Manisha, residing with her three young children and husband with little to no money, was no stranger to adversity. The family depended on the dwindling fund provided by Manisha’s parents and her husband’s meagre income provided no reprieve to their woes. Manisha used to go door-to-door asking for a job or menial income-generating opportunities. However, her lack of adequate education became an hinderance in her path, deterring her from securing a stable job. One day after a hopeless attempt to look for a job, she met Jyoti Sharma, a Community Resource Person working with the Development Alternatives group.

She visited warehouses with Jyoti to understand the requisite qualifications and skills to acquire a job. Determined, she attended a logistics training programme conducted by the Development Alternatives group and WE-LEAD (Women Empowerment through Livelihoods, Entrepreneurship, and Access through Digitalisation), a project designed to leverage technology and bridge informational and resource gaps for creating sustainable economic opportunities through entrepreneurship. After giving multiple interviews and putting in her utmost efforts, Manisha secured a job at a warehouse run by DB Schenker. She worked hard and dedicated herself to her job, rising through the rank of a picker with a pay of ₹11,500 per month to the position of a scanner earning ₹13,000 per month. Throughout her journey to secure financial freedom, Manisha had no support from her in-laws or the community she lived in. Despite constant discouragement, she focused on the people she loved and cared about and succeeded in achieving her goals. She rebelled against the idea that viewed women as passive individuals merely existing to look after their families and home. With her sincerity toward her work, she pulled her family out of poverty and proved herself to those who tried to pull her back. Manisha has since then come a long way; she now earns enough to send her children to a private school while getting tuition for her older children. Her own experience has taught her well, education is of paramount importance to her, and she encourages her children to never compromise on it. Her oldest daughter has finished college and her younger children are excelling in high school. Assistance from Development Alternatives and WE-LEAD enabled her to access a future she had not thought possible. She aspires to send all her children for higher education and build secure futures for them.

Simran, a 25-years old girl, is now known as ‘Makeover by Simran’. She is from a lower middle-class family and had a dream of becoming a beautician. She had always been fascinated by the art of beauty and wanted to help others look and feel their best. However, the journey was not without challenges. In her community, pursuing a career outside of traditional roles was not permitted, and people held conservative views about women working outside the four walls of home. Despite the social pressures and expectations, Simran was determined to follow her passion.

Simran knew, that to pursue her dream, she needed to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge and decided to participate in Development Alternatives’ Skills to Livelihood 45 days training and development programme supported by HDBFS. She signed up for Assistant Beauty Therapist course at one of the vocational training center in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The course provided her with a solid foundation in various beauty treatments, skincare, makeup techniques, and client management. Throughout her training, Simran faced numerous obstacles. She often struggled with managing her studies alongside the household chores that were expected by the family. Many times, she had to juggle her time between attending classes and fulfilling her household duties, but her perseverance kept her focused.

After completing her training, Simran started working at a local beauty salon. Initially, she faced skepticism from some clients and colleagues who doubted her abilities due to her young age and background. However, Simran’s talent, passion, and determination shone through her work.

She quickly gained a reputation for her attention to detail and ability to understand her clients’ needs. Her clientele grew steadily as satisfied customers spread the word about her excellent services. She got repeated customers.

Simran’s passion for her choice of career not only brought financial stability but also shattered stereotypes within her community. Other young girls, inspired by her journey, started considering careers beyond the conventional choices. Simran became a role model, encouraging young girls like her to pursue their dreams and break societal barriers.

Simran earns approximately INR 20,000 a month and takes care of her mother’s medical bills as she’s a diabetic. It shows her compassion and dedication towards her family, but her commitment to their well-being is equally admirable as her fiery zeal to work and be independent.