

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

*Oh no! Don't let the title deceive you. I am just 20 and very young to be saying something like this. But times have indeed changed a lot from my childhood (didn't realise when it ended) to my youth. Things have undergone drastic changes in the past decade or so. Gone are those fun-filled carefree days of infancy!*

*Back then the days were valued so much. Whether it was Mother's Day or Children's Day; Teacher's Day or April fool's Day. All had their own charm and importance. How desperately I longed for each one of them; not letting a single chance of celebration slip out of my hands. Dressing up on all these 'special occasions' only to impress myself.*

*I religiously put up a stocking near my window, expecting Santa to fill it with presents. The following dawn would be filled with excitement and anticipation. Counting and comparing our gifts was a tradition that me and my sister followed. She always had the larger share.*

*Come Mother's Day and I would be busy making a card for mumma which read "WORLD'S BESTEST MOM". With my state-of-the-art designs, even an artist would go weak in his knees.*

*Teacher's Day Celebrations were really looked forward to. One, because I got chocolates at school. And two, because I got to be a teacher for once. The feeling of taking the magic wand (read chalk) in my hands and putting up obsolete figures on the blackboard was beyond words.*

*April fool's day was another big day. Playing silly pranks on mom, dad, friends and neighbours seemed to be my sole purpose in life. Singing "April fool banaya, tumko Gussa Aaya." And*

*reinventing the same trick every year was a gift I was born with.*

*Oh! How can I forget to mention about Holi? Making coloured water and filling balloons with it was a difficult task which required expertise. Once done, this lethal weapon was used against my enemies. After a gruelling battle, we all looked like the canvas of a painter!*

*Tying a piece of thread around someone's wrist, on a particular day, was friendship. The number of bands on my hand reflected my popularity in school. And just in case I wanted to show my not-so -friendly side, the ritual demanded to tie the band the next day. It was all so logical. Wasn't it?*

*But now, a decade later, all this seems so immature and insignificant. Santa Claus never gave me gifts! It was mom who put them there. A few colourful pieces of nylon wound together do not define friendship. There are no more hand made cards that read BEST MOM and no more water filled balloons. No pranks are played and no chocolates received. All this because I have grown up (or so the world thinks) but I really long to live those glorious moments again.....*

*P.S: One addition of a special day has taken place. Yeah! You guessed it right.*

*Happy Valentine's Day*

*Gunjan Maheshwari*