

Casteless & Constitutional: Pune's Padman Had a Unique Wedding That We Can All Learn From!

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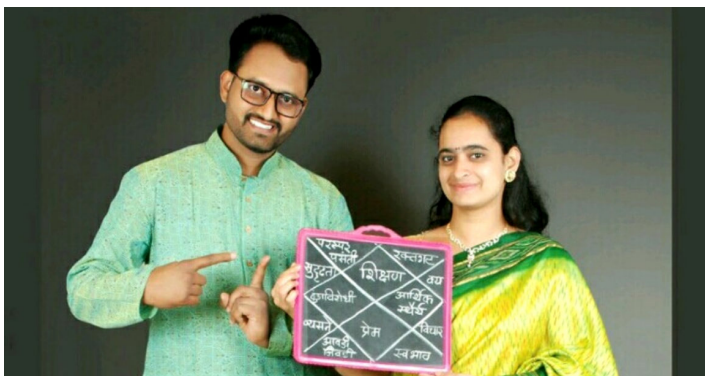
The bride and the groom sat on a sofa on the stage, ready to take their vows. A mutual friend sat on a chair adjoining theirs, reciting the customized vows for the couple to repeat. The seven vows that were to bind them for life were based on the ideals of truth, non-violence, hard-work, development, conscience, love, and goodwill toward each other.

Meet Sachin Asha Subhash and Sharvari Surekha Arun, a dynamic duo who wanted to solemnize their marriage in a Constitutional way.

Sachin and Sharvari are active social workers in Maharashtra. When they decided to get married to each other, they knew that their castes should be the last thing on anyone's mind. And so they changed their respective surnames and took up their parents' first names instead.

"Our personal beliefs and our public claims should not contradict each other," Sachin tells The Better India, adding, "If we maintain that we don't believe in castes, why should they come up during our wedding? So, neither of us told each other's surnames in our homes during introduction.

Ours is a love marriage and our parents already knew our school of thought. We always had their firm support."



The happy couple. Courtesy: Sachin AshaSubhash.

It was because of a common interest in social causes that Sachin met Sharvari. He is from Solapur, Maharashtra and studied in Pune, where he pursued Law after completing his bachelor's degree in Political Science and at the same time, got involved in social work.

"My mother had to undergo an operation and had to have her uterus surgically removed at a very young age. And this was because she, like millions of women in India, was not aware of the repercussions of using a cloth during her periods. She got badly infected. It was then that I decided to take up this social cause," informs Sachin.

This was in 2017, and Sachin had just started a *Manuskichi bhinta* or a wall of humanity in Pune just the year before. The idea was simple. You keep the clothes and daily items that you wish to donate near the wall and anyone, who needs it, will take it. Along with this, he was also distributing the clothes he got as donation in government schools, orphanages etc.

His mother's plight made him wonder if he could use the donated clothes to make hygienic cloth pads.

And so began a new endeavour.



The Asha Pads. Courtesy: Sachin AshaSubhash.

“We gathered samples from across the state from different manufacturers, to research and develop the ‘Asha’ pad (named after his mother) that is cheaper, and more accessible and also provides employment to many,” he told [Pune 365](#).

He started visiting remote villages across Maharashtra, training women to make these reusable pads at home and spreading awareness about menstrual hygiene. In the last two years, Sachin has covered 70 villages in the State, impacting the lives of thousands of women with the use of discarded clothes.

Today, he is running a manufacturing unit in Pune, with three women employees. These women separate usable clothes from the non-usable ones, then cut the cotton clothes in appropriate shapes and turn them into sanitary napkins.

“We make about 50 pads every day and I travel to different villages to distribute them twice or thrice every week,” Sachin tells TBI. “But we don’t just distribute pads, we also teach the women how to make them so they can pass on the knowledge. The pads look like a handkerchief so the taboo of drying them in the open, is tackled easily,” he says.

Like Sachin, Sharvari too is passionate about educating the rural, underprivileged population. While Sachin focuses on adequate clothing and menstrual hygiene, the B. Ed from Kolhapur actively teaches school lessons to the underprivileged at a minimal fee.

The couple met around two years ago and it did not take them long to realise that they were perfect for each other.



Courtesy: Sachin AshaSubhash.

“We realised that our thoughts, principles and beliefs align perfectly. We fell in love and decided to get married. And when we had to introduce each other to our respective families, we decided to go ‘casteless’,” Sachin says.

And then they set out to plan a wedding that was one-of-its-kind. “She likes calligraphy,” Sachin told us, adding, “So she handwrote the wedding invitations. Mahatma Phule had started this idea of a Satyashodak wedding—one without priests or the usual rituals—and we thought, why not follow that? We decided that we’ll get married on January 26. People decide on an auspicious day for such occasions and what could be a better day for a constitutional wedding than on the Republic Day?”

The couple invited around 1000 guests to the ceremony and for wedding presents, they insisted upon only books!

Sachin and Sharvari are set to open libraries, in their respective villages in Solapur and Kolhapur, for the children to read. “We have received about 1500 books so far and more are coming in,” Sachin, who has just returned from his ‘honeymoon’ in Gadchiroli, says. The couple was there to distribute the ‘Asha’ pads to tribal women and they couldn’t be happier that they got to spend their first few days as a married couple in Gadchiroli.

The bond forged with the strength of Sachin and Shavari’s shared passion for the social causes they believe in, will see the couple make a difference in many lives. This unique duo is an example of how even special occasions—like one’s wedding day—can be a cause for joy for others. We wish the happy couple many more years of togetherness, along with great success in their endeavors.

[\(Edited by Saiqua Sultan\)](#)

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