



We Care

July 2026

prerna

inspiration to excel
(Personal Growth)



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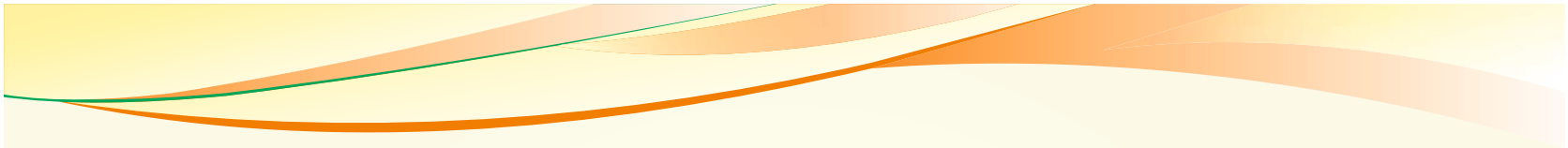


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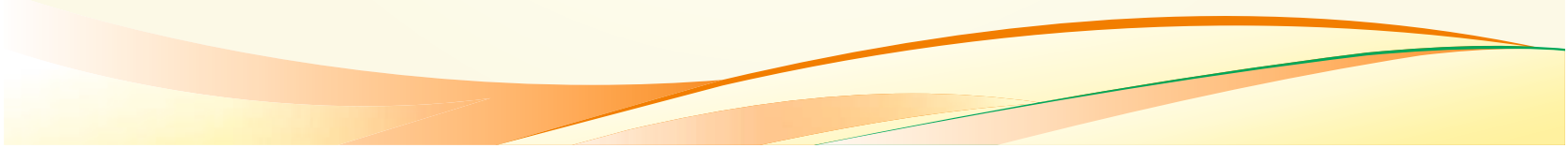
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President's Message



Dear Friends,

It gives me pleasure to write to you again, with the latest edition of Prerna. The year gone by was an eventful one for our Association. A new team of office bearers—*Mesdames* Shveta Gupta Kansal, Archana Kumar and Ragini Singh as Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Secretary respectively—and the cadre representatives have led the Association with aplomb and enthusiasm. They have come up with several new ideas and initiatives.

Our Association is a source of comradeship for the wives of Indian Administrative Service officers who come to Delhi from various parts of the country, various cadres, and differing languages and cultures, and for the wives of retired officers. Our husbands play an important role in administering our great and vast country and upholding democracy and good governance and so do we, in supporting them.

IASOWA is now providing skill training to over 25 young women from under-privileged backgrounds under the aegis of ATDC, an agency recognized by the Textiles Ministry. These girls are likely to be placed in gainful employment when they finish the course. The Prerna Beauty Centre has 19 young women, also from under-privileged backgrounds, being trained as Beauticians. The Prerna Computer Centre provides computer classes to 18 girls, in association with NASSCOM. Lastly, we also conduct a workshop where sewing machines are provided to women from economically weaker backgrounds, who may use them to support their incomes and build a better future. It is through our collective efforts that we are able to support these young women and thereby furthering the mission of the IASOWA.

I wish our members a successful and rewarding year ahead.

With warm regards,
Hema Somanathan
President

Executive Committee 2025-26



Hema Somanathan
(President)



Shveta Gupta Kansal
(Secretary)



Archana Kumar
(Treasurer)



Ragini Singh
(Joint Secretary)

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Rajshree Paatil
(Tamil Nadu)



Romi
(Uttar Pradesh)



Neeti Pandey
(West Bengal)

Executive Committee 2026-27



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(President)



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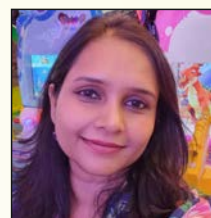
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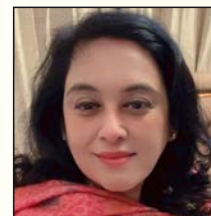
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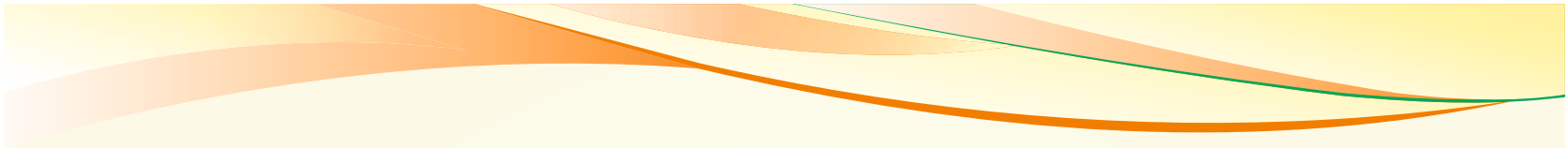
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(Tamil Nadu)



Romi
(Uttar Pradesh)



Neeti Pandey
(West Bengal)



Events & Social Initiatives



Diary Of Events



As we present this edition of the IASOWA magazine, it gives me immense pride and gratitude to reflect upon the remarkable journey of togetherness, service, and meaningful engagement that continues to define our association.

Since its inception in 1968, IASOWA has stood as a symbol of compassion, resilience, and collective strength. Rooted in the spirit of “Service Before Self,” our association has consistently worked towards the welfare and empowerment of underprivileged women and children through its various social and educational initiatives. Our Prerna Centres — encompassing learning, design, computer education, and wellness programmes — continue to touch lives and create pathways towards dignity and self-reliance.

This magazine is not merely a compilation of events and activities; it is a reflection of the vibrant spirit of our members, the richness of our shared experiences, and the enduring values that bind us together as one family. Each contribution carries with it a story of creativity, commitment, and compassion.

JOYFUL JULY – *New Beginnings*

July marked the beginning of a new IASOWA session, bringing with it fresh energy, renewed enthusiasm, and the promise of many meaningful moments together. A new Executive Body and Executive Committee were formed, ushering in a new chapter of camaraderie, creativity, and collective purpose.

The gathering was made truly special by a vibrant dance drama presented by the Ministry of Culture, thoughtfully curated for our members. The soulful performance, rich in colour and expression, filled the evening with warmth and joy, leaving everyone deeply captivated.

Adding to the happiness of the occasion was the beautifully arranged high tea in the gracious ambience of The Ashok. Members cherished the opportunity to sit together, share conversations and laughter, and reconnect over tea. The warmth of companionship and the joy of togetherness made the evening truly memorable — a perfect beginning to a promising new session.

AWESOME AUGUST – *Saree Walkathon*

August witnessed the spirited participation of IASOWA members in the Handloom Saree Walkathon, organised in solidarity with the weavers of our nation. The event stood as a beautiful tribute to India’s rich handloom heritage and to the skilled artisans whose craftsmanship continues to keep this tradition alive.

Despite the challenging weather and heat, the enthusiasm, elegance, and commitment displayed by our members was admirable.

Walking from Rashtrapati Bhavan to Vijay Chowk, our members carried themselves with dignity, purpose, grace, and pride — celebrating the timeless beauty of Indian handlooms while expressing solidarity with the weaving community of our country. Draped gracefully in six yards of

handloom sarees, the participants walked not merely as individuals, but as proud ambassadors of a meaningful cause.

This first-of-its-kind initiative organised by IASOWA made the occasion all the more memorable and significant.

SPARKLING SEPTEMBER – *Dancing in the Spirit of Joy and Togetherness*

September brought with it an evening filled with colour, music, laughter, and the true spirit of celebration as our members came together for a memorable Garba-Dandiya evening. The occasion became even more special with a choreographer travelling especially from Gujarat to teach traditional Garba and Dandiya steps to our ladies, lovingly introducing them to the grace and vibrancy of this beautiful cultural tradition.

What made the evening truly remarkable was the indomitable spirit of our members. Despite heavy rains and challenging weather conditions, their enthusiasm never dimmed. With smiling faces and energetic steps, they immersed themselves wholeheartedly in learning every step, rhythm, and movement, turning the evening into a joyous celebration of togetherness and shared happiness.

Adorned in vibrant traditional attire and exquisite Gujarati jewellery, the members looked absolutely resplendent. The sight of graceful swirling ghagras, colourful dupattas, sparkling ornaments, and radiant smiles created a magical atmosphere that was nothing short of captivating. It was an evening where traditions came alive and memories were woven through music, dance, and laughter — truly an unforgettable celebration of joy and camaraderie.

OUTSTANDING OCTOBER – *Delectable Diwali Dinner*

October brought with it the much-awaited Diwali celebrations hosted by IASOWA in the sprawling lawns of the official residence of the President,

IASOWA, Mrs. Hema Somanathan. This year's enchanting theme, Royal Rajasthan, transformed the evening into a vibrant cultural spectacle.

The members were welcomed to the rhythmic beats of the dhol and a traditional Rajasthani welcome. Adorned in beautiful bandhani and leheriya ensembles, they swayed gracefully to the soulful tunes of ghoomar. The atmosphere radiated warmth, festivity, and togetherness as members celebrated the spirit of Diwali.

Adding to the royal charm was the delectable Rajasthani cuisine, where traditional delicacies such as pyaz kachori and mirchi vada delighted every palate, making the evening a truly memorable celebration of culture and companionship.

NOSTALGIC NOVEMBER – *An Evening of Melodies*

The musical evening by Brian Silas at Siri Fort Auditorium was a mesmerising experience. His fingers glided effortlessly over the piano keys, weaving magic into every note and transporting the audience into a world of timeless melodies.

The auditorium resonated with the soulful strains of beloved old songs, creating an atmosphere filled with nostalgia and warmth. Members, along with their spouses, could be seen softly humming along to the familiar tunes, completely immersed in the charm of the evening. It was a beautiful celebration of music, togetherness, and cherished memories that left every heart touched.

DELIGHTFUL DECEMBER – *A Visit to the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya*

December was marked by an engaging and memorable visit to the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya. The members thoroughly enjoyed exploring the museum, which beautifully showcases the journey and contributions of India's Prime Ministers through immersive and interactive experiences.

One of the highlights of the visit was the captivating digital walk alongside the Prime Ministers, along with the excitement of getting photographs clicked with their favourite leaders. The helicopter ride simulation across the country, offering breathtaking views of a Viksit Bharat manifested through majestic bridges and remarkable national developments, left everyone fascinated. Equally impressive was the film presentation depicting India's remarkable progress in the defence sector, which filled the members with pride and admiration.

The visit proved to be both informative and enjoyable.

JUBILANT JANUARY – *An Evening at the Theatre*

January brought with it an enriching theatrical experience as members watched Babuji, a critically acclaimed play presented by the National School of Drama. The play beautifully narrated the emotional journey of a man deeply devoted to Nautanki as he struggled to balance his passion for art with the demands and responsibilities of society.

The members thoroughly enjoyed the performance — from its subtle humour and powerful storytelling to the brilliant acting and infectious energy created by the artistes on stage. Every scene left the audience deeply engaged and emotionally connected to the narrative.

Amid the winter chill, the indoor programme offered a warm and comfortable setting, making the evening all the more enjoyable and memorable for everyone present.

FABULOUS FEBRUARY – *Holi Lunch*

February brought with it the much-awaited annual Holi Lunch with spouses — a celebration eagerly awaited by members every year. This year's vibrant theme, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, beautifully showcased the rich culture, traditions, and rustic charm of the two states.

The venue was transformed into a captivating cultural setting with stunning décor reflecting the essence of forests, wildlife, and the majestic tigers of the region. Live pottery demonstrations and traditional bangle-making stalls added a delightful ethnic touch, allowing members to immerse themselves in the colours and artistry of rural India.

The authentic cuisine became one of the highlights of the afternoon, with delicacies such as bajra ki roti from Amma Ki Rasoi receiving immense appreciation from everyone present. Surrounded by warmth, laughter, and festive cheer, the gathering beautifully celebrated togetherness, culture, and the joyful spirit of Holi.

MARVELLOUS MARCH – *High Tea for Super Seniors and Visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan*

March sparkled with glamour and excitement as the super senior señoritas came together for a vibrant Disco Evening. The event was filled with laughter, music, and unbridled enthusiasm, creating an atmosphere of pure celebration and joy.

Dressed in dazzling attire, the members lit up the venue with their charm and elegance. The lively catwalks and confident ramp walks added a touch of glamour to the evening, while the much-awaited crowning ceremony of the Disco Divas became the highlight of the event, celebrated with cheers and applause from all present.

Another unforgettable highlight of the month was the members' visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Everyone was filled with awe and pride as the buses entered the majestic gates of the President's House to pay their respects to the First Lady of the nation. The occasion carried a deep sense of honour and solemnity, making it a truly memorable experience for everyone present.

The gracious hospitality extended during the high tea hosted in the magnificent Diwan-e-Aam added

warmth and grandeur to the gathering. Every moment spent within the historic halls of Rashtrapati Bhavan felt both humbling and memorable.

One of the most cherished highlights of the visit was the opportunity to have a group photograph with the President — a proud and treasured memory that members will hold close to their hearts for years to come.

AMUSING APRIL—*Stand-up Comedy Evening*

The stand-up comedy show by Harpriya Bains was truly a fitting finale to an extraordinary year. The final event of the session echoed with laughter,

warmth and energy, making it a perfect and unforgettable conclusion.

With her wit, spontaneity, and impeccable timing, Ms. Harpriya Bains had the audience in splits throughout the evening. Members thoroughly enjoyed every moment, laughing wholeheartedly and celebrating togetherness in the most delightful way possible.

What made the evening even more special was that it was the first event of its kind hosted by IASOWA — a refreshing and unique experience that was received with immense enthusiasm and appreciation.

Shveta Gupta Kansal
Secretary

Prerna: Our Dream, Their Wings

Some dreams are planned, while others quietly find their way into your heart and become a part of you. Prerna has always felt like that — not just a centre or an institution, but something deeply personal, nurtured with love, hope, and belief.

Watching Prerna grow has been like watching a child take its first steps. Every smile, every small achievement, and every spark of confidence in a young girl's eyes brings a joy that words can hardly describe. What began as a vision has become a space where hope and possibilities come alive.

The sound of sewing machines here feels like the heartbeat of dreams taking shape. Every thread carries a story — of fear turning into courage, hesitation into confidence, and young women discovering their own strength.

Prerna has never been only about tailoring, computers, or beauty training. It has always been about giving wings to dreams that simply needed an opportunity. Skills can be taught, but confidence, dignity, and self-belief are what truly transform lives.

Seeing Prerna touch lives, one girl at a time, feels like watching a dream spread its wings and soar.

Prerna continues to stand as a symbol of empowerment — where skills create opportunities, and opportunities create brighter futures.

Shveta Gupta Kansal
Secretary

प्रेरणा – सपनों की उड़ान



एक कोना शांत, पर हौसले से भरा,
IASOWA की छाँव में प्रेरणा का दीया जला,
न सिर्फ सिलाई सिखाती, ये तो जिन्दगी संवारे,
हर टाँके में लड़की का आत्मविश्वास उजियारे।

सिलाई मशीन की सरसराहट, गुरु की मीठी बात,
कपड़ा कटे, धागा जुड़े, बड़े हिम्मत के साथ,
ATDC संग डिप्लोमा का सपना, बेटियाँ आज,
कौशल के साथ नौकरी का मिले नया आगाज़।

इंडस्ट्रियल मशीन, ओवरलॉक, पिको का संग,
कटिंग टेबल, भाप इस्त्री, डिज़ाइन का रंग,
स्लिंग बैग बने, टीमवर्क का प्रमाण,
पहली कमाई हाथ में, आँखों में गर्व-मान।

प्रेरणा डिजाइन सेंटर –
जहाँ मशीनें नहीं, किस्मतें सजती हैं,
हर टाँका एक उड़ान, हर चेहरा बदलती है।

कम्प्यूटर कक्षा, NASSCOM के साथ,
कम्प्यूटर, इंटरनेट, सीखे। हिंदी-अंग्रेज़ी
द्विभाषी किताबें साथ, भाषा की बाधा दूर,
डिजिटल दुनिया में कदम, बढ़ा हर मन का नूर।

ब्यूटी सेंटर में सजे पेडीक्योर, मैनीक्योर के हुनर,
ATDC से जुड़कर, बेटियाँ संवारे भविष्य,
शेडिंग से फेशियल तक, साफ-सफाई का ज्ञान,
छोटा सैलून खोलें, खुद बनें रोजगार का निदान।

वर्कशॉप में बनें तकिए, मैट, थैले सुंदर,
प्रदर्शनी-सेल में बिका, मिला मेहनत का दर,
आय बाँटी, मुस्कान मिली, टूटी बेबसी की जंजीर,
टीमवर्क, अनुशासन, समय की सीख, बना हर कदर।

एयर-कंडीशंड क्लास, साफ पानी, रसोई का साथ,
Akshay Patra का पोषक भोजन,
चौबीसों घंटे सुरक्षा, स्वच्छ शौचालय, रोशनी भरपूर,
प्रेरणा सिर्फ संस्थान नहीं, ये तो सम्मान का सुर।

प्रेरणा का अर्थ यही – हुनर के संग विश्वास,
हर लड़की निकले यहाँ, लेके गरिमा, हौसला, आस,
हर धागा कहे कहानी, हिम्मत की शुरुआत,
सपने अब सच बनें, जब मिले अवसर का साथ।

Archana Kumar
Treasurer

IASOWA (2025 & 26) की डायरी –

एक साल का जश्न
स्थापना वर्ष अड़सठ से चला ये साथ,
सेवा, समर्पण का हाथ में हाथ,

“Solidarity”

का नारा साथ,
नारी-शक्ति को दिया नया विश्वास।

जुलाई में जगा नया सवेरा,
नई कमेटी, नया समंदर,
अशोक में हाई टी, बातें अनगिनत।

अगस्त आया, साड़ी की शान,
राष्ट्रपति भवन से विजय चौक तक,
गर्मी-ताप को किया दरकिनार,
बुनकरों के लिए, संग चला ये सफर।

सितंबर में गरबा की धुन,
गुजरात से आए, पेशेवर डांस टूप्स
घाघरा-चोली में खिले सबके चेहरे ।

अक्टूबर, रॉयल राजस्थान शाम,
ढोल की थाप, घूमर डांस,
दाल-बाटी-चूरमा, गट्टे की सब्जी,
प्याज की कचौरी और घेवर
दिवाली बनी यादगार हर बात।

नवंबर में ब्रायन के सुर,
पियानो पर बहे पुराने गीत,
जीवनसाथी संग झूमे सब,
स्मृतियों का बना एक खूबसूरत नजारा

दिसंबर, पीएम संग्रहालय की सैर,
डिजिटल वॉक, फोटो विद लीडर, हेलीकॉप्टर
सिमुलेशन इन्टरएक्टिव गैलरी, रक्षा क्षेत्र पर फिल्म
विकसित भारत का दिखा सपना,
गर्व से भर गया सबका मन

जनवरी में ‘बाबूजी’ का मंच,
नौटंकी का जज़्बा, समाज से जंग,
हँसी-आँसू का बंधा रिश्ते का नाता ।

फरवरी में होली का रंग,
एमपी-छत्तीसगढ़ की छाई उमंग,
मिट्टी-बाजरे की खुशबू खास,
जंगल-टाइगर से सजा वास।

मार्च में सुपर सीनियर की डिस्को शाम,
ग्लिटर-गाउन, रैंप पर बात,
डिस्को दीवा का ताज सजा,
तालियों से गूँजा हर मंज़र।

राष्ट्रपति भवन का मान,
दीवान-ए-खास में चाय का सम्मान,
प्रथम महिला संग खिंची तस्वीर,
दिल में बसी ये यादें अनमोल ।

अप्रैल में सत्र का आखिरी कार्यक्रम
हरप्रिया बैस का स्टैंड-अप कमाल,
पूरे साल का बना खूबसूरत अंत,

हर आयोजन ने रची एक कहानी,
सृजन, सेवा, मजबूत नेतृत्व,
आपसी सहयोग IASOWA का जज़्बा,
IASOWA- एकता की पहचान।

Archana Kumar
Treasurer

Stitching Dreams, Weaving Dignity



In a determined corner of community development, Prerna Design Centre stands as a symbol of hope, resilience, and transformation. Guided by IAS/ICS Officers' Wives Association (IASOWA), it is more than a training facility — it is a place where lives are transformed through learning and opportunity. For many women, Prerna marks the beginning of self-belief, independence, and a brighter future.

Trainees begin a journey of learning and personal growth, gradually discovering their abilities and gaining confidence. Amid the hum of sewing machines and the support of mentors, each stitch becomes a step toward self-reliance and dignity.

To strengthen skill development, IASOWA partnered with the Apparel Training & Design Centre (ATDC) to provide a one-year Diploma in Apparel Manufacturing Technology. Currently, 17 students receive industry-oriented training to improve employability in the apparel sector. Guided by a Principal and two instructors, students gain practical exposure while benefiting from a structured learning environment linked with national skill initiatives.

The centre offers comprehensive training in tailoring and design, from fabric knowledge and pattern making to garment construction and finishing. Beyond technical skills, students gain confidence to earn independently and build sustainable livelihoods.

A key feature of Prerna is its emphasis on practical learning. Trainees not only learn skills but also create products. A major milestone was the

production of 220 sling bags for IASOWA, which provided students with hands-on experience in teamwork, quality standards, and production management. The project became a symbol of their growing confidence and abilities.

Supported by IASOWA and dedicated mentors, Prerna has built a welcoming environment where women feel encouraged to learn and grow. Its vision remains focused on reaching more women, introducing advanced skills, and expanding opportunities for financial independence.

Design Centre and Stitching Training Programme

The Design Centre serves as Prerna's hub for creativity, skill-building, and transformation. Students receive practical training in cutting, stitching, garment designing, and finishing while gaining exposure to real production work.

Training progresses systematically from fabric understanding and basic stitching to advanced garment construction. The centre is equipped with industry-grade tools, including sewing machines, overlock and embroidery machines, cutting tables, steam irons, and pattern-making equipment.

Students are guided through stitching, finishing, and quality control with patience and encouragement. Workshops allow them to create sling bags, pillow covers, floor mats, and other household products, strengthening creativity and precision.

Exhibition-cum-sale events give students exposure to market demand and customer interaction. Sales

proceeds are shared with trainees, often becoming the first income earned through their own efforts. This reinforces confidence and demonstrates how skills can lead to financial independence.

Computer Course at Prerna Centre

Prerna introduced a Computer Course to build digital literacy and enhance career opportunities. The NASSCOM-affiliated programme has 15 students and one teacher, supported by an air-conditioned computer room with 11 internet-enabled systems.

Classes are conducted in English and Hindi, ensuring easy understanding for students with diverse educational backgrounds. Training covers computer operations, typing, internet use, MS Office, and digital communication.

An important initiative is the development of bilingual English-Hindi study materials that simplify learning and reduce language barriers. These resources encourage independent learning and ensure inclusivity.

The course equips students with practical digital skills while building confidence and preparing them for modern employment opportunities.

Beauty Centre and Skill Development Programme

The Beauty Centre is another important initiative aimed at promoting skill development and self-employment opportunities for women. The ATDC-affiliated course currently trains 17 students under one instructor in a well-equipped parlour setting.

Students receive hands-on training in threading, manicure, pedicure, facial care, hygiene practices, customer handling, and basic salon management. Along with technical learning, emphasis is placed on communication skills, confidence, and professionalism.

Many students aspire to work in salons or establish independent businesses, creating opportunities not only for themselves but also for others.

Prerna Centre: Learning with Dignity and Empowerment

Prerna Centre has evolved into a safe and inspiring institution dedicated to empowering women through skill development. Clean, comfortable, and well-maintained infrastructure ensures a positive learning environment.

Facilities include air-conditioned classrooms, hygienic spaces, safe drinking water, and security arrangements to support students throughout their training.

An important initiative is the provision of nutritious mid-day meals for approximately 200 students through support from Akshay Patra. The programme helps improve health, concentration, and well-being while ensuring that students remain focused and motivated.

Conclusion

Prerna Centre represents compassion, dedication, and empowerment through education and skill development. Through its Design Centre, Computer Course, Beauty Centre, and workshops, it equips women with practical skills, confidence, and pathways to self-reliance.

Prerna goes beyond training individuals — it transforms lives. Every classroom, machine, and activity reflects the belief that when women receive opportunity and support, they create meaningful change for themselves, their families, and society. It is truly a place where dreams are nurtured, confidence is built, and futures are stitched together with hope and dignity.

Ragini Singh
Joint secretary



Prerna Activities





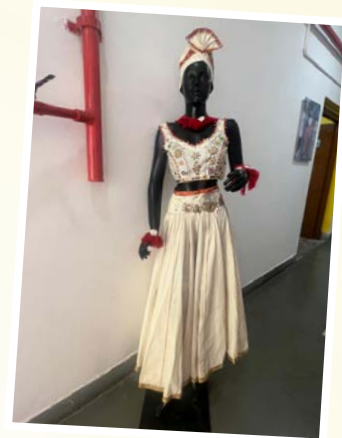












Our Volunteers

NOW



Anita Mittal



Neetu Singh

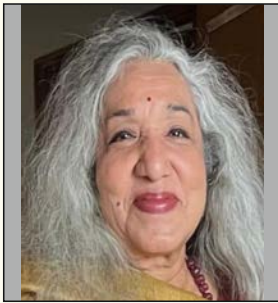


Neetu Srivastava



Rajshree Paatil

THEN



Usha Srinivasan



Gita Sarup Mehta



Anita Mittal



Shanan Jain



Neetu Singh



Smita Sahu



Neetu Srivastava



Vandana P. Singh



Ruhi Danish Ashraf

Photo Montage





New Beginning

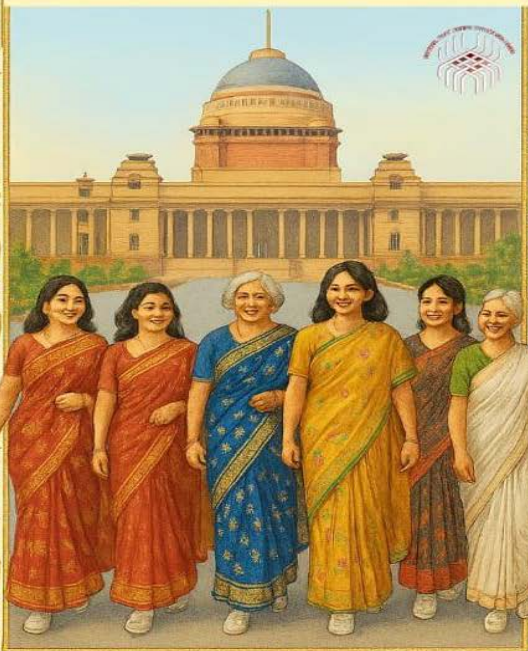


New Beginning





IASOWA is delighted to invite its members for
A Walkathon: A Tribute to the Weavers of India
On National Handloom Day
Thursday, August 7, 2025
A Royal Rendezvous with
Hon'ble President of India



Assembly point: NMB Club, 11 AM
 Buses will leave for Rashtrapati Bhawan at 11.20 AM Sharp
Dress Code: HANDLOOM SAREES & WALKING SHOES

TEAM IASOWA
 President : Mrs. Hema Somanathan Secretary: Mrs. Shveta Kansal
 Treasurer :Mrs. Archana Kumar Jt. Secy: Mrs. Ragini Singh

Saree Walkathon



Saree Walkathon



Saree Walkathon





We Care

IASOWA invites all it's members to Twirl into Tradition with

Garba & Dandiya

On
2nd September 2025, Tuesday
4 PM

at
the lawns of BIHAR NIWAS
(near Chanakya Mall)

**Dress code : chaniya-choli/gujarati saree/
 blouses with kutchi embroidery in vibrant colors**

**EXHIBITION CUM SALE FEATURING EXQUISITE
 GUJARATI CHANIYA CHOLIS,
 KUTCHI EMBROIDERED BLOUSES & HANDCRAFTED JEWELLERY
 ON 21ST & 22ND AUGUST AT OLD GUJARAT BHAWAN, KAUTILYA MARG**



Choreographer will be arranged

TEAM IASOWA

President: Mrs. Hema Somanathan **Secretary: Mrs. Shveta Gupta Kansal**
Treasurer: Mrs. Archana Kumar **Jt. Secretary: Mrs. Ragini Singh**



Dancing in Joy



Dancing in Joy



Dancing in Joy



Dancing in Joy





IASOWA invites you to
Annual Diwali Dinner
Saturday, October 11th, 2025
7.30 PM Onwards
CABINET SECRETARY'S RESIDENCE
12 MOTHER TERESA CRESCENT, NEW DELHI

Highlights
Rajasthan Folklore
Delectable Vegetarian Cuisine
Zero Proof Beverages
Valet Parking
Lucky Draw
Surprise Gifts

Contribution:
₹1500 per head
₹3000 with spouse

Dress Code:
Beend in Jodhpuri Suit/Ethnic attire
Beendni in Poshak/Leheriya/Gotapatti attire

TEAM IASOWA
President: Mrs. Hema Somanathan
Treasurer: Mrs. Archana Kumar
Secretary: Mrs. Shveta Kansal
Jt. Secy: Mrs. Ragini Singh

Delectable Diwali Dinner



Delectable Diwali Dinner



Delectable Diwali Dinner



Delectable Diwali Dinner





IASOWA invites you and your spouse to a soulful
piano soirée
With the legendary
Brian Silas
on
15th November 2025, Saturday
5 PM
at
Siri Fort Audi -2
(Entry from gate no. 4)

Dress Code: Printed Silk Sarees

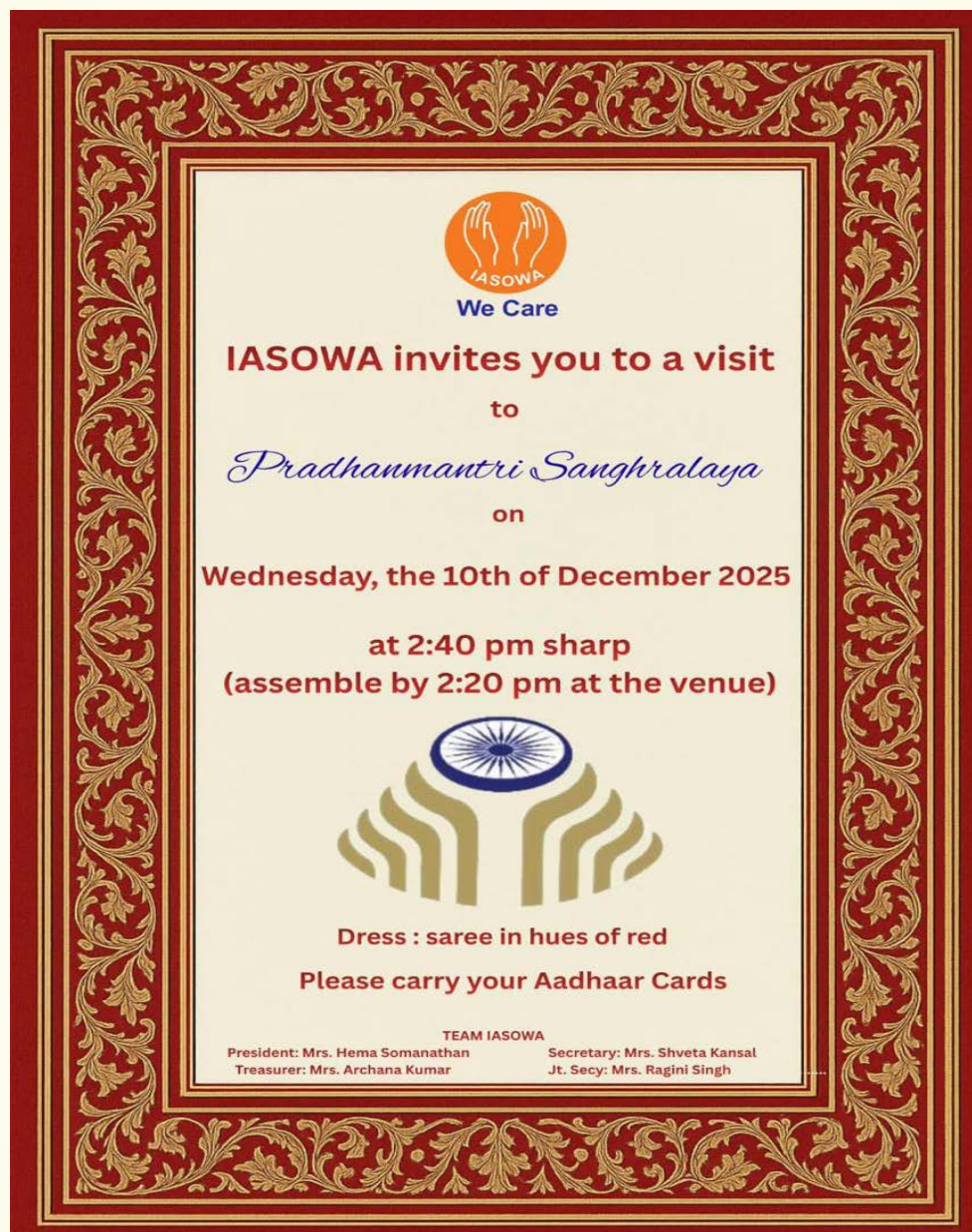
TEAM IASOWA
President: Mrs. Hema Somanathan
Treasurer: Mrs. Archana Kumar
Secretary: Mrs. Shveta Kansal
Jt. Secy: Mrs. Ragini Singh

An Evening Of Melodies



An Evening Of Melodies





A Visit To The PM Museum



A Visit To The PM Museum



A Visit To The PM Museum



A Visit To The PM Museum



A Visit To The PM Museum




IASOWA We Care

IASOWA invites its members to
an enchanting evening of musical drama

Babuji

Monday, the 19th of January 2026

at
Abhimanch
National School of Drama
Bhagwan Das Lane, Mandi House

3 pm onwards
(Please be seated by 2:40pm)


Dress Code: Saree in elegant shades of yellow.



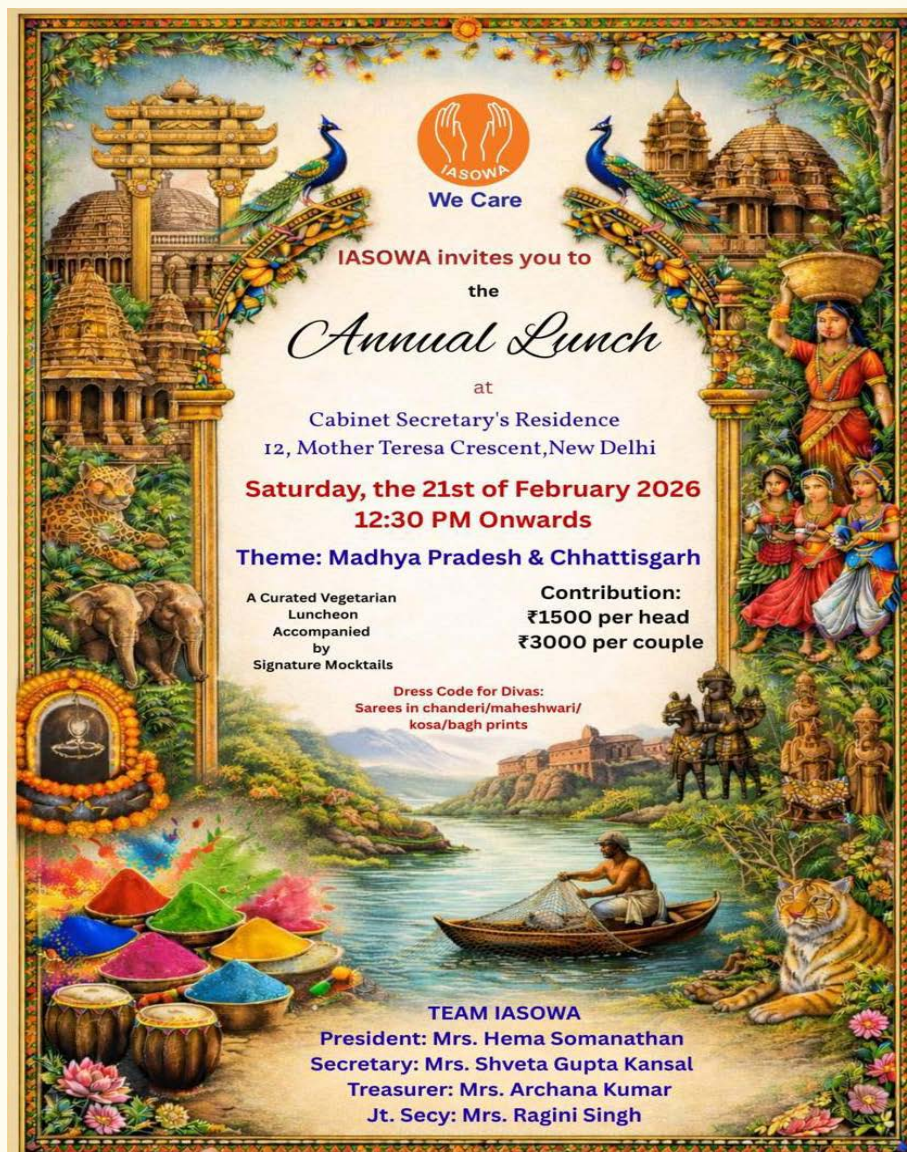
TEAM IASOWA
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An Evening At The Theatre



An Evening At The Theatre



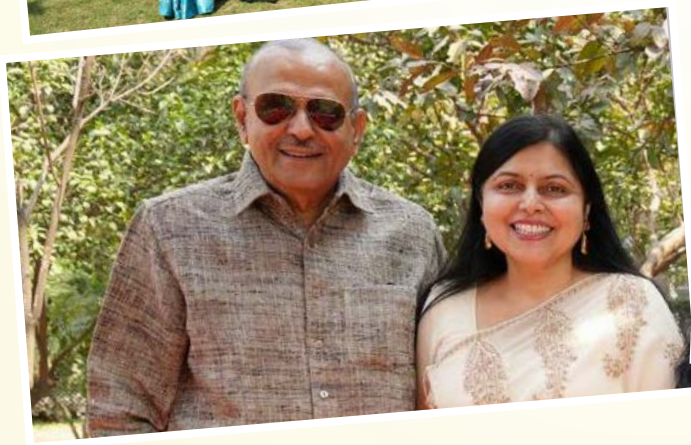


Holi Lunch





Holi Lunch





Holi Lunch



Holi Lunch



Holi Lunch





High Tea For Super Seniors



High Tea For Super Seniors



High Tea For Super Seniors



High Tea For Super Seniors



High Tea For Super Seniors



High Tea For Super Seniors





Visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan



Visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan





**IASOWA invites its members
to a delightful evening of
endless fun, laughter and entertainment
with**

Harpriya Bains

a celebrity stand-up comedian

**on Wednesday,
the 29th of April, 2026
at CSOI Auditorium
at 4pm**

Dress Code : sarees in shades of pink

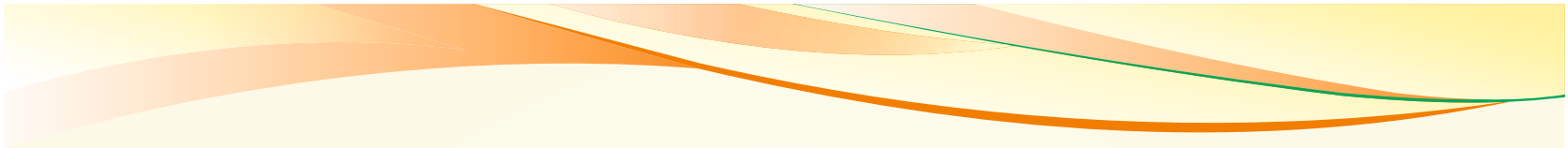
Team IASOWA
President: Mrs. Hema Somanathan
Secretary: Mrs. Shveta Gupta Kansal
Treasurer: Mrs. Archana Kumar
Jt. Secy: Mrs. Ragini Singh

Stand Up Comedy



Stand Up Comedy





Investing In Self



Creating a Niche



I know that I cannot change the world but I can chalk out my path and stick to it, no matter whatever hurdles come in the way. Sift the thoughts and values of the world around you, pen your aspirations on your sticky notes and your bearings will be found.

Life long learning, pursuing self development, joy of achieving milestones are all non material gains, to be experienced. Follow your passion, and see your



satisfaction level increase in leaps and bounds. Transforming abstract desires into concrete action is the first step towards finding your own orbit.

As a girl, being an avid reader and an animal lover, I read a series of four books written by a veterinary doctor Dr James Alfred. He wrote under the pseudonym, James Herriot. The book being about his personal experiences in the Yorkshire Dales. The doctor turned author, stroked his passion for creativity, for story telling, and penned his memoirs. The names of the books are picked up from a hymn. They are: All Things Bright and Beautiful, All Creatures Big and Small, All Things Wise and Wonderful, The Lord God made them All.

I just love detective novels and am well versed with Agatha Chistie's works. Recently while flicking through Netflix, I chanced upon a series based on her novel "The Seven Dials Mystery". Here the protagonist joins the ranks of detectives by sheer pluck and life skills.

Everyone's journey is remarkable. People learn as they go along. All learning leads to self-development and growth. Computers, the internet and web were once all Greek to brethren of my generation. Now we have learnt and how we have picked up. Women in the workforce have created their space and are valued for their commitment and hard work.

In two of the three types of Authority as stated by Max Weber, an eminent Sociologist, personal growth and self development is involved. In both Charismatic Authority and Traditional Authority, a domain is created where this authority is exercised. In Traditional Authority, found in families, it is in the personal domain that this authority is exercised whereas it is authority over a select public in Charismatic Authority, like that of an Influencer.

The most profitable niche is oneself. Identify your strengths, follow your dreams and see your dreams soaring the skies. Examples of Atma Nirbhar Bharat and Lakhpati Didis are gleaming of how success is around us, we just have to follow the right path. Personal niche may vary from health & fitness, artificial Intelligence, food & recipe, personal care, travel & lifestyle and the like. Bloggers do create their own genre. We now have Personal Shoppers

and of course celebrity saree drapers.

Me, myself and I are not selfish terms but means giving priority to oneself. I may want to learn a new language, pursue an erstwhile buried hobby, travel but with my likes in mind. An ongoing process, personal development is a constant companion. Seek yourself and what gives you joy and satisfaction. Perfections and perceptions of Society may be standardized and cliché.

Moral and motivational stories tell us about turning everything into an opportunity. It is motivation and the belief in oneself that encourages the courage to change. After that change, hard work and patience yields result. Self discovery can lead from helplessness to becoming proactive. Learning, failing and finally success will be the trajectory course. The journey, the learning, improving self awareness are all important for making life more fulfilling.

Meaningful changes can be made in your life by

recognising new opportunities and challenging yourself accordingly. An individual with a heart that is open to learning and is able to overcome the barriers of a judgemental society can create a niche. Women of my generation have done it, overcome hurdles and surged ahead, societal stereotypes notwithstanding. We humans have more than one status and each one comes with a role. Performance of these roles lead us to personal growth.

Intentionally evolving and maturing as we move along in life. It is about becoming a better, more fulfilled, self-assured, and resilient human. I can and I will is the mind set required for creating your own niche. Individual growth is your own journey, sensory, cognitive and physical.

Your own niche is both cultural and structural. Cultural as it a feeling and Structural due to being visible to oneself and to Society at large. It is your niche, your creation, your pride.



Rupam Jha
Haryana

Live Deliberately



“ Add more life to your years than years to your life”-the objective being not to live longer but to live healthier, maintaining physical and mental abilities well into old age. It means being physically active, mentally engaged, emotionally fulfilled and leading a purposeful life.

The concept of longevity is shifting from lifespan to health span. Health span is not just living longer but living well until the end. That means having strong muscles, good mobility, sharp brain and being active and independent. Sadly, the modern medicine focuses more on treating diseases when they manifest rather than preventing them.

Four major group of diseases that are responsible for disability and early death in present day times are: cardiovascular disease, cancers, neuro degenerative diseases and metabolic disorders like diabetes. These diseases develop over decades and can be prevented through lifestyle modifications and regular monitoring.

The four-lifestyle pillars for health span are:

1) Exercise- It helps maintain muscle, heart health, metabolic function and brain health. Exercise should include aerobic endurance, strength training, stability and mobility. Muscle mass is one of the strongest predictors of longevity. It wouldn't be incorrect to say that muscle is the longevity organ. As people age, they lose muscle mass which leads to frailty, falls and fractures and higher mortality risk.

2) Nutrition- Eat local, seasonal, fresh and in moderation. Consume adequate protein to maintain muscle mass and support immunity. To control

blood sugar and improve metabolic health, limit processed foods and sugar, avoid frequent snacking and include fibre in your meals. Choose low glycaemic carbohydrates such as whole grains and millets. Eat plenty of fibre to improve gut microbiome and improve digestive health. Include healthy fats such as nuts, seeds and fatty fish to support heart and brain health. A wide variety of plant foods like seasonal fruits, different coloured vegetables, herbs, and spices provide antioxidants, to support cellular health. Hydration are equally important for body functions. Listen to your body and personalise diet as per your metabolism instead of going by fads.

3) Sleep- It is essential for hormone balance, brain function, emotional health and repair & recovery. Seven to 8 hours of sleep, consistent sleep schedule following circadian rhythm, dark and cool bedroom and no screens close to the bedtime are simple ways to improve the quality of sleep.

4) Emotional and mental health- Stress, trauma and emotional issues can affect physical health and lifespan. Health span and longevity involves emotional self-awareness, mental resilience and meaningful relationships. It is important to cultivate healthy relationships and avoid toxic environment. Mindfulness practices help maintain Zen state of mind; being fully present in what you are doing right now instead of living in past worries or future anxiety. Mindfulness practices are simple mental exercises that train you to pay full attention to the present moment.- your thoughts, feelings, body sensations or surroundings.

5) Health monitoring- Most major diseases develop silently for decades so it makes sense to get regular blood tests and metabolic markers done to detect disease risk and take remedial measures timely before the symptoms appear.

Longevity and health span comes from boring fundamentals like exercise, nutrition and sleep. It is the lifestyle choices that one makes at 30 that determine your health at 80.

That is the advice as a health professional, which should be adhered to whichever extent possible. I consider myself an observer of life and it has given me an insight that having a purpose in life even in the twilight years keeps one healthier, both physically and mentally. When one gives up on life, thinking that the productive years are over and just drifts through the senior years, the cognitive decline is sharper. One must inculcate hobbies; it may be art, music, writing, gardening, anything that brings spark to life. Let these hobbies be besides the chosen profession so that post retirement, there is an engaging and fulfilling hobby to fall back on. Never lose that child in yoube curious and be willing to

learn, to laugh and be happy for no reason at all except for your own self.

It is very important to have meaningful social connections that stimulate you mentally, understand your emotional needs and provide the silent support by their mere presence. One can combat loneliness by joining groups, reconnecting with friends and family, practising self-compassion and by actively challenging negative thoughts about oneself. Be kind to yourself, accepting your failures and successes in life with understanding, trying not to dwell in the past or be scared of future. Understanding and acceptance are the key to inner peace.

George Bernard Shaw so rightly said, “We don’t stop playing because we grew old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

“Live life deliberately“

Dr Harleen Sandhu
Uttarakhand

Evolving...



Do I remember how I grew up?
No, certainly not!
Unless somebody mentioned one day
how tall or fat,
how big or mature-
I have grown.
Now in my fifties-
That Somebody, is my own realisation
She tells me how I have evolved
day by day in relationships
with people around me;
detached from opinions impressions and inanities of the surroundings!
The wisdom to me, of course, comes
not from the whole wide world
but from the journey within.
Sitting alone and reflecting upon self
has become the best hobby.
I, has become the best friend to Me.
It feels at peace by being with my Own Self!
This self-realisation,
journey to my inner world,
still on the march - day by day & moment after moment...
I am evolving, constantly...

-The Art of Being Idle!!

Vandana Poddar Singh
Tripura

RAGA Music Therapy

“Music gives wings to mind...”



The fundamental components of music include tones or sounds that either occur in a single line (melody) or in several lines (harmony), as well as the perception of sound moving in time (rhythm). Use of this Music in various alternative therapies has been demonstrated to improve several medical issues. It improves mental, physical, and emotional health. Music therapy can be administered at any specific time such as morning, evening or as per audience need. The Old Testament mentions music therapy when King David healed himself with the harp. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, believed music could heal. To reduce pain, ancient Egyptian women listened to music while giving birth. The famous Arabic author Ibn Sina wrote extensively about this issue. Music is beneficial even according to Richard Browne's 1729 medical treatise “Medicina Musica”. That the Indian Saint Thyagaraja could revive a corpse by singing the Kriti “Naa Jeevan Dhara” (set in Raga Bilahari), is a well-known legend highlighting the extraordinary power of divine music and bhakti (devotion) in Indian tradition.

Indian classical music has been shown to have a significant impact on the brain, with various studies highlighting its effects on mental activity, emotional responses, and cognitive functions. The study emphasizes the dynamic changes in brain activity in response to live Indian classical music, identifying specific brain regions activated during musical experiences. This study underscores the potential for integrating Indian classical music into music therapy for various cognitive and emotional

conditions. Another research by Kunikullaya explores how different ragas affect brain wave frequencies and inter-subject correlation, revealing that ragas like “Malkauns” and “Miyan ki Todi” can enhance relaxation and positive emotional memory through increased alpha-beta brainwaves.

Brainwaves are rhythmic, electrical impulses produced by neurons in the brain, ranging from slowest to fastest: Delta, Theta, Alpha, Beta, and Gamma. They regulate states of consciousness, from deep, restorative sleep (Delta) and relaxation/creativity (Alpha) to active, focused thinking (Beta) and high-level cognitive processing (Gamma). The transition of human brain waves from a calm to an anxious state involves a shift from low-frequency, slow-moving waves to high-frequency, fast-moving waves, often accompanied by reduced overall brain synchronization. This transition is characterized by a decrease in alpha waves (calmness) and a sharp increase in beta or gamma waves. Stress and anxiety primarily manifest in the brain as increased high-beta waves (18–40 Hz), signalling high arousal, worry, and alertness, alongside reduced alpha waves. While beta waves enable focus, excessive and high-frequency activity leads to cognitive, emotional, and physical stress symptoms. Listening to Ragas help move the brain from an active Beta state to a relaxed Alpha or Theta state.

Indian classical music believes that the human body has 72,000 nerves (nadis) that vibrate in specific patterns. Ragas are composed of notes (swaras) that, when played with specific intensity, regulate

these vibrations to correct imbalances. It functions by aligning the vibrational frequencies of the human body with specific sound patterns, which can activate energy centres (chakras), regulate breathing, and reduce stress.

7 Main Chakras in Human Body–

Root Chakra-- Associated with grounding, security, and stability.

Sacral Chakra– Linked to emotional release, creativity, and overcoming trauma.

Solar Plexus Chakra– Known as the "Love

Frequency" used for transformation and manifestation.

Heart Chakra– Promotes compassion, love, and harmonizing relationships.

Throat Chakra– Associated with communication, expression, and clearing toxins.

Third Eye Chakra– Linked to intuition, awareness, and spiritual order.

Crown Chakra– Associated with enlightenment, higher consciousness, and divine connection.

The following table shows the 7 chakras, seed mantras, sapta swaras and their common frequencies.

Chakra	Location	Frequency	Seed Sound (Mantra)	Swara (Musical Note)
Root (Muladhara)	Base of Spine	396 Hz	LAM	Sa (C)
Sacral (Svadhithana)	Lower Abdomen	417 Hz	VAM	Re (D)
Solar Plexus (Manipura)	Upper Abdomen	528 Hz	RAM	Ga (E)
Heart (Anahata)	Center of Chest	639 Hz	YAM	Ma (F)
Throat (Vishuddha)	Throat	741 Hz	HAM	Pa (G)
Third Eye (Ajna)	Between Brows	852 Hz	SHAM	Dha (A)
Crown (Sahasrara)	Top of Head	963 Hz	OM	Ni (B)

- **Solfeggio Frequencies:** These are commonly used in sound healing to balance energy centres, with 528 Hz often associated with transformation and DNA repair.
- **Sapta swaras (Swar Frequency):** The seven swaras (Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni) are believed to correspond to the seven chakras, helping to align them through music.
- **Chakra Sounds:** Each chakra has a corresponding Bija mantra (seed sound) that, when chanted, resonates with the frequency of that chakra. Blocked chakras can cause emotional and physical issues; music therapy aims to restore balance.

Examples–

Bhairavi	Calming, reduces stress, anxiety, and insomnia.
Darbari	Relieves tension, mental stress, and insomnia.
Todi	Lowers blood pressure, treats cold/headache.
Malkauns	Increases focus, treats low blood pressure.
Ahir Bhairav	Reduces hypertension, aids in respiratory issues.
Yaman	Boosts mood, reduces mental fatigue.
Malhar	Soothes anger, aids with asthma.

Holistic health can be achieved through culturally rooted, effective, non-invasive and low-cost complementary medicine of Raga Therapy.

Rajshree Paatil
Tamilnadu

उड़ान



यह उड़ान है तेरी
तू जी ले जिंदगी तेरी

आएगा वह दौर भी
जिसका तुझे है इंतजार अभी

क्यों है तुझे कल की फिक्र
आएगा वह भी मंजर

जिंदगी है
इम्तिहान भी है

यह उड़ान है तेरी
तू जी ले जिंदगी तेरी

आएगी मुश्किलें कई
तू मुस्कुरा देना यूं ही

हौसला बुलंद रखना
हार ना मानना

यह उड़ान है तेरी
तू जी ले जिंदगी तेरी

डॉ. युगंधरा खोडे.महात्मे
त्रिपुरा



The Power House



The invisible power: How women are quietly, but steadily shaping the world



In this world of visible achievements and loud victories, we often forget that the most powerful forces in life are often the quietest; be it patience, compassion, resilience, or the steady strength of women. These don't scream or shout, but quietly hum beneath the fabric of our societies, carefully guiding and nurturing, breathing life.

I once watched a mother patiently helping her child understand a difficult math problem after a long and exhausting day. There was no recognition, no audience—just patience and encouragement. But in that small moment, something powerful was happening. Confidence was being built. Curiosity was being nurtured. A young mind was learning to believe in itself.

But somewhere between balancing responsibilities, managing households, and caring for loved ones, women in our society got left behind. They sacrificed their lives and careers to build homes and families, guide future generations, and shape the world of tomorrow. We, as a society, often mistook their sacrifice for weakness, not realizing that their quiet strength is actually a profound form of resilience, one that allows them to remain calm during chaos, persevere through difficulties, and continue giving even in challenging circumstances. It may not always garner attention, but it leaves a lasting impact.

History has shown us evidence of this fact repeatedly. Women leaders brought radical transformations in society, even when their contributions were shadowed by those of their male

counterparts. Recent data acceded on global level clearly show that educating girls improves health outcomes and economic stability, empower an entire generation, thereby, allowing communities to prosper. Their influence extends beyond their immediate surroundings, often having far-reaching outcomes that shape an entire era.

Modern women have realized that strength can no longer be bound or hidden. It must be unfettered from the constraints of sacrifice and endurance, and it must be redefined to encompass their own personal growth, emotional well-being, and a fulfilling life. This strength lives in the professional who balances career and family with determination, in the woman who supports others even while facing her own struggles, and in the friend who offers encouragement when someone else is losing hope.

Interestingly, the qualities often associated with women—empathy, emotional intelligence, collaboration—once considered soft, are now recognized as some of the most effective leadership traits in the modern world. Organizations increasingly understand that success is not built only on authority or competition, but on understanding people, building trust, and working together.

Yet many women underestimate themselves. In the rhythm of everyday life—work, responsibilities, relationships—it is easy to forget the impact of small actions. A kind word. A moment of patience. A

gesture of encouragement. But these seemingly simple acts create powerful ripples.

It is time that women take back their power, regain their strength through growth. A woman who continues to learn, explore new interests, and nurture her own well-being becomes stronger with time. Whether through reading, creative hobbies, exercise, reflection, or spiritual practice, these small investments enrich both the mind and the soul.

Equally powerful is the strength women find in supporting each other. When women encourage and uplift one another, they create communities of resilience and inspiration. A shared story, a supportive conversation, or a simple word of encouragement can remind someone that she is not alone.

The strength of women is often quiet—but its impact is undeniable.

It shapes the values of children.

It strengthens families.

It builds compassionate societies.

And it does all this without needing applause.

A Moment of Reflection

Take a moment today to ask yourself:

- Am I caring for my own well-being as thoughtfully as I care for others?
- Am I surrounding myself with people who inspire and support me?
- What new skill, idea, or interest can I explore to keep growing?
- What worry or burden can I gently release?
- How can I encourage someone today?

Sometimes transformation does not arrive through dramatic changes. It arrives through small decisions repeated every day—moments of patience, kindness, and courage.

When a woman truly recognizes her own strength—her compassion, her resilience, her wisdom—something remarkable happens.

She stops waiting for recognition.

She stops underestimating herself.

And quietly, without needing the world's permission, she begins to change it.

Vandana Gupta
AGMUT

The Symphony of the Multiverse



The quiet architect of a bustling day,
She weaves the morning light from shades of grey.
One hand stirs the coffee, dark and sweet,
The other finds the shoes for tiny feet.
A phone pressed to her ear, a business deal,
While checking if the stove has cooked the meal.
Her mind is like a map of tangled lines,
Where every deadline and a birthday shines.
She balances the budget and the soul,
Keeping every fractured pieces whole.
From boardroom battles to the bedtime story,
She seeks no crown and asks for little glory.
The calendar is etched upon her heart,
A master of the scientific art.
To soothe a fever while she drafts a plan,
Doing more than any logic can.
With iron grace, she holds the spinning plates,
And meets the pressure of a thousand fates.
A thousand roles, a single steady light—
The one who keeps the world spinning right.

Dr. Yashdeep Kaur
AGMUT

The Tradwife Illusion: Calm, Chaos, and the Business of Selling Simplicity



Last Sunday at a café in Delhi, I overheard two women having what sounded like a crisis disguised as casual conversation.

“I’m done with corporate life. I just want to wake up, make banana bread, sip coffee in a silk saree, and post about it.”

Her friend nodded earnestly, spooning chia pudding into her mouth.

“Same. Manifesting slow living. But first, I need to clear my ₹18 lakh home loan.”

We laughed, but not for long. Because beneath the humor lies a deeper truth: modern women are exhausted.

Between back-to-back meetings and bedtime stories, EMIs and endless emails, many women feel stretched beyond capacity. We are all one power cut and an absent maid away from collapse. In this exhaustion, an old promise wrapped in a pastel Instagram filter is making a comeback: the tradwife dream.

“Tradwife”, short for “traditional wife”, is a social media trend that romanticizes homemaking, domestic devotion, and curated femininity. Instagram and TikTok are filled with soft-lit reels of women kneading dough, arranging pooja thalis, packing lunchboxes, and sipping coffee under golden sunlight. The captions promise serenity, simplicity, and slow living.

But behind the floral aprons and vintage filters lies a more complicated story, one about burnout, financial

independence, parenting, and the influencer economy monetizing nostalgia.

Why the Tradwife Temptation Is Rising

Across the world, women are burnt out. According to the Deloitte Women @ Work Report (2024), **53% of working women globally describe themselves as constantly exhausted.** In India, the LinkedIn Opportunity Index (2023) found **47% of urban working women feel overwhelmed balancing careers, homes, and motherhood.**

Despite rising corporate success, Indian women still perform **seven times more unpaid domestic work than men**, according to the NSSO Time Use Survey (2022).

It’s an impossible equation: parent like you don’t have a job, work like you don’t have children, and smile like you’re not falling apart.

Against this backdrop, tradwife aesthetics feel like a soothing balm, a digital whisper promising softer mornings and simpler lives.

A University of Hawai‘i study (2025) analyzing thousands of #Tradwife TikToks identified four emotional drivers behind the trend: exhaustion with hustle culture, reclaiming femininity as “soft power,” rejecting superwoman syndrome, and craving control amidst chaos.

But here’s the paradox: the tradwife fantasy isn’t really about simplicity, it’s about consuming it.

The Business Behind the Apron

The tradwife dream is carefully curated, and often

highly profitable.

Take Hannah Neeleman of Ballerina Farm in Utah. Her reels show her milking cows, baking bread, and raising seven children in pastoral slow motion. Yet behind the rustic aesthetic is a multimillion-dollar business selling farm products and partnering with luxury brands.

In India too, influencers draped in Benarasi silks, arranging temple thalis and demonstrating “authentic slow living,” often earn substantial incomes through brand collaborations, YouTube monetization, affiliate marketing, and lifestyle businesses.

Tradwife influencers preach surrender but operate as entrepreneurs. They promote financial dependence as aspirational while enjoying financial independence themselves.

They’re selling nostalgia, but monetizing your burnout.

The Parenting Paradox

The movement also taps into a quieter anxiety: childhood itself is being outsourced.

A UNICEF India report (2023) found that urban parents spend less than 90 minutes a day in direct interaction with their children. An ICMR **Urban Family Study (2023) found 65% of children under six in metros spend more waking hours with caregivers than with parents.**

Tradwife content exploits this guilt: quit the job, reclaim motherhood, be present.

But the problem isn’t simply individual, it’s structural. Mothers are pressured to choose between careers and caregiving, while fathers often remain “helpers” rather than equal parents.

And another traditional support system has quietly weakened: grandparents.

When Grandparents Say No

For decades, joint families acted as India’s informal childcare system. Grandparents helped raise children while parents worked.

But today’s seniors are rewriting that script.

A 2023 ICMR Family Dynamics Survey found **58% of Indian grandparents decline full-time** childcare, citing health, energy, and the desire to enjoy their own lives.

The assumption that “bacche toh hum sambhal lenge” is fading. Parents are left overstretched, children grow up rotating between caregivers, and many women turn toward tradwife narratives seeking control through curated calm.

India vs. the West

In the West, tradwife living can signal rebellion, a rejection of capitalist hustle culture. Many women who step away from corporate life do so with savings, legal protections, and state support.

Countries like Sweden and Norway provide parental leave, childcare systems, and social safety nets that make career breaks reversible.

India tells a different story.

Here, domesticity was never optional for many women. Choosing to “return” to homemaking often isn’t rebellion, it’s compliance framed as empowerment.

And without financial independence, leaving the workforce carries real risks: vulnerability during divorce, illness, or widowhood.

The tradwife fantasy may be global. But without safety nets, it can easily become a trap.

The Illusion of Calm

Homemaking can absolutely be meaningful when it is freely chosen and supported by financial security. It can be creative, fulfilling, even joyful.

But the glossy Instagram aesthetic hides what sustains the fantasy: money, influence, and

freedom.

Without those, tradwifery can quietly erode women's agency while romanticizing unpaid labor. Algorithms package calm as content. Influencers monetize it as business. Exhausted women consume it as hope.

The Way Forward

The real solution isn't choosing between boss-babe burnout and tradwife surrender.

It's building systems that make real choice possible.

India needs affordable childcare, flexible workplaces, equal parenting norms, and financial

literacy that ensures homemakers retain economic agency.

Because children won't remember whether you baked sourdough or ordered pizza.

They'll remember whether you were there.

Women aren't running back to the kitchen.

They're running away from chaos.

Ruhi Danish Ashraf
AGMUT

Empowerment Beyond Privilege: A Journey from Self to Solidarity



Women empowerment has never been the foremost goal of any society, ever. In fact, societies have sustained themselves by creating institutions that have assigned roles to women different from those assigned to men. The very nature of these roles have made men become the more assertive, dispassionate, dominant, decision making leaders of institutions while the women have remained aloof from the world outside their homes, are submissive, family oriented care givers. The societal definition of a good man and a good woman is also often related to how well the two genders perform their roles.

For women, the aspiration to get empowered often gets lost in the aspiration to be labelled as a good woman. Similarly, for men being macho, ruthless and more practical than sentimental makes them feel like an ideal man. In this race to be labelled good, the question of an empowered woman becomes more and more mystified because an empowered woman is seldom seen as a good woman. A 'good man' also needs a disempowered woman to feel good and manly. Why then would he ever strive to empower women?

Who is then an empowered woman, how does one become her? One is reminded of the famous phrase coined by the renowned historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich - "Well behaved women seldom make history"

It is actually the caricature of this "virtuous" woman, the "good" woman that has kept women empowerment quietly buried under various layers of

suppression and inequality. Breaking these multifarious layers does not only become a tedious, back breaking task but an immensely tactful and clever manoeuvre. The first struggle is to make the society realise that an empowered, strong woman can also be a good woman. In fact she could be a greater asset for society. A man who breaks the boundaries of archaic gender roles and treats women as his equal partner can help the society become much better than what it is today.

Even at the familial level, when women are equal partners in the truest sense, the family flourishes. And what are families, after all? The units that make up the society.

In this context, I feel, for many women, empowerment begins like a personal journey of self realisation. The need for empowering the self begins to be felt internally and more strongly than the need to be labelled as a good woman. The desire to make independent choices regarding finances, education, social norms and behaviours and to confidently place on the table, one's voice and agency becomes the real benchmark of true empowerment. '*Charity begins at home*', it is said and one realises that so does empowerment. Even before home, it begins with the self.

This initial journey could be long and lonely and full of obstacles but is worth every effort because the internal shift of the thought process, from validation to a role in decision making, transforms how a woman navigates family, workplace, and society. It is then that self-empowerment does not remain only

personal or internal - the ripple effect goes beyond her individual life. It carries social and political weight. When one woman claims her voice, she disrupts structures that were built to silence so many. Empowerment spreads through example, solidarity, and structural change. When women are empowered individually, they become role models, mentors, and advocates. Their confidence normalises ambition in other women. Their financial independence challenges dependency narratives. Their refusal to tolerate discrimination exposes injustice. This way personal empowerment empowers the whole community when it contributes to dismantling systems that disadvantage women as a group. It spreads through example, solidarity, and structural change.

Empowerment however, must not be confused with privilege. (Here, by privilege I wish to limit its meaning to access to wealth, elite education, caste and class positions and social status) Privilege provides access.

Empowerment requires agency and consciousness. Empowerment means understanding one's position within systems of inequality and choosing to act with awareness and responsibility. Many privileged women who appear to be powerful are not necessarily and truly empowered. They may still be operating within patriarchal norms. Empowerment thus, one may say, is itself a privilege.

Empowered women in privileged positions can contribute immensely to society. They have a unique opportunity.. Their access can open doors for others. Their voices carry weight in decision-making spaces. But this requires shifting from individual success to collective uplift. When privileged women remain passive beneficiaries of the system, inequality persists. When they become allies and co-strugglers, transformation accelerates.

There could be various ways through which

privilege could be used to empower. Using one's influence consciously in advocating inclusive hiring, equal pay, and safe workplaces can be termed as a few doable actions for working women. On the other hand, mentoring across social divides – supporting women from marginalised communities can be done by any woman, working or not.

For the financially privileged, funding and supporting grassroots initiatives, amplifying voices that lack platforms could be really impactful while challenging harmful norms within elite spaces, refusing complicity in exclusionary practices could be practiced by all.

Self-empowerment is the spark and community empowerment is the fire.

When women cultivate inner strength and pair it with social responsibility, change becomes sustainable. Privilege alone may elevate an individual woman but empowerment - conscious, active, and inclusive - uplifts women as a community. And in that shift, the empowerment journey moves from a personal identity to a transformative social change.

Priyam Krishna
Assam

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Culture Heritage & Civilisation
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Chamoli, the land of Gods: Almighty Badrinath to Amitabh Bachchan



Chamoli- the 'land of Gods' or '*Devlok*' - a land where Himalayan silence hums with the chants of pilgrims and folklore echoing in the mountains. Home to the spiritual gateway of Badrinath, this was a district where divinity intertwined effortlessly with breathtaking natural splendour. And to be honest- neither devotees nor dignitaries could resist the pull!

As the District Magistrate's family, our calendar quickly filled with high-profile visitors. Every few weeks brought a bevy of VVIPs, families in tow, flying in by chopper to seek blessings of the deity at Badrinath. That, of course, meant that we- humble hosts in the mighty Himalayas- would set out by road from Gopeshwar (district headquarters), winding our way through five hours of cliff-hugging mountain tracks.

And these weren't your average drives. Landslides, unpredictable weather and heart-in-mouth bends were part of the travel package.

I recall travelling to Badrinathji, in order to receive the then Hon. Governor of Uttar Pradesh and his wife, when a massive landslide blocked the road.

There was no turning back.

With kids in our arms- Taruvar and Tavishi bouncing with excitement, unaware of the dangers- we literally



ran across the unstable landslide zone, dodging loose rocks and mud as the BRO cleared debris.

My heart thudded in my chest with every step.

One misstep would send us hurtling hundreds of feet down into the valley, one loose boulder could come smashing down on us.

As soon as we settled in the car waiting on the other side, "Mom," beamed little Taruvar, "I've decided, I'll become Superman when I grow up."

Before I could respond, he added confidently, "So that I can fly and carry you all across the landslide next time!"

I smiled, the hills really do make everyone feel larger than life!

But the most unforgettable moment came with a fax. Not your usual one.

Amitabh Bachchan, Anil Ambani and Amar Singh were visiting Badrinath.

A spiritual retreat... with a dash of stardom.

Arrangements were made, and we extended a formal invitation on behalf of the DM Chamoli for an evening tea at Badrinath.

On the D-day, the chopper descended and the stars were welcomed by the assigned district officials. They were escorted to the temple and after paying obeisance, they proceeded for the tea organized in a guest house near the temple.

As the sun dipped behind the mountains, Amitabh Bachchan entered quietly, almost unnoticed at first- tall, composed, and dignified- followed by the effusive Amar Singh and the suave, energetic Anil Ambani. They were offered tea with humble hill snacks and, of course, the signature of sarkari VIP hospitality in

UttarPradesh-fried cashew nuts, served with solemn pride.

Even as polite conversation flowed, Amar Singh, never one to let a moment slip, suddenly rose, folded his hands dramatically, and boomed,

“Haathi ke paon mein sabka paon hai... DM saab, dhanyawad-aapne darshan karwa diye!”

(An elephant’s foot is equivalent to everyone’s presence- thank you for making it possible for us to pay obeisance). After all, the DM represented, not only the district administration, but the state too, and his presence meant the entire brass was there!

Rajiv smiled politely, while I wondered how devotion and politics could be so effortlessly woven in the same sentence.

Anil Ambani, impeccably dressed and effortlessly charming, moved easily through the room, speaking to everyone with equal warmth. He leaned toward me and said,

“These hills have such potential—spiritual, ecological, even economic.”

I smiled, thinking how a businessman’s mind never quite switches off. Perhaps even amidst mountains and *mantras*, business opportunities quietly took shape.

Mr. Bachchan, meanwhile, remained mostly silent. He sat slightly apart, listening more than speaking, acknowledging everyone with gentle nods and folded hands. When someone asked, “Sir, *thakaan toh nahi ho rahi?* (Sir, are you feeling tired)”

He replied softly, “*Yeh toh saubhagya hai.* (This is our good fortune)”

No drama. No performance. Just presence.

Everyone wanted a photograph with the superstar. I hesitated.

Rajiv whispered, “It won’t look nice if we ask.”

I nodded and stayed back.

And then—almost as if he sensed it—Amitabh Bachchan turned to Rajiv and said,

“DM saab, ek picture aapke saath bhi ho jaaye.”

(DM sir, let’s click a picture with you)

I couldn’t believe my ears. A superstar asking us!

We posed—no mobile phones in those days, only cameras that promised memories weeks later. The photograph never reached me, but the moment stayed forever.

As they prepared to leave, Rajiv and I stood with folded hands.

“Sir, dhanyavaad chai par aane ke liye (Thank you for accepting our invite for tea),” Rajiv said respectfully.

Mr. Bachchan smiled warmly, nodded at me and shook hands with Rajiv - humility personified!

As the entourage departed, the crowd surged like the Ganga itself. That day, the reverence usually reserved for gods had been lent, just for a while, to a man who was a legend.

As we proceeded to our car- ready to begin journey to Gopeshwar, still giddy from the stardust; a senior officer’s wife walked up to Rajiv shyly and asked,

“Sir, I saw Amitabh Bachchan shake hands with you. Can I... shake hands with you before you wash them?”

Adoration had clearly reached divine levels!

This was not all!!

A few days later, a signed thank-you letter arrived from Amitabh Bachchan, addressed to ‘Mr. Aggarwal and family’.

Another thank note from Amar Singh followed.

And then, the pièce de résistance- a warm note from Anil Ambani, this one addressed to

‘Aarti and Mr. Aggarwal’.

Rajiv, of course, chuckled for days.

Dr. Arti Aggarwal
Uttar Pradesh

Stories of The Rainbow and Sarees



WHAT ARE RAINBOWS MADE OF?

Sarees! Yes!

Sarees, resplendent in various hues and shades across the vast skies, connecting the Earth to the heavens, bridging the Sun and rains, representing diversity, vibrancy and joy. Sarees have been and are symbols of grace and elegance, blending the mythical symbolism with cultural artistry; a union of nature's beauty with human craftsmanship.

Sarees capture the mystical hues (VIBGYOR: VIOLET, INDIGO, BLUE, GREEN, YELLOW, ORANGE, RED AND BEYOND) of the rainbow into a beautifully crafted textile drape!

Sarees are worn in various styles, varying in length from six to nine yards with so much of diversity of over hundred distinct varieties! Luxurious silks and cool cottons: Banarasi and Tanchoi, Kanjeevaram and Aranis, Narayanpet and Pochampally, Mysore silk kasavu saree, Chanderis, and Maheshwari's, Sambalpuris, Dhakais, Paithanis, Balucheries, Patola, Bandhanis and Leheriyas, Ikkats and Teliya rumals, Ilkals and Jamdanis, Phulkaris, Eris and Mugas... the list is almost endless!

SAREES AND STORIES

Each saree has a story of and for the weaver and the wearer; the one who creates, the one who gives and the one who receives.

THE FIRST SAREE

This is always something special. For me, it was the first saree that my Nani got for me when I turned 13,



entering my teens. A beautiful maroon silk, hand-woven, with patterns of flora and fauna in zari. Every time I wore it, I not only felt the warmth of

Nani's love, but also nostalgic and very happy to be wearing the beautiful work of art and craft. In over the six decades that I have been wearing it, each time has been special!

THE FIRST SAREE THAT MY NANI WORE

Married at the age of six years, she went to her husband's house as a bride only when she turned 13! My Nana, a Siddha Vaidhya used to collect medicinal



herbs from forests. On his trip back from somewhere in Himalayas to Srivilliputhur (my home town), he bought a Banarasi saree as a welcoming gift for my Nani... a beautiful mehendi green with zari work of flowers and foliage in the borders and pallu. It was the first Banarasi saree that came into our town and to our family... it became talk of the town!

This saree, I have not draped but have cared for it and preserved it. It is much more than a hundred-year-old heirloom saree, it is a symbol and

expression of love of my Nana for my Nani.

THE FIRST SAREE THAT MY PARENTS GAVE

It was a kanjeevuram saree in rust colour with dark green border and pallu embellished with creepers and paisleys woven in zari.



When I was 16, going on 17, passed out from school and joining

college, it was a gift from my parents for getting the National Science Talent Scholarship award.

We, the awardees were invited to meet the President (Dr. Radhakrishnan) in the Durbar Hall at Rashtrapati Bhawan and later to meet the Prime minister (Smt. Indira Gandhi) at 1, Safdarjung Road.

My parents wanted me to wear that saree for the special occasions, but I chose a simpler attire, which did disappoint my parents.

THE FIRST SAREE THAT MY HUSBAND GAVE

The saree that I wore when he tied the Mangalsutra—nine yards of fine silk in maroon (the colour of kumkum) with



beautifully woven zari border and pallu in geometric design. With the blessings from the temples, parents, relatives and friends, I wore it during the auspicious, poignant and memorable moment and the happy and joyous occasion... the saree I cherish.

THE FIRST SAREES THAT MY DAUGHTERS GAVE

Both my daughters chose to give me tussar silk sarees with exquisite kantha embroidery, one in the

natural shade of tussar and the other in a burnished pink. I have worn them over and over many times. They have a special place in my heart and in my wardrobe.



I feel blessed in many, many ways... to have such loving family and friends! Almost all the amazingly beautiful sarees that I have, have not been purchased by me, but are the gifts of my loved ones!

Post script:

1. Rainbows are formed after the rains, when the sun peeps out of the clouds.

The tiny particles of water hanging in the sky split the sunlight into the seven gorgeous colours (visible to the naked eye) and ultra violet and infra-red.

2. On the theme: My understanding of the designs, weaves, the art and craft, weavers' techniques etc., my appreciation and admiration for this beautiful attire, have evolved over the years.

To preserve this heritage (the colours, weaves and designs), I am also upcycling, redesigning etc. and most importantly, have made the saree my daily (almost) attire.

I see saree as an important cultural heritage.

Usha Srinivasan
Kerala

Whispers of History on the River Nile



Drifting through the calm, serene and timeless waters of the great river Nile has been a dream come true for me. The opportunity came after many decades of cherished longing when I used to nurture hope of drifting on a river as I lay reading Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a student and dreamt of floating on a raft along with Jim and Huckleberry. The desires may become dormant with the passage of time but refused to wither away completely.



And when the opportunity arose, finally, it was on this great river Nile, the lifeline of the Egyptian civilization where I had gone on a recent visit, wanting to sift through the pages of ancient history.

Floating through the Nile River is much more than a journey across waters. It is a serene voyage through history, culture and nature intertwined where the

gentle current of the river carried our boat forward while the golden sunlight simmered on the water and the cool breeze softened the warmth of the desert air. The Nile River, a timeless and patient spectator, has been flowing for thousands of years, nurturing the land and passing by the ancient temple in Luxor and nearby towns and carrying with it stories of civilizations that flourished along its banks.

It has run through the length of the country, creating a fertile green valley. The Greek historian, Herodotus, rightly described Egypt as being "the gift of the Nile". Starting south of the Equator in the heart of Africa, the Nile flows northward out of tropical Africa into the desert land, transforming the barren land surrounding it, before emptying into the Mediterranean. It is about 4 0 0 0 miles long and approximately the last one thousand miles run through Egypt. The Egyptians, by making use of the water, have been able to create a thin green valley of fertile land

that runs the length of the country.

We had been watching the river Nile almost every day since our arrival but an afternoon free from the hectic schedule was a Godsend opportunity for me to be in close proximity with this great river and enjoy drifting along with it. I sat in the small cabin of

my cruise boat and drew the window curtains aside so that I could have a close view of the great river. And Wow! what a magnificent view it was!

Lush green valley on the sides with the rural ambience of the sporadic villages around adding a human touch and the calm, majestic waters of the river Nile in between. People may come and go with the passage of time, but the houses remain as does the grand, subtle, effortless flowing waters of this majestic river. I could see the small white birds hovering above the cool waters and taking a sudden dip below, may be just to catch an insect or a small fish.

And what a lovely spectacle it made!

I was reminded of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* where the sea waters, the Whale and the birds make a meaningful trio and a similar landscape. There was something majestic about the grand,

fabulous River, the Nature and the Universe. The three combined together to give a message to mankind: "Go with the flow and all will be well".

No wonder, the poets and the writers have written so much about Nature as their muse, its beauty and their oneness with mankind only if we have the mindset to appreciate it so.

It teaches you to just drift along, submit to the Will of the indomitable, mysterious Nature and be grateful for the opportunities that come your way as long as you may just

have them.

It was indeed an unforgettable and memorable experience etched out forever in my memory.

I love you ... beautiful Nile River Will always love you as a long-cherished dream come true.

Thank you for calling me and blessing me with your charm and beauty.



Dr. Suchita Malik
Haryana



The Culinary Art



Fish n' Chips



This dish is one of the most popular and iconic dishes of the United Kingdom.

It is a complete meal in itself or you can serve it as a snack with drinks or with the evening tea. We can serve boiled green peas, broccoli and carrots with the dish along with French fries.

*Serves - 5 as main course

Ingredients for Fish fry:

Fish fillet 4-5 pieces (each piece-weighing 200 grams approximately)	1 kg	White wine vinegar or any malt vinegar	1-1/2 tbsp
Onion powder/onion paste	1.5 tbsp	Freshly ground black pepper	3/4 to 1 tsp
Garlic powder/garlic paste	1.5 tsp	Salt	to taste
Tomato ketchup	1.5 -2 tbsp	Flour for dusting	1 cup
		Breadcrumbs	3-3.5 cups
		Egg White	2 to 3 eggs

Oil for frying

In a big bowl, mix onion powder, garlic powder, tomato ketchup, white wine vinegar, black pepper powder and salt. Next add the fish fillets. Gently rub the spice mix over the pieces evenly from both the sides.

Transfer the flour and crumbs into different plates.

Beat the eggs whites in another bowl.

Dust each side of the fish fillet nicely with the flour.

Next dip the fillet into the beaten egg whites.

The third step is to coat the fillets evenly with breadcrumbs. Set the prepared fillets aside while working on the French fries.

Ingredients for garnishing:

Lemon wedges and Parsley

Ingredients for chips (French Fries):

Potatoes 500 to 600 grams

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Oil for frying

Peel and cut potatoes in the shape of French fries. In a large sauce pan with plenty of water add one teaspoon salt. Bring it to a boil. Add the potato fingers to the water, and stir gently. Boil them for 3 to 5 minutes or until half cooked. Drain the water and transfer them to a plate. Heat plenty of oil in a pan for deep frying. Add the potato fingers to it in 2 to 3 batches and fry on medium high heat till they become crisp and light brown. Remove from the oil onto a paper towel. Sprinkle potato chips with some salt and black pepper powder. Then shake to mix well. Keep aside.

Heat plenty of oil in a pan on medium heat for deep frying. Add fish fillet to the oil one at a time. Flip the fish fillet to fry from both the sides till golden brown. Remove on a paper towel. Fry all the fillets in the same way.

Transfer the fillet from the plate to a nice serving dish. Nicely arrange the fish and then place the French fries on one side. Garnish with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs

Serve the dish hot with mayonnaise, tomato ketchup and mustard sauce.

Fish and Chips- batter fried version

This version of fish and chips is different from the first recipe and also has its own unique taste. This option is equally tasty and popular.

Ingredients:

Fish fillets 4-5 pieces (each piece weighing 200 to grams)	1 kg
Flour	3/4 cup
Corn flour	1/4 cup
Soda	3/4 tsp
Vinegar	1-1/2 tbsp
Freshly ground black pepper	1 tsp
Salt	1 tsp or to taste
Flour for dusting	1-1/2 cup
Oil for frying	

Ingredients for marination:

Lemon juice	1.5 tbsp
Salt for marination	1 tsp

Marinate the fish with salt and lemon juice for 10 minutes. Drain the extra liquid.

Transfer the flour for dusting on to a flat plate. Dust each fish fillet with flour evenly and lightly and keep aside.

In a big bowl, mix flour, corn flour, soda, vinegar, freshly ground pepper and salt with some water. This batter should be like pakora batter.

Heat plenty of oil in a frying pan on medium high heat. Place fish fillet into the batter one at a time to coat evenly and gently place it in the frying pan. Fry on medium high heat until the fish fillet turns golden brown on both sides.

Remove onto a paper towel lined dish to soak excess oil.

Then transfer the fish into a serving dish along with the French fries.

Garnish with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs

Serve hot with mayonnaise, mustard sauce and tomato ketchup!



Lasagne Rolls

(Stuffed with spinach and mushrooms and grilled in béchamel sauce)

It is quite different from the normal lasagne but there is no difference in the taste. This looks more presentable and is easier to serve and delicious too. In winters, we can make the best lasagne rolls with fresh and flavourful vegetables of our choice.

* Serves- 6

Ingredients for Lasagne Rolls:

Lasagne sheets	10-12
Baby spinach-blanchd and chopped	300 gm
Button mushrooms-sliced (stems removed)	200 gm
Onions- Finely chopped	1/3 cup
Garlic- Very finely chopped	1/2 tsp
Freshly ground black peppe	1/2 tsp
Salt	1/2 tsp or to taste
Butter or olive oil	15-20 gm
Mozzarella cheese thinly sliced	200 gm
Freshly grated parmesan cheese and freshly grated cheddar cheese for sprinkling over the lasagne before baking	3 + 2 tbsp

Ingredients for Béchamel sauce:

Flour	1/3 cup
Butter or olive oil	5-6 tbsp
Milk	4 - 5 cups
Bay leaf	1 pc
Freshly ground black pepper	1/2 tsp
Freshly grated nutmeg	1/4 tsp
Salt	1/2 tsp or to taste

Ingredients for garnishing:

Sliced sun-dried tomatoes
Parsley leaves/basil leaves

Boil plenty of water with some salt in a pan. Add lasagne sheet in small batches to it and cook till it becomes *al dente*. Remove these lasagne sheets into a pan of cold water. Drain well. Lay these sheets on a towel and pat dry or on greased tray or big plate in single layer. Keep aside.

Squeeze out extra moisture from the chopped spinach.

Heat butter or olive oil in a pan on medium heat and add chopped garlic and onion. Fry till it becomes

translucent. Add spinach and fry for 2 minutes. Now add sliced mushrooms and sauté for 2 -3 minutes. Add black pepper and salt. Mix well. Sauté for a minute. Switch off the heat and remove it in a plate.

Lightly heat some butter or olive oil in a pan. Now add the flour and bay leaf. Fry for a minute or two. Slowly add milk to it (preferably cold milk) and stir continuously with a whisk to avoid lumps till it starts boiling and becomes thick. Switch off the heat. Add ground black pepper, grated nutmeg and salt. Mix well and transfer the sauce into a bowl. Keep aside.

Pre heat the oven at 180-200 Celsius

Take a shallow oven proof dish and add some béchamel sauce to it. Spread the sauce properly in the dish. Lay out the lasagne sheets and spread some béchamel sauce over it. Now in beginning put one piece of mozzarella and some spinach-mushrooms mixture over it. Roll up the sheet. Place the roll in baking dish with seam side facing down in the dish. Make all the lasagne rolls in a similar manner.

Discard the bay leaf from béchamel sauce. Pour it over the lasagne rolls and sprinkle the grated parmesan cheese and grated cheddar cheese over it.

Place the dish in pre heated oven and grill till golden brown.

Garnish with sliced sun-dried tomatoes or parsley leaves or basil leaves.

Serve hot with mustard sauce or any tomato-based sauce of your choice. Enjoy!



Sarita Lal
West Bengal



The Soul Searchers





--'पुराना' शहर---

गुजरते हैं जब कभी, अपने पुराने शहर से,
गुजरा था जहाँ बचपन हमने कभी,
सोचा करते, ये सब है हमारी दुनिया,
छोड़ कर ना उसको, जायेंगे हम कभी,
बचपन तो है एक सपने की तरह,
आता है प्यार से, चला जाता है दौड़ के,
रह जाती हैं चंद बचपन की यादें,
बचपन के संग साथी चले जाते हैं दूर,
हमारे अपने भी खो जाते हैं कहीं,
देखा करते हैं, जब उस आँगन को,
बीता है बचपन जिसमें हमारा कभी,
आज वो भी बंट गया अपनों के बीच,
प्यार और मोहब्बत खो गया कहीं,
सोचता है हर कोई अपने नजरिए से,
बचपन से बड़े होने तक की दूरियाँ,
खो जाती हैं कहीं, सपने की तरह,
याद रह जाती है पुराने शहर की तरह,
फिर से नया शहर आबाद हो गया,
पुराना शहर खो गया अपनों के बीच-

--'दिल' दिमाग---

दिल नहीं आज मेरे बस में,
करता है शरारत कभी कभी,
दिल करता उड़े पहाड़ों के ऊपर,
कभी घूमें झरनों के बीच,
कभी उड़ाये तितलियाँ,
घूमें कभी फूलों के बीच,
आँखें मारे , कभी सिटी बजाये,
घूमें कभी लड़कियों के बीच,
रहता नहीं काबू, भागता है हरदम,
क्या करे दिल, बस में नहीं अब,
खूले कभी बच्चों की तरह,
खाए पिए सोयें मस्त रहें हरदम,
चाहता है दिल करना सबकुछ,
जो कर सकते नहीं हम अब,
दिल दिमाग की जद्दो जहद में,
दिमाग हो जाता है दिल पर हावी,
दिल कर नहीं पाता सब कुछ,
चाहता है जो दिल बेचारा,
दिल है कि मेरे बस में नहीं,
करना चाहता है शरारत कभी कभी

स्नेह मोहन
उत्तर प्रदेश

मन तू इतना क्यों भटक रहा



मन तू इतना क्यों भटक रहा,
जीवन की आपा-धापी में क्यों इतना कष्ट सहा ।
घर की जिम्मेदारी में कितने सपने बिखर गये,
समय के उतार-चढ़ाव में कितने अपने बदल गये ।
अश्रु बहाने से भी क्या बीते दिन कभी फिरे,
आँखों के खारे पानी से क्या घाव हृदय के कभी भरे?
संचित फिर क्या हो सके कभी जो बरस गये नैनो के घन,
जो बीत गया उस पर मन तू मत कर रुदन ।
इस जीवन के चौराहे पर कितने साथी छूट जाते हैं,
इस बीहड़-पथ के राहगीर खुद भी हंस-हंस लुट जाते हैं ।
उड़ते पंछी के पंखों की छाया क्या कोई थाम सका ?
काली-काली घटाओं को भी क्या कोई बिन बारिश थाम सका ?
जीवन के पथ पर चल कर पैर नहीं थकते थकता है दिल,
दिन-रात नयन के अश्रु बताते कितना अमृत और गरल ।
कितनी अपार चिन्ताओं का नित राग-द्वैशमय भावों में,
अति दुःखद-भाव ढोते-ढोते जिंदगी डूबी घावों में ।
मन तू इतना क्यों भटक रहा...
सादगी के नाम पर शृंगार का सामान नव-नव,
धर मनुज का रूप हँसता है यहाँ पर आज मानव ।
झूठ के आधार पर जिंदगी की नाव चलती,
कितने मुखोटे ओड़-ओड़ कर नित नये पेटरे ईजाद करती ।
दीप निर्मल बुझ रहे हैं द्वेष ईर्ष्या के धुँ से,
मानवता भी कराह रही है इन सभी के बोझ से ।
आगे-पीछे भीड़ मुखोटों की,
गिनती क्या अन्तर्मन की चोटों की ।
बिकता हर भाव दया बिकती, भर आये वह आँख नहीं दिखती ।
कब दूर होगा काली रात का छाया अंधेरा,
किन्तु इससे क्या प्रकाशित हो सकेगा द्वैश-ईर्ष्या का घनेरा ?
इस तिमिर से मुक्ति का साधन क्या मिल जाएगा?
शायद रात का उर फाड़ कर नव दीप जलेंगे,
बादल काले रैन अंधेरी फिर भी है विश्वास ।
मन तू इतना क्यों भटक रहा...?

शैलजा दत्त
कर्नाटका

फना-ए-मोहब्बत



ए काश कि बूंद बनके मैं ,
तेरे हर कण में समा जाऊं !
नदी की धारा सी बहकर..
अपने समंदर में मिल जाऊं !

तेरे ज़िक्र का सुकूं हो ..
हर एक बात पर मुझे !
ए काश हर शय को मैं..
तेरे तरन्नुम में गा पाऊं !

जाने कितने घावों से..
चाक है मेरा सीना !
ए काश तेरे नाम पे ..
सारा हलाहल मैं पी जाऊं ..!

अनजानी है डगर और ..
राहें भी कुछ बेवफ़ा सी !
ए काश अपने दामन पे ..
रंग तेरे सारे बिखेर पाऊं ..!

जाने किस किस मोड़ से ..
गुजरती रही ये जिंदगी ।
ए काश इस जिंदगी से ..
मुहोब्बत में बेपनाह कर पाऊं !

तेरे सजदे में ताउम तलाश रही..
इत्र की ..गुलाब की ..,
ए काश पूरी शिद्दत से...
कांटों को गुलाब में कर पाऊं !!



विनीता खंडेलवाल
बिहार

मन का अमलतास

सुनहरे पीले ..
फूलों की पगड़ी बांधे ..
खिल रहा अमलतास ..
तनिक कुछ शरमाया सा !!

अपलक नयन ..
भाव विभोर सा मन ..
तन में उठती उमंग ..
खिल रहा अमलतास..
प्यार का खुमार जगाता सा !!

ठंडी सी पुरवाई ..
धूप छांव का निमंत्रण ..
पीले फूलों की ओट में ,
खिल रहा अमलतास ...
मदहोश मुझे बनाता सा !!

ऋतु भी कुछ भीगी सी..
मौसम भी आशिकाना सा..
अमरसी रंगों की सौगात में..
खिल रहा अमलतास ...
फ़िज़ा कुछ नशीली बनाता सा !!

सेज सी बिछ गई..
प्यार की शोख अदाओं की ...
मौन का मुग्ध आमंत्रण ..
खिल रहा अमलतास ...
तनिक कुछ लजाता सा !!



विनीता खंडेलवाल
बिहार

लहरों संग लौटता बचपन

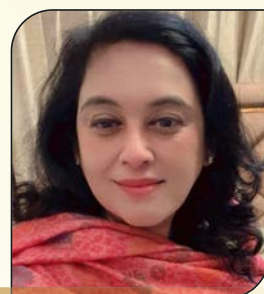


कहीं गहरा नीला
कहीं हल्का नीला
कहीं आसमानी,
कभी सुनहरा
नीला आसमान
काले बादल
समुन्दर की खूबसूरती
और बढ़ा रहे थे ।
स्वतंत्र व निश्छलता से खेलती
रंग बिरंगी अनेकों मछलियों का नृत्य,
जैसे स्तब्ध कर रहा था ।
प्रकृति के इस दृश्य से
मैं भी स्तब्ध हुई जा रही थी ।
आँखें थकती जाती थी पर
लहरों का उतार चढ़ाव
कभी तेज कभी और तेज,
कम न होता था ।
इस प्रकृति के सौन्दर्य में
तीन तितलियों का आगमन हुआ,
उनका बचपन जैसे लौट आया ।
उन्मुक्त सी सभी
जिम्मेदारियों से परे ।

लहरों के साथ कभी कूदती
कभी हँसती ,
उन्हें अपनी उम्र का भी
रूब्याल न आता ।
लगता था जैसे अपने सपने
पूरा करने का
दूसरा मौका न मिलेगा ।
सूर्योदय व सूर्यास्त
दोनों की लालिमा ने मंत्रमुग्ध
कर दिया था ।
लगता था और रश्मियाँ न बिखेरो
इसी ठंडक का एहसास बने रहने दो ।
समुन्दर और ये ठंडक
मन की उलझन को शान्त कर देते हैं ।
विचलित मन फिर, चंचलता
और नई ऊष्मा से भर जाता है ।

Dr Renu Agrawal
Madhya Pradesh

सपनों का धरोहर



सपनों की धरोहर पर,
अपना अधिकार नहीं होता है
मिलती ही रहे खुशियों की डगर,
ये हरबार नहीं होता है

होते हैं कई हमदर्द मगर,
देते भी कई हैं दर्द-ए-जिगर
अपने ही मुकद्दर पर,
अपना इख्तियार नहीं होता है
मिलती ही रहे खुशियों की डगर,
ये हरबार नहीं होता है

चौतरफ़ा घिरते जाते हैं,
अरमानों के बवंडर में
अनचाहे ही बहते जाते हैं,
अशकों के समुन्दर में
दूर कभी होता है साहिल,
और उसका दीदार नहीं होता है
मिलती ही रहे खुशियों की डगर,
ये हरबार नहीं होता है

"हारे" हुए को हारा कह दो
इससे बात नहीं बनती
मन में ही अँधियारा भर लो,
इससे बात नहीं बनती
मझधारे में हम हारे तो,
बेड़ा पार नहीं होता है
मिलती ही रहे खुशियों की डगर
ये हरबार नहीं होता है

सपनों की धरोहर पर अपना
अधिकार नहीं होता है
मिलती ही रहे खुशियों की डगर
ये हरबार नहीं होता है

डॉ. नेहा आकाश त्रिपाठी
मध्य प्रदेश

मुकद्दर



किस बात पे हो बात, यह बात भी खटकती है
अजीब मंजर है मेरे मुकद्दर का !
मेरी दुनिया रोज सजती रोज उजड़ती है ।

हैरान – परेशान बस्ती के सारे लोग जरा सा
मुस्कान देख मेरे चेहरे पर !
हवाएँ भी आँधी बन मेरी ओर उठती –उमड़ती हैं ।

कहते नहीं कुछ, सुनते नहीं कुछ, करते नहीं कुछ
दावा है हाकिम, सरदार, सिपाही– सलाहकार का !
बिन बरसात भी यहाँ, क्या खूब बिजलियाँ चमकती हैं।

कोठरी, कोठरी के भीतर सौ कोठरी ! सौ कोठरी में
कहीं बन्द, समय रथ के बहुत सारे पल ! बदरी सा
उमड़ – घुमड़ बेचोनियाँ सौ सवाल करती हैं ।

शिवालिका सिंह कुशवाहा
तमिलनाडु

रेलगाड़ियाँ

यह ट्रेन वाली यात्रा भी कितनी सरस होती है। अलग लोग, अलग विचार !
पर स्वाद का रसोईघर होती हैं यह रेलगाड़ियाँ ! जब खुलती हैं एक-एक कर
धीमे-धीमे माँ-भाभी, बहन - बिटिया की बांधी हुई पोटलियाँ ।

अलग-अलग झिल्लियों में रखा रहता है - भुजा, लाई, हरी मिर्च नमक संग
भूनी मूँगफली गुलगुले, सत्तू भरी लिट्टी। पूरे बोगी में महक बिखेरता चटपटा आम का अचार।
कहीं खुलती है भरपूर स्वाद लिए पूरी-कचौरी और आलू की सब्जी ।

यह मत सोचिएगा, कि ट्रेन में चावल तो ले जाते नहीं होंगे।
अजी ,चावल यहाँ बहुत से नामों से आता है ।
पुलाव , मिक्स वेज राइस , मटर पुलाव मशरूम फ्राइड राइस ,पनीर फ्राइड राइस।

हम महिलाओं की खासियत है - हम कहीं बोर होने, उबने,
ललचाने जैसा विकल्प छोड़ते ही नहीं हैं, किसी के पास ।

हर किसी की जरूरत का ख्याल, माँ ट्रेन में भी रख लेती है।
शाम का नाश्ता, रात का खाना, फिर सुबह का नाश्ता दिन भर का तो,
उसकी बनायी मठरी, लड्डू नमकीन, ठेकुआ (खस्ता) और चाय वाला मिल सम्भाल लेते हैं ।

बाकी उसकी स्नेह में सनी, ममता में पगी दुलार के मद्धिम आँच पर सिंकी-
कचौड़ियाँ, पूड़ियाँ, घाठी भरी लिट्टियाँ। और फिर कट जाता है
अजनबियों संग बोल-बतिया, बाँटते हुए प्रेम का पकवान ।

गुलजार होती हैं रेलगाड़ी की बोगियाँ कि-जब छनकाती है,
सिमटी सी गोरी घुंघरू ! महकाती है ,पकवान के संग हिना की खुश्बू।
इसीलिये तो कहते हैं - बड़ी मधुर होती है यह रेलगाड़ी की यात्रा !
गंतव्य अलग-अलग होते हुए भी जाने कितने लोगों को जोड़े ले जाती हैं यह रेलगाड़ियाँ ।

शिवालिका सिंह कुशवाहा
तमिलनाडु

साँझी हो रात तो. मान लो, हमराज ही सही



नयी आदतें बना रही हो तुम...
उम्र के इस पड़ाव में क्या छुपा रही हो तुम...
महसूस कर सकता हूँ बयाँ – ए-तरीका,
किस उलझन से गुजर रही हो तुम...

कभी खुद से सवाल, कभी खुद पर गिला,
कभी खामोश निगाहें, कभी बेचौन रातें...
सुबह की मुस्कराहट में हल्की-सी नमी,
पर साँझी हो रात तो – मान लो, हमराज ही सही...

चलो करते हैं फिर से
कुछ सवाल, कुछ बातें अनकही...
क्या है इन उलझनों का राज, झाँके तो सही...
जड़ तक पहुँच पाऊँ ये पता नहीं,
पर चलो साथ कुछ दूर चूँ ही...

होंगी बातें, खुलेंगी परतें,
रोएगा दिल, बहेँगे आँसू...
कुछ छूपी, कुछ अदायगी
पर साँझी हो रात तो – मान लो, हमराज ही सही...

(Dedicated to Perimenopausal)

Mrs Namami Barua
AGMUT

Gratitude as a Daily Spiritual Discipline



Gratitude is commonly understood as a response, something we feel when life is kind, when prayers are answered, or when circumstances align in our favor. Yet across spiritual traditions, gratitude is not treated as a reaction but as a discipline. A conscious, daily practice that refines perception, steadies the inner world, and gradually reshapes one's relationship with life itself. To be grateful is to acknowledge that much of what sustains us is not self-created. Breath flows without permission, the heart beats without instruction, and countless forces operate silently to hold life together. In this recognition lies humility. As the Bhagavad Gita gently reminds us, **"You have a right to your actions, but never to the fruits of your actions."** Gratitude is the embodiment of this wisdom. It bows to effort while releasing control over outcomes which were never ours to control in the first place. Most of us are conditioned to be grateful selectively, almost selfishly at times. We are thankful when life meets expectations and resentful when it does not. Spiritual discipline, however, asks for something deeper. Spirituality begins where entitlement ends. In spiritual terms, gratitude is remembrance. It keeps us awake to grace; the unearned, often unnoticed goodness that flows through our lives. A meal prepared, a message received at the right moment, strength that appears when exhaustion should have won; these are not mere coincidences so much as quiet collaborations with life. Spiritual awareness often fades not during crisis, but during routine. Yet it is in repetition; morning light, familiar faces, loved ones, daily tasks; that life reveals its deepest stability. We realise, complain and grieve for them

on losing them but tend to take them for granted when we have them.

Gratitude does not rely on comfort; it becomes a stance toward existence. This is not the romanticisation of pain or the denial of difficulty. Rather, it is the quiet willingness to trust that even disruption carries instruction. As the mystic poet Rumi wrote, **"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."** Gratitude, in this sense, is not approval of suffering, but openness to meaning. It appreciates the opportunity available to the divine light to enter the being rather than fixating on the wound which may draw greater attention due to the intensity of pain. Practiced daily, gratitude softens the ego. Ego survives on comparison, scarcity, and the belief that life owes us something. Being grateful dissolves this rigidity and reminds us that the greatest gift life could ever give us is our next breath and that is a gift that keeps on giving. Gratitude gently shifts the question from **"Why is this happening to me?"** to **"What is this teaching me?"** This shift does not happen overnight, but over time it creates emotional maturity and spiritual resilience. The heart becomes less reactive and more receptive. It is one of the simplest and most accessible forms of surrender. To say **"thank you"** in moments of uncertainty is to admit that understanding is not always immediate, yet trust is still possible. The Tao Te Ching echoes this wisdom: **"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Do not resist them; that only creates sorrow."** Gratitude allows change to pass through us without hardening the spirit. Importantly, gratitude as a discipline must be

practiced even on ordinary days. Infact especially then.

Zen teachings remind us that enlightenment is found not in escape from daily life, but in full presence within it. Gratitude trains the mind to see the sacred, woven into the mundane.

There is also an ethical dimension to gratitude. When we recognize how much we receive, generosity arises naturally. A grateful heart does not hoard; whether resources, compassion, or understanding. It moves toward forgiveness more easily and judges less harshly. Gratitude turns spiritual insight into lived values. It influences how we speak, how we listen, and how we treat lives that look different from our own. Like all disciplines, gratitude is built on consistency, not intensity. It does not require elaborate rituals. A silent acknowledgment upon waking, a pause before reacting, a brief reflection before sleep; these small acts, repeated daily, reshape inner character. Over time, it almost becomes instinctive. It ceases to require effort and becomes a temperament. In a world that constantly magnifies what's lacking, what is missing, delayed, or imperfect; gratitude is a quiet rebellion. Spiritually, it is an act of faith. Faith that life is not hostile, that meaning exists even when comfort does not, and that something larger than our understanding is unfolding. Gratitude as a daily spiritual discipline does not promise a life free of struggle. What it offers instead is a way to walk through life with grace. It changes not the events we encounter, but the consciousness with which we meet them. And often, that inner shift is the most profound transformation of all. Across the great spiritual traditions gratitude is not framed as emotional optimism but as awakened understanding.

The Guru Granth Sahib reminds us that all existence flows from Hukam—the divine order that moves beyond personal preference. To live in gratitude is to live in alignment with this order, to accept life as it comes without inner resistance. As it teaches, **“In**

hukam, all forms are created; in hukam, greatness and smallness exist.” Gratitude becomes the soul's agreement with reality as it is.

Buddha, too, pointed toward this quiet acceptance. His teachings emphasize awareness free from craving and aversion. Gratitude naturally arises when the mind is no longer demanding that life be different. When desire loosens its grip, appreciation appears effortlessly. In mindful presence, even a single breath becomes enough. In this way, gratitude is not cultivated by adding more, but by needing less.

The Upanishads echo the same truth through the principle of purnata i.e, wholeness. **“That is whole; this is whole. From wholeness, wholeness arises.”** When life is seen as inherently complete, gratitude ceases to be conditional. One does not wait for perfection to be thankful; one recognizes that existence itself is already full and that despite even the most devastating failure of today doesn't stop tomorrow's sun from rising.

Seen through these philosophies, gratitude is not a practice imposed upon life, but a realization that emerges from right seeing. It is the natural response of a mind that understands interdependence, impermanence, and grace. As a daily spiritual discipline, gratitude gently trains us to stop arguing with the moment and start inhabiting it fully. As someone rightly said **“you are not experiencing the present, you are the present experiencing itself”**. Being grateful helps in accepting this simple yet profound truth of life.

To live gratefully, then, is not to escape suffering, but to stand steady within the rhythm of life; awake, receptive, and humble. It is to meet each day not as a transaction, but as a blessing. And in that meeting, spirituality quietly moves from concept to lived truth.

Dr. Nehaa Tripathi
Madhya Pradesh



Spectrum Of Hues



Silent Stories on Canvas

Where every stroke speaks from the heart



This artwork is not merely a portrait of Buddha, it is an exploration of compassion and awakening. His closed eyes hold a universe of stillness, inviting the viewer into a quiet conversation with their soul. Gentle strokes of yellow and saffron radiate warmth, while the soft blue undertones whisper serenity and depth.

The textured background blends chaos and calmness representing the journey from worldly distractions to inner peace.



Buddha: Acrylic on canvas (141 cm x 108 cm)



Ganesha: Acrylic on canvas (64 cm x 42 cm)

A vibrant acrylic mural painting of Ganesha captures the benevolent energy of the destroyer of obstacles. Depicted with a calm, compassionate gaze, Ganesh Ji is adorned in ornate ornaments and a radiant crown, highlighted with bold strokes of saffron, crimson and gold. The textured acrylic work creates a striking interplay of light and shadow, while a symbolic lotus and textured background evoke wisdom and prosperity. This painting exudes warmth and positivity, inviting viewers into a space of blessings and new beginnings.



Silent Stories on Canvas

Where every stroke speaks from the heart

An enchanting mural painting of Radha and Krishna radiates romance, devotion and divine harmony. Krishna, painted in luminous shades of blue, stands gracefully while Radha's presence glows in yellow and golds, her expression tender and serene. Decorated hair, intricate jewellery, and delicate lotus in her hand are rendered with layered acrylic textures that add richness and depth.



Radha Krishna: Acrylic on canvas (64 cm x 42 cm)



Ardhnarishwar: Acrylic on canvas (64 cm x 42 cm)

An evocative mural painting of Ardhnarishwar beautifully portrays the divine union of Shiva and Parvati in a single, harmonious form. The composition is split vertically yet seamlessly blended- Shiva's blue/grey, strength contrasts with Parvati's warm, radiant grace. Rich texture, vibrant hues and delicate detailing bring depth and luminosity to the canvas. The cosmic backdrop enhances the spiritual aura, making the painting a striking reflection on balance, duality and unity.

Dr. Vandana Sinha
Tripura

Submerged Memories



Jyoti Singh
Punjab

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Facts With No Fictions
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Revolutions Are Never Beige: The Manifesto of Red Lips



Someone once leaned over at a brunch, glanced at my crimson lips, and whispered almost conspiratorially, “Red? Still? Everyone’s doing nude these days.”

I smiled, sipped my coffee, and replied softly:

“Darling, my lipstick is louder than your opinion.”

Red lipstick is not a passing trend. It has outlived empires, morality police, beauty rules, and Instagram filters. It has marched with suffragettes, crossed oceans on women’s uniforms, smouldered on Bollywood screens, been smuggled under veils, and survived bans and witch hunts. Red is not seasonal; red writes the seasons.

In India, the story of red is older than kingdoms. Ancient Sanskrit poets immortalized the image of bimbādharam, lips flushed like the ripe bimba fruit, as a symbol of vitality and longing. In Kālidāsa’s Meghadūta, a Yaksha pines for his beloved “whose lips are like ripened berries,” proving crimson lips symbolized life and devotion in classical aesthetics.

The Nāṭyaśāstra, India’s ancient treatise on performance, describes the use of kumkum and lac dyes to tint lips, enhancing śṛṅgāra rasa, the aesthetic of beauty and celebration. Ayurvedic texts like the Bower Manuscript even describe crimson lip stains made from manjistha, lac, and vermillion.

In India, red was not vanity. It was vitality. Brides stained their lips with alta to signify prosperity and strength, goddesses were imagined with vermillion mouths radiating power, and poets wove crimson

into metaphors of life and sovereignty. Red was never merely cosmetic. Red was consecration.

Long before lipstick counters, Cleopatra VII understood this power. In ancient Egypt, she created her own crimson blend from crushed carmine beetles, ants, and beeswax, what historians now call the world’s first “power red.” Cosmetic recipes preserved in the Ebers Papyrus reveal that red pigments symbolized divinity, vitality, and authority, reserved for queens and goddesses.

Cleopatra knew exactly what she was doing. Red lips became her signature of command. She met emperors, led armies, and ruled a kingdom while redefining what it meant to be powerful. Empires have fallen. Her crimson has not. A woman with red lips does not whisper power; she wears it.

History, however, has not always been kind to women who dared to wear it. In 16th-century England, crimson lips could get a woman branded a witch. In 1912 New York, suffragettes painted their lips scarlet before marching down Fifth Avenue, while Elizabeth Arden handed out lipstick tubes to protestors, turning beauty into political ammunition.

During World War II, Winston Churchill reportedly called lipstick a “morale weapon” and ensured its production continued despite rationing. A shade called Victory Red matched women’s military uniforms, and propaganda posters urged women to “wear courage on their lips.” Across Nazi-occupied Europe, women smeared red onto their mouths as acts of quiet defiance.

In post-revolution Iran, lipstick was banned as Western excess, yet women defiantly wore it beneath their veils. In 1930s Shanghai, red lips became the badge of the “modern girl,” rejecting restrictive traditions and embracing independence in a single stroke.

Some revolutions wore red softly but no less powerfully. In 1940s America, the U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve issued Montezuma Red lipstick as part of their uniform kit. In 1946 Italy, when women voted for the first time, many went *senza rossetto*, without lipstick, fearing smudges might invalidate their ballots. Sometimes, not wearing red became its own political gesture.

In Mexico, Frida Kahlo’s favorite Revlon reds survive in museum archives, reminders that she used color as rebellion against pain and conformity. And in 1968 Atlantic City, feminists tossed bras, girdles, and tubes of lipstick into a “Freedom Trash Can” during the Miss America protest, proving once again that lipstick has always been both banner and battleground.

In India, red carried its own quiet revolutions. Under the British Raj, colonial codes deemed crimson lips improper, which only made them louder. By the 1950s and ’60s, Bollywood icons like Madhubala, Waheeda Rehman, and Meena Kumari transformed red into cinematic poetry. Their lips became shorthand for elegance, confidence, and unapologetic self-possession.

By the 1990s, with liberalisation, Lakmé’s Enrich Satin Red became an aspirational icon, a small glossy tube of ambition and autonomy. Yet even today, crimson provokes whispers: “Shaadi ke baad

hi lagana,” they say, as though courage must wait for permission.

But history has taught us this: beige blends in, red takes up space. Instagram filters may reward sameness, corporates may whisper “be subtle,” and beauty brands may sell palettes of politeness, but revolutions have never been beige.

Suffragettes did not march in nude. Rosie the Riveter did not rivet in taupe. Iranian women are not jailed for muted tones. Beige bows. Red roars.

Because red remembers.

It remembers Kālidāsa’s poetry and Cleopatra’s signature of power. It remembers suffragettes demanding the vote, Rosie riveting steel, Iranian women defying bans, Frida painting rebellion, and Bollywood heroines burning across silver screens.

Red carries every triumph and transgression in its pigment.

Red is not decoration.

Red is declaration.

Red is dissent made visible.

So yes, while the world scrolls in beige and nudes, I will stay incandescent in rebellion.

Because power never wore nude, and history’s loudest women always had the brightest lips.

Ruhi Danish Ashraf
AGMUT

Environment, AI and Resource Sustainability: India at a Critical Crossroads



India today stands at a crucial stage in its development journey where economic growth, technological advancement and environmental responsibility must progress together. As the country moves toward becoming a five-trillion-dollar economy, the demand for natural resources such as water, land, forests and energy is rising rapidly. While economic expansion has improved infrastructure, employment and living standards, it has also intensified pressure on the environment. Issues like air pollution, groundwater depletion, deforestation and climate change have become serious challenges that require urgent attention. Managing these problems effectively while continuing economic development has become one of the most important tasks for policymakers and society.

One of the most pressing environmental concerns in India is the increasing stress on natural resources. Rapid urbanisation, population growth and industrial expansion have led to rising consumption of energy and water. Many major cities experience hazardous levels of air pollution, which affects the health of millions of people. Groundwater levels in several regions are falling due to excessive extraction for agriculture and domestic use. Land degradation and soil erosion threaten agricultural productivity, which is a serious concern for a country where a large population depends on farming for livelihood. Climate change is further intensifying these problems by causing irregular monsoons, heat waves and extreme weather events. India's resource challenge is particularly significant because it has nearly 18 percent of the world's population but only about 4 percent of its freshwater resources. This imbalance makes efficient and

sustainable management of resources essential for long-term development.

At the same time, India is witnessing rapid technological progress, especially in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI has emerged as a powerful tool that can transform various sectors such as agriculture, energy, transportation and environmental management. When used responsibly, AI can improve efficiency, reduce waste and support sustainable development. For example, AI-based precision farming technologies allow farmers to monitor soil conditions, crop health and weather patterns. This helps them use water, fertilisers and pesticides more efficiently, thereby conserving resources and improving productivity. Similarly, AI systems are being used to monitor pollution levels, track deforestation and predict natural disasters. Such technologies provide real-time data that enables authorities to respond more quickly and effectively to environmental threats.

The government of India has also taken several steps to address environmental challenges and promote sustainability. Policies supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate action have been introduced to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Large investments are being made in solar and wind power to increase the share of clean energy in the country's electricity supply. Digital infrastructure and data-driven governance systems are also being developed to improve monitoring and implementation of environmental regulations. These initiatives are particularly important because studies indicate that more than half of India's districts experience high to extreme levels of water

stress. By using technology and policy reforms together, the government aims to balance economic development with environmental protection.

The private sector is also playing an important role in supporting sustainable development. Technology companies, research institutions and start-ups are investing in innovative solutions that combine AI with environmental management. Smart electricity grids are being developed to reduce energy losses and integrate renewable energy sources more efficiently. Data-driven systems help industries monitor their energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. AI-powered tools are also improving urban planning by analysing traffic patterns, pollution levels and energy demand in cities. These developments demonstrate how technological innovation can help address environmental challenges while supporting economic growth.

However, the expansion of AI and digital technologies also creates new environmental concerns. Large data centres that store and process digital information require significant amounts of electricity and water for cooling and operations. If these facilities rely on fossil-fuel-based power sources, they may increase carbon emissions rather than reduce them. In addition, the growing use of electronic devices contributes to rising levels of electronic waste, which contains harmful materials that can damage ecosystems and human health if not properly managed. Therefore, it is important to ensure that technological advancement does not unintentionally create new environmental problems.

Looking ahead, AI offers significant opportunities to help India overcome many of its environmental challenges. AI-based climate models can improve weather forecasting and disaster preparedness, helping communities respond to floods, droughts and cyclones more effectively. Real-time environmental monitoring systems can detect pollution and illegal activities such as deforestation or mining. In agriculture, AI can help develop

climate-resilient crops and optimise irrigation systems to conserve water. These applications demonstrate that technology, when guided by responsible policies, can support sustainable resource management.

To achieve these benefits, several important steps must be taken. First, digital infrastructure such as data centres should operate using renewable energy and follow strict standards for energy and water efficiency. Second, governments must create strong regulatory frameworks that ensure technology companies follow environmental guidelines. Third, AI research and development should prioritise public-interest areas such as climate adaptation, disaster management and sustainable agriculture. Finally, improved recycling systems and effective management of electronic waste are necessary to reduce environmental damage and recover valuable resources.

In conclusion, India's future development will depend on how successfully it balances economic growth, technological innovation and environmental sustainability. Artificial Intelligence has the potential to become a powerful tool for protecting natural resources, improving efficiency and supporting climate resilience. However, achieving these outcomes requires thoughtful policies, responsible technological development and active participation from both the government and the private sector. If these efforts are aligned, India can create a development model that not only supports economic progress but also safeguards the environment for future generations.

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10 Eye-Opening Facts About Your Eyes



Our eyes are among the most precious gifts we have. In fact, nearly 80% of the information we receive from our surroundings comes through our sense of sight. From recognizing loved ones to performing daily activities, vision plays a vital role in our survival and overall quality of life. Isn't it our responsibility to protect and care for such an invaluable sense? Hello, I am Dr. Priyanka Shinde, an ophthalmologist, and I would like to share some important information about our eyes — including common myths and important facts everyone should know. With the right awareness and timely care, many serious eye problems can be prevented.

1.Cataract (Safed Motiya) vs Glaucoma (Kala Motiya)

Ans: Cataract is an age-related condition in which the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to blurred or dim vision. Almost everyone develops cataract after a certain age. Vision loss due to cataract is reversible. The only effective treatment is

surgery, where the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens. There are no eye drops that can cure cataract. Some may delay early progression, but ultimately surgery is the treatment of choice.

Glaucoma, on the other hand, is a serious condition usually associated with increased eye pressure that damages the optic nerve. It mainly affects peripheral (side) vision, and the vision loss is irreversible. Glaucoma is often hereditary. If your parents or close relatives have glaucoma, regular eye check-ups are essential. Although vision loss cannot be restored, glaucoma can be controlled with medications, laser, or surgery. Like diabetes or hypertension, treatment is usually lifelong. Both cataract and glaucoma can also occur in newborns and children.

2.Myths About Spectacles and diet

Ans: Many people believe that eating carrots can remove spectacles. This is a myth. Carrots,

mangoes, papaya, eggs, and other Vitamin A-rich foods are important for maintaining healthy eyes and good night vision. However, they do not reduce spectacle number. Similarly, yoga and eye exercises may reduce eye strain and improve overall well-being, but they cannot eliminate refractive errors. However, spectacle numbers can be corrected surgically in suitable candidates through laser refractive procedures such as LASIK after proper evaluation.

3.High Myopia and Retinal Risk

Ans: High myopia increases the risk of retinal detachment. In highly myopic eyes, the eyeball is longer, making the retina thinner and more fragile. Warning signs such as sudden floaters, flashes of light, or a curtain-like shadow in vision require immediate medical attention. Regular retinal check-ups are essential for high myopic patients.

4.Diabetic and Hypertensive Retinopathy

Ans: Long-standing and uncontrolled diabetes and high blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels of the retina. In early stages, there may be no symptoms, but later it can cause blurred vision or even permanent vision loss. Strict control of blood sugar and blood pressure, along with regular retinal examinations, is crucial to prevent complications.

6. Blue Filter Glasses and Refractive error

Ans. Blue filter glasses may reduce glare and digital eye strain but do not prevent or reduce spectacle number. They are for comfort, not for correcting refractive errors.

7.Eye Transplant Myth

Ans: Many people ask whether the entire eyeball can be transplanted. Currently, this is not possible because the optic nerve cannot be reconnected to restore vision. However, corneal transplantation is possible in certain conditions, and artificial eyes can be placed for cosmetic purposes.

8.Toxoplasmosis and Pet Owners

Ans: Pet owners, especially those with cats, should be aware of toxoplasmosis — an infection that can affect the eyes. Maintaining proper hygiene and avoiding direct contact with cat litter without precautions is important. Pregnant women and people with low immunity should be especially careful.

9.Importance of Protective Goggles

Ans: Wearing goggles is necessary for protection, not just fashion. Sunglasses with UV protection shield the eyes from harmful rays. People who wear spectacles can opt for prescription sunglasses or photochromatic (day-night) glasses that adjust according to light conditions.

10.Avoid Self-Medication

Ans: Never use eye drops without consulting a doctor. Many people directly buy eye drops for redness, often containing steroid combinations. While they may give temporary relief, they can increase eye pressure, worsen infections, delay healing, and cause serious complications. Always consult an ophthalmologist for proper examination and treatment.

Our eyes are precious and irreplaceable. Many myths surround eye health, but the right knowledge can prevent irreversible damage. Regular eye check-ups, timely treatment are essential steps toward lifelong healthy vision. Awareness today can protect your sight for tomorrow.

Dr. Priyanka Shinde
Orissa

The Words Of Appreciation

It was a Speaker  phore program... Had a real blast  The gifts  were beautifully selected I am very very lucky to be in this Super se bhee bhaut bhaut uperrrr rocking n bouncing group-
'65 AGMUT

Beautiful awesome decor! So colourful, vibrant and earthy too! The food spread was "lajawab"! The music and the dance (from places like Bundelkhand)..enjoyed them-
'65 Kerala

Experiencing theatre by prestigious NSD artists was amazing-
'78 Uttar Pradesh

We live in Delhi and never seem to go. I am now telling my friends and family that they must visit this Museum-
'74 Rajasthan

Thank you for organising an excellent Piano concert yesterday evening. It was truly mesmerising ; food for soul and soothing to the ears and heart. One couldn't sing and have enough of the old, romantic, nostalgic songs; our youthful era! Soulful indeed!
'83 Haryana

Some moments arrive quietly, yet leave an everlasting imprint on the heart. This was one such moment. Thank you for making it possible for us to capture a memory with the Honourable President Ma'am.-
'11 AGMUT

Today's programme was another such example of an event both hugely entertaining and illustrative of women who are making their mark in a field which has so far been dominated by male stand up comics! The IASOWA team under the leadership of our dynamic Hema ma'am chooses its programs with great care.-
'84 Himachal Pradesh

It touches our heart when our younger friends show so much of love and humility. We feel like coming again and again, lets keep our solidarity and hip hip hurray to IASOWA-
'80 Bihar

The image features five monarch butterflies in flight, arranged in a descending diagonal line from the top right towards the bottom left. The butterflies have vibrant orange wings with black veins and white spots along the edges. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm yellow and green light, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. In the bottom right corner, there are some yellow flowers, possibly daisies, partially visible.

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