

Flight of fancy

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On speaking to Kamini Asrani, **Purnima Goswami Sharma** discovers that designing fancy dress costumes can be an evolving experience



An Egyptian costume designed by Kamini Asrani

Kids can take you on a flight of imagination through their stories, their innocence and also their fancy dress competitions — where they dress up like Disney characters or animals straight out of *The Jungle Book*. Meet Kamini Asrani (55), who brings life to these fantasy characters by just dressing kids right.

For Kamini, this vocation has been a memorable journey. "It all began 20 years ago, when my kids use to take part in fancy dress competitions, I use to design their costumes. Eventually my work started getting noticed and I was flooded with orders," reveals Asrani, a Peddar Road-based designer whose innovative-ness is visible in her costumes. She adds, "I have designed multifarious costumes like that of flowers, fruits, vegetables, insects, dwarves, devils, fairies, animals, even pizzas, ice-creams and burgers. All these outfits are also available on rent and I even custom make costumes for school children." Her talent doesn't stop here; she has also designed outfits for annual programmes for different schools.

This enterprising grandmother has a

knack for designing costumes on social themes. Elaborating on this, she states, "Designing for a social cause gives me work satisfaction. The highpoint in my career was when I designed costumes for a female infanticide campaign, where I created an injection in which a girl was trapped. I have also created costumes for a drive against noise pollution, where I made loudspeakers using green cloth."

Kamini goes out of her way to help

kids; she also gives them lines to recite in sync with the costume. She states that by doing this the child gains confidence and in the past many have won competitions.

To stay updated, she follows the current fads in movies. At present the most hot-selling costumes are of Hanuman, Ganesha and a penguin. She elaborates, "To keep myself updated, I don't

miss a single film and I regularly browse through books and surf the Internet."

For Kamini this profession is a meditation, an experience beyond definition. She says, "I want to breathe my last while designing costumes for kids, as kids are nothing but a form of God," declares Kamini smilingly.

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Kamini Asrani