

EVERYTHING YOU NEVER HEARD ABOUT

The Unsung Heroes

WHO FALL, BREAK AND
RISE TO FIND COURAGE AND REDEEM THEIR
DREAMS.

SAFA, HYDERABAD

Acknowledgement

The world becomes a better place when we show gratitude and thanks to people who want to develop and lead others. We highly recognize and acknowledge all our women in SAFA who came forth and shared their incredibly empowering life journey with us. Simultaneously, our gratitude to the millions of brave women and girls whom we are working throughout the years.

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Finally, to all the partner organizations and those who have been a part of SAFA and contributing in unique capacities.

Foreword

“When women support each other, incredible stories begin.”

The ‘Unsung Heroes’ is a compilation of seven enlivening stories of women belonging to the marginalised sections of Hyderabad in India. These women have taught us that despite the myriad of pains and hardships, our work and endeavor to achieve new heights and lights are needed to go on.

Hope you enjoy reading these inspirational stories and let us know if you want to learn more about the grassroots through such stories.

With Love,

Rubina NF

Director, SAFA

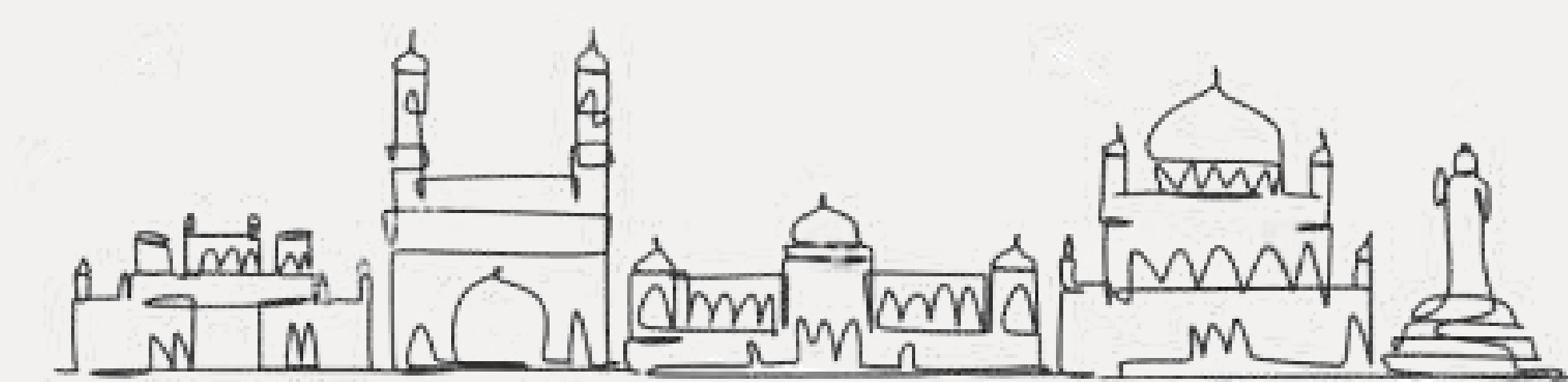


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Preface



As early as 1995, the UNDP reported , “investing in women’s capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself, it is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development. Therefore, gender equality must be an integral part of the sustainable human development paradigm”. Around the globe, There are two beliefs existing, one is a realization of the need of women in sustainable development, other is a realization of elimination of all kinds of discrimination on the basis of sex and equal distribution of power and resources is a prerequisite to bring sustainable development. Indeed, every nation and millions of non-profits are striving to bring changes in relation to gender equality and discrimination. Yet, there is more to do.

With these beliefs, *SAFA* is an NGO working towards attaining socio-economic empowerment of women in the most untouched slums of Hyderabad, Telangana. Hyderabad, a melting pot of North and South Indian cultures nestled in the heart of the Deccan Plateau of India. A city of contrast, Hyderabad emanates an old-world charm of its own with the old city, Hi-tech city, and the other regions lying between the old and the new. The scenic views of stately mosques, noisy bazaars, grand malls, pulsating clubs, sleek restaurants and hi-rise buildings of every-growing multinationals give you an incredible solidarity and a sense of purpose. But these scenic views veil the mounting concentration of urban slums, where thousands of women are battling for a decent life with dignity, respect, and independence.

And it is so ironic that the city’s slums are the abode of lakhs of people whose work makes the lives of its better-off citizens easier and comfortable but they themselves are forced to survive in the nastiest of conditions. The world doesn’t look like what you think it looks like: it is so outlandish that just a few kilometers can make a place so incongruent from our normal world.

With the stories from these slums, we celebrate the empowerment of marginalized sections in Hyderabad. **“The Unsung Heroes”** is a collection of seven women’s stories whose individual lives wove together in one incredible story - a story of challenges and triumph over them.

About SAFA

SAFA is a non-profit organization striving towards socio-economic empowerment of women and education of girl children whilst retaining the cultural ethos of the community. It aimed at providing livelihood opportunities with dignity to resource-poor women living in the unreached slums of Hyderabad.

Rubina NF realized that women, belonging to marginalized sections, are still confined to their traditional social role of being an ideal Indian woman, who confines herself to home and hearth. These women, within the constraints of the urban slum environment, are uneducated and deprived of their identity. She recognized the need for women empowerment at the very personal level where women could acknowledge their own worth and potentials. So, they can take an initiative for themselves.

At present, SAFA is working in the domains of education, skill development, livelihood, and capacity building through several projects. The stories in this book are selected from the beneficiaries of three projects i.e. Sustainable Livelihood for Single Women, Aajeevika, and Mainstreaming Youth.

Sustainable Livelihood for Single Women is a project in collaboration with Islamic Relief (IR) to empower deserted, separated, divorced and women who never married; by increasing their livelihood options through entrepreneurship development and promoting access to their rights and entitlements. Karwaan Kitchen is one of its parts where women learn cooking and earn through it.

Aajeevika is another project in partnership with Deloitte & United Way of Hyderabad (UWH). Aajeevika endeavors to equip women with desirable skills in tailoring and to establish market linkages to improve employability of women in order to provide them with fine placement.

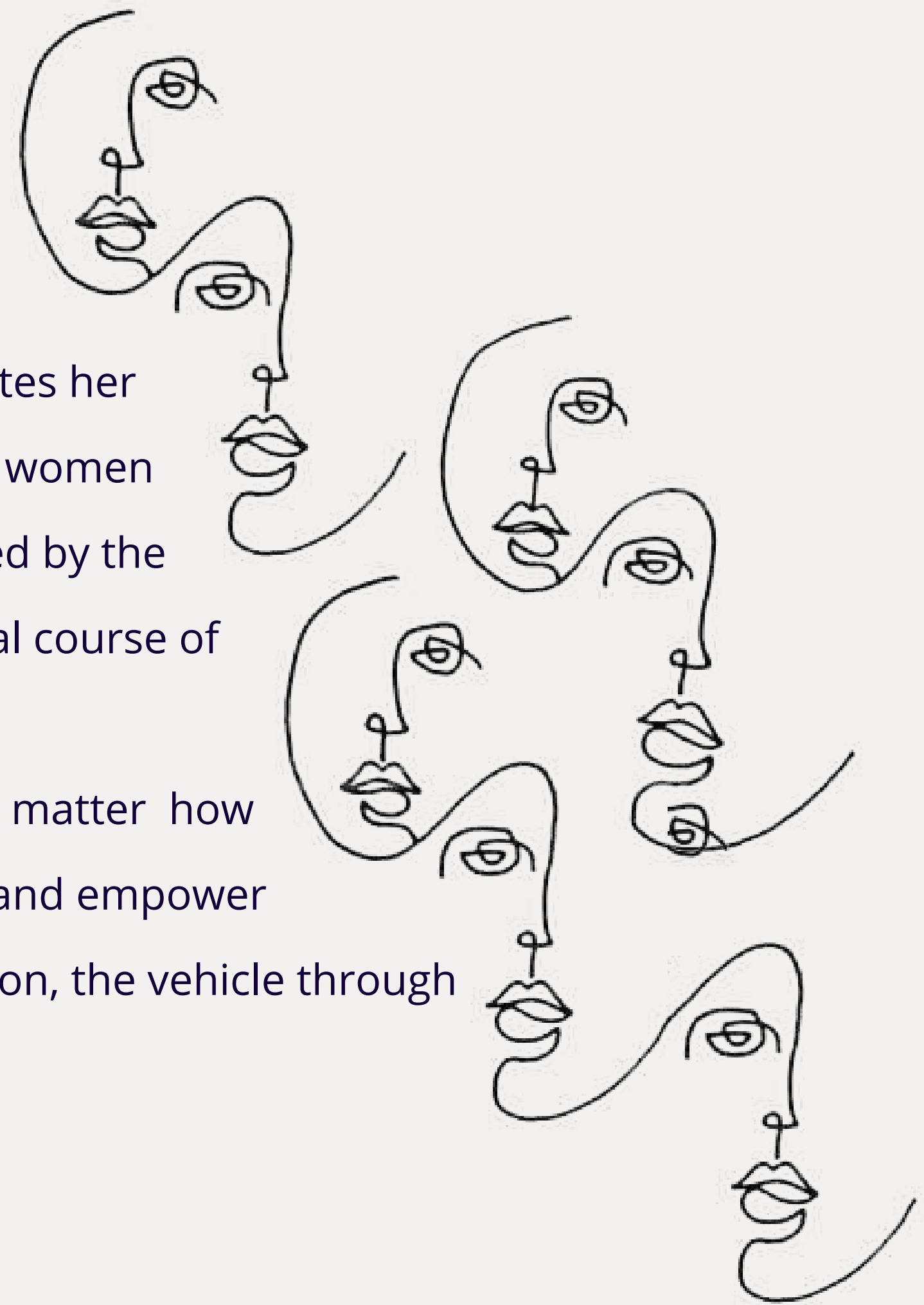
Sponsored by SEED & BSBT, the Mainstreaming Youth project focuses on offering Job-oriented skill training to unemployed youths or those engaged in the informal sector.



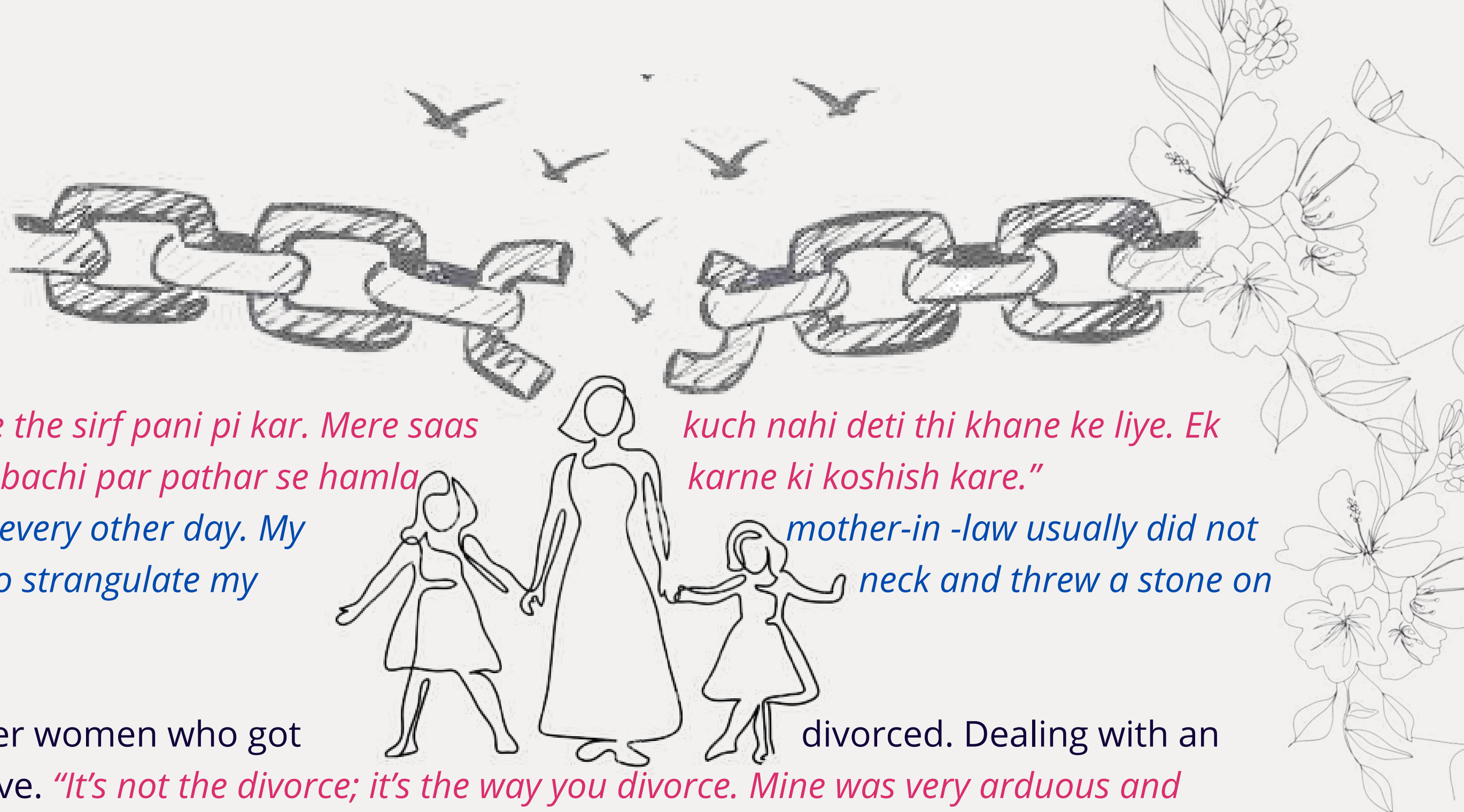
Introduction

“The Unsung Heroes” contains the stories of seven women from the marginalised sections of the society, each on a challenging path. We have selected specific women who, through their positive vision, significantly altered their life and environment they are surviving in. Each woman narrates her story from a first-person point of view as we imagined it. For each of these women there was a kairotic moment, a fork in the road, when they were summoned by the power greater than themselves to take steps that changed the conventional course of their lives and altered society.

Once summoned, each woman realised that there was no turning back, no matter how troublesome the path. Telling their stories, they reflect back to encourage and empower the women like them to have the courage to trust their instincts and intuition, the vehicle through which the higher power speaks.



A Happy Divorce



"2-3 din tak mein aur mere bachhe bhooke guzaarte the sirf pani pi kar. Mere saas din mere shauhar mera gala dabaye aur meri choti bachi par pathar se hamla

(My children and I used to survive only on water for every other day. My give us anything to eat. One day my husband tried to strangle my my little daughter).

kuch nahi deti thi khane ke liye. Ek karne ki koshish kare."

mother-in-law usually did not neck and threw a stone on

30 years old, Sultana, has set an example for other women who got divorced. Dealing with an alcoholic husband and fighting every day to survive. *"It's not the divorce; it's the way you divorce. Mine was very arduous and nasty: he restricted our mobility, forced our children to drop out their studies, and like every alcoholic man/husband, he used to beat me every day."* Sultana was under the most brutal attack and everything she valued – her home life, her future, her kids, and her finances – were being viciously threatened. She, then, had no choice but to turn her back on and take shelter in her mother's home. Her family supported her in the legal battle and she finally got divorced.

They say, *"Divorce affects life on absolutely every level – from your confidence and sense of who you are to your financial situation and long-term future."* For sultana, divorce was like childbirth – you don't know how awful it is until you're in it, and by then you have to see through it. Despite all the pain and struggles, it's the happiest moment of your life. Similarly, her divorce was indeed a devastating experience which made her feel weak and vulnerable but she was way too happy and relaxed about it. The only thing which bothered her most was the responsibility to nurture her two young daughters, support their studies and plan to make their future bright. She had no educational qualification to do some good job. So with the support of her brother, she started a kite shop at home and later added beautiful bangles for sale. Unfortunately, the new business got into loses and she had to shut it down. This first financial set back led her to move to a rented space. Later, she again recollected her strength and confidence to join a clothing shop where she used to stand for the whole day. This job affected her health severely and made her to quit this job too.

One day she happened to know about SAFA's skill training unit in her community and joined the cooking classes in Karwaan kitchen. Presently, Sultana is working as a home cook and earning pretty well to support her family.

And She Grew: Empowered to Empower Others

In our conventional husband, widowhood is herself to being treated family, there is more to go forever as a stigma. speech. Humiliation, does not have to face. challenges, whatever the



patriarchal society, where the identity and worth of a woman is determined by her about much more than losing a husband. From changing the way she dolled up with disrespect and alienation by her family members, in particular by her in-law tolerate, often without saying a word. The sufferings don't expire there, but they She is seen as a social pariah forbidden from family events to her basic right to harassment, exclusion, and prohibition, there is nothing that a widow in India However, when the going gets harder, there are those who rise up to the odds.

Asiya Sultana, a thirty years old woman who lost her husband few years back. Despite the tragedy, up her mind to forge on, to nurture her kid. And although she has had minimal emotional and financial from her natal or marital families, she has admirably managed to carry on with her life. Before she used to teach in a primary school and always desired to lead her life independently. But is the final fate of a woman as believed; Asiya also tied her knot and quit her job. And when her passed away, she was traumatized.

Incidentally, Asiya had no savings as she belonged to a lower middle income family and was employed when her husband was around. She neither pursued her teacher career again nor to out from the community. She, somehow, managed by renting a space in her home. Then came to know about the Karwaan Kitchen in her own community and decided to exhibit the of her hand. At present, Asiya is the Chef Assistant in Karwaan Kitchen of SAFA. As an Assistant Chef, manages a team of 16 women, guide and help them in learning new scrumptious dishes.



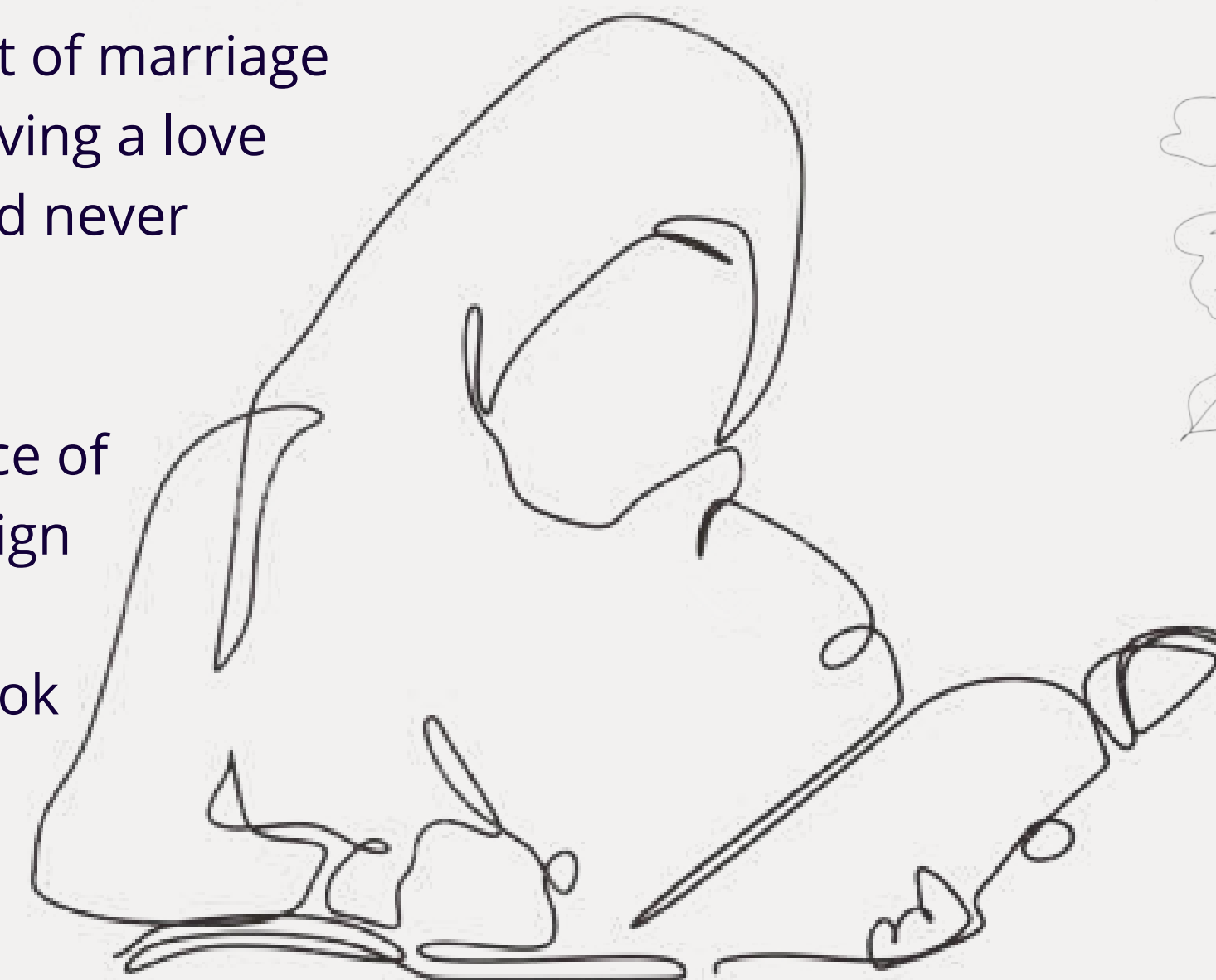
Asiya made backing marriage, marriage husband

not went Asiya magic she

Saleha's Puran Poli: A New Business Horizon

Divorce has been the defining event of her married life. Her husband checked out of marriage as if he was checking out of a hotel. After 18 years of their wedding, he'd been having a love affair and married to a woman. Saleha was shattered and traumatized as she had never expected this phase in her life.

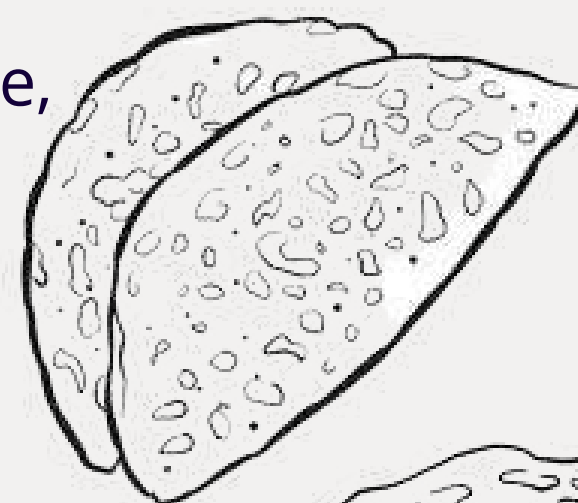
On being urged and supported by her parents, she asked him for the maintenance of her children. He, in response, agreed to give her maintenance only if she would sign some papers. Saleha, without any second thought, signed on a few dotted lines without knowing that those were the divorce papers. Her husband deceptively took advantage of her illiteracy.



At that moment, Saleha felt that nothing is ever as simple as divorce. She was so emotionally winded by his departure that she didn't have the energy to fight hard enough. In the early days, she was full of rage, anger and intense sorrow. She had panic attacks, lost her sense of identity – as well as lots of weight. Somehow she got through it, but the glitches continued as her support system was collapsed and she had three young girls to take care. Abandoned with three little beautiful girls, Saleha was accused of everything – from being a bad wife to unfit mother – though none of it was true. Saleha decided to do stitching and started to earn Rs. 3000-4000 in a month. But such meager amount was not sufficient enough to bear all expenses from living in a rented home to paying school fee of her girls.

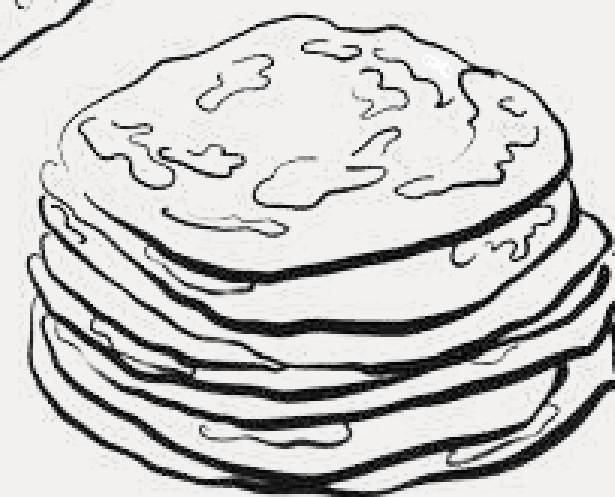
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Saleha has always been a wonderful cook in her home. Every folk enjoys her dishes especially Puran Poli with great pleasure and fondness. Hence, she firmly determined to make the most of this skill and set off her small business of preparing scrumptious homemade dishes and got bundle of orders for Puran Poli. Steadily, the demand for Puran Poli got increased in neighboring areas by word of mouth.



home. Every folk enjoys her dishes especially she firmly determined to make the most preparing scrumptious homemade dishes and got demand for Puran Poli got increased in neighboring

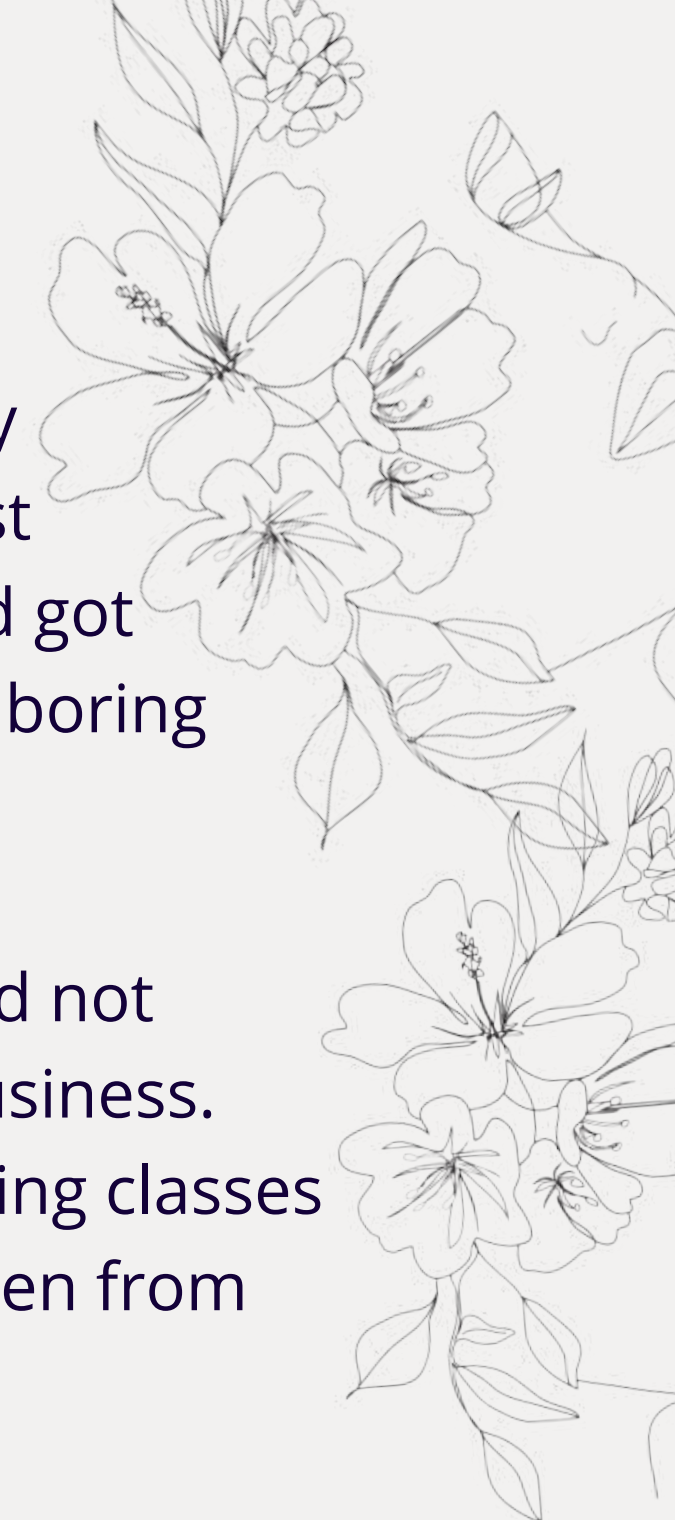
All things were going good but working with the least scale-up her business nor manage her existing clients. But the passion of playing with fire and spices did not let Saleha to stop, so she joined cooking classes in Karwaan kitchen. She has now re-started her her batch and use facilities available in the Karwaan kitchen.



resources as one-man army; she could not And this led her to shut down her business. let Saleha to stop, so she joined cooking classes Puran-Poli Centre with two more women from



“The skills I have been taught are new and so extraordinary for me. I have never thought I would be able to meet a master chef, Puneet Mehta, and learn from such a professional chef in areas where we live. I am so glad that SAFA opened up this unit. Now I feel that I can do a lot in this field and can earn much better.”



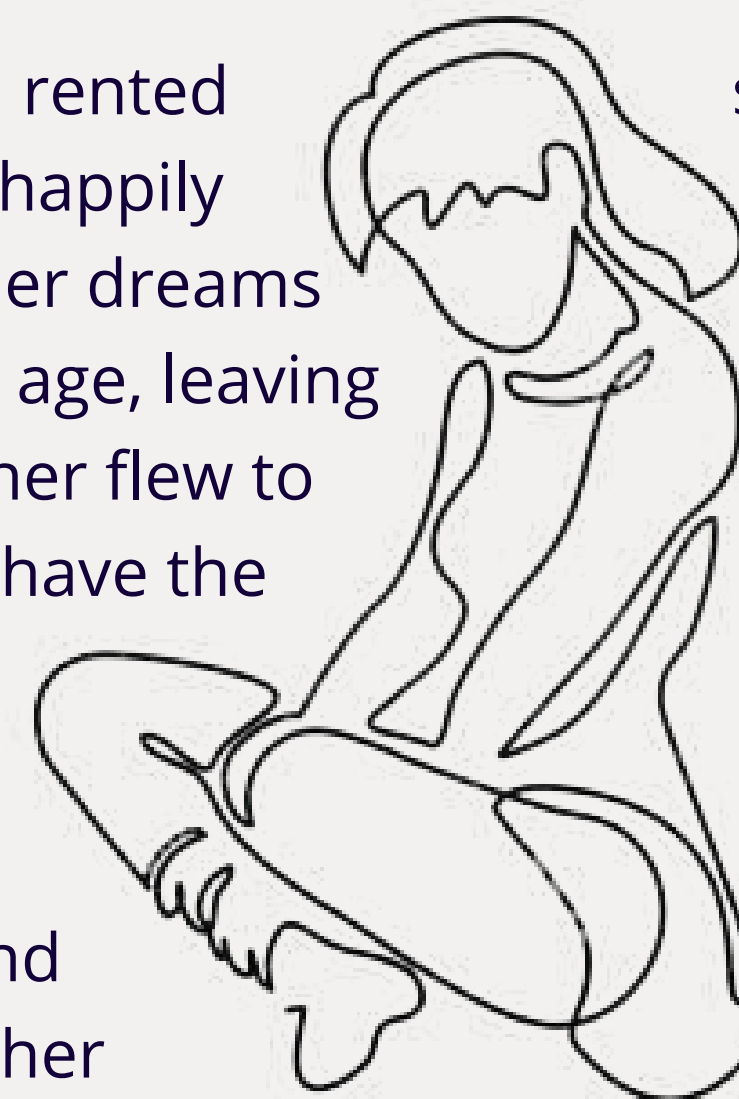
An Unavailable Father: A story of an abandoned girl



As children grow into adults, they every so often count on their parents to help them forge the way to who they are supposed to become. They look to their mother and father for lessons on how to become a good human being and lean on them as they learn how to trust. Even as self-reliance is earned, the child-parent relationship remains important. So when a child's father is no longer in the picture, what will be the resulting long-term effects? Sometimes life throws us some curve balls and things don't go as they're supposed to. And we don't have any choice but to suck it up, and carry on with our days. However, what happens when a person who should not, appallingly wrongs you?

Such is the case of our Ayesha Fatima, 20 years old, who resides in a small rented three younger siblings. Like every child, she had her little dreams of living happily decent abode, becoming a doctor, and marrying a man of her choice. All her dreams most trusted and loving person in her life abandoned her at a very young age, leaving work in raising four children. In the name of hunting employment, her father flew to appearances over call and then vanished for years. The man did not even have the providing monetary support for his offsprings.

Whenever, her mother tried to ask for some financial support, he used to and call after months. But Ayesha had always loved her father the most and to share everything about her schools, friends, and siblings and of course her Days passed but things haven't changed a bit.



shell with her mother and with her family in a were shattered when the her mother to do all the Abu Dhabi, made the odd common decency of

change his contact number tried to reconnect with him desire to become a doctor.

Cont..

“Huma ko bohot khwahish thi doctor banney ki, par nai padh sake, soche the padhne ka ke aadhe job karege aadhe wo karege, but wesa bhi nai hora, to abhi 10th se direct idhar hi ayi, 10th ho ke bhi 6 years hora to jab tak hum bhi sales mein job kare, idhar udhar job kr k phir SAFA mein thoda computer ki knowledge liye.”

(I wished to become a doctor but couldn't study further. I thought to do my studies and job simultaneously, but this also couldn't happen. So I dropped out after high school and it's been 6 years since I passed high school. So in the meantime, i worked in different companies as sales person and then joined computer course in SAFA).

They spend their life in pathetic and deteriorated condition. Her mother got ailed and quit her job of cooking. Each day turned into a battle for them to survive. As the eldest child, Ayesha took the lead to take care of her family. She dropped her studies when she was in high school. She joined as a sales girl in a hardware shop and used to walk hundreds of miles every day just to earn Rs. 5000 per month so she could feed her family. Standing whole day as a sales person for six years deteriorated her health day by day.

“Abhi sales mein hue to subhey se leke ek dam sham tak khade hoke hi rehna matlab kyun ki sir dekhe to ek dam gussa karte to khad ke hi work karna rehta.”

(In Sales, we would have to work since morning to evening in a standing position because if sir would catch us seated then he becomes angry.)

So she joined ITES course under the project “Main Streaming Youth” in SAFA. And after course she got placed as ‘Data Entry Operator’ in a good company namely SRM Traffic makes Rs. 8000 per month in an upright work environment where she parks herself in personal cubical.

“This course changed my life and proved so advantageous for me. I got a satisfactory job in a finer organization where I have my own decent workspace, perfect lunch hours, and a better remuneration along with incentives. I want every girl who doesn't have any opportunity or access to study further or who are struggling in any way, must join SAFA's training program.”

Ayesha now wishes to see her sister as a doctor and for that she's working hard in her job role.



An Anticipated Separation

As a child of divorce, she thinks that her relationship is not theirs - she doesn't hold grudges, she communicates her feelings, picks her battles and never goes to bed angry – she does all things that her parents were not good at. Nineteen years old Hina Fatima loves to chitchat and make good friends very effortlessly. But behind her beautiful smile and shining eyes, she veils her pain: the pain which she got as being a child of divorce, a child of abandonment, and a child of helplessness.

"I was devastated as a child when I came to know that my dad drove away on knowing that I 'a girl' was in the womb of his wife and he would again be a father of a girl. My elder sister was then one-year-old certainly didn't understand that our home was broken and our life too. And we became fatherless and honestly we survived the divorce, but the journey wasn't pretty: it really skewed the way people looked at us and passed harsh taunts."

It hurts. But worse is when your parents 'move on' and act like their first family never existed. Hina, in a desire to see her father at least once in her lifetime, went to meet him and fill him in with every minute details of her life. But her father, as strong-headed as he used to be, humiliated her, abused her, and got her out of his house by saying he never wanted her in his life.

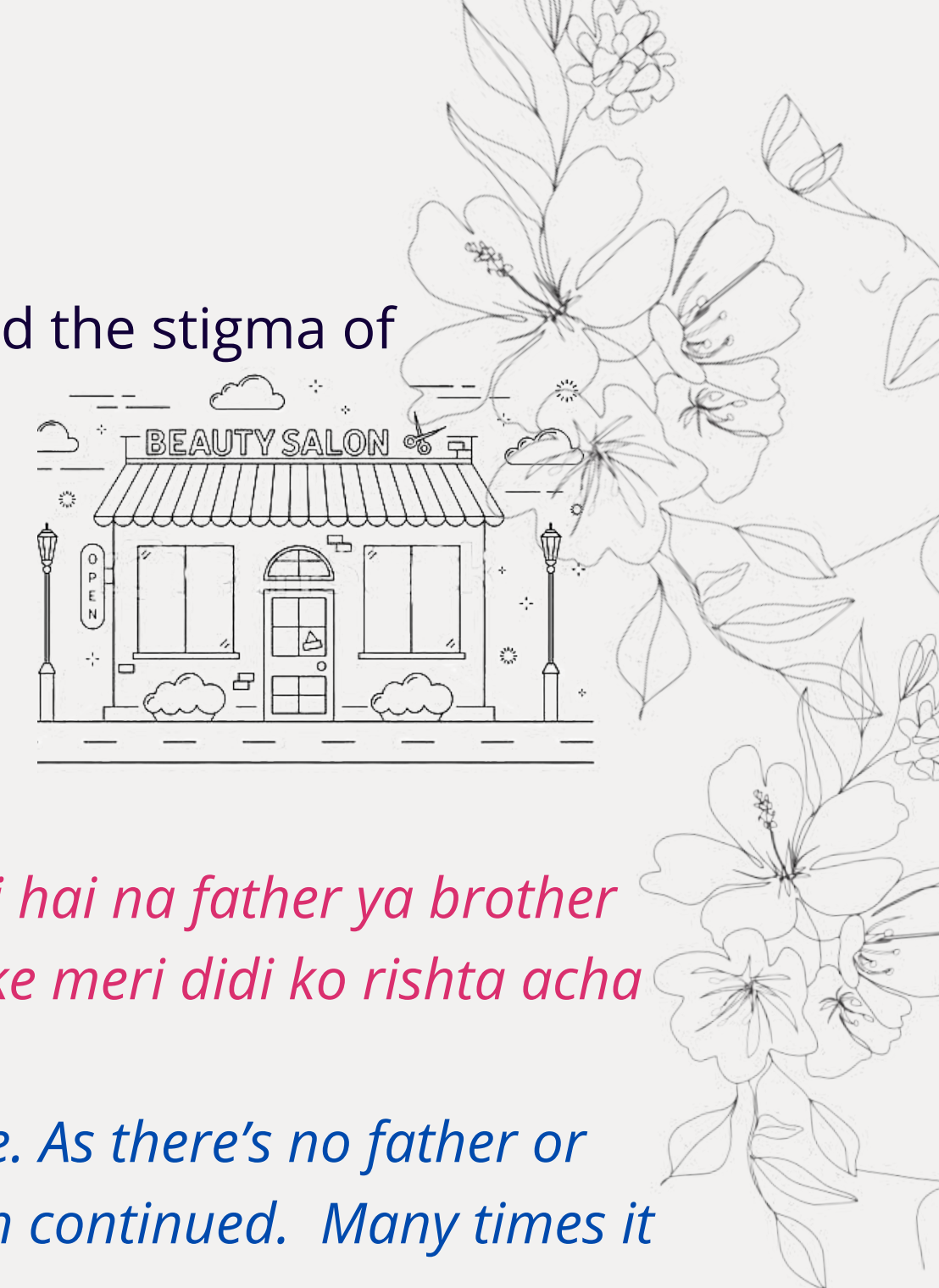
"It was the worst feeling I've ever had in my life. I felt rejected, abandoned, humiliated, and as if I never existed. It was the hardest thing for me to pretend that half of my family never existed and that half of me no longer exist. To pretend that I don't care or notice, but i do care and I do notice."

Hina's mother, a woman of forty who lost her husband, endured all her pains silently, and nurtured two little beautiful girls in to young. But each day was a battle for her. All her health concerns especially diabetes made her to quit her cooking job four years back. Since then, Hina left her school when she was in 9th grade and took all the responsibilities on her shoulders along with her elder sister. Being passionate of makeup-art, Hina planned to follow her passion and got a job in a unisex salon along with her sister. But as Muslim girls, they had to quit this job in the fear of certain stigmas to be attached to them.



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Though their immediate family did not oppose their choice of doing beauty service work, but they faced the stigma of doing an immoral job from their community members and relatives. She was told that as a Muslim woman, she was expected to use beauty enhancement only to please her husband and was not supposed to present herself in front of other men even in the course of earning her livelihood. This belief led Hina to feel guilty about doing beauty service work, especially in a unisex salon which involves working besides men and offering service to both male and female customers.



“Relatives mein Log bolte ke isko to husband bhi nai hai, betiyaan hein pata nai kese hoyengi. Kyun ki koi nai hai na father ya brother jo control mein rakh sakein. To betiyan shayad bigdi hui honggi. Ese ese taane marte rehte. Kai bar aisa hua ke meri didi ko rishta acha aya to is problem ki wajah se nai jama. ke akeli ladkiyan kya-kya kare honge, kahan-kahan gaye honge.”

(Relatives used to say that she doesn't have husband now but only daughters. Who knows how they would be. As there's no father or brother who put control over them. So daughters might have been spoiled and such taunts would have been continued. Many times it happened that my sister had a good marriage proposal, because of this problem it could not be fixed).

Our society is probably not ready to accept that a Hina proved them wrong. However, she quit her job passion made her join SAFA's ITES course under had a lot of counseling sessions which changed her in beauty culture, SAFA offered her a job of trainer in studies from distant education and set up her own



divorced woman can handle and raise her girls but in a unisex salon but her strong will to follow her project Aajeevika. She learnt not only IT skills here but outlook and personality. Because of her experience beauty & wellness. She now aspires to continue her beauty salon.

“Pehle to itna bahar jake itna karne ka kuch bhi nai tha, itna ma'alumaat bhi nai tha ke ye sari chizein girls ko sikhate SAFA mein free mein. Pamphlet ke zariye meko malum hua ke SAFA centre hai, to mein yahan pe ayi thi. SAFA mein ane ke bad ek tarah se mera dar bhi nikal gya logon se bat karne ka. Yahan pe ane ke bad us pe thoda seekh bhi mil gyi ke jaldi rona nai problems ki wjh se, logon se soch samajh ke batein karni chaiye.”

(Earlier I didn't have any confidence to go out and knowledge about free courses for girls in SAFA. I came to know about it through a pamphlet that was why I came here. After joining SAFA, all my fears to interact with people flew away. I learnt many lessons like I should not cry due to a problem or I should think before speaking, etc).

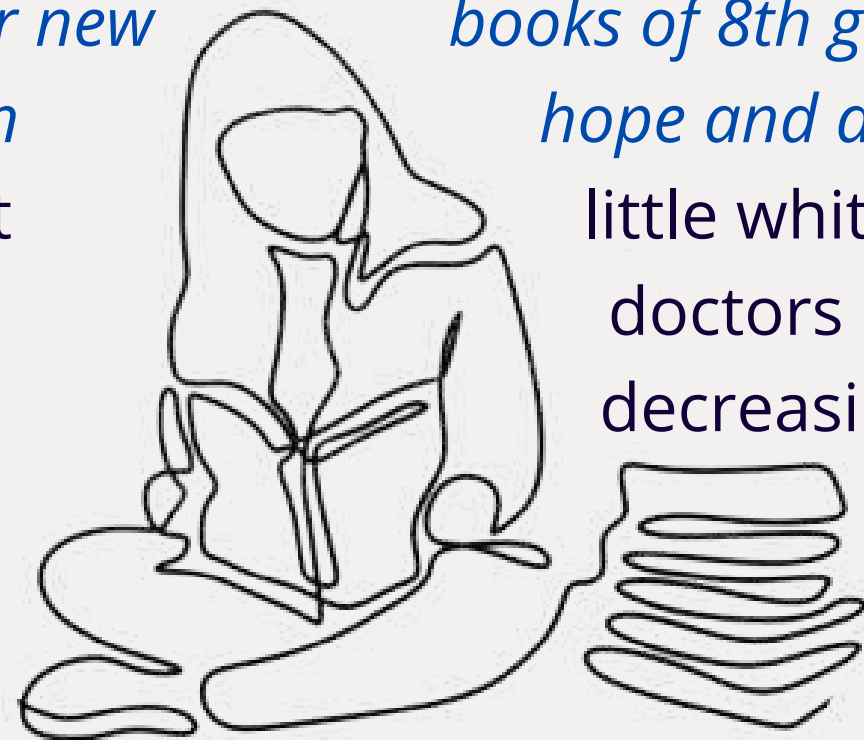
What I Never Told!

A little beautiful girl of 13 was enthusiastically planning on how she could spend her summer vacations at best? Which relative could she visit? How her new books of 8th grade would be? What should be included in her new 'to do' list? All these questions filled her eyes with hope and delight. During the summer days, she found out a white patch on her foot. Initially they ignored that little white patch but later her skin had white and brown patches on all over her skin. They ran to different doctors and tried out all kinds of treatments whether it's Ayurveda or homeopathy but instead of decreasing, white marks kept on increasing in the other parts of body.

As a small girl, it was very difficult to deal with such a problem. After consulting a dermatologist, it was discovered that little Ayesha had Vitiligo, a long-term skin condition characterized by patches on the skin losing its pigment. Since then, a social stigma was attached that her disease is contagious so others may get suffered from this disease. Even, her family started to have a whole heap of hitches related to money as her brother was a driver and an only bread-earner in the family. The treatment of Vitiligo was way more expensive for him that he could support either her treatment or her studies. So, all these financial problem and social exclusion of Ayesha led her to shatter all her dreams and drop out of school in 7th grade.

As she grew up, people started asking her questions like when did it happen? Why it is still not cured? Who will marry her with this disease? In which parts of body does she have white spots? And so on. Days passed and Ayesha has grown up into a beautiful and strong young woman of 23. But all these passed years were very depressing for her. She often felt lonely and left-out. Her self-esteem reduced drastically and her confidence was lost.

Ayesha was always fond of stitching and designing dresses. Her mother and sister-in-law noticed her inclination towards fashion designing, so they insisted her to join SAFA's tailoring course under project Aajeevika with a belief that the course could help her in regaining her lost confident and self-esteem.

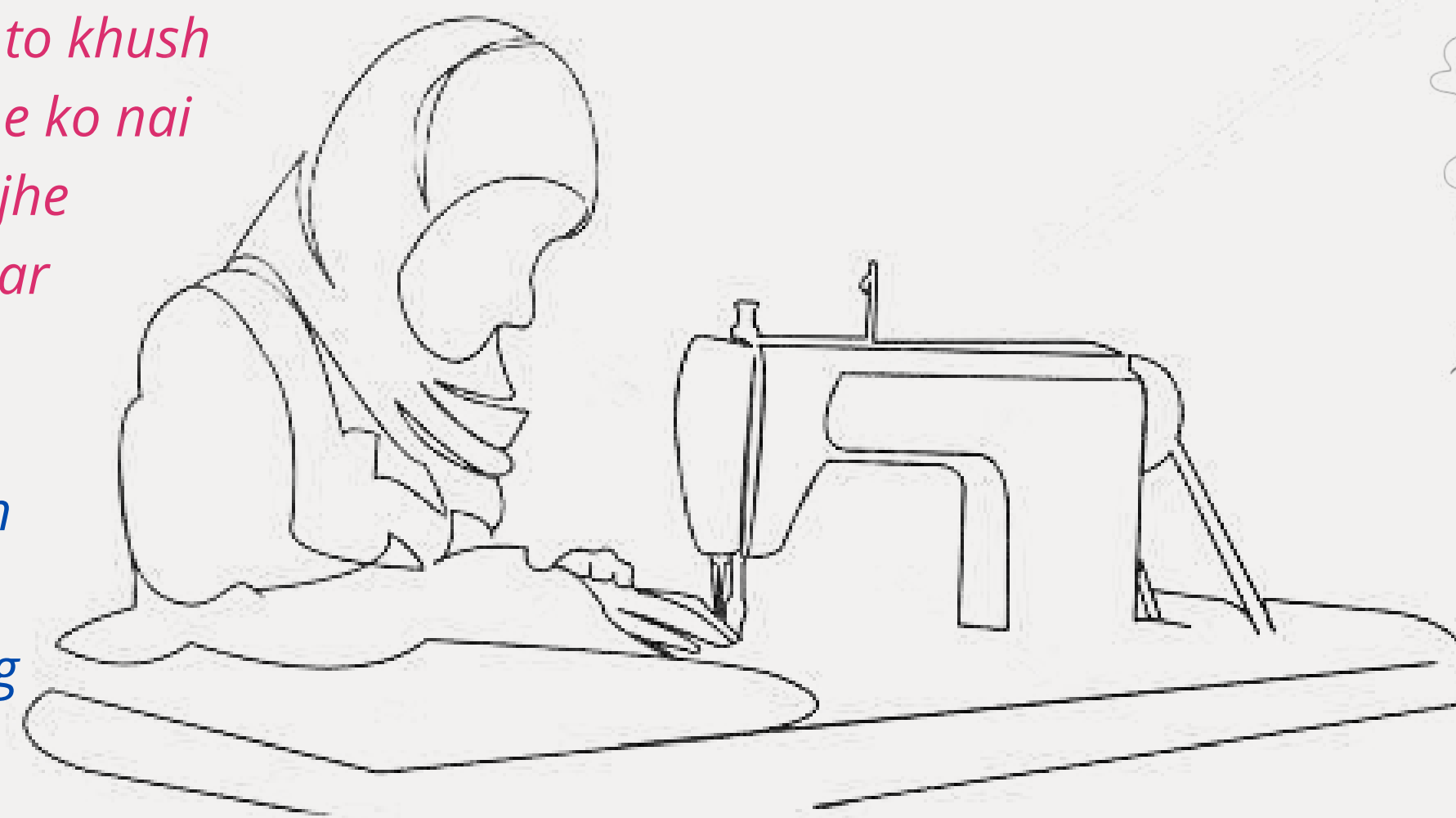


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She joined the course and gained number of ideas to improve her skills in fashion designing. She soon started to receive tailoring orders from neighbor and boutique also. Being a keen learner, Ayesha thought of joining an ITES course from SAFA training center. But she could not meet the eligibility criteria to get admission in the course. Instead, she was offered the job as trainer in tailoring. She with no second thought joined as trainer and kick off her new journey.

“Ghar pe rehne se bohot stress ho jara tha. Yahan pe ati logon se milti hu to khush rhti hu. Ghar par agar rehti thi to paise to milte the lekin itna kuch seekhne ko nai milta tha. Dar bhi bht tha ke kese bat karugi log meri skin dekhege, or mujhe English bhi nai ati. Abhi yahan ane ke bad dar ek dam chla gaya. Yahan par koi kabhi kuch nai bole meko dekh ke to khushi hoti.”

(Staying home was very stressful. I feel happy when I come here and meet people. If I stayed at home, I would have got money but there wasn't much to learn. There was a lot of fear about how would I talk to people, how would they see my skin and I couldn't even speak English. Just after coming here, the fear went away suddenly. But here I am happy to see it that nobody has ever said anything to me).



Working as a trainer in SAFA has totally changed Ayesha's life. She has become more empowered, confident, and self-reliant to fulfill her shattered dreams. She no longer depends on her brother for her vitiligo treatment expenses. She has enrolled herself in high-school from National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), and is saving pennies to set up her own boutique.

Growing Woman: How She Falls and Rises

She was always happy as a child, but the incident seemed to have irreversibly changed her life. 31 years old Sameena sacrificed her dreams of becoming a teacher and started her new life by getting married at the age of 18. She, with all courage, buried her dreams with her past life. Life was like revolving only around her husband and in-law family. She soon blessed with a baby boy when she was at her mother's home. Like everything was good in life. But as they say happiness and grief are transitory, her stint of bliss was also short-lived.

As soon as she gave birth to her child, she became a prey of Chikungunya, a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes which causes fever and severe joint pain. In the meantime time, her husband got married to a woman who was already married and had a kid. At that point of time, Samina was not just a victim of chikungunya, but she was also a victim of exploitation and discrimination, where her trust was severely crushed and assassinated. She asked why he married to another woman. He replied that *there was no one to work at home. His mother would go to work and the younger sister lived alone. After seeing all this, she insisted him to get married.*

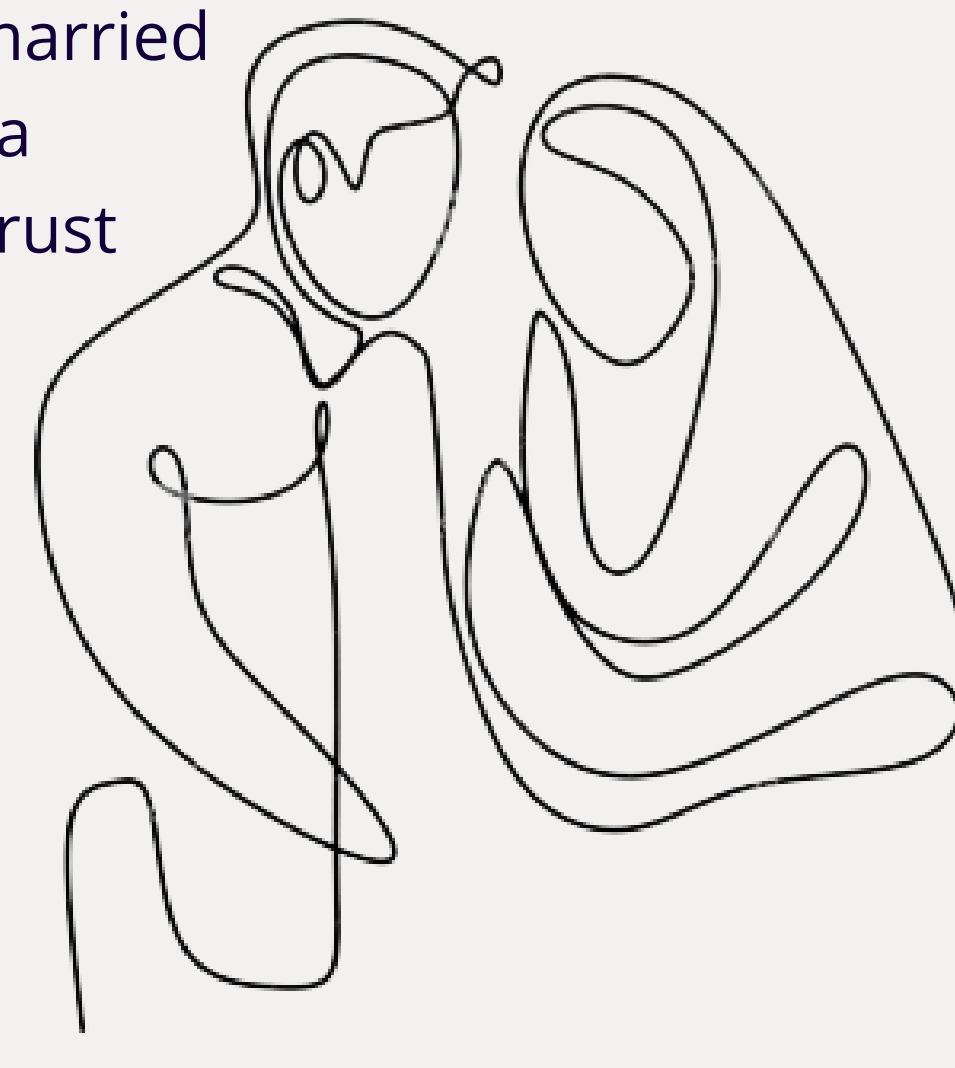
"Ghalati ho gayi ab, maaf kar de."

(I made a mistake now, forgive me).

"Koi bhi ghalati karte, lekin ye ghalati nai karna tha, ye ghalati bohut mehngi pad gayi mere ko."

(You could have made any mistake, but you shouldn't have to do this. I have paid a big price for it).

Sameena's parents came to solve this issue and asked her if she wants to divorce him and go back with them. But while saying this, their tongues were saying something else and their eyes were speaking something else. As if they were screaming to me that stop here and try to rebuild your family. We can't take you back now. *"But I wanted to do it."* Her inner voice yelled at her but not even a single word came out of her mouth. She was so miserable. Her parents looked at her with hopeful eyes, waiting for her answer.



Cont..

She ran a couple of answers in her head to explain her feelings to them and she thought that she would say, Papa! I am sorry but I cannot stay here anymore. I want to go back with you and you will have to support me in this. But instead, she heard herself saying, *"I am not selfish. I never want to ruin my two younger sisters' lives. We live in a small village where even a small thing spreads like fire. If I go back with you then the stigma of getting divorced or separated will bring hassles in their marriages. It's all right! I'll stay here with my husband till my death".*

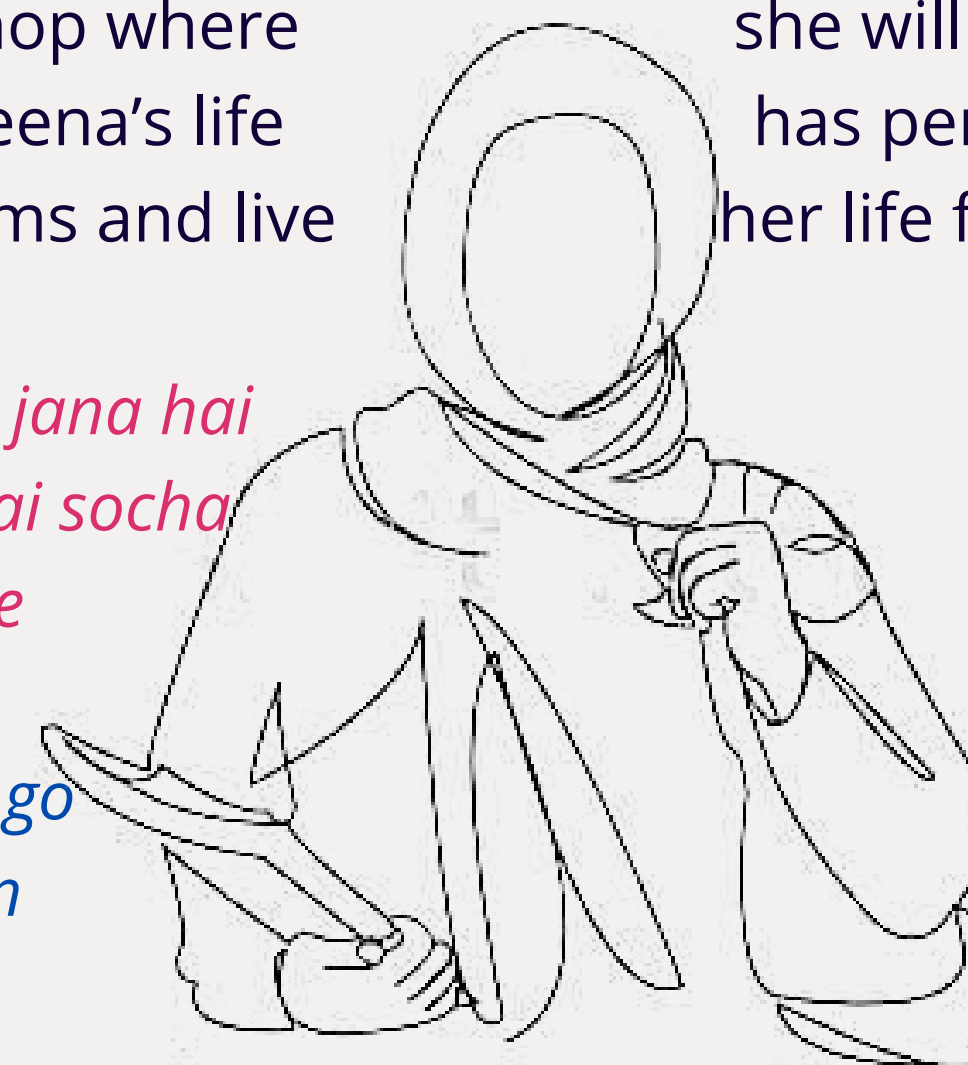
Her parents sighed in relief. For the past 20 minutes, they tried to make her understand that after the marriage of a girl, her husband's home is her actual home. As an adult, she took the best decision for the good of everyone. She had been through a long rocky period. Days passed, Sameena's husband divorced his second wife and started to live with her again. Over the years, she realized one thing that she never lived for herself. Now she wanted to do something for herself like to learn something new which can help her in earning money and make her identity in the world.

"Pese ate kuch kar le sakte na, kab tak marad pe depend rehte."
(You can do anything if you earn money, how long will you depend on the man).

This thought made her join tailoring course under project Aajeevika in SAFA. After the training, Sameena started to get orders to stitch dresses from neighborhood. But this wasn't enough for her, she wanted more. Thus, she again joined a course in 'Beauty and Wellness' under the same project in SAFA with a belief that she will start a shop where she will offer tailoring and beauty services simultaneously to people. After joining these courses, Sameena's life has perfectly changed. Sameena, at present, is pursuing beauty and wellness course to fulfill her dreams and live her life fullest.

"Ab Itta hai confidence ke me travel kar rahi. Mein apni cheez apun le rahi, kuch apne ko kahi jana hai ya kuch hona hai to mein husband ko nai puch rai. Mera bada ladka bola ke mummy mein nai socha ke tum yahan tak pohchege meri beautician ki book dekh ke yeh level mein, wo khush hogya ke mummy ab kamate."

(Now there's that much confidence that I can travel alone. I buy things on my own. If I have to go somewhere or I want something, so I don't ask my husband. Seeing my work file, my eldest son happily said that, Mother! I didn't think that you will reach to this level).



From the Author's View

Traditionally case story books are often written in third person with the actual photographs of the subject. This booklet is different. While I researched the traditional resources, my intuition told me to use both the third and first person point of view. And to give a unanimity to the stories and each narrator without revealing their identity.

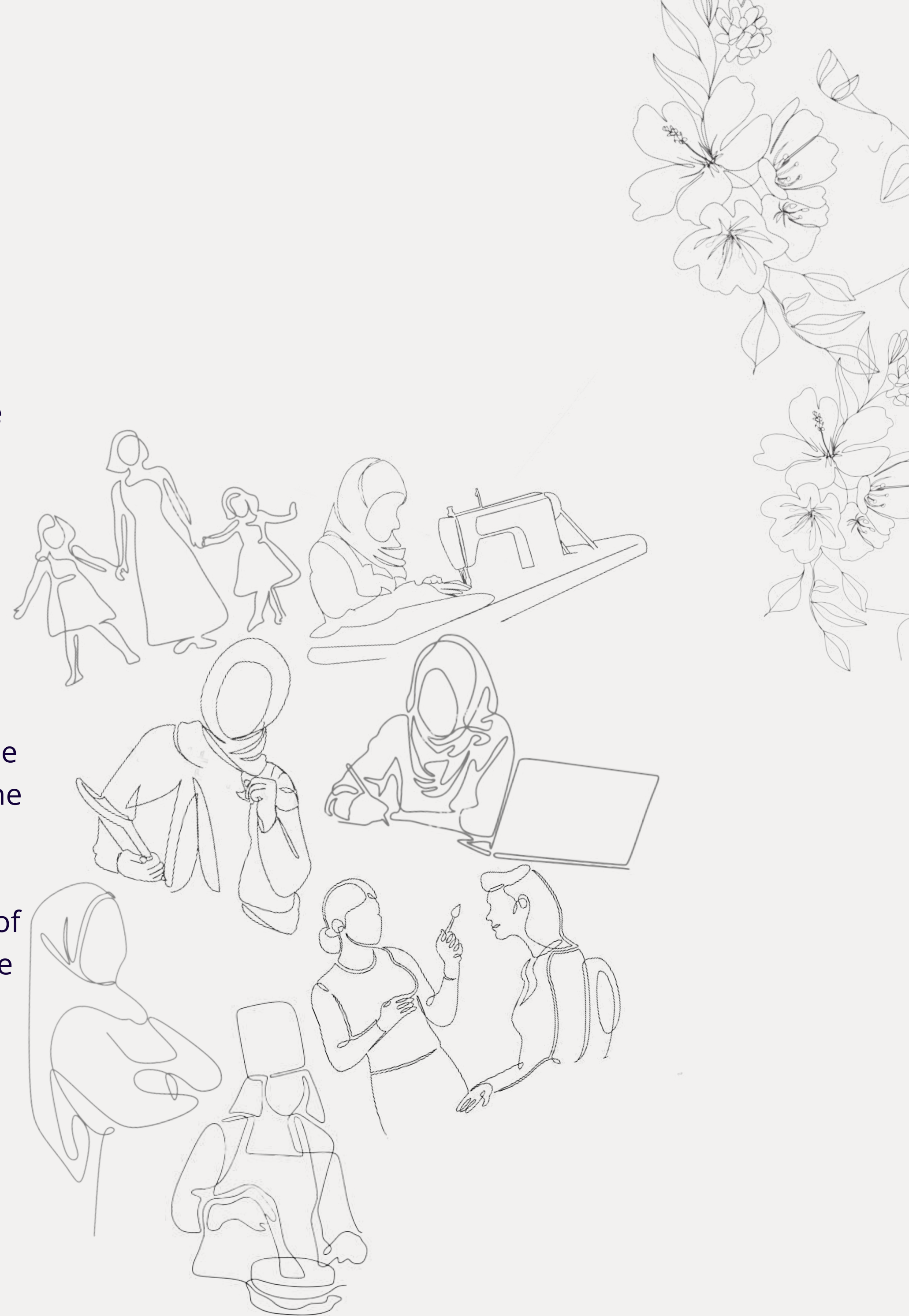
Each woman in this book speaks in her own voice and tells “her story”. They come from different walks of life and are examples of what is possible. The power of these women is the power of every woman if she has the courage to follow her inner voice, instead of blindly following the dictates of society.

The voices are stories of hope and the possibility for the women. Each of these women is an ordinary person who accomplished things which she wanted and improved her life by trusting and following her inner voice.

These seven stories are not just the stories of seven women only but these are exemplary of millions of women across the world.

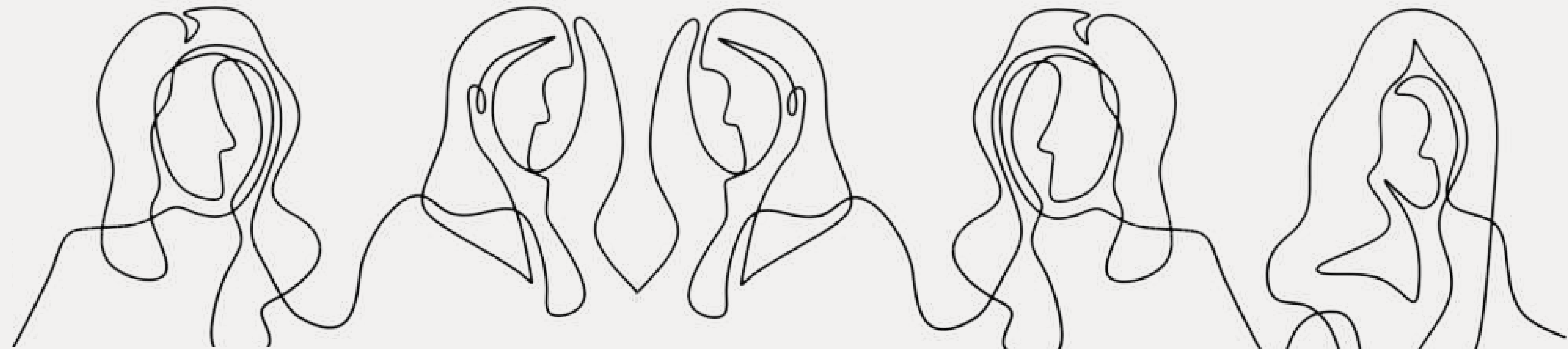
Mantasha Khaleel

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THE UNSUNG HEROES

WHO FALL, BREAK AND
RISE TO FIND COURAGE AND REDEEM THEIR DREAMS.



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