



Women and Modern World



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It is a truth universally acknowledged, by the Indian ad industry, that the only thing that a working middle-class mother needs to fulfil the unrelenting demands from her family, colleagues, and bosses, is a fleet of slick kitchen appliances. The husband's *only* contribution to the running of the household must be to provide said appliances.

Working women in India have been known, accepted, and supported for more than 30 years now. Yet, the expectations of a woman - to marry appropriately, bear children, provide for them, maintain a smoothly running household and take care of ageing parents and in-laws, persist to this day. But that's not all: a working woman is expected to do all the above, plus grow professionally, as well as set an example for younger women in the workforce, all while fighting ceaselessly to be considered equal to the men who have occupied this space for generations before, and while earning less than her male counterpart. Further, research shows that women senior leaders do more to help their employees navigate work-life challenges relative to their male peers, spending that additional time helping manage workloads. They are also 60 per cent more likely to be focusing on emotional support. In other words,



employees are likely to be happier working under women leaders. Yet, that adds to the toll on the women themselves. For working women, the refrain “**Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better**” is really rather “**Anything You Can Do, I *Must* Do Better**”.

All these expectations contribute to a bigger expectation of women - a woman must be emotionally resilient, strong and stoic in order to execute all of the jobs and responsibilities are given to her. A woman who shows emotions and vulnerabilities in any context, be it as a mother or as an employee, is looked down upon and immediately criticised for her weakness. Yet something must give way somewhere: ‘resilience’ may simply be a mask donned by the professional woman as she struggles to balance the weight of countless expectations, with untold stress, burnout and mental illness simmering under the surface.

Deepika Padukone is well-known for being public about her struggles with mental illness. Yet, in 2021, 6 years after she first announced her mental illness, she revealed that her entire team was scared at first about the knowledge of her depression coming to light, until Padukone took the risk of coming forward and being transparent,

citing the greater public good that comes from advocacy. If one of the most prominent Bollywood actresses is scared about the potential repercussions on her career of having a diagnosed mental illness, one can only imagine the fear that the average woman has in accepting that she needs help.

The **MINDS** Women's Day Issue celebrates women in high positions while acknowledging that a woman, no matter how professionally accomplished, cannot be superhuman and deserves due attention to her mental wellbeing. Women should be allowed to fail and flourish while being supported to thrive and flourish, and not merely serve the needs of those around them.

Womanhood!



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Through the window panels, Under the cumulonimbus clouds, I saw her Dwell in a thatched house.

Through the raindrops slipping down the glass, In knee depth flood, I saw her Scoop the water out of her house.

Through the blaze of thunder, That shook the house, I saw her Stand straight up in avouch.

With the changing cumulous to stratus, Arrived the squalls Blew her painted canvas and inked letters Off the shelves - to water, it falls.



*Through the triple pane windows,
Undeterred by the plight, I saw her
Drawstrings around the house And clip the
papers To wind them dry.*

*Through the sound locked window, With
an inaudible wailing grin, I saw her Not
wait for the long-delayed flight of the sun.*

*With the ticking quartz clock She cleaned
her house, Salvaged her work, And
recreated new pieces.*

*Through the window of my office, I saw
her - I saw her struggle, I saw her stand, I
saw her endure, I saw her patience, I saw
her achieve her purpose And felt her
strength.*



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