



Nitika Gujral,
Fashion designer and
Founder of Nitika Gujral

“By nurturing and raising a pet, they learn to develop the lovely bond, which becomes useful for them later when they want to raise a child. Petting helps develop the quality of responsibility, accountability, and tender love. By getting attached to them, pet mothers manifest their feminine energy as well. Being pet mothers since childhood not only helps girls to develop a sense of responsibility for another being but also instils the required positivity, happiness, and love that later grows deeper. I believe raising a pet since childhood is a really nice experience one can have.”

Jasmin Bhasin,
Actor

“Some days you just need to lay on the floor with your dog. I have two pets. During the lockdown, I spent most of the time with my pets. The bonding time with them helped me be in a good space. They are everything to me. They keep me positive and happy all the time. Whenever I go back home, I know they will be jumping in joy. Having them was one of the best decisions of my life.”



Maria D'Costa,
A former journalist and
certified relationship counsellor

“In Goa, it is a natural process to adopt strays. Nobody plans, it just happens. Every house has a pet or two. And pets were even allowed to sleep beside the infants. Both were considered babies needing love and attention. But now things are changing. People prefer having pets to kids as the maintenance is low and you don't have to worry about your pet's future the way you worry about your kids.”

REDEFINING MOTHERHOOD

NIVEDITA

Recent survey, conducted by *Rover.com*, an online dog walker and sitter company, has found a link between being a dog mom and being an actual mother to a baby. Conducted on a sample of 500 female dog owners, the survey found that before adding a child to the family, nearly half of the women decided to get a dog first.

According to the survey, while 46 percent of women opted first for a dog, about 42 per cent said their pet-parent experiences gave them valuable parenting skills that they can use with their human children. Another 23 per cent of respondents said they plan to do the same.

It was also found that quarantining has fostered a stronger bond between women and their dogs, with 70 per cent stating they feel more attached than ever to their dog, and 71 per cent saying their family groups have dogs as the core of their group.

Many women choose to be pet moms over or before having a biological child just like the survey suggested. For many, this move brings a sense of responsibility to them as a parent.

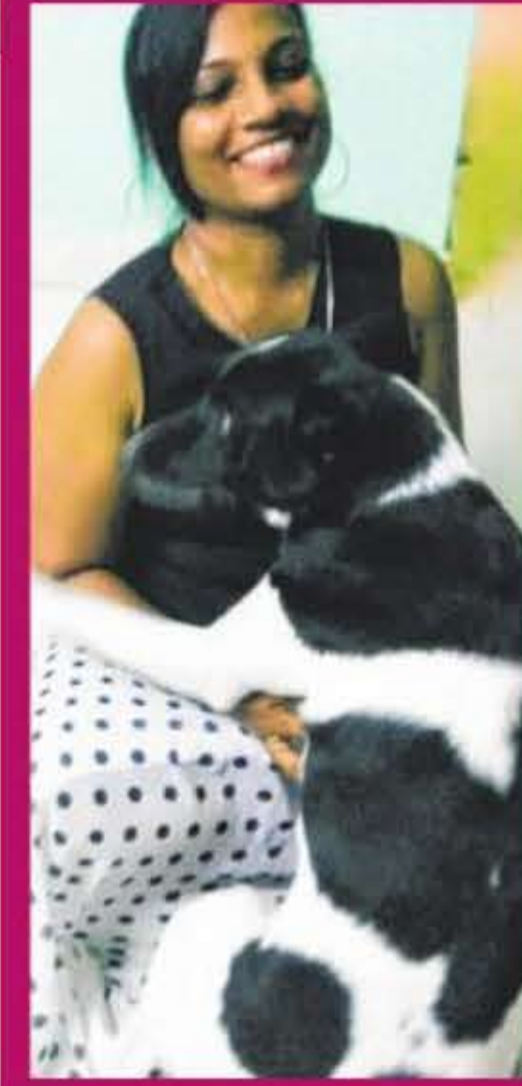
Women feel that being a pet mom has helped them as an individual or to be a better mom to their children.

Nanda Das, PR professional

“I have been a pet parent for the last five years and my days are completely like a mom who is raising a child. It requires 24x7 involvement. When my kid was a pup, I had also spent many sleepless nights and rushed to hospitals in the wee hours when he was vomiting incessantly. They also demand your love, attention and care and respond to it likewise. I haven't thought about whether I will have a biological child in the future or not, but I feel very fulfilled as a pet parent. He completes me as a mother.”

Dr Malini Saba,
Founder & Chairman of Ananke
Foundation

“Having a pet requires the same amount of effort and love as having a real child. Also, it comes down to personal preference, and some women are content to make their own. Adopting a puppy might also help a couple or person determine if they are ready to start a family. Pets can provide company, exercise possibilities, and a significant level of stress relief. The affection of a pet brings out the best in us all. Not to mention the several adorable photo possibilities along the way. They are accepting, non-judgmental sources of unconditional love, which is what young girls need when the world can feel harsh and unjust. Pets forgive, they let them share their feelings authentically, and offer calm, grounding support.”



Second Saturday of May is Dog Mom's Day and second Sunday of May is Mother's Day. This year, the first follows the later. We know many who have preferred to be a pet mom to dogs, cats, turtles, or hamsters than having a child. FPJ salutes these pet moms today on Mother's Day, who believe in redefining motherhood by being full-time mothers to their pets

Let's go book clubbing

ASIYA ANWAR

JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB: Started by a 16-year-old in 2012, this book club, as the name suggests, aims to study and appreciate Jane Austen's works and her writing style. It brings together Janeites from across the city to read, re-read, discuss, share, and revel in her books. It also conducts creative writing contests, events, workshops, and meets across Mumbai. They have recently made a Google Group to actively share job opportunities related to writing and reading. Fun Fact: The club held its first meeting on Jane Austen's 237th birthday on December 16, 2012.

CAFERATI: What started as a literary blog in 2004 by three friends, it soon branched out to become a book club thanks to social media. Caferati is one of the oldest and active book clubs in Mumbai. Currently, it is also a writer's forum to support and encourage writing. This book club expands to cities like Delhi and Bangalore.



BROKE BIBLIOPHILES:

This community is a nationwide book club. During their monthly meets, members discuss books they have been reading as opposed to members discuss their take on a single book, which happens in some book clubs. They also recommend books and discuss at length the movie adaptations (if any) of the same. You can also reach out to them if you need assistance with buying or selling books or even promoting them. You can find the club on Facebook and Instagram.

BOMBAY BOOK CLUB: They are as fun and relaxed as a book club can get. Their monthly meetings include book reading, recommendation sessions, discussions, and book exchanges. Many budding authors and poets are a part of the club.

BOOKELPHIA: It's more of a crowdsourced library than a book club, but it is still a book-loving community at the core. Here, a network of bibliophiles lend and borrow books from each other. The key factor here is you can request books that are shared by members within the network. It's a great community because you get to showcase your collection of books, maintain your bookshelf and share it with readers.

CHENNAI TAMIL BOOK READERS/Writers MEETUP: A one of its kind meetup group in Chennai, this caters to people who are interested in reading/writing Tamil books, novels, poems, or any form of writing in the language. A one-of-its-kind meetup group, it also encourages people to take up Tamil writing and reading. It is the place to go in case you want to start learning this regional language.

THE PEN: Also known as the International Association of Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists & Novelists, the PEN has its Indian chapter in Mumbai. It is one of the oldest and most famous literary clubs in the world. One can either be an associate member or a full member of the PEN; while there are no specific qualifications needed to be an associate member, to be a full member, you need to have at least two published works in your name. The group meets once a month at Theosophy Hall, Mumbai. They charge \$25 fees for the reader's circles. Fun Fact: Currently, they have three circles within the PEN: the readers' circle, the writer's circle, and the publisher's circle.