

# 2020: A Pyjama Story

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***Covid 19 pandemic forced the world to live in their Pyjamas, literally. Hey! Had we all not wished and longed for it always? Or was it only me?***

Be careful what you wish for, lest it comes true! This phrase originated in Aesop Fables centuries ago. Who would have thought that this phrase would come true in 2020, after years of my hundreds of wishes going unfulfilled, unrecognized and unheard? But amazingly, this one has (*smiley emoji*).

**Gosh!! My wish to live in Pyjamas wasn't for the world**

No, I won't blabber away and let you wonder what exactly I had wished for, yearned for and prayed for years. Every day, since my first child was born, I had yearned for some "me time".

Just a little, tiny bit of time that I could spend with myself, cherish myself, have a relationship with myself, in my pyjamas; not to wake up at 5 in the morning to catch the 6 o'clock morning train to downtown to be able to start work at 7 am, then rush at the end of the day to start dinner, take the kids to their activities; sometimes it's a soccer practice, at other times a basketball game or a swimming lesson or a volunteer credit. Mothers don't get a day off even on weekends as once again there was a game to go to in the morning or a Hindi class, as a result of which non-stop running in and out of the house, doing the laundry or cooking in between the little time I had in the house, before Monday rolled on again.

I just did not have the time to spend in my pyjamas. I longed, I yearned, I prayed, my heart ached and my body itched to spend just a little more time in my pyjamas. Just one more hour, O God! Can you give me another hour to spend in my pyjamas, in my bed, writing my thoughts or just lying down watching the ceiling and reminiscing the good times, thinking about the friends I had lost and pay gratitude for new ones I had made. But for years, my prayers went unheard.

While I totally believe that a day spent in pyjamas is the best day ever and that I am living life to my fullest, there are others who think that I have given up on life, that I am depressed and need to see a psychiatrist, if they see me in pyjamas all day.

My friends made fun of my yearning to live in my pyjamas. On rare occasions when I spent lunch with a group of friends, I would rush home to drink my afternoon tea in my pyjamas while the rest of the girls always stayed back to spend more time with each other. I instead longed to get out my formal tight dresses, which always felt like the tailor stitched them up after sliding me in, and curl up with a good book, sipping tea.

They say to feel good inside; you have to look good and confident on the outside. To look professional, well-ironed trousers and shirts with blazer, sometimes with the high fashioned heeled pumps, is like a uniform you have to adorn, every day at work. But I was tired of looking good and feeling good. Come evening, I rushed home to my fresh set of pyjamas lovingly waiting for my legs to get into, letting my muffin top exhale now that we were home, sit on the couch with a fresh cup of tea to watch TV.

Phew! A big gratitude for the setting sun, which provides the universe much needed hope, peace, rest, and a new beginning. And some relaxing time finally at the end of the day. My mom always thanked God for giving her the nights. I didn't understand then, but I cherish those words now as childhood becomes foggy and golden years loom (*sad emoji*).

And then boom! It happened! I was thrown into my pyjamas nine months ago and still haven't been able to shake them off. It feels like 9 months later, a new me was born in Pyjamas (*laughing Buddha*).

Boy! I wished that only for myself God, not for the universe. No, I was not asking for this – never in the life of me I wanted the whole world to live in their pyjamas, with all those pretty dresses behind closed doors of our closets, shrinking away as our bodies start rounding – some flab here, some there, some in the front, some at the back and at places you never imagined supposedly could ever get fat. And you cannot brush it off as muscle either because you haven't moved from the monitor in months (*Oh no emoji*).

### **Pyjamas and the work from home comfort**

Suddenly, as work from home started, yoga pants (I still call them pyjamas as they make me feel comfier and I love the name, sorry), are in vogue. Not that fashion means anything when all that is visible in a zoom meeting is just your sweatshirt or a blazer, which you can wear over a tank top or a raged t-shirt and no one notices.

You can also turn the camera button off, if you are not comfortable sharing your sleepy droopy eye looks or sit on the floor in a yogic pose. No need to even put on make-up, as it dries up sitting on the dressing table, as you can turn on the make-up button in the app or no need to clean your room for a clean looking plasma.

You can be sitting on your bed, under the sheets, yet you can appear to be hiking up the sun clad mountains when it has snowed outside or vice versa. And every day you can hold your meeting at a different location, on the beach, on a boat, in Mexico or Hawaii. Just change the background in the app. Wonderful technology! You will agree with me thanks to Covid-19, communication technology has leapt leaps and bounds.

Coming back to my heart wrenching topic of pyjamas, so dear to me in trying times and the only attire that provides me the feeling of health and wellness – I find happiness in simple things of life – like an opportunity to wear a pyjama.

Now the world has followed my fashion sense and as I write, almost every person working from home, is sitting curled up in their pyjamas, under their desks or dining tables or like me, on their beds. I do feel like a leader, in some sense.

#### **Pyjamas: the new office wears**

And I have statistics to prove it. As the sale of regular office wear went down by 13%, online sales of pyjamas (yoga pants, loungewear or sleepwear) went up by 143%, according to a survey by Adobe Analytics. According to Adobe, sales of shorts too shot up by 67% in the summer and T-shirt sales jumped by 47%.

Google Trends too has reported an increase in number of searches for loungewear, nay pyjamas, by 1300%, including searches for sports bras and runners. Before the lockdown, pyjama fashion never bode well for the fashion industry. Sales were largely concentrated on dress shirts, dress pants and blazers before the humble, neglected, checkered or the Scooby Doo pyjamas beat them all up in the race to the top fashion statement in the year 2020.

Apparel companies, who had to bear the brunt of their sales sliding as Covid-19 lockdown hit, many changed their advertising strategies as consumers hunkered down at home and malls were asked to shut their doors.

Take the example of leading consumer American giant Nordstrom, which is advertising “cute shoes to wear at home or around the block”. Or JC Crew, which advertises its sweatpants for cooking while other companies are using mission tags like “Perfect Zoom outfits.”

A Walmart executive recently hinted at the sale of their bottom apparel taking a dive. According to reports, sports and fitness clothing market is projected to grow by USD 65.6 billion driven by a compounded growth of 4.8%, in the coming years.

Remember the time when you were children, and every year during Christmas the best gifts you got were the cartoon printed night suits. The excitement of wearing SpongeBob square pants, Mickey Mouse, Batman, Donald Duck or those lovely cute Tweety pyjamas, are unforgettable. The memories of those beautiful mornings remain evergreen and made those childhood memories miraculous.

### **A pair of pyjamas and you are sorted for the day**

Like many of us working from home, Covid 19 may have changed their wardrobe to include polished sleepwear and stylish at leisure active wear, that is either hiding under the dining table or invisible on camera. I may not be the only one whose wardrobe has rejected me or in the process of shrinking to Liliput size.

Gone are the days when you had to change clothes 2-3 times a day – in the morning for work, evening for gym or yoga and then the favourite pyjamas for the night. Now, you can work, jog and sleep in just one set of pyjamas or yoga pants or sweatpants, whatever you want to call them.

Changing names of a comfy wear does not change its mission statement – live comfortable, sleep cozy and stay healthy. This year also made many of us shoppers realize the amount of money we have wasted buying clothes, when all you needed to survive is the humble pyjama.

Once upon a time, wearing a pyjama meant to forecast nothing will be accomplished henceforth. But now the world has realized in just one set of pyjamas you can hire and fire people, you can hold meetings discussing millions of dollars, you can decide the fate of an accused charged with murder or even take up a licensed course, write exams and tests etc etc.

We have had no choice but to embrace the video conferring services to stay connected, to interact, to take decisions, cast votes, teach children or just chatting with friends to break up the monotony of social distancing and chat without masks.

Thanks to the China virus, the definition of loungewear has changed to more respectable name. Finally, pyjamas have been given the respect, it yearned for, for ages. The apparel, which many like me long to don into after a hard day's work, always deserved a dignified place in our wardrobe but was neglected. In 2020, the Pyjama Story was born. Hail the Pyjama! (*Salute emoji*).

***2020: The Pyjama Story will soon be a distant memory as the vaccines make their way to the market. So enjoy the time you have to spend in them. Oh! Did I tell you, I am also the author of 1971: A War Story? Do check it out on Amazon.***