

# THE MEMON



Ladies Edition



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MEMBERSHIP  
BECOME A MEMBER

DONATE  
CONTRIBUTE TO A WORTHY CAUSE

## THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE IS THE HAND THAT RULES THE WORLD

~ William Ross Wallace

BLESSINGS on the hand of women!  
Angels guard its strength and grace.  
In the palace, cottage, hovel,  
Oh, no matter where the place;  
Would that never storms assailed it,  
Rainbows ever gently curled,  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world.

Infancy's the tender fountain,  
Power may with beauty flow,  
Mothers first to guide the streamlets,  
From them souls unresting grow—  
Grow on for the good or evil,  
Sunshine streamed or evil hurled,  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world.

Woman, how divine your mission,  
Here upon our natal sod;  
Keep—oh, keep the young heart open  
Always to the breath of God!  
All true trophies of the ages  
Are from mother-love imperaled,  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world.

Blessings on the hand of women!  
Fathers, sons, and daughters cry,  
And the sacred song is mingled  
With the worship in the sky—  
Mingles where no tempest darkens,  
Rainbows evermore are hurled;  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world.

**A tribute to the WONDERFUL WOMEN of the World Memon Organisation.**

# SANA SHAKOOR

**“She makes broken look beautiful,  
And strong look invincible,  
She walked with the universe on her shoulders,  
And made it look like a pair of wings”**

**S**ana Shakoor was raised in a family that has always stressed on the importance of giving back to society.

Eternally thankful to her parents for stressing on the importance of education and a brother that encouraged her to live life on her own terms, She is a product of old world traditions and new age modernity. She believes that a great support system ensures that a woman grows up to be level headed, intelligent and confident in the face of adversity.

She has a double graduation in commerce and fashion technology. Post Graduate from London School of Fashion where she topped her class. She is the General Secretary of the Minority Department of Congress and Chairperson of the WMO Youth Wing (India Chapter).

She teaches slum children in her spare time and assists them with school infrastructure. She also organizes educational awareness programmes for girl students in slum areas. Sana now runs her own Export Business of leather accessories and also employs underprivileged Memon women for job work within her business.



**“Women everywhere in the world face their own set of struggles, whether it be an urban woman facing a glass ceiling and gender bias in a big corporation or a poverty afflicted uneducated woman from a village forced to follow outdated norms like child marriage and back breaking physical labour. One of the most important aspects of a woman’s life is to ensure her own independence. Strong women empower other women.”**

That is what she aims to do by heading WMO’s women empowerment, a program she named WOW which has already found considerable success.



**“I am fiercely proud of this program and what it entails, it is very close to my heart”**

Everything to do with women and their well being is being covered within this program. A group of poor Memon Women in India Chapter got sewing and embroidery machines, they were taught to make products like gifting materials, bags, clothing.

The underprivileged women were enrolled into a two month programme to enhance their skills, after which they participated in an exhibition arranged by WoW and for the first time they became entrepreneurs. They sold out completely at the exhibition and have signed up for several more. That’s quintessentially WOW.

In Sri Lanka a fitness and nutrition program was held which benefited 55 memon women. Another event in Mumbai on “Women’s International Day” met young school girls and spoke to them about the importance of female hygiene and how this leads to prevention of cervical cancer. Many such programs including an international women’s entrepreneurship and networking project are underway.

She concludes:

**“If one person comes up to me and says I changed their life for the better through my endeavours I would consider it as having lived a truly successful life”**



# RAZIYA ASHRAF CHASMAWALA

## A paradox of a woman.

Strong yet soft hearted, unapologetic yet brutally honest, traditional yet fiercely independent, religious to a degree of fanaticism yet supremely broad minded. She is simple like quantum physics and a force to be reckoned with. She is a wife, mother, a proud Memon, respected social worker and above all a strong woman that has dedicated a large proportion of her life to the upliftment of her community. A Graduate, who was offered a scholarship to Germany when she was young, gave it up to settle down in matrimonial bliss. But that did not stop her from making her mark. Many years hence she has been felicitated by various organisations for her extensive humanitarian endeavours.

## Raziya's relentless work towards the empowerment of women especially stands out.



Establishing industrial and training centres across several towns in India wherein the underprivileged women are taught an income generating trade. The centres further provide the requisite machinery or tools to exercise their newly learnt skills. Raw material is also provided to generate the final product. Once the products are ready, trade exhibitions and fairs are organised to sell the goods. Additional Business Centres have been started wherein these products are sold at very competitive rates. Hence the women are supported all the way. They learn a new trade, become self reliant, independent and support their families.

Other honourable mentions are :

- An annual free distribution of Ja-Namaaz, Hijaabs, Quran, Veils, Tasbih, Cloths & Rations to poor, deserving families during holy month of Ramadhan.

- Establishment of Madressa, OPD Centre & Free Shelter for destitute Girls & Aged Women in Lohara.
- A "Money Box" Scheme was launched to collect funds for Children with Special Needs.
- The "Matrimony Wing" is the centre piece of the ladies activities.
- Introduction of 'Donate One Fist of Rice' program wherein the person willingly donates one handful of rice throughout the year. The grains are collected and donated to poor, deserving people of society.

*"My greatest achievement is my legacy. Both my children Sana & Zubair Chasmawala continue my humble efforts to make a difference in the lives of others."*



WITH THE HONOURABLE CHIEF MINISTER OF THE STATE



DISTRIBUTION OF RAMADAN RATION TO THE UNDERPRIVILEGED LADIES OF THE MEMON COMMUNITY



CONDUCTING MASS MARRIAGE

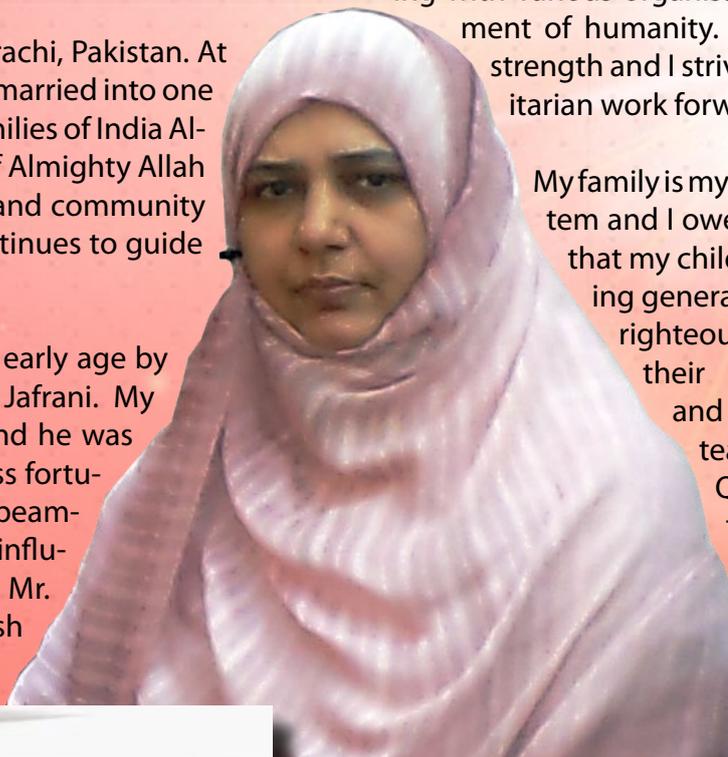
# SHABANA SHEHZAD DARVESH

I was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. At the young age of 18, I was married into one of the most respectable families of India Alhamdulillah. By the grace of Almighty Allah S.W.T. I entered into social and community work and the Almighty continues to guide me on this path.

I was greatly inspired at an early age by my late father Mr. Zubair Jafrani. My life revolved around him and he was always ready to help the less fortunate with open arms and a beaming smile. Another strong influence was my father in law Mr. Suleman Sodagar Darvesh whose generosity is leg-

endary. I was indeed fortunate to be married to Mr Shehzad Darvesh who carried forward his father's legacy of philanthropy and was involved in working with various organisations for the betterment of humanity. He was my pillar of strength and I strive to take his humanitarian work forward.

My family is my greatest support system and I owe it all to them. I pray that my children and the upcoming generation continue on the righteous path laid down by their fathers, forefathers and Serve Mankind. I also teach the principles of Quran and translate the holy scriptures. I aspire to spread the word of Allah to the far corners of the World.



MY PILLAR OF STRENGTH,  
MY SON SULEMAN SHEHZAD DARVESH



THE BHIWANDI LADIES CENTRE  
WHERE UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN ARE TRAINED



PRODUCTS MADE AT THE CENTRE ON DISPLAY  
AT TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS



FOOD PRESERVATIVES PROCESSED  
AT THE BHIWANDI LADIES CENTRE

**THE BHIWANDI LADIES CENTRE WAS ESTABLISHED BY SHABANA DARVESH AND CONTINUES TO EMPOWER WOMEN OVER THE YEARS.**

# HAWA ABDULLAH

## A Life Less Ordinary

**“A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.”**

— Diane Mariechild

The Women's Wing of the World Memon Organisation Pakistan Chapter. works on the very credo of creating, nurturing and transforming the women of this great land.

Mrs. Hawa Abdullah along with a dynamic group of ladies have worked continuously and tirelessly in improving the lives of the less fortunate. These spirited and energized ladies have proven, without a doubt, that they are indeed a force to be reckoned with. From organizing informative sessions, to helping flood victims, to managing fund raisers; these women have done it all!

Hawa's inspiration has been her father Mr. Joosub Ebrahim, who had been a champion of human rights, charity and philanthropy. Mr. Joosub Ebrahim has not only inspired his daughter Hawa, but many other people who have passionately worked to make a difference in the lives of others. Following

in Mr. Joosub's footsteps, Mrs. Abdullah, has pursued and developed her own style of service to humanity by working closely with many humanitarian organizations over the years.

Abdullah continues to hold office with the following non-profit service organizations which is listed as follows:

- Chairperson of WMO Ladies Wing (Pakistan Chapter) for 3 years: Providing a single international platform for the ladies of WMO to review and enable local upliftment projects within their communities (e.g. assisting flood victims in Jamshero & Razakabad, matrimonial referrals etc.)
- President Ladies Horticultural Club: Exposing ladies to the benefits and art of gardening including the growth of holistic and organic vegetables within the confines of their own gardens.
  - Executive Board of Ida Rieu Of Welfare Association Karachi. Supporting the school & college for visual and speech impaired children as well as young adults.
  - President Karachi Ladies Association: one of the oldest non-profit organization in Karachi donating linen to various hospitals in Karachi



Hawa works diligently and daily at Ma Ayesha Memorial Center (MAMC) in Hill Park Karachi.

This institute is a family owned comprehensive Rehabilitation Center for Neuromuscular Diseases. Her contribution includes administrative support to the staff facilitating the care of disabled patients and children. She is particularly passionate about the care of children with 'special needs' at the premises. Hawa also provides support to Busy Bee Ladies club whose aim is to provide financial support for the fulfillment of basic education to deserving children. Another addition to this illustrious list is Hawa's involvement with AMWA (All Memon Women's Association) who have recently raised funds for 15 shelters and water tanks for the homeless in NODO Jokhio Model Village in Malir Sindh.



Hawa's energy and passion knows no bounds. She continues to work tirelessly and selflessly for the upliftment of others. The more she contributes to changing the lives of others the more energized she feels! And that is the highest form of remuneration for her. This selfless devotion and continuous contribution serves as a beacon of hope for those that are less fortunate and inspires others, who like her, want to make the world a shared haven for humanity.

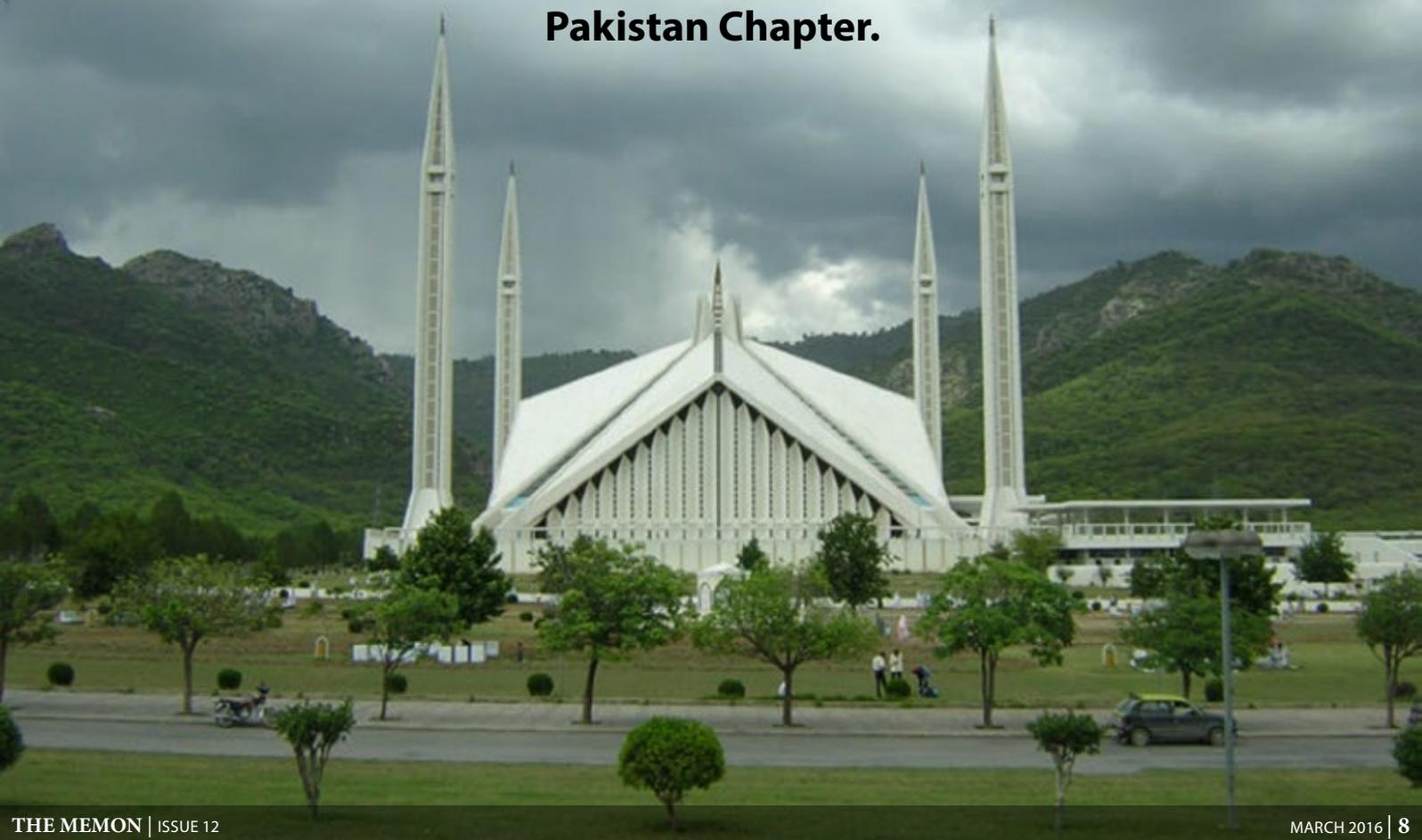


# **(THE LATE) SHERBANO KATCHI**

## **The Pioneer of Feminism**

*“Strong Women  
Empower Other Women”*

**In the times  
when women were con-  
sidered weak, SherBano, to a  
great extent, has done her part to  
change this misconstrued mindset.  
She has been true to the suffix of her  
name, Sher, for she has been fearless in  
her practice, defiant in her approach, and  
reassuring in her speech. Being the fore-  
most custodian of women’s right and  
empowerment, she has led by exam-  
ple as the pioneer and the found-  
er of the WMO Ladies Wing,  
Pakistan Chapter.**



Mrs. Bano became the change she wished to see in society. Despite her marriage at the tender age of 16, she did not let the domestic errands and pressures subdue her insubmissive nature. A descendent of a lineage with a history of unparalleled philanthropy, Mrs. SherBano, followed-suit to keep the family tradition alive. She was also a devoted mother, loving wife and nurtured her children with finesse.

portunities, which are still paying dividends to community and country alike.



Her altruism remains unprecedented, even after so many years, she continues to inspire and motivate people. She has cemented her place as the most iconic, dynamic and historic figure not only in the annals, but in the imminent future of the WMO.

Letter of Condolence to Sherbano Katchi's Daughter Neelofar from Dr Salima Ahmed; *President Pakistan Federation of Business and Professional Women's Organization.*

*“Her devotion and services to the organization have been deeply appreciated. Her demise will be greatly felt in the organization. We grieve for her and send her our prayers and hopes that she may bring the same light in her new abode and may she look down upon us and give us her blessings”*



Understanding that education is instrumental for bringing about a change in the society, she cajoled one and all, including her in-laws, and left no stone unturned for its fulfillment. Upset and annoyed with the status and treatment of women around her, she revolted against the orthodox and archaic system, and grafted with main and might for a grand social reform. **The most discernible breakthrough in this regard came forth in the 1980's in the form of Ladies Wing of the World Memon Foundation; with Sherbano as the founder Vice President.** Her exuberance was matchless; her effervescence timeless; as she surpassed one milestone after another. When the World Memon Organization was formed, under the leadership of ARY, she offered her unconditional support to the cause and served as the **first chairperson of ladies wing in Pakistan**. She was also included in the board of management for her dedicated support and held the office undisputedly for 3 terms on the trot. It is the trust and confidence that women had in her which encouraged them to join WMO Ladies wing.

She believed charity and philanthropy was an ongoing process and continued supporting needy families by collecting **Zakat funds**, and ensuring their rightful distribution. She also helped raise funds for youth programs. She launched umpteen **campaigns for the awareness and importance of good nutrition** and helped raise cognizance against some very common yet fatal ailments. She created ample employment and entrepreneurial op-

# DANIA HANIF

The foundation of every community is the education of its youth and WMO has always given prime importance to this sector. Dania Hanif, a young dynamic Electronics Engineer has discharged her deft services in Pakistan Chapter Youth Wing and was selected as **International Project Leader of WMO IYEP (International Youth Education Program)** in AGM 2015. Her academic portfolio is embellished with accolades in galore; from topping A-levels to being the high achiever in university, she has had a distinguished scholastic run. She has also held positions of prominence in the international arena during university; was selected as Gold Chair in global engineering society, Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineering (IEEE). Basking in inspiration from her mother, **Mrs. Samina Hanif**, who has brought-up a family of engineers and doctors, and strives hard for providing similar opportunities to all other kids; Dania Hanif has proven herself to be the linch-pin of the WMO Youth Wing.

Being an eloquent speaker and an erudite individual herself, she is adamant on instilling, preening and harnessing the same prowess and potential among the youth of the community. For the materialization of this dream, she has planned a **WMO International Debate Championship** along with AGM 2016 where three best debaters of each chapter youth wing will take part to represent their country. The speech competition would be laid-out in a parliamentary form which is

a globally accepted style of debating and would help improve oratory skills of memon youth.

Understanding that education is instrumental in bringing about change in the society, she is pursuing youth projects promoting cognizance and awareness; introduction of WMO exchange programs, creating



WMO International Debate Championship



Dania with her role model, her mother  
Mrs Samina Hanif

education portal for Centralized Online Library for sharing study material and executing Global career guidance programs are some of the projects undertaken by WMO IYEP.

Working in tandem & active collaboration with **Mr. Yunus Suleman** (WMO International Youth Wing Chair), they are set on a divine mission to revolutionise and reinforce the educational framework for the youth of the community. The endeavor, beyond a shadow of a doubt, will pave way for moral, ethical and professional upbringing of the society as a whole. And in a more broader perspective, it will act as a catalyst to involve and engage all the 7 youth wings across the globe.



# SHAMIM OSMAN

*“Nothing can dim the light which shines from within”*

– Maya Angelou

Having been in the UK for over 40 years, Shamim Osman was one of the early pioneers of the Memon Association UK Ladies Wing in the early 80s. To date she heads the Europe Chapter Ladies Wing WMO.

Born in Blantyre, Malawi I attended the renowned ‘Our Lady of Wisdom Convent School’. Aside from equipping me with academic knowledge, it offered an insight into the invaluable Charity work carried out by the dedicated nuns. Their ethos ‘Where there is a will, there is a Way’ was instilled and stays with me to this day.

My mother remains my foremost inspiration, one of the first Malawian Memon women of her time to run her own business. A business and responsibility that was involuntarily thrust upon her, following the tragic, untimely death of my father when I was only three. A true sink or swim situation... she thrived, managing to provide all seven of us siblings with the best education and all good things possible in life. The achievement of being a successful business woman, makes her memorable to many. Despite the hur-

dles of life, her strong resilience prevailed. A truly remarkable woman - respectful and loving - yet never compromising family traditions or principles. These are the values which I uphold and promote, they are reflected in the causes such as Women’s Empowerment, which I am deeply passionate about.

At the age of 18, my husband and I relocated to London. It was 1974, when we arrived as a newly married couple to a culture and society so different to the warmth where we originated from. In hindsight, this set the pace for us to participate, a desire to enforce and create that sense of belonging amongst our Memon community, a legacy our children would be able to carry on for future generations.



As an impressionable young Mother and wife I learnt much from experience and the wisdom of elders around me in those early years. My late father in law Haji Aboobaker Dada was one such example - a great philanthropist, one of the founding members of the Early Memon Association and of Balham Mosque in the 70s.

His sudden death three years later left us all in dire straights and our life took a 360 degree turn. I worked alongside my husband Hanif Osman in our family business. In spite of working long hours in our business and with family commitments raising our two young daughters we managed to make time for the Memon Community work- a passion that both of us shared. Hanif has been the VP for WMO Europe Chapter 2012 – 2014 and is now the President of the Memon Association UK, his kind, loving and generous nature always encouraged and motivated me towards charity work. His strong convictions that women should be given equal opportunities in life to excel has further inspired me.

**“Unity is strength... When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.”**

Under my leadership, my team of dedicated ladies from the UK, worked tirelessly alongside me to collect funds for several charities. The most recent ones have been:

- **Syria Blanket Appeal**
- **Syria Refugee Crisis/Medical Aid**
- **Malawi Flood Relief**
- **Al Noor Foundation for the Blind in Malawi**
- **Nepal Earthquake Appeal**
- **Widows charity in India**
- **Lohara Girls orphanage in India**

### MEMON CONNECTIONS

In 2003, a recognised need was identified due to a lack of social opportunities to meet prospective marriage partners - Myself and my colleague created Memon Connections to bridge this gap. A voluntary service especially for British Memons, which has been extended successfully and now globally adopted by WMO to create WMO Memon Connections. It has become a roaring success, far more buoyant than initially envisioned.

On a recent trip to India which I undertook solely for the purpose of identifying areas of charitable need I was fortunate to be received by the WMO India Chapter Ladies Wing. I hope to foster those links and inshAllah plan to work along side these remarkable ladies where our combined contributions can make a significant difference to those who are vulnerable and underprivileged. My intentions are to promote Women's Empowerment and to start co-operatives where destitute women can obtain machinery and skills to provide for their families.

Supporting Orphanages has been a cause very dear to me. After the wonderful hospitality shown by the girls orphanage during my recent visit to Lohara I have been further inspired to assist to ensure these young girls can be made self sufficient in life. The girls Madressa/Orphanage in Lohara has encouraged me to continue to support such worthy causes.



**May Almighty Allah assist me in fulfilling my vision and help me in my endeavours to make a positive and valuable difference to the lives of others. I pray for strength and continued determination to help the needy and destitute in our Memon community.**



## YASMIN NATHANI MBE

Outstanding contributions to the community, entrepreneurship, and the health and wellbeing of others have been rewarded in the New Year Honours list. People from the world of politics, charities, and education have been recognised for their services to others.

Leading the accolades is Yasmin Nathani (Daughter of Late Abdul Rashid Sayani), director of the Shama Women's Centre, in Highfields, for services to the empowerment of women in Leicester.

**She has been made a member of the order of the British Empire (MBE).**

Yasmin is the first person from the Memon Community in Leicester to receive the award. Her grandfather migrated to Malawi in the 1920s from Lalpur India and was a prominent businessman. She was born in Malawi and came to the UK in 1978. She currently works as an advisor at the Highfields Centre and as an adult tutor for Leicester City Council.

Mrs Nathani, 53, joined the centre as a member in 1988, and has been chair for the past 19 years.



*"I feel absolutely ecstatic about my award. It was a big shock when I received the letter. I had to read it three times before I believed what it said."*

*"I'm so happy for the centre too to be recognised in this way. It has empowered thousands of women over the years and is bringing them together from across different cultures, languages, and religions."*

*"It's changing people's lives and that's why we fought so hard to keep it going when there were cut backs. We have tremendous political support for the centre and we're incredibly grateful for that."*



## “WOMEN ARE THE REAL ARCHITECTS OF SOCIETY”

WMO Middle East plays an active role in all round community development and initiating social welfare programmes for underprivileged families residing in the middle east. We are very proud of the remarkable achievements of our ladies wing under the leadership of Ms Maimoona and Ms Rashida. They have fostered a wonderful relationship and developed a strong bond with the local ladies of our community to initiate projects for women empowerment and for the betterment of humanity.

### MAIMOONA HASSAN DARVESH

*Ever since childhood, I have never seen my father refuse the needy, nobody returned empty handed from our door. Poor ladies came to my mother to seek counsel on their daughter's marriages and returned with full wedding trousseaus. My parental uncle late Mr Umar Latif used to give every penny in his pocket to the less fortunate requesting alms on the streets and used to donate his full closet to clothe the poor. I have grown up in an environment where all were treated equally and respected.*

*After marriage I realised that in spite of being blessed with everything there was a certain kind of emptiness in my life. Then I joined the WMO and realized that charity is the only food for the soul. I am very happy and grateful that i got such an effective platform to work for my community.*

*I have a simple belief*

“*What we do for ourselves dies with us but what we do for others is immortal*”

**May Allah accept our endeavours and may our future generations follow this 'Art of Giving'**



## RAHSIDA ANWAR VAHEDNA

I am a Cutchi Memon from Bangalore, born & brought up in India, coming from a family of twelve children. My father's name was Yusuff Abdulla and my mother was Zahra Bai.



My father was a successful businessman and like most memons it was his passion to serve mankind. He helped people irrespective of caste, creed or religion but especially within the community. He was a true philanthropist and has instilled this passion for community work in all his children. My mother was a dutiful Muslim lady, extremely gentle, dutifully absorbed in bringing up her 12 children and thereafter her extended family.

I studied in Bangalore at Bishop Cotton Girls' School, and completed my graduation in English Literature, psychology and Economics at the Mount Carmel College in Bangalore. I got married and came to Dubai in 1983. I have 3 children, all grown up now and educated in Dubai.

As my daughters were growing up and in college; I felt the need for them to belong to a group which upheld our rich culture and traditional values. In the year 2006, I discovered WMO ME in Dubai and the year marks my involvement with this wonderful organisation.

WMO opened up a whole new world to me and it is here that I found my interest in Humanitarian service being fulfilled.

HUMANITARIAN SERVICE IS A SERVICE RECOMMENDED TO MAN BY NO OTHER THAN OUR BELOVED CREATOR, ALLAH(SUBHANAHU-WA-TA-AALA).

It is our way into Paradise.

It gives me a sense of satisfaction, peace and happiness in Life to serve humanity. I am proud to be a part of the World Memon organization that spells Humanitarian service as their main goal.

My favourite slogan is based on a Hadees:

***"A man cannot be a believer until he wants for his brother, what he wants for himself"***

## Key Ladies Wing Projects

### FUNDS FOR REFUGEES

The ladies wing has run a spirited campaign to support the refugee crises in Europe and has relentlessly collected funds towards this pertinent cause.

### WELFARE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The ladies wing is dedicatedly working for the general welfare and well-being of the Memon community. Financial assistance is provided to the less fortunate members of our community to ease their pain and suffering.

### FAMILY PICNIC

The ladies wing hosted a family picnic for our members on January 29, 2016 at Dubai creek park. Almost 90 families comprising 250 plus members participated in this event.

This picnic is yet another example of cementing bonds with members of our Middle East community.

### BRAIN STORMING SESSIONS

Every month the ladies wing hosts a one dish party to arrange a get together for its members. Purpose of the event is to encourage the ladies to cook up new dishes which will be compiled together for the Memon recipe book.

### EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Scholarships are provided to the academically deserving children of the Memon Community who cannot raise funds for their own education.



# SHAZIA SANGANI

*“No matter how quietly she spoke  
The world would spin a little bit slower  
Just to hear what she had to say”*

A mother of five, Shazia Sangani is more than just a capable house wife. Her daily multitasking involves caring for her children and maintaining her home, neither of which is an easy task with two mischievous toddlers to handle. Despite this, she has found the time to commit herself to the WMO, and has worked hard to build the Far East ladies wing. She now leads it effectively, carrying out numerous projects to serve the community.

community have undergone training for over 3 months and developed their sewing skills.. Plans are afoot to provide them with micro finance for self employment and sustenance. In addition the 2nd edition of **She is More** programme is planned for 6th April 2016 and many more events are in the pipeline for the future.

Other than the WMO, Shazia also actively engages in Conducting Tajweed Classes for elderly ladies and children as part of her social service activities.

Her friendly personality and calm exterior, make her a well liked member of the ladies committee and her dedication towards the programmes has inspired others. Shazia has lifted the moral of the ladies wing to even greater heights and continues her noble endeavours to serve humanity under the banner of WMO.



Since its launch, the Far East Ladies Chapter has organised a number of events, with their first program **This is More** held around Women’s Day, 6th March 2015. The event is a celebration of womanhood. Aimed to create awareness about education, women empowerment, opportunities for women in the modern world and to instill self confidence amongst the women by discovering their true selves. The opportunity was also used as a membership drive, to project the work of WMO and introduce “Memon Connections” to the Community in Sri Lanka.

This was followed up with a very successful hosting of the **International Ladies Wing Meeting** during the 12th AGAM held in Colombo in Sept’15.

Underprivileged ladies from the



# FARZANA NOOR MAHOMED AYOB 21ST CENTURY MOTHER

**“Here is to strong women – May we know them, May we be them, May we RAISE them .....**”

As a mother what comes most naturally to her is – Love and compassion. It is how she nurtures this for her children that ultimately determines her legacy that she leaves behind.

From a very young age my mum Zohra Noor Mahomed taught us about compassion. From a little smile to a helping hand – Rich or poor, old or young – respect,

courtesy and compassion were instilled into us as children. The personal touch is always what made the difference.

My sister Tasneem and I were taught that mankind is equal to one another and where inequalities exist in society it was our duty not only as muslims but as human beings to ensure that the balance in nature was restored.

Today by the blessing of Allah SWT I have been blessed with 4 children of my own ... As a 21st century mother who is a professional and a home executive how do I find the time to instill such values into my kids ? Like many others, like myself, we are constantly facing challenges that society imposes on us as women as a whole. But as society evolves what we don't realize is that our responsibilities towards humanity stay the same.

Its very simple – I follow the footsteps of my mother... As little children we always accompanied my parents to formal dinner parties, charity events and outings. We were never left at home. Boring as these events were, we were forced to listen to what the speaker had to say. It is amazing how adults may overlook the presence of a child. But as a child you are fortunate enough to see and feel the ex-



pressions on the faces of adults – sadness, anxiety, fear and happiness. You learnt much about people.

In the early 1980's apartheid was rife in South Africa – we as a family would take our regular trips into the most remote areas of the Limpopo Province where we distributed food, clothing and blankets. Our journey would begin at the crack of dawn – as the beauty and freshness of mother nature engulfed us, it was the little kids (who were our age) who welcomed us with their laughter and smiles that captured our hearts. We saw ourselves as one and thus made it very difficult not to notice the disparity that existed between our worlds – this was where the true mark was made.



Today I too, make it a point to take time off from my life to ensure that my children travel the same journey that I once did. I will never forget the words from my oldest son Noor Mahomed – “ Mummy we have to do something, its not fair...” or that of my daughter Zahraa

– “Mummy we did not bring enough...” It is absolutely amazing the insight an adult may gain from a situation once seen through the eyes of a child.

As human beings we are constantly looking for solutions – as a family we have realized that solution lay in the first word revealed to Our Beloved Prophet Muhammed SAW from Almighty Allah SWT – “IQRA ” – READ – .....EDUCATION. The scales of justice always require a balance. You have education on the one hand and nourishment in the form of food and clothing on the other.



Our Family foundation – The Solly and Zohra Noor Foundation – ensures that the scales are well balanced. Today our arms have stretched even further to include a crucial missing link – Early Childhood Development. It is in these crucial years of a child's life that the foundation of success is laid. Numerous studies have shown that it is here that significant social, economic and developmental benefits not only to children but to their families and communities are made.



The personal touch has never outgrown our family. Saturday mornings and holidays are normally spent tutoring children from under privileged areas – I started it many years ago and today my young daughter Zahraa (14yrs) and my sister Tasneem (22yrs) give up most of their valuable spare time to tutor as well.

Many Saturdays are also spent packing food parcels – from my youngest children Nabeel (7Yrs) and Aryana (5yrs) to my oldest son Noor Mahomed (17yrs) – everyone is involved. There is always work for any age group.

Our family has also adopted a school in the rural areas of Limpopo – while we live almost 2000km away from this school we still ensure that their educational needs are met and visit them as often as possible. We are currently setting up a much needed library – these kids do not have access to running water or a continuous flow of electricity – this library will be the gateway to their success.

My older son has ensured that I use technology to its best to network with friends and colleagues. We personally collect, sort, deliver – second hand reading books, magazines, novels, children puzzles and other educational toys. All it takes is a simple watsapp message..

Aside from being a trustee and CFO of our family foundation I have used my professional qualification to add value to society and bridge these gaps by being a trustee and board member of various charity trusts.

Amongst others are the Imaam Abdullah Haroun Education Trust – [www.IAHET.com](http://www.IAHET.com) – which also focuses on education but specifically on early childhood development in areas such as Guguletu, Belhar etc

The Saabri & Ashrafi Relief Fund – [www.saabriashrafi.co.za](http://www.saabriashrafi.co.za) - a community based organization based in Cape Town that responds to the needs of the surrounding communities. From Winter warmth and food hampers to monthly projects – the trust strives to address the challenges of widespread poverty.

The Mitchells Plain Bursary and Role Models trust – Founding Patron is Ex minister of finance and minister in the presidency of South Africa – Mr Trevor Manuel – [www.mpbursarytrust.org.za](http://www.mpbursarytrust.org.za). Mitchells Plain is a community in Cape Town that is plagued by gangsterism and drugs. Here we personally select students that are academically deserving but financially constrained. We provide mentoring to these kids as well.

The need for education has always been and will always be the driving force behind our family. Irrespective of race, creed, or colour.

*“The best in the sight of his Lord, is he who is most beneficial to mankind”*

