARNI

Rashmi Kulkarni is an educator and Founder of Studio Tarang. Studio Tarang is an art studio and brainchild of Rashmi that underlines Education Through Art. She is pursuing her PhD at Benaras Hindu University at present on topics of Indic Culture and Heritage. She backs up with 18 years of experience in the HR and Admin field working with various corporates in Bangalore.

She believes in bringing a paradigm shift in today's digitally occupied world but also builds a refreshing niche wherein kids willingly learn traditions and cultures of various religions through story-telling, puppetry, and Shlokas.



Currently, Incubate of Startup Karnataka, Elevate Sashakti, Government of Karnataka. We bridge the gap, by drafting educational programs encouraging integrity, respect, and excellence through Indian culture, mythology, and arts. Since the inception of my brainchild, Studio Tarang, we drafted programs to empower kids to create compassionate and intelligent youth. Tarang vehemently advocates downtime by involving kids in curiosity-rising methodologies. While encouraging and restoring the Vedic language Sanskrit, Tarang pioneers in bringing flashcards for learning Shlokas, Deities, and mythologies playfully and effectively.

We want to foster the idea of uniqueness and individuality and infinite possibilities of growth through the integration of arts and the Sanskrit language. Today when we join hands with CWE and StartUp Karnataka, the warm memories of starting solo fill me with pride in dreaming big. Receiving a laurel as a woman entrepreneur in the education domain from the Government of India and various other organizations, I raise a toast to Tarang for encouraging women to stand tall and youth to grow high!

- Team WS

Shraddha Joshi | Sole Weavers

Shraddha, an Entrepreneur and Footwear Designer from FDDI, Mumbai, independently started Sole Weavers in March 2022. Her journey with Sole Weavers has been very invigorating and demanding. In her spare time, she enjoys Trekking & Traveling. Shraddha takes a keen interest in caring for stray dogs.

"Things that look pretty may not be comfortable and vice-versa. This is an age-old problem that we at Sole Weavers are trying to resolve for our customers, giving them the right fit for the design they love," say's Shraddha Joshi. She adds, **"Creating value through customization is our forte. We have successfully made shoes for those unable to find the right size or fit or even with foot problems. We have designed shoes for size 43 EUR for a customer with swollen feet who has never worn shoes other than Black closed shoes, a few situations we helped resolve."**



OUR STORY

We started small, from a unit in Thane, Mumbai, with five employees. Our story is a very prudent and personal belief that Style and ease can belong to the same Place. It took me great courage to give up on my well-established career of seven years in financial services to begin my journey of setting up a shoe brand. To many, it may be a crazy decision to take a road less travelled. It is a drive to chase my dreams and passion, not give up, and follow my heart's path.

Besides my spirit and zeal for shoe-making, what keeps me going is the positive feedback I receive from my customers, the efforts of my team, and the artisans who have played a significant role in making us what we are today.

Sole Weavers is not a shoe store but an experience that feels genuinely personal.

- Team WS

ARPITA KATYAL |

Roperro

Coming from a business family, I was always inclined towards the idea of starting a business of my own. I always had a keen interest in fashion. So when I came back to India after studying at Penn State University and saw the gap between luxury and accessibility, it made me question why and how to minimize that gap. That's how Roperro was born—to bring luxury to everybody's doorstep. It wasn't an easy road, but it is one that I am proud of. My passion for fashion and expertise in supply chain led me to start my own

business in this industry. I wanted to create a brand that was stylish, affordable, and accessible to everyone. And thus, my journey began.

We created something with the mindset of global luxury at a more attainable price. Identifying trends became easier thanks to extensive market research. Armed with all the knowledge we had, we started Roperro with our unique designs and top-notch quality.

As a female entrepreneur, I've had my fair share of difficulties. One of the biggest challenges was getting people to take me seriously. Especially since I started at the age of 25, many people doubted my vision and knowledge, but I refused to let them hold me back. I worked twice as hard to prove them wrong and built our brand. One thing that has remained constant throughout this journey is the unwavering support of my family. Their willingness to lend a hand and expertise in various areas have been invaluable to me as I have grown my business.

Recently, I was felicitated with the 'Global Leader Award', and it was, indeed, a big moment for me. But this is not it. I want to take Roperro to a global level and make my vision of #EverydayIndulgence reach everybody's doorsteps. With the emphasis on the growth of our brand, I wanted to give back to society, particularly to young women, which is why our organization supports the Vidya Devi Charitable Trust, which promotes women's education and empowerment.

On Women's day, I want to urge every woman out there to dream big. Do not let society or even your own doubts and insecurities hold you back.



Shruti Mishra, a Corporate Professional

Ms. Shruti Mishra is born and raised in Delhi. She always did well in school as a young kid whether it was in academics or extra-curricular activities. Particularly her father, who never prevented her from going all out to study and work, her parents have been a huge source of encouragement for her. They have been her biggest supporters and strength from day one.

In 2006, Shruti began her career at TV Today as an anchor and producer. After switching from her maths degree to getting a postgraduate degree in broadcast journalism out of a desire to explore new opportunities, she eventually ended up joining Aaj Tak. Her very first show at Aaj Tak was such a hit that it lasted for eight years. Shruti covered a wide range of subjects during her ten-year term, including politics, entertainment, and elections in addition to lifestyle and culture. She eventually discovered, nevertheless, that the marketing and advertising sector was where she belonged.

As an Assistant General Manager, Shruti joined Flags Communications, a renowned MARCOM firm in New Delhi, and she hasn't looked back since. She has mastered every facet of a MARCOM, thanks to her dedication and passion, including marketing strategies, corporate communications, media relations, public relations, etc.

It is fair to say that Shruti has the Midas touch when it comes to directing, leading and driving people to success. She is undoubtedly one of the driving forces behind Flags Communications today and is taking the legacy forward.

With more than 16 years of demonstrated excellence, she is a force to reckon with.

Shruti's ability to successfully balance her multiple professional obligations and her personal one, which is being a mother to a young daughter, is another plus. Her success story undoubtedly proves that being an effective manager comes into play in all aspects of life.



- Team WS



#RIGHT2REST

CAMPAIGN | PRAG

Public Relations & Advocacy Group (PRAG) celebrates 5 years of its establishment. On this auspicious occasion the young but well-accomplished PR and communication boutique and the

champion advocate of paid menstrual leave pledges to offer free PR to all the organizations who will commit or announce to implementation of paid menstrual leave for their female employees. PRAG as an advocate of women's empowerment at the workplace through paid menstrual leave has had the policy in place since its inception in 2018. And, they're also the first PR and communication firm to give paid Menstrual leave in the country.

Apart from their specific services like Public Relations, Digital Marketing, Public Advocacy, Event Management, political campaign, and starting a new vertical of AI-based communication in PR and social media domain.

Today the support for paid menstrual leave at the workplace has gained global recognition and acceptance. For instance, South Korea granted ML in 2001, and in 2016, China also granted female workers the right to take two days off every month. Although there is no sign of a global movement on the issue.



"In our journey to support, promote and implement paid menstrual leave for female employees, the question of productivity has been raised often. On the contrary, it actually had the opposite effect, in my opinion, and my experience. Productivity increases, creativity enhances, and there's positivity and goodwill that reflects in the success of the organization and employees. For PRAG, paid menstrual Leave isn't just an idea, but a culture that PRAG wishes to imbibe in every organization." said **Gaurav Gautam, Founder & CEO, of PRAG**

He further added "In fact, this issue is worthy of global recognition which hasn't happened yet. We, as the first champion of paid menstrual leave, envision taking our campaign #Right2Rest beyond national boundaries and making it a global campaign. To date, no campaign on social in the nation has received global recognition. And we are confident and focused to make it happen."

On March 22, 2018, just 3 months into its existence, PRAG was putting in its cent per cent efforts for the maiden round table conference, which was aimed at championing the cause of the Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2017, a private member bill by Ninong Erring, MP, Arunachal East. PRAG has also provided technical support in drafting the bill. The bill triggered a national movement that led many organizations and multinational companies to implement paid menstrual leaves.

Behind the curtains, PRAG stood strong in not only PREACHING but also PRACTISING!

- Team WS

Anusha Subramanian | Bohemian Adventures

Anusha Subramanian is an award-winning journalist, a British Chevening Scholar and a mountaineer. She was nominated thrice for the Press Club's Red Ink National Award for Excellence in Journalism in 2012, 2017 and 2021 and won the award in 2012 for her investigation on the issue of 'How Environmental Clearances are Given out for Projects by the Environment Ministry.' Her other two nominations were for investigations into 'How Two Police Constables from the State of Maharashtra Faked Their Mt Everest Summit in May 2016' and for 'How a Mountaineer Faked his Summits to Bag the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award in 2020'.

She quit full-time journalism in 2013 to pursue her interests in mountaineering and working for social causes, however, she continues with independent journalism writing on topics on social issues, inclusion and adventure sports. Two of her three Red Ink nominations came for stories she filed as an independent journalist.

She founded her commercial entrepreneurial venture Bohemian Adventures with two other women mountaineers. With this venture, she has combined her writing skills with her adventure training to be able to effect greater change in society by getting more people introduced to the outdoors and adventure.

The outdoors embraces you with open arms. For those who have never experienced the outdoors, it can be exhilarating, inspiring, and even therapeutic. But, unfortunately, the outdoors are not easily accessible to everyone. Climbing mountains has never been about proving anything to anyone or herself. For Anusha, it is all about cultivating a more inclusive space in the outdoors. As a professional mountaineer and guide trekking guide, Anusha is focused on making trekking more inclusive. For her, empowerment is 'inclusion', providing equal opportunities for all. Her larger goal is to work towards building more awareness and creating more opportunities for the **Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Outdoors**.



To this effort in the last 5 years, she has gone Tandem cycling with the blind. In 2017 she did the Manali to Khardungla Cycling along with blind cyclists to build more awareness about inclusion in the outdoors. In 2018, she led the first inclusive climb to Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. She has been continuously leading inclusive treks for Bohemian Adventures. What initially started with just the blind has now extended itself to include autistic individuals, Individuals with other medical conditions or disabilities such as Parkinson's. In April 2023, she will be guiding a person with Parkinson's to Everest Base Camp. Anusha has always believed that to bring about change you have to be the change.



- Team WS



#shiningwomen



WOMENSHINE.IN | 15



Ritu Kochhar: INIFD

I understand Fashion and Design as a language of creativity and have delved deep to explore its true essence and value. My creative spirit and academic temperament inspired me to set up a state-of-the-art educational facility and center of excellence for those pursuing a promising future in the Fashion & Design domain. In a vibrant career spanning 27+ years, I have built a prolific and successful brand and evolved as a strong fashion and Design Mentor, Fashion curator, and Academician.

I'm an Army officer's wife and a mom to a 20-year-old. I'm a Reiki healer, a spiritual being & with an immense belief in the universe & the power of manifestations. I love to travel, explore new places, play ukulele, binge-watch movies, eat out, recycle & reinvent old pieces. I work towards Sustainability, Fair-trade & Recycling Fashion.

HER JOURNEY:

I graduated through correspondence from Punjab university as my work demanded me to travel & be present all the time. Later, pursued my MSc in Fashion.

At 18, we started as a very small setup in Chandigarh from a basement of a building, and within a couple of years, we had centers pan India. At an early age, I was already an entrepreneur and got busy setting up a design school - INIFD was born in 1995.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES:

- Initiated Avant-Garde trends and contemporary course curricula by amalgamating modern influences with a focus on Art, Business, Design, Mass Communication, and Technology connected to the fashion industry.
- Successfully became the creative force behind Institute's evolution into an academic Mecca and now the alma mater of many acclaimed designers.
- Have trained the talent of thousands of students and grew the INIFD franchisee to 100 centers of learning in India & abroad.
- Built the Institute's credibility quickly, taking the institute to prestigious forums and remarkable International Clientele.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Spearheaded International collaborations with London Fashion Week & New York fashion week
- Presented a successful show in collaboration with Indian High Commission in London
- Shaped the fashion sensibility and perpetuated the fashion ethos through media content and talk shows on Big FM, My FM & BBC London.
- Driving force behind the INIFD brand management and digital marketing.
- Featured in CNBC - Young Turks
- Columnist for Hindustan Times & The Tribune
- Led panelist for knowledge workshop series at Lakme Fashion week
- Groomed and mentored finalists of the Femina Miss India pageant
- Conducted Corporate grooming workshops.



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SHUBHA RAWAL – DIRECTOR, HEAD SOURCING



Ms Shubha Rawal is the Director -Sourcing and Marketing and has a dynamic career at IG International, one of the largest importers of fresh fruit in India. A graduate of Delhi University, she has partaken in numerous professional development programmes, namely; the Executive Education Programme, Artificial Intelligence from the Indian School of Business (IIMB,) Executive Education Program, Digital, and Social media marketing strategies, ISB, Executive Education Programme, Organizational Excellence Through Leadership (IIMB), Delhi University, and many others to keep her updated and versed in the Industry.

Her current role and responsibilities include Public Relations, Relationship Management with International Business Associates, handling Corporate Sales for supermarkets and modern retail, Manage end-to-end Promotions for Global Brands in the Fresh Produce Industry with a Specialization in Procurement of perishable fruits from global sources through Data, among many others. She also heads the corporate communication of the company.

Skilled in Business Planning, International Business, Strategic Planning, Business Development, and Marketing Strategy, she has held various responsible portfolios, displaying demonstrable organizational and leadership qualities that contributed to the Company's growth; both in terms of revenue and in establishing IG as a formidable brand globally.

Shubha's path-breaking initiative was to put on stream IG's digital foray into e-commerce, app and a gamut of social media management in record time. A first-of-its-kind programme in the Imported Fruit industry. She has represented IG International in global trade meets and events across Europe and Asia; at Berlin Fruit Logistica, Asia Fruit Logistica and at home, at Fresh Produce India, Annapurna, India, etc. and has built close proximity with heads and leaders of the Global Fresh Produce Industry. She had an earlier stint in the educational field before joining IG; working as an acclaimed Teacher at St. Froebel Senior Secondary School, New Delhi, where she was bestowed the '**5 Years Completion Best Teachers Award.**'

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Avantika Kampani | Day One Learning Solutions



Bright, curious and enthusiastic, Avantika Kampani is a 16-year-old entrepreneur and founder of Day One Learning Solutions, a startup that aims to bring about a revolution in children's self-growth & development through fun learning tools.

Her journey began in 2020 with Seekh. Stemmed from her observation of children around her, it consists of learning flashcards divided into 6 sections that each stimulate holistic growth for children from the ages of 0-4. It is developed with research on neural connections and brain development through stimuli. Avantika discussed this in her YEA (Young Entrepreneurs Academy) class and thus transformed Seekh from an idea into a product.

Avantika's latest venture is a card game inspired by her personal experience of emotional learning - CHECK IN is a card game that enables kids and adults to talk about feelings and deal with them. The cards are available in English and Marathi. It makes a pointed and organised effort towards Social Emotional Learning, for children ages 5 and over. It has a three-pronged approach to identifying feelings, being able to name the feeling and lastly being able to come up with ways to engage and deal with that feeling. With these cards, Avantika envisions ensuring that communication, conversation and self-awareness about one's feelings are encouraged from a young age thus developing emotional and social skills at an early stage.

Currently, a text student at Dhirubhai Ambani International School, Mumbai, Avantika shares an ardent interest in the study of the mind, feelings and human reactions and that has always been the starting point of my explorations. With this, she plans to introduce several more products that help enhance child and infant development under her company Day One.

Message to fellow women: I believe in big dreams and then even bigger efforts to make those dreams come true. My mantra is to work hard and be graceful and meet each setback with a stronger comeback

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Zahra | Being Mom and Beyond

As a mother, it is easy to prioritize your family's needs and put your own aspirations on hold. However, Zahra Jani, with her page "Being Mom And Beyond," is here to remind you that there is life beyond motherhood.

Amassed over 60,000 followers who eagerly anticipate her humorous and engaging content spread across parenting and fitness, self-care, beauty, and fashion, Zahra conveys a wealth of tips and tricks that empower mothers to live a well-rounded life while encouraging them to pursue their passions.

Zahra's journey to becoming a revered online personality was not without obstacles. After earning her B.Com. from NM College in Mumbai and an ECCed (Early Childhood Care and Education) degree. She taught as a teacher in a preschool for five years. Following her marriage, she started her fashion accessories boutique, which she had to put on hold due to pregnancy complications.

Despite these setbacks, Zahra discovered her true calling in 2019—two years into motherhood—as a parenting and lifestyle influencer. Initially a one-woman army, she has grown her team since then. Her work has received accolades, including being named Women Influencer Of The Year at the #WomenPreneurAwards2023. She has also been featured in "Humans of Bombay" and "99 Women Achievers of India" in 2020.

Zahra's dedication to supporting moms knows no bounds. She aims to replicate her success on other social media platforms such as YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter, inspiring even more mothers to live more rewarding lives. Her impact on the online community has been remarkable, making a real difference in the lives of countless women.

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Aditi Gupta: A Content Marketing & Personal Branding Expert You need to Follow This Year

You probably know that three out of four startups fail. It is impossible for freelancers and small business owners to establish themselves without credibility. No matter what business, you have to position yourself in remarkable practices to stand out from the crowd.

Two proven methods to stand out are to have a well thought content marketing strategy and build your personal brand. The more you grow as a brand, the more social proof you earn. Accordingly, the more social proof you earn, the more leads and clients come to you wanting to give you their hard-earned money.

Want to discover, build and expand your personal brand with content strategy and marketing? Then the only

person you need to follow is Aditi Gupta. She is a Content Writer & Strategist, a Govt of India Recognized: MSME Expert Marketing Content Writer/Copy Writer & Trainer; Founder of Content Cappuccino and Co-Founder of Brand and Beyond IT. Here is her journey in her own words:



"It is always interesting to learn how words can help you create a beautiful story. Professionally, I am a content writer and strategist who deals with different content strategies to help your business stand out from the crowd.

"Content is the reason search began in the first place."

Before jumping on to the main part, let me set the context for you! Being a graduate in Biology, I would say that the quirky quote 'Scientists can do anything!' actually stood real for me when I decided to be a writer after completing my bachelor's degree. At that point in

life, I didn't know anything about the career scope of a writer, let alone, a Content Designer and brand Designer.

I started writing six years ago; at that time, I was not a professional writer. I started writing for different social media content, infographic content, banner content and so on.

It makes me feel wonderful that I write the post or image content you're sharing! Seeing this, inspired me that yeah, I have written this content, and it's going viral. People love it.

People always think that content writing or copywriting is similar to data entry! Seriously!! Please don't spoil our images. To choose your career as a content writer every day, you need to improve yourself.

Social media content calendars, infographics or banner image content are easy to produce as you know the details about that product or service. But when I started writing blogs or articles, I felt it took a lot of struggle to create any blog or articles because of the tremendous amount of research and study that went behind it.

Under strong mentors and leadership, I started shifting the tone of my copies from a quirky marketing language to a very objective standpoint. As we all know, change doesn't happen overnight so it took time for me also but I understood that being a freelancer who is associated with most service-oriented organisations, all my work needs to be around customer education and satisfaction. With that being said, here is my biggest takeaway to date:

Message delivery within limitations

My biggest lesson was to understand the portrayal of creativity within some essential constraints. Now, I won't lie that I didn't question these limitations, I surely did! **But, later I realised that wordplay within specific restrictions actually induces more creativity.** Although, just clearing out that when I say 'restrictions' it actually means character limit, a uniform tone of copies, the voice of sentences, and so on and so forth.

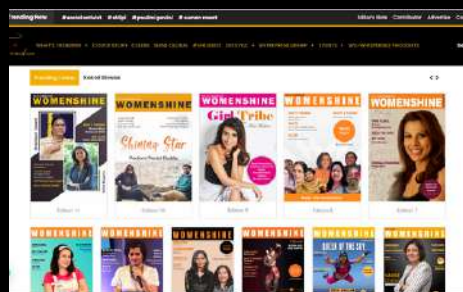
You don't need any degree to become a content writer. It's the thing that comes within you. Sometimes it happens when you create something, others copy that content and give their own names. But always remember -- Anyone can copy your creation, but no one can copy your creativity, passion, talent & wisdom."

"Be your best always! "

Thanks for reading!

- Team WS

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VEENA ASHIYA | MONROW SHOES

With a distinguished academic background, Veena holds a master's degree in fashion management from NIFT, Bengaluru. Prior to founding Monrow Shoes and Accessories, Veena has been associated with several globally renowned organisations, including Tommy Hilfiger and Versace. With over 15 years of corporate experience, she brings



a vast knowledge base of the fashion and lifestyle industry to the platform. An optimist by nature, Veena has created a healthy, enriching, and agile work culture where the entire team believes in celebrating small wins. In a nutshell, Veena is a thought leader who is here to change the current status quo in the industry. Her unwavering perseverance and relentless pursuit of goals enabled her to unlock several astounding achievements, including cracking NIFT & passing with flying colours. With Veena at the helm, Monrow Shoes and Accessories secured a second round of funding in just seven months, becoming the first women's footwear brand to do so. Leveraging her sharp business acumen and extensive experience,

Veena envisions Monrow to become the market leader in the fashion-comfort category by 2025. When she's not donning the entrepreneur hat, Veena loves travelling and meeting new people. A fitness enthusiast, she begins her day with her daily ritual of chanting and yoga. A firm believer in the transformative power of positive thoughts and vibes, Veena has started practising bio-productivity hacks like lighting soothing aroma candles, growing plants, installing swings, etc., at Monrow. I have had the honour of working with some of the great minds and iconic fashion brands like Tommy Hilfiger and Versace before founding Monrow. Tommy Hilfiger was my first job, I worked as an assistant buyer till early 2009 and worked at Versace, New York, right after as a marketing assistant for about a year. At Versace, as part of the marketing team I learnt about brand image and how in a luxury industry, the brand image is most important. I also learnt about what's exciting and what sells. And this learning laid the base for my future.

Coming from a Marwadi background where usually women do not own business, She was blessed to have parents who supported her dream and vision. Secondly her husband respected and nurtured her ambition to be where she is today. One of the biggest challenges that Women entrepreneurs have to face is of a solo founder. She comes from a family of Entrepreneurs, my father is the founder of the well-known perfume brand Moksh. Having seen him work passionately towards his brand inspired her to fearlessly follow her calling. Her parent's were a little hesitant when she told them about their love for fashion and design but they were supportive of my decision to enrol in NIFT, Bangalore.

The best thing about my journey was I knew what I was passionate about at a very early age which was fashion. I was raised by very progressive parents as they encouraged me to pursue my dream and raised me ambitiously. As a proud daughter of an entrepreneur, I understood why work and life has an intermingling flow to it. My motto is “I love what I do and do what I love”. With a distinguished academic background, Veena holds a master's degree in fashion management from NIFT, Bengaluru. NIFT was a very enriching experience on two fronts. At first I met a lot of people from the fashion industry and learnt about fashion as a form of art and science. NIFT also adds a lot of value to the resume so it was a lot easier to come establish yourself in the industry. Leveraging the sharp business acumen and extensive experience,

I think there are two major challenges faced by women, first I think is external as there is a lot of bias when it comes to women entrepreneurs. The general notion that oftentimes women's contribution to their family or household will outweigh their responsibilities at work has been a difficult one to change. Secondly, the internal challenges faced are based on self-doubt. When you see people doubting your skills it takes away from your confidence. Believing in yourself and the hard work that you have put in is very important. I envision Monrow to become the market leader in the fashion-comfort category by 2025. When I am not donning the entrepreneur hat, I love to travel and meeting new people.



- Team WS

“

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NISHA NARAYANAN

DIRECTOR & COO, RED FM & MAGIC FM

"As a leader, I believe the path to equality is equivalent to the path to diversity. It remains long and ever-shifting but it has also never been graver and more pressing. Women are already strong, it is about time we change the way the world perceives their strength.

A healthy and diverse workplace creates safe spaces for women. For present times, it might be monumental but let's not overlook how it is also a basic necessity. Recognition matters, and twin opportunities matter. If this means addressing the ominous gender pay gap, and questioning diversity & inclusion, as leaders we have to put on this hat.

This International Women's Day, let us continue to preach and lead our communities and women toward a world where gender does not define you anymore. Let's be more accommodating and more human."



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LIVING WITH RATZ CATZ AND BATZ...HOWZ THAT?

I came to Cawnpore on posting with my husband carrying grandiose dreams inside my excited heart. Newness is always refreshing and infuses a lot many hopes. And so naturally for us it was a new place to begin with, new friends and a new house too!

It generally happens in the Army that one gets a temporary accommodation for sometime before being allotted a permanent one. As luck would have it, we were given a guest room of the Army Officers' Mess. It was seated in the best of promising and picturesque locations. There was greenery all around. Many fruit trees flourished there which housed all types of colourful birds. It seemed an ethereally beautiful setting. The staff kept the area spik and span. The gardener tended the plants with utmost care. The cook was an extremely skilled man.

His sumptuous preparations surely won everyone a big paunch sooner or later. The security was sound with soldiers on duty round the clock. The Army Mess was a heritage building. It was a smart structure from outside and the interior was also impeccably done up. And we were right there, in the nucleus of happening surroundings. I had felt royal and queenly.

It was our first evening and we were sipping cold coffee sitting in the lush green lawns admiring the perfect scene of huge trees and also inhaling the scent of spring flowers. It was simply divine. The acrobatic monkeys jumped from tree to tree, the cute tiny palm squirrels darted here and there, and the dancing peacocks added to the existing marvel by displaying their resplendent coloured feathers.

Suddenly a flock of big birds descended over our heads. I swiftly ducked for safety. I was terribly petrified seeing those humongous nocturnal birds. We were informed by the staff that those were harmless fruit bats also known as flying foxes. They appeared dreadfully large, almost three feet in size. The bats lived in the mango trees, all around our guest room. We were also told that those fruit bats were herbivores and thus they damaged the garden as they defoliated the trees. Although, they left the humans largely alone but I shuddered remembering that bats were connected to witches also in some cultures. Creatures with wings like a bird and fur like a dog, residing in dark, dingy caves, crevices and trees in my immediate neighbourhood, it was certainly a bone chilling experience for me to see the sudden swift descent and ascent of a colony of a humongous sized flying foxes over our heads in that post dusk hour. Therefore, those fruit bats became my first worry in the new station. I realised that I would have to condition myself with the fact that those flying foxes would be my permanent neighbours in that temporary house of mine.

Soon I discovered that our new abode constituted of a very big bedroom, one regular sized ante room, a small kitchenette and a huge washroom surprisingly. As the evening progressed, I started to hear some squeaky noises that seemingly emanated from the fireplace. The fireplace looked brightly painted although on closer inspection, we realized that its chimney opening was choked with thick cardboards obviously to avoid any strangers descent from there. Apparently the room had a smart cream coloured false ceiling too. When we turned our heads in the upward direction, we noticed some gaping holes there and suddenly my eyes met many large eyes from the holes.



I screamed in full fright. Those eyes had vanished instantaneously. Surely those curious creatures were eavesdropping! They had heard my heart pounding too, fast and furiously. My husband was startled by my sudden shriek and jump. He admonished me later for displaying such unladylike behaviour. He had always expected me to be composed, decisive and stoically smart in all types of situations. But he never understood that he was a trained army officer and I was simply an ordinary wife of his. Moreover, the womanly attributes he expected in me existed only in his thoughts. And to have such high expectations from a scarecrow like me, he was blasphemously wrong. He needed self correction. And kilograms of empathy and understanding towards me particularly in such adverse circumstances. My husband seriously thought that since I was a timid person I was hallucinating about the appearance of eyes there. While I reiterated, we heard the nibbling kind of sounds but this time it was coming from the fire place. Both of us held our breath to hear. We heard the sounds of many rats running helter skelter trying to cut away the impediments, those cardboards, in their path, to descend into our room via the chimney. I was silently hysterical this time. Realisation had dawned upon me that I would be in their glare all the time and whenever possible they would be the surreptitious trespassers in my domain. The night advanced and after taking stock of the situation, my husband and I focussed our attention towards our sleeping arrangements for the following night. Finally my helpful husband decided that his bed would be put up against the fireplace for the ensuing night to block the entry of any visitor from that end atleast.



This brilliant idea was born to my far sighted husband only to avoid my cacophony through the night and I was totally in consonance with this operation. My husband made a sincere endeavour convincing me not to get into the fear loop although in the heart of hearts, I think, he also thought that the rat or cat or bat or for that matter anything was capable of causing me a cardiac arrest. Anyway, the night for my man was fairly comfortable but mine was an uncomfortable and an unnerving one. I had

seriously feared the fall of the impressive false ceiling along with what all creatures! Moreover those curious eyes had haunted me through the eerie and the noisy night. The following morning before my husband left for his office, he seriously sermoned me that since it was a guest room, therefore those rooms under no circumstances should be rearranged by me. His peering eyes and strict tone made me hugely miserable. But hardly had he left that those curious eyes focussed on me all over again from the ceiling holes and my vocal cords were again exercised, this time with greater force. I felt trapped in this place. The terrible truth that those creepy crawly rats had brought plague and consequent demise of almost one third of European population made me tremble with fear. The harm they would possibly cause to our clothes and eatables was a secondary concern. I counselled myself several times that no matter what, but the rats would not be able to come falling down upon me. In just the next minute or so, I also witnessed the activities of a black cat family which resided on our high rooftop.

Bats, rats and cats are dark coloured, have cryptic behaviour and nocturnal in nature. As such they have been cloaked in superstition since ancient times. We all have heard that when a black cat crosses our path, its a bad omen. Black cats are affiliated with evil. Their black colour and nocturnal nature makes one believe in superstitious belief that these otherwise cute kitties are either servants of witches or witches in disguise.

I seemed to be believing in this black cat superstitious theory that day! Some members of this feline family came visiting my false ceiling area through the chimney opening from the rooftop to hunt for the rat family members as their delicious meal that morning. The petrified scampering rats and the determined chasing cats created a major furore on my false ceiling frightening me to the core. I had actually waited for the false ceiling to crash as it was perilously supported only by the thinnest possible horizontally placed iron bars. Moreover the frightened cries of the rats was terrible melancholy music to my ears. The hurry, worry and the flurry of life taking, and life saving, activities, by the cat and the rat families, respectively, worried my anguished soul to the highest possible degree. My heart had been in my mouth and my eyes had dropped out of my sockets many a times witnessing this high voltage drama with unbearably high decibel rat music and that too in the absence of my warrior husband.

Staying in such a predicament had become very killing for me. Therefore, my self preservation instinct suddenly became the strongest. It fuelled my imagination at a lightning speed. My eyes never wavered but were rather fixed either on the fireplace or towards the holes of the false ceiling. Suddenly, I noticed that there was a bright, big painting of a very senior, decorated Army General that was placed on top of a shelf over the fireplace. The General had fought several battles and brought glory upon himself and to his garrison several decades ago. His painting portrayed him as an effective warrior in his smart uniform with a heavy display of several medals on his proud chest. After all, under his supervision, the men he commanded had bravely pushed the enemy away and saved many from fear, death and destruction. I had noticed the General's penetrating eyes and brave expressions in that majestic frame. He seemed extremely powerful and kind to me. His aura ignited hope and lent support to my failing heart.

Suddenly I mustered enough courage to go near the fireplace and lifted that heavy painting from the shelf and put it against the fireplace opening to keep my enemy of rats away. The painting fitted perfectly in there, brilliantly plugging the opening and simultaneously pacifying, both, my tumultuous thoughts and my anxious heart to quite a degree. And thus the brave General succeeded in defending me from my dreadful enemy and definitely saved me from fear, death and destruction. And just before my husband, a seasoned Colonel returned home from office, carefully and most respectfully, I placed the glorious General back in the highest pedestal. The General and the Colonel guarded me superbly like true, brave and loyal soldiers everyday. I managed to settle in that guest room for the following two weeks before shifting into a new permanent home. The concerned authorities smartly renovated the building especially plugging the holes on the false ceiling and the chimney opening from the roof top after our departure from there. The rats and cats also got posted out too, to a new neighborhood. Living with those creatures in close vicinity taught me many a lessons. Science has also allowed me to look past superstitious beliefs associated with flora and fauna and has made me empathetic towards them. It has also made me comprehend the importance of each species for the sustenance of our ecosystem. I think I am a shade better in terms of adaptability also now. PERHAPS. Even now when I reminisce the good old days of my living with the Catz, the Ratz and the Batz families, I experience eye crinkling smiles and hope to evoke wide mouthed laughters from you dear readers.



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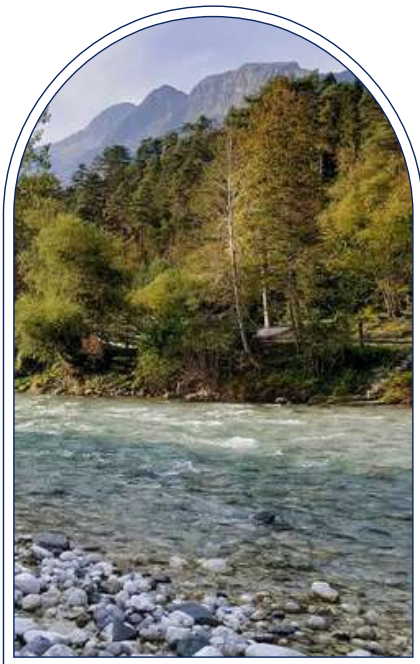


Written By :
Preeti Kandpal Pathak

ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN INDIA



India is a country with a diverse lifestyle. In Hindu culture, the co-existence of humans and nature is considered virtuous and a necessity for a complete lifecycle. By following these guidelines, Indians have been protecting and conserving wildlife for centuries. However, with the social and economic development, people started exploiting nature and we started losing our flora and fauna over greed. By creating and spreading awareness of environmental degradation, states have started making laws regarding sustainability and promoting eco-friendly tourism. With this, tourists can visit places closer to nature, without disturbing it. Here's a list of the Top 4 ecotourism destinations in India



KHANGCHENDZONGA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, SIKKIM

Located in Sikkim, Khangchendzonga Reserve is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Bordering Nepal to the west and Tibet to the northwest, it is home to exotic animal species like Red Panda, Snow Leopard, Great Tibetan Sheep, Bharal, Musk Deer etc. This Biosphere reserve was established on 26th August 1977 and was named after Mount Khangchendzonga (also known as Kanchenjunga), the third-highest peak in the world. The Reserve is also one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1,220 to 8,586 meters above sea level. Trekking is the most popular tourist activity here. The trips are mainly organized by the State Tourism department along with other travel agents. There are certain restrictions for tourists visiting the Biosphere Reserve. Every tourist has to take mandatory permission from the State

Chief Wildlife Warden. If you are a foreign national, you need to have an additional restricted area permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs. For Indian nationals, you need an Inner-Line Permit from the State Home Department along with permission from the State Chief Wildlife Warden.

MAWLYNNONG, MEGHALAYA

Located in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, Mawlynnong has earned its name as Asia's cleanest village. Also known as 'God's own Garden', this village takes pride in sanitation and mandates the residents to participate in keeping the village clean. The waste is collected in bamboo dustbins and is put in a pit to make manure. Smoking and the use of polythene are banned in the village and most people use water by rain harvesting. Since it got its name from the travel magazine Discover India in 2003, this place has attracted many tourists. Other than cleanliness, this village has much more to offer.

The Khasi tribe are the habitants of this village and are also the main attraction of the tourists. The iconic root bridge, the Nohwet Living Root Bridge is found in this village. This bridge showcases the staple Khasi architecture and it was created by weaving roots of the Rubber (Ficus Elastica) tree on the framework throughout generations. The atmosphere in this village is serene and helps you relax and take a break from your busy life. In short, you can enjoy your time here connecting with nature.



CHILIKA, ODISHA

Spread over the Puri, Khordha and Ganjam districts of Odisha, Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon on the East coast of India. Situated in the mouth of river Daya, this lake is the second largest lake in India, after the Vembanad Lake. Chilika is an as important habitat and a breeding point for both resident and migratory bird species. Every year, it hosts over 160 bird species and has the largest ground for wintering for migratory birds in the Indian subcontinent. You can also sight the Irrawaddy Dolphin in this lagoon.

Tourists mainly flock here to see the endangered dolphins and the variety of bird species. They can also enjoy activities like boating, walking on nature trails and visiting sites like Rambha Bay, Somolo and Dumkudi Islands, Kalijai Temple, etc.



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TSOMORIRI WETLAND CONSERVATION RESERVE, LADAKH

Located in the Northern plains of Ladakh, Tsomoriri Reserve is the largest of the high-altitude lakes in India. The lake is located in the Trans-Himalayan biographic region, bordering Tibet to the East and Zaskar to the West. The lake water is formed from the springs and snow melt from the mountains of the Changthang plateau. This reserve has a landscape of low-productive ecosystems and protects unique species. 34 species of birds, 14 of which are water birds, are bred and protected in this reserve. You can also find many endangered mammal species like Tibetan gazelle, Goa antelope, Bharal Himalayan blue sheep, etc and carnivores like snow leopard and Tibetan wolf habituating in this reserve. Tourists can indulge in activities like camping, bird watching, and trekking. As there is plenty of wildlife surrounding the area, you can also

explore the Himalayan wildlife on the high plateaus. Tourists also visit the Korzok village and the Korzok Monastery, located just 3 kilometres away from the lake.

There's an old Lakota proverb, "When a man moves away from nature his heart becomes hard". In this city life, we are constantly trying to fit into the standards set by society. Continuous efforts to prove ourselves worthy in the eyes of society make us insensitive towards nature and its laws. And as a result, we end up hurting nature, which in return backfires on our lives itself. The meaning of ecotourism is responsible travel and assisting in conserving nature. By conserving nature, we conserve our homes and our livelihood. So, return to your basics and never forget, planet Earth is our home.



Written By :
Ashwathi Anoopkumar

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North East India: The Unexplored Paradise



North East India, popularly known as the Seven Sisters and the most unknown yet fascinating part of our country. Located in the easternmost corner of the region, the landscape is covered with mountain ranges and rainforests, which are probably the last remaining ones in our country. Through this, the giant river Brahmaputra flows, which supports the farms and the wildlife there. This lush greenery and fauna will inspire you to visit this place at least once in your lifetime.

The Northeast comprises eight states, namely- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim. These states share borders with Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, hence border disputes are often in this region. But still, it doesn't interfere with the hospitality and warmth of the locals and they are always welcoming.

Each state has its own charms and unique sites to see. Here is a list of a few places which are a must-visit when you go to North East.

- **Kaziranga National Park, Assam**

Kaziranga National Park is one of the finest wildlife refuges in the world. Located in the heart of Assam, this place is home to around 2,613 one-horned rhinoceroses, which is almost one-third of the total population in the world. This national park was formed in 1908 according to the recommendation of Mary Curzon, wife of the Viceroy of India- Lord Curzon of Kedleston, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.

The best time to visit the place is between November to April. The park authorities also organize jeep and elephant safari tours. Tourists can also engage themselves in bird watching and visit the National Orchid Park, which is located near the Central range.



• Tsomgo Lake, Sikkim

Also known as Changgu Lake, Tsomgo lake is a glacier lake located 35 kilometres away from Gangtok, Sikkim. The most attractive point of this lake is that it changes colour according to the season and remains frozen from early winter to late spring. This lake is also associated with many myths and legends and hence is respected by the locals. As the lake is in a restricted area, tourists have to seek permission to enter this place. Reaching there, you can enjoy joy rides on decorated yaks and mules. This place is also suitable for trekking, nature photography and bird watching. The lake can be visited around the year and you'll witness a different view every time.

• Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh

Located roughly 115 kilometres from Itanagar, Ziro Valley lies on the lap of lush hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Added to the tentative list of UNESCO's World Heritage site, Ziro is a place where culture and nature meet and come alive. The valley is habited for centuries by the Apatani tribe, the oldest tribe in North India. This tribe have unique features, setting them apart from the other tribes of the Northeast. Ziro is famous for paddy-cum-pisciculture tradition. But the main tourist attraction is the Ziro Music Festival, which was launched in 2012. Music lovers from different places, top national and international artists, bands and folk artists gather in this place for an exchange of musical values and culture.

• Kohima Museum, Nagaland

Every tourist and patriot should visit the Nagaland State museum aka Kohima Museum. Located in Bayavü Hill, this place is filled with deeper insights into the history and culture of the tribes of the state. This museum was established in the year 1970 and contains rare artefacts belonging to 16 tribes of Nagaland. It also showcases the Naga culture in garments, arts and crafts. Life-like models of Naga life are also displayed for people to understand better.

• Tripura Sundari Temple, Tripura

Located in the ancient city of Udaipur in Tripura, this temple is also one of the ancient temples in Northeast India. This Hindu temple is dedicated to Goddess Tripura Sundari or Devi Tripureshwari, and it is believed to be one of the holiest Hindu shrines in this part of the country. Many visitors from the nearby states visit this temple. The name of the state comes from this temple. The temple was founded in the year 1501 by Maharaja Dhanya Manikya. According to popular folklore, he actually had founded a

temple for Lord Vishnu, but due to a revelation in his dream, he initiated the worship of the Goddess on the hilltop. An interesting factor about this temple is that people of any religion can offer Pooja and pray to the Goddess. When visiting the temple, you can also visit the Kalyan Sagar pond which is located on the eastern side of the temple. The lake is filled with Bostami turtles or Black Softshell turtles, which are considered to be extinct in the wild.





- **Double Decker Living Root Bridge, Meghalaya**

Located in the thick forests of Meghalaya, the Double Decker Root Bridge is a living root bridge. Although living root bridges are common in the area, the Double Decker Bridge is famous for its large size. The bridge is almost 3 kilometres long, grown from a special type of rubber tree, and is placed at a height of 2400 ft. The local tribe of Khasis are the one credited for making this bridge. They train the roots to grow in the shape of a bridge. It takes around 4 to 6 hours to cover the whole bridge, which makes this place the main attraction for trekkers and nature enthusiasts.

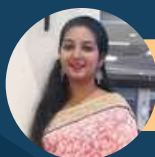


- **Dawki River, Meghalaya**

Meghalaya has a visual feast of nature to offer. The most popular among these is the Dawki River. Located near the East Jaintia hills district near the Indo-Bangladesh border, the Dawki river is a beautiful river with crystal clear water. The water is so clean that you can see the riverbed clearly. While boating on the river, it feels like

the boat is floating on a glass surface. A hidden gem of the state, this place became famous after the Ministry of Jal Sakti posted a picture of this place on social media, congratulating the locals on keeping it clean. Tourists can indulge themselves in activities like boating, cliff jumping and zip-lining in this place.

The North East is India's hidden gem. It is a rendezvous of different tribes, communities and cultures. Various tribes of this area are believed to have lineage descended from the times of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The lush landscape, the distinct tribal community and the geographical and ecological diversity make this region a must-visit.



Written By :
Ashwathi Anoopkumar



CANDYLAND

CAKE -KIDS BLUEBERRY FLAVOUR



Ingredients:

- Maida 190gm
- Hung curd 210gm
- Powdered sugar 110gm
- Oil 100gm
- Milk 60gm
- Baking soda 1/2 tsp
- Baking powder 1tsp
- Blueberry essence 1 tsp
- Salt 1/4tsp

Method:

- 1) Sieve maida, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
- 2) Whisk hung curd with sugar
- 3) Add oil and essence and mix gently.
- 4) Now add the dry ingredients and milk in three batches and fold gently to make a smooth batter without lumps.
- 5) Pour the batter into the greased mould and bake it in preheated oven at 170° for 30-35 min.



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Shared By : Suhani Kukreja

EGGLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE



Ingredients:

Maida- 1cup/120 gms
 Powdered sugar- 100gms 1/2
 cup+1/3 cup
 Cocoa powder- 2 tbsp
 Baking soda-1/2 tsp
 Baking powder- 1 tsp
 Hung curd-1/2 cup
 Oil- 50 ml
 Vanilla essence- 1/2 tsp
 Milk 80-100 ml

Method:

- Preheat the oven at 170°C for 10 minutes.
- Sieve the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder in a mixing bowl. Mix well and set aside.
- In a large mixing bowl, take curd and sugar, whisk nicely till the sugar is melted. Add Vanilla essence, oil and stir well.
- Add in the flour mix and milk in 3 batches and fold gently to make a smooth batter without lumps. (No over mixing)
- Pour the batter Into The greased mould. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes at 170 degree Celsius.
- Insert a toothpick and if it comes out clean it means your cake is done.
- Remove it from the oven let it cool down.



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Shared By : Shikha



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