

## Women on the move: Making travelling easier

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

### WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE LEFT OUT?

We live in a society where the topic of women and travelling does not seem to go hand in hand. Women are often restricted from travelling whether solo or with a group of friends, and this hindrance usually comes from the family. But looking at the safety status of our country, our families have good reason to be worried.

Insofar, some girls miss out on exploring borders beyond their city before marriage because they are told they can do so only with their husband, which is unfair. Not only this, but some women themselves feel uncomfortable travelling alone, taking into consideration the safety aspect. Rather than them having to arrange a trip for themselves, they would rather prefer an organiser do it for them.

Taking all these issues into consideration, travel groups designed for women started to make a presence online a few years ago, and now, women have many options to choose from if they want to explore new places. Large and small, whether working as a full-fledged travel agency or just a small platform created by friends, there are now women's travel groups aplenty.



"I really want to explore Bangladesh but my parents never allowed me to travel with friends. But with the advent of travel groups, they get the feeling of trust and security that I am travelling safely on a tour organised by professionals," said Suraiya Yasmin, who is a student and frequent traveller using such groups.

### IN THE SPIRIT OF TRAVELLING

Female travel groups have seen massive success since their inception and this greatly benefits both the organisers and travellers. Usually, these are passion projects conducted by enthusiastic travellers, which is why the trips provided by them are created in such an amazing manner to provide the best experiences.

Rukaiya S Bushra, the founder of Women Travelers of Bangladesh, shared her story saying, "I love to travel and often would look for people to travel with. Previously, I would see many Dhaka-based travel groups arranging trips for women and I thought we should have one in Sylhet too, and in 2019, I started my own. Over the years, receiving overwhelming response and encouragement from people, we have

now expanded all over Bangladesh and are arranging trips countrywide."

Another prominent travel group for females, Lady Travelers Bangladesh, is one of the very first female travel groups in Bangladesh that are now offering the scope to travel beyond our national borders by arranging international trips. More so, they have established themselves as a renowned travel agency that caters to the needs of women.

"We started our journey in 2017 as a Facebook group and since then, this has grown so much that I am now fully invested in it. I receive immense satisfaction beyond my professional scope seeing that I am able to provide female travel enthusiasts the experience of their lifetime," shared Marzia Mahzabin, Owner of Lady Travelers Bangladesh.

### A MEDIUM OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

Travel groups of any sort are a medium of community building. It is a platform for like-minded people who share the same interests and gather together for one common purpose - exploring new places. Travelling with people you have never met may seem unappealing to

some, but people who have been on such trips usually end up making friends for a lifetime.

Travelling with a group as such not only gives the opportunity to explore new places but also exposes us to different cultures as there are people from various backgrounds present, which makes travelling even more fun and teaches us to adjust to various types of people and situations.

For many, getting to go on a trip with strangers also works as a respite from the turbulences of everyday life. Sometimes, people want to hit the pause button and go on an adventure like never before, either to bring back the lost joy in life or to get over a recent ordeal and going on tours with a group creates the perfect space for this.

"We have an amazing community of people who keep coming back for more trips and we ensure everyone feels included. A big chunk of our clientele consists of single mothers, divorcees, and senior citizens, and it fills my heart with so much joy that we are being able to give them relief from the troubles of life," remarked Marzia Mahzabin, Owner of Lady Travelers Bangladesh.

### A STRUCTURED TRAVEL MECHANISM

Travel groups, just like any travel agency, strive to provide the best experience to people. As it is a more community-based mechanism, the services provided are customised and created to understand the specific needs of women. This makes the trip both enjoyable and affordable for travellers.

"Planning a trip takes time and although I often want to take a breather from work whenever I get the scope to, it is the planning that I don't get time for. With the vast availability of travel groups nowadays, I can set those worries aside and go for a quick tour even if I get a three-day break from work, without having to think about any of the arrangements," said Sadia Zarin, who is a job holder in the corporate sector and has previously gone on trips arranged by travel groups.

Some people may question the viability and capability of travel groups given they do not operate as a formalized business structure, but they offer a vast array of services such as guided group tours, customised packages, travel consultation, and even affordable packages for students! More so, accommodation is fully taken care of along with complete guidance and information on everything that is required.

"I prefer going on guided tours with a group because the trips are well planned, I feel more secure, and end up bonding with people who become like family members," said Genelia Salim who is a student and a frequent traveller.

Bangladesh is filled with fervent travellers but despite that, a big part of our population was missing out on the joy of exploring new places. With the advent and support of travel groups, women are being able to experience the joy of travelling and exploring our beautiful country and beyond.

By Fariha Amber  
Photo: Lady Travelers Bangladesh & Women Travelers of Bangladesh



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