

Femme Forward

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Voice Vista

Celebrating Women's Journey



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND CONTINUED SUPPORT.

SINCERELY,

FEMME FORWARD EDITORIAL TEAM

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Dear Readers,

As we embark on this journey with our inaugural issue, it fills me with immense joy to introduce to you our magazine, a platform conceived with the noble intention of shining a spotlight on the extraordinary individuals who tirelessly contribute to society in various fields. Our mission is simple yet profound: to celebrate and appreciate the remarkable work being done by people from all walks of life. As March approaches, a month heralding the celebration of International Women's Day, we find ourselves in a position of privilege to showcase the talents and achievements of eleven remarkable women hailing from diverse sectors in Nashik. These women are not just emblematic of resilience and determination, but they also serve as beacons of inspiration for generations to come.



I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the entire team whose dedication and tireless efforts have brought this vision to fruition. Each member has played an integral role in shaping this platform into what it is today—a testament to our collective commitment to amplifying the voices of those who often go unheard.

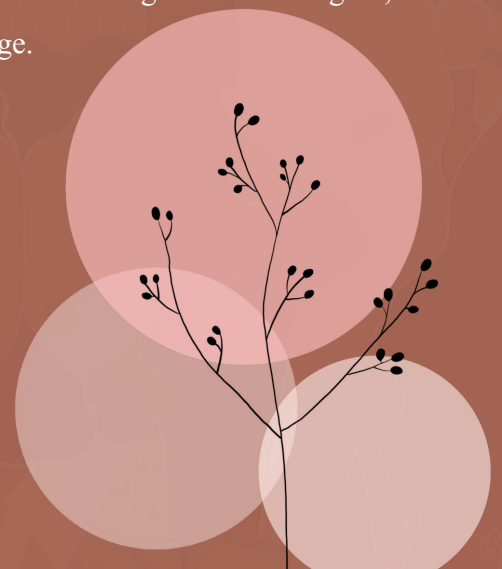
Moreover, I extend my sincerest appreciation to the interviewees who graciously shared their invaluable insights and experiences with us. Their willingness to open up and share their stories has enriched our magazine and will undoubtedly inspire countless individuals.

As we embark on this journey, let us remember that it is not merely about the stories we tell, but the lives we touch and the hearts we inspire. Together, let us continue to uplift and celebrate the unsung heroes among us, for it is through their stories that we find hope, courage, and the power to effect change.

With warm regards,

Pooja Prajwal

Founder & Editor in Chief for Project
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Esteemed Readers,

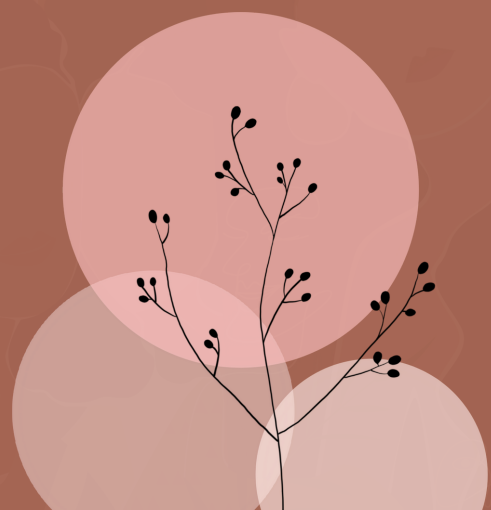


As we stand on the brink of our magazine's debut edition, poised to launch on the auspicious occasion of International Women's Day, I am reminded of the immense power and potential encapsulated within each page. This edition is not just a collection of stories; it is a testament to the unyielding spirit of Nashik's women—a celebration of their triumphs, their resilience, and their unwavering commitment to shaping a better tomorrow.

Within these pages, you will find narratives that transcend the ordinary, offering glimpses into the extraordinary lives of eleven women who have left an indelible mark on our city and beyond. From breaking barriers in traditionally male-dominated fields to nurturing communities with compassion and grace, each story is a testament to the boundless possibilities that await when courage meets opportunity.

As we embark on this journey together, let us not only celebrate the achievements of these remarkable individuals but also reflect on the collective strides we have made towards a more equitable and inclusive society. May their stories inspire us to dream bigger, to reach higher, and to embrace the unique potential that lies within each of us.

With gratitude and anticipation,
Dr. Anagha Naik
Editor-in-Chief (English Edition)
Femme Forward



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संपादकीय ..

पंचवटी पासून पॅन्टीयम पर्यंत प्रगती केलेली ही नाशिकनगरी ... मंत्रभूमीकडून तंत्रभूमीत परावर्तित झालेली नाशिकनगरी ... रुद्राक्षभूमीकडून द्राक्षभूमीकडे वाटचाल करणारी ही नाशिक नगरी... या नवशिखरांवर वसलेल्या नाशिकनगरीतील स्त्री शक्तीच्या भारावलेल्या पंखांनी साकारलेली 'अकरावी दिशा' म्हणजे 'Femme Forward' चा हा पहिला अंक चोखंदळ वाचकांच्या हाती देताना आम्हाला मनस्वी आनंद होत आहे.

भारतीय संविधानाने बहाल केलेल्या स्वातंत्र्य - समतेचे अर्धे आकाश मिळवून स्वतःची क्षमता सिद्ध केलेल्या स्त्रीजीवनातील 'गृहिणी' पदासोबतच सखी, राज्ञी, सचिव, मार्गदर्शक अशा विविध भूमिका सक्षमपणे साकारणाऱ्या अकरा 'मातृकां' चा 'प्रज्ञाप्रवाह' च्या या अंकात आपणास परिचय होऊन प्रेरणेचा प्रकाश पसरेल अशी आम्हाला खात्री वाटते.

प्रज्ञा प्रवाहाच्या निमित्ताने दरमहा विविध संकल्पना - विषय घेऊन आम्ही नियमितपणे आपल्या भेटीस येणारच आहोत. आपले प्रेम आणि पाठबळ असू द्यावे ही नम्र विनंती. या प्रकल्पात आम्हाला मार्गदर्शन करणारे आमचे मार्गदर्शक, मदत करणारे सहकारी आणि तंत्रज्ञ या सर्वांचे आम्ही ऋणी आहोत. असाच लोभ असू द्या, धन्यवाद !

सुनिता चौहाण.

संपादक (मराठी अंक)

Femme Forward





DR PRATIBHA JADHAV

"Ink & Influence: The Artistry of Pen, Talent, and Advocacy"

Introduction:

Welcome to the *Femme Forward* magazine! Meet Dr. Pratibha Jadhav, a strong advocate using the power of the written word to address issues such as gender discrimination, social disparities, and atrocities against women, thus spreading awareness through her work. In this exclusive interview, we explore the life journey of Dr. Pratibha Jadhav, a versatile personality—literary figure, orator, monologue artist, and YouTube influencer—who is making a significant impact through her advocacy.

Q1: Professor, writer, and monologue artist—how did you find inspiration to choose this diverse career path?

Ans1: I hold a Ph.D. in Marathi, and my journey as an educator started from being a primary school teacher to becoming a professor in a prestigious college. I have always had an inclination towards reading, writing, and performing since my childhood. My parents were both involved in performing arts, which exposed me to cultural activities from an early age. The stage has been fascinating to me from the beginning. I have never felt hesitant about expression. Performing arts such as dancing, singing, acting, or sports have always come naturally to me. Over the years, I have cultivated these skills and developed a profound interest in them. As I delved into literature, my approach evolved from superficial understanding to deeper contemplation. Writing on societal and literary topics, giving speeches, and participating in discussions about various subjects have become a part of my life. I have lectured on multiple subjects, participating in discussions on several societal and cultural issues. I believe that art can bring about a positive change in society, and it's essential to take my acting skills to support this cause.

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Q2: Can you share an unforgettable or amusing anecdote related to a performance or public speaking event?

Ans2: The monologues I perform, such as "Me Jijabai...!" (I am Jijabai), "Me Savitri Jyotiba Phule Boltey!" (I speak as Savitri Jyotiba Phule), and "Me Aruna Shanbaug Boltey!" (I speak as Aruna Shanbaug) feature historical and social themes. While narrating the incident of the sexual assault suffered by Aruna Shanbaug during my monologue performance, I couldn't help shedding tears. The audience also reacted emotionally, and I felt a strong connection with them. In Pune, after one of my performances, a lady who was an audience member came to meet me. She said, "Girl, you've put on a lot of weight since your performance. Take care of yourself now!" Her comment was a reminder of the profound impact that these artistic portrayals can have on people. She eventually realized that I was just an actor and not the real Aruna Shanbaug, but that moment showed how deeply these portrayals can affect the audience.

Q3: To bring authenticity to your performances, you engage in extensive research and dialogue writing. How do you look at the process of portraying a character on stage?

Ans3: When an unfortunate event or a matter of concern occurs in society, it becomes my duty as an aware citizen to express myself through writing, speaking, and performing. I believe in raising public awareness through artistic means. Every time I write, I think deeply about the subject from various perspectives. This process helps me to create natural, conversational content that is simple and comprehensible. My writing, speaking, and acting stem from this natural conversation, addressing the significance of the topic at hand. The ongoing process of reflection and contemplation leads me to refine my dialogues and present them in a way that can easily resonate with the common people.

While honing the narrative, I always try to keep the discussion current by adding new developments and context. My approach revolves around adapting my content to the ever-changing scenarios while considering the needs and understanding of the general public. Thus, my focus is to continuously align my work with the contemporary happenings and ensure it appeals to a broader audience.

Q4: As a solo artist, how do you engage the audience and maintain their interest?

Ans4: To engage the audience and maintain their interest as a solo artist, it is essential to captivate the viewers with a strong stage presence. The artist's entrance onto the stage and initial interactions are crucial. Creating a captivating, effective atmosphere by engaging in personal dialogue with the audience and making eye contact, body language, and vocal delivery are all vital components. The first few minutes of the performance should not only capture the audience's attention but also hold it until the end. Creating an atmosphere that emotionally connects with the audience, evokes a sense of anticipation, and leaves them engaged until the conclusion is essential. The degree of engagement, enthusiasm, and connection with the audience plays a significant role in making the performance attractive and impactful. Building this rapport requires a deep understanding of human emotions and the ability to convey the intended message effectively.

Q5: Could you describe a challenging or memorable moment that you encountered while writing or performing, and how you overcame it?

Ans5: Sure! A memorable moment in my career was during the performance of "I Am Aruna!" This solo play depicts the life of a poor elderly woman. After the play, an elderly woman in the audience approached me and said, "You reminded me of my impoverished mother who struggled to make ends meet. The way you portrayed her was so moving."



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It was a profound emotional connection with the audience. After my lecture on women's empowerment in Nashik, I visited a rural shop, bought a simple cotton saree, and brought it to the stage from behind the scenes. During the performance, I took it off and handed it to one of the ladies from the audience, saying, "Put it around your waist and take it home. This is for you!" Those words, despite being simple, created a deep personal bond and understanding. Such experiences have been a priceless reward for me.

Q6: If you had the opportunity to stage your show in any theater or location worldwide, where would you choose, and why?

Ans6: Before, I have performed theater in Singapore and Mauritius, and in the future, I would love to stage my show at the "Shakespeare's Globe" in London. The "Shakespeare's Globe" is one of the world's most famous theaters, and it has a rich history. It was initially built in 1599 to stage Shakespeare's plays. However, it was tragically destroyed by fire in 1613. The current "Shakespeare's Globe" is an authentic reconstruction, featuring an oak frame, a thatched roof, and an open-air design. Shakespeare's plays hold a significant place in world literature and have always been a source of great fascination for me. Therefore, having the opportunity to perform at such a renowned theater would be an incredible experience.

Q7: How do you combine humor, wonder, depth, and other elements in your writing and performances to captivate your audience?

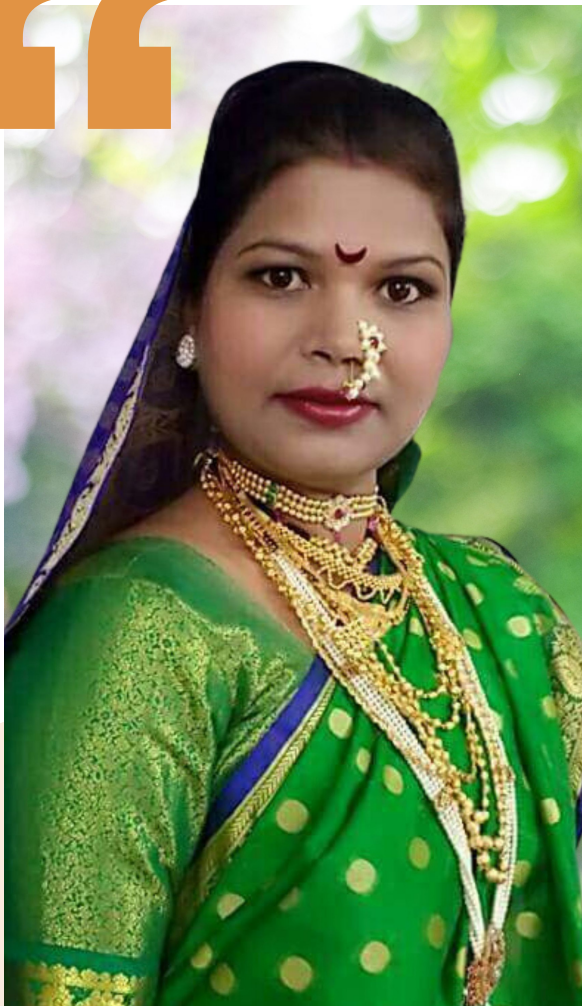
Ans7: To captivate the audience, I integrate humor, wonder, depth, and other elements by carefully selecting and weaving together themes and issues that resonate with everyday people. For example, topics related to women's empowerment and the human experience have been central to my one-woman plays. I strive to present these themes in a thought-provoking and relatable manner. The use of humor can lighten the mood and make the audience feel comfortable, enabling them to engage more deeply with the content. Wonder is created by delving into the complexity of human emotions and personal stories. Depth comes from exploring the profound aspects of the chosen subject matter. By skillfully balancing these elements, I aim to create a performance that resonates with the audience on multiple levels.

Q8: Can you share an entertaining or memorable moment that your writing or performance has had an impact on the audience or delivered a significant message?

Ans8: One memorable moment was after my performance of "I Am Savitri!" In the play, a poor grandmother says to me, "Tell me, how can I hold money in my hands as a poor woman?" She had rolled up some currency notes and handed them to me during the performance. This gesture, although seemingly insignificant, left me deeply moved. It was a moment that exemplified the power of art to connect with the audience on a personal level. Another instance was during a lecture on women's empowerment in Nashik. After the talk, I visited a nearby rural shop, bought a simple cotton saree, and presented it to a woman from the audience, saying, "Take this home. It's for you!" This simple act established a profound personal connection and understanding. Such experiences have been the most valuable rewards in my career.

Q9: How do you find opportunities to engage and captivate your audience through your writing and performances?

Ans9: To engage and captivate the audience, I select themes and issues that are relevant and resonate with common people. For instance, addressing women's empowerment and the human experience allows me to create a connection with the audience. My writing and performances often address pressing social issues and dilemmas, which are at the heart of my solo plays. Using relatable content, connecting with emotions, and sharing authentic stories, I can establish a strong bond with the audience. This connection enables me to engage the viewers deeply, provoking thought and encouraging them to become a part of the dialogue.





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Q10: You are an ambitious writer and monologist who is starting a new journey in this field. What advice would you give to such aspiring writers and monologists in this area?

Ans10: In this field, the art of solo theater performance and writing is highly commendable. It can address various critical issues by incorporating fresh ideas and concepts. While entertainment is important, one can also use it for social awareness, public education, constitutional literacy, humanitarianism, and intellectual empowerment. Rather than merely imitating others, creating and refining your own scripts and performances can be much more impactful. I have gained considerable experience over the years as an example of this. While managing your regular job or business, pursuing your passion in this domain allows you to do something different. Solo performances are a bit challenging, but they offer a unique opportunity to explore multiple roles. Those who have excellent observation skills and adaptability can undoubtedly excel in creating something unique.

Q11: Have you ever received unexpected or unique feedback from the audience? How did you respond to it?

Ans11: In 2016, for my solo performance "Mi Jijau..." in Mauritius, I had a wonderful experience. This solo play about Savitribai Phule and Jijabai's character was performed with great enthusiasm in Mauritius. It was part of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute's program, and the theater was fully packed with an audience of thousands. The very first show was a houseful. Maharashtra's Bhushan "Jijausaheb" was portrayed with extraordinary internal pride, passion, and energy. After successfully presenting "Jijau," when Sonia Dharmia, a renowned Marathi theater artist and actress from Mauritius, came to meet me in the makeup room, she said, "Our roots are in Maharashtra, India. Our ancestors came here as contract laborers for the British many centuries ago, which is why we were born here. Although I haven't seen Maharashtra, I came here and represented my sister, Jijau, on this stage, and it filled me with great pride and joy. We know about Chhatrapati Shivaji, Jijabai, Savitribai Phule and other historical figures, and today, when you brought Jijau to life here, I felt very emotional. This meeting was a special and unforgettable moment in my journey abroad for my writing and acting."



Q12: Can you share a situation during a performance where you felt a strong connection with the audience? How did that experience impact your work?

Ans12: Connecting with the audience during a performance is essential. Without it, excellent performance is impossible. The actor and the audience being on the same emotional wavelength is akin to the power of an actor's performance. Before the start of every performance, I send out a silent request to the context of my play. This intensifies the audience's enthusiasm for the play, and once the performance is complete, their complete attention and engagement are drawn towards our production. The emotional connection between the actor and the audience is established during the performance, and that mutual emotional connection contributes significantly to my work.

Q13: When you depict real-life events in society through your performances, how do you balance the need for confidentiality with the subject matter?

Ans13: When my theatrical work is based on actual events in society, historical subjects, or characters, it's essential to maintain accuracy and truthfulness. I am extremely cautious to avoid errors or misrepresentations that could hurt someone's feelings. Each word and phrase is meticulously analyzed to ensure that there are no unintended meanings. Simultaneously, the atmosphere becomes more sensitive and emotionally charged.





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Q14: If you had the opportunity to work with any other artist, who would they be, and why?

Ans14: Veteran actors Nasiruddin Shah and Nawazuddin Siddiqui in Hindi, and Marathi actor Bharat Jadhav are my favorite artists. I've had the chance to meet Bharat Jadhav. I recently watched Nasiruddin Shah's old movie "Ijaazat," and once again, I fell in love with his acting. Collaborating with these legendary artists is next to impossible, but I mention their names here to answer the question.

Q15: How do you overcome stage fright or nervousness in the context of performance or when artists need to face stage fights or confrontations? Do you have any tips for those artists?

Ans15: As an artist, I always feel that this is my first performance and, with that sentiment, every performance needs to be presented. I still experience fear before every play, and I consider it a positive stage of my art. Artists should never have excessive self-confidence, as every time they face new surroundings, a new environment, and a new audience. Therefore, one must see it as their first performance to ensure that they give their best. It is the emotional connection that the artist creates with the audience during the performance, and it plays a significant role in successful theater. The audience's complete engagement in the production is ensured when the artist sends out a silent request to the context of the play before each performance.

Q16: Finally, if you had to describe your work and performance in one sentence, what would that be?

Ans16: "Art is an incredibly influential medium for societal transformation; connecting with emotions, empathy, enlightenment, and constructing a conscience is what my theatrical journey is all about!" That's it!

Thank you for sharing your literary and artistic journey with us. Your creative strength and the ability to evoke deep emotions through your writing and monologues are truly inspiring. We hope that this interview will motivate readers to engage in critical thinking on important societal issues and encourage them to explore their own creative expressions through innovative literature and dramatic performances. Wishing you all the best in your quest for innovative literary creation and your ability to foster emotional unity among the audience, driving social awareness and change.



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Introducing "Femme Forward," a captivating magazine celebrating the extraordinary journeys of 11 remarkable women, each shining brightly in their respective fields. From the intricate strokes of a Rangoli artist to the soul-stirring verses of a poet, from the nurturing guidance of a teacher to the captivating narratives spun by a writer, our pages are adorned with the diverse hues of talent and passion.

Within these pages, you'll meet a calligraphy artist whose ink flows with elegance, a fitness coach inspiring strength and vitality, and a compassionate social worker weaving threads of change in our communities. Venture further and discover the entrepreneurial spirits behind a kitchen of culinary delights and the aromatic spices that tantalize the senses.

Delve into the insightful wisdom of a counselor, guiding hearts towards healing, and the mesmerizing performances of a mono artist, captivating audiences with each word uttered. Through their stories, we illuminate not only their individual journeys but also their profound impact on society, weaving a tapestry of empowerment and inspiration for all who dare to dream.

"Femme Forward" is more than just a magazine; it's a beacon of empowerment, a celebration of diversity, and a testament to the boundless potential of women everywhere. Join us as we embark on a journey of discovery, illumination, and empowerment, one story at a time.