



**PERSPECTIVE**  
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# Fierce and fabulous FORTIES

As soon as you hit your forties, age tends to catch up. Nature's law states that no one can hold onto youth forever and yet, all across the globe, especially in our nation, women in their forties are derided for the friends they keep, to the clothes they wear and even the jobs they choose to frequent 9-to-5 a day.

The most amazing part about this age is that women become more deviant, they become self-reliant and a whole new institution on their own. Some chose to leave their jobs to pursue entrepreneurship because no longer is an unfair boss acceptable. They are disgusted by the patriarchy existent in society and wilfully stand with other '40 something ladies'

to fight head-on against the unjustified system.

At this age, men and women are more knowledgeable and experienced and they can use this valuable asset anywhere in their lives, from the personal front to the public sphere. However, the sad part is the rampant use of the derogatory proverbial terms like "kuritei buri," even in the 21st century, which usually renders to the connotation "chollishe mrito," forcing the ladies over 40 to face a double-edged sword of ageism and sexism. When men are considered to be 'refining as fine wine with age,' women are disdainfully discarded as bygones.

I belong to the latter group, the

fierce group of forty-year-old women, encompassing single mums, women who have never been married, women who are happily married with children, women who are happily married without children, divorcees, widows— you name it, and we are a part of everything. We are a cult! We have found out how to deal with society, professional obstacles, psychological trauma, depression, systemic abuse of power, and so on. And I feel that 'they', the society has made us smarter, and stronger to recognise exploitation and be able to deal with it as necessary.

I have but one thing to say: if we change, society will too. For once in our lives,

let's get off the grid, and walk through the forbidden territories, and not let anyone else question our motives and our capabilities. Because this is the age to be reborn again, to be able to reboot and start and live free.

As Maya Angelou said, 'I would like to be known as an intelligent woman, a courageous woman, a loving woman, a woman who teaches by being.' So, age is not important for any human being, including a woman: we may be fierce in our 30s, fabulous in our 40s, and colourful for the rest of our lives.

**By Tanziral Dilshad Ditan**  
**Photo Courtesy: Tanziral Dilshad Ditan**

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## Understanding the process of Menopause

On this note, Dr Akhter strongly recommended that mental support and comfort is the most important remedy and reassurance for every woman going through these phases.

"It is the duty of her family, friends and loved ones around her to make her feel safe, loved and protected in this time of turmoil when she might be feeling the most vulnerable," she stated.

Being a part of support groups/communities where she can speak with others going through similar journeys can also make her feel like she's in a safe space.

Having a balanced diet, filled with fresh

fruits, vegetables, vitamin supplements, and the appropriate amount of fluids/ water is another core component of coping with menopause. Especially, to prevent the occurrence of osteoporosis, Dr Akhter advises to increase the intake of calcium and Vitamin D-rich food, go for early morning sunbathing, and form an active lifestyle. In fact, regular exercise, yoga, meditation and walking — an overall active lifestyle also helps significantly to reduce the downsides of menopausal stages.

In some cases, specialist help may be sought for artificial treatments. Usually the specialist will tend to prescribe few

hormone tests, and after successful results they may move on to prescribing estrogen supplements coupled with calcium; this is a kind of a short-term hormone replacement therapy and helps the body to produce estrogen artificially.

However, Dr Akhter cautions that in case the patient has any previous history of breast cancer, jaundice, etc. then aggressive estrogen therapy may lead to undesirable and severe health conditions such as cancer.

### As life goes on

After all that has happened, it is crucial to remember that menopause is a very natural

biological process of life and every woman has to go through it when it is time.

"Just like menarche happens in its time, so does menopause," said Dr Akhter comfortingly. The focus should lie primarily on how to live on normally after menopause has occurred.

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