






Indian women seek freedom from appearance based societal bias

Vidya Balan joins Nihar Naturals to encourage women in overcoming stereotypical judgments to achieve their capabilities

-  64% of Indian women agree that judgements passed on them has affected their ability to reach their true potential
-  69% of Indian men agree that their judgement of women is based on their looks
-  60% of Indian men agree that women with short hair are more capable of being independent than women with long hair
-  72% of Indian women agree that working women face more judgements on their looks or their clothes than housewives
-  69% of women surveyed agree that they want freedom from the judgements that are passed on them by people in the society

Kolkata, February 10, 2016: Today, at an event in Kolkata, Vidya Balan released the Nihar Naturals #IAMCapable national report. As a brand, Nihar always stood for the inner-voice of women and has supported a progressive life for them. This time, Nihar took upon the task of making Indian women realize that, “Appearance cannot be a tool to judge a woman’s capability”. In order to sensitise women about their inner capability through a powerful medium that would immediately resonate with them, Nihar Naturals launched the #IAMCapable report, a national study commissioned to Nielsen. The report highlights a limiting bias faced by Indian women today – **64% of Indian women state that judgements passed on them has affected their ability to reach their true potential.** The Nihar Naturals initiative, commissioned this research to bust some commonly held judgements regarding a woman’s appearance and her ability.

Women’s hair length and clothing choices are elements of style that Indian society routinely polarises either as ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’. Long locks are considered ‘feminine,’ whereas short haircuts are not. Hair in a bun or braid is considered traditional and sedate; long and loose hair is judged as glamorous. With such fixed stereotypes at play, Indian women find their style being confused with their abilities like **62% of Indian men agree that women with long hair are better at attending to a child’s needs and 62% of Indian men agreed that they don’t think women who wear traditional attire can change the tyre of a car.**

An Indian actor has encountered and overcome such stereotypes in the professional world. As brand ambassador for Nihar Naturals, **Vidya Balan** said, “I have chosen to be associated with Nihar over 5 years because this brand believes in encouraging and enabling women to achieve their full potential. I learnt that **more than 69% of Indian men agree that their judgement of women is based on their looks.** I feel by making public the findings in this survey Nihar is doing a great job in rejecting appearance based stereotypes. Nihar through its initiatives, is tangibly enabling men and women alike to overcome obstacles to development.”

Also present at the event was Harshini Khanekar, India’s first female fire engineer who overcame the odds of conventional bias against her choice of career in a male dominated field to succeed in her professional life. Harshini

acknowledged the report's findings and said, "I am alarmed to learn that **70% of women agree that majority of judgements on women are from family members or friends rather than strangers.** I had observed this



around the society; it affects women's morale and professional progress. I believe men and women alike need support to reach goals and should not have superficial judgements hampering our motivation."

As part of this campaign for women to achieve their full potential, Nihar Naturals released a music video to bolster women to overcome judgements and to make the most of their capabilities. They asked to hear from women about their experiences and the response was overwhelming. Thousands of Indian women called in to relate their stories of facing bias and achieving their goals. Nihar felicitated one such lady –Rubi Ghosh during the launch event in Kolkata. She faced considerable opposition from her in-laws and people in West Bengal to start dance tuitions for children at home. Her husband stood by her in the face of opposition. She began with 2 students and now she trains 80 dancers. Nihar Naturals celebrates Rubi's capabilities by helping her develop 'Rubi Ghosh Dance Academy'.

If **69% of women surveyed agree that they want freedom from the judgements that are passed on them by people in the society** then, we must do what we can to ensure that our society is set free of these burdens. Indianness and femininity are not determined by choice of hairdo or clothing. Just like Vidya Balan, Harshini Khanekar, Rubi Ghosh and other enterprising Indian ladies, our creativity and our productivity help build our self-esteem. This report commissioned by Nihar Naturals on research conducted by Nielsen aims to remedy the effect of women being misjudged on the basis of their style in relation to their abilities. It hopes people all over feel this message and it makes a difference in their lives."

About the Nielsen India Survey:

Nihar Naturals commissioned a National survey for the Nihar Naturals 'IAmCapable' campaign in 16 markets (with a total of 2160 respondents). The survey was carried out by Nielsen in October 2015, and was conducted among 574 men and 1635 women (between the age group of 18-45& SEC ABC) in the key cities/villages of India - Delhi, Surat, Mumbai, Jaipur, Bangalore, Gorakhpur Rural, Kolkata, Burdwan, Midnapur Rural, Muzaffarpur Rural, Patna, Chindwara Rural, Vijayawada, Coimbatore Rural, Bhubaneswar and Guwahati.

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