

# Against all odds: Indian Canadian seeks success in Indian music industry

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Toronto

WHILE many dream of success, very few take the necessary steps to reach that goal. But Indian Canadian artist, Shweta Subramanian, has taken the leap to turn that dream into a reality. The 25-year old, who has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from Carleton University in Ottawa, went to India to fulfill a lifelong dream.

It all began after she won the title of Best Singer in North America under the banner of Surtarang by the Sangam Kala Group who held a competition in Toronto in December 2005. The singer rose above 200 talented singers from different parts of North America including California, New York, Edmonton, and Toronto to gain the coveted title. It was then she decided that India was where her destiny lay.

"I didn't want it to end there and decided to venture further in the world of South Asian media", says Subramanian, who has worked as a radio jockey for Bollywood Hungama on Chin FM 97.9 and was a host for Sounds of India on Rogers 22 in Ottawa.

But the journey was not an easy one for Subramanian. With no direct contacts in the industry, she had to struggle and find her way in tinsel town. To add to her woes she was diagnosed with appendicitis.

Thankfully, says Subramanian, she met former Miss India Canada and MTV VJ Ruby Bhatia in Mumbai.

"I was quite fortunate to know Ruby who took me to her personal doctor who immediately had me shifted to Lilavati Hospital. The surgeon there told me I had only seven hours to live since the appendix had perforated. I was operated immediately and had to spend a month at the hospital. Ruby was there with me during this crucial time. My parents also flew over from Canada during this period", she says.

However, this experience did not deter the artist from following her dream to get a



(Above) Shweta Subramanian at the rehearsal for Gang of Girl's finale;

Shweta being interviewed by Rajat Kapoor for The Lounge on NDTV Goodtimes



foothold in the world of media. She got back into the groove and started taking music lessons from Padma Wadekar, well-established singer and wife of Suresh Wadekar, getting a few breaks here and there.

"I appeared in an episode of Voice of India,

but due to backroom politics and the internal turmoil the show was going through, I decided not to pursue this show further," she says.

Instead, she became a self-performer and received opportunities to perform at various stage shows that included a show with Atif

Aslam and Sukhbir in Pune as well as Garba performances with the Kalyanji Anandji troupe in Surat and Navsari.

"Attendance at these events was in the tens of thousands with an amazing turnout of people", she says.

Soon she started gaining popularity and was called in to meet the producers behind Sunsilk Gang of Girls, who felt she had the perfect look to be a diva that the younger girls could look up to. Her Canadian background also added to the overall profile of the show, she says.

"I am currently appearing on Sunsilk Gang of Girls on Zoom TV, a highly popular channel in India. The show consists of five girls, and we were selected based on unique talents, set out to form a band. I am the only international selection in the show", says Subramanian who was introduced as a surprise gang member in the later half of the series.

The gang has been trained by music mentors Manasi Scott, Anushka Manchanda and Baba Sehgal, dance choreographer Sandip Soparkar, fitness guru Mickey Mehta, and is provided with a make-over by renowned hair stylist Javed Habib.

"Show ratings have gone up according to the staff at Zoom TV", she says.

Other achievements include appearing on a show with Rajat Kapoor for a talkshow entitled The Lounge on NDTV Goodtimes where she discusses the differences amongst men and women as well as the challenges of the media industry. The Ottawa girl also appeared on Maximum Style aired on Zoom TV as well as Santa Banta, also on Zoom TV. She has been interviewed by B4U to profile her achievements and her role in the Gang of Girls. She will soon be shooting for Zee Music and ETC, other popular TV channels in India.

However, the determined artist considers this exposure as just the starting steps to a long career ahead.

"I have miles to go to make an impact. It will be a struggle as the competition is fierce and countless youngsters are dying to be a part of this dynamic industry", she says.

"Talent alone is not enough. You have to network, look out for opportunities, don't let failure bring you down, and always aim high. Values are important, especially in this industry, if you want to build a reputable profile," adds Subramanian.

## Canadian multicultural hockey returns; number of participating team number rises from 16 to 34

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Toronto

LATER this month, the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships (CMHC) will feature 34 teams in three separate divisions playing for the Canadian Cup and the Heritage Bowl. Spectators will cheer for their cultural team at four different arenas within the Greater Toronto Area from December 27 to 30.

Driven by passion and staying true to its mission of developing multicultural hockey in Canada in just three years of existence, the Canadian Multicultural Hockey (CMHL) Inc. is surging at a stellar pace and making a significant contribution to hockey in Canada. To date, the organization has laid a strong foundation in Ontario with team entries reaching 34 from the original 16 teams that participated at its inaugural tournament in 2005.

"The Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships is a tournament of cultural di-

versity and sportsmanship among Canada's favorite pastime—hockey" says founder Stan Papulkas. "We are so proud of the tournament's development over the last three years and continue to be amazed at the support from the communities involved and the level of hockey these teams bring".

**Teams include South Asian, West Indian, German, Italian, Polish, and Israeli among others**

Participating teams include South Asian, West Indian, German, Italian, Polish, and Israeli amongst other communities. The CMHL has become a cultural phenomenon for those outside of the GTA and in some cases, in parts of Canada.

"Requests have been coming in from cities and communities across Ontario, other provinces and even the US and Europe, for men's and women's teams to take part," says Papulkas. "The quality and skill of the players is a testament to the passion for the game of hockey, hard work, commitment and development of all those involved in this Canadian tournament."

For more information on the CMHC visit [www.cmhl.ca](http://www.cmhl.ca).

