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I come from a middle class family. My father used to tailor clothes and I developed an interest in sewing as a result. My father was keen on getting me educated, but society dictated that getting a girl educated was equal to spoiling her and making her wayward. The idea was for me to finish grade 10 and get married. My mother was completely uneducated and thought it best for me to study only until grade 10. There were many disagreements in the house over my education, but thankfully my father prevailed and I was permitted to attend college. **In my community, I was the first woman college graduate in the entire region of south-central Rajasthan.** After I got married, I moved into my husband's house to help take care of his parents. Our financial situation was tough and my father-in-law supported the idea that I should

move with my husband to the city of Udaipur and find work sewing. I did so and eventually, it was my husband who submitted my application to Sadhna. As they say, the rest is history.

In 1992, I joined an NGO called Seva Mandir in which I was associated with a government-funded program giving impetus to small scale industries by training people in various crafts. We had started cooperatives for women to help this program sustain itself but we quickly realized that this was a difficult venture as women depended too much on men for money and they had almost no social standing in their own communities. It was clear however that they were eager to make their own money. What was needed was for these women to have the backing of a strong organization whose reputable name they could leverage to legitimize their work. Seva Mandir was that organization. Soon we took a group of women to Gujarat, to expose them to various embroidery styles that were prevalent there, with the hope that this would inspire them in their own craft here in Rajasthan. Upon returning from that trip, the first step Sadhna took was deciding to focus on the slum women of Udaipur, which had a big market for embroidered products. Working with embroidery seemed the perfect fit for this demographic, because it wasn't necessary to be educated to do this craft, there was no major investment needed in the form of machinery or infrastructure and this could easily be done within the confines of one's home.

Today, Sadhna is a women's handicraft enterprise which specializes in hand-embroidered and hand-sewn fabric that can be used for various decorative and functional purposes. The technique we primarily use is called running stitch, which is similar to the kantha embroidery of West Bengal. We also do appliqué work, which is essentially stitching one cloth piece over another. And finally we have patchwork, where different pieces of fabric are stitched together.. Sadhna is also certified Fair Trade organisation and has accreditation from Fair Trade Forum-India and World fair Trade Organisation (WFTO), based in Netherlands.

Recently, I withdrew my role as Chief Executive of Sadhna with effect from 5th October 2014 and would continue my association as a Board Member with them. It was an exceptional journey learning and sharing new ideas that has helped me grow both on personal and professional front. Also I have been on the board of FTF-I since last 6 years. My journey with fellow Fair Traders has been amazing. I got to meet some of the most dedicated and strong people who are working with the marginalised artisans and producers for their economic independence and giving them a hope for better lives. I would like to continue my association with FTF-I so right now I am an Associate Member of Fair Trade Forum- India.