

“ Once you are passionate, nothing is out of your reach. Just because you are blind doesn’t mean you can’t take up science, for example. If you are ready to take the challenge, you can do it. ”

—SADAF KHAN, HR PROFESSIONAL, MUMBAI, INDIA



CHALLENGE

At age three, complications during cataract surgery left Sadaf completely blind. At age nine, she was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis which made walking without support difficult. She gained permission to study from home and was diligent about her schoolwork. Her parents did their best to support her, especially her father who read to her and dictated notes which she typed in braille while her mother cared for her other needs. When Sadaf was 17, her father passed away. “Even though my mother went out of her way to help with my studies, I felt like giving up because it was too much to ask from her,” she said.

SOLUTION

In spite of these obstacles, Sadaf persisted and graduated in the top of her high school class. She earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology followed by a master’s degree in industrial psychology at Mithibai College of Arts. She used braille for most of her classwork and started using Bookshare in 2013 when she was studying literature. Sadaf also received her first laptop which introduced her to the benefits of technology for academics, reading, and communication. Now, as a human resources analyst, technology is an integral part of her day-to-day job. She uses JAWS (screen reader software) to access job-sourcing platforms and complete certificate programs in cyber security and other skills. For pleasure reading, she uses Voice Dream Reader on her phone because it has expressive text-to-speech voices and a direct link to the vast Bookshare library.

IMPACT

Sadaf Khan has accomplished so much in her 27 years. Her hard work has earned her a successful career for one of the top, global, professional services providers. Her responsibilities include the talent acquisition process from sourcing and interviewing candidates to conducting negotiations and hiring in the financial risk management and cyber security domains. In addition, Sadaf recently became the youngest and first woman president of the Blind Graduates Forum of India. “I manage a team of twelve, and it has been a fruitful way of expanding my network and building technical skills that apply to my job,” she says. She encourages others who are blind to always grab opportunities to upskill. Sadaf has developed tremendous self-confidence and she loves traveling on her own. She is a rising star and the sky’s the limit!

Benetech is a nonprofit that empowers communities through software for social good. Our work transforms how people with disabilities read and learn, makes it safer for human rights defenders to pursue truth and justice, and connects people to the services they need to live and prosper. We’re constantly pursuing the next big social impact.