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Doodles

One Mahatma is not enough....

The pressure is building up in all quarters. I recall the ominous words of Dr. Radha Burnier of Theosophical Society, whom I had decided to, write about for a regional magazine when I was freelancing. She predicted what we are seeing in the country today about a decade back, if we did not put an end to corruption. She said that a time would come when even the common man, particularly the downtrodden would start feeling the pressures of unbridled corruption. 'Corruption will reach such proportions if not curbed now, that every citizen will feel stifled by the intensity and all pervasiveness and every aspect of his life will be impacted,' she said. Which is what we are seeing today.


We have reached a situation where we watch news of our representatives in the legislative assemblies and parliament watching porn, brandishing wads of currencies or doling out liquor and freebies openly in public. We watch with apathy a chief minister, who happens to be a woman shrugging off a rape victim, blaming it as a false propaganda by the opposition party. How much deeper can we fall? Every time we feel we have reached the nadir, there seems to be more and more to plummet. The intriguing propensities of human brain are unraveled through grisly manipulations by those who would like to snare a fistful of fame and money. If such creativity of minds were put to constructive use, our 2020 dream ingrained in us by an insightful citizen would have long since become a reality.

Women have and continue to be the keepers and transmitters of our values for generations. While our society is tottering under the impact of gross plagiarism of values alien to us, we must remember that our own values have not been replaced by the true values of alien cultures- that of humaneness and universal human rights.

Our younger generations simply import superficial customs, lifestyle habits and individualistic approach to life from other cultures without making the effort to comprehend the underlying richer ethos and values these societies are endowed with. The result is for all to see- a society where the family which once played the role of the safety net and repository of values is now being exploited completely to bolster gratification of self-pursuits. There is still time to change all that- and it is in the hands of women to now step in and take over the reins.

Nothing much can be done about the present set up. We need a new order. A new community based approach wherein the common man will have a role in creating his own social ambience. This will come from women – as it always does. Even in the staunchly patriarchal set up our society had been designed for generations; it was a mother, a grandmother, a sister or a family woman who was the trigger for bringing about a social change - through a man. Today, one Mahatma cannot do much. We need many Mahatmas and that can come from the women's pool... the thinking women who have solutions to draw us all out from the quagmire we have been sucked into..... Women coming together, burying their insecurities and stereotypical attitudes the world has heaped upon them – envy, narcissism, low self worth and self esteem. We are dauntless and we can do it. Are women ready to come together, build a strong sense of sisterhood and become Mahatmas?

Ciao!



Swati Amar



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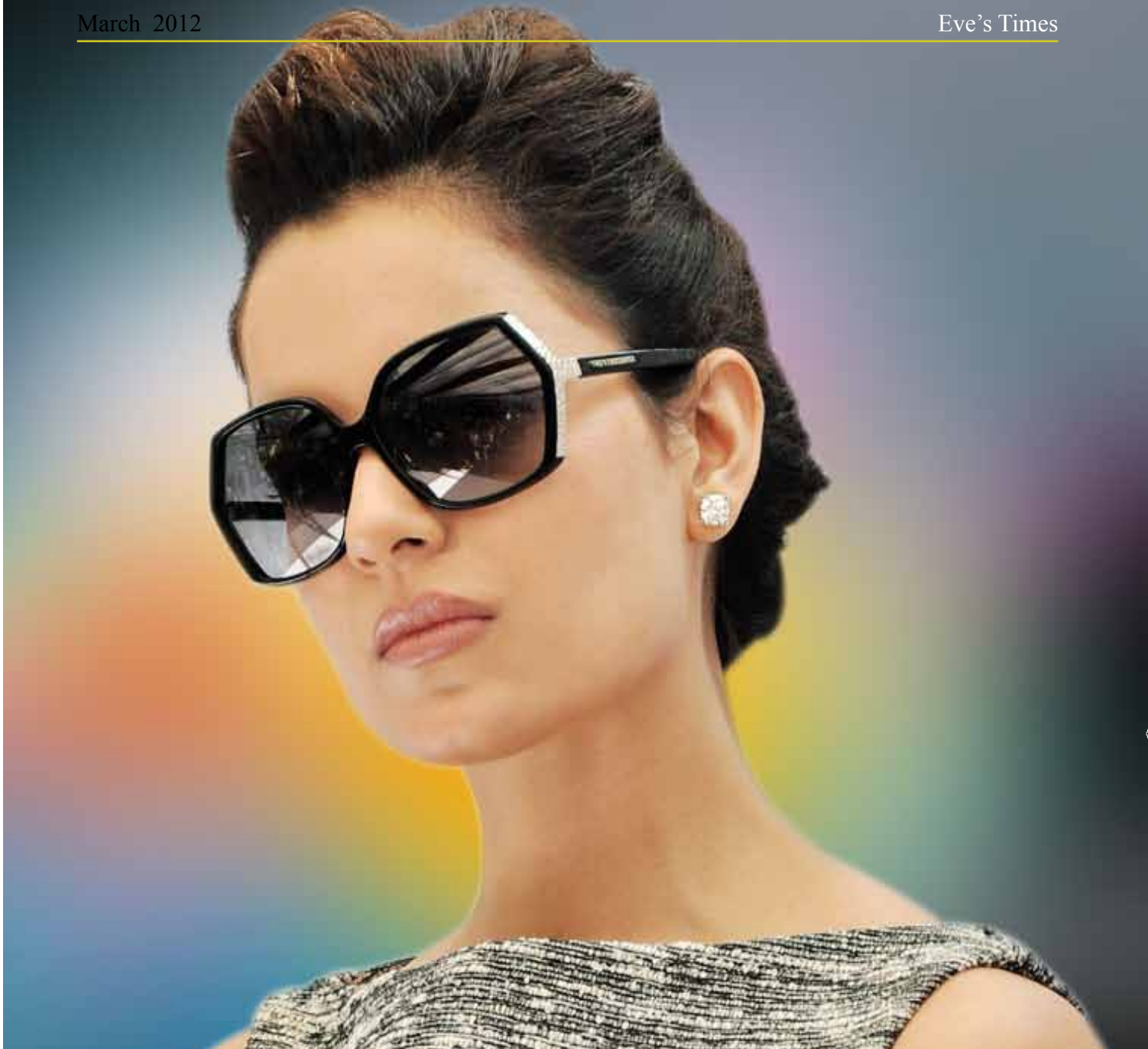
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 responsibility for returning unsolicited publication
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The best judge of whether or not a country is going to develop is how it treats its women. If it's educating its girls, if women have equal rights, that country is going to move forward. But if women are oppressed and abused and illiterate, then they're going to fall behind.

BARACK OBAMA, Ladies' Home Journal, Sep. 2008

Woman

Emergence of the Thinking



This view that women are somehow inferior to men is not restricted to one religion or belief. Women are prevented from playing a full and equal role in many faiths. Nor, tragically, does its influence stop at the walls of the church, mosque, synagogue or temple. This discrimination, unjustifiably attributed to a Higher Authority, has provided a reason or excuse for the deprivation of women's equal rights across the world for centuries. At its most repugnant, the belief that women must be subjugated to the wishes of men excuses slavery, violence, forced prostitution, genital mutilation and national laws that omit rape as a crime. But it also costs many millions of girls and women control over their own bodies and lives, and continues to deny them fair access to education, health, employment and influence within their own communities.... The truth is that male religious leaders have had -- and still have -- an option to interpret holy teachings either to exalt or subjugate women. They have, for their own selfish ends, overwhelmingly chosen the latter.

JIMMY CARTER, "Losing My Religion for Equality"

National Family Healthy Survey 2011

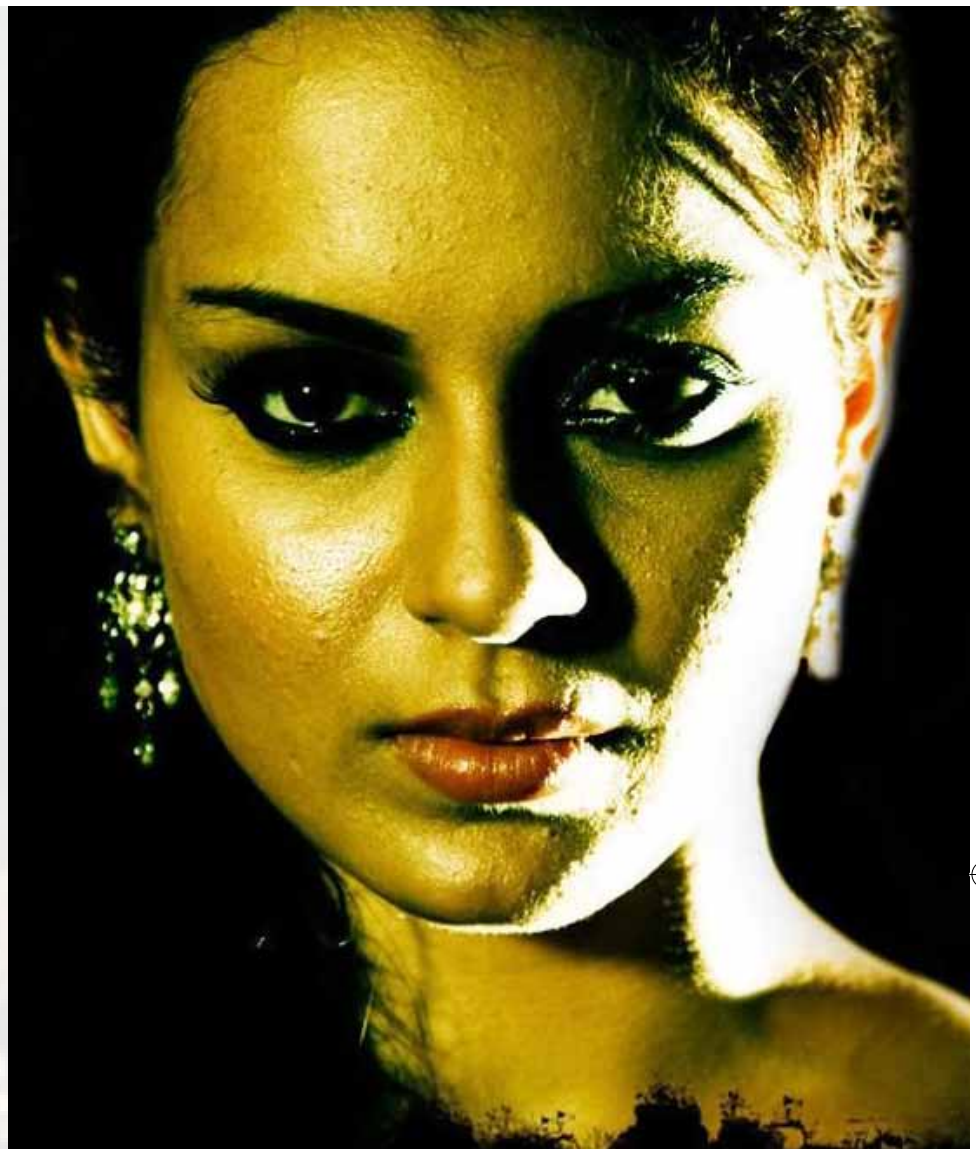
- ◇ One-third of adolescent girls are undernourished
- ◇ Almost 56.2 per cent women of reproductive age are anaemic in India.
- ◇ The number of adolescent girls (in the age group of

11-18 years), constituting 17 per cent of the total female population, is 8.3 crore

- ◇ The female literacy rate is only 53.87 per cent, which is considerably low.
- ◇ Among women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the NFHS said neo-natal mortality rate for the first five-year period preceding the survey for SCs is 46.3 per 1,000 while for the general populace is 39 per 1,000.
- ◇ Infant mortality rate for the first five-year period preceding the survey for SC/STs is 66.4 while for the rest it is 57.
- ◇ For the same time period, other health parameters like the under-five mortality rate for SC/STs is 88.1 per 1,000 and 74.3 for the general populace.
- ◇ The percentage of married women with anaemia is 58.3 for SC/STs as against 56.2 per cent national average.
- ◇ While among the general population, 11.5 per cent women are graduates, among SC/STs the corresponding figure is 3.9 per cent.

National Family Health Survey 2005-06

- ◇ Thirty-one percent of young women and 14 percent of young men are illiterate.
- ◇ Only 29 percent of young women and 38 percent of young men have completed 10 or more years of



- education.
- ◇ Urban-rural differentials are much wider for women than men in literacy and educational attainment and the gender gap is also much greater in rural than in urban areas.
- ◇ More than one in three married female youth (37%) have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband.
- ◇ Sex differentials in knowledge of HIV/AIDS are of concern. Only 84%

of men and 61% of women have ever heard of AIDS. Further, only 70% of men and 36% of women know that consistent condom use can reduce the chances of getting HIV/AIDS.

Crime Against Women

- ◇ A crime has been recorded against women in every three minutes in India.
- ◇ Every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country.
- ◇ Every six hours, a young married woman is found



beaten to death, burnt or driven to suicide.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2010 Report

- ◇ A total of 2,13,585 incidents of crime against women were reported in the country during 2010 as compared to 2,03,804 during 2009 recording an increase of 4.8% during 2010. There were 22,193 victims of
- ◇ Out of 22,172 reported Rape cases in the country. 8.9% (1,975) of the total victims of Rape were girls under 14 years of age, while 16.1% (3,570) were teenaged girls (14-8 years). 57.4% (12,749)

were women in the age-group 18-30 years

- ◇ Dowry Deaths have increased by 0.1% over the previous year (8,383). 26.4% of the total such cases reported in the country were reported from Uttar Pradesh (2,217) alone followed by Bihar (1,257) (15.0%). The highest rate of crime (1.3) was reported from Bihar as compared to the National average of 0.7.
- ◇ Torture (Cruelty by Husband & Relatives) have increased by 5.0% over the previous year (89,546). 18.9% of these were reported from West Bengal (17,796). The highest rate of 26.0 was reported from Tripura as compared to the National Rate of 7.5

Domestic Violence

A substantial proportion of married women reported that they experienced physical or sexual violence at some time in their lives. Overall, 40% of every-married women experienced violence, with large variations among the states. The experience of spousal violence ranges from a low of 6% in Himachal Pradesh to a high of 59% in Bihar. Married women with no education were much more likely (at 46%) than other women to have suffered spousal violence. However, spousal violence extended to women who have 12 or more years of higher education, with 12% reporting violence.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005



According to this act every women who have been deprived of their right to life by the act of husband or relatives of the husband, can file a complaint to the protection officer, police officer or magistrate in the form of 'Domestic Incident Report' (Similar to FIR).

Complaint can be filed by the victim /aggrieved person or relatives, it will be considered as the prima-facie evidence of the offence.

Every 'Domestic Incident Report' has to be prepared by the Protection Officer which will assist in the further investigation of the incidence. The protection officer will pass certain orders i.e. protection of the women, custody of respondent and order of monetary relief to the victim.

Violence against women in India is as rampant as ever now in 2011. India is the 4th most dangerous place in the world for women. This is abysmal, considering we have a woman President of the nation, women Chief Ministers in four states, a woman who is the chief of the ruling party, and powerful women CEO's in the country.

Honouring Women

An Inclusive Realm for Beautiful Minds

Nirmala Subramanian*Dr. Sharada Menon, Padma Bhushan*

Choosing a path that brings solace to minds disassociated from the real world is a challenging option. It takes inexorable grit and determination and a mind devoted to the service of others to take on the responsibility of serving people who have no connect with the world around them.

Eve's Times is proud to feature one such woman, who quietly goes about her chosen calling, tending to the mentally ill with unfailing commitment and dedication to the cause close to her heart. For octogenarian, Padma Bhushan, Dr. Sharada

Menon who is 88 years old today, the choice came naturally.

Anyone who visits her clinic in Kilpauk would be surprised by the missing name board which throws light on her modesty and her matter of fact approach to her profession. For a society riddled with stigma attached to mental afflictions, the absence of a name board, proclaiming her profession is a welcome approach.

In an interview with Dr. Sharada Menon, psychiatrist and founder of Schizophrenia Research Foundation, SCARF, Chennai, the many facets of this impeccable medical professional are unraveled.

Dr. Sharada recounts the stirrings of her interest in the human mind, "Even as child I had tried to comprehend why people behaved the way they did. It is the mind that decides every action. Expressing love and affection is a conscious effort, never without the mind's consent."

Dr. Sharada's parents were disappointed when she was

born. She was the eighth child and their seventh girl! Her brother was born after six girls. So they expected another boy, but she arrived in the world, much to their dismay.

Dr. Sharada Menon reminisces how she chose to be an independent thinker early in life. Most of her growing up years was spent in her sister's home. She joined Presentation Convent in Class 2, but she often went and sat in the first standard. This was because her class teacher used to terrify her with threats of exterminating her! Six months later the principal of the school found her and asked her the reason, Dr. Sharada replied, "I wanted to solve my own problems."

Her passion to pursue medicine and study why people behaved in different ways did not hold her back despite adverse family situations. Dr. Sharada first obtained her 3-year undergraduate degree in science from Women's Christian College, Chennai in just 2 years!

Her parents thought that a 5 1/2 - year medical undergraduate



degree was a great ordeal for them and for her. But she would not accept a “No” and applied for a fee waiver that was available for women students who joined medicine. This helped her stay motivated and independent.

One year of residency in Irwin Hospital, New Delhi landed her the first assignment at Pittapuram Mission Hospital in Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Sharada Menon disclosed about her first medical appointment, “I didn’t know a word of Telugu. The missionaries who ran the hospital were very strict. They expected me to converse in Telugu. Soon I had a master teaching me to read and write the language. In two months, I surprised everyone by taking lessons in Bacteriology, in Telugu!”

Dr. Sharada Menon continued, “Every medical college should have a full-fledged psychiatry department as per medical rules, but it was not to be.” She took charge as the first woman superintendent of the Institute of Mental Health, Chennai, and improved the lab and other facilities that included provision of occupational therapy and vocational activities to improve the lot of the mentally sick.

Her professional baby, SCARF was born in 1984 to offer temporary residential facility, advanced psychiatry methods of treatment, vocational training and employment opportunities for the mentally ill. It conducts research projects and awareness programmes throughout the year.

The face and voice of Dr. Sharada Menon reflected

concern as she said, “These people can be made whole. Mental illness is like any other ailment. Response to treatment should not be sidelined from the mainstream of medicine. If treatment is not given properly, relapses occur. About 20 per cent recover completely, 60 per cent need rehabilitation to come back to their original state and 20 per cent do not recover. Even with this unresponsive 20 per cent one can work on their residual ability and tap their resources toward a constructive goal. When we can tolerate a drunkard, why not a schizophrenic? Give affection. Be considerate.”

Aasha, Association of Families of Schizophrenia, was also started by her in 1985 to deal with the trauma that family members of the mentally ill go through in dealing with them.

Women like Dr. Sharada Menon make a huge difference to the world of those marginalized sections of the society that are not even aware of the stark reality! A humanitarian like her stands testimony to the exemplary and exclusive qualities women bring to the society- that of love and care. If the world chooses to learn from them and incorporate the priceless values these sentinels convey, it will be a peaceful haven for mankind to live in harmony.

Honouring Women

Knitting Dreams and Realities

Padmini Natarajan

Sivasankari has been part of the lives of many generations. Many women read her tales of the modern Indian women in Tamizh weekly magazines that came to their door through post or a local vendor....for people in Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta the issues were received days late from publication, but were eagerly anticipated.

Sivasankari was part of these women's lives and the worlds that she created through her words were familiar and yet tellingly different. Sivasankari exhumed emotions, feelings, situations, abuse and repression that many other Tamizh women were undergoing within four walls without a chance of ventilating them.

This litterateur, social chronicler, champion of women's causes and a writer who exposes and negates cultural deviations and anomalies and meaningless traditions is a great travel enthusiast, speaker and philosopher. Sivasankari is somebody who inspires, revolutionises and invigorates women.

She is a fiery, benevolent, shining, splendid sun and has been a strong influence through her writing on the Tamil literature readership. She has written about social issues

with great sensitivity and a very strong desire to make people aware about the conflicts, issues and situations that impact middle class life. Over the years she has focused on drug abuse, alcoholism, old age problems and euthanasia. Her travelogues have introduced exotic places, sounds and cultures to the armchair traveler. Her books have been serialised in magazines and television and translated into other Indian and foreign languages.

Sivasankari did her BSc (Zoology); passed out first in her college and ninth in the University. She is a Bharatanatyam dancer and has given concerts in India and abroad and is also well trained in Carnatic music. She has written 120 books over a period of 45 years. Unfortunately 35 of these wonderful novels are out of print.

Her singularly brilliant, unique epic of national importance is 'Knit India Through Literature'. This unique project took more years than Rama's vanavaasam. It is an epic like Valmiki's or Vyaasa's that was undertaken so many centuries ago. 'Knit India Through Literature' showcases great writers of all the 18 approved Indian languages. It is published with an account

of her travels in search of these literary luminaries - many famous and not-so-famous novelists, poets and short-story writer and their stories. She includes in-depth articles on the cultural and literary heritage of the respective language. The four volumes in Tamil and English focusing on the four points of the compass N, S, E, W aim at 'introducing Indians to other Indians.' The first volume SOUTH, the second volume EAST, the third volume WEST and the final volume NORTH were published in 1998, 2000, 2004 and 2009 respectively.

It has been a 'single-minded 'yajna,' one that lasted 16 years. "I wrapped up the project in June 2009. 'Knit India Through Literature' is a bilingual edition and has been a beautiful experience. The Indian constitution had 18 official languages when I started the Knit India series. I needed a boundary for my convenience and so I divided it into four regions. Even the wrapper colours of the books have been chosen as blue for the peninsula region of the south, brown for the desert region etc."

The book works on the basis of writers from all over India contributing their best pieces. "Many times the translation was not up to standard. I had to work on it quite intensively. My dream as a writer is that Knit India should go to all the libraries of schools and colleges."

This year Sivasankari will be 70 in October. For the past year and half Sivasankari, with her faithful lieutenant Lalitha has been feeding her old novels into the computer. In recent times her publisher, Vanathi Padipakkam has brought 8 of her novels to the bookshelves for sale. "No new writing," she says, "I am almost retired. This is the time of my vaanaprastha. It is not a mental slowdown but more of a giving up. I have had a lot of fulfillment and satisfaction. When giving up is voluntary, then it is a pleasure. If it is forced, be it food, dress, relationships or profession, it becomes a chore." Her traveling too has been cut down though she went on a wonderful Mediterranean cruise last November.

Sivasankari has now moved out of her bungalow into a flat. "I am living alone but I am not lonely. I have discarded a lifetime's collection of things and am now focusing on charity. I am just being realistic about the ageing process and adjusting my lifestyle to this. Food is delivered at home and my needs are minimal."

Like the 108 beads of a japamala, Sivasankari has been doing a unique deed for the past 9 years. On Sunday, 26 February she got 10 couples married - with band, baaja,





seeru, thaali and all basic necessities. This year's set brings the total to 90 couples, no mean feat. God willing in two year's time it will be 108 and complete her prayer beads!

"I should grow more and die as a good human being. Nobody is born as Hindu, Christian etc. These are acquired roles. A writer is a role that I have donned for the past 45 years. I do not believe in women writers and men writers. For me it is a woman who is a writer. If my role of a human being is disturbed by the role of a writer, then I will happily lay down the role of a writer," she states categorically.

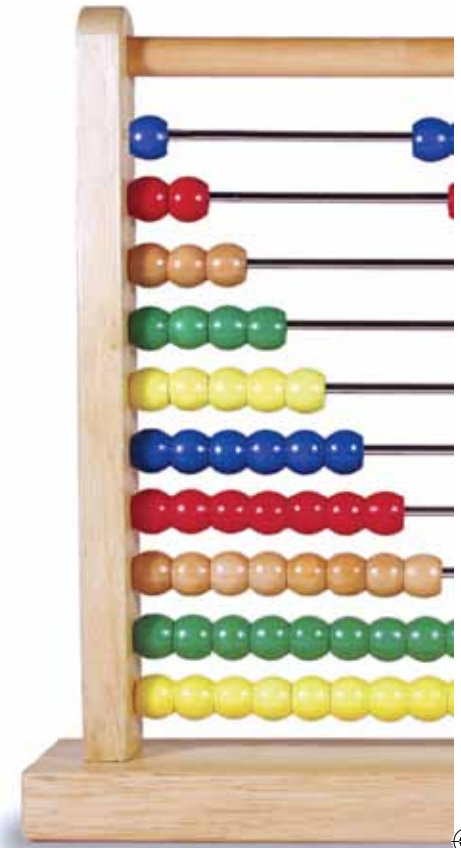
Sivasankari is the recipient of the Zee Astitva Awards for exemplary women. The Bharatiya Basha Parishad, a Calcutta based literary forum, has honoured her Verillatha Marangal as the best Tamil novel published in 1989-90. She was one of four writers selected to record her works in her own voice for the Archives of U.S. Library of Congress to mark the Bicentennial Celebration of the Library in August 2000. She also received the Rashtriya Hindi Academy "Premchand Award" at Shantiniketan.

Sadly her literary works and contribution to modern fiction and her single minded focus on society's problems is still unrecognized by the powers to be, both nationally and regionally.

Honouring Women

The Abacus Player

Padmini Natarajan

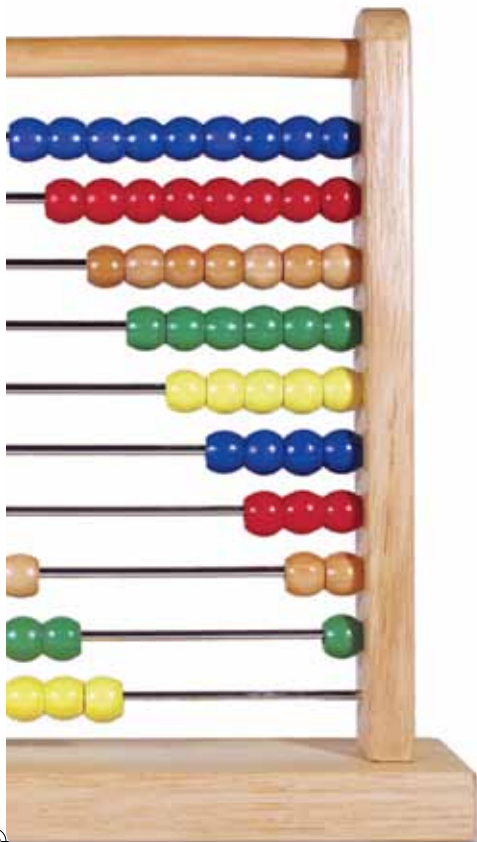


Women are able to ride different horses at different times of their lives. They are able to critically look at opportunities and move vertically or in a linear path or take a completely different trajectory from the familiar and the known. Sharada Sriram became an entrepreneur after achieving a great deal in her academic life. She stood State 2nd in her 12th Standard, was a Gold medalist in B.Com and the Best Outgoing Student from Stella Maris and then joined her

Chartered Accountancy course. A year and half later she got married and then pregnant and still managed to not only clear her CA exams but got an All India 10th rank. She also won an award for "The best paper on Auditing" in the year 1994. The icing on the cake was her becoming a Gold medalist in the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India.

Through campus recruitment, she got a coveted job as Funds Manager of Unit Trust of India. With the birth of Avinash she

decided to get involved in the family business of her father, Shri N Krishnan dealing with Hydraulics and software. "It offered me flexi-time working hours and helped me to manage kids and a profession". This she did for a few years but there was a longing to do something of her own. Then life changed when she attended the Abacus program with her son Avinash. "It was very interesting and a new concept. There I met Chitra Ravindran, we hit it off and became partners and decided to start Ideal Play Abacus India Pvt Ltd (IPA) in 2003. Today our company is an ISO 9001:2000 certified enterprise. It is affiliated to Play Abacus Malaysia and the Guang Xi Abacus Association, China".



In the nine years since inception, the company has set up over 900 centres all over India with more than 2000 trained teachers and has over 70,000 students. IPA has also recently opened centres in other countries such as Botswana, USA, UAE and Nigeria.

At the Franchise Awards 2006 event held in Delhi, Sharada won the prestigious 'Best Women Entrepreneur of the Year 2006' Award given by Franchise India and Eurokids. IPA has also other programs such as Vedic Maths, Amazing Memory (in association with Dr Yip, World Adult Memory Champion) for age 12 years and above and Handwriting programme for age 5 and above, Creative Art India, an

international art programme and 2 new English programs – Learning Box from UK and Brite English programme. IPA is launching a chain of preschools this year.

Sharada looks after the administration and finance even though she is trained in the product. "Initially we started with four centres in Chennai. Soon parents who brought their kids offered to be franchisees and this process was flagged off from Virudunagar. Our progress has been entirely through word of mouth". The basic program is spread over 1½ years and the age band is 4 to 12 years. "Our teaching English program is targeting middle income group schools and last year over 9000 students benefited from this specialised program".

The business involves a lot of travel too. "Both Chitra and I travel even though we have capable people all over the country. We have trainees based in Mumbai, Punjab, Pune and Bangalore. Any programs in other cities are taken care of by the nearest available manpower."

Two things about this business give Sharada and Chitra great satisfaction. Firstly it involves children and education. Secondly, 90% of her franchisees and course instructors are women. Her office in Chennai is entirely manned by ladies. "It is my own business and it is a lot easier to run than a 9 to 5 job. I do put in extra hours when it is needed.



When our kids need us, Chitra and I fill in for each other. It is easy to manage the work life balance and my family has been extremely supportive and this has helped a great deal".

Sharada is not merely a number cruncher; she also represented India in 1990 in the Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony as part of the cultural team in New Zealand. She was Youth artiste of All India Radio and Doordarshan singing Carnatic music. Married to a high profile raconteur, historian and author V Sriram, Sharada hides her own achievements and basks in his glory. Her sons Avinash and Abhinava are budding violinists and that is another focus of her life.

When opportunity knocks at a woman's door, it is entirely her call to respond and take advantage of it. Sharada has done just that and along with her she has opened windows of opportunity for other women. She has been an agent of change in many other lives.

Honouring Women

Education with Empathy and Responsibility

Padmini Natarajan



Vidya Shankar focuses on the most important need of children - education. It began with her lifelong interest in kids. She was a chemical engineer

but decided to change tracks. What brought her husband Shankar and Vidya together was this total involvement with children. "I used to be always

surrounded by kids. Shankar too was of the same frame of mind and we clicked just on the basis of this love for kids". With the birth of her daughter

Varsha in '90, Vidya decided to become a full time Mom.

Before marriage, Shankar and Vidya had discussed and agreed upon adopting a child as a second offspring. This endeavour came to the forefront in their lives and in '92; it began to completely take up all their interest. "There was no information available at that time. I had absolutely no idea about where to go and how to find details about the adoption process. After a great deal of enquiry I was told I could register at the Adoption Co-ordination Agency in Shenoy Nagar. Within a month we were offered a four month baby boy to adopt because at that time the waiting period was minimal. Today the procedure has become much more complex especially when there is an inter-country adoption. Vishal came into our lives and started us off on a different track altogether," says Vidya.

Her experiences as an adoptive parent combined with her interaction with other parents who have welcomed a child into their lives by choice influenced her to become an adoption educator. She is a founder Secretary of the adoptive family support group called SuDatta.

Few people think about the problems that beset delinquent children, their backgrounds and their reasons for becoming social outcasts. Vidya has been Chairperson of the Juvenile Welfare Board and Juvenile Justice Board and has zoned in on the importance of education

in a child's life.

Vidya decided that an important aspect of a child's moulding is the school. In rural areas the atmosphere, educational parameters and involvement of the stakeholders viz., child, parent and teachers, is not at an optimal level. The lackadaisical approach to education is one of the main causes of delinquency and this led her to establishing model schools in villages through a foundation and along with other educators.

Relief Foundation is involved in school reform processes for under privileged children. This helps to improve academic and systemic processes with training and financial support. The Cascade Montessori Resource Centre is her brainchild and offers Alternate Education Project. Progressive, forward thinking families who have had a pre-primary Montessori experience are invited to associate with this initiative and Home educate their children. Parents of younger children willing to stay on with the child in the centre or come in for separate sessions and learn about how to help their child at home are also welcomed. Older children are taught through co-operative learning methods. Experiential learning materials for all subjects are also provided.

"I upgraded my skills with a Montessori Diploma. I have now besides my other work for economically deprived children, started a cooperative learning centre for parents

willing to partner with their kids in education. This is crucial for saving children from spiraling into mindless hours in a regimental school. Rote learning is sabotaging education. I have qualified all kids in these kind of settings as "under-served" and am making a fervent call to parents to break away, listen to and think for their children," says Vidya.

The centre also has a vibrant library of 10000 books with both fiction and reference books to give children a range of research material, language building forums and answers to their questions about the world and its workings. Vidya says, "The revenue which I collect as charges for my sessions and usage of library goes directly to my projects for underprivileged kids in our rural schools."

Vidya concludes, "To my amazement I have found a capability in women to mother anything and everything in this world, both animate and inanimate. It has now been frittered away and the consciousness numbed. It used to be the panacea for all evils. It was the song a woman's heart always strummed till materialism won the battle!"

Vidya's goals are focused on empathy and responsibility towards the child. "A child needs to be made to feel that s/he belongs to the village, neighbourhood and not to destroy but to preserve and cherish nature." Therein lies the path to a holistic approach to sustaining life on this planet.

Honouring Women Radio Star

Dadmini Natarajan



All India Radio has had a tremendous impact on generations of women. It was the one major source of information and entertainment that had a listenership in every little village, town and city, in hills and dales and in deserts and jungles. With the advent of TV, its impact has been reduced but actually, its influence is still quite deep and meaningful.

For a woman, immersed in housework, family matters and small enterprises the radio has been a good companion and continues to be so. Despite her deceptively humble appearance, Meenakshi Selvanarayanan

has an important portfolio as Programme Executive, AIR Chennai and produces three important programs for Chennai AIR.

Meenakshi did her B Com from Lady Doak College, Madurai. Her first experience was with Illaya Baratham program dealing with Education. She is just short of 50 and has been married for 23 years. Her husband Selvanarayanan who works for Keltron has been the strong motivating factor for her career. "I actually came in here as a Duty Officer and occasionally did some compering. My job was from 10 to 5 and I was in the Feature Section. My first feature was on Thiruvallangadu. Gradually, I moved into producing shows".

"I handle Women's programs, Senior Citizen programs and also Industry based matters in a program called 'Thozhil Ulagam' that is broadcast on the fourth Thursday of every month. I also script a two minute broadcast that happens everyday

at 6.55 AM called Sutru Soozhal—a program about the environment".

Being a producer means being an Ashtaavadaani or one who is good at multi-tasking. Meenakshi has to manage planning programs recording, editing and dubbing. "I have a few casual assistant including a male, Jagadeesan and three ladies including Jayalakshmi, Kaveena and Rajarajeswari, who have been trained. We have three comperes - Uma Jayachandran, Anbaras Selvaraj and Vijay to anchor the shows. With these people I put out three major programs".



'Magalir Poonga' is broadcast three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 1.45 PM. "It deals with women's issues such as how to manage work-life issues. We have an opinion poll over the phone that is very popular. We also have a segment called

'Ennachaaram' which is a thought process that is mixed with music. 'Magalir Medai' offers a platform for women achievers to be interviewed".

A Seniors' program goes out on Saturdays between 1 and 1.45 PM. "We deal with issues that affect elders like loneliness,

finance, relationships and health too."

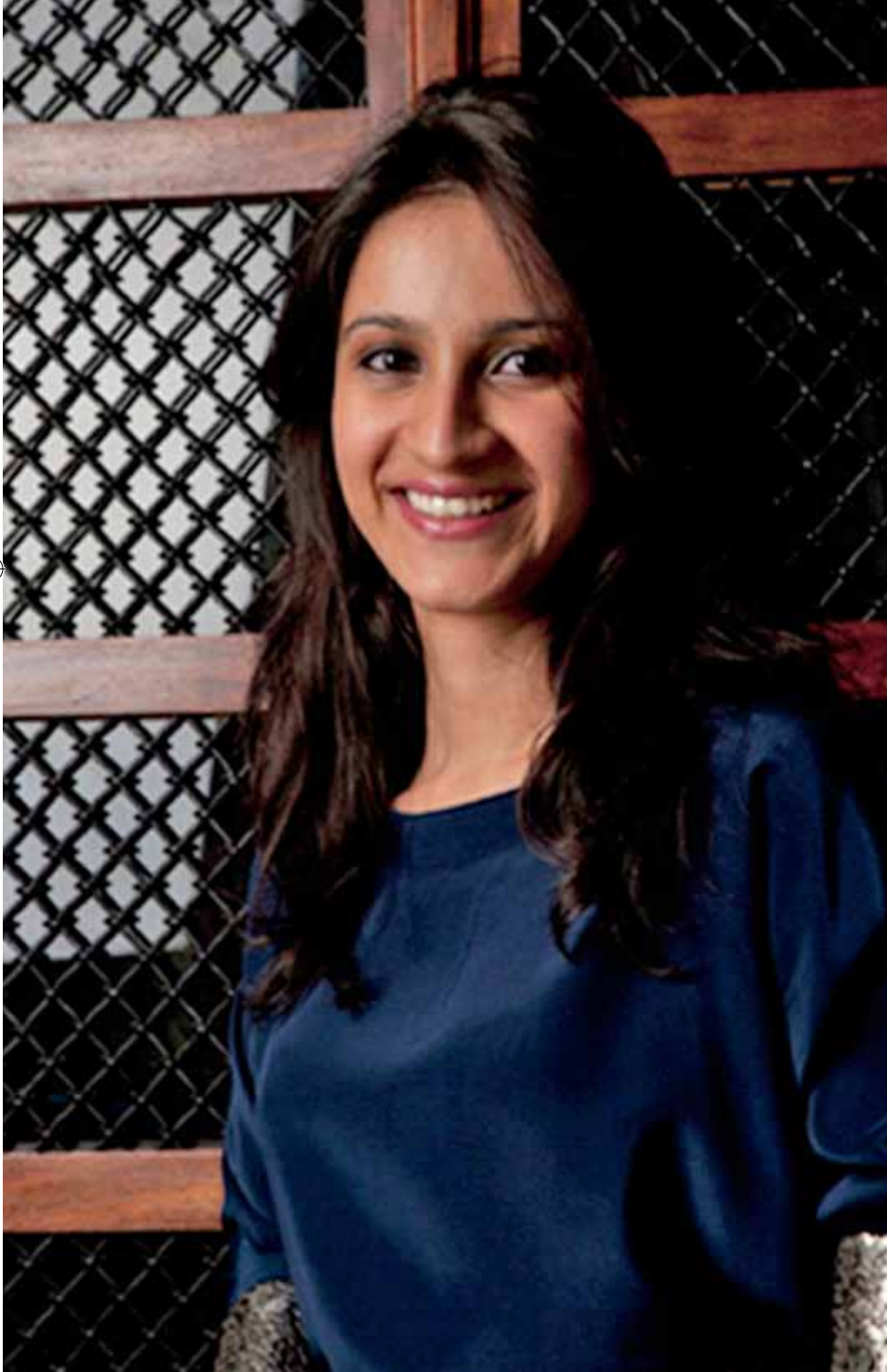
Meenakshi has a 22 year old son who is in the IT field. Her hobbies are reading and cooking and she loves to experiment with new recipes that also find their way into her programs. Though simple in demeanour, she is able to express herself very well. Her empathy with her target audience helps make her programs very popular. She is easily able to handle issues at the grass root level and also understands and offers perspectives to urban family problems.

The radio continues to reach a large audience and Meenakshi has her hand firmly on the pulse of this multi-layered listener audience.



Honouring Women

Grooming a Successful Portal

Gayatri T Rao

"Fashion should be effortless and so should your online buying experience. Pret-Amoda strives very hard to bring you established and up-coming designers from across India and showcase their best ware for you to browse and purchase. An effortless online shopping destination, Pret-Amoda.com brings chic and fabulous designer fashion from India to your doorstep. An exclusive boutique, we feature individually handpicked pieces of the latest and hottest fashion from India's coveted fashion designers." That's the way the fashion website advertises. This not-entirely new website is a brain child of Ritika Walia.

It is interesting how Ritika conceived the website. Armed with M.A. in Fashion Merchandising and Management and a chunk of experience from corporate fashion houses in London and then India, she decided to sell high fashion products through a website. She says, "I wanted to apply the same retail concept to established Indian designer brands. I also wanted to provide an accessible space for the growing pool of extremely talented and commercially viable emerging labels; to give them an opportunity to showcase their products on an international platform. After an



in-depth research into the market, I was motivated to create an e-commerce store that would be an exclusive retail channel, an interface that is simple to use and easily accessible for shoppers of Indian inspired fashion from around the world. Pret-amoda.com was launched in June 2010 to address this need!”

According to her, the only qualifications required to run such a website, is “a fantastic vision and a persistent drive to follow it through.”

She explains, “Experimental yet completely simple to use, this website is more than just an online shop. Its features – shopping across categories, ordering front row fashion, luxury packaging and dedicated worldwide deliveries, inspiring every fashion hungry style seeker to explore their individual style and creativity.”

But today there are quite a few websites selling fashion items. Ritika differentiates, Pret-Amoda’s uniqueness lies in its ability to curate fashion with content. She says, “Our buyers bring a certain aesthetic and commercial appeal in our selection of products from across the country and combine it with suitable content that makes it a direct purchase for the consumer. We put together themes and looks based on their research and trend predictions and link it with stylised looks that gives our shopper a sense of how she would wear what.” She continues, “Pret-Amoda is for the trend setter as well as the fashion follower – a woman who knows her style and won’t hesitate to experiment with it. Our online boutique covers shopping across categories - jackets, tunics, tops, sarees, jewelry, shoes, bags and home decor.”

Competition, thy name is Woman

Priyanka Sakhamuru

Women over time are known to move about in groups. The groups are determined on the basis of several factors. For example, stylish women stick together. Similarly girls who are studious form a group. The list goes on. However when a new girl or woman enters the picture, she is measured and dissected. If she fits their "requirements" she is accepted or she is treated as an outcast. For reasons unknown she is tormented or targeted. Quite a few women have experienced this situation at some point in their lives. This Women's Day, let us explore into the whys and wherefores of this competition.

Sonal Belamkar, 28, a beautician says that when a woman wants to make another woman suffer, she can do it. "She can go to any extent to compete with another woman.

The reason can be petty or even important. If a girl or woman finds that another girl is different from her, then she can make life hell for her. Women have strong emotions and they exhibit them without any difficulty," says Sonal.

According to Radhika Gupta, a Class VIII student of DPS, she and her classmates generally seek attention from their teachers and boys. "Generally a teacher pays more attention to a girl who studies well. In such cases, I would try to improve

myself so that I will be visible to my teacher," she says. Radhika also goes on to say that, if her friend is better looking than she is, she will accept her for who she is and not be jealous of her. "Moreover, all the girls in my class are very nice and have no hard feelings towards one other," Radhika sums up.

Quite a few are of the opinion that our reaction to such a situation depends on our attitude towards competition



which is either positive or negative. Sushila Sharma, Treasurer of A.P. IAS Officers' Wives Association says that jealousy is a natural feeling. "It generally occurs when another woman has some quality which you don't have. If we are good at grasping knowledge then, we can try to improve ourselves. If we are not capable of that, we in turn feel jealous. Moreover if there's a newcomer in our group, we will look at not only the way she dresses but also the way she talks and behaves.

If she looks cultured we will welcome her. On the whole, how we react is up to us," she states firmly.

Smita Pradhan, a Psychology Lecturer at a local Degree College explains that there are primarily three reasons why competition exists among women. First being restricting and contradictory gender roles. "In other words, all women want to be stylish and beautiful always. Secondly, it is due to the mutual distrust caused by economic and ethnic differences. For example, girls or women belonging to one particular caste or social status hang out together. There is no understanding among people of different castes, so they don't share anything and this leads to distrust. Reason number three is the desire for inclusion. They accentuate their similarities and highlight their differences," elaborates Smita.

Who are the targets? Smita says that it is always someone who is better than you. Either you try to get even or react positively. The most common opinion shared is that a lady, who does not have the ability to handle rejection, makes the other woman the target. So, the best way to tackle competition is to understand your priorities and use them to get ahead.

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Get Fit 28
Friends 32
Pass Board 34



Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE, Jane Eyre

TEEN MAG

Essence of Feminism

*From
Kirithi's Desk....*



You might notice a slight change in my name- and in all hindsight, I think it couldn't have come at a better time! I've chosen my mother's name, Gita, as my middle name, and no, it isn't an empty move after being influenced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, nor an overt assertion of a feminist stance. It was, though, a product of simple rumination- if a father's name is a must for a child, why not a mother's name, as a suffix?

Nevertheless, this month, in keeping with Women's Day, I am going to tell you a little of what I learned from my work with Women in battlefields and war zones- in Afghanistan and DR Congo.

As the war began in Afghanistan, women's rights were among the

first things to take a beating. When a stadium full of people in Kabul witnessed the execution of a woman was filmed by the RAWA and submitted to the BBC and CNN in vain, it was subsequently taken up by the Pentagon and (ab)used extensively to fuel the war in a bid to offer justice. The Taliban treated its women brutally. Girls were kept from going to school. Women were subjected to downright unacceptable treatment. In DR Congo when rebellious populace moved out of Rwanda after the Rwandan Genocide to escape punishment, a thriving culture of impunity coupled with an unholy compatriot in the form of a culture of silence rendered any institutional arrangement of women's rights redundant. Women were raped and kept as sexual slaves, deprived of schooling and working rights, subjugated to horrific torture, and left bereft of a normal life. Even as I write this, and as you read this, girls in Afghanistan and DR Congo are still picking up pieces of their lives, hoping to put them together someday.

The nature of the continued conflict's impact on gender roles in society has also to be understood. Women are, no doubt, the primary victims of

the war in Afghanistan, as is the case with war of any kind in any place. Women experience violence from all quarters, be they enemies or friends. Conflict itself is known to polarize gender roles. The sheer magnitude of violence meted out against a society sends men into more aggressive forms, while the women are sent in the other direction of sheer docility, as the representatives of their social structure, as the bearers of a cultural identity, as the WHO puts it. Just as in any other war, the bodies of women are the new battleground. The war shifts to their bodies.

This story is not without a message. When you come across activists, feminists, rights fighters, always remember to look for the truth of their cause. There are those who are fanatical, there are those who are jingoistic. But sift the matter about, separate the grain from the chaff. Feminism is not about empty rhetoric, it is not about being a bra-burning liberal, or a girl who demands her rights when she is already given them. Speak up for a woman in need, for a woman whose rights are truly deprived. That is the true essence of feminism.

*Until next month,
Kirithi Gita Jayakumar*

Stress Distress Among COLLEGE STUDENTS

TEEN MAG



Dhivikram: Family problems, love life , studies..

Archana: Parents pressurizing children to study something they are not interested... too much competition (everyone wants to be first .. no one is content.. they always want more..

Shrinath: Worry about the future, pressure to get job , at times also to get into good university for higher study.

Arabi : Peer pressure , need to fit into society, to get accepted by others. There is a need to look a certain way, hang out in specific places to get accepted by others, or simply to be called "cool".

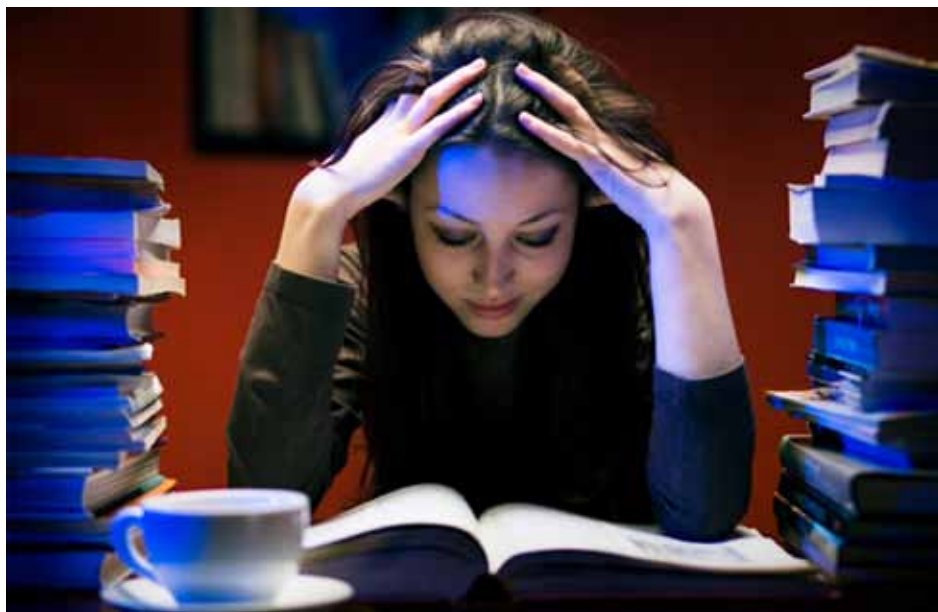
Smrithi : Pressure from global arena and to settle in a good position.

Lalith: Exams, too much pressure for high scores due to system. In some cases parental pressure as well

expectations from adults, need to balance social and academic life. Sometimes it can be adjusting to new surrounding and people

Sneha: Peer pressure, heavy

A.G : The inability to cope up with examinations is a major cause of stress to students. The multitude of available courses and the respective entrance exams just add on to the existing pressure. There is no breathing time for students in between different sets of examinations. The worst hit are the science students, who go for coaching even when they are in standard 10. Should they prepare for their board exams or the entrance? Parental expectations and peer pressure can be other causes.



TEEN *Get Fit Without* Sacrificing that Chocolate

MAG

Namrata Amarnath



In every television channel, book, magazine, newspaper, hoarding and website, we see them. Yes, we're talking about those models, with their perfect, voluptuous figures—shapely legs, tiny waists, rounded hips and slender arms,

achieved after hours of vigorous workouts and a diet of salads and wheat-bran. How many hours have girls spent before the mirror, wishing they were a few sizes smaller, wishing they had better bodies, wishing that they could magically shrink a few

sizes without compromising on that sinful death-by-chocolate? Well, practically speaking, it would be next to impossible to attain those nubile figures sported by most models, but definitely, we can make an effort to achieve a figure that is both attractive and healthy.

So stop chomping on rabbit-food and get ready to shape up.

Starting with food, first remove all the fatty food from your diet. This includes butter, ghee, oil, fried-food, chocolates, pizza, fizzy drinks, etc.

Replace your milk with skim milk. Substitute white bread with brown bread or whole meal bread. This is reduces your carbohydrate intake. You can include some low-fat cheese for breakfast, as cheese contains more protein than fat, unlike butter.

In between breakfast and lunch, have a fruit—some juicy chunks of watermelon, or maybe an apple or a pear. This makes you less hungry during lunch.

Have a normal, healthy lunch. Don't cut down on your lunch, as this is likely to leave you hungry, and you could end up on a binge later on.

In the evening, have a glass of skim milk, maybe a few biscuits, and a fruit.

Have a light dinner in the night, but don't skip meals.

Keep slurping glasses of freshly squeezed juice in case you feel hungry during the day. Remember, no add sugar!

Have at least ten glasses of water a day. It cleanses your body, and sometimes, people tend to snack even when they aren't hungry. To avoid that, drink plenty of water.

When it comes to exercise, don't do vigorous workouts. Try to join an aerobics class, or go swimming. Do stomach crunches every night to flatten your stomach. Skipping is another great exercise that can flatten your stomach, and tone your thighs and arms. Two hundred skips a day will do the trick. In case you're really keen on shedding off a few pounds, do the gym for an hour a day.

However, don't deprive yourself of the food you'd very much like to eat. Once a week, it's all right to indulge in a thick slice of chocolate cake, or a pizza with extra cheese. For chocoholics, here's good news for you! Maybe that milk chocolate you've been wolfing down has added to your waistline, but dark-chocolate is completely harmless when consumed in small quantities. So you can add four squares of dark-chocolate to your diet, probably once in three days. Dark chocolate contains antioxidants, which is very good for the heart, and it also has anti-aging properties.

You can also have a scoop of vanilla ice-cream once in three days, immediately after your

workout, because that's when your metabolism-rate is very high. But you'll have to increase your workout time by fifteen minutes.

For fizzy drink lovers, there's always Diet Pepsi and Diet Coke to keep you going. However, having too much of these is likely to cause health hazards. After all, nothing like freshly-squeezed fruit juice.

In case you do, on an impulse, go on a binge, don't get disheartened. The summer has only just begun. So encourage yourself and get back to your diet the very next day.

If you strictly discipline your diet, eat healthy and in moderation, by the end of the summer, you'll have a body to die for.

However, it isn't necessary to go for the svelte look. Nowadays, the curvy, sensuous figure is more in demand. So for those of you who're happy the way you are, cheers to you. It's a good thing that you can accept and love yourself the way you are. As we all know, looks barely matter today. It's the way you carry yourself in your skin that does. People should love you for who you are, and not what you look like. Those people who do love you for your looks, they're really not worth it. You deserve a lot better.

So don your best clothes, plaster your best smile and let the sun douse you with its incandescent rays. Life is simply glorious!



Know your BMI

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and women. BMI uses a mathematical formula and equals a person's weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. You can calculate your BMI with the help of your dietician and work out a diet pattern for a healthy lifestyle.

If your BMI is	You are
18.5 or less	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Normal
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight
30.0 - 34.9	Obese
35.0 - 39.9	Obese
40 or greater	Extremely Obese

TEEN *Canteen Banter* Your Cuppa Calories!

MAG



Every time you stir in a teaspoon of sugar in your cup of tea or coffee you add 32 calories!

To determine whether you have a potbelly, divide your waist measurement by hip measurement taken around the butt. If the figure you get is more than 0.85, then you may be said to be loaded with a royal paunch!

It is not true that only fat people need to exercise to keep help them lose weight and the slim ones need not exercise. The truth is that exercise helps everyone to stay fit!

People often assume that when they stop exercising, their weight will increase. Actually, it is because they don't cut own on calories when they cut on exercise that they put on weight.

To Do or Not To Do

Don't aim at losing extra weight miraculously. There are no

short cuts. To lose weight you not only need to decrease food intake wisely, but also increase the level of physical activity.

A warm-up before exercise is good for you. It increases muscle elasticity and helps you to perform your exercises effectively. For warm-up go for light joint movements, stretching or spot jogging for a few minutes.

Too much exercise can have disastrous effect too. Rigorous exercise can cause stress to muscles, tendons and other parts of the musculoskeletal system. So don't aim at losing weight dramatically and over do physical activity!

Spot reduction is an illusion. Exercising one set of muscles will not melt fat from that area. When stored fat is burnt, it is taken from all over your body, not just where the activity is centred, say a few experts!

Diet Secrets

The diet must be nutritionally well-balanced, containing



adequate amount of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins. Crash diets, fasting and fad diets may affect your health over a period of time.

To avoid a boring diet, eat a variety of foods.

Spread your intake of calories throughout the day to match the calories used off during your daily activities.

Avoid large meals and excessive snacks in the evening when the activity levels are generally low

Low-calories and low-fat foods between meals will help in a weight reduction programme and will help you eat less

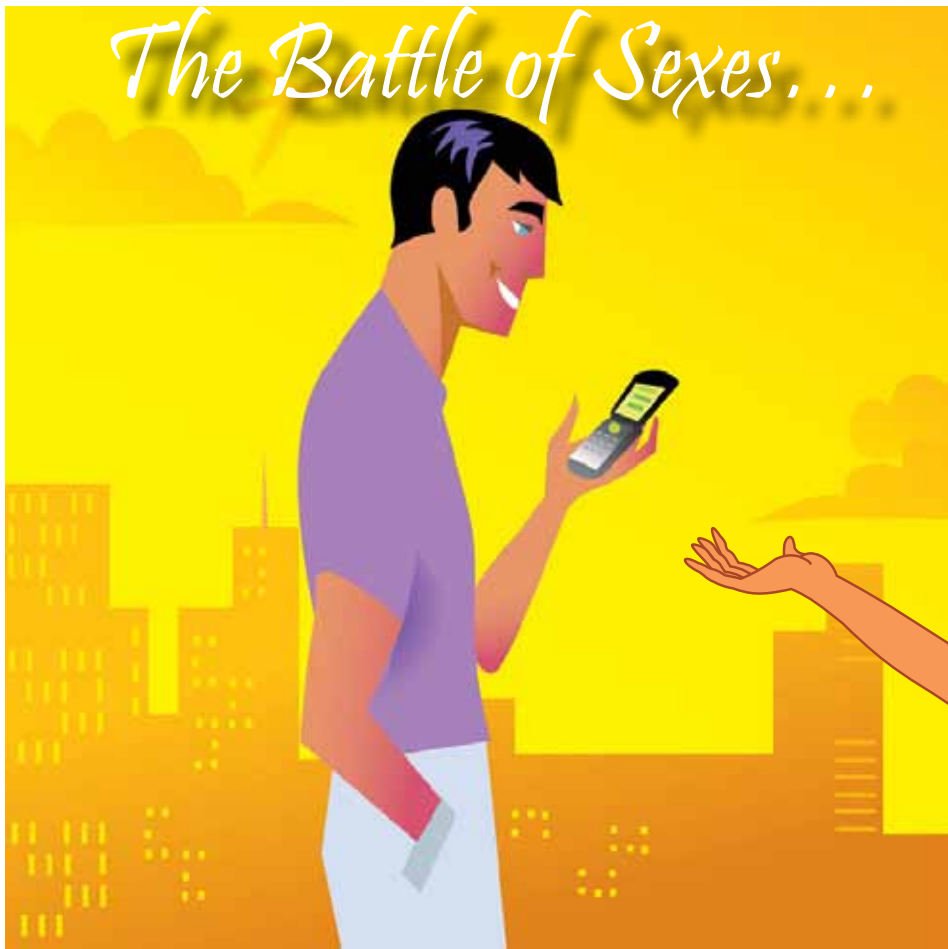
Avoid Buffet meals like plague. As long as the food remains on the table, the temptation is too much to resist.

Try to drink a glass or two of water before a meal.

Go for skimmed milk. It has all the nutrients that whole milk has. Switch to margarine instead of butter, use paneer instead of cheese. Eat more vegetables and whole grains.

For Non-veggies- eat more fish and less meat, less meat and more vegetables. Trim off the fat when you cook meat, remove the skin from chicken.

Grill bake or steam the food instead of frying.



1. A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man.

2. Men wake up as good-looking as they were when they went to bed. Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

3. A man will pay Rs. 200 for a Rs. 100 item he wants. A woman will pay Rs.100 for a Rs.200 item that she doesn't want.

4. A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't. A man marries

a woman expecting that she won't change, and she does.

5. There are two times when a man doesn't understand a woman- before and after marriage.

6. A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband. A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

7. To be happy with a man, you must understand him a lot and love him a little. To be happy with a woman, you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all.

TEEN MAG

Best Friends Forever

Priyanka Sakhamuru



There are several nuances when it comes to friendship among women. Best friends, close friends, good friends, et al; it makes a lot of difference in the relationship. They might be inseparable one day, but some events test their friendship. They fall-out, they patch-up. Here are a few examples of movies which are based on friends.

Sex and the City: Based on the series, the rom-com is about the friendship between four women living in the New York City. Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah

Jessica Parker), Samantha Jones (Kim Cattrall), Charlotte York Goldenblatt (Kristin Davis), and Miranda Hobbes (Cynthia Nixon) are like any other friends. They have many things in common, but are still different from each other. They are supportive of each other and close as they are, they still experience difference of opinions, have little fights et al. This movie brings out the joys of female companionship and how true friendships help you along in your life.

The Sisterhood of Travelling

Pants: A film based on the novel *The Sisterhood of Travelling Pants* by Ann Brashares, it describes the magical connection between close friends. The story revolves around four girls - Amber Tamblyn as Tabitha "Tibby" Tomko-Rollins, America Ferrera as Carmen Lowell, Alexis Bledel as Lena Kaligaris, and Blake Lively as Bridget Vreeland and their lives and a pair of jeans which "magically" fits them, though the girls are not of the same size. When the girls separate for the summer, they share the pants so that they

can still be together even if they are apart. In real life, girls seal the bond between their friends with charm bracelets, earrings and the like. In some cases, the connection stays for life.

Clueless: Loosely based on Jane Austen's novel – Emma, this movie is about the ideals and aspirations of teenage girls on the brink of womanhood. Cher (Alicia Silverstone) and her friends Dione (Stacey Dash), and Tai (Brittany Murphy) are high school students in the super-swank neighbourhood of Beverly Hills. Cher's and her friends' time is spent in shopping and parties. When popularity is a position that matters, friendship takes a backseat. As the saying goes, pride goes before a fall, Cher realizes her folly and tries to mend ways to win back the friendship of Tai and the others. This movie brings out the subtle rivalries among friends and how they try to deal with them.

Julie and Julia: An American film starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams as Julia Child and Julie Powell respectively, it describes about Julia's culinary career and Julie's love for cooking. Julie's work-life is unpleasant and she keeps herself happy by cooking. She decides to cook every recipe from Julia Child's book 'Mastering the Art of French Cooking' in a matter of one year. Julie's fascination for Julia becomes an obsession after a while, but one cannot miss the satisfaction she feels when she accomplishes Julia's recipes. Sharing recipes is a timeless act. In a cosmic way, the two women are bound by the joys of cooking.



Yeah Write

Being over 50 does have its advantages...



1. Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
2. In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.
3. No one expects you to run into a burning building.
4. People call at 9 p.m. and ask, "Did I wake you?"
5. People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
6. There's nothing left to learn the hard way.
7. Things you buy now won't wear out.
8. You can eat dinner at 4 p.m.
9. You can live without sex (but not without glasses).
10. You enjoy hearing about other people's operations.
11. You get into a heated argument about pension plans.
12. You have a party and the neighbors don't even realize it.
13. You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
14. You quit trying to hold your stomach in, no matter who walks into the room.
15. You sing along with the elevator music.
16. Your eyes won't get much worse.
17. Your investment in health insurance is finally beginning to pay off.
18. Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the National Weather Service.
19. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
20. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size.

TEEN MAG

Pass Board To Success



doesn't mean before sunset. It means a decent hour that you would like to get up from bed..... 5.30 or 6.00 am is good enough. But once you are up, don't waste time. Take your cup of tea or coffee and enter your study room. You should have already planned the subject and chapter for the next day and kept the books, note books, extra notes, guide books and other paraphernalia ready on your study table for starting right away. Study continuously for an hour or two. A better idea will be- till your breakfast. Before you decide the time to get up for breakfast, leave the last fifteen minutes for revising what you have just studied. Every time you take a break, remember to revise what you have studied.

Examinations are round the corner. Having chalked out your study plan, chosen the subjects to study and made your time-table, it is time now to decide on the number of hours you must study, when and how much you should study.

Before anything else, let me tell you, never feel the pressure of the exams and get bogged down by a strict regimen. After all, YOU are going to decide your own schedule. Hence, be kind to your self a little, be strict too, or else, your mind will play tricks!

If you are a morning person, then the best time is to get up early in the morning. This

After a relaxing wash, a wholesome breakfast and some lighter moments when you can read the newspaper or browse through a magazine, get back to your study room and go on until lunch with a break of fifteen minutes to have a little buttermilk, juice or tea.

The time after lunch should be set apart for a major break when you can watch a small programme in the TV or resort to light reading or just talk to your friends or family members. It is a good idea to intersperse your breaks with a little stretching or bending



exercises just before you return to study. It will keep your body and mind agile. Or you can take a short walk in a shady area around your home or street. Your study session after lunch should be long too after the long break till tea time, which can be short. Definitely, include a small exercise during tea time, before you eat. Freshen up, have your snacks and return to study and go on till dinner. Dinner time can be normal time when you relish your meal with your family members, talking about everything else but studies. If you have a hobby like music, playing keyboard or an instrument or painting, try to include it in your daily routine. Those who play a sport or learn dance can include it in their time table and dispense with other means of exercises. Remember, continuing your hobby, or a sport amidst examinations is not a big crime... in fact; it is a positive reinforcement for



plan is a good mix of studying, physical activity, family interactions, a light hobby or relaxation and a cool attitude... there's no doubt that whatever you have learnt during the entire year will surface when you look at the question paper. Three Cheers and Best of Luck!



your brain. But let it be a mild and constructive distraction to freshen up your mind and lift your spirits.

Night birds can study during the wee hours of the night and work out a similar time table. Include your hobby, relaxation and physical exercises during the day time, have a little nap and study continuously during the night. You can have short breaks during the night too when you can get up to make yourself a cup of tea or a small, protein-rich snack to stop your stomach from grumbling.

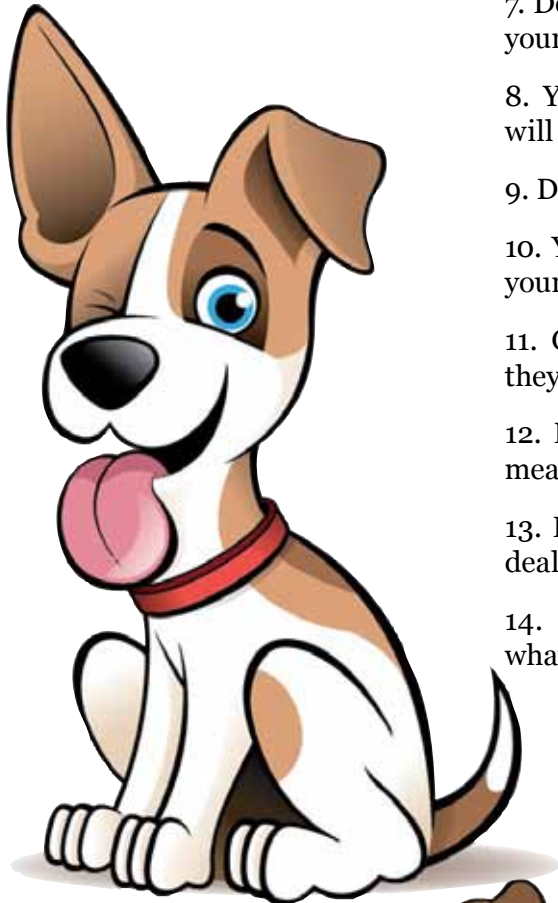
Night or day, instead of studying continuously, if your study-



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Yeah Witte

Why Dogs are better than "Men"?

- A Frustrated Woman!

7. Dogs don't feel threatened by your intelligence.

8. You can train a dog and it will even get your newspaper.

9. Dogs are easy to buy for.

10. You are never suspicious of your dog's dreams.

11. Gorgeous dogs don't know they're gorgeous.

12. Dogs understand what 'no' means.

13. Dogs don't need therapy to deal with their problems.

14. Dogs are happy with whatever you feed them.



1. Dogs do not have problems expressing affection in public.

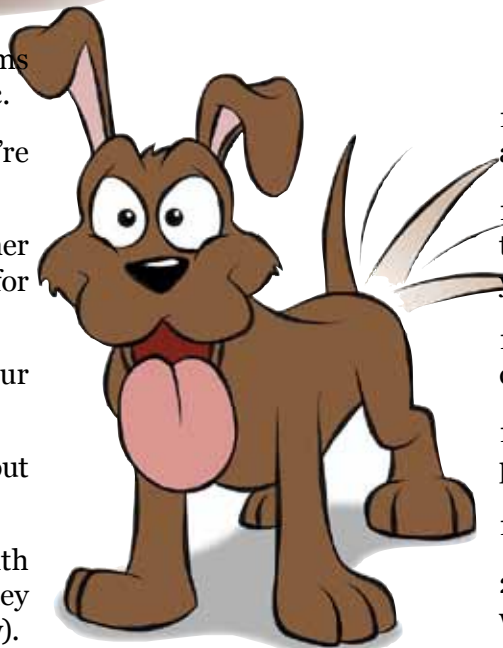
2. Dogs miss you when you're gone.

3. You never wonder whether your dog is good enough for you.

4. Dogs don't criticize your friends.

5. Dogs are very direct about wanting to go out.

6. Dogs do not play games with you -- except fetch (and they never laugh at how you throw).



15. You can force a dog to take a bath.

16. Middle-aged dogs don't feel the need to abandon you for a younger owner.

17. Dogs don't borrow your credit cards or cellular phone.

18. Dogs don't weigh down your purse with their stuff.

19. Dogs don't play video games.

20. Dogs don't drink beer or watch football

Salt n' Pepper Korner

My husband is a diabetic. I am unable to think of some good snack for him during teatime. Can you suggest some good snacks for diabetics?

Sharada Ramanathan, Chennai

All snacks that are steamed or made with less oil are good

for diabetics. I have brought out a special cookery book for diabetics, which is available in the market. You can make a variety of snacks for diabetics. Try to include a lot of sprouts and fresh vegetables and creatively turn out ordinary recipes into special, tasty snacks for diabetics. You can

make different varieties of sandwiches, stuffed chappathis, dosas, idlis, pidi kozhukattais, upmas and kichris with dhal combinations, noodles with a lot of vegetables (you get wheat noodles in the market) dhokla, steamed vegetable adais, idiyappam, etc.



Mallika's Special Recipes for Diabetics

Papaya Halwa

Ingredients

- Papaya diced 1 cup
- Skimmed Milk Powder 2 Tbsps
- Artificial sweeteners 5 small sachets
- Cardamom, powdered one pinch
- Saffron one pinch

Method

Keep the diced papaya in a thick-bottomed pan and stir. When the paste dries, sprinkle milk powder over it and stir. Add cardamom powder and saffron. When it cools, mix the artificial sweetener and serve.

Quantity: One serving for six persons

Nutrient Details (For one person, one serving)

Calories	21
Carbohydrate	3.6 gms
Protein	1.5 grams
Fat	0.07 grams

Sprouted Chana Sandwich

Ingredients

- Wheat Bread 8 slices
- Grated onions 50 grams
- Grated tomatoes 50 grams
- Grated carrots 50 grams
- Grated mint, coriander leaves 10 grams
- Finely cut green chillies 2
- Lemon juice to taste
- For Preparing Sprouted Chana Chutney
- Sprouted chana 100 grams
- Red Chillies 2
- Jeera 1/2 tsp
- Salt to taste

Method

Cook the sprouted gram in a

pressure cooker for ten minutes.

Grind the red chillies, jeera and salt first and then add the boiled chana and grind coarsely.

Spread a little sauce or green mint chutney over a bread slice and spread the chana chutney over it.

Over this place grated carrot and other vegetable gratings, green chillies, salt, finely grated fresh coriander and mint and squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over this mixture.

Keep another slice covered with chutney and place it over the first slice and serve immediately.

Nutrient Details for one Sandwich

Calories	105
Carbohydrate	18 gms
Protein	5 gms
Fat	1.5 gms

Courtesy 300 vegetarian Recipes for diabetics by Mallika Badrinath

Cook & Smile Easy Recipes

Marriage season also means a lot of relatives and friends visiting you. Turn out a delectable meal and delight your guests. Its party meal for the season!

Chicken a la King



Ingredients

Sliced mushrooms	1 cup
Chopped green pepper	¼ cup
Flour	3 tbsp
Butter or oil	¼ cup
Salt	to taste
Pepper powder	to taste
Curry powder	1 ¼ tbsp
Milk	2 cups
Finely diced chicken	2 ½ cups
Egg	1

Method

Lightly brown mushrooms and green peppers in ¼ cup butter. You can use oil if you want to make a low calorie dish. Add flour and blend well. Add milk, curry powder, pepper powder and salt. If you want to make the dish spicy, add a tsp of red chilly powder. Cook and stir till thick. Stir some of the hot mixture into the egg yolk and add it to the remaining hot mixture. Cook a minute or two, stirring constantly. Add chicken and cook. Serve on biscuits, toast or with rice.

Serves 4



Ingredients

Rice	400 gms
Water	650 ml
Spring onions sliced	100 gms
French beans, diced	25 gms
Carrots, thinly sliced	100 gms
Shelled peas	50 gms
Vinegar	1 tbsp
Soya sauce	1 tbsp
Chilli sauce	2 tbsp
Anjinomoto (optional)	a pinch
Oil	3 tbsp
Salt	to taste

Method

Wash and soak the rice in water for half an hour. Drain and keep aside.

Pour the rice in a 1.5 litre deep dish with water, salt and 1 tsp oil. Microwave, partially covered on 100% power for 12 – 14 min.

Allow to stand covered for 10 min.

Heat oil in a 2 litre deep dish on 100% power for 1:00 min. add the spring onions and microwave on 100% power for 2:00 mins.

Add the vegetables, salt and anjinomoto and microwave on 100% power for 2:00 mins.

Add the remaining ingredients and boiled rice. Mix well and microwave on 60% power for 2:00 min.

Mix well and serve hot.

Jus'Ask Brinda



Eve's Times is happy to announce that Family Therapist and Parent-Teacher educator Brinda Jayaraman will answer any query you want to ask relating to family and interpersonal interactions. Send in your questions to editorevestimes@gmail.com or to our office directly.

I am a young man of 24 years. I have severe leucoderma and

I feel very embarrassed to interact with anybody other than my family members. I have read about several motivating articles on how physical attributes do not make a difference, how to overcome weakness and try to practice as much as possible. But what can the future hold for a person like me? (I am sure I cannot have a family of my own, though I have a good career.)

Your frustration reflects in your letter. You will become that which you think you are! If you think you do not have a future, no effort is going to work! Failure of your efforts is due to this baseline in your thinking. Look for people who are worse than you are in life and learn how they have changed their adversity into advantage. You

will get inspired and motivated. Inspiration works at the thought level and motivation, at the action level. The silver lining I see is that you have come up well in your career. Compensate by diverting your mind to activities that would enhance your talents. Compensation, a psychological defense mechanism, helps an individual make up for what s/he has lost- in your case optimism about life. Please do not attempt to compare yourself with others and end up in frustration! A pessimist looks at the letter 'O' as the last letter in 'Zero'; an optimist sees 'O' as the first letter in 'Opportunity!' Autosuggestion helps in fine tuning our minds towards positive thinking. Keep reading some positive statements, hearing positive people and recalling a positive role model. "More of ears, more of eyes and less of mouth make a person wise." Come on young man, find the treasure of life which is within you! Face your problem boldly and tell yourself 'So what?'

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Honouring Women

Entertainment Enterprise

Gayatri T Rao

“Women can do anything. If you have the will power and make up your mind, you can do anything in life. Any enterprise taken up with dignity and dedication can garner goodwill for you in the society,” says Mrs. Sadhna Romy, partner of a renowned nightclub in Mumbai.

This goes to say that Indian women are no longer treated as show pieces to be kept at home. Having overcome constraining circumstances for years, today Indian women have ventured into various fields and encountered great success. They are not only successful entrepreneurs, but are also doing a wonderful job striking a balance between their home and career. A case in point in

Mumbai is the only Mother – Daughter pair of restaurateurs of a renowned nightclub which ranks among the most sought after by party aficionados for the past nine years.

Set up in 2003 by late Mr. Romy, who conceptualized and started The Shack, it moved to the hands of his wife Sadhna after his demise. Sadhna had to manage the nightclub all by herself. When she took up this enterprise, she was criticized by her family. They were critical of the fact that she had to stay at work till 2am. Then there was the BMC to contend with. But she did not lose heart. There was a time when she could not even sign a cheque. She has evolved to become a discerning business woman. The Hawaiian

Shack in Bandra has developed into a cult among Mumbaikars who are connoisseurs of food and liquor. Her daughter Sheen Lalwani has joined the business. Sheen Romy is an architect from the UK. She has designed the second level of their second outlet in Juhu. The Shack is a family run business with an in-house team of creative people.

“Although it has been a tough and challenging journey for me over the past nine years since my dear husband passed away, I have managed to sustain loyal frequenters, attract newer crowds and have also created an identity for The Shack which is unlike any other night-club in the city,” says Sadhna.

According to Sheen the support system of any business is the staff members and the clients. The Shack has been attracting the crème-de-la-crème and the hip ‘n’ happening bevy of Mumbaikars on a regular basis; especially when the party loving crowd is in a mood for a short break from the hustle-bustle of their everyday routine. Sheen says, “In Mumbai city youngsters have started partying more during the past few years. Even during weekdays people are out partying, despite the increase in liquor prices.”

Sheen has chalked out a blueprint for the success of their new outlet, just like the one in Bandra. Converting it into a brand is her next challenge. The mother-daughter duo continues their entrepreneurial saga on an optimistic note.

Honouring Women *Intervention of The Divine* Valsala Menon



It was on a train to Kerala that I met Jalaja and her friends. Her “friends” were not just a few in number but an amazing team of 30 ladies, in their mid forties and fifties. Jalaja bustled around checking out berths, tickets and ensuring that everyone was safe and fine. Something about the entire lot struck a chord of curiosity and intrigue and that prompted me to ask one of them, as to where they were heading for.

Thenmozhi, one of the ladies smiled in reply and told me they were all residing in KK Nagar in Chennai, and were united in conducting ‘Narayaneeyam parayanam’ in various temples within the state. On request, they travel out to other cities and towns to give recitals. What she said next had me floored. “Everyone seems to think that once our children are grown up and settled, women like us are left with no

interests, hobbies or passions of our own and they decide to dump their kids on us. We do love our grandchildren, but we too are not old or willing to be relegated to the back ground. Now it's our turn to venture out on our own, and do what we like to do.”

Well said, indeed. I wanted to know more and I was guided to meet their team leader Ms Jalaja Gopalakrishnan. Incidentally, the entire bevy of ladies was on their way to Guruvayur for a Narayaneeyam recital.

Later, in Chennai, on speaking to Jalaja, she explained briefly about how it had all started out. Born and brought up in Pathanapuram in Kollam district of Kerala, Jalaja had been deeply interested in learning Sanskrit. This coupled with her mother's devoted Bhagavathaparayanam had left deep imprints on her mind.

Much later in 2000, she decided to seriously take up reciting Lalitha sahasranamam, Vishnu sahasranamam and Narayaneeyam. People heard her reciting these with rare beauty and approached her for training to recite.

News about her skill in reciting these spread by word of mouth and she started training those who were similarly inclined to learn recitals of these divine texts. Thus, over the years, a team of ladies was formed and they take up recitals in various temples all over the city, and this has now expanded to other places within the state and to other states.

Training is imparted free of charge and Jalaja is kept busy throughout the day, from ten to five PM, imparting training to interested women and kids. “I train kids to recite Bhagavad Gita for competitions and most of my students have bagged prizes,” smiles Jalaja.

She is also the Vice President of the ladies' wing of Krishna Samajam at Ramapuram. “We are based at Ayyapan Kovil in KK Nagar, Chennai,” says Jalaja.

Dedicated, committed and focused on reciting and imparting training in chanting the Divine texts, Jalaja and her friends have found new meaning to their lives. This keeps them glowing with an inner happiness, which is the secret of their eternal youth. They have found a magnificent means of countering the onset of aging.

*Honouring Women**How Street Plays Changed a Village in Maharashtra**Priyanka Sakhamuru*

Small changes can bring about great differences. This is true in the case of Sonali Powar, a young woman hailing from Kodoli. A small village near Kolhapur, Maharashtra she and her friends created history when they organized a campaign to raise AIDS awareness in this tiny hamlet. Like any conservative village folk, her parents being farmers did not want her to go to college. However, she did not take no for an answer. Her stint in AIDS campaigning started with the support of an NGO – Center for Advocacy and Research that urged her and her friends to work for this cause.

“In our village people suffering from AIDS and who are HIV positive, were discriminated against. We wanted to spread awareness about this disease and how to prevent it. By providing information on this subject, we wanted to educate the people about the difference between AIDS and HIV positive,” says Sonali. Her group’s way of making an

impact is in the form of street plays, camps at the hospital and gram panchayat etc. Though the response was negative in the beginning, with the help of 120 students and several lecturers they were able to bring about a change in people’s attitude.

Their big break came on January 26, 2011 when the panchayat passed a resolution that no one in the village must discriminate against people who are affected by AIDS or who are HIV positive. “Along with the mahila mandal, we set up training camps for women. Initially no one wanted to come. But a girl who tested HIV positive was thrown out; so they were convinced to attend the programme,” says Sonali. Apart from general information on this subject, the participants were also shown video clips. The event was also attended by women who were affected by this deadly ailment. “We also organized programmes with food and games for the ladies. Recently, during Diwali we donated books and other things in a school for HIV+ children. Since no one helps them, we decided to lend them a helping hand,” she adds.

A group of eight, Sonali and her friends – Mughda, Vaishali, Vishal, Madhura, Anand, Meenakshi and Sachin are known for their street plays.



“Once we performed at ten different places in a single day. Though the people looked on, they did not appreciate us talking about AIDS. According to them, it is as good as interfering with their lives. They were uncomfortable as they consider it a private matter,” Sonali reminisces. However their hard work paid off and they are slowly working to reverse the traditional mindsets of the people.

As of October 2011, Kolhapur district has 8000 HIV positive and AIDS patients. In addition to the awareness campaign on this topic, a personal health, reproduction and hygiene drive was initiated by the village government. Self-help groups, mahila mandals, aanganwadis and students have been supporting the panchayat to educate the people of Kodoli. On Women’s Day, we look to such women for inspiration and take a leaf out of their book. Sonali’s example is indeed an eye-opener.



Honouring Women A Heart to Care



"I am just an ordinary person," says cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. P.S Sreemathi MS.FRCS. MAMS. MCh (TS) MNAS (CTS), who has commenced a new initiative to garner social support to help indigent little children's hearts continue beating. Using social media effectively, she has started a movement to partner with those who are willing to be a part of her endeavour to provide surgical intervention for cardiac ailments.

Hailing from *Pathamadai in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu*, cardiothoracic surgeon, as a child Dr. P.S Sreemathi used to ponder on how she could help needy little patients who died every year in large numbers for lack of resources and facilities for effective heart surgeries.

Dr. Sreemathi aspired to be a doctor because her father Mr.

Seshadrinathan and mother Lakshmi wanted their only child to be a doctor. Her maternal uncle, a doctor, was her role model during her childhood, though her decision to opt for surgery came later on in her life. "It is with their support that I have been able to achieve whatever little I have done so far," she says, "When I pursued medicine in college, I developed an interest in surgery. I felt it would give me immense satisfaction. I specialized in cardio-vascular and thoracic surgery."

According to her government hospitals are overcrowded and the demand is so huge that however hard the doctors try, they are able to cope, despite the best intention and efforts by the doctors.

Dr.Sreemathi has started "Less Affluent Kids Cardiac Fund" for her project 'Needy Little Hearts' under K J Research Foundation, Chennai. " Dr K. Jagadeesan founder of K.J. Hospital and Research Foundation and President of International Medical Sciences Academy came to my aid. He encouraged and helped me set up " Less Affluent Kids Cardiac Fund" with a vision to render free cardiac surgery, investigation, hospitalization, follow-up, rehabilitation, and

prevention of heart diseases in children and improvement of surgical results."

"Around Rs 20,000/- (\$400) are required for one surgery. We perform 20 surgeries / month. I need a steady flow for every month. Our website is [www. needylittlehearts.org.in](http://www.needylittlehearts.org.in). We are prepared to enter into partnership for the same. We are determined to keep everything transparent and are prepared to enter into formalities for the same," she says.

Her latest venture is H4H (www.h4h). "We are a trust set up to perform heart surgeries on less affluent children and adults. This also includes follow up and monitoring of treatment after surgery with reference to future quality life of the patient. In addition, we intend to carry out research for surgical improvements and prevention of heart diseases. This corpus h4h is meant to mobilize funds from those who can give, whether small or big."





FORM IV

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I, Smt Kamala Balachandran, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 1 March 2012

Smt. Kamala Balachandran
Publisher

Honouring Women

The Brave One Knows not Fear

Kirithi Gita Jayakumar



announced for the National Award for bravery in India. And what brave deed landed her in this spot?

On September 27, 2009, at about 9:30 p.m., three militants from the outfit known as the Lashkar-E-Taiba came into Rukhsana's uncle's house, and forced him to lead them to his brother (Rukhsana's father), who was in the adjoining house. The militants broke a window open and entered the house. Rukhsana was hiding under a cot, and the militants demanded that she be handed over to them. Her parents and younger brother, Aijaz, tried to resist them. The militants started hitting them with rifle butts. In a jiffy, Rukhsana emerged from her hiding place with an axe and hit the LeT commander on his head. One of the other militants opened fire. The family began battling the militants, when Rukhsana picked up the commander's gun and snatched another from the other militant and threw it to her brother. Rukhsana shot the commander, killing him. She and her brother fired at the other militants, forcing them to flee. The siblings then led their family to the police post and handed over the weapons. En route, to ensure that the militants stayed away, the siblings fired in the air from the two AK rifles at regular intervals until they reached the police post. Later, the militant who was killed, was identified as Abu Osama, a dreaded



commander of Laskar-E-Taiba. According to Rukhsana's mother, Osama earlier had threatened Rukhsana to beware.

Later, in what seemed a retaliatory move, on October 31, 2009, a few Terrorists hurled two grenades and opened fire at Rukhsana's house at around 10:30 pm. The grenades missed and exploded away from her house. Similar attempts were made later, but the family managed to dodge the repercussions.

Rukhsana had never picked up a rifle before that incident, and soon, the news spread like wildfire. Having had to live a life that precariously hung on tenterhooks in anticipation of danger, a daring act no less, Rukhsana has showed the world what it is to live under conflict and to rise to the difficulties posed by such a life. Truth be told, a bravery award is hardly enough to commend her valour in the line of fire. Today, Rukhsana remains in the confines of a securely guarded life, in the hope of being able to continue a normal life without being hunted down by terrorists.

The true test of bravery is when one is put on the line, and rises to the occasion on the spur of the moment. To rise to the occasion, to stand the litmus test and to be able to deliver not just oneself, but also those alongside oneself caught in the throes of turmoil is bravery in anthropomorphic form. Saluting bravery is one timeless obligation mankind owes to the select few that stand tall as stalwarts, for their unmatched courage and bravery.

In the conflict-ridden valley of Kashmir, lives one such brave girl, Rukhsana Kausar. Having been courageous in the face of danger, Rukhsana has been

Sacrifice and Enjoyment

Padmini Natarajan



"You must learn to sacrifice as bliss comes only from Thyaga not from Bhoga"...this was a message from the archives of Sai Baba.

Women are never actually taught how to sacrifice. It just comes naturally to them. They automatically share with their siblings, give away to their brothers privileges and priorities, succumb to family pressures and demands and subordinate their own likes and dislikes.

Yet women are blamed for family discords, when things go wrong at home or office, made fun of in jokes about mothers-in-law, wives, work people, even in comic strips.

Let us take the kitchen. How many women ever cook something that is a favourite dish of theirs? It is always for the other people in the family -in-laws, husband, children, why even the Gods, whose likes and dislikes are catered to day in and day out. Similarly even meal times are dictated by other people's schedules even though the lady of the household has her own timetable as a working woman.

How many times does a man enter a home after being late at work, play, travel etc. and just take for granted that somebody is waiting for him and collapses on a chair expecting to be fussed about? Compare this to the guilt with which a woman rushes home from a late appointment, work or even a meeting with her friends. She feels the need to immediately go into the kitchen, or open the fridge and check up on her kids about their activities, homework etc.

We say that the younger generation is different, that women today get their due and are able to dictate what happens in families and that they rule the roost. If they ask for Sundays as no cooking day it is frowned upon as not being healthy, good or beneficial to the family bonding. The girls toil during the rest of the week is not taken into account or praised.

All of what is stated is not uniformly true in every household; all women are not angels and all men not MCPs. This is just an observation and the more exception to the rules, the better our society will be.

Viewpoint Licensed to Kill?

Prof. N. Natarajan



Lately Chennai has been witnessing a disturbingly large number of house breaks and killings for money. Usually the victims have been old ladies living alone or helpless aged couples. These incidents have sent shock waves among the public. To cap it all heists in the branches of two Public Sector banks truly unnerved the Chennaites.

On January 22nd a daring four-member gang robbed Rs.20 lakh at gun-point from a Bank of Baroda branch located at Perungudi on the outskirts of Chennai. The Police investigation showed that four Hindi speaking gang members in the 25-35 year age group were involved in the



robbery and had come to the bank in the afternoon, posing as customers. After sometime one of them went near the branch manager while two others stood pointing weapons at the seven staff members and around 15 customers present in the branch. Holding the bank cashier at gun-point, the gang members took the cash and escaped after locking the outer door. Clearly it was a well planned crime, knowing that the Bank did not have fool-proof security arrangements.

The BOB robbery was followed by another daring day light robbery on 20th February at the Keelakattalai Branch of Indian Overseas Bank. Five gangsters entered the bank brandishing pistols and seized all the mobile phones of customers and the staff. Their modus operandi was similar to the one adopted in the IOB robbery. The gang made away with a loot of Rs 14 lakhs.

Close on the heels of the two bank robberies in Chennai, another big heist was reported from the industrial town of Tiruppur on 21st February, where robbers entered a Jewelry shop run by Kerala based Anto Alukkas group and decamped with jewelry

valued at Rs10 crore . This was the third such incidence in Tiruppur in the last one year.

This chain of disturbing incidents presumably prompted the Police to act decisively. The Chief Minister too ordered them to act with alacrity and punish criminals. The cops managed to get footage of a man suspected to be the kingpin behind the two bank robberies and also announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for providing information about his whereabouts. The suspect's photo was published.

Action followed immediately thereafter. A squad of 14 policemen zeroed in on a tiny apartment at Velachery in the small hours of 23 February and shot dead 5 men who were in the apartment. After the event the Commissioner of Police explained that it was an encounter in which the police had fired in self defence. The media in general picked holes in the 'encounter' theory and pointed out tell tale evidence at the site to debunk the police theory. The staff of the two bank branches gave a statement that the men shot down were the ones who had committed the heist. The bank managers also thanked the police for their prompt action. Inhabitants of the neighbourhood at Velachery too praised the police. They felt relieved that a few undesirable elements had been eliminated. But the media was not satisfied. They continued to ask probing questions.

A popular newspaper



reported "Though Mr. Tripathy said the police broke open the front door to gain entry into the one-bedroom flat, reporters of our newspaper who visited the site found no visible signs of the door being damaged or broken. The wall behind the window grill through which the police said the initial exchange of fire had taken place had only two visible bullet holes on it, that too at the same height, and a TV set that would have been in the line of fire survived the gun battle intact. The window grill itself showed no signs of having been hit by bullets, suggesting both the police and the men inside who allegedly fired shots through it were excellent marksmen.

Entry into the house was barred by the police — since a judicial probe is on — but from the windows it was possible to see the floor soaked in blood with clothes strewn around. However, none of the walls appeared to be bloodstained."

To lay doubts to rest, the Commissioner of Police has ordered the CB-CID to probe the matter. The National Human Right Commission has issued a notice to the Tamil Nadu government. A PIL has been filed in the Madras High Court alleging that it was a fake encounter. The High Court has issued notice to the Government why it should not be admitted.

One basic thing needs to be considered. When the men were killed, they were only suspects. Even assuming they had been identified as culprits, the right course of action for the police would have been to nab them tactfully. The police could have waited in plain clothes till dawn and caught the men when they came out. They could have jammed all their telephones and denied any access to other accomplices if any. They could have covered the window openings with steel sheets to protect themselves from any firing from inside. They could have worn bullet proof vests to protect themselves. Moreover sharp shooting cops wielding sophisticated arms should have been able to disable the culprits without killing them. The Supreme Court has said that fake encounter killings should carry capital punishment.

There was a strong case why all the five men should not have been eliminated. If even one of them had survived, the police would have had solid evidence to prove the robbery and the role of the gangsters.

It could also have led to the uncovering of a whole network of crime syndicates. It could have also led to the recovery or trail of all the stolen cash, not only in the bank heists, but also other crimes claimed to have been committed by them in various states. Thus instead of finishing off all the suspects hastily within 15 minutes, it would have been wiser to show more patience to catch the suspects alive. The police seem to have shot into their own foot, giving rise to possibly unnecessary questions which are denying them the credit for alacrity and swift action. It also leads to the doubt whether the criminals were silenced to prevent further embarrassing disclosures, since there is a public perception that there is only a thin line of separation between some influential VIPs and crime syndicates.

Killing the men in so called self defence somehow does not add up. Such a defence could be convincing if anyone found himself cornered and his life was in danger. By no stretch of imagination can 14 armed policemen claim that all their lives were in danger. In fairness to the alleged culprits, they had not killed or seriously harmed anyone during the heists. The only plausible justification for killing the men could be the inability of the justice delivery system in India, where most criminals get away with murder. This is a sad commentary on our outdated laws and the total lack of interest on the part of our law makers to reform it.

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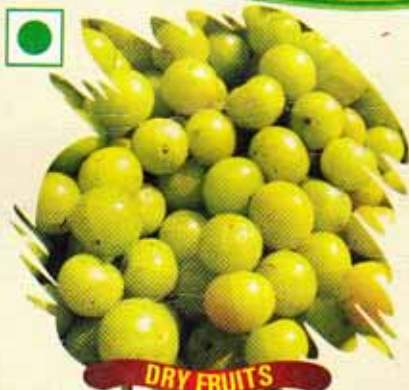


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Honouring Women

THE MOTHER WHO DIDN'T GIVE UP.....

Chandrika R Krishnan



she was younger I grew a garden so that I could teach the shape, colours and numbers and also helped her motor development when she watered the plants. She also had very good playmates in the form of her cousins and I am glad that she did not miss out on playtime. Today, she watches tele-serials. She also loves to watch and

Only when there are expectations, you feel hurt when they are not met....in my case I have learnt to reduce my expectations and accept the limitations of my daughter and maybe this attitude of mine makes me, a single mother, more patient when I deal with my spastic child who is 30 years old.”

This statement of Jayanti Vishwanathan is a lesson to many of us who feel that we need to push our children and keep pushing them so that they live our dreams. Here is her story.....

The beginning..... And the journey till now

My child Archana was a breech baby and within a few days after she was born, the doctors felt that there was a problem as her eye balls were moving

continuously. We were asked to consult a neurosurgeon when she was a mere 40 days old and have been consulting him ever since. My late husband was a source of enormous strength and support though he worried a lot about the future of our child. I started accompanying my daughter to the spastic society of India, Chennai Chapter now known as Vidyasagar. I would not have been in this position if I did not enjoy unconditional family support.

I wouldn't say it was an easy task making her as self sufficient as possible and making her live up to her potential. She needs a prompt for most of her actions and I keep reiterating the same till she understands and follows the instructions. There are certain chores that she loves doing like stacking the utensils in the allotted place and she does not miss the same. When



tell me the recipes shown in cookery programmes. She has a good memory and she can recall most of the ingredients in words that I can understand. In case I forget some ingredient she comes to the kitchen and points out to the container which has the ingredient. !

We were dealt another raw deal in life when I lost my husband to cancer 10 years back. It was indeed difficult for me to overcome my concern and prepare her for the eventuality.

He was extremely affectionate to her that it took her almost a year to come to terms with the irreparable loss and the vacuum created in our lives by his tragic end. Maybe, his trait of giving unconditional love has rubbed off on her. She too is very affectionate like her father, without expectations.

Though she remembers him very frequently, she has learnt to move on. She is extremely responsible and takes utmost care of the things entrusted in her care. To give you an example, being an extremely light sleeper (even the slightest noise wakes her up) my brother placed a suitcase with valuables under her seat during our journey to Nagpur and believe me, she took care of it till we reached our destination and rarely budged from her seat. Similarly, if a lady entrusts her with her handbag, it would be returned only to the owner and nobody else.

She is also extremely sensitive to the needs of her loved ones and also has a sixth sense as far as hazards are concerned.

The future....

Though I have a wonderful family my future and my daughter's is very worrying and I feel Archana also feels that in her heart. Whenever I am sick or lie down saying I am tired, she makes sure that nobody disturbs me and keeps checking on me and helps fetch a glass of water or in other ways.

Change in attitude...

Today's parents are more aware than those of the earlier generations being hands-on in helping their children realize their potential. I learnt that consanguineous marriage can cause problems in children only after my daughter was born. But, today parents are well read. I have also observed that even if the child is slow in academics they don't mind going the extra mile or two to accommodate their children and help them wherever needed. I have also realized that parents with children who cannot do well academically become more depressed and take time to accept that there is a need to look for alternatives for their children. People also are more accepting and do not stare at my child anymore.

Your help....

Some children who had been trained from Vidyasagar have set up a unit in West Mambalam to make 'tambulam bags' which are colourful and environment friendly too as they are made out of paper. Chennai is a good market for these bags as people handover a return gift at the end of an auspicious function. Moreover, it provides these children a source of livelihood and also gives them a sense of purpose. They can be contacted at 9790849420 (Vasumathi)

The present

There is no time to think of 'If only's' and at present I am too busy to make life safe and comfortable for my daughter and me. About the future I can only say, 'que sera sera.'



Viewpoint



What Ails the Teaching Community?

“You must train the children to their studies in a playful manner and without any air of constraint with the further object of discerning more readily the natural bent of their respective characters.” – Plato

“One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.” -- Carl Jung

Of late, there have been a lot of news about students and teachers, nationally and regionally, giving the impression that all is not well within the portals of educational institutions in our country. While the incident of a young adolescent boy resorting to premeditated murder of his teacher who updated his parents about his performance sent shock waves across the country, there have been several benumbing incidents where members of the teaching fraternity were the culprits. Incidents of teachers executing corporal punishments that scarred innocent minds for life or caused permanent physical disability and those who perpetrated heinous crimes against children by way of sexual abuse have sent alarm bells across the country.

Despite advancements in several quarters, why do such incidents occur often? What is wrong with the educational system in our country? If

something is not done about this, it may be hazardous to the progress of the country and a disgrace to human rights of a large number of children.

While there is truth in the viewpoint that exposure of children to the media which portrays violence and aggression has impacted them to a large extent, it also true that there is something inherently wrong in the way the affairs of our educational institutions are conducted. Indeed there are a large number of dedicated teachers who go that extra mile to give their best to their students. Even today there is an exclusive group of teachers that plays a major role in shaping the personalities of their students who have been entrusted with great faith by the parents. Yet all is not hunky dory in schools and colleges.

“Commercialization of educational centres is the prime reason for such a trend,” says Ramakrishnan, a father of two and an executive in a private company, “Most schools demand donation during the time of admission, which does not come to the notice of the public. Parents want the best for their children and go out of the way to seek admissions to schools that are ‘renowned’ for good board exam results. In the process, they are willing to pay donation, even if it means borrowing from banks or friends. Little do they realize, once the children are admitted in the prestigious school, it becomes a stress for the parents and the children to ensure they



perform well. Despite their name, most schools employ only ordinary teachers. By admitting high caliber and hardworking students and pressurizing them to perform well, they are able to achieve good results. It is often the parents that undergo the turmoil of ensuring their children study well. They are sent to private tutors to ‘supplement’ what is being taught in school. Private tutors are flourishing in cities like Chennai and minting money. I know of a person who coaches Maths for board exams. On 1st January at 5 am there is a huge queue in front of his house to admit children for extra coaching. These tutors demand money in thousands to coach the children! How much more commercial can education get? And what happens to the hapless children? Can anyone imagine their pressure?”

Teacher-student interactions lack the sense of comfort level

that should be the case for both parties. Most teachers believe students, especially adolescents engage in wasteful pursuits and do not trust a student when he has genuine constraints if he does not perform well or complete his homework. Teacher-student interactions are based on authoritarian approach by the teacher and rebellious approach by the student. The teacher expects blind obedience from students. Students believe they can question the teacher if they seem to have additional information or they would like to adopt another approach to solving answers.

Another major issue among adolescents is the way some teachers treat adolescents (from Class 8 upwards). There is this maths teacher in a premier school who has a habit of throwing notebooks at her students if she is displeased. When Rajan was called to



work a sum in the blackboard, he decided use a different method to solve the sum. Being a brilliant boy and always first in class, he believed his teacher would be happy. But this teacher was so angry she started hurling abuses, "Do you think you are more intelligent than me and you want to prove it to the class?" She threw his maths notebook at him. The poor boy felt deeply humiliated, more so because it was in front of girl students. Another 'Sir'

has the habit of enquiring his Plus 2 students, "So which girl (boy) friend were you out with yesterday?" He had a habit of abusing all his students making allegations about their 'spurious relationships' if they did not complete their home work or perform well. Most parents do not get to know what their adolescent son or daughter has to go through in school because there are no open channels of communication with their children! Moreover, adolescents

tend to feel humiliated and hesitate to discuss such things with their parents. If at all the children do tell their parents, they ask them to somehow adjust to the situation. "This is only temporary. Soon you will be out of the school," they say. They have their own pressures of wanting the child to do well in the boards after all the time, money and effort both the child and the parents have spent!

Favouritism is another universal malice in schools

which is underplayed. Marks are given on the basis of likes and dislikes of the teacher. More often, if the students go to the teacher for extra classes, they are given more marks in class tests, if only to prove to the parents that the tuitions are helping their children. Students not attending tuitions by the teacher or those who go to other teachers or tutorials are not given marks even if their answers are correct; this usually happens in arts subjects. Children of prominent people are treated favourably, causing resentment among adolescent children.

In one school, most Plus 2 students are failed in schools tests 'to encourage them to study better for the boards.' They are given a different 'cooked up' report card with arbitrary marks after they pass out the board examinations so that the reputation of the school does not suffer during college admissions.

Most schools are not equipped with a proper counselor to guide children who are under enormous pressure or have personal problems. The principal is usually never available and not cordial to parents who cannot voice their opinions candidly because their wards would be penalized. Many schools have the concept of 'Open House,' which is a good thing. Parents are called on designated days to meet the teachers of different subjects and discuss the student's performance. During such times, the child's attitude and

behaviour are also discussed. It depends upon the teacher to give an objective feedback.

"Most schools pay a pittance to their teachers. Hence the quality of the teachers is very low. Many come from family backgrounds steeped in traditions, lack of education, authoritarianism, caste and gender bias, and beliefs in social taboos, superstitions, prejudices and stereotypes. These teachers bring with them this conditioning and their behaviour and attitude are harmful to impressionable young minds. The teaching community should be given due respect and paid well so that we get good quality teachers," says Chandrika from Bangalore who was a teacher herself.

To beat the market, a premier educational institution in Chennai employs educated mothers of students they admit to their schools paying them paltry sums and keeps them on the rolls as probationers for a couple of years. This seems to be working out well initially because the mothers fear their children may be targeted if they exhibit their frustrations.

We are still living in the times when education is all about rote learning and marks. Teachers do not upgrade their knowledge and bring innovation in their teaching methodology. No effort is taken to make the classes interesting for the students.

As much as we talk about respect for the teaching community, unless we adopt

the western ways of treating every student, whatever the age, as an individual in his or her own right and treat them with respect and love, this restlessness in educational institutions will continue to simmer and every now and then lead to outbursts. Today, given the wide exposure and communication explosion, it is important for teachers to forge amicable ties with their students where there is mutual respect and affection. The system of education should be comprehensive and flexible enough to enable students to learn according to their own pace, skill and interest. This will remove the burden of stress on young children. And finally, to relieve the physical burden, lockers must be provided to students so that they do not have to carry huge satchels to school. Chennai schools must also offer transport facilities to their students!

We need a total overhaul of educational institutions and the attitude of the teaching fraternity before we can think about altering the parental mindset. A warm and welcoming educational institution will bring out the best among our children and youth. It is time we took steps against incidents of crime in educational institutions and do away with attitudes and behaviours that will lead to a future generation deformed in mind and body. The teaching fraternity should sit up and bring about a renaissance in their thinking and approach to education.

Honouring Women

Fresco - A Fresh Look At Interiors

Valsala Menon



Reshma is a personification of quiet strength, poise and confidence. A few minutes of associating with her leaves you profoundly inspired and motivated.

Born into an ordinary middle class family with humble beginnings, it was Reshma's will power, dedication and commitment to excel that has propelled her upwards on the ladder of success. "My father was a mechanic and mom, a housewife. Times were tough when my brother and I were just children. There have been days when we had to go hungry, with no food at all." - reminisces Reshma.

Right from an early age, she had made up her mind to excel in all that she undertook. She excelled in academics and stood first in the final examinations at Railway School, from where she completed her secondary school education. Reshma then proceeded to procure her diploma in civil engineering from Murugappa Polytechnic. She simultaneously completed the CAD course as well.

"After my CAD course, I joined a small company that deals with interiors, where I learnt a lot about plywood. I was deeply interested in the concept of modular kitchens. This concept was pretty new when I started out and I did a lot of research on my own. I then decided to venture into designing and make my own modular kitchens. My CAD training stood me in good stead," smiles Reshma.

Even while working in other firms, Reshma clung to her dream of going into business on her own. "I understood that Godrej was not able to fulfill all the storage needs of an Indian housewife. I developed my own repertoire of kitchens, bedrooms, false ceilings and designer paintings."

Within two years, she decided to quit working for other interior firms and decided to venture out alone. Her pleasing manners and quiet efficiency had helped her build up a good clientele .A satisfied customer



introduced her to Mr. Jose who was impressed by her quiet efficiency. They set up office together and under her able guidance, set up Fresco Interiors, an exclusive modular kitchen unit based at Kilpauk in Chennai

While José handles his own body care firm, Reshma has single handedly built up the firm to what it is now. The last three years has witnessed her meteoric rise in the arena of interiors and she continues to cater to an ever growing customer base. To her credit, no loans were taken to set up shop. All the modular kitchen units, bedroom accessories, wardrobes and lots more are exclusively designed by Reshma.

"We have not advertised at all, so far. We have grown mainly through references. I let my work speak for itself, and builders keep coming back to me, with more orders," a proud and confident Reshma says.

All leading builders in the city like VGN, Pace builders, Chaitanya and others are her clients.

Reshma never stoops to compromise on quality. This wonderful lady entrepreneur has faced tough times but she proves beyond an iota of doubt that tough times do not last, but tough people do.

LIC of India launches new product – Jeevan Vriddhi.

On 1 March 2012, The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) launched a new plan 'Jeevan Vriddhi' on the traditional platform. This is a single premium non linked insurance plan where the risk cover is 5 times of premium chosen by the customer and offers excellent guaranteed returns on Maturity. The plan, which is an ideal combination of Insurance and Returns, would be available for a limited period only up to a maximum of 120 days. A major highlight of this plan is that it offers multiple benefits to the customer, these being

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In the event of the unfortunate death of the life assured during the currency of the policy, the Basic Sum Assured shall be payable which is 5 times the Single Premium excluding extra premium, if any. On Maturity, the Guaranteed Maturity Sum Assured (which will depend on the single premium payable and the age at entry of the life to be assured) along with Loyalty Addition, if any shall be payable. Eligibility for Loyalty Addition would be considered during the last year of the policy depending upon the Corporation's experience and the rates and terms would be as declared by the Corporation.

The Minimum Age at entry for

the plan is 8 years (completed) while the maximum is 50 years (nearer birthday). The term under the policy is fixed at 10 years. The minimum Sum Assured is Rs.1.50 lakhs while there is no upper limit. The minimum premium under the policy is Rs.30,000/- and shall increase in multiples of Rs.1000/-.

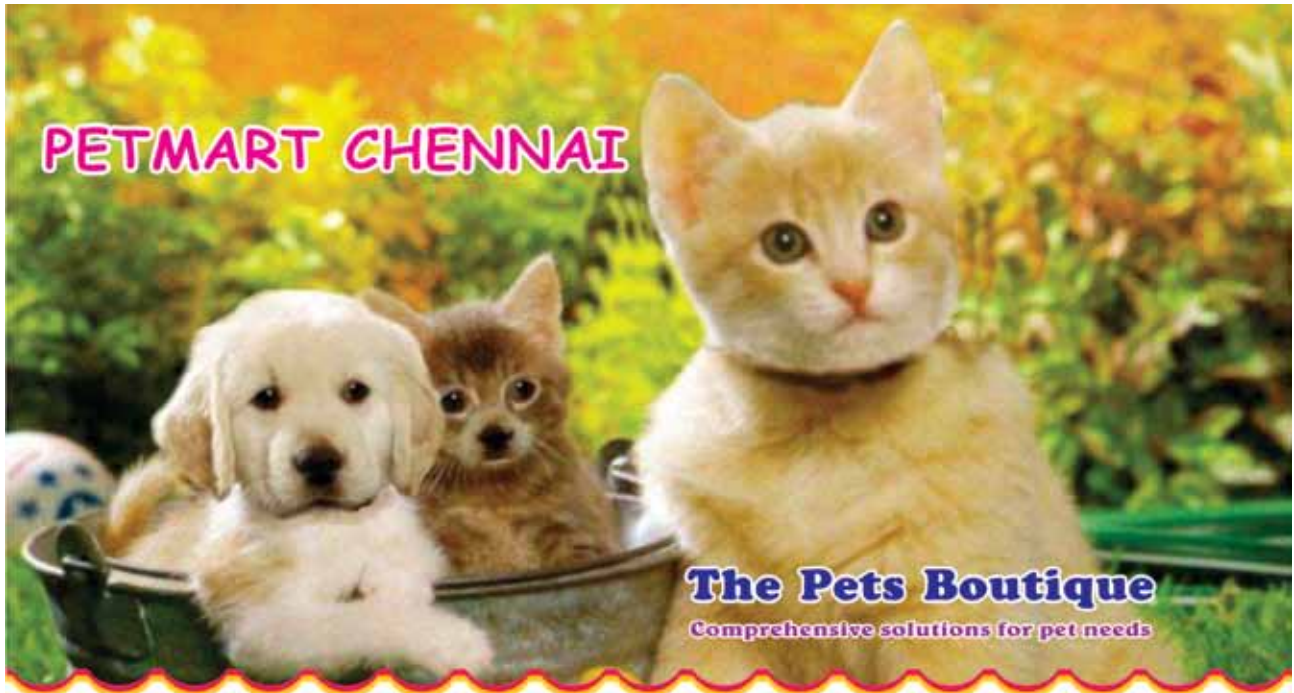
This is an ideal plan for all groups of people, be it youngsters who want to save a nest-egg for following their passion after putting in some years of hard work and gaining experience, or parents who want to save money for funding their young child's higher education or for financing other needs of self or children who have grown up. The Customer shall be eligible for tax benefits on the premium under section 80C as per prevailing rules. The policy offers high liquidity through policy loan after just one year.



From left to right
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Sri.R.Sudarsan, Regional

Manager(CRM)
Sri.M.Kannan,SDM,Chennai
D.O.I
Sri.D.D.Singh,Zonal Manager

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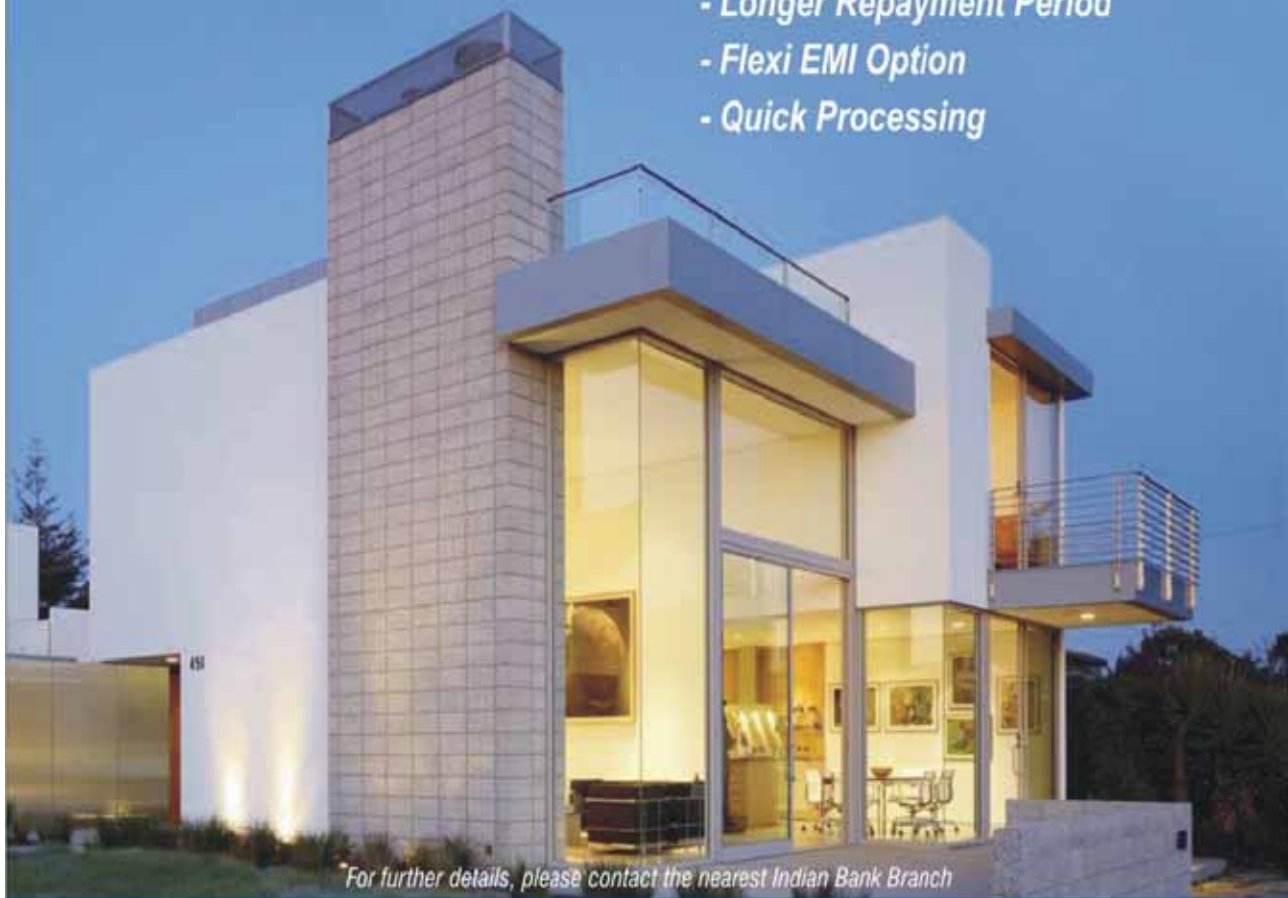
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