

Gender based violence have become a major topic of discussion in the recent times – would you like to elaborate on this. What inspired you to start Kotha?

Gender based violence is a very strong topic. We usually do not find any inspiration in these words. So, when I am asked what



inspired me to begin Kotha, I usually say 'rage!' That's exactly how I feel and I expect others to reciprocate in the same way because of the way we have normalised and become desensitised to such a heinous crime.

At Kotha, we work on the primary level, trying to change the mindset of the people. The root cause of gender-based violence is the way that we think. In our society we are encouraged to 'not talk' and hence the name Kotha. So 'speaking' is a way to our protests. We encourage everyone to talk about what's bothering them, what's hindering their progress, what's causing unhappiness in their lives.

Any words for the future leaders?

Always question what you are told. We are usually dictated everything; we need to be able to decide for ourselves what we want and not be navigated by others. And we should also remember that it is easy to rise as a single person and that the real achievement lies elsewhere — where we rise together as a team!

Ambreen Reza – Co-Founder and MD at foodpanda

What does being a leader mean to you?

First and foremost, leadership means 'being willing' to listen. You have to listen to the people around you — that's how you learn and implement new changes and achieve new goals together. Beyond that, being a good leader is about empowering everyone in your vicinity, being there for your team and giving your team the independence so that people never feel like their creativity and ability to innovate is being hampered.

Do you think it is harder for women to reach the top of the ladder due to the



dominant ideology of patriarchy?

I think that patriarchal notions often work to constrain women, and prevent them from reaching their full potential. These outdated notions have no place in the workplace, or anywhere else for that matter. So, as we move further into the digital era, I hope that everyone will be extended the same opportunities and allowed to climb to the top with no restrictions.

How did you gather the courage to think

out-of-the-box and break all sorts of glass ceilings to reach where you are today?

I have never been the one to settle! All my life I have tried to break the norms and I have worked hard to make sure that I'm always able to get a seat at the table. I was the first girl in my extended family to represent my school in the sports teams, to get a scholarship and pursue studies abroad, to be on the Dean's List at a foreign university, and to become a chartered accountant. Throughout my life my parents have empowered me to never settle and provided me with ample amounts of freedom, and I have used that to propel myself forward, towards new goals.

Any advice for the future leaders?

My advice is to follow dreams and never be dissuaded by failure. Any good idea needs grit and perseverance, to become a reality. Take criticism and feedback, but never let it hold you back. Instead, use it to learn more, forge forward to make impactful changes, and create something that really helps to make a difference in the lives of your target audience.

On Women's Day, as we pay homage to the leaders and recognise their efforts, we also instil a special hope amongst ourselves that everything is possible. Pandemic or not, nothing should be able to hinder our ways to progress. It only gets better from here, for all the genders.

#choosetochallenge #supportequality #supportprogress #supportwomen #womeninleadership

BY LS DESK

Wardrobe: TAAGA

Styling: Azra Mahmood

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed



BOISHAKH/1428