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Muneerah Kuraishi : First graduate and career woman in her family



The first time I met Muneerah was on 27th September at the Caferati @Writers 'Forum – an event organized by Giant Group Mumbai One at the Giant Internationals headquarter office Orient Club 9, Chow patty Sea Face. The session was from 3-5pm on a bright dazzling afternoon with sunlight shimmering on the sea. The two Speakers were Satish Ranade (trainer of Internet Training, Mind Programming, Business Goal Setting) and Dr Muneerah Kuraishi(Founder of Shifa Naturopathic Centre). Mr. Ranade was speaking on the topic “How little posts give giant returns and Muneerah on a subject of my interest “How to publish eBook.” She had recently launched her e-Book *14 Days to get over it*. Well I don't know what I expected her to look like, though from the poster on What's Up she seemed pretty enough. Sure she was and also petite and charming. Brimming with confidence in her white shimmering suit, she seemed eager to reach out to the audience. Her aim in writing this book she told us was to enable people to reach their potential. She has, in it squeezed 17 years of her clinical experience in the most simple and lucid manner to answer whatever query one can have. And she said that she has made it simple (though it has variety of complex therapies) – so simple that even a kid should be able to benefit from it. She informed us of her blog and the various workshops conducted by her on Health.

Impressed by her achievements I went home checked Google for more information. I learnt that Dr Muneerah Kuraishi is an eminent practitioner of Naturopathy, Yoga and other integrated holistic therapies; she holds numerous medals for distinguished services in her field. Several videos of her talks on subjects such as *Healthy Living*, *Kaya Kalp for diabetes management*

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How to be Positive were on u tube. There she was, poised, stylishly dressed, speaking with conviction. I was certain she came from a privileged background and hence didn't think that she met the criteria of the 'successful women' whom I profiled in Ehsas. I was certain that she didn't have to struggle against society, patriarchy, adverse circumstances to find her place .

But just last month I was surprised to learn that Muneerah didn't get her success on a platter. She had to strive for it and though there was no lack of monetary support, the family was very tradition bound: no girl had gone beyond school, leave alone take up a career .The general belief was girls should be married off when they reached 15 years -the permitted age of marriage under Muslim traditions-especially if they were pretty and there was a suitable proposal .Her elder sister was married off when she was fifteen and had just completed her 10th standard. Her second sister, (Muneerah has two sisters, both older to her and two brothers, one of whom is younger) had to remain at home after 10th to look after the house due to the demise of their mother.



Muneerah, extreme right with her mother (the thin lady in the center) and her sisters.

Muneerah had been very affected by her mother's ill health. "She was always unwell though no reason for ill health could be diagnosed. I therefore wanted to become a doctor so that I could diagnose the cause and cure her. This was my desire since I was in the 2nd standard.."

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I realized that Muneerah's desire to achieve her dream despite family traditions was really inspirational for those lots of young girls from traditional conservative families.

I fixed an appointment and went to meet her at her clinic at Juhu near



the Ramada Inn – a beautiful breezy place .She looked even more confident and assured in her familiar surroundings . And then came the next surprise when I asked about her schooling. She had studied in the Urdu medium – in Anjuman Islam Girls High school at Belasis Road. I couldn't help asking, “How come you are so fluent in English? I thought you had studied in a Convent. Did you attend English Speaking Class.”

“No . In school only .We had very good teachers.” She said

When Muneerah completed her schooling in 1993 and joined St Xavier's –she became the first person in her family circle to go to a College out of the vicinity of her home (the predominant Muslim locality of Muhammad Ali Road and its precincts) and in a College which was not under a Muslim Management such as Maharashtra or Burhani College .Her father(who was in the mutton business) was not in favor of her decision but came around when her brother and sisters persuaded him.

The real opposition began when she decided to study for a Diploma in Naturopathy from Thiruvananthapuram after completing her graduation in Science. She had been able to get admission in Tibia Medicine course but she was more inclined towards Naturopathy. “My mother was no more .But now my motivation was to cure people using traditional and natural remedies, so that they didn't suffer the after effects of chemicals in drugs.”

It took some persuasion from her siblings and being a loving father he couldn't bear to see her unhappy. He finally did allow her and she spent three years in Thiruvananthapuram. After

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returning in 2001 to Mumbai she decided to set up practice which her father vehemently opposed.

“His opposition was more out of concern for me .He felt that my having a career would jeopardize my chances for getting a good match. He even feared my remaining unmarried. But I had made up my mind and as usual with some cajoling from my brothers and sisters he reluctantly agreed. I opened a clinic initially for 6months in Bohri Mohla in Bhendi Bazaar and then in Mahim .”

“ What about your marriage?” I asked wondering how her father had allowed her to remain single all these years.”

“I got married a year or so back much my father’s relief. I too was happy that he could see me ‘settled ‘ , for he died some months later.”

“Your husband must be broadminded to accept an independent career woman. What does he do?”

“My husband Altaf Khatri looks after his family’s antiques business .His family hails from Jamnagar. He is a commerce graduate who has specialized in graphic designing .He is very supportive.”

“Lucky you.” I said, for in a conservative community to get a suitable match, when was touching forty was indeed remarkable. But then age is only a number and Muneerah with her fine glowing skin exuded an air of youthfulness - she looks in her twenties. I remembered one of her videos on reversing the aging process and made a mental not to check it later.

For the present I was keen to know her future plans .Did she have any more books in the pipeline? Did she plan a Naturopathy Hospital? Where did she see herself, five years from now?

Muneerah informed that she was soon launching two books: 14 DAYS TO GET OVER MY WEIGHT and 14 DAYS TO GET OVER SKIN.

The E-book 14DAYS TO GET OVER MY WEIGHT, is based on her experience .She says she used to be overweight and therefore the formulae is self tested.

And her dream and objective is to set up a Global Natural Fertility Center which will be **on-line**. Her Motto in life is to care and reach out and benefit as many people from her knowledge and experience.

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Ehsas wishes all the Best to Muneerah in fulfilling her objectives. She holds out a hope to girls from conservative and traditional backgrounds that they can also make it – if they work hard enough.