

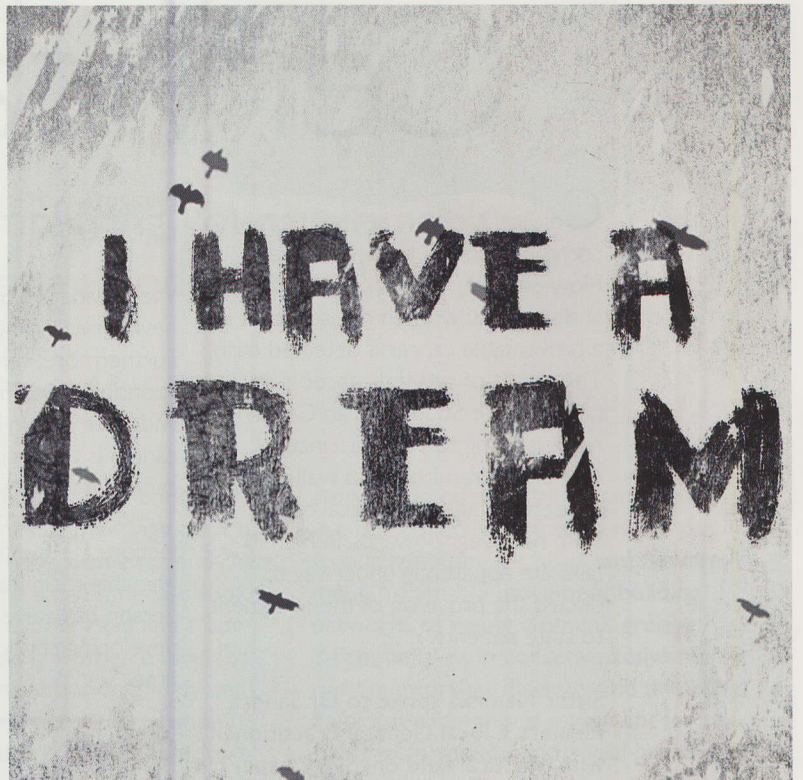
# I HAVE A DREAM

They say strive for your dream and make something of your life... But what good is a dream if you know you cannot make it? You have to do homework at night by candle light; have to sit with the book on your lap with the television on since it is a two room house with five other siblings... You sleep in a cramped room on the cold floor because your dad cannot afford a mattress.

Sure, you are better off than some people, but still all this makes it very difficult to strive for your dream. I want to be a doctor, but will I make it to university and who will pay for my studies? All those things are now the least of my worries, since I have to clean the house, look after my three little siblings and cook dinner every day after school. It is not really much of a dinner though. Most times it's just porridge, with sugar if we are lucky. How can you reach your dreams if you have so much to do and so much to worry about?

They teach us in school that all you need to reach your dream is will power. But what good is it if you are stuck... Stuck in this one place... Taking care of your siblings and cooking for your dad. A place where you are constantly told that a woman's place is at home in the kitchen and that you should wait for your prince charming to marry you and whisk you away from the dreariness of your existence.

Every day I ask myself: 'What good is a dream if I cannot achieve it?' I cling on to religion as there are inspiring stories in the Bible, but still I wonder what the use of dreaming is. Sure I have heard of Abraham Lincoln who made it out of poverty, but he was not facing the same problems I am



facing now, simply because he was not a woman. Things are different for women. Society puts many restraints on women and girls. 'You can't do this... You can't do that...' because it is a man's world. 'Your place is at home looking after the men-folk and the children.' Sure I have heard of Oprah Winfrey too... yes she is a woman. But she was facing different problems from the ones I am facing. Each one's problems are unique.

From all this I am starting to realise that I am slowly accepting the social constraints placed upon me. I have a dream to become a doctor. Why can I not study hard and become what I want to? What does circumstances have to do with it? I believe in myself! I do not belong at home in the kitchen! I can work hard if I set my mind to it. I can overcome my circumstances! I can reach my dreams if I work hard enough at it... Why can't you too?

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