

She IS NOT A MONOLITH

Four women.

Four life stages.

Four different lives.

All are facing the same set of challenges, but in different formats.





Their lives are inescapable from unwanted opinions, even from strangers. Being **morally policed** is just part of their everyday lives, and it never stops – even when they hit 50.

Buses, trains, public parks, and at times, even their own homes still remain **unsafe** for them. Pepper spray is a permanent addition to their purses. And to add to the load, they now have the weight of being sexually harassed online.

Their lives revolve around male figures, sometimes even around ones that don't exist in their lives yet or have long gone. Any attempt to **decentre men** is met with scrutiny and treated as taboo.

Strangely enough, living in a society that constantly likes to give them advice is no use when it comes to their career or passion. **Mentorship** remains a distant vision for them.

COHORT 1

16-22

Student to first job

She

SEES THE WHOLE
WORLD ON HER
PHONE. SHE CAN'T
STAY OUT PAST
NINE.

She has grown up with the global feminist discourse on Instagram, healthy relationship templates on YouTube, and vocabularies of consent, boundaries, and mental health. Her interior life is more globally informed than that of any previous generations of Indian women at her age.


Her exterior life hasn't caught up.




"I share my live location with my friends until the third date. Every time I go out, I know that it's not going to go the way I think it would and I know that there is a possibility I could end up dead too."

-age 19

The rage she feels from not being who she is, and pretending to be what her parents, neighbours or relatives want her to be, boils deeper every day. And the cherry on the top- navigating girlhood and doing it "right" - being modern enough to be desirable but traditional enough to be marriable, being educated enough to indulge in smart conversation but not too smart to be ambitious.

 **the_eloni** 24w
Kyun nahi ho rahi padhaai 😊

 **kabitadas7879** 38w
Pants ka ander slacks pahana karo sob dikh raha hai 😊

 **rghvgupta10** · 4y
I think it's high time schools and teaching institutions stop dictating hairstyles and other such nuisances that curb kids in any form or manner in which they try to seek and channel their creativity.


She can pull together an Instagram-ready Korean-inspired outfit in seconds. The neighbours think she should dress “Sanskari”. She can talk for 30 minutes straight on an Instagram live. But her life is tied to studies and nothing more. Her self-cut bangs are on point. She hides it every day to school, because rules dictate a template haircut.

She wants to play basketball and try out for soccer. Maybe give Kho Kho a chance. The school thinks it's a wasted investment to train girls. Her parents think she should take up something more “feminine”. Her vision is set on being a future tech leader, but she doesn't know where to start.

She has dreams. She has ambitions. She has seen her mother give it all up for her, her father and her family. Her X is filled with feminist chatter. She doesn't want to compromise - not on behalf of a man anyway. But her relatives still start most of their conversations with her with “When you get married...”

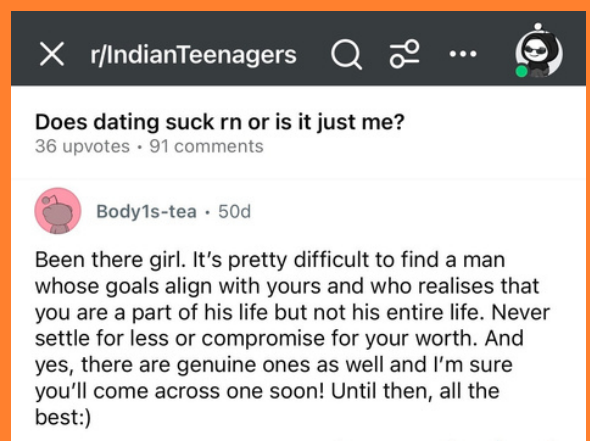


 **Ok-Analysis-2692** · 3y
Woman
I remember when we were in 1 year college, all of us had a phase to download Tinder(Bumble wasn't that famous that time)
Someone downloaded my friend's dp, searched her on instagram(or it was linked) and then sent the same photo (of the dp) back to her. It was so random, but my friend was really creeped out

 **adityaansh_** 31w
Spent 4 years of school life, learning how not to play cricket. Thanks coach! hope schools catch on soon! I would tag my school but nah 😂👻🙏👁️
Reply

I'm really frustrated by the lack of mentorship from women coders and engineers.

(I'm going to be vague because I don't want to call any particular organization out)
Ever since college I've been a huge advocate for women in tech programs. And I'm really happy to have attended a number of events - some explicitly for women in tech and others as part of larger events - that have similar programs. But every event I've been to leaves me with the same frustration - none of the women speakers are engineers or coders, rather, most are women in management or marketing for tech companies.



She is an online social butterfly. She posts thrice a week, but she doesn't know how to handle advances and threats from men online. She has watched all the rom-coms on Netflix, but the world of Hinge & Bumble is completely alien to her. She wants to keep herself safe, but refuses to hide in her room.

COHORT 2

23-30

Metro migrant, living alone

Free

AT LAST.
ON WHOSE TERMS,
EXACTLY?

She moved cities for a job, a degree, or because staying felt like a slow disappearance. She has income, independence and a social life. She is, by most measures, the Indian woman most brands want to reach.

She is fighting on all fronts nobody is writing about. Her life is an open book without her consenting to it.

" My ex's mother remarked *oh so if you wore outfits like this, God knows what sort of outfits you'll wear in Goa, implying that now I'm left to myself, there's no one to say anything if I walked naked in Goa"*

- age 29



Her housing society discusses her "lifestyle". Everyone has an opinion on what she wears. She wants to go to a bar alone, have friends over at 2 am, or just go watch a movie at midnight without justifying to a security guard or neighbours with opinions.

She fought her family to move to a city she didn't know and speak a language she didn't understand - all for a shot at having the career she had always dreamed of. All she sees around her are male bosses who cannot relate to her issues, sessions for "women empowerment" that sound more like Pinterest motivational quotes that don't offer any real directions on how to get to the top.

How easy was it for you to find accommodation as a single woman in a city in India?

Opinion [Women only]

I'm currently on the hunt for a new accommodation but a lot of properties that are reasonable (as much as it could be) don't want to rent to single women. I don't want to share my apartment either, so this is becoming increasingly hard. The "liberal" ones are way too overpriced in my opinion.

She is selfish. She advocates self-love. She buys herself flowers. She won't give up her career for a man. But she lives in a city that won't rent to single women, and lives through "You are past marriage age" conversations.



GoodIntelligent2867 · 1y
Indian Diaspora Woman Top 1% Commenter

Kamala Harris recently told in her speech 'not every woman aspires to be nice'. That is how it should be. Be selfish - by selfish i mean, self love and self care



r/india 
u/Ajaa...atru34 · 6y · thenew...ute.

Moral policing much? Kerala night shelter turns away 5 women students for watching film

Disappointed in the Women Mentor Program at work

Vent

I work at a Fortune 500 company in a predominantly male dominated field. I joined a Women's mentoring program in hopes to help find solutions or common ground among other women.

It was 6 months and each month included a video and discussion guide. We were grouped in groups of 6 women, with one being a leader.

I have found the discussions to be lack luster and often missing key issues that women have to overcome in the work force. Although I realize that not every woman has the same experience, nor is every woman a mother of caregiver - I feel like many are caregivers or mothers or over extending themselves.

She lives in a city that buzzes till dawn. Yet she never feels safe. She is followed back home by random men, and her images are morphed and circulated online. Her safety is still treated as optional because "what else do you expect, roaming around in odd hours and leading a very loose life."



manieshabhatotia 4w · Author

Let me give a lil background here: this man has been stalking me on social media for months, my family has been trying to resolve this from their side for far too long since he happens to have relatives who are my neighbours (back home), he has a history of mental illness and his family refused to own up to his actions. I have had no interaction with him ever in this life, nor gave him any idea that I am available. I mean, come on! Him coming to Bangalore was the biggest mistake of his life and the audacity to chase someone who is not interested in you, even remotely is just outrageous! He got what he deserved. Those who want to sympathise with him, you got some serious issues


2,990

COHORT 3

31-45

Educated, at home, tier 2-3

Deferred, NOT DEFEATED

She is often more educated than her mother, sometimes more than her husband. She left a job, or never got one, because of marriage, location, or family expectations. She has ambition that got deferred, not extinguished.

She manages a household, raises children, and has a smartphone she uses more intelligently than most people around her realise. She is watching YouTube tutorials at 10 pm.

She is in five WhatsApp groups building something. She is not waiting. She is working without income.

“ I made breakfast and lunch for a family of four, and two dogs before leaving for my work every day. I run my own institute. My husband was named a partner for name sake. On divorce, I was questioned about my competency to run the place without him, when I have been doing that for 5 years already.” - age 35



Being a wife or a mother came with expectations beyond caregiving for her. She has to dress like a mother, show restraint in her needs, and sacrifice her happiness and her career. She quietly holds on to her ambition, planning to return to work once her children are older. She discovers there's little support waiting for her on the other side.

There's no such fix rule. By this logic many housewives aren't good wives or mothers or daughters. Ambitious women are the ones who provide less time to their husband and kids. Even when we talk about working women, not many can always be available to family

I think gym trainers don't teach right cardio exercises to women

General - Replies from all

I am not sure how many women resonate with this, but gym trainers especially to mid age women don't provide with right sets of exercises. It's even bad for those with heavy chest. I see women who had mustered up the courage do some rambo kinda cardio of which they can't complete one set of properly.

I am no where saying that those exercises aren't effective but I have a feeling that they work better for young people, men or women with not so heavy chest.

Her body is no longer the same. Her joints are weak now, and carrying two bags of groceries is not a breeze anymore. Her doctors tell her to go to the gym. But it's not easy to find a trainer who understands female physiology, let alone design exercises for a middle-aged woman.

 professionalchutiya · 1y
Woman
My mom is like this. She'll never dress up, wear makeup, or look presentable. It's like she takes pride in looking haggard and worn down. It's not even a lack of money. She spends plenty on useless stuff but feels bad spending on grooming and fashion. If I ask her why, she says "who's gonna look at me now?" Why does it matter? Why can't one look good because it feels good to them?

 r/TwoXIndia    

Why do women lose their identity over time & wh...
115 upvotes · 11 comments

 kittugilheri · 1y
Woman

MARRIAGE.....If it's not with the right person.

Well into her thirties, her safety is still conditional. Without her husband by her side, she is followed, stalked and watched. Her Facebook is filled with messages from old acquaintances who want to "catch up" or requests from strangers looking for "friendship".

She has proved herself capable over and over again for decades. She has taught her children everything from alphabets to advanced physics, and cooked meals she learned from YouTube. Yet, her identity is tied to her husband's. Any attempts to place herself at the centre of her own life end with her being questioned by her family, relatives, neighbours, even those she barely knows.



throwaway2847hhxb · 4y

My mom gets stalked everyday by random men and it has messed up my emotionally and psychologically.

...  Reply   80 

COHORT 4

46-65

Post-care-giving,
invisible to brands

For

THE FIRST TIME IN
DECADES, TIME IS
HERS

Her children have left. Her husband is approaching retirement. Her primary caregiving role, which consumed her 30s and 40s entirely, has wound down. This may be the first decade since her twenties where she has genuinely discretionary time.

Indian culture has a script for her: grandmother-in-waiting. She is supposed to be available, content, and useful to others. Her post-menopause journey is a scary one. She navigates hormonal transition, bone density changes, and cardiovascular risk shifts entirely alone.

She has no cultural permission to ask what she actually wants or needs, and almost no brand, platform, or institution is asking the question with her.



She has been a caregiver all her life. She has always wanted to pick up gardening, or crochet, maybe try pottery, or go for a trek up the hills. But she doesn't know where or how to begin. It has been years since she last learned something new. The classes she looks at do not feel designed for someone her age. She is unsure if her body is strong enough for things she once imagined. Her uncertainty keeps her paused.



TheEmeraldDoe · 5y

I noticed this too! Also in India widowed women are often treated as inauspicious which is incredibly demeaning.



Inner_Breadfruit_480 · 23d
Indian Woman

I am from south India, My grandmother loved flowers and colours. The same thing they take away once she becomes a widow.

She stood her ground. Wore flowers and kept the bindi. She gave no fucks to people around her. In her opinion, my grandfather had no relation with the flowers.

Three held for raping 50-year-old woman

Published - November 06, 2024 07:54 pm IST - HYDERABAD

THE HINDU BUREAU

16% Of Elderly Women In India Have Faced Abuse, Says Survey

A total of 40 per cent of the surveyed women reported the main perpetrators as their sons, while 31 per cent pointed out their relatives and 27 per cent their daughters-in-law.



PracticalWrongdoer19 · 1y

I can relate to her, as I am also in my fifties and going through menopause, I was working, and stopped a few years back. Recently I did NTT (nursery teacher training) and passed with distinction. I was so full of energy and wanted to open my own play home. As this menopause started I have lost all the interest, I do not want to step out and just scroll on mobile. My daughter has been working from home, she does make a lot of effort to take me out to movies, malls and parks. She took me on a trip to Rajasthan, she has brought me colouring books. But I don't know my mind is totally clogged. Sometimes I don't want to talk to my daughter also. I cook for the heck of cooking. I have not done a special dish for a year or so. I got instantly connected reading about your mom.

... Reply 4



shobhna_2511 10w · by author

Mam, if I have never exercised before and start strength training at the age of 54, can I still get fit?



2

Reply

She has given her entire life in service of her family, asking for nothing in return. She depends on her husband entirely. She is terrified of what would happen to her after his demise - not just in terms of financial security but in how the world would redefine her without him.

The question of safety remains in her life. Past fifties, she is expected to be beyond risk. In reality, domestic abuse intensifies for her, and the threat of sexual abuse persists. But who wants to talk about the issues of a woman well past her prime?

What CAN BRANDS DO?

AGE 23-30

1. Stop assuming a family unit

Financial, housing, and lifestyle products must treat a single woman as a complete economic entity.

2. Address structural vulnerability

Urban safety, housing discrimination, and workplace harassment are not “awareness topics.” They are product design problems.

3. Align aspiration with protection

If you sell nightlife, travel, dating, or ambition, you must also invest in making those spaces safer. She does not need empowerment messaging.

She needs institutions that behave differently because she exists.

1. De-risk ambition

Desire doesn't hold her back but fear of social and parental backlash keeps her chained.

Brands can:

- Create parent-facing narratives that legitimize daughters' ambition.
- Provide early career micro-grants and visible roadmaps.

2. Institutionalize mentorship

Enough of the panels ! She needs ongoing guided pathways. If you don't build structured entry points, she defaults to what her family understands.

3. Design for safety as default

Any product targeting her must visibly account for harassment, surveillance, and mobility constraints.

If you remove friction from her first leap, you become her lifelong reference point.

AGE 16-22

AGE 46-65

1. Build financial dignity at 58

55 million widows in India. Create products assuming she is managing money independently for the first time.

2. Create identity beyond kinship

Design communities and learning spaces not anchored in “grandmother” or “retired.” For many in this age group - this is the first time she is allowed guilt free access to her own time and money. Be her guide into the world of fun.

3. Rewrite representation

Show competence, curiosity, reinvention. Not quiet sacrifice. There is almost no competitive noise in this segment.

The first brand to speak to her without infantilizing her will define the category.

1. Reframe career gaps as value

She has managed logistics, budgets, negotiations, education, and healthcare. Translate domestic management into employable skill language.

2. Build re-entry ecosystems, not sympathy ads

- Paid returnships.
- Skill refresh programs.
- Flexible leadership tracks.

3. Recognize midlife physiology

Health, fitness, and nutrition must move beyond aesthetic youth. Design for hormonal shifts and joint health without stigma. Menopause - say it!

If you validate her economic and intellectual relevance, you unlock both loyalty and scale.

AGE 31-45

SNAPSHOTS FROM *India 2030 with forecasts*

REFLECT AN UNDERSTANDING OF THIS CONFUSING TRANSITION



Support understanding of consent and boundaries through early education at home, in school and in the workplace



Portray realistic dynamics of dating and romance that feel reassuring rather than alienating



Enable informed decisions through informative content, podcasts etc.



Celebrate the joy of independence through exploratory experiences and travel.

RESONATE

India 2030

74

OPPORTUNITIES

3\| WOMEN AS FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKERS

WHY?

80% of household spending decisions are now influenced by women, but finance, insurance, and investments still overlook them.

PRODUCTS

- **Women-only investment & insurance plans** – tax benefits & wealth-building plans, explained in a straight-forward, non jargon heavy manner.
- **Maternity & career break loan schemes** – loan repayment options designed for career pauses.
- **Fertility and reproductive health plans** – Egg-freezing, IVF, fertility clinic plans to assist with empowering choices.



SERVICES

- **Wealth advisory for women entrepreneurs** – business funding, credit-building, and investment tools.
- **Career restart platforms for women** – return-to-work fellowships & skill-building courses.



India 2030

104

PLATFORMS

- **Safe marketplace for women freelancers** – Verified platform for women professionals in consulting, tech, and content.



FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA'S WORKFORCE IS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW (19%) (WORLD BANK, 2023).



WOMEN CONTROL \$3.2 TRILLION OF INDIA'S HOUSEHOLD WEALTH (ECONOMIC TIMES, 2024).

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ARE DRIVING 40% OF ALL SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH (ABP LIVE, 2024).



OPPORTUNITIES

India 2030

105

REFLECT EMPATHY AND PROVIDE NON-JUDGMENTAL SUPPORT



Instead of reinforcing outdated narratives, offer support through messaging that reflects empowerment, fresh starts, and self-reliance.



Whether through financial planning tools, mental wellness resources, or lifestyle offerings that celebrate new beginnings, create inclusive spaces that recognize divorced individuals and families not as outliers, but as valued members of a changing society.

RESONATE

India 2030

80