



Woman's World



pg 16-17 Take a look at what trends will be big in 2013

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pg 18 See what we like about the new Hello Kitty sneakers

Afternoon Despatch & Courier

MUMBAI | THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2013



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>> Women are speaking up about what they expect from the country in the New Year, with one of the major points being better safety for women

WHAT WOMEN WANT

Forget the clichéd knight in shining armor or diamond ring; women in the city want some real change in the New Year. **Rhea Dhanbhoora & Priyanka Singh** find out what's on the list...

With the way we ended 2012, it's no surprise that almost all the women we spoke to have safety, security and better amenities for women at the top of their lists; with a sense of freedom and the ability to achieve dreams, no matter what they may be, coming in as close seconds. Have you thought about what you want from 2013? While you think about that, read on to see what change women in the city hope to see this year.



ways. "I think women should initiate all-women pool in clubs, where women can contribute what they can and take what they need. For example, one mother puts in her children's old school books and in return she can pick up the next year's books from another mother. Similarly, this pool can include endless stuff such as home appliances, clothes and jewellery. This way it creates a

LEND A HAND

Wilma Kenny, co-owner of www.peppercloset.com thinks women need to come together to help each other, even if just in small

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network among us," says the 35-year-old.

EDUCATION ESSENTIALS

Neha Asthana's profession requires her to travel from urban to rural India and to see cultures and spaces from villages to cities, so her one wish for 2013 is a better India. The 30-year-old principal of Rachana Sansad-SFTD, says, "A majority of the country's problems are due to the lack of compulsory primary education. Education is not only about learning but nurturing an individual too. I also want to see an end to corruption, pulling in strict stands and laws for criminals and even stricter ones for sexual harassment."

WE NEED TO LET OUR HAIR DOWN

Fitness expert and vice president of Gold's Gym India, Althea Shah believes India has emerged as a fast growing economy, where women and men are equally qualified in education and more specific skills, whether it's I.T., marketing, finance or business. But, she thinks that while we should be looking for growth, we're getting pulled back over petty issues, which stop us from becoming a stronger country. "Sometimes work and family commitments make it a long day, so does that mean we can't step out to go back home? Why do we have to think twice before stepping out at night? Just because women are 'weaker,' men think it is their birthright to attack them. Why do they forget that it's a woman who gave birth to them, or that it is a woman who will give birth to their offspring?" She adds, "Also, sometimes we need to let our hair down and unwind, so why do we have so many constraints to enjoy ourselves? If the management can let us live a life without worries, there is nothing stopping Indians. Steps need to be taken to punish the bad guys and let us live freely."

DREAM A LITTLE



28-year-old designer, Nidhi Munim wants women to be able to fulfill their dreams, no matter what they are. She thinks that one of her favourite songs by Nicki Minaj sums up her wish best. "Cause I am not a word, I am not a line! I am not a girl that can ever be defined/ I am not fly, I am levitation/ I represent an entire generation." As I quote this beautiful song, I wish that this New Year brings security, growth, happiness and luck to every woman who aims to fulfill her dreams," she says.

OPERATING ON OUR OWN CREDENTIALS



39-year-old designer, Reshma Gangji thinks that today's women are more empowered than ever before. While that's a good thing, society's mentality, she says, has not changed. This means that in spite of self empowerment, women are still asked for their surname, known by association with their husbands, fathers and brothers. She says, "Irrespective of being self independent, well renowned, with her own sense of identity, she is



>> The women we spoke to said they want every woman to not be afraid to voice their opinions

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STAND UP FOR OURSELVES

The year ended with women having very little faith in their neighbours, friends and the law, so this year, 19-year-old Heer Khant wants all women to be able to stand up for themselves. The Kandivali resident says, "I want all women to stand up for themselves and against injustice in every way." We are inclined to agree.

STRICTER LAWS



26-year-old Rashami Desai Sandhu thinks that eve teasing needs to be dealt with in a stricter fashion. "I'd like there to be stricter rules for eve teasing and rapes rather than just life sentence, which isn't half as painful as someone whose sexuality has been harmed. I would like there to be more men who support the safety of women cause, so that this cause can be taken more seriously," the actress says.

LIFE WITHOUT FEAR

Mahim resident Akshita Jha is beginning to feel the effects of living in a country where women are not protected and safety is all about caution and chance. Like most other women in the city, she's angry that there's so little freedom for women to express themselves. The 19-year-old says, "I want 2013 to give women the freedom they deserve. I also want the country to become a place that's safe to live in without having to think twice about everything we do."

LAWMAKERS ON OUR SIDE

So much has been made of the law barely helping women and often making life worse for them that it's no surprise what 22-year-old Priyanka Mathur wants. The Yari Road resident says that safety is top priority. She says, "We should feel safe going to the cops, we should feel protected. I'd like to see more women cops and a better attitude towards protecting women this year."

BASIC FACILITIES

Customer care executive, Varsha Pandit thinks that it's about time that there are a few changes made to ensure that women are safe. She says, "There should be more ladies coaches in the trains and if not that, then the rule of men travelling in some ladies coaches after 11pm should be prohibited. Lots of women work until late at night." The 23-year-old also tells us that single mothers have no facilities in India and better job opportunities and financial aid should be made available for them.

BANISH THE FEAR

Preeta Agarwal thinks that women in India are going into the New Year more scared than ever before. "Keeping the current scenario in mind, the wish list of every Indian woman has changed from our previous carefree desires. This year, a worried and scared woman makes her list of basic necessities of life such as safety, respect and honour. The society from playing a negative role will now have to learn to play a positive role in order to save the rights of a woman. We need to respect women, who we otherwise pray to as Goddess Lakshmi, Durga and Kaali," says the 27-year-old communications manager for Entice jewellery.

With inputs from Rohit Pramdar

questioned about her male companion. At many intervals, if a male companion doesn't exist, she is seen suspiciously in society. I'd like to see women able to operate on the basis of their own credentials even without the validation of a male partner or guardian."

SANITATION IS NECESSARY



Actress Mughda Godse thinks safety is the most important issue and in the New Year, she wants safety measures to be there for women, especially in Delhi. "I think we need a lot more women police around who are easy to connect with, so if there is any such issue the girls can approach them immediately. Also, I want less harassment and a society where men do not ogle at women on the roads and instead, treat them as equals, behaving normally rather than making them feel conspicuous," she says. The 26-year-old doesn't stop there though; she also thinks the country needs cleaner public toilets for women, immediately!

TAKE TO THE RADIO



"Women should be trained in martial arts since childhood. It should be a mandatory subject for girls as a part of school curriculum," says actress Reeth Mazumder. The 25-year-old also thinks there should be a radio station where women can voice their demands, difficulties and dreams on a national level without political interference. "We could call the show Freedom of Speech by Her," she suggests.

FOUR POINT AGENDA

In these shaky times, where government officials who run our country fail to stand up for women, artist Avantika Mathur, who travels a lot because of her work, has witnessed the unruly behaviour of men from close quarters. She suggests a precise four point agenda. The 23-year-old says, "I

suggest a four point revival agenda. First, law enforcement machinery should proactively engage with women to make them feel encouraged to work with the authorities. Second, speedy and demonstrative justice will instill the fear of the law in those who take our system for granted. Third, basic self defense education is the model of success wherever this issue has been effectively tackled. It works in both arenas — whether it's harassment on the road or domestic abuse behind closed doors. Finally, technology such as CCTVs, SOS alert systems, public helplines, smart street lighting and monitored walkways will go a long way in ensuring our safety."

SPREAD AWARENESS



We already know that a lot of the issues in our country rise from the lack of sex education. Actress Vishakha Singh thinks it's a must to grow up in a healthy environment. She thinks it's essential for girls so they understand each other and so that their parents can be their friends. "I want this so that girls can grow up to confide in their parents. Many crimes and mishaps happen because daughters are scared to turn to their parents," says the 25-year-old. She also emphasises that we as women need more women-only public transport driven by women.

TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE

While science is getting supremely advanced with each passing minute, if used in an apt manner, it can help to solve the security issues in this country to a large extent. And that's exactly what Rebecca D'souza, a communications professional suggests. She says, "The concerned authorities should allot a direct number for women to call in case of an emergency or even better, if notification takes place through a quick dial and GPS tracking system." Along with this, she thinks that the most critical aspect is the response time of the cops, which is at an all time low at the moment, unless you're a celebrity. "A quick response from police is a must, which will only happen if half of the force isn't too preoccupied with taking care of the rich and famous," adds the 25-year-old.