

WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE

THESE YOUNG WOMEN HAVE EMBODIED ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS VARIOUS SPHERES

By MOEENA HALIM

Always the class clown, it was no surprise to Aditi Mittal or the people in her life when she decided to take stand-up comedy seriously. "It was equally insulting as it was awesome when people told me, 'Well, what else could you do.' If it wasn't for comedy, I would have taken up psychology. But my desire to be an idiot was too strong," she says.

THE FIRST PUSH Part of the country's burgeoning world of comics for the past five years now, Mittal has certainly managed to stand her ground despite it being a strongly male dominated environment. "Women are far more encouraging than men. And with comedy especially, it's such an extreme, unforgiving world. But

I don't want to 'mythologise' my troubles, and would like other young girls to know that it is totally doable. At the end of the day, the audience must find you funny," says Mittal, who found a tremendous support system in comedians like Sorabh Pant and Vir Das and Tom Course, former manager of the Comedy Club.

WHAT'S NEXT Her focus on experimenting and finding out what she could do well last year has enabled Mittal to gain clarity on how she wants this year to pan out. Which means she is doing a little bit of everything. "My calendar for the next few months includes different kinds of comedy—sketches, silly songs, and going on an international tour with the stand-up act *Things They Won't Let Me Say*," she reveals.

FUNNY GIRL

◆
Aditi Mittal,
Comedian, 28

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR



**THE
BLOGGING
BUSINESS**

◆
Perzen Patel,
Blogger and
Caterer, 27

When Perzen Patel first got married and moved to Mumbai from her home in New Zealand, she had no idea how to cook Parsi food. "I used to make secret phone calls to my mother, who passed on her tips and my grandmother's recipes. I desperately wanted to impress my in-laws and my husband, who loved to eat typical Parsi food," recalls the blogger-turned-caterer.

THE FIRST PUSH Patel began blogging as the Bawi Bride to keep a note of all the recipes she was trying. Soon enough, her followers were asking her to begin selling her 'bhonu'. "I just laughed at that, but my husband, who is now known as

Bawa Groom in the virtual world, encouraged me to do it," she says.

Slowly, she began taking orders and now she has a pop-up restaurant practically every weekend and has started her catering service as a full-fledged business.

"Rishad has always been there and pushed me to do this. He's always by my side at the various exhibitions, and helps me sell my food," reveals Patel.

WHAT'S NEXT "My vision for the future is to expand and make Parsi food accessible to everyone. Maybe a Parsi food truck or a QSR space," she says. Patel dreams of being able to dish out more Parsi food for everyone, every day.

“ IT IS A GREAT MEASURE OF REGARD AND AFFECTION WHEN SOMEONE COOKS ME A MEAL WITH LOVE. PERZEN IS DOING THIS MORE AND MORE WITH SO MUCH PASSION. ”

RUSHINA MUNSHAW, food writer and consultant

