**15246, Karan Gupta**

A very good evening to everyone and a warm welcome to the **Karan Gupta, Education Foundation and IE Business School’s *I AM WOMAN***.

Diane Mariechile said, “A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.” This quote resonates with what we believe. We have an inspiring evening planned ahead and we have with us 9 power women who will share their inspiration with you. But before we get to that, let me share a story with you.

There was once a young boy Krish and his mother Asha. Born and raised in our city Mumbai, Krish wanted to study overseas, but could not afford the fees to study abroad. Asha pushed him to study hard and apply for scholarships. He worked day and night and got a scholarship to study in America and his father agreed to pay for his living expenses. A few years later, his father's business shut down and Krish was forced to return home. Asha then encouraged Krish to start helping other students who wanted to study abroad. With Asha's support, encouragement and guidance, Krish started his own business and with a Rs.5000 from his father, in the next 10 years Krish made the business worth over Rs.50 crores.

Every story must have a villain, and Krish soon met his in his uncle Kans. He was jealous of Asha and decided to punish Asha by kidnapping Krish. With the help of corrupt police, Kans imprisoned Krish and falsely implicated him in illegal cases. Asha had just undergone an emergency surgery and was bedridden. When she found out what was happening to Krish, she went from pillar to post asking people for help, holding rallys for support because she was barely able to walk. She did not lose courage but continued to fight and knocked on every door to get justice for her son. The situation went from bad to worse and young Krish was on the verge of giving up. When Asha finally saw Krish again, she held him and told him stories of bravery and justice and gave him the power to fight. Finally, after weeks of struggle and perseverance, Krish and Asha were reunited.

Asha nurtured and transformed young Krish. She taught him to never to give up. She taught him to believe in himself and to always do the right thing. This is how she transformed him. This, my friends, is the power of a woman.

Tonight you will hear from 9 women who have unique stories of how they have discovered their power as women and learned how to use it to create, nurture and transform, as Diane Mariechile said. Each woman has her own unique strengths, talents and experiences that she has used to help others to overcome life’s challenges and help those around her. It is our hope that after you hear these inspiring stories that you, too, will seek and discover your own unique strengths, talents and experiences and use them to help those around you to overcome their challenges and so you all may strive to reach your full potential.

Now, without any delay, let me introduce my colleague, Amber Wigmore.