

Rama Devi always longed to meet the son that she had left back home when he was seven
PHOTOS: RAAJESSH KASHYAP/HT

LOVE THAT NEVER FADES

Time is a cruel thing. A decade and a half of alienation can make a mother and son unrecognisable to each other. But what doesn't fade is the love in their hearts. When you meet Rama Devi Chowdhary and her son Mitrajit, not for a moment it appears that the two have just been united after a separation of 15 long years, such is their bonding.

Criminal lawyer Rama Devi Chowdhary left her home in Kolkata 15 years ago after she had some differences with her husband. She came to Delhi to practice law. Beginning from Patiala Court, she soon moved to the Supreme Court.

But her career suffered a blow in 2012 when it was discovered during a hearing that she had schizophrenia. The judge directed the police to admit her in the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences, where she was treated for her mental illness for

nine months. In 2013, she was shifted to a government shelter. After two years, she came to the home run by Rahab Centre For Hope, an NGO that works for abused and trafficked women. Rama began a new life here.

In the five years of her stay, Rama slowly opened up in the family like environment. But the pangs of separation from her child often resurfaced when she was alone. Unable to recollect his name or any other detail that could lead her to the child, she kept her pain to herself.

And one day, in the month of June, a miracle happened. In a flashback of memories, Rama was reminded of her little boy's name, Mitrajit. Longing to meet the son she had left back home when he was only seven, Rama requested Eunice Stephen, founder, Rahab, to help find Mitrajit. But no record of Rama's husband or his family

was available. When the shelters, where Rama had lived in the past, couldn't help with any information, Eunice and her team decided to look up social media in the hope to get some clue about her son. As they typed Mitrajit Chowdhary, they came across several profiles on Facebook. Messages were sent out to each person. And one of them indeed happened to be Rama's son Mitrajit! A message flashed on Mitrajit's phone screen that said, 'Hello, do you have a relative called Rama Devi Chowdhary?'

"I stared at the screen for the initial few seconds... my mother had finally reached out, as I always believed she would one day. Without wasting time, I typed yes," says Mitrajit.

When he spoke to his mother for the very first time, he was nervous. "I was shaking. I went blank. She took my name... said Mitrajit, this is mom speaking. It was a lot to sink in," he says.

Mitrajit made a video call the next day. "I couldn't recognise her. She had all grey hair... she looked so different from the picture that I had of her, taken at a family wedding," says Mitrajit.

Soon after, he started planning his trip to Delhi. On September 25, the two finally met. It took a while for Rama to recognise her son,

After 15 agonising years, Rama Devi Chowdhary was reunited with her son when a sudden rush of memories helped her recall his name



It's such a touching reunion... I wish we are able to unite more such families that are torn apart due to circumstances.

EUNICE STEPHEN,
Social activist

who is now a 22-year-old confident young man working as an HR executive for a firm in Vishakhapatnam. "As I had a closer look, I saw the same childhood face... the only difference is that a beard covers it now," she says.

Rama and her son are now on their way to Vishakhapatnam. The son can't be happier that his parents are going to be united once again.

Shara Ashraf Prayag