



Pioneering hooded fatuas and exclusive motifs on the traditional Jamdani, Paera became quite famous in a short period of time. A selective few, however, were steadfastly against her decision to introduce revolutionary motifs on heritage textiles.

"My point as a designer has always been, that we should be allowed the freedom to experiment!" she says.

Delving a bit deeper into her work-life, Khair reveals, "Paera is a brainchild of my desire, it's a haven for experimental pursuit. I am also involved with Aranya, as its creative director and this institution is much bigger than 'just my intentions'; it is a nationalistic pride, dealing with 100 percent heritage looms and products for a long time now."

To Nawshin Khair, life is all about balance. To explain her commitment towards welfare of society, she let us in on her involvement with B-Craft initiatives, the non-profit, community development wing of Bengal Foundation.

"The project, which I am currently dealing with is very close to my heart!" she says.

B-Craft Initiatives exclusively deals with the members of the Murong tribe, helping them build up their community in a sustainable way. For many years now, the tribe has been solely dependent on 'jhum cultivation' (slash-and-burn) in the Sango Forest, causing major soil erosion and land slides in the Bandarban Hill District. Along with a team of specialists - Sriti and Afsara, Khair has been spearheading projects like Unique Jewellery Making, Nakshi Kantha Stitching, and collaborative Indigo Cultivation, to find alternative ways for the tribe to make a sustainable and successful living beyond jhum cultivation.

Deviating slightly from serious topics, we ended up discussing the recent influx of women designers in the field of fashion. Nawshin Khair has much to say on the topic. "Well, every woman has their right to design whatever they want – it is an inherent trait for most of us. To encourage people on a large scale though, there must be a unified effort from both the public and private sectors. The universities must bring in qualified teachers from home and abroad to give lectures and provide increased exposure to the young designers. This is where BGMEA, BUFT, etc. have enormous roles to play," she said.

Half way into our conversation, she decided

to bring up the topic of children and how she was a proud mother of three. Acknowledging the amount of responsibilities that she had to cope with everyday, Khair seemed no less than any Super Heroine at that moment. Beaming, she briefed us on the secret to maintaining the perfect work-life rapport.

"Teamwork is extremely important. We must always be willing to share responsibilities. I would have never been able to reach this level, if I did not get help from a few special people in my life including my husband, extended family, parents and close friends. All of us live in a community and it is the united effort from the community that can help us move forward.

"On any given day, if you suddenly popped into my house and I had taken the day off, you'd probably see me chaperoning at least twenty kids! Yes, I also help my friends out, in a similar way, during my free time!" reiterates Khair.

The conversation could go on forever with a charismatic person like Nawshin Khair but both of us needed to draw a conclusion somewhere and what could be better than an advice from the designer herself, for the youngsters. "Please, acknowledge everyone who gives the tiniest effort to help you move ahead with your life. It's the least you can do for them."

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Indrani and Arpita

Wardrobe: Nawshin Khair, Khadi Collection

Jewellery: Special Murong Ornaments,

Aranya

Makeup: Farzana Shakil's Makeover Salon

