

#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

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