



MWF NEWSLETTER



News & Events

» **Exhibition: 'Pathbreakers: The Twentieth Century Muslim Women of India'**
 Venue: Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad
 Date: 3- 7 August 2019

» **National Seminar: Role of Muslim Women in National Struggles**
 Venue: JDT Islam, Kozhikode, Kerala
 Date: 25 September 2019

» **Exhibition: Pathbreakers: The Twentieth Century Muslim Women of India'**
 Venue: JDT Islam, Kozhikode, Kerala
 Date: 25 September 2019



About Muslim Women's Forum is a not for profit organisation formed in 2000. Its primary objective is to provide Muslim women a platform for expressing themselves on matters directly affecting their lives. The organization is unique as it acts as a catalyst with many stakeholders in addressing issues pertaining to Indian Muslim women. Educational uplift, self-reliance, social development, legal reform and political empowerment; MWF advocates all these.



Inspiring tales of legendary Muslim 'Pathbreakers'

'Pathbreakers'; an exhibition, which was held at Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad was all about the 20th century Muslim women, who broke barriers and contributed to building of a new India

M M FAROOQUI

Exhibition titled 'Pathbreakers: The Twentieth Century Muslim Women of India' was organised by Muslim Women's Forum, New Delhi, COVA and TMREIS (Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society) at Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

The exhibition displayed photos of 21 Muslim women, who gave up purdah on the eve of independence and became partners in building a new India. The main body of their work spanned from 1947 until the end of the century and has remained largely invisible, unrecognised and unsung.

"The main objective of organising the exhibition and the panel discussions to inspire youth, especially girls and women to emulate the 'Pathbreakers', who made significant contributions for social transformation despite facing herculean odds and obstacles," said Mazhar Hussain, executive director, COVA.

At the launch AK Khan, advisor to the Government of Telangana, and Dr Syeda Hameed, former member, Planning Commission, Government of India and Presi-



21 Muslim women who gave up purdah on the eve of independence and became partners in building a new India, who have remained largely invisible, unrecognised and unsung, are featured in the photo exhibition

rum explained the concept, objectives and the efforts that went into the creation of this unique exhibition. Jayesh Ranjan, secretary, IT, Government of Telangana released a special booklet on 'The Pathbreakers'.

There were two panel discussions that were organised during the launch. Some of the Muslim women pathbreakers of the 21st Century from Hyderabad, Syeda Falak (Karate Champion), Syeda Salva Fatima (Pilot) and Nikhat Zareen (boxing sensation) were also present for the event. Around 450 students from TMREIS and surrounding schools and colleges visited the exhibition, which was open to general visitors. Eminent experts from different fields Dr Safia Mehdi from Delhi, Prof Ismath Mehdi, Dr Avdesh Rani, Dr

Ameena Tahseen and Prof Salma Firooqi from MANUU, Dr Anand Raj Varma, K Vimala, Veda Kumar, Dr B V Subba Rao and Dilnaz Baig attended the event. They spoke about the contribution of the Muslim women around and after independence in the spheres of politics, education, social transformation, culture and literature. They also spoke about aspects of governance, harmony, culture, literature etc. in the history of Hyderabad.

"During and after independence many Muslim women joined the project of rebuilding India. They became writers, teachers, artists, scientists, lawyers, educators, political workers and trade unionists. A few became MPs, MLAs and some represented India in international forums. 'Pathbreakers' present some of these women who were at the forefront of nationalist and feminist struggles through their work and their social engagements. They worked along with men during the most challenging times inspired by the work of Gandhi, Nehru and Azad. There were and are hundreds of such Muslim women across the country. Hence the idea of the exhibition is also to break the stereotype of Muslim women as victims of triple talaq, polygamy, burqa, halala," says Mazhar Hussain.

Upcoming Events

» **Exhibition: 'Pathbreakers: The Twentieth Century Muslim Women of India'** Venue: Jawahar Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi | Date: 11-13 November 2019.

» **Field Visit and Knowledge Building Workshop in Assam**
Date: 13-18 November 2019

» **Video making workshop organized for MWF Team by Dusty Foot Productions,** Venue: Vasant Kunj, Delhi
Date: 30-31 October 2019 (Tentative dates)

» **Exhibition: 'Pathbreakers: The Twentieth Century Muslim Women of India' in collaboration with Dept. of Sociology, JMI**
Venue: Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi | Date: 20th January 2020



Leadership & Capacity Building Training for Muslim Women

On 14 May 2019, the 12 MWF Fellows from Barpeta (Assam), Koraon (UP), Chattarpur (Madhya Pradesh), Jaitpur Extension (Delhi) completed their two months Leadership & Capacity Building training for Muslim Women at Dalit Shakti Kendra. With 3 fellows from previous training, MWF now have a total of 15 Fellows.

At DSK, MWF Fellows performed brilliantly. Hameeda Parbin from Assam, who since childhood had never been permitted to go out of the house to run or to play a game was this batch's most outstanding sportsperson and walked away with the best sportsperson award. Afsana, who had never spoken a word in any Forum anywhere was orator number one. And Amreen Bano who was the best essayist of the batch spoke with passion about social justice and violence against women. Amreen spoke about how DSK expanded the horizons of her mind. "Before coming here, when we looked at the mirror, we saw our own faces. But the mirror DSK held up for us was 'Mirror of Truth'. We saw the world in its reflection.

"Upon reaching their own villages, Fellows started opening a library where children come to read and learn. Baseline Survey Format was also prepared for Assam, UP, Delhi and MP.

They were also invited to share their personal stories titled 'Meri Kahaani, Meri Zubaani' (My story in my Words). This was an effort to reflect on the impact that our efforts have made in them, the changes that it has brought, in their thoughts and behaviour. It was also to tell us about the challenges we faced. We are highlighting an inspiring story from Hameeda Parbin, MWF Fellow from Barpeta Assam.



'Meri Kahaani, Meri Zubaani' Hameeda Parbin

A social worker from my village introduced me to Munjuwara Mullah, who told me about Muslim Women's Forum and the Capacity Building Training that they are organising for Muslim women from Assam. I was very interested. This is also the first time I heard about Dalit Shakti Kendra, where the training was supposed to be held. All my travels and logistics were taken care of by MWF.

As a young girl, I dream of becoming an honest police officer, but some of my other dreams got fulfilled when I joined the training and travelled outside my village for the first time. At DSK I get to meet people like Indu didi, Martin Bhai, Tilu Didi, Rita didi who all inspired me to work hard, developed my self confidence, and utterly changed my thoughts and behaviour for the better. This experience changed me completely.

I took beautician training as my vocational course. I participated in all the extra curricular activities. I especially enjoyed outdoor sports. As a child, I was never allowed to play outside. And when I received the best sportsperson award; it was the happiest day of my life and I felt like part of my dreams came true that day.

Earlier I only speak in Assamese, now I am able to speak in Hindi. I finally overcome my fear of public speaking. My general awareness of human rights, social well being, rights of women increased. I never knew that I had this ability to learn so many new things before, but now I feel it is what makes me strong. For the first time, I feel free from my fears and insecurities. I never used to look forward to what I will do in the future, but now I have decided to become more self-reliant.

I know that in future I would also like to impart some of the skills and knowledge I learnt from there. I noticed there has not been much development in my village for a long time. I have spoken to many people to get to know their conditions and impressions. But I feel both their conditions and thoughts are not healthy. They feel helpless, but I can try to change that. I would like women in my village to be aware of their rights. To change society's patriarchal thoughts, and communicate to them that woman can do just as well as the man if given the same opportunity. This message I will take it with me wherever I go. This is will be my work and my identity.



23rd May 2019 - 5 of us fellows from Barpeta had a meeting about what we can do to discourage child marriage in our area, and how we can start educating our parents and elders in our family. We discussed about violence against women and how to prevent it.

28-29th May 2019 - We attended Women's empowerment workshop in Guwahati. Different participants spoke about gender justice, rights of women, cases of domestic violence which surfaces every day. We learnt that many of these women have no recourse to any judicial remedy. One participant, spoke about how eventhough women work just as hard as men, how they are not allowed to sleep before the men goes to sleep. We also learned more about the importance of women's health and menstrual hygiene. Library: I have set up a small library in my house using the books I received from DSK. Many children from my locality came and I helped them with their reading exercises and taught about sanitation.

Five women on rights mission

GAURAV DAS

Guwahati: Five Muslim women from Barpeta district in lower Assam are on a mission to spread rights awareness among the women of their community to help them with citizenship issues.

The women especially want to help those poor and illiterate women of their community in rural Barpeta who have been "arbitrarily" marked D or doubtful voter or against whom "false objections" have been filed during the National Register of Citizens (NRC) update process.

The five, some of whom are victims of child marriage and some are students, were helped by Manjuwara Mullah, collaborator with Barpeta-based citizenship rights group

Sambidhan Sovak, and Shahjahan Ali Ahmed of the Association for Protection of Indian Citizenship Rights (APICR), to get training in the structure of citizenship rights, with special focus on D-voters, NRC, its claims and objections process and how child marriage affects women especially in terms of citizenship rights.

The women, who come from economically underprivileged families and showed interest in the mission, were sent to Dalit Shakti Kendra in Gujarat for two months to train in leadership development. Back in their district and respective villages, the women will now embark upon their special mission.

The women, who underwent rigorous training on constitutional rights in Gujarat,



Shahjahan Ali Ahmed meets the women

are now ready to fight for the rights of rustic, poor, illiterate Muslim women in Barpeta district. Their special focus will be women arbitrarily declared D-voters, against whom false NRC objections have been

filed and those excluded from the NRC because of child marriage. They will make these "powerless" women aware of their rights and equip them with the means to contest their cases. "It will be a continuous

process," Mullah said.

Most child brides take the family names of their husbands and have no address/document to prove their father's legacy. After getting married, they get a pan-chayat certificate. This became a bone of contention during the NRC process when it was rejected as a valid document for inclusion in the NRC.

"Women married before the age of 18 are among the victims of citizenship exclusion. We found such women to have been declared D-voter and excluded from NRC. Having just the panchayat certificate as an available document renders them helpless. Child marriages lead to age discrepancy and citizenship exclusion. Besides, being illiterate narrows down options," Ahmed said.

25th May 2019 - Attended meeting on issues such as, D voter, referral case, Foreigners' Tribunal, Declared Foreign National, Detainee, NRC excludes, NRC objection etc.

A group of 5 women including Dr. Syeda Hameed, President, MWF visited 17 villages all across Kashmir to bring out the ground realities. A report based on their visit was released at the Press Club of India, Delhi on 24 September 2019

جموں و کشمیر میں 13 ہزار نو جوان غائب

میڈیا کی رسائی سے دور □ جنت نشان ریاست شہر خموشا میں تبدیلی □ کشمیر سے واپسی پر رپورٹ پیش

جموں و کشمیر کے شمال مغربی علاقے میں ایک پانچ روزہ میٹنگ کے دوران ریاست میں غائب ہونے والے 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔

اس رپورٹ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ ریاست میں 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔

اس رپورٹ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ ریاست میں 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔



نئی دہلی (محمد صفوان) انڈیائی ایس این این

جموں و کشمیر سے متعلق ایک رپورٹ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ ریاست میں 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔

اس رپورٹ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ ریاست میں 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔

اس رپورٹ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ ریاست میں 13 ہزار نو جوانوں کی شناخت کرنے کیلئے ایک رپورٹ پیش کی گئی ہے۔

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