

Model Anjhula Mya Singh Bais on Her Passion for Social Work [Diva in Focus]

By Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

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Being a Rajput princess, tell us how you deal with the fame and glamour that comes with the royal connection?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

True Rajput princesses are people that I admire like HH Bhargavi Kumari of Udaipur, HH Diya Kumari of Jaipur etc. I am less inclined to call myself princess and would describe my family as an old aristocratic one with royal ties. As such, there is a mantle of self respect, grace and direction that comes from being born to the manor. With great power comes great responsibility and I know how hard the aforementioned princesses work in balancing their families, professional responsibilities and the happiness of their former subjects. It is not merely a privilege but a responsibility to work for the people of our respective fiefdoms.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

How did you chance upon modelling? Tell us your

“Dallas Jessup is a girl on a mission.... Here is a girl walking the walk and talking the talk....Girls in salwar kameezes in Chennai to women at University in Europe to African tribals, all have watched and become empowered.”

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais, talking about Dallas Jessup, the founder of Just Yell Fire



The multi talented diva is walking with the times.

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais dons many hats; an international super model, actor, psychologist, social activist, Buddhist practitioner and blogger for esteemed publications. She is a multitasking diva who is walking hand in hand with the times. She talks to iDiva about what it's like juggling many roles, her passion for social work and her future plans.

experiences working with international and national designers?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

I was scouted (discovered) in the

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US but my sister advised me to stay away from modelling as I was too young at that time (14). When I was 18, I did a Banana Republic campaign in New York and never really looked back. I don't think enough people in my field have gratitude for being in a field which most little girls and boys desire to explore. It is a dynamic and creative force that propels one through to amazing heights of storytelling, belonging and beauty, be in the flow of a garment on the runway or a mesmerising, soul-stirring photo captured. On the whole, I prefer the experiences working outside of India; it's calmer and more respectful of each person.



Anjhula Mya Singh Bais in all her glory.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

Being a model, what is your personal style?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

My style is undeniably influenced by the Rajput background. Whilst most models are associated with designer bags, trinkets and always made up, you'll usually catch me in chappals, a smudge of kajal and hair tied back. Hopefully that allows another type of beauty to come forth. Fashion is transient, style is eternal.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

Tell us about your experience working with Just Yell Fire? What is your stance on the current scene in India regarding women's safety?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

Dallas Jessup is a girl on a mission; she was one of CNN's teen heroes. Here is a girl walking the walk and talking the talk. When she saw another girl in her state being raped on CCTV footage, she turned around and said to her dad, "I could have taught that girl my black belt karate techniques and saved her." From there started an Internet phenomenon where she records simple techniques (you don't have to have a karate

black belt to do them) so that girls around the world can learn to save themselves from a perpetrator. In essence, she's buying them time to get away and save their life. Girls in salwar kameezes in Chennai to women at University in Europe to African tribals, all have watched and become empowered. When she asked me to front the campaign for India and act in the film, it was a natural 'yes.' Regarding women's safety, I am most concerned about two things: Apathy in India and the hand that women play in raising men (future sons, sons-in-law, brothers, fathers) with a sense of entitlement unseen in other countries. We as women must look in the mirror and ask what we are doing to contribute to the situation. If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

You have been involved with Concern Worldwide. How did you associate with it?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

It is a deep privilege to be associated with and be the ambassador for one of the most prestigious NGOs in the world. The work Concern does

is outstanding, for example they were first on the ground after the Haiti earthquake. I was introduced to Siobhan Walsh, executive director of Concern USA by mutual friends. There was a synergy between Concern and my work, both our visions and impact. We felt that together we could do more. Each year I sit on the steering committee for the Women of Power Luncheon, what an amazing day in New York! Past honorees have included Fashion Giant Fern Mallis and NBC's Anne Curry.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

As an actor what kind of movies would you like to do? Is Bollywood on your mind?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

I used to be asked all the time to do films and my standard reply was I'd rather help the masses than be watched by them. Though this is still true to an extent, I have realised the power of media and entertainment and if harnessed correctly, it is an excellent way to affect change and influence. As such, I would consider Aamir Khan and Prakash Jhaa mentors. Their work and the issues they grapple with are intelligently done and completely needed; I have nothing but the deepest respect for them using their platform

and power so judiciously. Working in films by them is like second nature because of the meeting of minds. Personally, acting has satisfied a creative longing.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

You, along with your husband, founded an anti-corruption fund in India. Tell us all about it.

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

My husband and I are moved by a deep faith in humanity which starts with each person as individuals. 'Enough talk, let's just do' is how we run our lives professionally and personally. Our fund was started based on our own being held at gun-point hostage situation in Deogarh, Rajasthan in 2010. Ever since then, we vowed to give voice to those that can't. We used the trauma of that incident and turned poison into medicine. Our fund was the first to offer to pay the legal/medical fees for the Nirbhaya case. Each person we assist has a ripple effect.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

What made you do your PhD in International Psychology?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

My whole lineage is academic. The question running in my family is how can you NOT do

a PhD!? I am blessed to be in the world's only International Psychology program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. It's a field that is going to burst on the world stage and be in demand because it approaches the topic of Psychology in the most sustainable, intuitive and holistic of manners. My colleagues are doing ground-breaking and amazing work around the globe; I am privileged to be in this tidal wave of change.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

Did you face any challenge as a woman trying to make a mark?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

Several! I now look at those challenges with gratitude; the strongest swords are forged in fire. For me, the challenges have been trying to balance my background, my education and finding my place in the world. I now realise it's absolutely imperative to be the best version of yourself and the world will come find you.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

What has been your aha moment yet and why?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

The moment I realised with all my being that I have found my life's compass through Buddhist philosophy. My whole life and the universe is encompassed in the mantra Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. It means I devote myself to the mystic law of cause and effect by sound.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

What are your future plans, as far as social work is concerned?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

You will catch me having my own psychology-based talk show plus being a Human Rights Watch director sometime soon.

Rati Agrawal, Team iDiva

You are an international super model, actor, psychologist, social activist and blogger. How do you juggle so many roles?

Anjhula Mya Singh Bais

I shatter through any obstacles to doing what I want and what the world needs by sheer dint of a force field of energy. If you want something badly enough, the universe conspires to make it happen, both on the micro and macro level. For me, absolute victory in a humanistic sense will always be the goal and purpose of all that I juggle. It works out in such a way that the seemingly

disparate areas of my life blend into one another seamlessly. For example, fashion week always came during spring break when I was studying at Columbia University. I studied so much on the plane and in green rooms that I came back actually ahead in school work! ■