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WOMEN INDIA

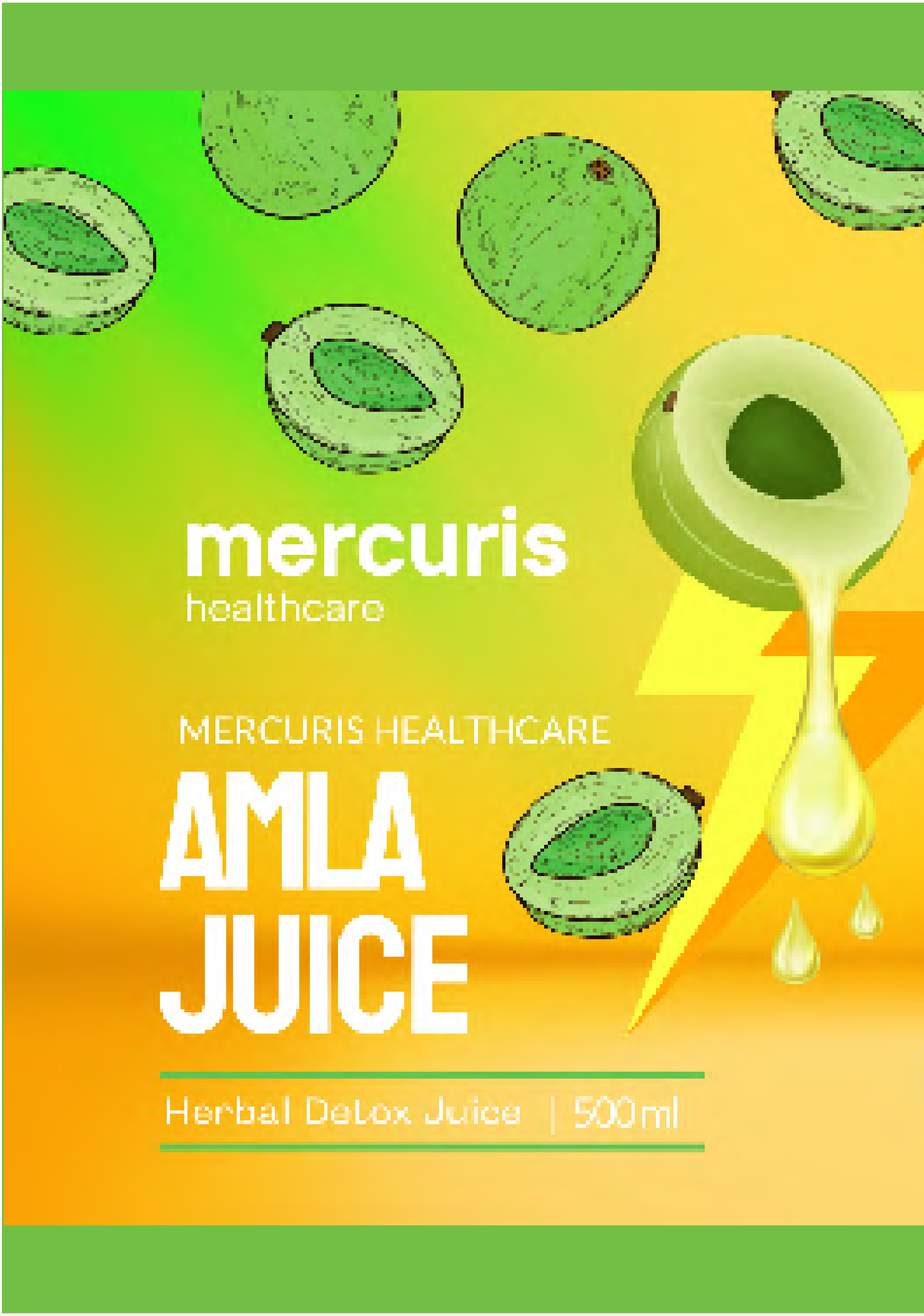
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Letter From The Editor

Power, Poise, and Progress: The Era of the Modern Woman



Hello Readers,

She ascends—not simply in titles and timelines, but in reality. In each discussion being reinterpreted, each ground being regained, and each quiet now filled with purpose, the modern woman isn't waiting on permission—she's taking control.

In this issue of Modern Women India, we delve into the multiple facets of womanhood in 2025: bold and feminine, logical and creative, strong and shining. In the halls of policy or the pixels of video games, women are creating pathways not yet constructed for them—and making their mark. The future of technology, energy, and sustainable development is no longer blind to gender. It's gender-bold. But that advancement isn't without resistance.

Throughout the world, there is backlash in the works. Rights that have been won are being challenged. The message is clear: advancement must be guarded, and equity must be thoughtfully planned.

In addition to activism and advocacy, this conversation also honors softness—because softness is not vulnerability, it's planning. From DIY skin routines to ancient plant medicines that respect the body, we believe in wellness as a resistance. From care economies to artfully curated beauty, we think every decision a woman makes—whether in health, fashion, or profession—is political, personal, and potent.

We submerge into trends in fashion and food and the face of contemporary marriages during a time of autonomy. We touch on women rising in the world of games, the technology revolution in leadership, and the worldwide push once more to envision economies where care as currency is king and gender equality is not a box but an intrinsic principle.

This is not just a magazine—it's a mirror, a megaphone, and a manifesto. To every woman reshaping her world with vision and voice: this is your space, your story, your moment. Together, we are not just moving forward—we are creating the future on our terms. The power is ours to claim, the world is ours to shape.

Happy Reading!
Warmly,
Mini G Joseph
Editor-in-Chief
Women India Magazine

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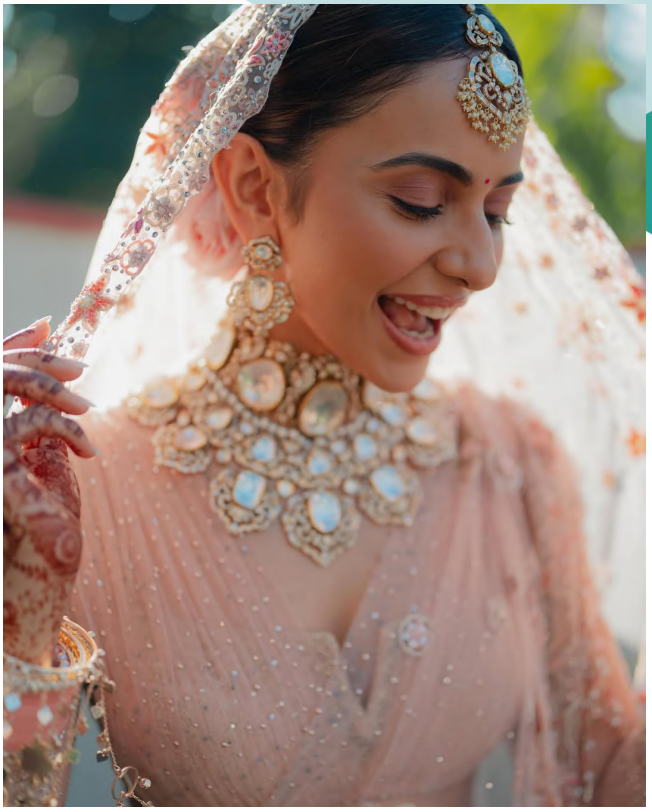
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Women, Peace and Security Champion Profile: Conflict Victim Women National Network, Nepal

Individuals and organizations who are championing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Asia and the Pacific are being profiled by UN Women – online and in our 2025 calendar – to mark this agenda's 25th anniversary.

The Conflict Victim Women National Network (CVWN) is a national organization dedicated to advocating for justice, empowerment, and equality for women and children affected by Nepal's armed conflict which ended in 2006 through a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA). In this interview we speak with two inspiring leaders of CVWN who are survivors of the conflict: Srijana Shrestha, the Chairperson, and Sabitri Khadka, the Secretary. Their experiences shed light on the challenges faced by conflict-affected women and CVWN's commitment to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Nepal.



Why was your network established?

"The establishment of CVWN was born out of necessity. Despite the end of the decade-long conflict in Nepal in 2006, women victims found themselves disproportionately affected – socially marginalized, overlooked by policies and denied their fundamental rights. We realized the government's efforts to address our needs were insufficient and, in some cases, perpetuated inequities. While men have had more opportunities for representation and redress, women have remained largely invisible in the justice process.

Today, CVWN brings together over 2,000 women, including those from the most remote areas of the country. We provide a safe and empowering space where women can share their stories and find solidarity. This grassroots reach is our greatest strength, allowing us to address the unique dimensions of challenges that conflict-affected women face.

The compounding effects of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters have disproportionately affected conflict victims and made our mission even more critical."

What are key milestones for CVWN in advocating for conflict-affected women's rights?

"While we have spearheaded achievements, they are a result of collective efforts involving multiple stakeholders, including UN Women, civil society organizations and other partners.

We're proud to say our contributions to the peace process in Nepal have been significant. We have fostered dialogue between previously opposing parties during the armed conflict, enabling them to work together in shared forums.

This shift from division to collaboration is a milestone in advancing Nepal's peace process.

A key accomplishment has been our role in coordinating with various entities to ensure the effective implementation of Nepal's second National Action Plan (NAP II) on WPS for 2022–2025.

Our advocacy has filled gaps. Many women victims, previously silenced by stigma, now have the confidence to speak out against sexual violence due to CVWN's efforts, combined with those of other stakeholders. Another part of our advocacy is enabling accountability under various international frameworks, Supreme Court decisions and transitional justice laws.

Beyond advocacy, our work has had tangible outcomes for conflict-affected women and their families. For instance, we secured scholarships for children of missing individuals and orphaned children. We also advocated tirelessly to enable wives of missing individuals to gain property rights, ensuring their economic security. These provisions are now enshrined in the recently amended legislation governing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

What role has CVWN played in advancing Nepal's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

"We've been instrumental in advocating for, developing and implementing Nepal's NAP II in coordination with other key stakeholders. CVWN representatives were members of the Drafting Committee of the NAP II Action Plan formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). We're leading the group of CSOs called Victim and Civil Society (VCS) for WPS formed in 2023, with 15 CSOs as members for concerted advocacy to implement the current NAP, and build synergy and solidarity.

Recognizing the importance of grassroots engagement, we have extended our efforts to the very local level, coordinating closely with local governments to ensure effective implementation.

For example, we recently organized meetings in all seven provinces in collaboration with provincial ministries. In these



forums, we have consistently emphasized the importance of including conflict victims in decision-making committees related to NAP II and other mechanisms.

By advocating for their inclusion, we ensure those with lived experiences contribute to crafting policies and solutions. Additionally, our provincial coordinators and district committees enable us to maintain strong connections and mobilize resources.

Our advocacy aligns with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which highlight the significance of women's participation in decision-making and address the specific needs of victims of conflict-related sexual violence. In this regard, we have worked to establish mechanisms to identify and address their unique needs, while also empowering them to assume leadership roles in their communities.

A critical step in this process has been the establishment of subcommittees at the local level for the implementation of NAP II which ensure representation of conflict-affected women, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and serve as key mechanisms for identifying their needs and collecting essential data.

CVWN has not only supported the government in these endeavours, but also held it accountable to international commitments. We firmly believe that laws and policies should lead to meaningful outcomes, not remain decorative.

Partnering with UN Women has strengthened our advocacy by linking our collective efforts to international norms and commitment, providing hands-on advocacy skills to our staff and members to strategize better and build solidarity, and providing guidance on policies and legal reform to advance to the WPS agenda."

"We have fostered dialogue between previously opposing parties during the armed conflict, enabling them to work together in shared forums. This shift from division to collaboration is a milestone in advancing Nepal's peace process."

What are CVWN's main challenges and priorities for advancing the WPS agenda?

"As Nepal navigates a critical phase in its peacebuilding process, we envision a future where CVWN's collaboration with government, UN agencies and development partners amplifies victims' voices and drives systemic change through the WPS agenda. Together, we can create a future where justice, equality and the voices of conflict victim women are at the forefront of Nepal's journey toward sustainable peace.

Despite persistent advocacy by CVWN, other conflict victim networks, CSOs and other stakeholders, the pressing concerns of conflict victim women regarding justice and reparation are yet to be fully addressed through NAP II and transitional justice processes.

Political instability, frequent changes in leadership and government personnel, and lack of budget and resources in this area of WPS and transitional justice further hinder the implementation of these critical commitments.

To ensure sustained progress, we emphasize the importance of multi-faceted support from stakeholders. CVWN also requires continuous institutional development and growth, capacity building and exposure to sustain its advocacy. Our priorities include providing capacity-building initiatives for officials to identify needs and collect data on conflict victim women, and enabling the provision of services and reparation of conflict victim women and their families. Extending the timeline of NAP II and developing a comprehensive third NAP to sustain progress are also important.



Effective implementation of the transitional justice law that was amended in August 2024 is another priority. CVWN wants to ensure a victim-centric and gender-responsive approach with the meaningful participation, and leadership of conflict victim women and marginalized groups. We are also ensuring the timely and transparent appointment of commissioners for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons.

Congratulations to CVWN on your recent international recognition!

For CVWN, receiving the Saahas Mashal Award in 2024 presented by Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace is a celebration of our journey from the grassroots. The moment we received this award, we felt immense pride in knowing that our efforts to work with, and for, conflict-affected women have resonated beyond our national boundaries. We are also delighted to feature as WPS champions in UN Women's 2025 calendar for Asia and the Pacific.

This recognition reminds us that our collective voices are stronger together, and international platforms offer opportunities to amplify our causes and foster peace and solidarity.

ABOUT CVWN

The Conflict Victim Women National Network (CVWN) was founded in 2020 by women who experienced the hardships of armed conflict. This non-profit NGO is dedicated to safeguarding the rights of conflict victim women, providing them with a secure and respectful environment. CVWN specifically focuses on women, acknowledging their disproportionate suffering due to societal norms.



When we heard that the Nepali army murdered Dai (brother) our relatives told us not to cry. "What if people found out? What if the police found out? Don't cry," they said. The army killed Dai assuming he was a Maoist (the then opposing group) in the armed conflict. If the villagers found out about Dai's death, they would also assume that all of us were Maoists and start ostracizing us.

Rasaili lost her brother on 4th February 2001 and her sister after she was gang raped at home by the Nepal army on 13th February 2004 in the armed conflict of Nepal.

— Gita Rasaili, Kavre, Nepal
An activist for the victims of the Armed Conflict

So, none of us could cry and Aama (mother) kept fainting. When we felt like crying, we went inside the house, cried for a bit and came out as if everything was normal. It still haunts me, how we could not even mourn when they murdered Dai.

Earlier we participated as 'victims' in events that sought justice for the people lost in armed conflict. We would share our stories of torture, re-live our grief and return home. Now we are not just helpless 'victims' but are active agents driving justice forward. The UN in Nepal supported the Government of Nepal to engage victims of armed conflict in the government's National Action Plan drafting committee. Our role in this drafting committee was critical. We prepared the National Action Plan Phase II prioritizing the need for investigation of the perpetrators, availing access to justice and reparation for victim's families. Such efforts keep us going.

During wartime, many women endured sexual harassment, rape, and torture, often used as tools of war, resulting in profound physical and psychological trauma. CVWN is committed to offering these women a safe space, protecting their rights, and addressing transitional justice and reparation issues. CVWN meets conflict-affected women's distinctive needs and justice concerns, playing a crucial role in peacebuilding, transitional justice dialogue, and advocacy.

The organization has established networks in over 45 districts across 7 provinces and collaborates actively with local authorities and like-minded organizations. The team possesses expertise in transitional justice, victims' rights, and the Women's Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP). Beyond aiding transitional justice through leadership development and women's empowerment, CVWN drives societal transformation by incorporating conflict-victim women into its network. The organization continually works towards gender equality through various long-term programs and initiatives, ensuring the economic, social, and cultural rights of conflict victim women and their families, even beyond the completion of the transitional justice process. CVWN consistently offers psychosocial support to conflict-affected women and their families. With a commitment to uplifting these women and providing transitional justice post-peace process, CVWN follows the philosophy of Change, Engage, Empower, and Transform. The organization is dedicated to creating an inclusive and equitable society where conflict-victim women are empowered leaders who pursue justice with dignity.

Better Energy Policies Start With Better Gender Data

This International Women's Day is around the theme of For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment. Today we look at why women's representation in the energy sector matters – and how gender data can help shape more inclusive energy policies and actions that foster equity.

Data are a critical foundation for decision-making across industries, whether in sports, business or policymaking. When data are not disaggregated, women's needs and contributions remain invisible, perpetuating inequalities. The data that are collected shape priorities and policies. As feminist geographer Joni Seager said: "what gets counted counts".

Policymakers have a responsibility to ensure that data collection and analysis capture the experiences of all genders, moving beyond the default assumption of the male experience as universal. Data help us understand the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls.

However, lacking such data creates gaps in targeted policies, services and interventions. Gender statistics and age, disability and sex-disaggregated data are fundamental for effective policies. One striking example is car crash tests. Historically, dummies were designed based on the average male body, making car safety features less adapted to female bodies.

This puts women at a higher risk of injury or death in a crash.

Lack of gender and energy data leaves women exposed to risks

Just as gender-blind car safety data put women at greater risk, the absence of gender-specific energy data leads to policies and actions that fail half the population, reinforcing inequities in health, education and economic empowerment.



Consider household energy use. Many rural households across Southeast Asia still use unclean cooking fuels, such as wood and charcoal. Since cooking is typically women's responsibility, they are disproportionately exposed to harmful fuels, increasing health risks. Around 15 per cent of women in Cambodia and 17 per cent of women in the Philippines are estimated to be at risk of these adverse impacts.

Without appropriate data on these health impacts, energy policies may overlook clean cooking solutions, exposing women to preventable harm.

Three key areas for gender integration in the energy sector

1. Human-centric energy solutions

Energy policies must prioritize human impact, including health, education and economic empowerment. This means investing in clean cooking solutions and designing energy projects that meet the needs of women and other marginalized communities.

2. Energy access and distribution

Women in developing regions face greater barriers to accessing clean, affordable energy. Time spent collecting firewood or other traditional fuels limits opportunities for education, income generation



and other activities. Women, as primary managers of household energy, are often excluded from policy discussions. Integrating gender considerations into energy distribution policies promotes equal access for all.

In Cambodia, the Rural Electrification Fund focuses on expanding access to electricity in remote areas. This programme supports women by offering affordable energy solutions, reducing the time women spend collecting firewood.

1. Leadership and decision-making

Women's leadership within the energy sector remains limited. They currently comprise around 32 per cent of the global renewable energy workforce but are underrepresented in technical and leadership positions.

Expanding science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, technical training and financing for women entrepreneurs can address these gaps. There is also a need to address structural barriers to women's leadership, create anti-discrimination policies and expand mentorship and networking opportunities for women.

Increasing women's participation in energy decision-making will bring more diverse perspectives and lead to policies and solutions that serve entire communities more effectively.

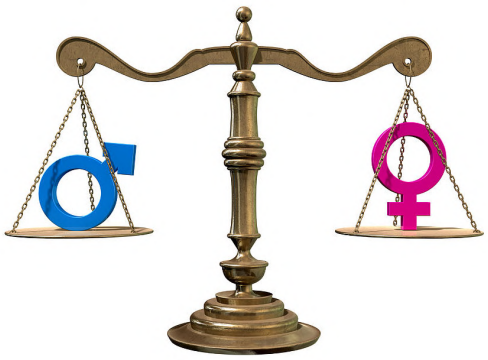
In Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy launched the Women's Energy Leadership Initiative, which provides leadership training and facilitates women's participation in policy discussions.

Gender data for smarter energy policies

The EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies programme (EmPower), jointly implemented by the UN Environment Programme and UN Women with support from the Governments of Germany, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland, seeks to bridge these gaps by integrating gender considerations into energy data collection.

Working regionally and nationally in programme countries, EmPower collaborates with partners such as the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the Department of Energy in the Philippines to improve gender and energy data collection. Gender data is not just about gender equity; it also enhances the effectiveness and inclusivity of energy policies and investments.

Systematic collection and use of gender-disaggregated data enable policymakers to address critical energy needs and improve health and environmental outcomes; ensure equal access to energy services, interventions and work opportunities; foster innovation and sustainability that can accelerate meeting national energy targets; and increase the productivity of all workers in advancing economies.



One In Four Countries Report Backlash On Women's Rights

On International Women's Day, UN Women calls on everyone to stand up for Rights, Empowerment and Equality for ALL Women and Girls

Women's and girls' rights are facing unprecedented growing threats worldwide, from higher levels of discrimination to weaker legal protections, and less funding for programs and institutions that support and protect women. UN Women's latest report "Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing", published ahead of the UN 50th International Women's Day on March 8, shows that in 2024 nearly a quarter of governments worldwide reported a backlash on women's rights.

Despite important progress, only 87 countries have ever been led by a woman, and a woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes by a partner or member of her own family. Digital technology and artificial intelligence spread harmful stereotypes, while the digital gender gap limits women's opportunities.

In the past decade, the world registered a disturbing 50 percent increase in the number of women and girls living in conflict, and women's rights defenders confront daily harassment, personal attacks and even death. Recent global crises—like COVID-19, the climate emergency, soaring food and fuel prices—are only increasing the urgency to respond.

"When women and girls can rise, we all thrive. Yet, globally, women's human rights are under attack. Instead of mainstreaming equal rights, we're seeing the mainstreaming of misogyny. Together, we must stand firm in making human rights, equality and empowerment a reality for all women and girls, for everyone, everywhere," said Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General.

"UN Women is committed to ensuring that ALL Women and Girls, everywhere, can fully enjoy their rights and freedoms" affirmed UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous. "Complex challenges stand in the way of gender equality and women's empowerment, but we remain steadfast, pushing forward with ambition and resolve. Women and girls are demanding change—and they deserve nothing less."

2025 marks 30 years of progress since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most visionary roadmap on women's rights.

The "Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing" report, which draws on feedback provided by 159 Governments to the United Nations Secretary-General, shows progress that must be acknowledged - since 1995, parity has been achieved in girls' education and maternal mortality has dropped by a third. Women's representation in



parliaments more than doubled, and countries continue to remove discriminatory laws, with 1,531 legal reforms between 1995 and 2024 in 189 countries and territories. It demonstrates that when women's rights are fully upheld in their countries, families, communities, and economies flourish.

Yet, significant efforts are still required to achieve gender equality and bring us closer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That's why today's report also features the new Beijing+30 Action Agenda, a courageous roadmap to complete our unfinished business by focusing on:

1. A digital revolution for all women and girls: We must ensure equal access to technology, equip women and girls to lead in AI and digital

innovation, and guarantee their online safety and privacy.
2. Freedom from poverty: Investments in comprehensive social protection, universal health coverage, education, and robust care services are needed for women and girls to thrive and can create millions of green and decent jobs.
3. Zero violence: Countries must adopt and implement legislation to end violence against women and girls, in all its forms, with well-resourced plans that include support for community-based organizations on the front lines of response and prevention.
4. Full and equal decision-making power: Temporary special measures like gender quotas have proven their effectiveness in rapidly increasing women's participation.
5. Peace and security: Fully finance national plans on women, peace and security and gender-responsive humanitarian aid are essential. Frontline women's



organizations, so often the first responders to crisis, must receive dedicated, sustained funding to build lasting peace.
6. Climate justice: We must prioritize women's and girls' rights in climate adaptation, center their leadership and knowledge, and ensure they benefit from new green jobs.

Across these six Actions, putting young women and girls at the heart of our efforts is the best way to guarantee success, both today and tomorrow. These six plus-one actions have the potential to unleash progress on women's rights and put us back on track for 2030.

The Beijing+30 commemoration and the forthcoming Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) are clear opportunities to enshrine this Action Agenda into national policies, regional strategies, and global agreements.

In a pivotal year for women and girls, that is also a year of pushback and crises like no other, let us push women's rights forward to create a world where all women and girls enjoy equal rights and equal opportunities. We can be the first generation that can live in an equal world.



Placing A Gender-Just Energy Transition At The Centre Of Sustainable Development Discussions

UN Women and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) placed gender-just energy transition at the centre of discussions at the 12th edition of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD).

Organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), this annual, inclusive intergovernmental forum reviews progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level. This year's APFSD took place from 25–28 February in Bangkok, Thailand.

As part of their engagement in the Forum, UN Women and UNEP, under the EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies Programme, co-organized side events to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion were included in climate discussions.

On 22 February, as part of the APFSD preparations, a People's Forum brought together civil society organizations to discuss the challenges and opportunities of advancing a gender-just energy transition in the region.



Jesmin Nahar, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh, emphasized the need for stronger integration of gender in transition policies, adding: "Governments should increase women's participation in green jobs and support women's role in climate adaptation and resilience."

Key points of the discussion included the difficulty of collecting gender-disaggregated data due to the informal nature of women-owned businesses, as discussed by Allan Sicat from the Microfinance Council of the Philippines. APRCEM also stressed the importance of incorporating gender-sensitive approaches in climate programmes, while Robeliza Halip, interim Executive Director of the Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples, highlighted the crucial leadership of Indigenous Peoples in renewable energy initiatives.

The session concluded with a commitment to create a regional brief on just transition policies that prioritize the needs of affected and marginalized communities, particularly women and Indigenous Peoples.

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On 27 February, the side event "Powering the Future: Advancing Gender and Social Inclusion in Climate and Energy Policies" was co-organized with APRCEM and the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). The hybrid session focused on strategies for integrating gender and social inclusion in climate change and renewable energy policies in South and Southeast Asia.

Throughout the session, participants discussed the gaps in current policies, the specific needs of marginalized groups, and how stronger partnerships can advance gender and social inclusion goals.

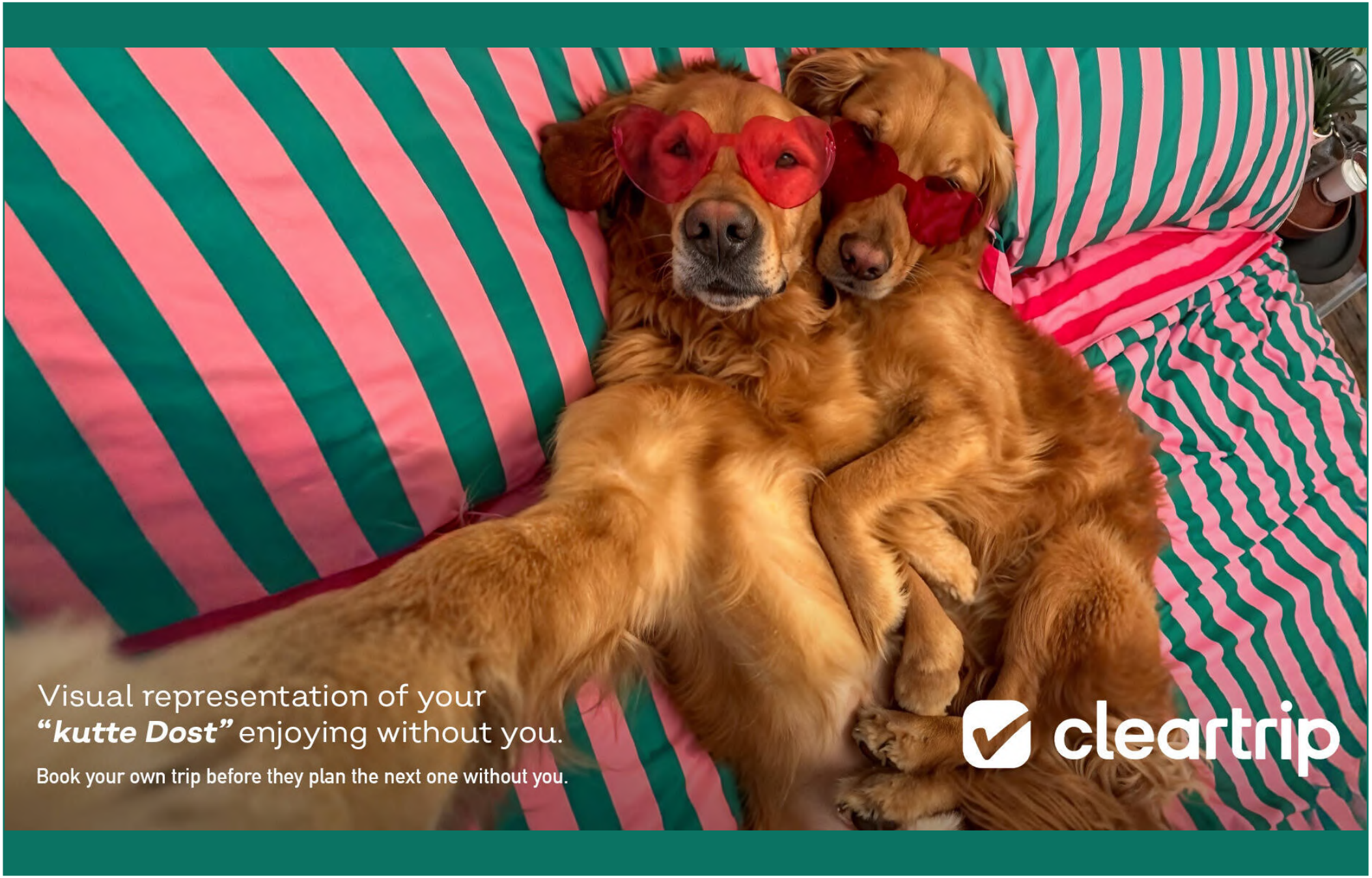
Dechen Tsering, Regional Director of UNEP Asia and the Pacific, noted: "National climate mitigation and adaptation plans are increasingly recognizing the importance of women's leadership, yet the real challenge remains in translating these policies into tangible actions." The event culminated in a call for stronger multistakeholder partnerships, adequate funding and inclusive, science-based policies to achieve the SDGs. Participants committed to ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion remain central to future climate and energy actions.

On 27 February, the side event "Pathways for Indigenous-Led Energy: Voices of Indigenous Women and Youth in Asia" explored the urgent need to support Indigenous-led energy initiatives in the face of imposed renewable energy projects that often disregard the rights and needs of these communities.

Among the speakers from Indigenous Peoples-led organizations were Surti Handayani from Perhimpunan Pembela Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (PPMAN), who discussed the challenges and community impacts of geothermal and mining projects in Indonesia, and Joe Baxter from Tonibung, who shared examples on how Indigenous Peoples in Malaysia developed sustainable power system using their traditional knowledge. Pema Wangmo Lama, from WE-Women from Indigenous Nationalities in Nepal, shared the challenges in Indigenous Peoples' engagement in climate-related policy processes. "It is important to include Indigenous Peoples in a meaningful way, where they have the capacity to understand the technical aspects of the policies. Without that, our representation remains tokenistic," she emphasized.

The outcomes from these sessions will directly inform APFSD deliberations, ensuring that the voices of civil society are central in shaping policies that address the climate and energy challenges of the future.




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Gender Equality Means Business: Cambodian CEOs Commit to Change



UN Women and the European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia (EuroCham) convened business leaders for the International Women's Day Business Engagement Event, themed "Gender Equality Means Business," at Raintree in Phnom Penh, with support from the Australian Government. The event aimed to foster collaboration and promote concrete actions for gender equality within the Cambodian business sector, focusing on the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

Cambodian women are vital to the nation's economic growth, with 84.1 per cent participating in the workforce. As business leaders, they own 62 per cent of micro-enterprises and 26 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, they continue to face structural barriers, including unequal pay, limited access to credit and social protection, and underrepresentation in leadership. Additionally, women shoulder 90 per cent of unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities, hindering their full economic participation.

The event featured discussions on the business case for gender equality, emphasising the economic benefits of inclusive practices. Emerald Am, Chairman of Benelux Cambodia, an organisation representing the Belgian, Dutch, and Luxembourg business communities active in Cambodia, stated, "At our organisation, gender equality is a fundamental pillar. It's not just about doing what's right—it's also smart for business. Creating gender equality means providing a fair and level playing field for everyone." Julie Keo, Vice-Chair of Eurocham, stressed the economic imperative of inclusion, adding, "Gender equality is an economic imperative. If we want an economy that is resilient and productive, we must include everyone rather than focusing on just one gender."

Central to the event was the ceremonial signing of commitments to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) by twelve CEOs. Developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, the WEPs provide seven guiding principles for businesses seeking to advance gender equality, and are grounded in the recognition that business has a stake in and responsibility for gender equality and women's empowerment. Thary Vorn, CEO of SUDrain, an innovative wastewater solutions company, explained the company's decision to adopt the WEPs: "For us at SUDrain, WEPs align closely with our mission. Since our founding, we've understood the value of promoting women—not just within our company but also in the wider community. WEPs provide a strong platform that connects and supports us, helping us collaborate and drive meaningful change."

By committing to the WEPs, these CEOs pledged to establish equitable workplaces through equal pay, gender-responsive supply chains, and zero tolerance for harassment. Emerald Am observed, "Gender equality means business—that's the key message today. To me, it means giving everyone a fair chance, whether they are women, from different backgrounds, or otherwise. It's about eliminating social and gender biases so that everyone can contribute equally."

Thary Vorn added, "I want to encourage more entrepreneurs to sign the WEPs. When women lead organisations, they create real ecosystems of support, helping other women become independent and brave enough to raise their voices. WEPs provide an excellent platform for this."

WEPs signatories have an opportunity to participate in the newly launched Gender Action Lab (GAL), an initiative powered by the Women's Empowerment Principles to foster private sector innovations that advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Cambodia is one of four countries (along with Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines) to implement this platform. The GAL engages businesses and partners through an action-learning process to co-create, test, and scale transformative solutions aligned with the WEPs.

For many, participating in the WEPs is a commitment beyond profit—an investment in a more prosperous and equitable Cambodia. As Thary Vorn said, "When women lead, it strengthens the economy and benefits the entire community. Empowering women creates real economic growth, and when a woman becomes a leader, she can support and inspire others to lead as well, helping to build a stronger Cambodia."

Commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30), UN Women and UNICEF have launched a new report, Content Analysis of Gender Representation in Advertising in China. The report examines how advertising portrays women, men, girls and boys, and the impact of this on children's perceptions and aspirations.

"2025 marks a turning point—30 years since the Beijing Declaration and just five years before the deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals," said UN Women China Country Representative Smriti Aryal. "As leaders and representatives of media and respective industries, we wield immense power to show positive representation of women and girls in non-stereotyped way, to use gender-responsive language to combat misinformation, discrimination, and hate speech, and to celebrate women's achievements, amplify their voices, and advocate for their rights. "

The report analyzed 1,000 of the most played TV, internet and social media advertisements in China in 2022. Key findings revealed that women are less prominently featured than men, more often depicted with slim bodies, and often shown in domestic and caregiving roles. In contrast, men are more likely to be portrayed in paid occupations and leadership positions. The report recommends that advertisers and content creators craft more inclusive narratives that reflect the full potential of girls and boys.

"At UNICEF, we believe in the potential of advertising to be a force for good," UNICEF China Deputy Representative Amanda Bissex said. "Advertising is not only a source of inspiration and information but also has the power to shape how children view their values, dreams and self-worth. Portraying women and girls in leadership roles can inspire young minds to challenge barriers, while showing fathers as engaged caregivers can redefine outdated norms and encourage new ways to think about division of responsibilities in a family."

By adopting the report's recommendations, advertisers can create positive narratives that help children realize their full potential. Addressing biases like narrow beauty standards or the underrepresentation of men in caregiving roles not only fosters inclusivity but also empowers girls and boys to envision a future unconstrained by stereotypes. This report highlights that gender stereotypes persist in others, shaping perceptions and reinforcing inequalities. For example:

in beauty, clothing and appearance advertisements, female characters are 10.5 times more likely than male characters to wear sexually revealing clothing female characters are nine times more likely than males to be shown cleaning, while male characters are 1.5 times more likely than females to be shown to have a paid occupation and almost twice as likely to be shown as leaders.

The report also identified some areas of positive gender portrayals. For example, there is equal representation of women and men in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) professions and young characters in school settings. However, real-world statistics show women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM fields despite equal early academic performance. This gap emphasizes the need to build on advertising's positive portrayals to address broader societal



barriers for women and girls in STEM.

The report offers a series of recommendations for improving gender equality in advertising. These include:

develop content that positions women and girls as leaders and challenges harmful stereotypes and beliefs around violence against women and girls strengthening advertising organizations' capacity to create non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women reinforce accountability through legislations, measures and self-monitoring and regulatory mechanisms increase women and girls' expression and participation in decision-making in advertising develop partnerships and collaborations with gender-equality organisations to improve the quality of advertising content.
The report was launched on 20 March at an event in Beijing, which brought together representatives from UN agencies, government, enterprises, media platforms, creative agencies, academia, NGOs, influencers and young people.

Continuing the historic Beijing+30 momentum, the report also contributes to the broader goals of United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework for China (2021-2025) and the Outline of Women's Development in China (2021-2030).

At the launch, UN Women and UNICEF reaffirmed their commitment to working with partners in media and advertising to accelerate collective efforts toward advancing gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, depicting a more equal and inclusive world.

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Take Five with Astha Sharma: "We can stop telling girls to 'catch up', and start redesigning tech spaces where they start ahead"

Astha Sharma is Co-founder and Managing Director of Shequal Foundation based in Lalitpur, central Nepal. The nonprofit works to break barriers for women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and information communication and technology (ICT). UN Woman began collaborating with Shequal Foundation last year, at its all-female hackathon. Sharma was interviewed ahead of Girls in ICT Day on 24 April.

What inspired you to champion this cause?

Growing up with a mother working in STEM, I was naturally drawn to challenge gender norms from an early age. But I consistently found myself being the only woman in rooms full of men, from choosing science as my subject in school to my current corporate journey. This experience sparked my determination to create change.



The journey culminated in co-founding the Shequal Foundation with Melisha Ghimire, who shared similar experiences of gender bias. What continues to drive me is witnessing the tangible impact of our work, particularly in rural regions where gender disparities are most pronounced.

What makes Shequal's all-female hackathon so special?

Before this initiative, seeing women at hackathons — let alone all-women teams — was a rarity in Nepal. That's exactly why this hackathon was born — not just to offer a platform, but to create an entirely different environment: one that's safe, encouraging, and unapologetically built for women. We've seen girls walk in shy, uncertain, and hesitant — and walk out proud, energized and loudly confident. Many of them go on to join other hackathons, this time forming their own all-female teams.



A group of girls … traveled all the way from Sudurpaschim Province. They hadn't worked together online before, so I showed them something as simple as how to use Google Docs collaboratively. The excitement on their faces, like they'd just discovered a super power, was unforgettable.

What does the partnership with UN Women mean for you?

Astha Sharma (second from left) poses with her team members at Nepal's Largest All-Female Hackathon.

Last year, the first collaboration of UN Women and Shequal brought visibility to the often-overlooked realities that keep women out of tech, especially the unpaid care responsibilities that silently shape their access to opportunities.

This year, we're incredibly excited to align even more closely with the theme of women's economic empowerment, particularly through the lens of care work.

For women, especially in Nepal, the burden of unpaid care work directly affects their ability to pursue education, employment, and leadership in tech. Tech is not just about access — it's about designing systems that acknowledge and support the daily lives of women, especially caregivers.

What is your message to girls looking to break into the field?

Every year, we see a new wave of girls curious about artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, robotics and design, and they're hungry to learn, build and lead. We can stop telling girls to "catch up", and start redesigning tech spaces where they start ahead.

To every girl looking to break into tech: You don't have to wait to be invited. Be bold enough to learn out loud, to ask questions, to take up digital space — even if you're the only one like you in the room.

And to the rest of us? Let's make sure she's not the only one for long.

How can people join your cause?

We invite individuals, companies and institutions to join us — mentor a young girl innovator, co-create a learning platform, support our hackathons and boot camps, and invest in long-term partnerships that foster inclusive innovation.



Ring the Bell for Gender Equality Calls for Investment in the Care Economy to Support Women's Economic Participation



On International Women's Day, BSE (formerly the Bombay Stock Exchange) in collaboration with UN Women, marked a significant moment by hosting the "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" event. This ceremony, held on March 7, 2024, brought together a prestigious line-up of partners, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE), the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (SSE), and Women in ETFs (WE), emphasizing the critical investment in women for accelerating progress toward gender equality.

The gathering underscored the United Nations' theme for International Women's Day 2024, "Investing in women; accelerating progress', and towards advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on Gender Equality. A significant point of discussion was the investment in the care economy, poised to generate nearly 300 million jobs by 2035, with a substantial number benefiting women.

Susan Ferguson, the Country Representative of UN Women India, highlighted the event's core message: "Today's bell-ringing symbolizes our commitment to empowering women through strategic investments. Supporting the care economy not only reduces and redistributes the care responsibilities shouldered by women but also opens avenues for their economic participation and success."

The ceremony also served as a platform to spotlight the "FinEmpower" program, joint initiative by BSE and UN Women India, launched during the 2023 Ring the Bell event. This program is dedicated to enhancing women's financial literacy and skills.

Sundararaman Ramamurthy, managing director and CEO of BSE Ltd, reiterated that "initiatives with UN Women play a vital role in ensuring that women can harvest their full potential by breaking barriers. Last year, together, we organized awareness sessions on financial literacy for 1,000 women in 3 cities of India."

Søren Gade, Speaker of the Danish Parliament, gave his testimony on why gender equality is so important for any nation and economy. He reinstated Denmark's consistent commitment to improve gender equality, education and women's active participation in the workforce. He endorsed the role of UN Women which actively promotes this agenda in India and across our planet. Finally he highlighted India's dedicated efforts in promoting women's empowerment.

A panel discussion titled "Investment in Care Economy: Pathway to a Resilient Nation," followed the bell-ringing ceremony. This session saw contributions from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and leaders from the private sector, discussing the crucial recognition and redistribution of the care burden, making it a shared responsibility for everyone, and the transformative impact of increased private sector investment in the care economy, including through public-private collaborations.

Celebrating its 10th year in 2024, the "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" campaign calls upon the BSE community and wider stakeholders to champion women's investment, driving towards a sustainable and equitable future for all.



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Women in esports: 9 Questions to Natalie Denk



Natalie Denk is a research associate at the Center for Applied Game Research of the Donau University Krems and a passionate gamer. In addition to numerous projects she is a part of the „League of Girls“, an initiative by PICAPIPE, a Viennese company, and is committed to increasing the visibility of women in esports. She tells us more about her work and how more women can be motivated for esports.

While half of all gamers are female, only few women are part of the professional esports scene. We have asked Natalie Denk, co-founder of the “League of Girls”, why women are so underrepresented and what needs to change so that women can play a larger part of the industry.

Almost half of all gamers in Germany are women: Out of 34.3 million people who play video games at least casually, 47% are women. This is according to the annual report of the german gaming industry for 2018. This makes it even more surprising that there are so few recognizable female esports athletes in Germany. In this intervew, Natalie Denk, scientist and gamer, will explain why this is.

1. Mrs. Denk, what are you researching right now? Natalie Denk: My focus is on Game Based Learning, Educational Game Design as well as gender aspects in relation to digital games. Currently I am mainly involved in the research projects CDG4E - Create Digital Games for Education (Erasmus+), Walk Your City (FFG) and Digital, healthy ageing! (FGÖ). In the CDG4E project, for example, a Game Creator is being developed in cooperation with partner organisations from Malta, Germany and Luxembourg, which can be used to create games for teaching content from all subjects. The content of the games can be created or defined by teachers or students themselves. The games developed with this can then be used on the go and shared publicly.

It is important to us that the topics of gender & diversity are taken into account in our research projects at all levels. This applies not only to the design of content (e.g. the design of game characters), but also to data collection, dealing with the target group or the conception of offerings.

2. You yourself are a passionate gamer. What do you like about esports? First of all I find computer games as a medium fascinating in themselves and also the culture that has developed around gaming and is constantly evolving. The broad spectrum of video games as far as possibilities, experiences and approaches are concerned also needs to be pointed out here. In order to master a game, different skills and competencies are required, which players can aquire and improve during the game, but that they also bring to the game themselves.

And in the case of esports games or playing in a league, skills such as team spirit, self-discipline and organisational talent are also required. I am fascinated by what people are able to accomplish in eSports. At the same time, I am equally fascinated by what esports has already become in this country.

3. Why are women underrepresented in esports? There are several problems that women* in the professional gaming industry have to face:

Missing role models: Esports tournaments are generally open to women* and men*. However, the esports scene is very male-dominated. This applies to players*, but also to all other areas, such as management or members of eSports associations. Women* therefore often do not see a career in esport as an option in itself. There is a lack of role models with whom women* can identify.

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Fear of sexism: Of course, the entire gaming scene is not toxic to women*. But: So far I haven't met a female esports athlete who hasn't reported sexist incidents. Women* must also fear that they will not be judged according to their performance, but according to their gender. If a woman* does badly in a game, it quickly means she plays badly because she is a woman. Of course, all this has something to do with gender-specific socialization and the transmission of stereotypical role patterns.

Gender-specific socialisation: From birth, we are faced with certain socially constructed gender roles. "Video games" are seen as an activity with a more male connotation. This leads, for example, to the fact that it is often not even assumed at first that girls* are interested in computer games or could develop them. In this way, stereotypical role models become entrenched. Statistics show, however, that women* and girls* enjoy playing computer games regularly. Nearly 50% of those who claim to play computer games at least occasionally are female*. A completely different picture emerges when you look at the professional gaming scene (eSports, LAN parties, game development). Women* are massively underrepresented here.



Non-perception of women* as a target group of the gaming industry: The stereotype of women* and girls* who are not interested in video games also means that the gaming industry still does not widely perceive women* as a target group. This can be seen, for example, in the design of game content, where it often becomes clear that this is intended to appeal to heterosexual young men*. This says a lot about how the gaming industry thinks and in turn suggests that video games are not for women*.

4. How can we change this underrepresentation?

We can and must make some changes to motivate women* to participate more in the eSports scene:

Role Models: Many women* do not perceive esports as a possibility for themselves. The most important train of thought to get involved in any activity is: "That could be me!" Making women* visible in esports as role models is one way to create this train of thought. Role models show that a certain goal can be achieved and make something new desirable for us.

Association work: A look at the list of esports associations and clubs also shows that hardly any women* are represented here. In order to make esports more attractive for women*, more women* should be involved in the associations - even beyond gender-specific working groups. This will also help to break down the image of a purely male-dominated esports scene. In addition, it is of course also necessary to explicitly address the topic of gender & esports.

Club work: Of course, clubs can do a lot as well. Here it is important to explicitly address women* and welcome them - for example, when it comes to setting up new players*. But women* also need competent contacts* when it comes to sexist incidents and the know-how to deal with them.

Gender competence in journalism: To make esports more attractive for women*, it is also necessary to develop gender competence in journalism. Women* should be perceived as potential readers of reports on esports. A suitable language or a targeted selection of photos or examples will help.

Most articles that report on women* in esports are written to address the gender issue in esports (which is also important) - but it does not always have to be said that women* are active in esports.

Breaking down stereotypes as an educational task: My long-term goals are to promote a reflexive approach to stereotypical gender roles and to raise awareness at all levels. In order to achieve this, the confrontation with gender stereotypical role models must be understood as an educational task. Video games have become an integral part of the lives of children, young people and adults and are one of the most important entertainment media. For this reason, they must also become an integral part of our educational system - especially in schools. This also implies that gender competence is built up among educators* and parents.

5. Are there typical men's and women's games?
I would like to answer this question with a simple "no". There are studies that show differences in game and genre preferences between women* and men*. BUT: Of course we always have to take a closer look here and also ask the question where these differences are coming from (keyword: gender-specific socialisation.) In addition, I think it is counterproductive to talk about men's and women's games at all, because this again fuels and constructs gender role clichés. Instead of dividing games into women's and men's games, the games industry should be aware of the diversity of gamers. Instead of developing games specifically for women*, games should be gender-inclusive. This means, for example, abandoning eternally "ruminated" gender role clichés and stereotypes and instead drawing interesting - and not arbitrarily interchangeable - characters. I'd say here that you don't just do good for women*, but for all gamers*.

6. Do women in esports have different strengths and weaknesses than men?
No. There are no serious studies that would prove that there is a difference in gaming behaviour or performance between women* and men*. The nice thing about esports is that - in contrast to many conventional sports, such as soccer - gender segregation is not necessary for physical reasons. Nevertheless, this is unfortunately still often suggested and attempts are made to force gender-specific differences.

7. Is there any support and opportunities for exchange for women in esports?
Association work: The ESVÖ - the Austrian eSports Association - elected Yvonne Scheer as the official gender commissioner. For the ESVÖ Yvonne supports the promotion of women in esports and is therefore also the contact person for women* who want to get involved in esports. In my opinion, this is a very important and necessary function to remove barriers to entry. In Germany the ESBD has recently formed a working group which is dedicated to increasing the quota of women in esports.

Platforms: One of the best known platforms for promoting diversity in e-sports is AnyKey - an initiative of ESL and Intel. This platform also lists further Communities dedicated to the topic. Our initiative "League of Girls" is also committed to the promotion of women in esports and promotes networking within the esports scene.

Social media networks: Various groups in social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, Discord) are a good place to go. This is where the most diverse online communities are formed, where you can exchange information specific to a particular game or just in general.

8 What is your opinion on all female teams?
So far I have met female esports athletes who reject Female-Only leagues as well as those who feel very comfortable in Female-Only leagues. I can see both sides of the argument. It seems to me that esports clubs are increasingly beginning to focus on this topic and are setting up female-only



teams. Of course this is to be welcomed. But in my opinion the efforts could also be used to build a gender-mixed team.

Female-Only tournaments can serve to address the under-representation of women* in esports and to provide women with a space in which they can move without automatically comparing themselves to the opposite sex and consciously or unconsciously subjecting themselves to certain role patterns. However, it becomes problematic when one believes that one has solved the "gender problem" in eSports with female-only leagues.

In my opinion, the long-term goal should be that women* and men* play together and gender simply doesn't play a role here - unlike in many conventional sports, where there is a physiological limitation or difference based on gender, it doesn't in fact in eSports.

9. How did the "League of Girls" come into being and what are the goals behind it?
"League of Girls" (LoG) is a project of PICAPIPE, where I work in addition to my job at the Donau-Uni. LoG is a platform and initiative that promotes women* and girls* in the gaming scene - especially in esports and streaming. On the one hand, our goal is to make female gamers visible and to draw attention to the necessary diversity in the scene and on the other hand to promote networking within the eSports scene.

Members can share posts that deal with gender, diversity, esports and gaming. We also feature twitch channels by female streamers to establish female role models in the scene.

By the way, anyone who wants to set an example for more diversity in the gaming scene can register - men* are also welcome, of course.

As part of our “League of Girls” initiative, we are also trying to find ways to bring the topic of gender & eSports into the educational arena and to promote girls* in particular. At the moment we are doing this with our eSports school league Floridsdorf, the 1st eSports school league in Austria and before that with our LoG-school event. We hope to find ways in the future to combine esports and school in a meaningful way. Together as one!

Whether you are part of a female only team, an all men’s team or a mixed team - a visually uniform appearance at an esports tournament shows your team spirit. You will find numerous designs in our online shop and be able to create the perfect design for your team in our 3D Kit Designer.

In our article “esports - gaming for money” you can read how to become a professional esports player and earn money with it. To make sure your professional gaming career is successful, we have taken a look at proper esports nutrition in our article „eSports training: nutrition and fitness“.

Have fun training!

:- Source: Owayo



What Is The Future Like For Female Gamers In India?

The number of female gamers in India is on the rise but yet not equal to male gamers. According to the Lumikai State of India Gaming report, the male:female gaming ratio was 60:40, with equal representation from both metro and non-metro cities. Yet, one of the taboo subjects that needs to be discussed is gender inclusion.



Women encounter challenges every day. Working women are expected to manage their personal and professional lives simultaneously, and when they venture into areas where males have long held sway, the difficulties they encounter are unfathomable. Take gaming as an example. Over the years, men have cultivated the prejudices that women can't play video games and can't drive. No one has ever classified gaming as a man's pastime throughout its history, but women gamers still encounter preconceived notions like gaming is not women's play. While we advocate for equality, we also hold women-only tournaments to show and encourage women that gaming is a safe space for them to experiment.

There are many female gamers in India who have established their identities via tenacity, dedication and eradication of negative stereotypes and insults directed towards them. Some believe that this could be because they see it as a competition and some said being classified as a woman in gaming is the reason.

Popular influencer in gaming, Kanika "Kani Gaming" Bisht says, "First, I believe we shouldn't be classified as female gamers, but just as gamers. In gaming, there should not be any genderism, as the game is the same as the skill sets used for it. The only difference is the different challenges girls and boys face. As girls, we face difficulties like being judged on the basis of our appearance, being judged on our gameplay just because of our gender, and so on."

The women gamers who have already created their identity in the community have inspired a lot of females in the country. According to Fanclash co-founder and CEO Richa Singh, who is a gamer as well, "We have ace women gamers who have demonstrated their talent. Players like Shagufta "Xyaa" Iqbal, Monika "Sherlock" Jeph, and Saloni Panwar (Meow16k) are some of the top Indian female gamers. From competitive tournaments to streaming platforms, women are taking up the mantle of game-making and game-playing with new avenues for representation and storytelling. We anticipate a climax with shattered gender stereotypes associated with gaming if this trend continues."

Influencers take on harassment and online bullying

A lot of female gamers are unable to express or leave a mark in the community due to the terror of being bullied or harassed. Despite being supported by family and peers, women have been bothered by the hate comments which they have received in their streaming career. To protect themselves, many female gamers have concealed their identities in the gaming community. Animation Xpress reached out to popular Indian gamers to know their story:

Prachi "Agnees Gaming" Lingwal shared that her family has been supportive but she has faced problems regarding the growth of her gaming audience. "I want to say there will be many ups and downs in this field, so be patient and continue to do your work. There is bullying in every field you work in, and I too have faced such things, but with time, we learn to handle it. There's nothing to worry about; just keep focusing on your work and ignore hateful and negative comments. Kuch toh log kahenge, logo ka kaam hai kehna."

Kani Gaming has simply learned to ignore hateful comments and bullying. "Because where there is success, there will be people to pull you down. But I believe that the more you get pulled down, the more you will rise and



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go up the ladder of success!" Speaking about players concealing their identity, she said, "Yes, I've seen such instances. I respect their decisions and privacy. Not everyone's mindset for dealing with negativity can be the same. So they feel prevention is better than cure. The community needs to understand the preferences of every creator and support them the way they are."

Aaradhya "Vibe with Aradhya" D Sawant shared, "I come across numerous bullying and hateful comments frequently in my streams, my video comments and DMs. Most of them state that I should leave gaming or I am famous because my brother (Dynamo) is famous and that I am using my brother's name to rise to fame. Through this opportunity, I would love to address that, it is the most difficult responsibility to live up to a name that has already been made. These trolls give me immense power to come back with my skills and knowledge. I am proud of the fact that the Indian gaming community has started accepting me as an individual creator which also makes me push myself further and I try to add as much diversity in my content as possible."

Sawant believes in the ideology that "a journey without challenges and constant triggers is no fun. My biggest challenge was having to prove myself over any other female creator because of the tag I had of being a sister of a popular gaming creator. However, I genuinely want to thank the haters and trollers for being my constant motivators."

Sawant has a different take on concealing identities. "Respecting privacy is something that everyone should do. If there are female gamers who want to conceal their identity because of personal or other issues, it is totally fine and should be respected. But those who do it due to harassment and bullying, I would tell you: believe that what you have achieved is yours to celebrate and be proud of it. Nothing can stop you once you are dedicated and ready to face any consequences in your journey."

Monika "Savage Girl" said, "I believe that if you are a girl, you will have to deal with online bullying or hateful comments sometime in your life. To be honest, this is something that makes the girl even stronger to face the world. There are millions of people with easy access to everything, we cannot restrict everyone and ask them to change; therefore, it is better to ignore it and let it go. I also get unpleasing comments, but I never let them overpower me or my confidence. I am going to keep doing what I do. I believe that if I have haters, I have the assurance that yes, I am doing something great, and I am happy about it."



She added, "It was a bit challenging for me to fit in the community, and it took me more than the normal time to prove my worth. To this day, I receive disheartening and sexual comments. I don't take them personally because I know those are not the people who actually love gaming or the spirit of gaming; they are just attention-hungry wolves who would target any woman they see. Female influencers, gamer, or public figures are more prone to them, but as I said, it is just part of the journey. There are only a few humps in the road that can be avoided."

Savage Girl does not see the point in hiding one's identity because if anyone takes the initiative to do something, it will have both positive and negative consequences. "After all, we are gamers, and we have a natural competitive spirit. To all the female gamers out there: gaming is a glorifying world, and everyone is going to embrace you with open arms. Therefore, don't fear anything. You have done nothing wrong. Come out of your shells and proudly say you are a female gamer, and I am sure the Indian gaming community will always be by your side to support you."

How has the journey of female gamers been?

Not all gamers can show courage. A lot of gamers are unable to explore the ecosystem despite having



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better skills than male players. The moment a gamer gets popular with large numbers, it becomes difficult for them to track every follower. But sometimes, their relatability and skill which has connected them to the audience may not turn out to be pleasant.

Hyojeong Park, a South Korean YouTuber better known online as Mhyochi, experienced harassment while conducting a live stream in Mumbai. The video revealed two boys approaching the YouTuber and attempting to hold her hand despite her protests. One of the boys offered the woman a ride on his motorcycle, but she declined. He followed her for sometime before leaving her alone.

Agnees Gaming said, “It has been a hard journey for female players to enter the gaming industry; there is a lot of family pressure on them. I have seen many female gamers who are very good but are unable to pursue a career in the industry, maybe because of the underlying stereotypes and gender bias.

Female influencers in other fields are well accepted and praised, but I believe that when it comes to gaming, this is not the case. I believe it takes more than the usual effort to prove our worth. However on a positive note, the gaming community recently has become a bit more welcoming and encouraging for female streamers.”

Kani Gaming said: “There are many gaming events, tournaments, and so on. that we all can participate in! There are challenges, just as there are on any other platform, but these challenges pale in comparison to the opportunities in the gaming world!”

Vibe with Aradhya mentioned: “One concern is the perception in the market that it is easier for a female to become famous in the gaming world. But are girls supported because of their beauty or their game skills? It may take some time to figure out an answer. Talking about myself, I have experienced mixed reactions along with an equal amount of support and troll.”

Savage Girl commented: “The gaming world is indeed considered a male-dominated genre in the world of content creation. But, unlike in the real world, women have proven to be just as good as men, whether it’s gaming or any other male-dominated task. I would admit that in the initial stages when the wave of gaming just started in India, women were not welcomed as much, and they later had to go through some disheartening comments; but there has been a lot of change in the mindset and sportsmanship of the men in the gaming industry. In the past, I believe, gaming was solely focused on game skills, but now it’s also about content creation skills, as well as great audience engagement. So if a girl out there wants to try out her luck in gaming, I guess this is the right time.”

Richa Singh said: “For years, I was an avid gamer, which ultimately motivated me to establish a business in fantasy esports. It was not a cakewalk, especially for a woman, when most stakeholders are men, right from investors to consumers. In recent years, there has been a huge shift in the gaming industry, with a remarkable stride towards gender equality as women showed their ability to compete with male gamers on an equal footing. They took part in game development, designing and marketing.

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Krutika "Krutika Plays" Ojha shared, "Embracing diversity and inclusion in the gaming industry is a goal that we are constantly striving towards. The gaming industry can tap into a wider pool of talent, ideas, and perspectives, and create games that appeal to a more diverse audience. This not only helps to drive the growth of the industry, but also helps break down barriers and stereotypes associated with gaming."

"It's great to see that technology is also playing a great role in making the gaming industry more accessible and inclusive. The rise of mobile gaming and cloud gaming has made it possible for people from all walks of life to enjoy gaming, regardless of their location, age or gender. "

Kashvi "Kaash Plays" Hiranandani shared, "At 25, I started streaming video games on YouTube even while working as a finance consultant in Singapore. But now I am a full-time streamer. It was a tough choice for sure, especially being a woman getting into a male-dominated industry, but I followed my passion and have never regretted it. When I started, there were hardly any women players but glad that things have changed in a really short span of time. It's encouraging to see that perceptions are changing and that women are becoming more confident in taking risks and pursuing their passions."

Saloni "Play Like Incognito" Singh shared, "I have seen organisations recruit professional women only teams in 2022. Currently, a lot of investors have put their money in games like BGMI, Pokémon Unite, PUBG New State and Valorant. We see tournaments happening very frequently with a whopping seven digit prize pool! This means there is a great future and that young women who are esports athletes, can safely invest their time. Not just playing professionally, a lot of other professions have opened doors in the IT sector for gaming as well."

What will make gaming a safe environment for women?

There are various ways through which we can create a safe environment for female gamers to sustain:

- Equal distribution of female and male players in the teams
- No gender-based discrimination within the community
- Creation of technologically advanced tools which will ban harassers and offenders
- Advertisement and promotion with gender inclusive content
- Hiring more female professionals within the community
- Grassroot awareness in gaming and esports to inspire more women

Here's what women gamers from the community think:

Kani Gaming said, "Bridge the gap between male and female gamers by not categorising them and treating everyone equally; make this community an equal, fun and safe place to be!"

Agnees Gaming said, "If the gaming industry provides opportunities in tournaments for females, it will



encourage them further."

Vibe With Aaradhya said, "Female gamers can be caring for their fellow members and fierce when it comes to being competitive. The Indian gaming community should realise that female gamers can be the game changers and strategy makers once they are given the chance to use all of their potential."
Savage girl shared, "I have been in this community for a long time, and I have seen things change a lot, which indeed makes me happy. There is nothing that can be done to create a safe environment, and this is not a one person job. Everyone needs to understand, appreciate, and support the efforts."

Payal "Payal Gaming" Dhare mentioned, "It's exciting to see that the gaming industry is embracing diversity and inclusivity, and I hope that it will continue to do so in the future."

Kaash Plays said, "I hope that the trend of increased representation of women in the gaming industry continues and that more and more women will be encouraged to pursue careers in the industry."

Krutika Plays added, "The push for greater diversity and inclusion in the gaming industry is not only important for women, but for the industry as a whole."

Richa Singh shared, "Women are an active part of the gaming community, working to bridge the gap between themselves and their male counterparts. The priority should be crafting safe spaces for leadership identity where women should be able to focus on the job, not overthink regarding invisible barriers, and to create jobs for those women who are passionate about gaming and want to make a career out of it, from game designers and developers to content creators and influencers. Women can also look into roles such as esports commentator or analyst, game tester, or game artist. We need to use more outreach methods to attract more women to this space, as well as provide ample support for retaining and developing the ecosystem's existing female talent."

A happy empire was never built in a day. Similarly, the days of struggle shall pass if we strongly hold on to our purpose, identity and debunk stereotypes.

As Payal Gaming opined, "Women bring unique perspectives, ideas and creativity to the industry which helps to drive innovation and progress. Moreover, women's contribution to the gaming industry has been proven to be instrumental in bringing in a new audience and increasing revenue. Video game designers, programmers, animators, video game testers, game writers, audio engineers, are some of the viable career options one can opt for. Women who are interested in gaming can also opt for careers in education and research, where they can use their skills and knowledge to educate and inspire the next generation of female gamers."

Agnees Gaming said, "BE YOU. There is nothing to worry about if you have confidence in yourself. Believe in yourself."


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Marching Her Innovation Towards Digitalization

"This Dhakiya is a handmade Tharu cultural basket, crafted from forest shrubs, decorated with peacock feathers, vibrant fabric, and woolen decorations," a woman in Dhangadhi told me last week. When I asked whether I could do online payment, she took a long breath and shared, "Had I known digital skills, I wouldn't be struggling to sell."

Her words stayed with me. Women's limited access to digital financial platforms was not simply her problem but rather a representation of a larger global reality. According to the World Economic Forum, the transforming digital landscape runs the risk of leaving half of the population behind, contrasting with the central promise of leaving no one behind.

The digital economy presents tremendous opportunities for women's economic emancipation in Nepal. Expanded market access, financial inclusion, online payment, mobile banking, and digital financial services improve financial autonomy by guaranteeing safe transactions as well as providing access to micro-loans for expanding businesses. This offers a new avenue to bring the labour market inside the households, which can benefit 1.5 million home-based workers, representing 34.4 per cent of total women in employment (Nepal Labour Force Survey-NLFS 2017/18).



Although digitalization is fast progressing in Nepal, women entrepreneurs like her face specific problems to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. Especially in rural Nepal, on one hand, women have limited access to infrastructure and resources, and on the other hand, digital literacy, technical know-how, and market knowledge add to gender-specific challenges.

In Nepal, only 3 per cent of women have used the internet or mobile phone to access bank accounts, and only 13 per cent have made or received digital payments (World Bank 2022). At the heart of this digital divide remains not just the gaps in connectivity but also the gender discriminatory social norms and practices that dictate women's access and decision-making regarding technology and digital spaces, increasing their economic and digital reliance on others, mostly men.

Besides, the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) industry in Nepal is marked by a significant gender disparity. While 81 per cent of women over the age of 15 are economically active, only 0.5

per cent are involved in ICT (NLFS 2017/18). Furthermore, the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) worldwide further complicates this divide, with the systems trained on biased data amplifying gender stereotypes. For example, globally, hiring algorithms prefer men over women for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) jobs, reflecting past workforce prejudices.

As Nepal moves toward Least Developed Country graduation, bridging this digital gender gap becomes even more critical. It is not only vital for women's equal representation in the digital economy and industry but also crucial for the inclusive economic growth of the country.

The main strategy to tackle this is to advocate for legislative changes for increased investment with public-private partnerships for digital infrastructure, making devices and networks affordable and promoting women's entrepreneurship and business beyond the local market.

Another critical strategy is to focus on digital education tailored for girls and women, including in ICT, right from an early age, coupled with community-driven initiatives and campaigns. Prioritizing inclusive digital policy is crucial to ensuring that women are not left behind in the transition to a tech-driven economy.



If we don't take corrective measures, the digital gender divide will not only widen but pose a major obstacle to Nepal's progress.

It's commendable that the Government of Nepal (GoN) has made some attempts, like public consultation on the National Artificial Intelligence Policy draft. This consultation provides an opportunity to advocate for a gendered approach, being mindful of the ethical challenges and gender-biasedness in AI. But field experiences show these policies alone are not enough. Thus, it is crucial that the GoN work with various stakeholders that stand together, like UN Women, which has prioritized women's access and involvement in the digital sphere.

This will align with Nepal's commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), a landmark global agenda for gender equality that the government has pledged to uphold. To accelerate progress, UN Women is mobilizing high-impact initiatives globally under the theme '2025: The Year For ALL Women and Girls.' In this spirit, today's International Women's Day 2025 is also being commemorated under the theme, 'For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.' Such collaborations further strengthen the advocacy for gender-responsive policies and frameworks closing the digital gender gap, which is a prerequisite for Nepal's national and international gender equality and economic development goals.

Furthermore, collaboration with the private sector can play a crucial role in advancing inclusivity by supporting women-led tech startups and ensuring gender diversity in technology access, including AI. Civil society can drive meaningful change through ground-level awareness campaigns on digital literacy and advocacy for equal internet access. At an individual level, if women and girls are supported in exploring digital opportunities, this can help break societal norms.

By taking collective action, we can ensure that women are not just participants but leaders in shaping the future of technology. Nepal can unlock the full economic potential of women as innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders in the digital age and can March Forward for the Digital Inclusion of All Women and Girls in Nepal.

Role Of Women And Women's Organizations In Indian Society



What is the role of women and women's organisations in Indian Society? Read here to learn about the history of women's organizations and movements in India.

Historically women all around the world have faced a similar set of issues during different periods like- Inferior status in society, Lack of education, Early marriage, being Forced out of public life, and Poor conditions of widows.

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed mass movements and protests by women all over the world for their rights. The adult suffrage movements in western for voting rights gave tremendous strength to women fighting all over the world.

In India, the fight for the betterment of women's condition in society was started by men social reformers in the early 19th century. Later on, women themselves started forming organizations at local and later national levels.

Most of these organizations worked to end social evils against women but the years around the independence saw the demand for political rights and reform of personal laws as well. The post-independent world saw women standing together against rigid societal norms and patriarchy, taking up issues like violence against women, gender equality, gender justice, etc.

History of the role of women in Indian Society

The status and role of women in India have seen drastic changes over the past millennia. In ancient times, Indian women's role was confined to the house and their families.

In the Medieval period, the status of women was declined considerably. And in modern times, women started fighting for their rights and equality.

Women in pre-historic times

During the period of Indus Valley civilization, the status of women was equal in honour. The worship of the mother goddess demonstrates that they were respected in the form of a mother.

During the Rig Vedic period, women had superior status and they got more liberty and equality. The position of wife was a privileged one in the household and women had enhanced status in performing religious rites.

In terms of education, both boys and girls were given equal opportunities. After observing Upanayana Samskar, girls were permitted to spend their lives in Gurukul. The education of girls was considered an important qualification for marriage.

During the age of Upanishads also women had a superior role in society and widows had freedom of remarriage as well. The presence of women teachers, many of whom possessed the highest spiritual knowledge was also a feature of this period.

The later years saw a decline in the role and status of women in public life. Early marriage started hindering education and women slowly started diminishing from away from political and educational spheres.

The Maurya and later, the Gupta period saw the practice of Sati increasing, and women's lives were dictated by the men in their life. The upper-class women were much more confined to their homes and were not allowed to be out in public life.

Women in the Medieval period

This period saw many social evils like female infanticide, sati, child marriages, the Purdah system, and widow's condition were more miserable.

The inflexibility of the caste system deprived of them the right to freedom and social movement. She was forced to lead a life away from society as well as family.

The inhuman practice of Sati had become forced and predominant.

Women in Modern India

The modern period saw the start of the fight by women to gain their position and stature back slowly.

Many movements and organisations were led by both men and women for the upliftment of women in society.

Early Women's organizations by social reformers

- The early Indian society was plagued by various social evils against women such as Sati, polygamy, poor conditions of widows, child marriage, female infanticide, etc.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was one of the earliest social reformers to focus and work on issues of women. He condemned sati pratha, and polygamy, and spoke in favour of property rights for women.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar is well known for his efforts for widow remarriage. He and Rani Roshmoni's efforts helped in the passing of the Widows' Remarriage Act in 1856, which was drafted by Dalhousie and passed by Canning.
- Keshab Chandra Sen of Brahmo Samaj also worked for the upliftment of widows, held educational programs, and started a women's journal. Similar work was done by the Prarthana Samaj in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule worked immensely to educate girls and established girls' schools for the same.
- M.G Ranade, Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, and R.G Bhandarkar in Pune started organizations for ending child marriage, to encourage widow remarriage and women's education.

This male-guided organization and reform efforts were not truly liberating in many areas. The earlier reformers wanted women to be educated but did not want them to step out of their homes into public life.

The Age of Consent Act. 1891: The cases of death of 11-year-old Phulmoni Dasi due to marital rape (1887) and child-bride Rukmabai led to the enactment of the age of consent act.

- This act raised the age of consent for sexual intercourse for all girls, married or unmarried, from ten to twelve years in all jurisdictions, and its violation was subject to criminal prosecution as rape.
- Though this act was supported by reformers like Behramji Malabari and women's social organizations, national leaders like Tilak and revivalist groups were vocal against it.

They were against the interference of the British in the social customs and believed that educated women were turning their backs on societal and cultural norms.

Women's organizations by women

- The Ladies Society in Calcutta (1882) was started by Swarnakumari Devi (sister of Rabindranath Tagore), for educating and imparting livelihood skills to widows. She was also the editor of the women's journal Bharati making her the first Indian woman editor.



- Arya Mahila Samaj was started by Ramabai Saraswati in Pune to provide education to women and to discourage and fight against the practice of child marriage. She later opened Sharada Sadan in Mumbai in 1889 for the education of child widows.



- In 1905, Bharat Mahila Parishad, the women's wing of the National Conference (part of the Indian National Congress) was inaugurated to work for the betterment of the social conditions of women. It focused on child marriage, the condition of widows, dowry, and other evil customs.
- The Stri Zarthosti Mandal (Parsi Women's Circle) was the Parsee community's major organization for women's social work, which emerged from plague relief work done by the family of Naoroji Patuck. The organization expanded its agenda to include medical care, and education and successfully sought funding from the wealthy Parsi philanthropist Sir Ratan Tata.
- Many such associations were formed in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras by small urban educated families.

National women's organizations

In 1910, Bharat Stree Mahamandal was formed by Sarala Devi Chaudharani (Daughter of Swarnakumari Devi) to bring together women of all castes and creeds together. They targeted the purdah system to liberate women from openly working in public life.

They opened many other branches all over the country to promote female education.

The three major national women's organizations which thus trace their origin to the decade between 1917-1927 were:

The Women's Indian Association (WIA)

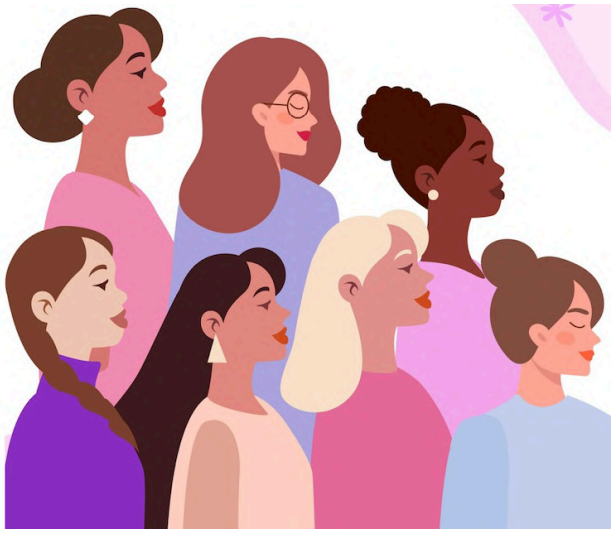
- The WIA was founded by Irish woman, Margaret E. Cousins on 8 May 1917 in Adyar, Madras with a secular agenda for women of all creeds, classes, and castes. Annie Besant became the first President of WIA later on.
- The other founding women included S. Ambujammal, Dr. Muthulaksmi Reddy, Mangalammal Sadasivier, Saralabai Naik, Herabai Tata, Dr. Poonen Lukhose, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Begam Hasrat Mohani, and Dhanavanti Rama Rao.

The National Council of Women in India (NCWI)

- The NCWI was formally formed in 1925, with the efforts of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras's dedicated and influential women who had contributed commendably to the war efforts.
- It came to be accepted as the national branch of the International Council of Women.

The All India Women's Conference (AIWC)

- AIWC was an organization dedicated to the upliftment and betterment of women and children.
- The first President of the AIWC, the Maharani Chimanbai Gaekwad of Baroda, underlined the need for a special type of education for women, compatible with their nature.
- Margaret Cousins was the Secretary. Renowned women like Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyay, Renuka Roy, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Rameshwari Nehru, Begum Hamid Ali, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, etc. were in the leadership of this organization.



Impact of Women's Organizations

The result of these organizations was that the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Act of 1919 gave women the right to vote in elections to all state legislatures but not to the Council of State for Governor-General.

- The princely state of Travancore-Cochin was the first to give voting rights to women in 1920.
- In 1921, Madras and Bombay Province granted the Right to vote to wealthy and educated women, under the same terms as men.
- In 1925, in Punjab, the Sikhs granted women equal voting rights irrespective of their educational qualifications or being wealthy or poor. Bengal legislation also passed a similar resolution.
- With the demand of women, in 1926 women were given the right to membership of provincial legislatures. This was of course to be achieved only through government nomination.
- In 1926, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay stood for Madras legislative council elections from Mangalore but was defeated. The Madras government later nominated Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy to the legislative council.
- Sarda Act of 1929 raised the marriage age for both girls and boys to 14 and 18 respectively.
- By 1932, however, the AIWC had become involved with women's political rights and all questions that affected women and children as well as with social problems such as untouchability.
- In the Government of India Act 1935, the British Raj set up a system of separate electorates and separate seats for women. Most women's leaders opposed it and demanded adult franchises.

Women in the national and labour movements

The Swadeshi movement after the Bengal partition of 1905 and the Home Rule movement saw the participation of women in limited numbers. They also attended sessions of INC during this time.

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- The really large number of women participation was seen in the Non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhiji in 1920 where women played a vital role in organizing processions, picketing shops selling foreign clothes and liquor, and even went to jail.
- The peasant women wholeheartedly participated in Borsad and Bardoli Satyagraha.

Women from all walks of life took part in Salt Satyagraha, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Quit India Movement. Many of these women faced lathi charges and went to jail.

There were women involved in the revolutionary and extremist activities also:

- Kalpana Dutta, Chittagong, Bengal, was part of the Chittagong armoury raid
- Nonibala Devi was associated with the jugantar party and was arrested for transporting weapons.
- Preetilata Waddedar was also a Chittagong revolutionary.
- Captain Laxmi Sehgal was a commander of the 'Rani of Jhansi regiment' in the Indian National Army (INA) under Subhash Chandra Bose.
- Women also actively took part in labour and trade unions, since they also were part of the workforce later on-
- Anusuya Sarabai led the Ahmedabad textile workers to strike in 1917 and started the Ahmedabad textile mill workers union, the Majdoor Mahajan in 1920.
- Maniben Kara was a socialite leader of railway workers; Ushabai Dange and Paravai Bose were communist leaders of textile leaders.



SEWA (self-employed women's association) was formed in 1972 by Ela Bhat in Ahmedabad. It aimed to improve the condition of poor women who worked in an unorganized sector by providing training and technical aides.

- The women's movement in pre-independent India has been called the first wave of feminism. In this phase, women blamed tradition and social structure for their suffering and sought redress through education and legal change.
- The women's organizations had brought women's issues to the forefront. These organizations helped women to come out from domestic boundaries, assemble, and fight for their cause. This prepared the base of women's active participation in the struggle for freedom.

Women In India Played A Significant Role In Social, Economic, And Political Development Of The Country

How has the role and status of women in India evolved over time?

The role and status of women in India's history have been complex and varied. Historically, the Indian society has been patriarchal, with men holding more power and status than women.

- During the Indus Valley civilization, and the Vedic period, Women enjoyed equal status in society.
- They participated politically by attending Sabha and Samithis. Some significant female figures of the Vedic period are Ghosha, Lopamudra, Sulabha Maitreyi, and Gargi.
- The status of women began to decline in the later Vedic period, and many social restrictions were placed upon them. There was evidence of sati during the Gupta Period.
- During Medieval times, the social status of a woman, both in Hindu and Muslim communities, was very low.

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• Females belonging to the nobility observed purdah and were rarely allowed to go outside the house. The custom of sati has become more common.

• With the rise of Social reform movements, there was an improvement in the status of women in Indian Society during British rule.

• With the efforts of reformers, Sati was abolished in 1829, and the Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856.

• Women participated in the Indian anti-imperialist struggle in large numbers through important movements.

What is the role of women in Indian society in general?
In traditional Indian society, the social role of women has been primarily as a wife and mothers. In recent years, there has been a shift in the social role of women in India.

- **Family:**
  ◊ Women are the key to sustainable development and quality of life in the family.
  ◊ Various roles women assume in the family are those of wife, leader, administrator, manager of family income, and most importantly, the mother.

- **Education:**
  ◊ Women play a key role in educating children. The development of future generations depends upon women.
  ◊ According to an Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) report, the education levels of a mother have a strong correlation with the holistic development of children.

- **Health/ Public health:**
  ◊ Women are responsible for 70-80% of all the healthcare provided in India. Female healthcare providers can be important in educating society to recognize their health and nutrition needs.
  ◊ Women professionals and the empowerment of women at all levels are required for the improvement of the health and nutrition status in India.

- **Food Security:**
  ◊ Women are essential contributors to all four aspects of food security, including availability, access, utilization, and stability.
  ◊ They serve as food producers, farmers, and entrepreneurs, as well as "gatekeepers" who make critical decisions and invest time and income to ensure the food and nutrition security of their households and communities.

What is the role of women in Indian politics?
The political role of women in India has been complex and evolving. Historically, women in India have been underrepresented in politics, with a low percentage of women in positions of power.

• Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy.
• There is also strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is a corollary increase in policy-making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities.

- The three main parameters to assess the state of women's participation in politics in India are: Women voter turnout, women's candidature in elections, and women representation in political offices.
• Women voter turnout, women's candidature in elections, and women representation in political offices.



• The female voter turnout in the Lok Sabha elections has increased from 46.6% in 1962 to 66.9% in 2019, which indicates their increasing role in politics. Also, the number of female representatives in the Lok sabha increased from 5% in 1951 to 14% in 2019.
• Representation of women leaders at the grassroots level in India is nearly 50%, especially since the 73rd and 74th amendments in 1992, which allotted one-third of all seats to women.

What is the role of women in India's Economic growth story? The economic role of women in India has traditionally been limited, with many women facing cultural, social, and economic barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the workforce. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the important role that women play in the Indian economy.

- The present contribution of women to the national GDP is around 18%.
- In India, women



comprise 48% of the agricultural workforce and own only 13% of the land. Women in India constitute around 20% of the manufacturing workforce and around 30% of the total workforce in the services sector.
- At present, there are 432 million women of working age in India, out of which 343 million are employed in the unorganized sector.
- India has the 3rd largest ecosystem in terms of Startups in the world, and 10% of them have been led by women founders. Also, research shows that ventures started by women are more sustainable in nature.



- In 2022, a survey among 250 Indian companies revealed that the share of women in the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director roles has increased by55% which reflected significant growth in their role in driving the economy.

What is the role of women in environmental conservation and sustainable development? In India, women have traditionally played a significant role in environmental conservation and management, particularly in rural communities where they often rely on natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being.

- In most developing countries like India, women play a major role as farmers, animal rearers, and water and fuel collectors.
- Various environmental movements like the Bishnoi movement, Chipko Movement, Appiko movement, Silent valley movement, and Narmada Bachao Andolan are the significant environmental movements of India that reflect the integral leadership of women.
- The government of India has adopted various policies and programmes such as the Joint Forest Management (JFM) program of the 1990s mandated that women comprise 33% of the membership in the management committees.
- Today, there is a growing emphasis on "mainstreaming" women's role in the planning, implementing, and monitoring of all sustainable development and environmental management programmes.

What measures could help enhance the role of women? Improving access to education: By increasing access to quality education for girls, as well as education and training programs that help women to develop the skills they need to participate in the workforce.

Providing support services: Support services such as affordable childcare, healthcare, and transportation can help women to balance the demands of work and family life. Encouraging women's participation in leadership roles: Initiatives to promote women's leadership in politics, business, and other fields, as well as mentoring and networking programs that help women to develop the skills and connections they need to succeed. Addressing discrimination and bias: This includes efforts to combat discrimination and bias in the workplace, as well as in other areas of life. Encouraging community participation: Encouraging community participation and creating an enabling environment for women to take on leadership roles through creating platforms for dialogue, capacity-building, and networking.

Trends To Watch Out For If You're Getting Married This Spring-Summer Wedding Season

As winter gradually fades and the days grow longer and warmer, we're also approaching the much-anticipated spring-summer wedding season. As couples prepare to tie the knot, here are some trends that we predict will dominate the upcoming wedding season.

Hometown weddings: It seems the destination wedding trend has reached a saturation point, and couples are now opting to return to their roots.



More and more are choosing to marry in their ancestral homes, as it provides a deeper connection to their heritage. The charm of being surrounded by loved ones in a familiar setting has become irresistible. In recent years, we've seen stars like Sonakshi Sinha-Zaheer Iqbal, Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor, Athiya Shetty-KL Rahul, Yami Gautam-Aditya Dhar, Farhan Akhtar-Shivani Dandekar, and Sonam Kapoor-Anand Ahuja all tie the knot in their residences, farmhouses, or ancestral homes. A prime example was Anant Ambani's pre-wedding festivities, which took place at his ancestral home in Jamnagar — a perfect blend of nostalgia and intimacy



Dramatic draping as decor: Drapes are making a bold statement in wedding decor this year. Whether cascading from ceilings, adorning walls, or accentuating tabletops, draping creates a warm, romantic atmosphere that sets the tone for the celebration. It's expected to replace the classic pipe-and-drape setup, pairing beautifully with both pastel and bright floral arrangements, adding an extra touch of luxury to the venue



Invites with gifts: A new trend is emerging: sending gifts with invites. It's a thoughtful and personal touch that allows couples to engage their guests from the moment the invite is received, tying the gift to the wedding theme for a memorable and cohesive experience.

BRIDAL FASHION

When it comes to bridal wear, we're seeing a continued love for simple silhouettes with bold statement features. Pastels, timeless reds, and contemporary innovations will continue to dominate the fashion scene, seamlessly blending tradition with modernity.

Calcutta-based designer Abhishek Dutta shared, "Pastel tones will be huge this spring — brides are opting for colours like ivory, off-white, teal, and coral peach. When it comes to silhouettes, pre-stitched saris, sari gowns, and corset dresses will remain popular for summer weddings. On the wedding day, lighter tones, minimal embroidery, and tone-on-tone textures are the way to go. Embroidery is shifting towards more delicate threadwork, sequins, and light fabrics like nets and georgettes. Fusion wear is also gaining popularity — think corsets paired with lehngas, dupattas, and capes. And red, of course, will always have a place in Indian weddings — it's timeless.



The classic red: While pastels have dominated recent wedding seasons, we are witnessing a comeback of red in its most minimalist forms. B-Town divas have embraced this bold yet timeless colour, often pairing it with simple, delicate red blouses for an elegant take on the classic wedding hue. Shades like maroon, oxblood, and subtle variations of red are expected to continue to make a strong appearance in the 2025 wedding season

Lighter fabrics: Weddings are about opulence, and for many brides, pure silk adorned with intricate designs and precious stones will remain the fabric of choice. However, with sustainability now taking center stage, eco-friendly fabrics like organic cotton, silk, and upcycled materials will gain prominence. Lighter fabrics like net, organza, and tulle are also making waves, offering a modern twist on traditional bridal wear.



Florals and intricate motifs: Florals and intricate motifs are timeless, exuding femininity and romance. These designs will continue to be the preferred choice for brides, defining the elegance of their wedding ensembles. Expect to see delicate flower patterns that reflect both tradition and modernity, adding a touch of femininity to every outfit

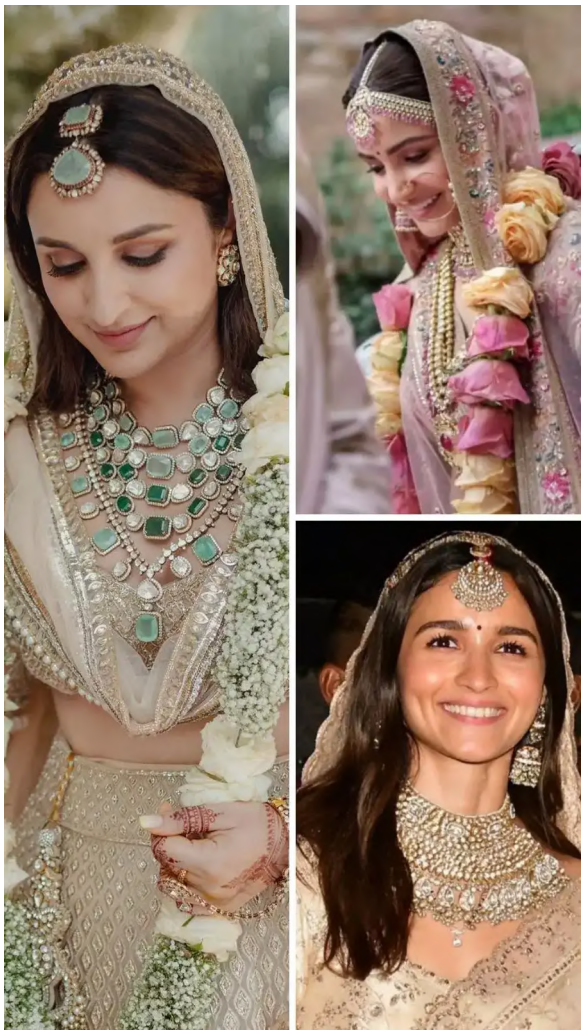
Merging tradition with contemporary charm: Modern bridal fashion will continue to blend traditional aesthetics with contemporary flair. Pastel colour palettes, including shades like powder blue, mint green, lavender, soft pink, beige, and peach, will remain in high demand for brides seeking understated elegance. These soft hues are perfect for those who appreciate a timeless, yet fresh, bridal look.



Metallic accents & 3D embroidery: Metallic accents and 3D embroidery are expected to rule the wedding fashion scene. These embellishments add character and depth to bridal ensembles, creating a stunning, textured effect. Tone-on-tone beaded embroidery will also be popular, reminiscent of the mesmerising red lehnga worn by Priyanka Chopra Jonas for her wedding with Nick Jonas, designed by Sabyasachi.

Bold minimalism: For brides who favour simplicity with impact, bold minimalism is the way to go. Monotone wedding ensembles in rich, striking colours like emerald green, burgundy, sapphire blue, and ruby red are expected to dominate the bridal scene, offering a powerful yet elegant statement.

Silhouettes: While vibrant Lehngas and heavily embellished saris will continue to be the go-to for many brides, fusion wear is making its mark. Think pearl veils, capes with lehngas, and wedding trains inspired by white weddings, adding a contemporary twist to traditional attire. Unconventional styles, such as anarkali lehngas, asymmetrical cuts, and mermaid cuts will also become a part of wedding day fashion. Remember Janhvi Kapoor's custom-made mermaid lehnga by Anamika Khanna at Anant Ambani's wedding — a perfect example of experimental bridal wear.



Spring Weddings Ideas and Things to Keep in Mind
In India, spring is a wonderful time of year for weddings because of the blooming flowers, nice weather, and brilliant colours. There are countless ways to experiment with light, colour, and texture at a spring wedding to highlight the inherent beauty of the season. Here are some creative ideas and crucial factors to make your spring wedding unforgettable, whether you're organising an inside ceremony with seasonal elements or an outside garden party.

1. Adopt Bright and New Colour Schemes
Since spring is a time for new beginnings, incorporate this into the colour scheme of your wedding. Pastel colours including blush pink, lavender, peach, mint green, and powder blue are popular selections. These hues not only fit well with the season, but they also make a stunning background for traditional Indian clothing in deep shades of gold, maroon, and red.

Try combining pastels with richer hues, such as blush and emerald green or peach and royal blue,


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for a dramatic contrast if you're trying for a more contemporary style

Twinkling fairy lights, chandeliers and candles create a soft, warm glow. Consider fireplaces or faux fireplaces if your venue allows; they add to the charm and keep guests cozy.

2. Floral Decor to Capture Spring's Essence
Fresh flowers are the epitome of spring, and there are many different types of flowers available. For an authentic ambiance, you can incorporate seasonal indigenous flowers like lotus, jasmine, marigold, and mogra. Combine them with hydrangeas, roses, or lilies to make stunning floral backgrounds, centerpieces, and mandap décor. For both indoor and outdoor weddings, think of incorporating floral chandeliers or tiny hanging blooms into suspended arrangements to create a magical atmosphere.

3. Light and Airy Wedding Attire
The sunny, pleasant springtime weather allows brides and grooms to choose more comfortable yet stylish, lighter fabrics. Organza, georgette, and chiffon are lovely options for brides' lehengas and sarees; they provide a flowing, dreamy style that's ideal for the occasion. Lighter colors and floral prints add a delicate touch to bridal wear and go beautifully with spring decor. Grooms can choose lighter shades like pastels or earthy tones for their sherwanis or bandhgalas, which pair well with floral or paisley motifs.

4. Keep Guests Cool and Comfortable
Indian marriages sometimes take place throughout the day, with ceremonies lasting hours, despite the generally pleasant spring weather. Set up hydration stations with flavored water and refreshing beverages, outside fans, and seating that is covered to keep your guests comfortable. Aam panna, coconut water, and fresh juices are excellent seasonal options and can be refreshing. For outdoor events, think about supplying hand fans or parasols in matching colours as an extra considerate touch.



5. Playful Guest Activities
Spring weddings can be the perfect time to host outdoor activities that add a fun element for your guests. Set up photo booths with floral frames and props, or consider arranging a henna station where guests can get small mehndi designs. You can even organize a flower shower for the newlyweds, a traditional yet whimsical addition that guests will enjoy. If you're hosting a multi-day event, consider adding a morning yoga or wellness session that allows guests to enjoy the fresh spring air.

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6. Seasonal and Fresh Food Menu

Spring brings a bounty of fresh, seasonal ingredients perfect for a vibrant and flavorful wedding menu. Include fresh salads, chaats, and refreshing fruit platters that highlight the season's produce. For main courses, lighter curries and grilled options go well with the spring vibe. Desserts like kulfi, fruit sorbets, and rasmalai are refreshing choices that won't feel too heavy in the warm weather. A spring-inspired beverage counter with options like mango lassi, shikanji, or buttermilk can add a refreshing twist and keep guests cool.

7. Think About the Spring Season's Unpredictable Weather

While spring is generally pleasant, the weather can occasionally be unpredictable. For outdoor weddings, consider tenting or gazebo arrangements as a backup in case of unexpected rain or temperature changes. Work with your decorator to incorporate transparent or light-colored coverings that allow natural light in while protecting from any sudden weather changes. Also, keep a few indoor areas ready as a fallback option, especially for the main ceremonies or important photo sessions.

8. Choose a Spring-Appropriate Wedding Invitation

Set the tone for your spring wedding with an invitation that hints at the seasonal beauty to come. Opt for floral or botanical designs that match your wedding theme, or consider eco-friendly invitations made from seed paper, which guests can plant afterward. This not only reflects the spring theme but also adds an element of sustainability to your wedding.

For a spring wedding that fully captures the beauty of the season, The Tamarind Tree offers an enchanting venue with lush gardens, serene water features, and timeless architecture.

Nestled in the heart of Bengaluru, The Tamarind Tree provides the perfect blend of elegance and tradition, creating a scenic backdrop for outdoor celebrations. With the versatile spaces that the space has to offer, you can celebrate an unforgettable spring wedding.




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6 Food Trends Fashion Needs To Know About In 2025

For many consumers, food is an important luxury. From functional feasting to 'hot girl pickles', here are the food trends luxury brands can tap into.

In 2025, the way to consumers' hearts may very well be through their stomachs. From Chopova Lowena's viral mayonnaise It-bag to glazed donut skin, Nara Smith's "cooked from scratch" Marc Jacobs tote to the Loewe tomato — the fashion and beauty industries have never been hungrier for food.

This is especially true of Gen Z, who've been swapping high-ticket purchases for daily $20 Erewhon smoothies and $4 Liquid Death canned water, as they aim to elevate the everyday in a challenging socioeconomic environment.

As the influence of fleeting micro-trends wanes, the focus has shifted from individual products to holistic lifestyles and the cohesive aesthetic a person embodies in real life. As a result, trends are no longer confined to individual categories; instead, aesthetics now cross-pollinate across fashion, homeware, beauty and food. And in 2025, understanding these food trends won't just be about what's on the menu — it will be key to unlocking deeper insights into consumer desires.

"Gen Z is craving sensory-based experiences — it's not just about how something looks, but also how it tastes and feels," says Sydney Stanback, head of global trends and insights at Pinterest, which features food trends alongside fashion, beauty and homeware in its annual Pinterest Predicts report. Digitally savvy and endlessly curious, Gen Z is diving deeper into trends that older generations may have overlooked, exploring cross-category themes like Charli XCX's "Brat summer" or "quiet luxury" on Pinterest, TikTok or Instagram, which encompass every facet of a person's lifestyle, including what they eat.

Consider last year's 'tomato girl summer', a sartorial embodiment of la dolce vita lifestyle. "The Mediterranean appealed not just for the delicious food, but also for the kind of people we would get to be while on vacation there, including the clothes we wear and the way we do our makeup, and even what it might smell like," says Melanie Bartelme, associate director of food and drink at market research firm Mintel. For Bartelme, these multisensory trends are so important because they offer an "easy way to get us out of our routines and let us daydream without doing anything more than ordering an Aperol spritz, or putting on a striped dress and a hat".





From 'functional feasting' to 'chaos cakes' and the rise of food as a third space, Gen Z are consuming these trends — literally and figuratively — and transforming them into a core part of their identity. Brands that position themselves at the heart of this cultural shift are set to win big.

Functional feasting

In an era where weight loss drugs like Ozempic dominate cultural conversations, it seems paradoxical that food has become one of the ultimate luxuries. This shift underscores how our relationship with food has been reshaped entirely — not merely as sustenance, but as a tool for optimisation and selfcare.

"This stems from consumers feeling that the world is out of control," says Matthew Barry, insight manager for food and beverages at research company Euromonitor. "If the world is becoming more chaotic and you can't trust the people in charge, what do you do? Focus on what you can control; and don't just control, but optimise.

"Maybe you can't solve the world's problems, but you can confront them with more energy, a stronger immune system and better sleep habits."

Supplements are booming, but functional food and drink is also on the rise. A branded Erewhon smoothie has become the epitome of celebrity prestige, encapsulated by Hailey Bieber's "strawberry glaze skin" smoothie. Packed with collagen, sea moss and hyaluronic acid, the $20 concoction is marketed as giving the skin a plump, dewy glow. On the high street, British food and fashion retailer Marks & Spencer just released a smoothie line for 2025, with drinks labelled "Revitalise" or "Brain Food" underlining functional feasting's mass appeal. "The ultimate status symbol today is not having the nicest car or handbag, but having a 'biological age' well below that of your literal one," adds Euromonitor's Barry on the phenomenon.

However, Mintel's Bartelme warns that companies run the risk of isolating consumers by going too overboard on labelling. "A decade ago, everything was labelled as gluten-free, including bottled water. That was silly and unnecessary," she says. That's not to say it's unimportant for consumers to understand what's in their food. Rather, when companies label products as being suitable for every currently trending eating pattern, they run the risk of turning off consumers who are not interested in them, she says. "There's a risk that labelling something as suitable for [weight loss drug] GLP-1 could make some consumers wonder if that food is not going to be tasty or feel like 'diet' food," she offers as an example.

Redefining Comfort Food

Even in the age of Ozempic, food remains an unparalleled source of comfort. While wellness and optimisation dominate conversations, the emotional and sensory role of food in our lives cannot be overlooked.

"As a society, we are tired, anxious, burnt out. One way that we've seen consumers assuage some of their life pressure is by relaxing their expectations about what food has to be," says Bartelme. Snacking throughout the day instead of sticking to rigid meal schedules has become normalised. Pairings that once seemed unconventional — like McDonald's promoting iced coffee and fries as a snack — are now embraced as indulgences. Similarly, concepts like girl dinner (a TikTok term referring to a casual, unstructured meal made up of snack-like or mismatched foods for dinner) showcase how minimal-effort meals can bring joy and comfort without judgment, she says.

It's also why we've seen a rise of "unserious" food and drink, says Jennifer Creevy, director of food and drink at trend forecaster WGSN. "This reflects a need for irreverence, silliness and fun to counterbalance the anxiety and stress of the polycrisis," she explains. "For food and drink, this means leaning into comfort, nostalgia and playfulness. Think playful textures, bold colours, unusual formats and experimental fusions designed to let people fully enjoy the moment."



Desserts and drinks have become another key arena for this kind of experimentation. "One standout trend is 'chaos cakes', where perfectionism is thrown out the window," says Stanback, referring to the decorating of cakes in chaotic, wacky and expressive ways that focus on fun over pristine design. Another, she adds, is 'surreal soirées', which revolves around maximalist, creative tablescaping. Pinterest found that searches for "surrealist tablescapes" are up 55 per cent in the last year, as well as the "Salvador Dali aesthetic" (+40 per cent) and "cake bouquet flowers" (+30 per cent), floral arrangements that look like cake.

"Instead of spending money on traditional decorations like flowers, people are opting for edible decor, such as baguette bouquets

or strawberry centrepieces that double as part of the meal," says Stanback. "We've also seen collaborations between chefs and fashion brands highlighting this trend by creating experiential events that merge food with fashion," she adds, referencing Eckhaus Latta's surprise Spring/ Summer 2025 show hosted during an elaborate dinner party.

Creevy points out that the surrealist trend also creates opportunities for fashion brands to deliver much-needed joy through unexpected product collaborations, as well as creative culinary displays at events. "Imagine croissant handbags, sausage roll earrings or pickle shoes. These whimsical designs tap into the same need for levity and delight," she says. Fashion is already trialling the playbook, with the Chopova Lowena's Hellman mayonnaise bag, Kate Spade's Heinz ketchup collection and Kate Barton's goldfish snack bag each being huge hits last year.

Sober-Curious Gen Z Are Revolutionising The Beverage Industry

According to research by Mintel, around a third of people aged between 18 and 24 do not drink alcohol at all, while those who do, treat it as a once-in-a-while indulgence. Instead, they are opting for a growing array of non-alcoholic beverages.

"Soda floats are back, and younger generations, particularly Gen Z, are putting a modern twist on this old-school favourite," says Stanback. This so-called 'rebel floats' revival is likely driven by Gen Z's preference for non-alcoholic options as well as their love for nostalgia, she continues.

Water, too, has evolved from a simple necessity to a premium offering, with the rise of functional waters infused with vitamins, minerals and adaptogens turning hydration into a status symbol. On TikTok, #WaterTok has been tagged in over 128,000 videos of creative water concoctions, dubbed "sexy water" by content creator Kelly Grace Mae.

As a result, according to statistical platform Precedence Research, the electrolyte drinks market is projected to be worth around $59 billion by 2030, growing at 5.9 per cent each year, with cult California water brand Liquid Death introducing the Death Dust electrolyte mix in February in 2024. Celebrated for its "spunky rebrand of water", with a "murder your thirst" slogan and collaborations with Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker among others, Liquid Death was valued at $1.4 billion in 2024, which is double that of 2022.

Hypebeast Grocers And Status Snacks

In any major city at any given time, you'll find queues snaking around the block for the latest eatery that's gone viral on TikTok. These culinary hotspots have evolved into cultural status symbols much like streetwear — a plate of food can now hold as much clout as a limited-edition sneaker drop.

Take bakeries such as L'Appartement 4F in New York or Forno in London, which are leveraging the drop-style business model popularised by brands like Supreme to create buzz-worthy offerings that entice customers to line up for hours in the hopes of snagging one of their sought-after pastries. These "hype bakes", as coined by The Future Laboratory, combine the allure of exclusivity with the communal joy of food.

They're not the only ones appealing to those seeking sustenance with a side of social cachet. In New York, "hypebeast grocers", as per food substack Snaxshot, innovative grocery concepts like Pop Up Grocer and Happier Grocery (which is stocked at The Row's Amagansett outpost on Main Street) are reimagining corner stores and bodegas as destinations for curated, high-quality food items in a bid to become "the local Erewhon".

"Food lore is a social currency. Niche communities are propelling local products and places to cult status and cultivating food subcultures where the barrier to entry is not finance, but knowledge," says The Future Laboratory in its latest Food and Drink Futures report.

Luxury fashion is already tapping in. Held in East Hampton, retailer Mytheresa partnered with home and garden brand Flamingo Estate on a 'Inconvenience Store' pop-up last July, featuring Flamingo produce such as olive oils, spices and sorbet alongside Mytheresa's curation of luxury clothes, bags and shoes.



"The people that were buying our vegetables, that had Flamingo Estate products in their kitchen and bathroom, had Mytheresa products in their wardrobes," Flamingo Estate founder Richard Christiansen told Vogue Business on the partnership.

According to market research and consulting firm CMR, the global fermented food and beverage market was valued at over $566 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.2 per cent through 2030, reflecting its surging popularity among health-conscious consumers.

The trend's influence is seeping into fashion as well. For instance, Loewe's SS24 'Natural Fake' collection featured garments inspired by the imperfect, organic textures reminiscent of fermentation processes, highlighting the aesthetic crossover.



The Year Of The Pickle And The Cherry

Pickles and cherries are set to dominate in 2025, not just as flavours but as fully fledged cultural aesthetics.

"The ingredient of the year appears to be pickles, inspiring everything from pickle de gallo to pickle margaritas," says Pinterest's Stanback. She references Good Girl Snacks, which has jumped onto the internet's pickle obsession with its Hot Girl Pickles (a riff on the internet's 'hot girl walk') to viral success.

"What's fascinating is how this trend goes beyond the flavour itself. Consumers are embracing the green hue associated with pickles as part of their aesthetic, blending bold, adventurous flavours with visual identity," continues Stanback. The trend has celebrity backing: Bella Hadid's pickle-infused cocktail aligns perfectly with the emerging pickle-fix craze, while Dua Lipa's viral concoction of Diet Coke, jalapeños and pickles underscores this appetite for culinary experimentation.

Cherry-coded aesthetics are also on the rise, with searches up for "cherry vibe" (+325 per cent), "cherry bedroom" (+100 per cent), "cherry car" (+270 per cent), "cherry martini" (+80 per cent) and "dark cherry red" (+235 per cent) on Pinterest since this time last year. "Across categories, we've identified about 100 search terms that qualify for this trend," says Stanback.

With these food-adjacent themes, there's multiple ways for brands to tap in, from events to campaigns to product design. "Food and fashion collaborations thrive on multisensory storytelling that merges taste, touch and visual appeal," says Riani Kenyon, anthropologist and behavioural analyst at consumer insights agency Canvas8. "This convergence allows brands to deepen emotional engagement by creating memorable and novel experiences."

Dunkin' Donuts-themed makeup by Elf, which sold out swiftly, showcases how humour and cultural aesthetics resonate deeply with younger audiences. "Beyond aesthetic synergy, food-inspired fashion appeals to a sense of nostalgia, humour and whimsy that Gen Z finds particularly engaging," Kenyon adds, highlighting accessories like Oscar Mayer's bacon-scented shoelaces or Mociun's radish-inspired jewellery, which were particularly popular last year.

So whether it's cherry-themed apparel, pickle-green beauty collections, introducing a health-focused supplement line, or even immersive experiential events with surreal, outlandish tablescaping, food trends offer endless potential for brands from all categories to engage consumers in new, imaginative ways.

Empowering Women, Elevating India

As India sets its sights on becoming a 'developed' nation by 2047, empowering women lies at the heart of this challenge. Women empowerment and socio-economic development go hand in hand, as development alone cannot address gender inequalities. Amartya Sen coined the term "missing women" to highlight ongoing gender disparities globally.

With women lagging behind on several parameters of well-being, India must adopt key policies to propel the country towards gender parity in socio-economic outcomes.

What are the Key Provisions in Place for Women's Socio-economic Empowerment?

- Constitutional Measures:

- Article 14: Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Article 15(3): Allows the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- Article 16: Provides equal opportunities in matters of public employment.
- Article 39(d): Calls for equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- Article 42: Directs the State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

- Government Initiatives:

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana: Provides access to affordable credit for women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Focuses on generating awareness and improving women's welfare through education.
- Mahila E-Haat: An online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
- **Mahila Shakti Kendra:** Facilitates empowerment programs and resources at the village level for skill development and entrepreneurship.
- **Working Women Hostel:** Supports safe and affordable accommodation for working women in urban areas.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** It ensures housing under women's names.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017:** Increased paid maternity leave to 26 weeks and mandated crèche facilities.



- International Conventions/ Agreements:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Adopted by the UN in 1979, calls for ending discrimination and ensuring equal rights for women.
  - ◊ It was signed by India in 1980 and was ratified in 1993.
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Adopted at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women, it laid out agenda areas for women's empowerment including economic participation (India is a part of it).

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including through economic empowerment measures by 2030.

What are the Key Factors Hindering Women's Socio-economic Growth in India?

- Entrenched Social Norms and Patriarchal Mindsets: Deeply ingrained social norms and patriarchal attitudes often restrict women's mobility, education, and economic opportunities.

- The preference for sons and discrimination against daughters persists in many parts of the country.
- Example: Son meta-preference leading to gender-biased sex selection has resulted in skewed sex ratios in states like Haryana, Punjab, etc.

- Low Labor Force Participation: India's female labor force participation rate is quite low at around 37% as compared to the global average of 47% (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23).

- Also, India has a lower proportion of employed individuals in salaried work compared to China and Bangladesh.
- The shift away from agriculture and the prevalence of informal labor have disproportionately impacted women, with many rural women working in the informal sector.

- Disproportionate Share of Unpaid Care Work: Indian women bear a disproportionately higher burden of unpaid domestic and care work relative to men. This restricts their time available for education, skills development, and paid economic activities. Women spend nearly three times (2.8) as much of their day on unpaid care work as men (UN Women).

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- **Gender Pay Gaps:** There exist significant gender pay gaps across various sectors and occupations in India.
  - Women often experience discrimination in hiring, promotions (glass ceiling and glass clip), and wages compared to their male counterparts.
  - In World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023, India ranks 127 out of 146 countries and has closed 64.3% of the overall gender gap.
    - ◊ However, in economic participation and opportunity, the country has only achieved 36.7% parity.

- **Lack of Property Ownership and Financial Inclusion:** Despite laws granting equal inheritance rights, only about 20% of women own land or property in India. Limited asset ownership restricts women's economic bargaining power and access to credit.
  - National Family Health Survey 2019-21 data shows a higher percentage of men owning property compared to women.
    - ◊ Specifically, 42.3% of women and 62.5% of men own a house, while ownership of land, either solely or jointly, stands at 31.7% for women and 43.9% for men.

- **Exposure to Violence:** The high prevalence of different forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, etc. impedes their freedom of movement and ability to participate safely in economic spheres.
  - Over 28,000 complaints of crimes against women received in 2023 (National Commission for Women (NCW).
  - 50% of women suicide deaths were of housewives in 2021 (National Crime Records Bureau)

- **Limited Education:** As per the National Family Health Survey 2019-21, the overall female literacy rate is 71.5%, significantly lower than the male literacy rate of 84.7%.
  - At the elementary school level, the gender parity index is close to 1, meaning equal enrollment of girls and boys. However, it declines at higher education levels.

- **Limited Political Participation:** Women's representation in Parliament is low - only 14.4% in the Lok Sabha and 13% in the Rajya Sabha.
  - While the Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam 2023 has been passed providing 33% reservation to women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, its implementation is still pending.

What Measures can be Adopted to Promote Socio-economic Empowerment Among Women?

- **Increasing Women's Labor Force Participation: Raising** women's labor force participation (LFP) rate from the current around 25% to 50% could bring India closer to an 8% GDP growth rate. according to World Bank estimates.
  - ◊ The government should focus on expanding manufacturing capacity, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as readymade garments, footwear, and light manufacturing, where women form a large proportion of workers.
  - ◊ These labor-intensive sectors could be brought under the ambit of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to address cost disadvantages.
  - ◊ India can also learn from Iceland's Equal Pay Certification that mandates companies prove they don't discriminate
- **Improving Access to Skilling:** There is tremendous scope to raise the number of training institutes that cater exclusively to women from the current 17% of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
  - ◊ Career counseling, job placement cells embedded in training institutes, and harnessing alumni networks to activate women "role models" and mentors for female trainees may be effective tools to improve employment outcomes.
- **Enabling Women's Mobility in Urban Areas:** As India urbanizes at a rapid pace, cities must be planned with a gender lens to welcome, accommodate, and enable women's mobility.
  - ◊ With rapid demographic shifts and population aging, a high-quality, subsidized urban care infrastructure will not only release women from care work but also create new jobs for them in this sector.
- **Clean Energy to Fuel Dream Energy :** The government could provide cash rebates to consumers at the point of purchase of clean technology along with production incentives that create new jobs in the clean energy sector.
  - ◊ Adopting such measures could help reduce the significant time burden women face in activities like cooking with inefficient, polluting fuels and make them more focused towards their goals.
- **Developing Micro-credentialing Platforms:** Develop online platforms offering stackable micro-credentials focused on in-demand skills .
  - ◊ These bite-sized courses with the help of Generated AI can be completed flexibly, allowing women to gain relevant skills without disrupting childcare or work schedules.
- **Women-led Supply Chain Networks:** Create government-backed initiatives that connect women-led self-help groups (SHGs) directly to large corporations and government procurement programs.
  - ◊ This provides women with a stable market for their products and services, bypassing middlemen and increasing profit margins.
  - ◊ Women-led startups should also be encouraged. For example, Falguni Nayar, a self-made entrepreneur, who has transformed the Indian beauty market with the founding of Nykaa, the country's first online beauty e-marketplace.


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Liquorice Root for Period Relief: How This Herb Helps Ease Pain and How to Use It

Liquorice root is a promising natural remedy for managing period pain, offering relief through its anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and hormonal-balancing properties.



Mananging pain related to periods every month can be challenging task? From cramps that knock you off your feet to bloating and mood swings, it's a lot to handle. While many of us reach for painkillers, what if there was a natural remedy that could help ease the discomfort? That's where liquorice root comes in. This herb, known for its sweet taste and soothing properties, might just be the period relief hack you've been looking for. In this article, we explain how liquorice root can help make your period more manageable and ways to use it in your routine.

Liquorice root is derived from the plant Glycyrrhiza glabra, native to regions of Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. The key component in liquorice root is glycyrrhizin, a compound with anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and hormonal-regulating properties. These properties make it particularly effective in addressing menstrual cramps and other period-related discomforts.

How Liquorice Root Eases Menstrual Pain

1. Reduces Inflammation
Menstrual pain is often linked to inflammation caused by the release of prostaglandins—hormone-like compounds that trigger uterine contractions. Glycyrrhizin in liquorice root has potent anti-inflammatory effects, which can help reduce the intensity of these contractions and alleviate cramps.



A small study examined the effectiveness of liquorice root extract compared to ibuprofen for relieving menstrual cramps. The findings suggested that liquorice root, with its anti-inflammatory properties, could be a helpful option for easing period pain.

2. Acts as an Antispasmodic
Liquorice root helps relax the smooth muscles of the uterus, reducing spasms that lead to severe cramping. This antispasmodic action is especially beneficial for women experiencing debilitating pain during their periods.

3. Balances Hormones
Hormonal imbalances, such as elevated levels of estrogen or a lack of progesterone, can worsen period pain. Liquorice root is known for its phytoestrogenic properties, which help regulate hormone levels, promoting a more balanced menstrual cycle.

4. Soothes Digestive Discomfort
Bloating and digestive discomfort are common symptoms during menstruation.

Liquorice root supports digestive health by reducing gas and improving gut function, easing these additional period-related discomforts. A study involving 58 adults with GERD found that using liquorice root daily provided greater symptom relief over two years compared to commonly used antacids.

5. Supports Emotional Well-being
Periods can bring about mood swings and irritability due to hormonal fluctuations. Liquorice root contains adaptogenic properties, which help the body manage stress and regulate cortisol levels, promoting emotional stability during menstruation.

How to Use Liquorice Root for Period Relief
If you're considering liquorice root for managing menstrual pain, here are some effective ways to incorporate it into your routine:

Liquorice Root Tea
- **How to Make It:** Boil 1-2 teaspoons of dried liquorice root in a cup of water for 5-7 minutes. Strain and enjoy warm.

When to Take It: Drink 1-2 cups a day during your menstrual cycle to help alleviate cramps and discomfort. **Liquorice Root Powder**
- **How to Use:** Mix ½ teaspoon of liquorice root powder with warm water or add it to your smoothies.
- **Dosage:** Limit consumption to once a day during your period to avoid overuse.

Liquorice Root Supplements
- **How to Use: Capsules or tablets are available as an alternative for those who prefer convenience.**
- **Dosage:** Follow the manufacturer's guidelines or consult a healthcare professional to determine the appropriate dosage.

Topical Application
- **How to Use:** Mix liquorice root powder with carrier oil to create a paste. Apply it to your lower abdomen for a soothing effect.

Licorice Root for PMS & Periods After 40
Periods after 40 can be erratic, with an uptick in PMS symptoms. Thankfully, licorice root can help balance hormones and reduce unpleasant period symptoms.

Licorice Root for a Less Painful (and Plant-Powered) Period
Our relationship to our periods often shifts over our lifetimes, with lots of valid and varying ways to feel about them. There's the early embarrassment of "Aunt Flo" arriving during gym class. Then the times we practically prayed for it to come (and on time, please!) after a sexual encounter.

Maybe you've crossed your fingers for it to stay away while hoping for a pregnancy. Now with perimenopause, many of us don't know how to feel about or what to expect from our newly erratic periods.

However you feel about your period, the time leading up to its inevitable conclusion does not have to be painful or unnecessarily wild. That's why we included licorice root in our 40+ Period Support, one of our supplements to balance hormones after 40.

Why We Love Licorice Root
- It's a phytoestrogenic super star. It's all about the hormone balance, babe. Licorice root has natural compounds that mimic estrogen, leading to better hormone balance for women over 40.
- Licorice root's multifaceted approach to period care makes it a perfect part of our 40+ Period Support supplement. Curious about how this plant soothes period cramps, reduces period diarrhea and improves cycle regularity? Read on!

KEY BENEFITS

Hormone Balance - Hormone balance for women over 40 is absolutely crucial, and licorice root can help. Most uncomfortable effects of perimenopause are due to shifting estrogen, progesterone and testosterone levels. Licorice root's phytoestrogens react with estrogen receptors and reduce prostaglandins to restore hormonal equilibrium.





This can seriously improve quality of life in grown women without the risky side effects associated with pharmaceutical hormone replacement therapy.

Reduce Period Cramps - During your period, molecules called prostaglandins make your uterus contract and shed its lining. Unfortunately, too many prostaglandins can make your uterus contract more than necessary, causing painful menstrual cramps. Licorice root lowers prostaglandin production to ease period pain.

Eases Period - Related Diarrhea - Look. It's not glamorous, but we have to talk about period poop. As if causing cramps wasn't enough, elevated prostaglandins during your period are also responsible for period diarrhea. Thankfully, licorice root helps here.

Improves Menstrual Regularity - One cause of irregular periods is an imbalance of testosterone and estrogen. Not only does licorice root emulate estrogen, it also inhibits testosterone secretion. This balances those hormones for optimal menstrual regularity.

Note: Menstrual irregularity is part of perimenopause for most (if not all) women, but women with PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) can experience it during all life stages. There is lots of promising research about licorice root for PCOS, including studies indicating that it can reduce ovarian cyst growth.

Helps Fight Fatigue - Licorice root can ward off the midday slump by slowing the conversion of cortisol into cortisone. We know that cortisol has a bad rap as a stress hormone, but there's more to the story. Cortisol levels are naturally higher in the morning, which helps you feel awake. Throughout the day, cortisol converts into cortisone. For many people, this shift causes midday fatigue. Licorice root can inhibit the enzyme that makes this conversion happen so that your cortisol sticks around for longer, leading you to feel less sleepy.

Licorice root is an optimal herb for period wellness, especially during perimenopause. Check out our Wile 40+ Period Support supplement to reap the rewards for yourself.

Traditional Uses

Licorice root's history goes back at least to 2500 BCE, when ancient Assyrians wrote about it in their clay cuneiform tablets. Ancient Egyptians were also early adopters, with papyrus scrolls detailing its medicinal uses and its culinary power as a sweetener.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, licorice root is used for:

- Digestive support
- Reducing phlegm
- Cough
- Pain relief
- Complementing other herbs so that they work more efficiently in the body

Its uses in Ayurveda include:

- Adrenal support
- To reduce inflammation
- As a mild laxative

About Licorice:

Licorice plants are native to the Middle East and the land surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Technically a legume, it has branching green stems with fronds of green compound leaves and purple, pink or white flowers that slightly resemble clover flowers. The roots are fragrant and medicinal.

Licorice root's latin genus name is Glycyrrhiza, which translates literally to "sweet root." Not so incidentally, sweet root is one of this plant's common names. Makes sense for something that features so prominently in candy shops! If you're taking licorice root via herbal candies, just make sure they're made with the real thing. Anise tastes similar and is used as a licorice-like flavoring but doesn't have the same properties.

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Things to Know about Licorice Root:

While licorice root is safe for most people, it never hurts to be careful when adding a new supplement to your regimen. Talk to your doctor before use if you have a history of heart disease or high blood pressure. Licorice root may interact with some medications, so use caution if you take diuretics, steroids, or blood pressure or cholesterol medicine. Take care not to exceed the recommended dose of any licorice root supplements.

Licorice root is not safe for use during pregnancy and is discouraged during breastfeeding.

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At IKEA, we believe that everyone deserves to live in a home they love, without harming the planet. Our chairs are no exception. They're made from a variety of sustainable materials, including wood from sustainably managed forests, recycled plastic, and even leaves!

The Importance of Women's Wellness and How to Achieve It



Women's wellness is an important concern because even today, women face discrimination in social culture. According to the World Health Organization, over 800 women die every day in pregnancy and childbirth. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, women and girls encounter new health challenges and crises that disrupt their access to health and vital support services.

Wellness is subjective to each individual's life; it may be a satisfaction to their mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, social, and occupational dimensions. Women's wellness's vital target is to focus on those aspects concerning their well-being. In women's health, reproductive and hormonal problems, gastrointestinal stress, bone health, and urinary incontinence are some elements with disruptions.

Why Is Women's Wellness Important?

Women are more prone to ovarian cancer, breast cancer, heart diseases, depression, and anxiety, ranking the topmost in wellness and health issues for women. Women's health issues mentioned above are certain severe conditions that can considerably affect their quality of health and well-being. Diseases like ovarian and breast cancer are treatable at their early stages. Women should see a doctor if they encounter irregular bleedings, lumps in the breast, and severe abdominal pain. Studies suggest that women need annual check-ups to keep track of their health and wellness.

Women's Mental Health

Mental issues or disorders can affect according to gender. Women are more prone to depression and anxiety compared to men. They might experience symptoms of mental disorders during the perinatal time (from getting pregnant to a year after giving birth), hormone change, and menopause. Other mental disorders like bipolar and schizophrenia are similar among men and women. But still, women might experience these illnesses differently; specific symptoms may affect women more than men, and the disease's period will act according to the gender.

Women physical health

There are relatively few physical disorders unique to women that are more prevalent or severe. They need special prevention care or interventions as a prudent plan. The earliest physical disorder in a woman is when precocious puberty, to which there is an effective treatment newly developed. Disorders like bulimia (life-threatening eating disorder) and anorexia (abnormally low body weight) gradually increase among young women.

Reproductive concerns are a significant focus of women's wellness. The hundred-fold decline in maternal mortality related to pregnancy is one of this century's important public health achievements. The leading cause of death among middle-aged women is cancer. Due to the increase in smoking, breast cancer



is replaced by lung cancer among women. Avoiding smoking will be the most crucial part of improving health, irrespective of gender.

What are the signs of poor women's health?

In multiple instances, men and women can have typical symptoms of different disorders. Few symptoms won't impact health or well-being for an extended period, but some signs can worsen over time. The impact of specific symptoms can affect women more than men in the long run. Such symptoms cannot be unnoticed.

We strongly suggest you check with a doctor if you are going through any of the following:

- Constant sadness
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Change in eating habits
- Short of breath for no reason
- Irregular sleeping schedule
- Swollen neck
- Bleeding after menopause
- More than usual, hair lose
- Change in size/shape/color of a mole
- Lump in the breast
- Decline in energy
- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Excessive fear



- Social withdrawal or suicidal thoughts

What are the benefits of women's wellness?

People's brains tend to work like how Google does—it always wants to way the quickest way to your question. Wellness doesn't occur in a way where you can grab it in a short period. Good things take time—the process matters when you want to attain the wellness you require. You can't push back your days or your health.

Your fitness will stack up in your "someday" pile if you continue to do it. When you start trusting yourself and the process you make, your wellness isn't that far away. Following is the list of benefits of women's wellness:

- Prematurely death
- Reduces the risk of heart diseases
- Reduces the risk of diabetes
- Reduces the risk of certain cancers
- Decrease in depression and anxiety
- It helps to maintain healthy bones and muscles
- It helps in aging slowly
- Increases psychological wellness
- Controls gaining weight
- Lowers your stress

A guide to women's fitness

Moderate physical exercises—walking, using stairs by avoiding lifts, gardening, running errands, housework- can help you stay healthy and lower the risk of heart diseases. Then are classic aerobic activities—hiking, jogging, swimming, and using a jumping rope. Any physical activity for 30 minutes in a day can strengthen your heart.

It is suitable for older women to include stretching, strength training, and aerobics in their routine. But, it is recommendable that older women start slowly with their exercise or wellness journey. Stretching before involving in other activities can allow them to be flexible and reduces injuries. Regular aerobic can strengthen and improve their heart condition by increasing the ability to use oxygen without any consequences. Low-impact activities such as swimming, dancing, and walking can more likely give them body stress.

Every woman should take care of herself

When women take care of their health, they become their best friends. We need to accept that women have unique physical and psychological concerns as compared to men. Study says that women experience more stress and anxiety during work compared to men. We must ask, are we doing enough for women's health in the workplace? There is a lack of awareness in society about women's wellness programs.

Start your wellness journey NOW! You can't skip taking care of your health, and it should never go into your "someday" pile. Make it happen today, draw a plan, and get suggestions from experts or doctors. To give you a head start for the women to run the world, Optimists provides "Women's overall health test,".

A balanced and nutritious diet is a key part of both men and women's overall well-being. The basics of eating healthy are the same for all of us. Women, however, do have special nutrition needs that change during the different stages of their lives.

Eating healthy means "choosing different types of healthy food from all the food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and proteins) most of the time, in the correct amounts." At each meal, we should be filling our plates with all the food groups, with half of the plate consisting of fruits and vegetables.

There are five stages women should take into account when focusing on their nutritional needs: teen years, young adult, before and during pregnancy, during breastfeeding, and after menopause.

TEEN YEARS

During their teen years, girls need more calcium and Vitamin D. From the ages of 14-18, the focus should be on an increase in iron. Foods that are rich in iron include red meats, eggs, poultry, legumes, and dark leafy greens such as spinach and broccoli.

YOUNG ADULTS

As young adults, women are growing and developing and



should be seeing an increase in their calorie intake allotted for this. After the age of 25, a woman's resting metabolism will go down. Research indicates this happens for a few reasons, such as less activity, muscle loss, and the aging of our internal organs; which also makes this a great time to focus on finding and maintaining an active lifestyle, in tandem with good nutrition.

BEFORE AND DURING PREGNANCY

Before and during pregnancy, certain nutrients will be needed more than during other times of a woman's life to support their own health and the development of their baby. These nutrients include protein, calcium, iron, and folic acid. A balanced diet can help create a natural increase in calcium. The American Pregnancy Association lists the following food groups where calcium is prevalent: fruits and vegetables, dairy, fish, beans, and fortified foods.

WHILE BREASTFEEDING

When breastfeeding, a mother will need to continue to eat well and increase their water intake. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers tips on how to drink more water:

- Carry a water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day.
- Freeze some freezer-safe water bottles, and take one with you to have cold water all day.
- Choose water over sugary drinks.
- Opt for water when eating out.
- Serve water during meals.
- Add a wedge of lime or lemon to your water to improve the taste and help you drink more water than you usually do.

AFTER MENOPAUSE

After menopause, a woman's risk for diseases increases. What you eat can affect your risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and osteoporosis. This is a great time to talk to your doctor and find out if you need more calcium and vitamin D. While we all know that Vitamin D can be acquired from (safely!) getting some sunshine, there are also ways to increase your intake of Vitamin D through your diet. The government dietary guidelines show food sources such as: proteins, dairy, fortified soy alternatives, and other sources here.

No matter what stage of your life you're in – we are here for you. If you have questions about your nutrition needs consult your healthcare provider or schedule an appointment today.




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Effortless Elegance: Tips on Curating a Chic Lifestyle for Modern Women



In a world where trends come and go, developing a timeless, chic lifestyle for modern women is more than just following fashion fads—it's about embodying elegance, confidence, and intentionality in all aspects of life. Here's how you can cultivate a lifestyle for modern women that reflects both style and substance while staying effortlessly true to who you are.

1. Wardrobe Essentials: Less is More
A chic lifestyle starts with a well-curated wardrobe. Instead of chasing every trend, invest in timeless pieces that can be mixed and matched. Think of a classic trench coat, tailored blazers, a little black dress, and well-fitted denim. Neutral tones with pops of colour add depth to your outfits, while minimalistic accessories like dainty gold jewellery or a statement handbag tie everything together.

Expert Tip: Organize your closet by season, and donate what you no longer wear. It will make your mornings more streamlined and your outfits effortlessly polished.

2. Mindful Living: Quality Over Quantity
Chic living is synonymous with intentionality. From the beauty products you use to the furniture in your home, opt for quality over quantity. Curate spaces and routines that spark joy and reflect your personal style. This can mean selecting cruelty-free skincare products, opting for sustainable fashion brands, or even supporting local artisans.

3. The Art of Entertaining
Hosting with style is an essential part of chic living. Whether it's an intimate dinner party or a casual weekend brunch, thoughtful details make all the difference. Invest in timeless tableware, fresh flowers, and classic wine glasses to elevate your hosting game. When you entertain, create a warm and inviting atmosphere by choosing a neutral colour palette with soft lighting—candles are your best friend!

Expert Tip: Create a signature cocktail for your gatherings. It's a simple yet sophisticated touch that leaves a lasting impression.

4. Self-Care as a Ritual
A chic lifestyle is grounded in self-care, not as an indulgence but as a daily ritual. Whether it's a morning meditation routine, a skincare regimen, or a weekly digital detox, taking care of your mind and body is paramount. Remember, feeling good from the inside out enhances your outward glow and radiates confidence.

5. Travel with Intention
When travelling, go beyond tourist hotspots. Seek out hidden gems, immerse yourself in local cultures, and collect memories instead of souvenirs. A chic traveller moves with grace, packing light and embracing versatility. A cashmere scarf or a stylish hat can take you from sightseeing to a chic dinner effortlessly.

6. Living Sustainably
Sustainability is not just a trend but a lifestyle choice. Incorporate eco-conscious habits into your daily life by reducing waste, supporting slow fashion, and opting for reusable items. A chic life respects the environment, with sustainability seamlessly woven into everyday practices.

7. The Power of Personal Development
A true chic lifestyle for modern women is about continual growth. Read books that inspire, take classes that challenge, and seek out experiences that expand your horizons. Investing in yourself intellectually and emotionally is a chic choice, as it helps you become the best version of yourself.

Living a chic lifestyle isn't about perfection—it's about authenticity, grace, and making choices that align with your values. Whether it's your wardrobe, home, or travel destinations, embrace a life that's as stylish as it is meaningful.

Are you looking for a chic fashion style reference that reflects your style and stands out from the competition? This informative article is for you! Discover tips and tricks on how to mix and match clothing items, accessorize, and choose colors that align with your personality. Plus, learn about the importance of quality and sustainable fashion choices to appeal to modern consumers.

What is Casual Chic Style for a Woman?
Casual chic style for women effortlessly combines comfort with sophistication, creating a relaxed yet stylish appearance. This fashion approach integrates comfortable yet high quality fabrics and relaxed silhouettes with more refined pieces and accessories.



The key is to balance ease and elegance, resulting in a look that is both effortless and chic.

Moreover, casual chic style often includes versatile wardrobe staples like tailored blazers, well-fitted jeans, and classic tops. Accessories such as understated jewelry, stylish scarves, and quality handbags further elevate the ensemble, making it suitable for various occasions while maintaining a polished yet relaxed vibe.

Ultimate Ways to Create Chic Styles

Casual chic style bridges the gap between structured business attire and elegant evening wear by combining everyday basics with stylish accents. It involves pairing casual elements with chic accessories to elevate your daily clothes. Here are Masari's straightforward tips for mastering casual-chic style.

1. Understanding Your Personal Style

Before you can craft a chic and elegant fashion style that reflects your personality, you need to define what that is. Your personal style is the image you present to the world, and it should be consistent across all aspects of your life, including your fashion choices.

To define your stylish outfit, consider your values, interests, and personality traits. What sets you apart from others? What do you want people to think of when they think of you? Once you clearly understand your personal style, you can start to build a wardrobe that reflects it.

2. Mixing and Matching Clothing Items

Creating a chic fashion style is all about mixing and matching clothing items in unexpected ways. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Creating a Capsule Wardrobe

A capsule wardrobe is a collection of essential clothing items that can be mixed and matched to create a variety of outfits. To create a capsule wardrobe, start by choosing a few basic pieces, such as a white t-shirt, a pair of jeans, and a blazer. Then, add in a few statement pieces, such as a bold print skirt or a colorful scarf. With just a few key pieces, you can create a variety of stylish outfits.

Layering Clothing Items

Layering is a great way to add depth and interest to your outfits. Try layering a denim jacket over a dress or wearing a turtleneck under a sleeveless top. Don't be afraid to mix and match texture and patterns, either.

Playing with Textures and Patterns

Mixing textures and patterns is a great way to add visual interest to your outfits. Try pairing a chunky knit sweater with a leather pencil skirt or wearing a floral print blouse with a plaid skirt.

3. Accessorizing to Elevate Your Look

Accessories are the key to taking your chic fashion style to the next level. Here are a few tips for accessorizing like a pro:

Choosing the Right Accessories

When choosing accessories, consider the occasion and the outfit. A bold necklace can dress up a simple t-shirt and jeans, while a pair of hoop earrings can add a touch of glamor to a little black dress. Accessories are the finishing touches that elevate an outfit from ordinary to extraordinary, adding flair and personality.

When looking for and choosing the right accessories for your chic style, consider brands like John Hardy which is known for its Asian inspired designs and classical handmade jewelry techniques.

Layering Accessories
Layering accessories is a great way to add depth and interest to your look. Try stacking bracelets or wearing multiple necklaces at once. Just be sure to keep it balanced and clear.

Mixing and Matching Metals
Gone are the days when you had to stick to one metal color. Mixing and matching metals is a great way to add visual interest to your accessories. Try pairing a gold necklace with a silver bracelet or wearing a rose gold watch with a silver ring.

4. Choosing Colors That Complement Your Style
Color is a powerful tool when it comes to creating a chic fashion style. Here are a few tips for choosing colors that complement your style:

Understanding Color Theory
Color theory is the study of how colors interact with each other. By understanding color theory, you can create visually appealing and harmonious outfits. For example, complementary colors (colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel) make a bold and eye-catching look.

Choosing Colors that Align with Your Style Identity
When choosing colors for your outfits, consider your personal style. If you want to convey a sense of professionalism, stick to neutral colors like black, white, and gray. If you're going to appeal to a younger audience, consider incorporating bright colors and bold prints.

Incorporating Pops of Color
Even if you prefer a more neutral color palette, incorporating pops of color can add interest and depth to your outfits. Add a bright scarf or colorful shoes to an otherwise neutral outfit.

5. The Importance of Quality and Sustainable Fashion Choices
Finally, when crafting your chic fashion style, it's important to consider the quality and sustainability of your clothing choices. Here are a few reasons why:

Investing in Quality Pieces
Investing in quality pieces may cost more upfront but will save you money in the long run. High-quality clothing lasts longer and looks better than cheaply made clothing. Plus, you'll feel better knowing that you're supporting ethical and sustainable fashion practices.



Choosing Sustainable and Ethical Fashion Options

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. By choosing sustainable and ethical fashion options, you can help reduce the industry's environmental impact. Look for clothing made from sustainable materials, such as organic cotton or recycled polyester, and support brands that prioritize ethical labor practices.

The Benefits of a Sustainable Wardrobe
Creating a sustainable wardrobe has many benefits, including reducing environmental impact, supporting ethical labor practices, and saving money in the long run. Plus, by choosing high-quality, sustainable pieces, you'll create a chic fashion style that reflects your personal style and stands the test of time.

Crafting a chic fashion style that reflects your style is all about mixing and matching clothing items, accessorizing, choosing colors, and making sustainable fashion choices. By following these tips and tricks, you can create a stylish and sustainable wardrobe that reflects your unique personality and values.

Elevating your style to the next level requires a keen eye for quality and sustainability in fashion choices. By investing in timeless, high-quality pieces and embracing sustainable fashion practices, you contribute to a positive impact on the environment and create a wardrobe that withstands the test of time.

Elevate your look and make a statement with each carefully chosen piece.

How to Master Casual Chic Fashion Style: Your Ultimate Guide

When it comes to fashion, casual chic is the epitome of effortless elegance. It's about combining comfort and style, creating a look that effortlessly transitions from day to night. Whether you're heading to the office or meeting friends for a casual outing, mastering casual chic fashion style is a game-changer.

But how do you achieve this coveted style? In this ultimate guide, we'll walk you through the key elements of casual chic fashion and provide you with outfit ideas, style tips, and dos and don'ts to help you elevate your everyday look.

Understanding Casual Chic Fashion

Casual chic fashion is all about striking the perfect balance between casual and dressy elements. It's about mixing relaxed, comfortable pieces with more refined and polished items. The result? An effortlessly stylish ensemble that exudes confidence and sophistication.

The Key Elements of Casual Chic Fashion Style

Before we dive into outfit ideas and style tips, let's explore the key elements that define casual chic fashion style:

- **Quality fabrics:** Opt for high-quality fabrics that not only feel great but also elevate your look. Think silk, linen, cashmere, and premium denim.
- **Neutral color palette:** Stick to a neutral color palette, including shades of white, beige, black, gray, and navy. These colors are timeless and versatile, allowing you to mix and match effortlessly.
- **Tailored silhouettes:** Embrace tailored silhouettes that flatter your body shape. Whether it's a well-fitted blazer, a tailored pair of trousers, or a structured dress, the right fit is key to achieving casual chic.
- **Statement accessories:** Elevate your look with statement accessories that add a touch of personality. Think oversized sunglasses, a chunky necklace, or a statement handbag.
- **Effortless hairstyles and makeup:** Keep your hair and makeup simple and natural. Opt for loose waves, a messy bun, or a sleek ponytail. When it comes to makeup, focus on enhancing your natural features with a fresh-faced look.



Outfit Ideas for Casual Chic Fashion

Now that you know the key elements of casual chic fashion style, let's dive into some outfit ideas that you can easily recreate:

- **White button-down shirt and jeans:** This classic combination is a staple in every casual chic wardrobe. Pair a crisp white button-down shirt with your favorite jeans for a sophisticated yet laid-back look.
- **Black blazer and T-shirt dress:** Dress up a simple T-shirt dress with a tailored black blazer. Complete the look with ankle boots or white sneakers for a trendy touch.



- **Midi skirt and sweater:** Embrace feminine elegance with a midi skirt and a cozy sweater. Opt for a pleated skirt in a neutral color and pair it with a chunky knit sweater for a chic and cozy outfit.
- **Jumpsuit and heels:** Make a statement with a jumpsuit in a bold color or print. Pair it with heels and minimal accessories for a show-stopping look.
- **Denim jacket and culottes:** Achieve the perfect balance between casual and chic with a denim jacket and culottes. This combination is effortlessly cool and versatile.

Style Tips for Casual Chic Fashion

To help you master the art of casual chic fashion style, here are some style tips to keep in mind:

- **Focus on fit:** Pay attention to the fit of your clothing. Well-fitted pieces instantly elevate your look and create a polished appearance.
- **Layering is key:** Layering is a great way to add dimension and interest to your outfits. Experiment with layering a blazer over a blouse or a sweater over a dress.
- **Play with textures:** Mix different textures to add visual interest to your look. Pair a chunky knit sweater with a leather skirt or a silk blouse with distressed denim.
- **Accessorize thoughtfully:** Choose accessories that complement your outfit and enhance your personal style. Don't be afraid to make a statement with bold accessories.
- **Confidence is key:** The most important element of casual chic fashion style is confidence. Own your look and wear it with pride.

Casual chic fashion style is all about effortlessly combining comfort and style. By embracing quality fabrics, neutral colors, tailored silhouettes, statement accessories, and effortless hairstyles and makeup, you can master the art of casual chic fashion style. With the outfit ideas, style tips, and dos and don'ts provided in this ultimate guide, you'll be able to elevate your everyday look and exude confidence and sophistication. So go ahead, embrace casual chic fashion style and unleash your inner fashionista!

Chic is a fashion buzzword that is widely used, but what does chic style really mean? It's a term that can be associated with any genre of style. From boho to rocker, every style has its own interpretation of chic. Let's take a trip down history lane to kick off your women's guide to chic style.

The Origins of Chic Style

We start our chic journey in France. Ooh, la la. Established in 1600, the old French term chicanery was the first and original mention of chic. By definition, chicanery means legal quibbling and sophistry. In other words, it is used to mean arguing or raising objections about a trivial matter. While this has nothing to do with style, the Wikipedia entry describes that it's where the word chic originated, so it must be true, right? Perhaps more plausible, some link chic to a German word, schick, meaning skill or tact. Either way, you have a new fun, possibly true fact to impress all of your friends with at parties.

The definition and use of chic continued to evolve in France and England in the art and fashion scenes. By 1887, the word chic was being used in publications to describe just about anything. From clothing to architecture, everything was coming up chic.

Chic Fashion Makes it to America

In 1925, chic exploded across the pond onto the American fashion scene with the height of the jazz age. By 1954, chic was a frontrunner in the industry and would soon become the leading lady. Perhaps one of the chicest women of all time, Audrey Hepburn, ignited chic flames with her wardrobe in the movie Sabrina. Dressed by costume designer Edith Head, the fashions Hepburn adorned in the movie catapulted her to chic style icon status. The world continued to ride the chic wave and never looked back.



Overtime, the word chic evolved and was adopted across the world. Used to describe social events, individuals and modes and styles of dress, chic landed a spot in the english dictionary. Defined as smart elegance and sophistication, chic is used as a descriptor for an array of people, places and things.

Many attributes can be chic, but none are more popular than chic style. Whether in closets or on runways, chic style is supreme. It's time for a class in chic fashion style 101. Pay attention—there will be a quiz after. Obviously, we are totally kidding, but please do the chic thing and pay heed anyway.

What is Chic Style?

As you will soon find out, women's chic style comes in many variations. However, in its stripped-down fashion form, chic style contains clean lines, monochromatic notes and is steeped in neutral colors. Highlighted by a bold accessory, this looks consist of classic pieces with a twist that never go out of style.

Famed chic French fashion designer CoCo Chanel once said, "In order to be irreplaceable, one must be different." Chic style certainly accomplishes this by incorporating unique details like asymmetrical hems, boxy silhouettes, classy prints and slight embellishments. Chic fashion style is often marked by luxurious fabrics that elevate a woman's closet to new levels. They are lasting, classic and will be dependable staple pieces in your wardrobe for years to come.

Think of chic style as an uncomplicated look put together with little or no effort. Chic style is the result of a wardrobe consisting of pieces that mix and match together with ease and have individual interest. It is a simple voice with an extravagant exclamation point.

Now that we have a handle on chic style, let's talk about its dashing forms, starting with boho chic style.



Boho Chic Style

To understand boho chic style, we must again travel back to France. In the early 20th century, French Bohemians were travelers and artists from central Europe. Boho style was directly derived from the garments that bohemians wore while living their unique and artistic lifestyles. Flowing, effortless and free, the functional fashions for the bohemian culture became a desired style statement for the French masses.

Taking it one step further, boho chic style has more recent roots. While boho style was in the mix years prior, a more polished version of the trend emerged in late 2005. Knighted as boho chic, the trend consists of pieces that are more fitted, neutral and coordinated than boho alone. Still self-expressive, boho chic is far more curated and versatile, expanding the power of your wardrobe with each piece.

Casual Chic Style

Opposites really do attract with our next fashion player on the scene, casual chic style. Casual chic style is a variation that takes your comfortable pieces up a notch. Accelerate your chic status by pairing them with tailored pieces like a smart black blazer or pleated midi-skirt. You chic things up by mixing and matching your laidback options with your most polished pieces. Try pairing your cherished straight-leg jeans with a white tee, boyfriend blazer and a fresh pair of white sneakers.

Style your favorite pair of wide-leg pants from your closet with a neutral sequin top. Slip your feet into neutral slides, and you are ready for whatever the day brings your way.

Rocker Chic Style

Chic happens. Even to edgier styles like rocker. Rocker styles were first seen in the United States and later emerged in England. The style really had nothing to do with fashion and everything to do with protection. Motorcycles were far more economical than cars and everyone who rode needed a thick layer of armour. Enter the biker jacket. Over time, the jackets became a point of fashion as people added trinkets, zippers and studs to personalize them. Even the name rocker came straight from the motorcycle itself as there were rockers found in the 4-stroke engines of the motorcycle.

This necessary and functional clothing sparked an entire genre of rocker chic style that is worn to this day. Marked by leather, fringe and distressing, rocker chic styles add edge and a sexy silhouette to your wardrobe.

Chic Street Style

Chic street style is exactly how it sounds—a style that has evolved from the street rather than the runway. You will find this style while thumbing through your most-loved magazine and all around you when out and about. It's a reflection of what everyone is wearing, with individual interpretations that make every look unique.

Often retail pieces will be combined with designer items to create looks that are not only functional but fashionable. Infusing crisp chic lines and neutral colors into the clean streetwear ensembles is key. Due to the times, athleisure with both comfort and style in mind dominates streetwear. Pair a versatile jumpsuit with a utility-inspired open-front top for an instantly chic streetwear look.

Add a pair of trainers, and you are ready to hit the city streets in ultimate chic style.

Modern Chic Style

Colorblocking. Structured design. Fresh, solid color palettes. Much like modern architecture, modern fashion is inherently chic, innovative and an instant classic. Modern chic style can be seen on every runway and street. Elegant or casual and always in style.



Look for modern chic pieces that are already in your closet. From solid pencil skirts to crisp white button ups, pair your clean basic pieces for a powerful modern chic look that is perfect for almost any occasion. Don't have any modern pieces in your wardrobe? Check out a thrift store for chic eco-friendly clothing that is looking for a new home. Create a strong ensemble with thrifted pieces that will help promote your fashion sense and the planet.

French Chic Style

It's only fitting that we wrap up your woman's guide to chic style where it all began—France. Perhaps the most chic of all of the styles, French chic style is wrapped in beautiful simplicity. Basics with unique details like balloon sleeves and pleats make every day dressing an easy task. This style creates a wardrobe full of effortless pieces you can mix and match to create numerous fresh looks.

French chic style is never overdone and relies heavily on statement pieces that take the looks to the next level. From vibrant color to diligent details, French chic styles always have an unexpected pop that sets them apart from the rest. The true definition of très chic.

Inspired to add new chic styles to your closet? Take your style quiz, order a Fix and ask your stylist for chic items that fit your style preferences. Remember, you're never required to schedule more than one Fix a time and shipping and returns are always free.


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DIY Summer Skincare Recipes: Homemade Treatments for Healthy Skin



Just like you switch from piping hot cappuccinos to iced lattes and knitwears to linens with the onset of the summer, your summer skincare routine needs a revision too. Your skincare during summer must be sun-proof, appropriately prepared to beat the heat. With the sun shining brighter and humidity levels soaring, your skin requires special attention to combat the effects of heat, sweat, and UV radiation. Whether you're following a summer skincare regimen with trusted skincare products or experimenting with DIY skincare recipes, we've got you covered with the best tips for achieving radiant, glowing skin this sunny season.

SKINCARE ROUTINE FOR SUMMER: REVISITING THE BASICS

For most parts in India, summers are accompanied by humidity, which is primarily responsible for your skin's greasy countenance, sweat, stickiness, and acne breakouts. A good skincare routine for summer not only consists of a high broad spectrum sunscreen, it also incorporates gentle but effective cleansers and lightweight, nourishing formulas. Scroll on to dive deeper into our guide for summer skincare.

Three Magic Words: Hydrate, Moisturise, Nourish

Whether you have dry, oily or combination skin type, you cannot drop the moisturisation step from the roster. Your skin needs to relish the goodness of nourishing ingredients all year long. The key is to find the right product that works for your skin. In summers, you most likely don't need a thick layer of cream or a rich serum or oil, unlike the winter season. Opt for lightweight gel-based blends or milky emollients that quickly absorb into the skin, without feeling heavy or sticky. For a splash of refreshment, spritz a cooling toner before you begin your skincare.

Double Cleansing and Routine Exfoliation

Cleansing your face in your AM and PM skincare rituals is a must, especially during the hotter months. And when it comes to the summer skin care routine for oily skin, it's best to pull out all the stops and go for daily double cleansing and weekly exfoliation. With makeup and SPF touch-ups throughout the day, a single wash with a face cleanser may not be enough to get rid of the sweat, dirt, and grime. This is where double cleansing comes in. Additionally, weekly exfoliation works to unclog the pores and eliminates acne forming bacteria.

SPF On-The-Go

If you are a skincare and self-care enthusiast, the sacred role of SPF is not a novelty. When shopping for a sun protection formula, look for a broad spectrum sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 30, like Forest Essentials' Sun Fluid SPF 50 PA++ Nothing can be prioritised over protecting your skin from the harmful UVA/UVB rays. Ensure that you are applying generous amounts and covering your lips too. From fluids and creams to liquids, gels, and sticks, there's a sunscreen formula for everyone. And if you're out in the sun for long periods of time, do not forget to re-apply your sun block. By following this dermat-sworn ritual, you are not only mitigating premature skin ageing, but also preventing the risk of skin cancer.

OPT FOR A LIGHTWEIGHT AND NATURAL MAKEUP LOOK

Your summer skincare applies to your makeup too! After all, nobody wants their makeup to melt and get patchy when the heat takes over. Consider adding skincare and SPF-infused makeup to your vanity kit this summer. By minimising the layers and striking off the extras, your skin can take a breather. Forest Essentials' Natural Makeup Collection has lightweight and hydrating skin tints, concealers,





lip serums, and more for all your beauty needs.

TRY DIY HOMEMADE RECIPES FOR SUMMER SKINCARE

What if we told you that a casual stroll in your kitchen pantry can be your next beauty aisle check-out? Kitchen hacks for skin care are approved by beauty gurus, skincare junkies and celebs alike. There are numerous, easy-to-avail ingredients that can help you create homemade masks, exfoliators, toners and more. Be it refreshing bouts of Rose Water for all-day spritzing or a hydrating Aloe Vera based recipe, an at-home skincare concoction is a great way to care for your summer skin.

Here are our most loved, tried, and tested DIY skincare secrets for the best summer skincare routine for oily skin, dry skin, sensitive skin, combination skin, mature skin, and acne-prone skin types.

Aloe Vera Skincare Recipes

A cult favourite for decades, Aloe Vera is rich in vitamins and antioxidants that are good for our skin. From helping soothe skin concerns like burns and dry skin to simply adding a fresh boost of hydration, the benefits of organic Aloe Vera have great reverence. To enjoy the soothing and regenerative properties of this plant-based ingredient, you can incorporate Forest Essentials' Aloe Vera Juice in your skincare routine for summer. The tonic can be used as a pre-moisturising toner for daily use or mixed with an ubtan and other home-remedies to enhance the nourishment. You can also make DIY masks by mixing Aloe Vera with ingredients like Honey, Yoghurt, Papaya etc.

Cucumber Skincare Recipes

A hero ingredient for detox waters and salads, Cucumber is also a beloved ingredient for skincare. Fun fact: Cucumber has the same pH level as that of our skin. It helps in replenishing the skin's protective layer. This easily available kitchen staple is enriched with Vitamin C and antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory properties. Simply slice up and gently rub a cool Cucumber on your face for instant freshness. You can also easily make a DIY face mask by blending Cucumber and Yoghurt or Cucumber and Aloe Vera. Looking for an at-home remedy for puffy eyes? Blend Cucumber and Mint to create a refreshing eye gel.

Besan Skincare Recipes

A holy grail for pre-wedding bridal care, Besan or Gram Flour acts as a natural exfoliator and helps in removing dead skin cells, along with deeply cleansing and enhancing the skin's complexion. A Besan face pack can be your ultimate summer skincare hack, owing to its array of skin benefits. This kitchen staple is packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. All you need is to create a Besan paste—you can use Lemon, Curd, Rose Water or Aloe Vera juice. Whip up the blend and apply evenly on the face. Once it dries out, wash it off with warm water.

Almond Skincare Recipes

A not so common, yet extremely effective pantry recipe for skin care involves Almonds, soaked overnight. Almonds are rich in Vitamin E, antioxidants and skin nourishing properties and can be a great ingredient for skin care for dry skin in summer. Crush the soaked almonds and blend with raw Milk, Yoghurt or mashed Bananas. Use this thick paste and apply evenly over your face and neck. This recipe helps to even out the skin tone, enhance complexion, and mitigate signs of ageing. You can also create a DIY face, body, and lip scrub with Almonds by creating a mixture with Honey, Oatmeal, and Yoghurt.

Sandalwood and Almond Oil Skincare Recipes

You can't go wrong with pairing Almond Oil and Sandalwood. Sandalwood has anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, making it a time-tested skincare ingredient. Almond Oil, on the other hand, is rich in Vitamin E and fatty acids, which can help to nourish and protect the skin.





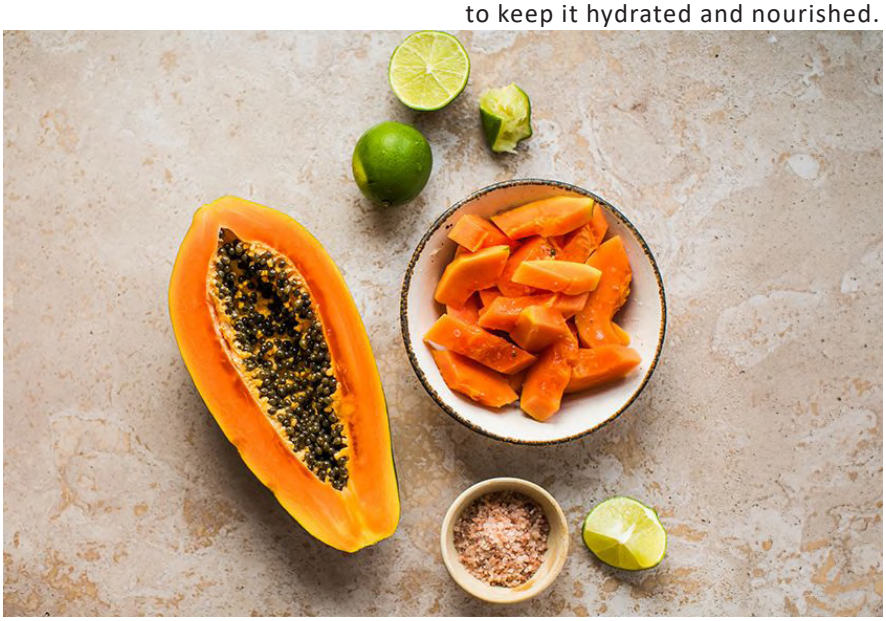
To create a face mask or paste, you can add Rose Water to a concoction of Sandalwood and Almond Oil, ideal for dry, sensitive, and combination skin. You can also try Forest Essentials' Chandan Varnya Lepa, which contains the goodness of Sandalwood and other Ayurvedic ingredients.

Papaya Skincare Recipe

The best part about a Papaya face mask is that it needs no additional ingredients. Peel. Slice. Mash. Apply. The enzymes in the fruit can help to gently exfoliate the skin and remove dead skin cells, while the antioxidants can help to protect the skin from damage. Papaya pulp can be massaged all over the body and washed off easily. You can visibly notice a brighter complexion and cleaner, smoother skin.

Turmeric Mask Recipe

Indian summer skincare is incomplete without Turmeric. The kitchen staple is a natural ingredient known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It can be used to help brighten and even out skin tone, and all skin types, including dry, mature, oily, sensitive, and acne-prone skin types can benefit from it. To create a DIY Turmeric face mask, you can add ingredients like Lemon juice, Aloe Vera, Almond Oil etc. And if you're looking for a pre-made mask, the Haldi Varnya Lepa by Forest Essentials can be your go-to. The moisture surging facial mask is curated with four varieties of Turmeric and a myriad of herbs that come together to not only cleanse the face, but also leave a fresh glow.



Rose Water Skincare Recipes

Rose water is an essential ingredient for many homemade skincare recipes such as face masks, scrubs, eye compresses, and bath soaks, and can also be used individually as a tonic mist. It has anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce the redness of irritated skin as well as the chance of acne and eczema breakouts. It is also known to be a great cleanser and aids in removing oil and dirt from the skin. You can use a Rose Water mist multiple times throughout the day, and even as a primer before applying makeup. The Facial Tonic Mist Pure Rosewater by Forest Essentials is a great pick.

Our skin changes with the weather, so in summers we may experience certain changes in our skin.

To protect our skin from excessive heat and humidity, we need a summer skincare routine with summer-proof products. Lightweight, oil-free formulas with SPF protection are your best bet.

Mosturiser is a must throughout the year and since summer heat can dehydrate your skin, it's crucial to keep it hydrated and nourished. You should use non-oily, non-greasy, and non-comedogenic serums in summer.

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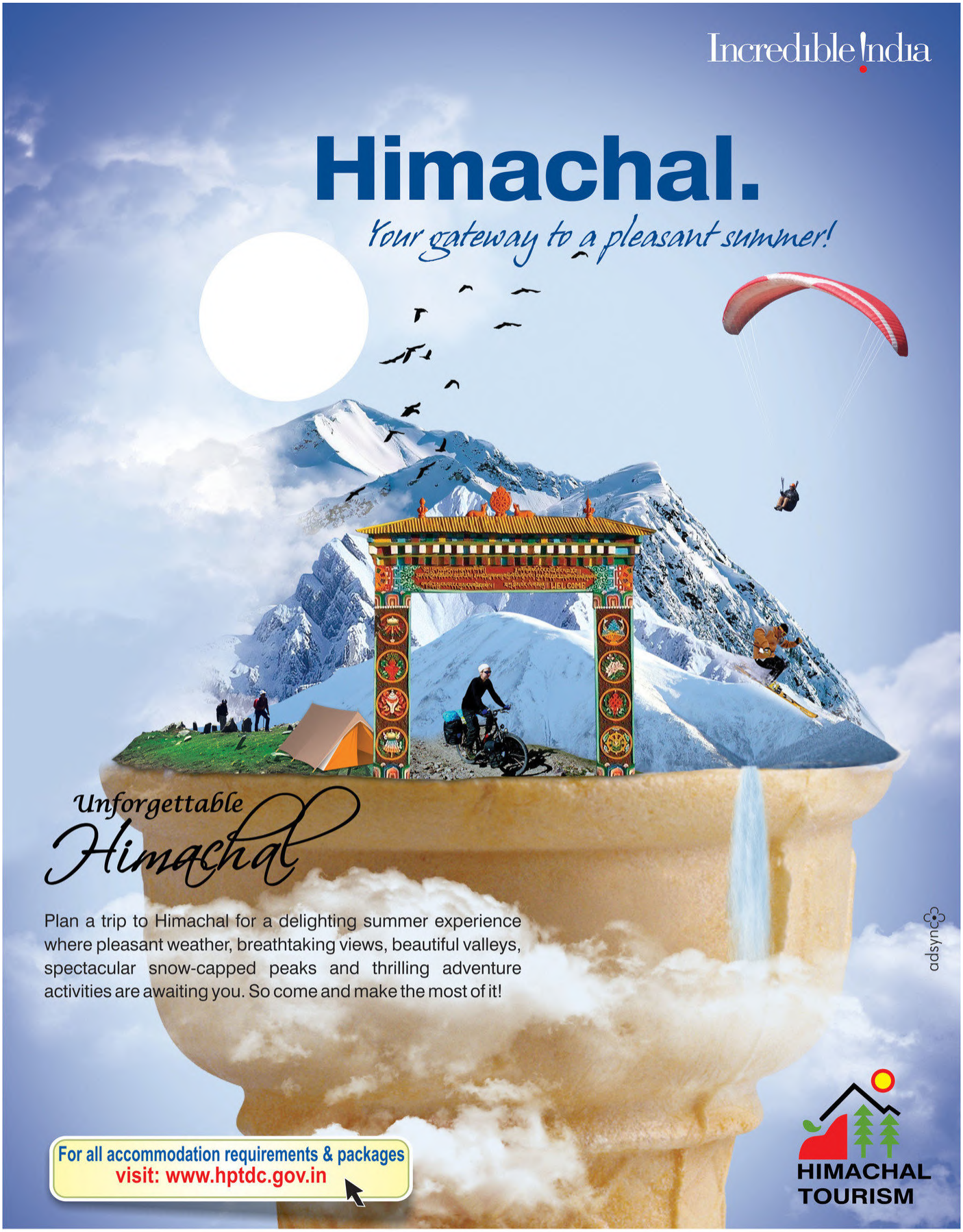

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