Brand Conscious?

You may have heard of a person in North India who has a weird obsession with VIP mobile numbers and pays lakhs and lakhs of rupees for it, where his family also supports him.

Same way some are obsessed with food or passionate about clothes or music or a collection of coins and many such things. There are also people who have a hobby of collecting books or shoes, or alcohol.

But here I introduce to you a girl who is crazy about branded wrist watches and has a collection that is exceeding Rs.5,00,000. Sounds big!! Khyati Vora, 25, is an Electronics and Telecommunication Engineer by profession.

Since a decade she has been very dedicated to the leading brands of the world and hasn’t worn anything less than a lakh on her wrist. This Engineer is an independent thinker and believes of classy lifestyle. She has always been brand conscious, be it clothes, shoes or pen, but wrist watch tops her list.

It is like a priceless possession. She is very happy and proud about owning them. Her collection includes Omega, Tissot, Movado, Tag huer, Swatch and the list goes on.

She explains her brand consciousness by saying that, “Sometimes it becomes a tradition to follow an elder sibling; same is the case with me. My brother and even my dad have always been conscious, so it came naturally to me.”

The first brand gifted to her was a Parker Pen worth Rs. 12, 000, this is how it started. It was then, that she realised how it feels to own classy things, which lead further to clothes, shoes and wrist watches.

Why should boys have all the fun?

When was the last time you did not compromise on your buying habits or only stuck to branded stuff? In short, when was the last time you were brand conscious? You name it and they have it. Most of us have some craze or obsession with something or another.

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Smoke with Style...

Hookahs have today become a symbol of the urban existence. Iona Chatterjee finds out how this tradition has evolved as a fashionable elite culture.

Coffees and conversations remain almost incomplete without the rich aromatic experience known to us as ‘hookah’. From a symbol of royal pride and honour, the hookah has eventually evolved as a popular youth culture. Gone are the days when water pipe smoking was practiced by elderly retired men as leisure. Today parties and reunions go incomplete without the Hookah experience.

This aromatic offering most of us know by the name Shisha, is a mixture of tobacco, distilled water with fruit extracts and flavours. Mint, apple, vanilla, lemon, peach are a few popular flavours and at times flavours are combined to enjoy a new unusual taste.

“Hookahs are very light and flavourful, though I am not completely addicted but I often visit a Shisha parlour to enjoy my favourite mint and green apple flavour,” says Shreya a student.

Youngsters today prefer to spend long hours at such parlours, smoking their favourite flavours over conversations.

The demand has led to the existence of several Hookah lounges in the city. Colourful walls, lanterns, glittery curtains and decorative cushions bring to life, the rich Arabic ambience. This culture seems to have occupied its place in the homes of its lovers.

Many prefer this experience at home than visiting cafes, which seems expensive for regular smokers.

PR executive Akshat Jain owns two Hookahs and holds a party once a month. “The Hookahs add a different flavour to the parties and my friends look forward to it,” says Akshat. Setting up a Hookah at home can cost between Rs 470 to Rs 4500.

Smoking hookahs have always rested on the perception that it is comparatively less hazardous than cigarettes but doctors and health organisations are not comfortable with this new trend.

“Be it Hookah or cigarettes, health risks are involved if the habit reaches an alarming level. The frequency and length of the smoking session, makes the difference,” believes Dr Amit Dua, general physician.

However Hookah parlours are not of the same opinion. “Smoking is always harmful, but in the case of hookahs the smoke gets filtered and the nicotine content is 0.05% and the contents are clearly mentioned in the packs,” says Dinesh from Arabian Nights, Bandra.

“Hookahs should not be banned, but the awareness should be spread, let people make an informed decision,” believes Shweta Dubey, lawyer.

Such joints should necessarily carry warning signs. Our youngsters rather prefer to stay away from the little white and puff their favourite flavour which reminds them of their urban elite existence.

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“This world class branded stuff is too costly. Earlier my dad used to gift me but now that I am earning I gift him,” says the engineer with a twinkle in her eyes when enquired about the expenditure. She has always been brand conscious, be it clothes, shoes or pen, but wrist watch tops her list.

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