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Life

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Daily Star

Love the body YOU ARE IN

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WHAT IT CAN DO
ALL BODIES ARE BEAUTIFUL C
TO BE OR NOT TO BE A MOTHER
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PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED MODELS: TASHNUVA SHISHIR, NAZIA HASSAN, PREJUAL CHAKMA, MAISHA SAMIHA, SHABABA RASHID, SHARREEN REZA
WARDROBE: RETAIL REMEDY STYLING: ISHA YEASMIN MAKEUP: FARZANA SHAKIL'S MAKEOVER SALON


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#HEALTH & FITNESS

Beauty is not BMI

I am on the chubby side of the weighing scales. I used the word chubby not because it's an endearing expression, but more so because it is less hurtful. Throughout my life, I have been called fat, fatso, fatty and these words scarred me. Now when I go back to my old albums and see myself some odd years ago, I failed to realise why a girl with her collarbones out and slim waistline was called by such harsh words. Of course, these days when my doctors write my prescriptions and scribble obese ++; they have a genuine reason to do so.

I am obese and I don't do anything about it; no exercise, no dieting and scarily enough, have no desire to help myself either. I think I am rebelling, simply because deep down in my mind's eye, I am offended and wounded and I have never been properly healed to find the right kind of motivation to love myself again. I have a fantastic husband, who for the last score and few more years has been trying his best to bring back my drive, but to no avail. I feel lazy and do not wish to spend an iota of energy doing something for myself.

The domino effect of that wound is my

laziness and lack of motivational drive, which resulted into my clinical depression, making me sink further down the pit. It was my generation when the society was at its rudest, no one cared for subtle niceties. The society then looked down on dark complexioned girl like they were witches, infertile women like pariahs, fat women as someone who would eat into her husband's wealth. We women in general were an unhappy lot and needed to wade through loads of social stigmas to hold our heads high.

I am earnestly so glad that two generations down the line, I am able to see

all body shapes and types being accepted for the way they are; broad, skinny, dark, short, tall. And today's women, unlike myself and my generation, are not bogged down with negativities, which crush your self-esteem. They are confident to work out their differences as their advantages.

Beauty is trivialised by objectifying it but confidence is sought after. Confidence gives you the strength to walk the walk, and talk the talk. The same is true for men as well. A lot has been written and said and done about the awareness and correctness of body images. Its time you read up and

be politically correct. Let the obese++ live a life and love her or him to change for the better.

Today's Star Lifestyle is all about Body Positivity. We talk about how body image, mental health condition and the influence of media are the pertinent trio; being unique and perfect; how motherhood is a choice and not an obligation, and many more trending topics.

Read and let us think together.

— RBR

Photo: Collected

us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন ঝুপচার্য আভিজাত্য মানেই

অ্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

ঝুপচার্য আভিজাত্য...

#BEAUTY

TANZIRAL DILSHAD
DITAN



Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of all?

Shejuti is a 27 year old executive working for two years at a reputed company. Because of her nine to five job, she peeks at a mirror less but is more consumed with the digital screens; which by the way is a sanctum of her friends and social media influencers flaunting their filtered bodies and faces. Although she never had the urge to undertake any drastic procedures, the urge to be trendy haunted her. At last, one fine day, she went back home, glanced at the mirror, and started searching online for beauty clinics to board the trend ship.

From fantasy stories to reality, the standard of beauty has been evolving like all other aspects of life. During the fifteenth century, renaissance women used cosmetics and devoted much time for their hair. Conversely, men became symbols of power. They flaunted their power through their obese physique. During the eighteenth century, women became more modest by concealing their breasts. Medications became the desired salvation to rejuvenate their bodies. During the twentieth century, the invention of machines brought about a new beauty, the beauty of consumption. Fashion canons represented the beauty of consumption by posing for pictures in magazines and billboards; starring in runway shows, movies, television shows, and commercials. Consumers were bombarded by the propaganda made public by fashion canons. Consumers wore designer jeans and



clothing and made up their hair and makeup to resemble the model on a glossy magazine cover. Mass media brought upon a new mode of beauty attention.

Negative body image has been a topic of intense debate amongst men and women of all ages since sixth century BC. Body image is a multidimensional concept that widely describes the internal and subjective perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours about an individual's appearance.

Individuals strive to be accepted by his or her peers, such as by having the "right" hair, body, clothing, and essentially anything that is considered acceptable by their peers. When rejected by his or her peers, individuals being subjected to constant daily teasing and torment, especially at a young delicate age, slowly changes his or her patterns of behaviour. These factors can lead the victim to isolate themselves and adopt extreme diet restrictions and unhealthy weight control practices, cosmetic surgery, aesthetic procedures, etc.

Today, society relies on social and mass media more than ever, as users are now hyper active. Media sources have a very important relationship with an individual as they have the unique ability to connect the individual with an abundance of information, such as an image one desires, news, fake news, celebrities, friends, family, online communities, and more.

The individual has the power to constantly ask, "Why a Negative Body Image?"

Both avenues have influence over the way the individual perceives him or herself and the desire to become what society presents as the ideal persona. The impact of social comparison to thin models in advertisements creates a negative face, body perceptions. Negative body perception is likely to be found while comparing oneself to extremely thin models. Negative

perceptions transfer to the individual via social media, mass media, technology, and by peers by shaming and bullying individuals with undesirable characteristics. Hence, using filters on mobile phone apps to going through different aesthetic/cosmetic surgery at an early age has become very common and trendy in Dhaka. There are so many salons, spas that are offering these services without proper experts or doctors that it is something to be a concerned about. If someone needs it, wants it, and at the right age, it's his or her wish, but when young ladies in their mid-20s get interested, they are losing their natural youth, natural beauty, and not to mention these procedures have to be maintained regularly, and not a one-time thing.

The constant access to media brings body image concerns to the forefront now more than ever. Mass media and social media has enabled the frequency of social comparisons. An individual can face harsh judgments towards him or her when images are encountered, which facilitate obsessive grazing or unenthusiastic thoughts and emotions. We can see that on the comment sections of the social media influencers to celebrity posts, that can categorically be called cyberbullying!

Will graceful ageing soon become a myth to the society?

Art: Tanziral Dilshad Ditan

#HEALTH & FITNESS

Body image, mental health condition and the influence of media: The pertinent trio

It is common knowledge that the most relevant perceptions and notions (that matter) in our lives are primarily shaped at the crucial age of adolescence. This is when we are at the beck and call of the media, our friends and even siblings; everything that we consider as 'valuable' during this specified period of time influences us for the long haul. So, if a teenager witnesses her favourite singer endorse an idealised body size, her mind will forever be etched with the notion that there is 'only one perfect size,' which is meant for all. This concept applies to teens of all genders, races and upbringing. Hence, experts usually target young adults when they especially want to motivate a generation to change perceptions.

"It is always better to start early than to rectify late," says Farin Daula, Mental Health Practitioner and Life-skills Educator (Adolescents and Youth) and also the founder of One Circle (a life-skills education institution).

We recently interviewed Daula for a better understanding of the ideology behind body positivity, and what it actually meant to the youth of today and how their influences could be affected to make them less susceptible to overall negativity and depression.

How can people celebrate their bodies every day?

Just like our personalities, our bodies are unique as well. The world would be a

very boring place if we all looked the same! Every time we get a negative thought about our bodies, we should try to remember the unique aspects of our own bodies instead. Additionally, we should also try to shift focus to 'what our bodies can do' rather than 'what it looks like' – helping to augment our self-belief.

What kind of people makes a person feel bad about their body and why?

People who body shame others are often extremely critical of their own bodies as well. This is detrimental for both the person experiencing it and the person doing the damage. Body shaming is a learnt behaviour. Society teaches us definitive notions of beauty, such as too fat, too thin, too dark, too



pale etc. and we criticise anyone who doesn't fit that notion. Culturally, it has been accepted to body shame ourselves and those around us. There are friends and family who believe that they "mean well" when they body shame others around them. We can stop this by immediately calling them out and voicing it to them on why it's completely unacceptable to shame someone about their looks.

Why are adolescents more susceptible to the outside pressure to looking good? How can they be motivated in a positive way during their formidable years?

Media, including social media, plays a huge part in shaping young people's views on unrealistic beauty standards. This comes in

the form of photo shopped celebrities, skinny models, and an unaccommodating six-pack culture. Media glorifies and celebrates beauty of only a certain type, weight, height, skin colour etc.

There is also a drawback to putting too much emphasis on body positivity since the focus is still on physical appearances. Instead, society as a whole should shift the focus to personality, positive character, and skills. We have to stop drawing parallels between our looks and our sense of self-worth.

Body positivity is a very common term that we frequently use nowadays to influence the youth of today. What does it actually mean?

Body image is how and what we think about our bodies. A positive body image is about accepting our physical appearance, and being satisfied with the way we look. Body positivity means accepting ourselves and others around us the way we are and understanding that there is no single notion to being beautiful. Positive body image is important for self-esteem, mental health and a balanced attitude towards healthy eating and an active lifestyle.

We often see adults suffering from severe depression because their insecurities had not been addressed earlier. How can these people be helped?

BOLD AND STRONG

That's how women are

This is the story of Samira Syed, a Bangladeshi powerlifter, fashion and fitness model. Yes, you read it right; she is all three and much more. Her passion, often associated as a man's profession, didn't seem to put her down. Instead, it encouraged her to be adamant and more focused on achieving her best: to be number one in her field of athletics.

"Even two years back, I was just a fitness enthusiast just like any normal person. I would regularly go to the gym and eat healthy food whenever possible. But as I religiously worked out, my gym instructor (I call him coach) noticed my intense dedication towards weightlifting and also how I excelled in it. This is when he got the idea to introduce me to powerlifting. And then, there was no turning back for me," confessed a smiling Samira.

Since she started, she has taken part in five contests, including Deadlift 2020, where Samira secured the fourth position in a 63KG weight class distinction.

"My journey took a massive lift after winning the accolade and I don't think I can ever turn around. This field gave me a separate identity and I was almost reborn. And having gained enormous amount of confidence, after proving to the world that everything and anything was achievable by the women of today, I decided to encourage other women onto the journey of fitness or even powerlifting for that matter."

Samira runs her own fitness page by the name 'Burn It with Samira S' on Facebook, which has gained popularity since day one of its establishment.

"I hope my knowledge and experience will help people to become both physically and mentally fit," said Samira.

Until now, everything sounded effortless and uncomplicated, as if powerlifting had always been Samira's calling and she achieved greatness within a few days of workout. According to the athlete, it's actually on the contrary.

"Only if I could express how difficult this journey had been for me! Transformation wasn't easy at all. I sacrificed many things in life, from an active social life to enjoying restaurant made food. I stopped having my favourite dishes, survived through days of sleepless nights, suffered reactions from supplements, felt stressed, jittery, cried my heart out and almost everything else that could break a person. And yet, I was adamant in my goals. I wanted to be a powerlifter and there was no alternate to that.

"People reading my story up until now may feel a bit jittery and become discouraged to start an athletic journey of their own, but let me also assure them that the pain I suffered from had been nothing compared to the joy I achieved from being a proud female powerlifter of our country,



breaking down barriers for all the women in the society," stated Samira.

But her journey had not been solo, there were many people supporting her to achieve the pinnacle of success, and mostly, Samira credits the Bangladesh Powerlifting Association (BPA), her parents and coach Zico Zaman for her achievements.

"If it wasn't for them, my journey would have been tougher and laid with additional obstacles," stated the athlete.

2021 has encouraged Samira on hypertrophy workout and willing to participate in more contests.

Aside from her identity as an athlete, Samira has also kept herself busy with modelling stints in the local fashion industry.

"Maybe I am workaholic, I don't know, but I love working in many professions and modelling is my other passion," she said.

Here's wishing more accolades to the athlete, and may she be able to take powerlifting across national borders and make us prouder every day.

After all – women can do everything they set their mind to.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo: Samira Sayed

Essentials:

Facebook page: "Burn it with Samira S"
Instagram: burn_itwith_sams

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Don't jeopardize your health. Understand both arguments before taking sides. Abrupt changes in your profession are evident. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Try to be understanding. Avoid saying too much to colleagues. Put your place in order. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Your dramatic appeal will unleash itself at social functions. Your partner will feel ignored this week. Making amends. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Your partner will disappoint you. Your passionate mood will be well-received. Sidestep the eccentrics. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Don't make rash decisions. Consider starting a small part-time business. Don't let others make unreasonable demands. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Don't say something you'll regret later. Have fun with your partner. Don't get involved in joint financial ventures. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Plan physical activities. Deal with problems before it's too late. Get involved in a moneymaking venture. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Your partner won't be accommodating this week. Check into art objects. You can do well in group endeavours. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Be extra careful with your valuables. Help children with their projects. Get involved in real estate deals. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Co-workers may not be on your side. Ask for pertinent information when necessary. Don't be misunderstood. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Outcomes will be favourable. Past partners may try to come back. Overindulgence is not a cure. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Inspire confidence in others. Make some changes this week. You will be a spendthrift this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

#HYGIENE

CLEAN HANDS

with Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer

Germes are all around us, on every surface. We often touch these surfaces with our hands either knowingly or unknowingly. Just as we use our hands on a daily basis for almost every activity, they also come into contact with a variety of dust particles and germes.

We tend to use our contaminated hands to touch our face, mouth, eyes, nose, and numerous parts of our body.

While thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is the most ideal approach to get rid of these particles, it is not always an available option and depends on the surrounding. So, another option to get rid of these germes is to use hand sanitizer. Nowadays, this germ-fighter is a staple in everyone's shopping list. However, there are many counterfeit products and ineffective hand sanitizers which do not get the work done but rather make us more vulnerable.

Square Toiletries Limited offers Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer, a reliable hand sanitizer which is adequately effective in destroying germes, leaving one's hands germ free and safe to use.

Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer effectively meets everyone's personal hygiene requirements. The convenient product design makes carrying the sanitizer everywhere and anywhere easily

Germes pose a great threat to our health and lifestyles. Every precaution is necessary in assuring that we keep ourselves and our loved ones safe and secured. Square Toiletries Limited is making these precautionary and preventive measures easily maintainable for everyone with their line of hygiene products which include hand wash and face masks along with their sanitizer.

doable. The 40ml travel pack is such that it barely takes up any space in one's bag, does not add any extra weight and can be carried around for whenever necessary at ease. Therefore, keeping a bottle in one's bag is always a wise idea!

There are also various sizes available. The family pack comes in two different containers of 200ml and 500ml with a pump so that everyone in the house can sanitize their hands easily when needed. For offices and corporations, a five litre container is offered. Starting from individual and personal needs to family and collective safety, Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer is available for everyone at affordable rates.

Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer effectively removes 99.9 percent germes. In situations where clean water is not accessible, the sanitizer can serve the purpose of killing all harmful germes on the hands and does not require water to be effectively used.

Some sanitizers tend to leave the palm of the hands dry and flaky. The harsh sanitizers, even if it serves its purpose of cleaning, damages skin. On the other hand, Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer leaves the hands feeling soft and refreshed. The rinse-free sanitizer is ideal for the whole family.

Simply pouring a few drops into the palms of the hands and rubbing the hands together assures protection and cleanliness. The sanitizer can be used and carried during travelling, before coming in contact with infants or little children, after touching pets, touching surfaces in public areas and so on. Imagine going to a restaurant or cafe to enjoy a good meal. There might not always be an option to wash hands before eating. In that case, having Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer to apply before eating will ensure that one's hands are germ free and that these germes do not contaminate the food. Then, while paying for the meal and in handling cash, hands should be sanitized as well as it involves hand-to-hand exchanges.

Germes pose a great threat to our health and lifestyles. Every precaution is necessary in assuring that we keep ourselves and our loved ones safe and secured. Square Toiletries Limited is making these precautionary and preventive measures easily maintainable for everyone with their line of hygiene products which include hand wash and face masks along with their sanitizer which are all widely available on e-commerce platforms and retail shops. As sanitizers have become a must have in everyone's bag and in every household, Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer checks all the boxes for individual and collective safety!

All products of Sepsnil, including Sepsnil Instant Hand Sanitizer Mask can be purchased online from Daraz and Chaldal and corporate orders can be placed at Square Toiletries Limited's helpline at 08-000-888-000.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: Square Toiletries Limited



#BEAUTY

Most of us know for a fact that our school and college years are the most formative years of our lives. This is when we are encouraged to follow a set lifestyle and consider it as 'the ultimate way to be.' This is the time when certain 'media certified' and so-called 'perfect body' images are infused into our minds and we start to believe that any deviation from the specified measurements or ideology must be incorrect.

Beauty is all SHAPES and SIZES



This is also when all sorts of problems begin to arise, one by one, because in reality, we find ourselves way different from the specified trajectories. We feel disappointed, neglected, and often depressed, blaming ourselves for failing to be as 'perfect' as deemed by the society.

So, here we are today, trying to tell people all over the world that being different is normal and being different is being real. And that there are no hard and fast rules to be the same as everyone else. The regressive thought process has only been concocted by a select few whom it benefits, when the real truth is that every body type, shape and personalities are beautiful and we must be open-minded enough to celebrate our differences.

Star Lifestyle recently interviewed a few wonderful women; leaders and torch bearers, who consider themselves as different and yet, more beautiful than the fake interpretations of the perfect woman. **Tashnuva Anan Shishir Actor, News Presenter, Model, Dancer** Tashnuva Shishir had a hard time convincing society that she was as much part of the society, as any cisgender person.

"I have tried to prove over and over again that I can do anything as a transgender woman that any other person in the world could do. I had to prove to them that I could 'also' be a model and broke all the stereotypes attributed to the term conventional!"

According to Shishir, there is no specified definition to beauty, all these have been manufactured over the years, as an end result to 200 years of colonialism.

"We are all South Asian people; we belong to the tropical areas. Why must our skin colour be as fair as Caucasians? Why must we be as tall as them? Isn't it because we were made to think that way?" said Shishir.

Shishir also stated that the modelling

industry all over the world was obsessed with a fixed set of looks which almost always discouraged the unconventional looking transgender men and women to take part in the profession.

"It's extremely hard for us to get in, we have different types of skin, some of us have unique heights and body measurements," revealed Shishir.

According to the multi-talented performance artist, God has made every individual unique and people in general should proudly flaunt their differences instead of hiding behind the veil of similarity.

"We must all be encouraged to think beyond the box. In a world that is so advanced, it is extremely prehistoric to stick to ideologies so ancient."

Nazia Hassan Fitness Coach, Nutrition Expert

To Nazia Hassan, body positivity means much more than an emphasis on the external body image. According to the fitness coach, the term is more related to self-love and mental satisfaction instead.

"I respected myself too much to ever think that my body composition was flawed," said Nazia.

During the conversation, Hassan revealed that she had been through a lot of ups and downs in life and that every stage of her life demanded a different body structure.

"I used to be into weightlifting and my body type was completely different back then. After that, I became pregnant and then I had a completely different body type and today, I am much leaner but I wouldn't call any of these stages flawed. They have been all perfect and exactly what was needed at the time," said Nazia.

Being a fitness coach means that clients come to her with body issues that need to be corrected and Hassan has a different approach to deal with her clients.

"I tell every single one of my client to

be healthy, fit, and energetic instead of becoming a certain body type. Most of my clients, when they come to me at first, want to drop 20KG or 10KG to become a certain weight deemed attractive by the society; I teach them to be healthy instead. Once they get used to my style, they realise how much more important being fit and energised is compared to just dropping down a few sizes," revealed the fitness guru.

Shababa Rashid Self-Employed

"For the longest time, I kept my hair straight, thinking that it was the only way to look trendy and fashionable," admits Rashid. "I even damaged my hair irreparably by trying to straighten it every day," she said, highlighting the lack of confidence in her God-gifted features, including a thick set of curly locks.

"The funny thing is, once I stopped following the norms and began to take care of my natural hair, people actually started to compliment me more. This actually meant that all this time, I was worried about nothing at all! So, basically it wasn't them, it was more me lacking self-confidence," admits Rashid.

Today, Rashid believes that she is much more confident than before and wants to share her story with the world. "Please don't follow what others are doing. Instead, be yourself and people will find you more interesting than ever."

Prejual Chakma Model, Communication expert working at a local company

Prejual works at a marketing firm, while doing stints of modelling as a hobby. "People are always telling me that I starve myself to be lean. See! It's not easy being a model at all. I have always been a little on the lean side and many people found a problem with that. So, it isn't any specific structure that the rest of the world wants you to comply with, rather it is their own unhappiness that bars them from accepting you as you are," said the

confident model.

In her profession, she has to meet a lot of people and they come up with a variety of odd conversations.

"There are so many people calling me a budget Korean model and that is so offensive. It seems like these people are completely uneducated about the many indigenous cultures that exist in Bangladesh.

I proudly belong to the Chakma community and I don't like it when somebody confuses my heritage without checking with me first. That's just rude," said Prejual.

The popular model clearly states that the grass is not greener on any side. "Trust me, I just want to be myself, conforming to a certain size, shape and body type can be a constant pressure that takes major toll on the psychology of a person. So I tell everybody in general. Just be yourself and that's the best way to be."

Maisha Samiha Professional Photographer, Entrepreneur

"I have always been petite! This is who I am. But people seem to have a problem with this. I remember one person just randomly making a comment that I was tiny because my mum didn't feed me enough during my childhood," said the well-known photographer.

Claiming to have been equally chided for her olive toned skin colour, Samiha said she found a worthy coping mechanism to deal with the negativities.

"Sports gave me wings; it gave me enough confidence to overcome any sort of



Sharreen Reza Faculty, International School

"I have been wearing the hijab from the age of fourteen, completely out of personal choice and yet, people keep on asking me improper questions like: why do you wear the hijab? Have you been forced...," confessed Reza.

"Most of the time, I have walked away from such nonsensical questions. I have taken part in the national volleyball team in my hijab and it was my choice. Plus, when people can't get through to me on this note, they start commenting about my height. Calling me too tall and whatnot. At first, these sort of comments used to get to me, and then I realised these comments actually come from really dissatisfied people. You know just like they say, if you can't do, comment," stated Reza.

Reza confessed that negative comments don't hurt her anymore because she realises that the pain inflicted on her by others are actually desperate cries of unhappy people.

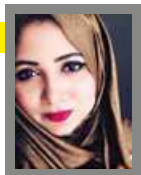
Having spoken to all these wonderful ladies, we have come to the conclusion that however the world may like to portray us, we only shine when we are truly ourselves – body type, image, size, shape, and personality.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Models: Tashnuva Shishir, Nazia Hassan, Prejual Chakma, Maisha Samiha, Shababa Rashid, Sharreen Reza Wardrobe: Retail Remedy Styling: Isha Yeasmin Makeup: Farzana Shakil's Makeup Salon

THINSPIRED

SIMRA KHAN
Fitness and Nutrition Coach, Mentor/
Guide at ThinspiredbySimra,
Managing Director Fit Food
Culinary Artist- Specialized in Healthy
Cooking



Embracing Body Positivity for Self-Empowerment

See if this rings a bell: You are at a social gathering, and you often find yourself or other women start their conversation with how you have either lost weight or maybe gained a little from the last time they saw you. This conversation starting point is so toxic that it takes away your confidence level down so much that you start being overly body conscious and maybe stop socialising. This stigma leads to harmful behaviours in women, with negative body image leading them to try out fad diets, starvation, and even bulimia.

In an effort to look perfect, many women fast, go for strict diets, intake chemical slimming (laxative) agents. Anorexia is another form of body negativity which is associated with emotional disorder, making one's obsession to look thin until they are just bones and skin, leading to major health issues such as anaemia, malnutrition and organ failure due to sudden weight loss in the unhealthiest manner.

In pursuit of a toxic body image

In this era, many women, including the millennials, have joined the workforce and for them, creating a body positive society is an important tool to make them feel more empowered. We want to live



in a world where young girls don't feel threatened to meet other fellow women with a toxic mentality.

The rise of social media also adds to the downside of bringing in this hysteria of "perfect body." We participate in this frenzy of body comparison and self-doubt by believing in such unrealistic body types, which most of us don't really have to be honest. Either we are too thin or too fat and never really care how we really feel about our body from the inside.

The unrealistic beauty standards of celebrities, Instagram influencers with that perfect filter or that deceptive pose hits you hard, and you engage in this never-ending pursuit of the 'perfect figure.' This affects your mental and social wellbeing, leading to anxiety, shame, and

guilt, and these feelings hold you back from progressing both financially and socially. You are constantly obsessed and feel discontent in whatever you do. Some women go for drastic weight loss and even gastric surgeries to lose weight.

"Love yourself first and everything else will fall into place."

Nurturing healthy body image

Positive body image and self-esteem are interlinked. Low self-esteem is developed when girls or women have negative feelings about their body shape. This major urge to become perfect makes them chug miracle drinks, follow fasting, and the ever controversial 'fat eating diet.' Inconsolably acknowledging exercise in this equation is always absent. This has an opposite

reaction, as their bodies become lethargic, weak, their skin and hair gets affected, and they ultimately go back to square one which shatters their self-esteem.

Society's recent push to body positivity helped empower many women by boosting their self-image and confidence. Many women are now ready to accept that a healthy body is the right body type. Healthy eating habits such as clean eating, which is more of a lifestyle change than just a simple diet, has made major shifts into understanding the value of eating well and following a fitness regime to feel stronger from the inside.

Clean eating lifestyle choice for healthy body and mind

Clean eating diet allows you to make

good eating decisions and divides your daily meal plan into 4-5 smaller meals. Clean eating is all about eating the right food, such as wholesome food, fibre-rich food, vegetable, protein, vitamins, antioxidants, omega fatty acid and cutting on processed, refined and fast food.

Hydration and reducing stress is essential part of clean eating, so forgoing fizzy carbonated sugary drinks and caffeine is important. Clean eating can help you lose weight in the healthiest manner and it doesn't work overnight. It's a lifestyle change with a holistic approach of eating healthy and timely meals with a daily workout regime.

The benefits go beyond just weight loss; this lifestyle diet will keep you healthy, have more energy, boost your metabolism. You will have healthy skin, hair and vital organs. Exercise is a major part of a person's daily life, since in this diet, you will consume a balanced eating plan, you will have a forte for enthusiastic workout routine.

I feel good, I look good

I was a skinny kid, and was constantly bullied for my skinny figure back in the '90s. I was called malnourished, a stick, and various other comments from everyone around who would always advise me to eat more. Whereas I was an energetic, hyper young girl and ate well, but maybe burned more by my daily activities.

The scenario changed when I was diagnosed with PCOS and this made me gain more in my pregnancies and also develop gestational diabetes. After my second child, I knew I had to do something about my weight, not because I hated being fat, but because it hampered my mobility mostly.

I was bloated all the time and digestion was impaired too. That time, I used to get useless comments from here and there. The body shaming was different this time, as it was more fat-shaming. But that wasn't bothering me more than my unhealthy lifestyle was, like waking up late, not working out, eating fried refined food.

I had to find a sustainable approach for my healthy lifestyle choice and not just a diet. Around the same time, I stumbled across clean eating lifestyle which I found manageable. Adopting this, I knew my weight wouldn't just drop overnight. I lost 9 kg in one year and now, I am eating well, working out daily to maintain my healthy body and to strengthen my core body. I am more concerned about my overall wellbeing, mental and physical strength so that I can keep my family healthy and that gives me the empowerment I deserve.

I believe people should cherish their bodies by eating right and have a daily workout routine to redefine the unrealistic body image in themselves and in others by bestowing that healthy body is the perfect body.



By Simra Khan
Photo: Simra Khan

#FUSION CUISINE

SHAHEDA YESMIN

Culinary Curator of Jewel's Kitchen boutique school



Fusion cuisine explained

What does Fusion Cuisine mean?

Fusion food is an art of cooking that involves combining varying and contrasting culinary traditions, or techniques, into one single dish.

There are various forms of fusion food. It could be regional fusion, for example, where food from different regions or sub-regions are combined. The characteristic of 'fusion cuisine' is a mutual blending, or, to put it differently — this type of cuisine combines the traditions of different national cuisines.

In the global sense, fusion cooking resembles a meeting point and calls for imagination and improvisation. It is the blending of diverse cuisines to create something different without compromising on its taste.

Quite often, some tend to confuse the true meaning of the word 'fusion.' The art of fusion is a cuisine by itself where one needs to have proper knowledge of the foods that are being 'fused.'

Cuisines of this type are not categorised according to any one particular cuisine or style. It is an art of creativity and innovations.

As early as the 1960s, American chefs were experimenting with blending European and Asian cuisines. Richard Wing, of Imperial Dynasty in Hanford, California, is widely credited with creating one of the first fusion cuisines when he combined French and Chinese cooking traditions at his family's restaurant in the 1960s.

There are categories and types of fusion food, although, it is a general term for the combination of various forms of cookery and comes in several forms. Fusion food is usually the invention of Culinary Curators and highly experienced chefs.



There is a trend these days for people to like 'fusion cuisine,' and it has become a popular thing to do. Its popularity lies in the fact that it offers culinary adventures based on unique and distinctive tastes, bringing more colour to mainstream culinary culture. This explains why many aspiring chefs are inclined to create their own 'fusion.'

This, however, is neither easy nor simple. While one can enjoy and cook food from a culture that is not one's own but in doing so, one must learn to respect it and know enough about its origin.

Most fusion dishes incorporate some familiar elements. They appeal to the human love of the familiar, the affection for comfort food. Many people associate specific dishes or ingredients with pleasant memories, and the best fusion food takes advantage of that emotional connection.

How do you make fusion food?

From my own wide experience, I would suggest the following:

Do your research by visiting restaurants or pick up any recipe from a dinner.

What I am trying to say is, first you need to pick up a tasty dish and then go for 'fusion' through appropriate blending.

Cook the original dish first. That will guide you to make a great fusion.

Give yourself some parameters. Don't over stuff your mind to make fusion. For example, if you want to make a fusion dish with Thai and French foods, you have to have a proper knowledge of both the cuisines. I will reiterate here that fusion is effective 'blending.' You can't do 'fusion' within your own cuisine. That is, you 'create' your own cuisine in your own way but give it a degree of diversity. That's what the 'food curators' are meant for.

Be practical with your changes. For example, if you want to make a fusion of a 'beef recipe,' stick to the savoury dish. Never try to make your 'beef dish' into a dessert, and vice versa, if you are trying to make a fusion with a 'dessert,' make sure it is a dessert. Don't add any 'savory' dish ingredients or may be an important spice of a 'savory' dish. These are not 'fusion' cuisine.

A combination within the same cuisine may not appeal to one's palate. Someone with knowledge will explain to you properly whether it is right or not. Don't take constructive criticism personally, the critic means well.

Here is one of my 'fusion cuisine' items for all of you. Wait for my upcoming cookbook, where you will find fusion and some creativity.

Culinary regards to all.

FUSION FRENCH CHICKEN LIVER PATE

Ingredients:

- 25g butter
- ¼ cup shallots, minced
- 300g chicken liver
- 100ml grape juice
- 200ml cream
- ¼ cup spring onion
- 150g chicken breast, boneless
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp green peppercorn
- 1 tbsp sweet mint sauce
- 1 tbsp Thai sweet chilli sauce
- 1 tbsp apricot sauce
- 2-3 bay leaves

Method

Preheat the oven at 180C.

In a pan, melt 15g of butter on medium heat. Sear shallots for 2-3 minutes and then add the livers and sauté for about 5 minutes.

Add grape juice, cream and spring onion and sauté for 1 minute

In a food processor, add the liver mixture, minced chicken, egg and pepper corn, cover and process for 4-5 minutes. Don't make a smooth paste. Add the mint, Thai sweet chilli and apricot sauce, mix well. Taste and adjust.

With the butter left, butter a terrine (or small 2-3 terrines) and add the blended preparation. Top with the bay leaves.

In a roasting pan, add some hot water and place the terrine covered. And cook for 30 minutes. Check, cooking time depends on individual ovens. Insert a toothpick in the middle of the pate, if it comes up clean, it's done.

Remove from the oven and let it cool. Keep in the refrigerator for 4 hours minimum.

De-mould in a nice dish topped with onion marmalades and dry cherry, served with pitted green olives, fried bread, grapes and carrots.

Food and Photo: Shaheda Yesmin

BEOL | adani wilmar

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The power of a befitting lingerie

Lingerie shopping in Bangladesh is a three-pronged challenge, often disappointing! When looking for quality, you will dreadfully discover the markets being flooded with leftovers from European and American RMG orders, the sizes of which were not exactly built for individuals of the Indian subcontinent. Second, evaluating choices will prove difficult; there are not many. Sizes in local markets are limited, and if that's in your favour, designs will leave you second-guessing. Finally, you'll resort to "the easier route" of importing your lingerie via close friends or family, which will prove far more expensive than locally-produced goods, not to mention the waiting period, culminating to your inevitable disappointment.

Refusing to bow down to these colossal fails time and time again, visionary entrepreneur, Monoshita Ayruani took matters into her own hands. She identified a niche in the clothing industry of Dhaka and worked in small but steady steps to claim it. Enter Shape.

"Born more out of frustration than inspiration,"

as Ayruani puts it, Shape is a women's lingerie brand breaking glass ceilings by reinventing the way we look at undergarments. Shape is not your typical, veiled-in-secrecy lingerie store tucked away in some lonesome corner of a mall or a street. A virtual business for now, the social media presence of Shape is real and unapologetic, blissful and brazen. The page dares to start conversations others would shy away from and aims to spread awareness. It does so about a few things.

Whoever said size does not matter was certainly not shopping for their breasts! Here, two sizes, in fact, are paramount: band number and cup letter. Both are different than one another but can easily be measured using a tape.

For the band number which can range from 32, 34, 36 and 38, take the measuring tape and take it around the bottom of your bust, holding it snug at your torso. Round up the figure and you have your band number!

For the cup size, hold the tape a bit higher and measure round the fullest part of your bust. You can hold the tape a bit looser than

before but still remember to round up to the nearest whole number. Subtracting your cup size from your band number will reveal your bra size!

A difference of 0 is AA, 1 is A, 2 is B, 3 is C and 4 is D. Likewise, a difference value of 5 is DD, 6 is DDD or F and 7 is G. But if this is math you can't do, Shape has handy an exclusive team of employees dedicated to providing you with size consultations. This way, you're



always guaranteed a Goldilock's fit for your lingerie: one that is neither too tight nor too loose but rather just right.

When talking about what Shape has to offer in the products it boasts, Ayruani evaluates, "Shape's strength is its range of seamless undergarments. The losing battle we would always fight was the shape of our undergarments being visible over layers of t-shirts, kameez or just certain fabrics. Our seamless range gives you a seamless look so you can wear that t-shirt you never had the courage to wear before and revel in the confidence that no shape is being made out over your clothes."

Seamless undergarments fulfil a consumer demand that was previously left unmet. Another unfulfilled demand arose from the simple discomfort, especially in humid weather, of multi-layering just for the sake of keeping your bra invisible to the outside

world. This, Shape solved by introducing bra-tops — a juxtaposed tank top and bralette that contains removable padding (as do all their bras) that prioritise comfort and wearability above all else.

Shape has under its belt more to choose from regardless of what size and body shape you rock — strapless, convertible, balconettes, triangle cups or push-up bras. But choose wisely and only according to your breast shape. Consult with Shape regarding this.

As part of Shape Activewear, the brand has also introduced a range of high-impact sports bras that come in a myriad of sizes. The design is sleek and so powerful that any woman with whatever body type will feel comfortable and well-supported in one.

Shape's success since its inception in 2019 has to be its relentless customer service and dedication to the social causes their online posts promote. Through strategic and witty campaigns, routine advocacy for body positivity and social inclusion of plus-sized women by expanding options to them. Ayruani individually and via Shape, makes strides to normalise lingerie conversations by speaking vocally at exhibitions and taking the lead by trying to educate its customers on the right bra shapes and sizes.

"When you run a page, your personality kind of shows through. And, so, with our posts online, we have been anything but conservative," she concludes.

Simply, picking up a bag from Shape can single-handedly change your entire wardrobe. Shape redefines the three prongs and keeps individualism, sizes and prices in check, rightfully restoring joy to lingerie shopping. No longer a disappointing ordeal but now rather an uplifting exploit, just wear shape!

By Ramisa Haque
Photo: Shape

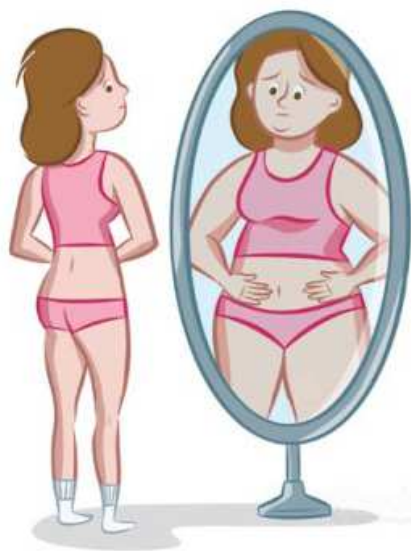
Essentials

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JustWearShape>

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Body image, mental health condition and the influence of media: The pertinent trio



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 03

Shift focus from physical appearance to the whole person that you are.

Confront those who perpetuate body shaming.

Promote body positivity and be a role model to others who are struggling.

See a mental health expert as soon as possible if things are getting too out of control.

Finally, having said everything, it must be mentioned that "body positivity" should be taught early on in our lives, just like any other subject because it will help us to grow as stronger individuals later in life. Daulah agrees that body positivity, along with a comprehensive list of a few other life-skills education should be made a compulsory part of every educational institution across the country.

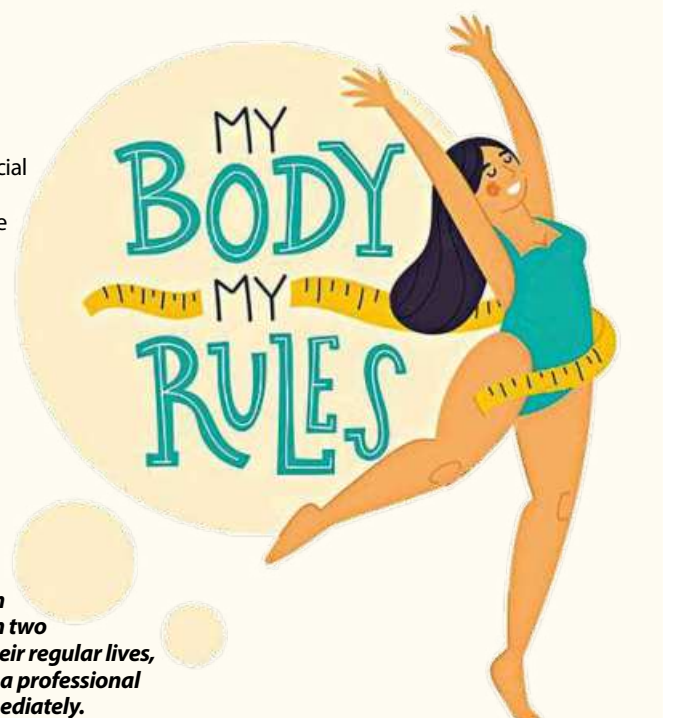
"We need to incorporate mental health,

physical well-being and social skills into our curriculum and these issues need to be given equal importance as other academic subjects. There is a mental health pandemic which we simply cannot ignore," said the worried expert.

Interviewed by Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Photo: Farin Daulah/ Collected

Disclaimer: If someone you know is suffering from depression for longer than two weeks and it's affecting their regular lives, it is best to seek help from a professional mental health expert immediately.



#HEALTH

Not woman enough for the world

Over the years I watched my friends and colleagues bear children with zero concern, while my infertility stretched on for years. It was 'as if' I couldn't finish-off with my womanly duties until and unless I reproduced!

After years of endless visits to the gynaecologist and one failed IVF in Dhaka, I landed up in Bangkok's most reputed infertility hospital. Shifting to a foreign land, taking a break from a job that I loved, renting-in at an alien country, and arranging finances for a super-costly treatment had been utterly stressful on my deteriorating mental health and yet, I tried my best. To add cherries on the top; the physical pain endured during trial phase of the IVF was incomprehensible. Every day, I had to intake medicines from every possible point in the body. Oral, vaginal, rectal.

Painful injections to my lower abdomen and bottom: thrice, every day. Yes! You got it right. I went through hell, thrice, every day. As a result, my tummy turned black with bruises and blood clots. The hormonal medicines bore severe side-effects on my outer appearance. I lost hair like a chemotherapy patient. I had dark patches on my neck, hyper-pigmentations and rashes on my face, pitch-dark eye circles and uncontrollable weight gain. I started using the highest filters while taking photos. I was even embarrassed to show my face to the husband during video calls. One day, I said "I look ugly" and he replied "No, you don't, you look gorgeous!" I knew he was lying.

A few days into the treatment, the doctor transferred two embryos into my uterus and informed that I would have fraternal twins, in two weeks — if everything went well. I skipped showers for these 14 days, laid flat on the bed and simply prayed. I even selected names for my babies — Aariz and Liyana.



But alas! After all the effort, the pregnancy test came negative. The medic said that the embryos stopped developing

a few days after the implantation and my treatment had failed. My mum broke down crying, right in front of the doctor. So did I,

at least mentally.

My world felt shattered, I felt depressed and completely lost. I did not even want to return to Bangladesh and face the sneering remarks thrown in by society. Simply said, I was tired of fighting my fate!

And that's when the decision hit me! Not to pursue any further treatment, and to live my life to the fullest, with or without a child. I promised myself not to allow anyone make me feel any less of a woman just because I couldn't bear a child.

I am certainly a mother, especially to all the lovely kids that I teach at school.

Nowadays, when anyone tries to belittle my existence by reminding me of my condition, I answer back boldly, "Not having children is also a blessing; it's just a different kind of blessing."

Post 2019, I did not pursue any treatment. Instead, I found solace in music, books, and prayers. After a long period of inactivity, I finally hit the gym and made staying fit and healthy an essential part of life.

In the near future, my plan is to set up a foundation for the underprivileged orphans of our country and provide them with basic education and food.

Yes! I will be a mother, to all these children. I promise.

By Nafisa Ahmed
Photo: Nafisa Ahmed

এখন **ফাস্ট ওয়াশ** ডিটারজেন্ট পাউডার ১ কেজির সাথে ১ টি **৫৭০** লম্বীসোপ **ফ্রী!**

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KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

Motherhood: a choice, not an obligation

The year 2021 is ringing with change but women claiming bodily autonomy is not one we are prepared for yet. The liberal (read: atypical) belief of “your body, your choice” is one shrouded with controversy, shame and guilt where only one school of thought is given attention.

To have or not to have children is a life-changing decision that is often taken for many women; their ‘consent’ to motherhood is mostly seen as an assured constant unimaginable to ever change. But aspiring to motherhood is a personal choice and there are two wings, rather than just one, that must be acknowledged with the same respect.

If raising children is what you yearn for, you should be celebrated and supported for your choice to bring life into the world. Motherhood is a beautiful experience, one that has no substitutes. There’s nothing quite like feeling a growing foetus move and breathe inside of you and having its tiny heartbeats pull at your emotional strings.

Usaila Alam, a teacher philosophising over life and English and a successful mother bringing up two teenage daughters, loves every opportunity and challenge raising her children allow. Her view is transparent, “I love my daughters and



everything about being a mother. I love disciplining them, instilling my values into them and having free-spirited conversations with them. I feel blessed to have daughters and I can positively say they understand me better than anyone else in the world.”

But make no mistake, motherhood is anything but a lionised bed of roses. Morning sickness, physical distress, eating and sleeping disorders, not to mention the financial cost and tumultuous alterations a child, small enough to fit in a tiny bassinet, brings with it. What we often forget is that it’s not just the pregnancy that a mother has to endure. It’s the permanency of raising the children you bear and parenting that is a discussion suffering from little to no limelight.

“Your children are your responsibility. They did not ask to be born; in fact, they had no say in the matter! It was you who decided to do so. This is why it is your job to take care of them as well as you can and raise them into able human beings,” Alam shares.

And so the enunciation of the argument, thus far, falls onto the word “choice.” You are more than welcome to sincerely *choose* to be a mother. However, if you are of the second wing of taking a childless life, no one should be entitled to have a say in the

matter. Other than you, of course.

The world should applaud you and minstrels should write songs of your opinion and bravado. If you find yourself shocked at this notion, perhaps, it is time to remind you yet again that motherhood is a conscious decision; one that must be taken with respect to individual ideologies and perspectives. Bangladeshi women who have happily decided to be child-free exist and one such brazen example is Kohinur



Khyum Tithila, a journalist working at Dhaka Tribune.

“I’m an independent, heterosexual woman and I have no desire to have a child. I proactively made this choice not out of apathy or ignorance, but because I want to live my life to the fullest; I want to explore every opportunity I’m granted without having my hands tied. And even though I love to celebrate my femininity, I identify that motherhood is not its only branch,” Khyum feels. “I simply cannot picture myself mothering a child in any phase of my life,” she states.

And a brazen statement to make. Khyum deserves a show of respect simply for voicing an outlook deemed unconventional in our society. But maybe it’s an outlook that more women should accept and adopt.

Parenting is a big ask. It demands enthusiasm, training and patience – qualities not everyone is inbred with nor are prepared to develop. A young child left to the whims of neglect and mercy of chance is one who grows up with scars and trauma that take years, if even that, to reverse.

In our society, broken marriages are often seen as perfect rooms to throw a baby in, unrealistically hoping that an infant will somehow act as an aiding tool to overcome cases of abuse, abandonment, mistreatment and miscommunication. It’s important we recognise that this argument is about as good as saying that bullet wounds can be patched with a grenade timed to blow up your whole life, taking your marriage down with you.

To sum up, having a child that you do not want is the greatest injustice you can inflict upon humanity. And, perhaps, the most extreme tragedy that exists in the world is when women vying for motherhood find it impossible to conceive, while others who do not have the maternal gene are ironically blessed with a baby.

But if things were as simple as adding two and two, life wouldn’t be such a puzzle. For a woman to admit out loud that you wish to be child-free invites prying friends, disappointed, even hostile parents and in-laws and a shocked society. The ideology may very well be deemed as the biggest blasphemy of a brown society and before you know it, you’ll find yourself at the receiving end of offensive and futile bargaining mechanisms that tell you your biological clock is ticking away, every woman comes with a maternal instinct and maybe even that you’re failing at the sole purpose of your life – to sire an heir.

To understand these regressive

comments, and eventually negate them, sociologist and professor, Obydullah Al Marjuk believes that the gradual development of society had a major role to play in shaping the perceptions we seek to debunk today.

“Society was formed to recognise women as a powerful being gifted with the ability to prevent human extinction. Women do this simply by having children. Through the passage of time, helped with a myriad of other factors like women choosing to stay home and misguided definitions of masculinity and feminism, women found themselves with the image of being primary caregivers,” recalls Marjuk.

“Society has not helped this notion much with their over-adulation of parents, particularly mothers, who are put on a pedestal and given a free get-out-of-jail card for everything simply because they are mothers,” he further explains.

Indeed, quoting scriptures and Victorian beliefs of having more and more babies to increase likelihoods of eventually birthing a son are all guilt-trips and emotional manipulations to coerce women into accepting motherhood.

With global population exceeding 7.79 billion, it’s more than safe to assume humans are nowhere near the brink of dying out. Having established that, let’s allow half of our kind to wilfully make decisions regarding their own bodies. After all, women hold the sole proprietorship of their own selves and not having a child is equally as acceptable as having a child. In either case, it has never been and will never be your business anyway!

By Ramisa Haque
Photo: Mère Maternity Wear