

#PERSPECTIVE

Will the real chivalrous man please sit down

As woman's day dawns upon us, two arguments immediately break out: what about men's day, and look at how all the feminists killed chivalry.

On the surface, both these arguments seem to deserve some attention. Upon closer inspection, neither have any merit. Firstly, men's day is on November 19. It is the same day as World Toilet Day. Do with that what you will.

The more important discussion is the one revolving around chivalry. A simplistic observation is that chivalry was the military and over time, romantic codes of practice upheld by knights and European soldiers.

Today, the focus is more on the romantic codes, because why as South Asians, should we really seek codes of ethical warfare from Europeans? Not that we don't do that, either. Apparently one of the codes of

chivalry was "Thou shall make war against the infidel without cessation and without mercy." We all know who follows that.

But more importantly, moving onto the romantic aspect of chivalry, remember how knights always talked about treating the pious, virtuous maiden right? Notice the adjectives. Even back then, with the code and all, the onus was still on a woman to be a certain type. Only upon finding such a maiden would a knight try to win her over. Either those virtues were present, or she was a sight to behold. Fair, long hair, and all that.

The winning her over was also usually a very grand gesture. Think Shah Rukh Khan movies but with more blood and masculinity. A No was only a grand gesture away from becoming a Yes. And a No was not ever the right answer. So, a lot of men went about their way sending

bouquets even though she said she was not interested, constantly messaging even though she would not reply, trying to be her friend only to secretly love her and expect her to love him back one day, and so on and so forth.

In short, there was and has always been a fine line between a chivalrous man and a creep. Nestled between those two definitions has always been the overzealous lover. Because knights never learned to calm down and they made sure others did not as well.

Once having failed in the some of the above-described modes of pursuit, for lack of a better word, the gentleman would resort to other seemingly innocent gestures: holding the door open, giving a woman his jacket when she was cold, trying to hold her hand as if she was incapable of

doing things on her own. Basically, treating a woman like you would treat a child.

The chivalrous behaviour, upon closer observation, became a patronising one. And when some men realised that women could not be won over by gimmicks, this must have whipped them into a fury. And hence began the debate on how feminists killed chivalry and not about how chivalry had always been quite problematic behaviour.

All this gave birth to the Nice Guys TM. And what are those? Clearly, another discussion for another day. For this woman's day though, take the leaf out of nobody's book, be yourself, be a decent human being and if friendships blossom, then good and if not, just move on.

By Osama Rahman

The (hidden) cost of being a woman

The chronicles of women are strongly accentuated in various parts of history, more often so owing to the notable effort we have to exert in order to overcome the constant barricades thrown our way — opportunities that the opposite gender can take for granted, but which we receive as a "privilege."

Albeit the discrepancies that persist, women have made notable progress, whether by breaking the glass ceiling at work to some extent or by successfully highlighting their contribution towards the economy. The entire gender discrimination scenario finally seems to enervate —but is it really the case?

Truth be told, gender discrimination is not only limited to salary discrepancies, professional roles or promotion at work, but rather it extends its deadly grasp on rudimentary parts of an economy, such as price. Price discrimination exists in the form of pink tax — a tax unlike any other, which remains hidden within the price tags of products catered towards women.

No matter how much we women are told to be silent about this topic, justified by explanations that lack logic, one cannot deny that pink tax is indeed real. If you are ever at a supermarket aisle, try comparing the price of unisex products and you will notice that just because the female version looks more feminine, they are costlier with no apparent rationalisation.

Whether it is attributed towards capitalising on the naïve consumer perspective of females or just another way to remind us of female subjugation embedded in a patriarchal society, the pink tax is the unnecessary price we have to pay, simply for being a woman. Fun fact —marketers even have a terminology for this concept, which is known as "shrink it and pink it!"

Superficially, the difference in price may not seem like much, but the accumulation of slight percentages here and there really adds up to a significant amount. The pink tax is omnipresent, regardless of the category of products or age of the consumer. Starting from infancy to old age, almost all products women use throughout life come tagged with this hidden charge.

Ranging from everyday essentials including personal care and hygiene



products to services such as haircuts, the pink tax is unavoidable. And if you are thinking this is limited to only non-essential items, surprisingly you are wrong, because comparing the price of painkillers that are said to mitigate menstrual cramps with ordinary painkillers shall leave you amazed.

Unfairly, this is the extra price about half of the population pay every time they shop, which sadly often goes unnoticed even by the payer. Perhaps in our odyssey to attain

a greater degree of feminism by trying to overcome myriad hurdles, the pink tax has been overlooked for a while.

But all is not doom and gloom, as this increasing awareness may indeed be a harbinger of a complete eradication of the pink tax, much like the other milestones we have graciously achieved over time powered by the zeal and spirit of womanhood.

By Fariha Amber

"The phrase 'pink tax' emerged in the 2010s. Pink refers to the fact products targeted to women and girls are often, stereotypically, pink in colour. And because women's products are frequently more expensive than their male counterparts, the price discrepancy has been likened to an unofficial tax.

It's important to note that a pink tax is not explicitly mandated by governments in the way that a sales tax or property tax is. Instead, it's believed to be the result of systemic gender discrimination in society."

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