



Our Mission

"We shall promote the highest ethical practices, by business and professionals, in order to provide complete satisfaction to consumers and other stakeholders."

CFBP TIMES

DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025

Women Empowerment Summit - 1.0

Tuesday, 17th December 2024



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2024-2026



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Heartfelt from The President

SWAPNIL S. KOTHARI

On December 17, 2024, we hosted a Flagship Programme titled, “CFBP Women Empowerment Summit” with the same fanfare and glory. The Taj Lands End, Bandra was the perfect backdrop and our Chief Guest Nandita Das with Guests of Honour Dr. Pheroza Godrej and Padma Shri Prasoon Joshi were the cynosure of all eyes. Our Executive Committee Member Payal Kothari had been working tirelessly since a few months and it bore fruit. We introduced Awards to felicitate NGOs / Individuals that promoted Women / Girl Child. Also, our Advisory Board Member Shaina NC worked hard to ensure that the Fashion Show portrayed the twin goals of Cancer Patients Aid and Women Empowerment at its best – approximately 43 women of all shapes, sizes, vocations and age walked the ramp adding that dash of glamour to a purpose! It was covered in the Economic Times.

Our Third Edition of the Annual Ethics Lecture, primarily supported by the Tatas, promises to be a blockbuster Event – it will be held on February 15, 2025.

This time an interesting read is an article about how the enhancement of perceived value of a product can command a higher premium written by our Advisory Board Member and regular contributor Mr. Jagdeep Kapoor. Also, our Invitee Jalpa Merchant enlightens us on various issues that surround the controversial topic of Marital Rape. My Article on the Adani Imbroglio was published in Business India. Hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did writing it.

As I sit back and revel in the momentous December month, I gather that you must have a passion to do something! At the same time, it is important to hone that passion and craft it to a certain level of perfection and presentability. That gives you a sense of bliss.

I end with a quote from that great Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom,

*The happiness of a man in this life does not consist in the absence
but in the mastery of his passions.*

Alfred Lord Tennyson

PATRON MEMBERS

All our esteemed readers including all other non-Patron Members are encouraged to call us and let us know if they are interested in becoming Patron Members and it's resultant benefits besides the fact that this List shall be published in every Newsletter (which comes out every two months and goes to about 1000 readers).

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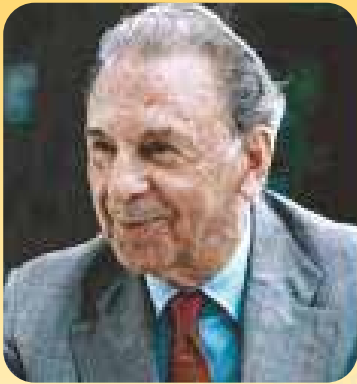
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Nutritionist, Chef and
Sustainable
Fashion Designer

Mr. Vijay. K. Chauhan
Chairman &
Managing Director
Parle Products Pvt. Ltd.

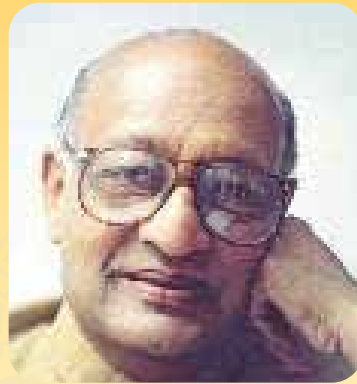
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Ramkrishna Bajaj



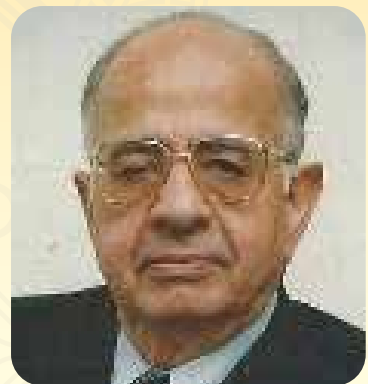
S. P. Godrej



F. T. Khorakiwala



Naval Tata



Arvind Mafatlal



J. N. Guzder



Ashok Birla



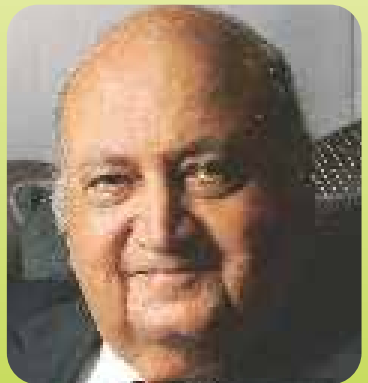
B. D. Garware



Harish Mahindra



Vishnubhai Haribhakti



Keshub Mahindra

PAST PRESIDENTS



Arvind Mafatlal | 1966-69



Naval Tata | 1969-71



Ramkrishna Bajaj | 1971-72



S.P. Godrej | 1972-74



P.A. Narelwala | 1974-75



Y.A. Fazalbhoy | 1975-77



Harish Mahindra | 1977-83



F. T. Khorakiwala | 1983-87



J. N. Guzder | 1987-90



Nalin K. Vissanji | 1990-92



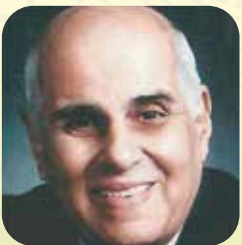
A. H. Tobaccowala | 1992-96



Shekhar Bajaj | 1996-98



A. S. Kasliwal | 1998-2000



K. N. Suntook | 2000-02



V. S. Palekar | 2002-04



V. B. Haribhakti | 2004-06



Dinesh Parekh | 2006-08



Ramesh K. Dhir | 2008-10



Suresh Goklaney | 2010-12



Hoshang Billimoria | 2012-14



Shyamniwas Somani | 2014-16



Shekhar Bajaj | 2016



Kalpana Munshi | 2016-18



Swapnil Kothari | 2018-26

MAGNA PUBLICATION – SOCIETY MAGAZINE



Swapnil Kothari, President CFBP with Sonu Sood and Ashok Dhamankar - Director Magna Publishing Society Magazine where the magazine felicitated several Achievers whilst unveiling their latest issue that puts Sonu Sood on its cover page to showcase the launch of his first movie as its maker - Fateh - which released on 10th January

Women Empowerment Summit - 1.0




CFBP
COUNCIL FOR FAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES

Women Empowerment Summit - 1.0

PRESENTED BY **BAJAJ** 



SHEKHAR BAJAJ
FOUNDER MEMBER



SWARNIL KOTHARI
PRESIDENT



PAYAL KOTHARI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
AND CURATOR, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

Tuesday, 17th December 2024 • 10.00 am to 1.30 pm
Venue: Taj Lands End, Bandra (West), Mumbai

Silver Sponsor:  **DR. MICKLEY MEHTA**

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World's First Female Tabla Maestro & President Awardee Padma Amuradha Pal will present a unique Tabla Jugalbandi with herself & keyboards for 20 minutes



ANURADHA PAL

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SHAINA N. C.
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER, CFBP



PAYAL KOTHARI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER AND
CURATOR, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

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Women Empowerment Summit - 1.0

PRESENTED BY **BAJAJ** 

Certificate of Honour

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

IS TRULY A WOMAN ACHIEVER AND IS THANKED FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SHAINA N C FASHION SHOW - WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR THE YEAR 2024



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President



SHAINA N C
Advisory Board Member, CFBP



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Women Empowerment Summit - 1.0

PRESENTED BY **BAJAJ** 

Fireside Chat on Women Empowerment



SWARNIL KOTHARI
PRESIDENT



PAYAL KOTHARI
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
AND CURATOR,
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

WITH



MS. NANDITA DAS
FILMMAKER, ACTRESS
AND SOCIAL ADVOCATE



DR. PHEROZA J. GODREJ
ART HISTORIAN AND
ENVIRONMENTALIST

Tuesday, 17th December 2024 • 10.00 am to 1.30 pm
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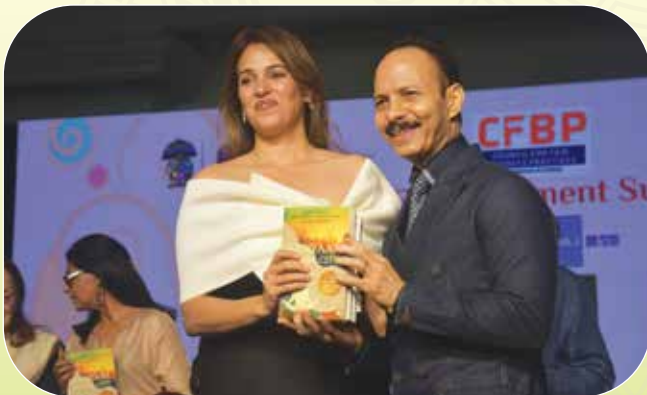
Golden Memories



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Golden Memories



Golden Memories



Golden Memories



Woman Achievers



An evening to celebrate leaders who paved the way

The Council for Fair Business Practices Women Empowerment Summit raised a toast to inclusive fairness and women achievers

etpanache@timesofindia.com

The recently held Council for Fair Business Practices (CFBP) Women Empowerment Summit at a suburban five-star had a lot to offer: NGOs that empowered women, a fireside chat with Nandita Das, Dr Pheroza Godrej and Prasoon Joshi, and a specially-curated fashion show by Shaina NC.

The awards, the brainchild of Payal Kothari, executive committee member, CFBP, and programme curator, was given to NGOs that rescued acid victims, educated the girl child, promoted menstrual hygiene and gave water to the rural women who used to walk miles for the same. Dr Pheroza Godrej and Prasoon Joshi were present at the event as guests of honour and Nandita Das was the chief guest.

Swarnil Kothari, senior lawyer and president, CFBP, said, "In its first chapter, the CFBP Women Empowerment Summit is one of the flagship

events of the city fostering women empowerment to achieve fairness and include them in building the third largest economy as we unveil our souvenir chronicling all of our other activities last year. Each programme reflects our team's exceptional talent

and resonates with our ethos of intellectual integrity and impactful creativity."

Shifting the conversation

Shekhar Bajaj, a founding member of the CFBP, said, "I am glad that CFBP is taking this proactive initiative in ensuring that women are meted out

a fair share and that meritocracy prevails in all walks of life."

The fireside chat explored how women in various spheres could be best encouraged to fulfil their potential. Das asserted that in 2024, it was a given that women ought to be considered equal. Joshi said this dichotomy between men and women should stop to make way for a more inclusive society that focused more on overall human development. Godrej stated that her art gallery had a fair share of both genders and that women should not be any more conscious of their gender when out in the real world.

Notable guests

Shaina NC, fashion designer, politician and advisory board member, CFBP, curated the fashion show for the fourth time for CFBP. For the causes of women empowerment and cancer aid, 43 women achievers, from wellness experts to doctors to interior designers to homepreneurs, walked the ramp, looking graceful in her creations. Asha Idnani, consumer activist; Rajyalakshmi Rao, former judge,



The fireside chat with Swarnil Kothari, Nandita Das, Dr Pheroza Godrej, Prasoon Joshi and Payal Kothari



Anuradha Pal (left) playing the tabla

NCRDC; Tanvi Shah, nutritionist, chef and sustainable fashion designer; Leena Gupta, motivational coach; Sonal Choraria, lifestyle coach; Dr Sameera Gupta, physiotherapist; Jalpa Merchant, writer; Aradhana Nayak, model; Dr Biju Khurana, urology, numerologist and signature analyst, and Meghna Rao, entrepreneur and philanthropist were among those who walked the ramp, in addition to Sandra Shroff, Tanaz Doshi and Barbara Sehgal.

Zakira Shaikh, an acid attack survivor, was the show stopper with Payal Kothari and Dr Mickey Mehta, wellness guru and advisory board member, CFBP.

The event was brought to a soulful close by Anuradha Pal, another advisory board member, who regaled the audience with her tabla *vadan*.

CFBP was primarily founded by JRD Tata, Ramkrishna Bajaj and Soli Godrej, along with Arvind Mafatlal, FT Khorakiwala, JN Guzder, Harish Mahindra and Keshub Mahindra and other industrialists and professionals in 1966.



(From left) Dr Pheroza Godrej, Nandita Das, Prasoon Joshi, Swarnil Kothari, Payal Kothari, Shekhar Bajaj, Dr Mickey Mehta, Amlia Rula, Niranjani Jhunjhunwala and Ashok Bhansali



The fashion show curated by Shaina NC

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AT CROSSROADS?

Guest Column

BUSINESS INDIA • THE MAGAZINE OF THE CORPORATE WORLD

Corporate governance at crossroads?

Any scam with national and global ramifications must be investigated

Laws too gentle are seldom obeyed; too severe, seldom executed – Benjamin Franklin

The recent Adani imbroglio has thrown up many questions about corporate governance – primarily from the perspectives of business ethics and shareholder confidence and the adequacy of legal and regulatory machinery. One cannot imagine the power of one single case or a report and, that too, of foreign origin that can have so much influence that it can wipe out a significant portion of a conglomerate's market capitalisation and brook challenges about the very foundations of a democratic set-up.

The *Economist* had the report on the cover page a few months ago and every mainstream newspaper and media channel had debated on the consequences – disastrous and hopefully not so dire – until the cows came home! The unfortunate part is that too many unimaginable events take place in this country and the media attention is short – we all move forward to the next 'breaking news' and leave it to the next watchdog to take care of it. Many believed that it was not just a Ponzi scheme but an event that begged investigation!

Then came another jolt! Federal prosecutors in Brooklyn disclosed a few weeks ago an indictment accusing Gautam Adani of bribery of certain Indian officials. They had to buy electricity, which was produced by Adani Green Energy, a subsidiary of the Adani group and then to mislead US investors by informing them about the company's anti-corruption practices. And generally, these indictments come only after thorough scrutiny.

Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani, with another Adani group executive, were charged with securities fraud pursuant to an elaborate conspiracy. Azure Power Global, a formerly-US-listed company, whose five people were also allegedly involved, had violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Azure co-operated with the investigation stating that those charged had left the company. Gautam Adani, whilst seeking legal recourse, has made two public appearances since the indictment.

The prosecutors had found 'bribe notes' – ledgers of the alleged payments on Sagar Adani's mobile phone. Because Gautam Adani e-mailed himself a copy of the search warrant and grand jury subpoena served on his nephew by FBI, this could be an important piece of electronic evidence, albeit needing much more corroboration to prove that Sagar Adani and Gautam Adani knew



SWAPNIL KOTHARI

they had misled investors into believing that all was hunky-dory and that they were squeaky clean, when actually they had paid bribes. To gather testimony from witnesses in India would be another task, as that would require governmental approval, which would not come easily, given the clout that Adani has and also because it involves national prestige. A defence lawyer could argue that Gautam Adani himself did not draft any misleading statement, whereas the prosecution could argue that eventually any material statement about the company that goes out to the world at large has its buck stop at the desk of the top boss.

It is always more amusing than bemusing to watch how the governmental authorities downplay the situation. India's foreign ministry stated it had not received any request from Washington calling it an affair between private entities and the US Justice Department. The US Justice Department declined to comment altogether.

Conspiracy to violate the FCPA is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and the fraud charges are punishable up to 20 years in prison. The US law enforcement authorities have made it abundantly clear that their job is to protect the integrity of their capital markets and that anybody accessing them would have to play by the rules.

Corporate scams in the world are not new. But few of them have definitely snatched the ground beneath one's feet. Volkswagen's *diesel dupe* had the giant pay billions of dollars in fines, Wells Fargo too, the recent Chinese scandal of Luckin Coffee, also Enron, resulting in the implosion of Arthur Andersen, are all examples of immense frauds perpetrated on the public at large and operate as paeans to greed – whether of the corner office or of a few down the ladder! Greed is good but only when it benefits the large pool – most of Wall Street follows it, having learnt bitter lessons of the past! In the US, Chief Ethics Officers, who are not just figurines, but actual functionaries strengthened by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and amendments to the US Federal Sentencing Guidelines are playing their role largely to avert any catastrophic economic upheavals, which these kind of juggernaut scams can cause. Contrastingly, in India, the answer is sadly, 'No'.

In Adani's case, the issue is simple – did the internal management know about this and, if it did, where was the *faux pas*? If it did not, then did the auditors not bring it to their notice? How far can we hold the board responsible and what do we answer to the sea of shareholders? Having perhaps

The author is a corporate lawyer and president, Council for Fair Business Practices

answered all of that sketchily, is it not time for the SEBI or the RBI to launch an investigation into this – history can repeat itself if we do not learn lessons from it! According to our comprehensive set of corporate laws, SEBI is the legal watchdog – equivalent to the Securities Exchange Commission in the US. Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) would perhaps also be a welcome entity, as it operates directly under the aegis of the ministry for corporate affairs. One of its nobler objectives proffers a sanguine hope to take up for investigation cases characterised by:

- complexity and having inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary ramifications;
- substantial involvement of public interest to be judged by size, in monetary terms; and
- the possibility of investigation leading to or contributing towards a clear improvement in systems, laws or procedures.

Many corporate professionals that I interacted with in the past few years echoed the sentiment that perhaps it is because these watchdogs turned a blind eye or did not give a more serious look that we landed up chasing a Vijay Mallya or a Nirav Modi or a Mehul Choksi on foreign lands, using our precious meagre resources and are still

awaiting their arrival with eyes agog, standing outside the airport.

For a moment, I do not wish to suggest that I am pre-judging anything and foreclosing all defence arguments. Both as an ethicist and a corporate lawyer, I firmly believe that any alleged scam having both national and global ramifications, especially when India is on the cusp of being the third largest economy, must be investigated. The investigation must ensure the quality, integrity and experience of the auditors. Naturally, if the auditors are young, they will lack the quality and experience even if their values are in place! Also, a revisit of the corporate laws in currency today is necessary to ensure that a systemic rot, if any, catches the attention of and mandates the investigation by the watchdogs! Often I hear that India has some of the best laws, but our implementation of the same is abysmally poor. That means toothless tigers do not hunt prey! Lastly, and this goes a long way, a periodic course in business ethics to the entire organisation – top to bottom – is a must so that there is a sincere attempt to etch it in the DNA of every person of the organisation.

And, yes, it is time for the Chief Ethics Officers to be eulogised more often than not!



Source by : Business India - January, 2025

THE TIMES OF INDIA, 7TH JANUARY, 2025

Longevity & building health proactively is the mantra in New Year

Dr Hemant Thacker

From the 'Don't Die' call of Bryan Johnson, to the 'Be Happy' motto of most Indian Gurus, 2025 promises to be the year of longevity promotion.

Strange how healthcare has turned a full circle and come to rest where it all began. Taking a leaf from Darwin's Survival of the Fittest, mankind has constantly adapted and innovated from the primitive days to protect, prolong and preserve the species by using everything from common sense to intuition to conditioned learning, during evolution.

Weren't we as children given special turmeric preparations in winter to combat the cold and citrus juices in summer to neutral-

ize dehydration! Covid rekindled the flame of immunity buildup and the zinc and clove and what-have-you, came tumbling out, to gallantly aid the contemporary armamentarium.

The renaissance in healthcare has been adequately stirred to propagate a worldwide revolution into how we approach health and wellness. The 'absence of disease' is one definition of good health, but building health proactively is now the new mantra.

The correct amount of protein to not only combat catabolism, but actively aid anabolism, is now centerstage. What's getting even more attention is the source of that protein and its optimum contribution from the first class pro-

tein category. In the quest for living longer, isometric and isotonic exercise is a must and the timing of this protein ingestion is also critical.

The favourite whipping boy, fats, is next. While there is a growing acceptance of ghee and the use of omega 3 and like fatty acids unequivocally, the contribution of calories from fats is always edging southwards but importantly never vanished. From olive oil and unsaturated fatty acids, cooking mediums have now a garden variety to offer and individuals are spoilt for choice.

Glucose, an ingredient considered outcast in planning healthy diets, has its role to play in situations which are mutually exclusive and often irreplaceable, like in

brain metabolism. The different forms of glucose (fructose, sucrose, etc) need to be carefully understood before adoption or procrastination.

Of course, the age, sex, occupation etc of each need to be carefully comprehended in the compilation.

This brings me to the increasing use of curcumin, ginger, different seeds (flax, sunflower, pumpkin etc), cloves, Tulsi (shree), saffron, the list is endless, which is returning to dining tables and dietary supplements. Nature and its organic produce is leading the way in planning the menus of anti-aging schemes.

Sleep and rest is a cardinal commodity to be encashed in healthy living. The quantum of sleep, its quality and the regularity

in establishing a punctual mind switch-off mechanism, to allow the neurotransmitters to work in the foreground, is assuming great significance. To allow the mind and body to wean off into the lull of slumber at almost the same daily time with a conducive mindset, is to coax, cajole and finally direct the hormones and tissues to work towards anti-aging. Planning the sleep routine and adhering to its rhythm may sound difficult to begin with, but once inculcated, reaps dividends.

Happiness quotient and positive thinking are closely related and form the basis of healthy living. Unfortunately both have evaporated in the humdrum of modern life, entangled in its pursuit of success at any and all cost. Dopamine, the neuro-modulator that governs

motivation, the feel-good sensation and satisfaction, is easy to woo but to nurture its benefits, the cause and effect have to be cultivated. Efforts to mentally seek it even for short periods by running away to ashrams or retreats are now passé and the evolution to preach and practice it on a day to day basis is the fundamental tenet of 'nouveau' wellness. Experiencing its blossom from within, tutored from a discipline of satisfaction and love, is more important than seeking it from a teacher. Unbridling the mind from SSRIs and mood elevators and allowing the healthy mind to meander into positivity is the new raga.

I can go on and on with the seeming trifles that would ultimately make perfection, but the physician in me nudges to remind

that in this quest for the infinite existence, the quick and uncomplicated disposal of disease in the most scientific and acceptable manner, is never to be ignored. Regular clinic and laboratory checks have to run parallel.

Modern medicine has clearly accepted and inculcated this new order, but one needs to walk together with all the different disciplines in the march to eternity.

In the 'Rhood Bhulaya' of fast paced living, you need to 'Zero Se Restart' if you want to shun the 'Varnas' of ill health.

Let the HNY resolution be to embark on the path of healthy living in mind and body.

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Premium marketing personalisation

The enhancement of perceived value increases the premium that can be commanded by the brand

On a recent market visit to London, I noticed a particular trend – of personalisation getting a premium and premium products getting personalised. One day, I saw a long queue of parents, grandparents and kids, in one section of the m&m's store in central London. The consumer families were eagerly but patiently waiting to get their children's/grandchildren's photos and names stamped on the many coloured m&m's they had purchased. The waiting period to get the kids' wishes met would have taken almost an hour. But they were happily waiting for their personalised treasure. The popular brand m&m's was getting personalised and commanding a premium price, as against the normal m&m's. And the wait was worth it. The sheer joy on the kids' faces was invaluable – so was the delight reflected on the faces of their parents and grandparents. Personalisation premium marketing, as a trend, had caught on.

It will be a matter of time before popular brands will command a premium in India too through personalisation premium marketing. Interestingly, in this process, there is no change in the configuration, quality, quantity, shape or size of the product and, yet, the brand commands a premium through personalisation. Each consumer and his/her family considers the name and the way it is spelt, the photo or any other image, etc, valuable. And, so, the consumer is willing to pay a premium for the personalisation, because the joy of seeing the name and photo/image/ initials on the product enhances his/her self-esteem and that enhances the value of the product, which thus commands a premium. It also has a certain snob appeal, which also justifies the premium and cuts the clutter from the ordinary.

During this visit to London, I was able to experience premium products, which had taken the personalisation route – they not only had greater footfall but also commanded a premium. The premium products are in any case out-of-the-ordinary but the process of personalisation enhances their image, making them ultra-premium. Apart from the higher price, in some cases, there could be a longer waiting period too – of a day or two – before you pick up your personalised product, which enhanced its uniqueness, created through the scarcity and the waiting period.

In a flagship Burberry store, a jacket or scarf, personalised with the initials of a name neatly engraved on the product, comes out as a trophy having been won, since it is personalised. The entire ambience and service at the Burberry store



JAGDEEP KAPOOR

in London would of course be world-class but the touch of personalisation – of owning a piece of the Burberry brand, whether jacket or scarf with one's personal initials neatly and painstakingly engraved on them – enhances the value and the premiumness through personalisation. The counter salesperson also shares the whole process, including the waiting days, with a sense of pride and then a couple of days later, ceremoniously hands over this ultra-premium Burberry personalised brand to a proud and well-deserving consumer.

The sheer enhancement through personalisation, with no other change in the brand, suddenly brings out a leap in marketing and consumer delight, through personalisation and helps it command a premium. It could be as high as 30-100 per cent. The best part is that the consumer willingly and enthusiastically pays the premium when he/she becomes the proud owner of the personalised brand.

Apart from normal utility products like belts and wallets getting enhanced in terms of image and commanding a premium, the premium products themselves, such as high-end handbags or brief cases become ultra-premium due to personalised premium marketing.

The process of personalised premium marketing is gaining ground in India too, in certain cities across certain categories. This enhancement through a minor change, with a little cost of money and time, gives a huge image boost and, because its perceived value goes up substantially in the eyes of the consumer, he/she is happy to pay a premium and wait for the personalised product to be handed over after a few hours or days. In fact, personalised premium marketing has become the norm for a certain segment of consumers, who would not like to buy the brand without the personalised stamp of premiumness on the product.

The premium set of products like the Louis Vuitton range in India, in the normal course, provides personalisation and has been able to maintain that gold standard for that specific set of consumers, who expects it. Whether in London or elsewhere in the world (even in India), the Louis Vuitton store would offer a personalised premium marketing effect to its consumers, who then proudly carry them along, knowing fully well that image enhancement has taken place due to personalisation. From a consumer behaviour perspective, in addition to the perceived value of the Louis Vuitton brand, personalisation enhances

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the self-esteem and the image of the consumer, a little higher.

There are other premium brands, which have been able to expand, grow, profit from personalisation like Mont Blanc, Coach and many upscale brands. Victorinox, the Swiss knife brand, which could be used for multiple purposes, also enhances its image substantially by offering personalised premium marketing. The proud owner of the Swiss knife would find his/her pride enhanced, if she/he has a personalised brand in possession.

The trend of personalised premium marketing is going to cut across countries; and, while in London or in India, it is going to cut across categories as the aspiration level of consumers across segments go up in search of personalisation. And they would happily pay a premium for the same.

Coming back to the kids' segment, in the store at Hamleys, London, which is a favourite of the children, I witnessed personalisation in full flow. While so far I have spoken about personalisation through engraving names, initials, visuals, photos, images and so on, let me also share with you the details of personalisation through audio.

At Hamleys in London, for example, kids and their parents and grandparents often buy clocks, cutely designed and available in various colours. But, the audio personalisation was of a different kind. While the clock had an alarm bell, with the voice-over, which said 'wake up', or 'good morning', it would also say the name of the kid, as a form of personalisation. You could give the name of the kid at the counter and it would be incorporated in the voice-over. Thus, the wake-up call or the 'good morning' was personalised with the name of the child mentioned along with it. This kind of personalisation, though simple, was valuable to the kids, their parents and grandparents.

Personalisation could happen visually, in the form of audio, in the form of initials on the product or in the form of images, leading the brand to be close to the heart of the consumer. This enhancement of perceived value would obviously increase the premium that can be commanded by the brand.

One is not sure, whether this offering of personalisation premium marketing is available at the Indian Hamleys, though the brand is owned by an Indian. But, at the store for the segment of consumers – which I began the article with – it has a wonderful way of personalisation. The soft toy teddy bear bought by the kids is assembled in front of you, with your choice of attire, and you could have the name of the kid embroidered, you could customise and personalise the teddy bear, a favourite kids' toy, thus enhancing its perceived value and the premium it commands. Here too, I noticed a long queue to buy these personalised teddy bears, with a lot of excitement from parents, grandparents and kids. This personalisation, as seen in the above examples, could be high points in the life of a child and could remain in the memory of the child for life.

Commanding premium in terms of price does not only require a better quality, a higher technology or any other components, such as quantity. It gives just a personalised touch. Recent trends seen during my visit to London, as well as other parts of the world, clearly indicate that personalisation premium marketing is a powerful weapon to enhance perceived value and command premium and delight the consumer, all at the same time.

One looks forward to this trend catching on, on a wider base, geographically and across product categories, in India. After all, Indians are also world-class consumers.



Source by : Business India - January, 2025

" I AM NOT IN THE MOOD TODAY ... "

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PRIVY?

SHOULD MARITAL RAPE BE CRIMINALIZED?



Jalpa Merchant

Marriage is a tricky interpersonal relationship and comes in with a bag full of aspirations, illusions and yes... expectations. The man and woman share a special bond of proximity based on the popular phrase 'give and take'. How much who gives and how much who takes is never accounted for either as a debit or a credit. The weighing balance may be lop-sided but considered as 'that's ok... a woman always needs to sacrifice more than a man.' If marriage is a sacrifice, who are these offerings going to ?

One of the most important pillars of society (as sociologists would scream out), is the institution of marriage because it gives human beings a sense of direction, purpose, progeny and stability. Marriage is sacrosanct and the man and woman who get into this relationship are suppose to maintain and execute the highest degree of truthful commitment towards each other and fulfill duties respectfully.

Between satin folds of this idealistic relationship of marriage, there are undercurrents of not expecting or accepting denial from the wife towards sexual intercourse, if the husband wishes to do. Women more often than not, have no right to say "NO" for sex if her husband wants it. The man exercises his dominance and expresses his urge to get into a sexual act assuming that his partner will oblige 'willingly' each time and everytime. Why is this so ? Does the wife not have the right to say a "no" or "not today"? Does the wife's consent, mental state or mood hold no validity or importance? Why does the woman either have to be on a guilt trip or fearful if she wishes to refuse and why does she have to feel traumatized with the thought that if she does not give in, her husband may treat her with disrespect or beat her up or seek other women?

This brings us to the topic much spoken and debated about recently - a concept called "Marital Rape". Marital Rape is defined as an act of sexual intercourse with ones spouse without the approval or consent of that spouse. It is basically forced sex where one spouse manipulates the other in having sexual intercourse against the wishes and consent of that spouse. In romantic relationships or in marriage, sexual violence has several, different faces. Furthermore, sexual assault need not always be overtly violent. Even if one partner forces himself onto the other without consent of the other, this act is an act of rape and an act of sexual violence.

Commonly, people think that rape is something that happens only between strangers. Well...that is not true. An act of rape is also when there is nonconsensual sex. Spousal or marital rape is also to be considered as rape. When one partner - whether in marriage, or in a live-in, or in romantic relationships - is deceived by the other to perform sexual acts when she does not want to indulge in that act - this is also considered as coercion and rape.

It is usually women who are victims of sexual assault. Marital rape happens across cultures, racial groups, different ethnicities and varied socio-economic stratas. When a woman faces marital rape, she goes through intense emotions of disgust, helplessness, guilt and unhappiness. Rape, under any circumstances, is not the fault of the victim. Rapists cannot justify their act of forcing themselves onto another human being. Rape is actually about power, control and dominance. It's about a husband or a partner believing that he has the right to demand and have sex whenever he wishes to.

The Indian government is not in favour of criminalizing marital rape saying that it would be "excessively harsh" and could completely disrupt the very institution of marriage. The Centre goes further to argue that marital relationships are different from non-marital ones and therefore require different punishments under law. The government expresses that currently non-consensual acts in a marital relationship do attract penal consequences under the Domestic Violence Act (DVA). The Centre has opposed to pleas in the Supreme Court to criminalize marital rape, stating that if a husband cannot engage in sexual acts with his own wife, and if done then criminalized as rape...it will seriously impact the conjugal relationship, leading to disturbances in the institution of marriage.

In any case, rape is a heinous crime carrying with it a life-long baggage of deep-seated trauma. The questions that come to mind and debatable are - should marital rape be criminalized? Should it be made punishable by law? Will it be too harsh and inappropriate if marital rape is criminalized? What is the proof that it's a rape? Will this law, if implemented, be misused?

In my opinion, any type of nonconsensual sex should be an act to be severely punishable by law, even if it is between husband and wife or between romantically involved man and woman or girl and boy. Social issues often come with a pinch of salt and has a flipside to it. So, looking at this issue more objectively from both points of views- socially and legally- what if criminalization of marital rape gets misused? How does the judiciary ensure fair and just verdicts in cases of marital rape? What if rape in marriage or romantic relationships is misused with the intention to defame, traumatize or extract money from the "rapist" by twisting facts to the "victim's" advantage through false allegations to demean the character of the other person?

A thin dividing line between facts and fabrications, with multiple shades of grey, the issue of marital rape will continue to be a sensitive issue and much to ponder about.

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