

University of Hard Rocks of Life

based on the
life and adventures of
NK Chaudhary



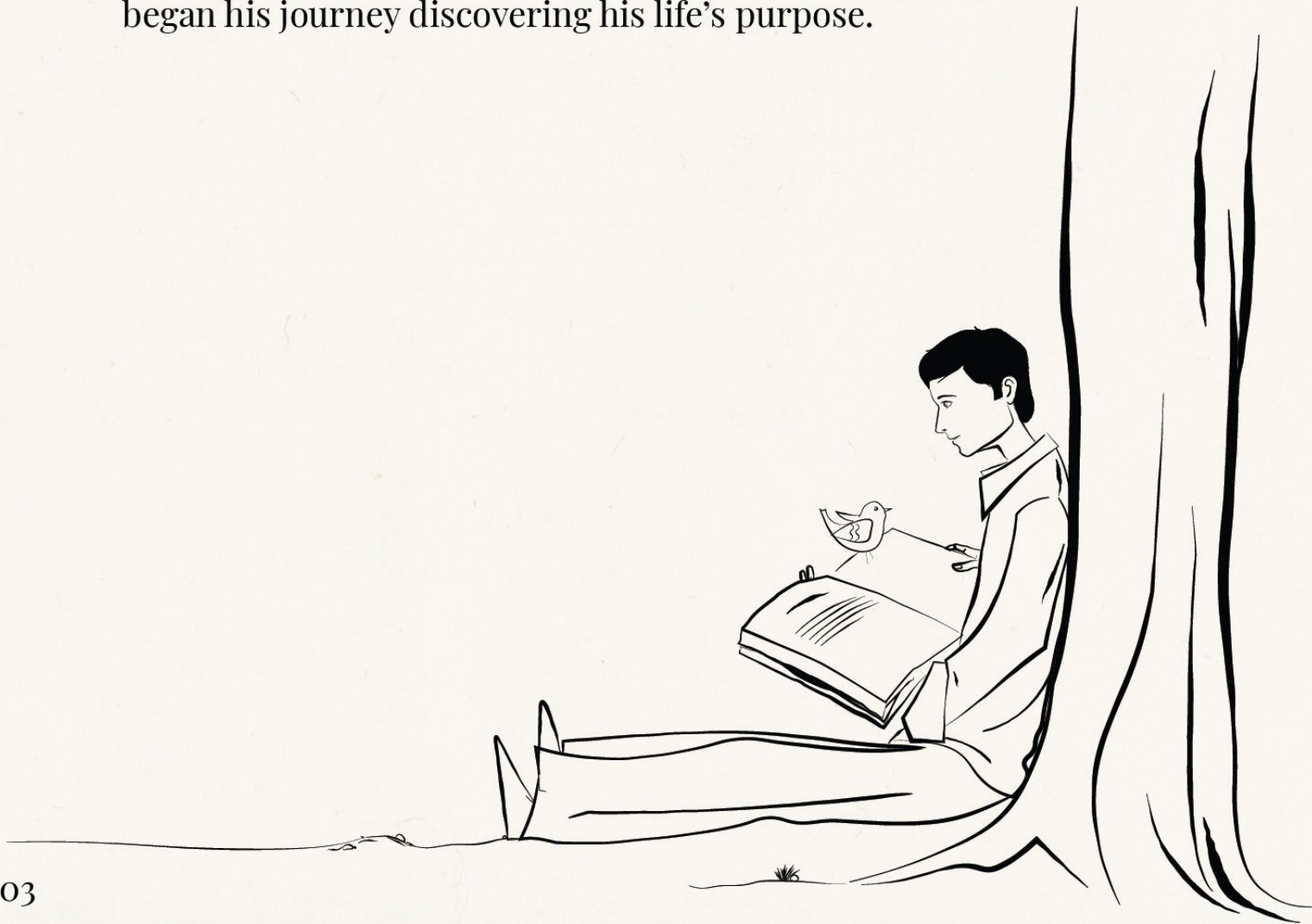
Welcome to a tale of love, innocence
and determination, The University of
Hard Rocks of Life.



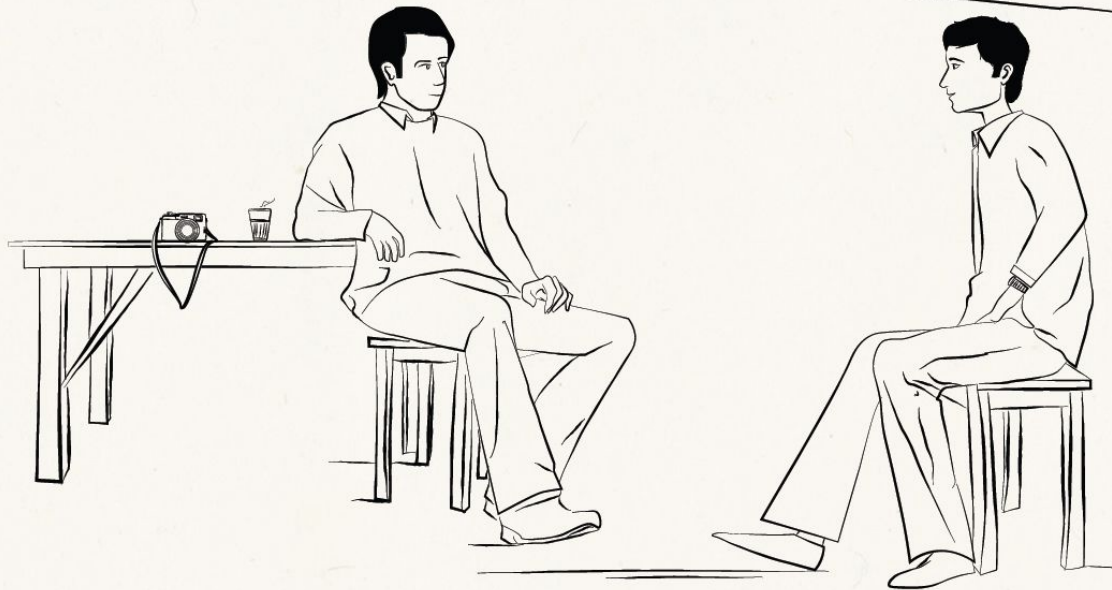


In the early 1970s, young NK started his journey by helping at his father's shop but left soon after. He even rejected a job at a bank. NK wanted to make a difference, not knowing how but he shared love with his family and neighbours knowing that he will find those answers someday. It was the beginning of a dream in the midst of a small town, Churu.

Growing up, NK was an introvert but an avid reader and nature lover. He also studied the works of Tagore and Gandhi, and the spiritual texts of Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita. NK explored his heritage, recognised his values and began his journey discovering his life's purpose.

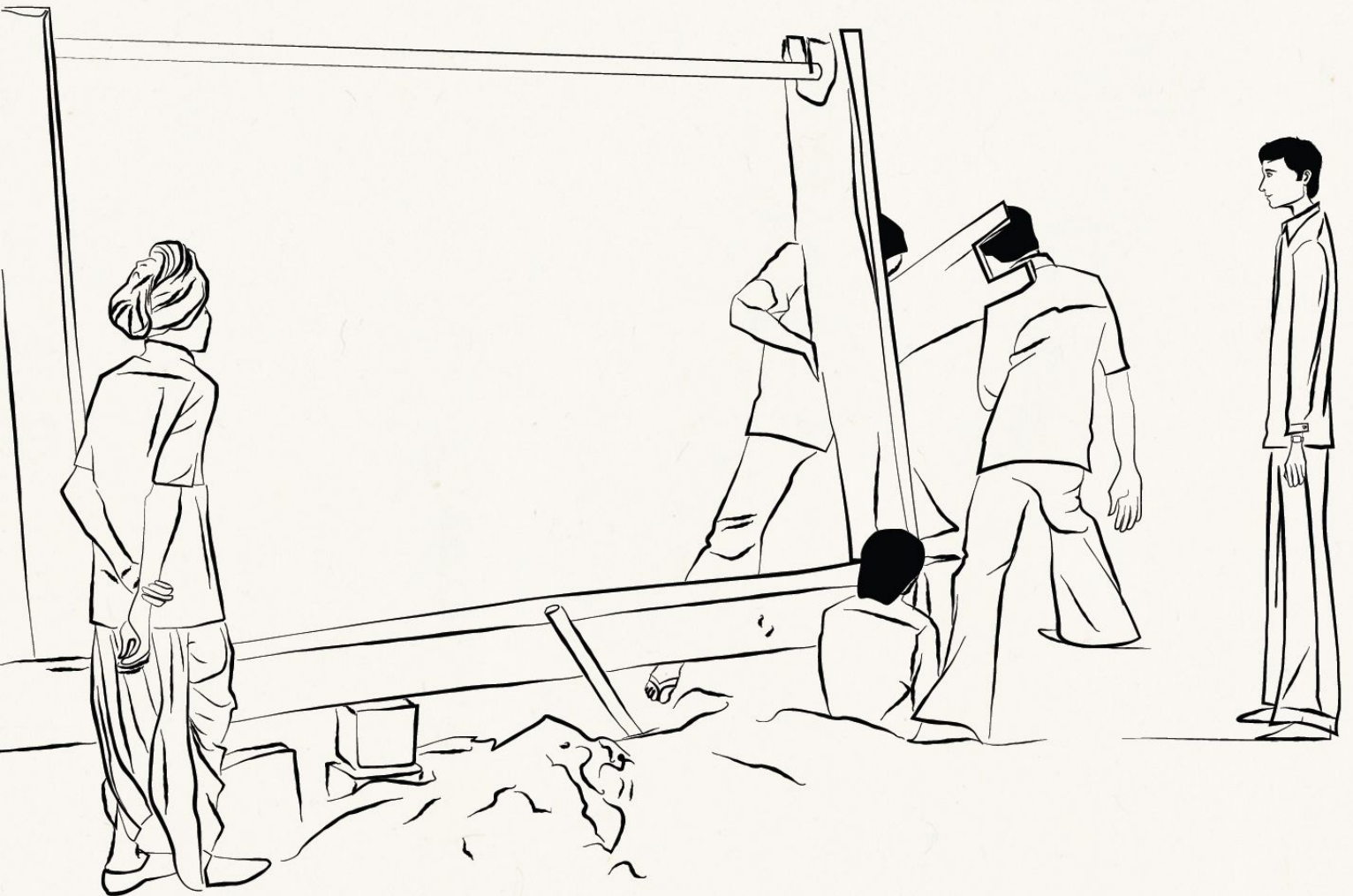


Soon after, He met Ilay Cooper, a British researcher, who had come down to Rajasthan to study Shekhawati wall paintings. NK and Ilay bonded and Ilay became the first few to inspire NK to revive carpets.



The first few seeds were sown

Taking Ilay's advice, NK ventured into carpet weaving. He took INR 5000 as a loan from his father and bought a bicycle, some raw materials and set up two looms for nine artisans in Churu.

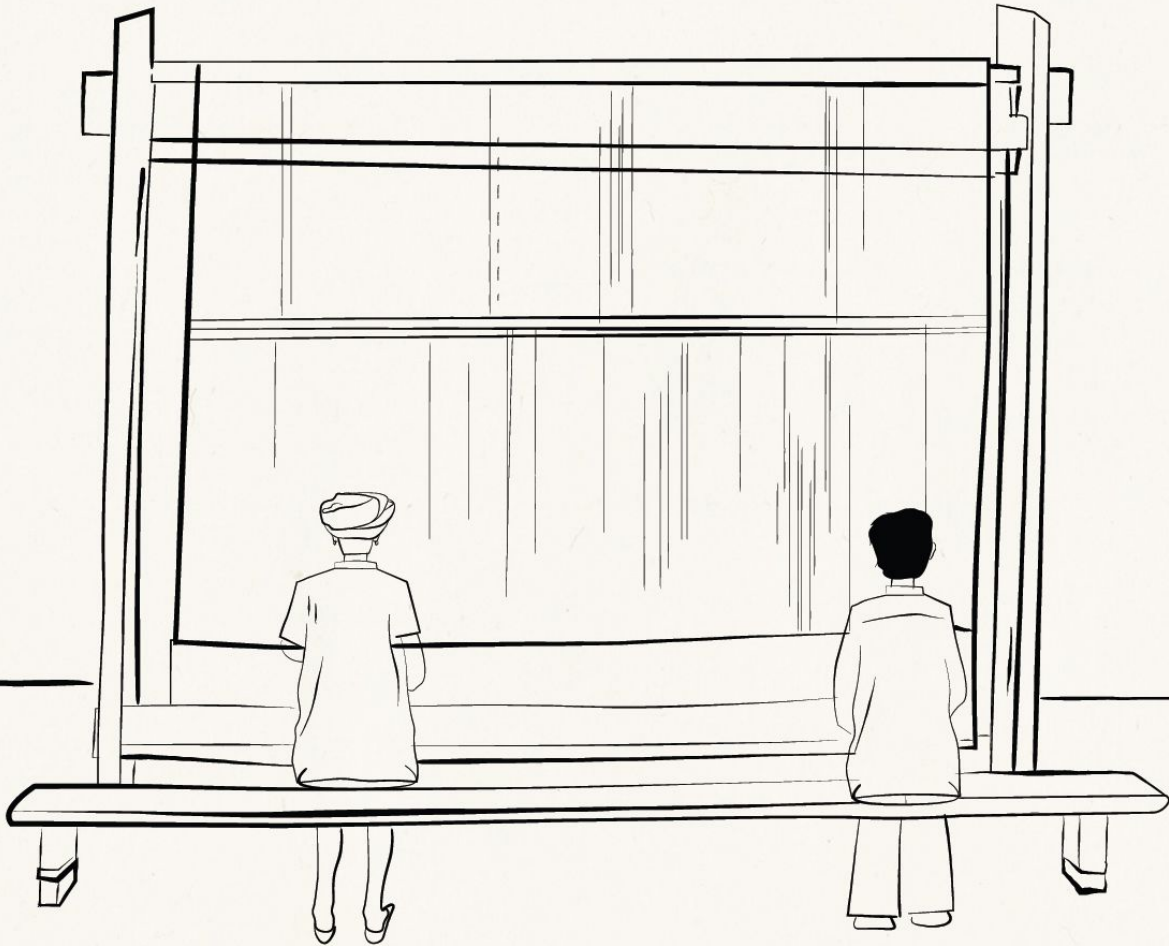


Removing the weeds

After laying the foundation, the first obstacle he faced was to fight against the stigma of untouchability that existed in those times as the artisans were of a lower caste. Nevertheless, he believed in treating everyone with dignity and love. This guided all his decisions. More than belief, he never understood the caste system. He says, “*a man should be known by his work and not by anything else.*”

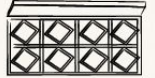


As a result, NK was rejected by his family for trusting the artisans. The artisans on the other hand were rejected by the society. Two rejected people came together and found love in each other which eventually formed Jaipur Rugs.



First Carpet

After working day in and day out, NK and his fellow artisans learned the art of weaving from an Ustad of Benares. After sheer passion, the first carpets were produced: identical twins of 6*4 sq ft, which were contracted under the name of **'Bharat Carpet Enterprise'**.





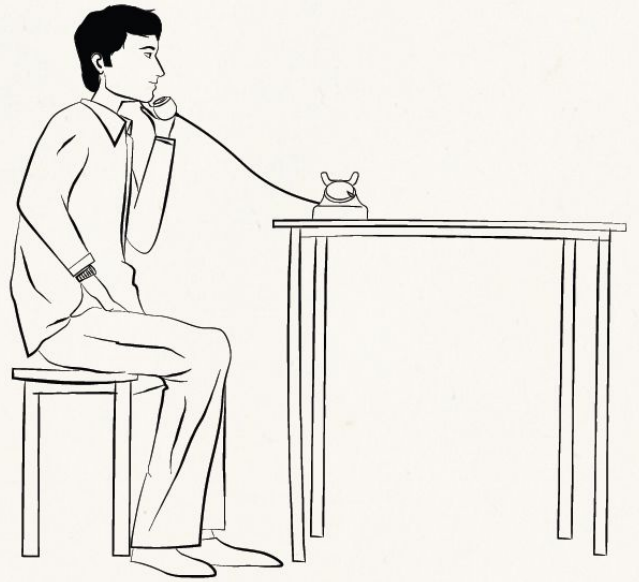
NK's dream began to take shape. In just two years, he was successful in establishing 10 looms across the villages of Rajasthan.

After a few years, NK got to know about a tribal community in Gujarat and thought of expanding his business. People opposed the idea saying that the community is repellent and won't help. NK was confused and tried consulting his friend.





Ilay made him understand that the community is innocent and has been exploited for years. “All they need is love and compassion,” he said.

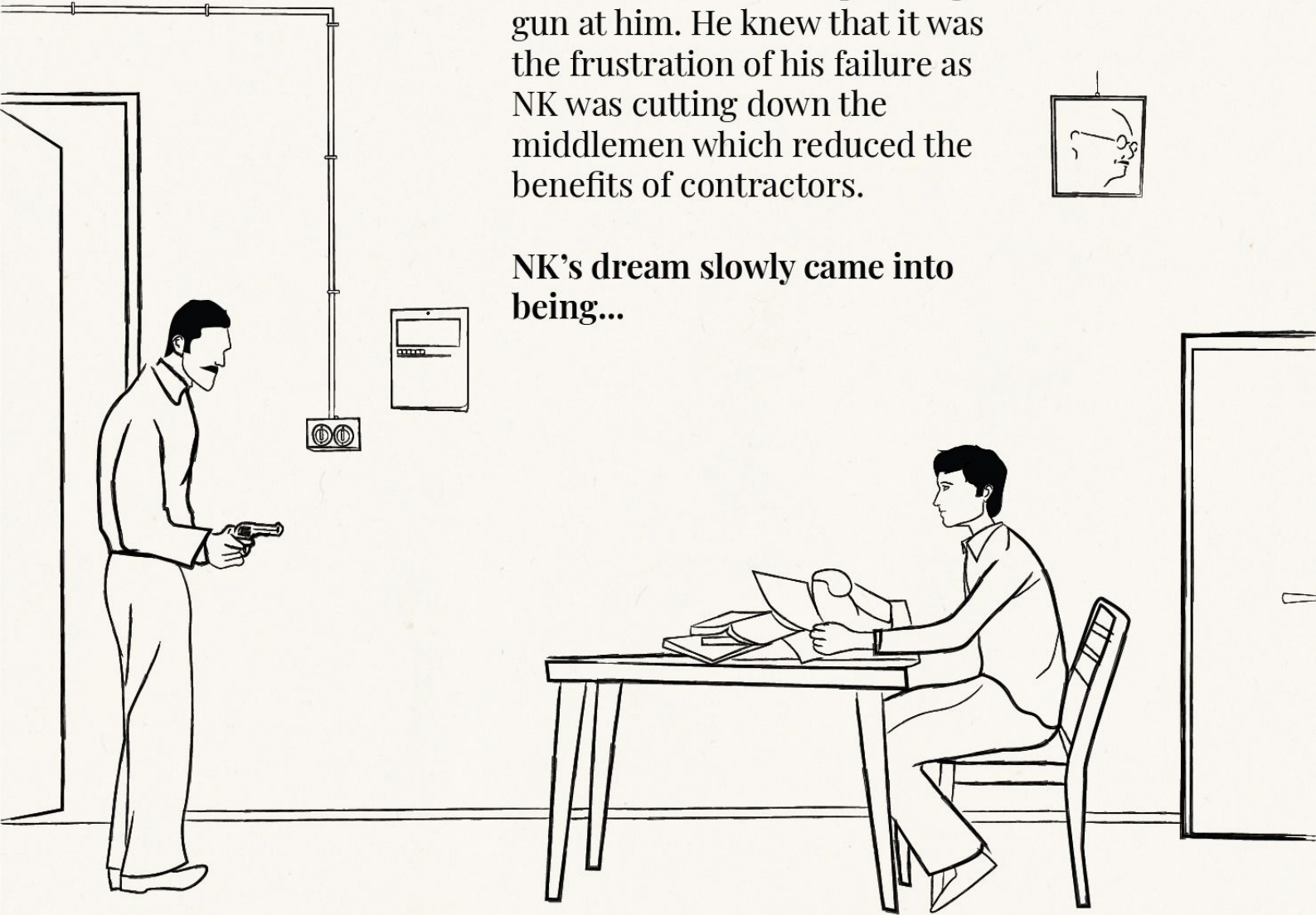


In just a period of three years, the miracle happened. Their resistance turned to love and they began addressing NK as 'Bhaisahab,' meaning brother in Hindi.



Amongst all of this, one fine day a politically powerful contractor came into NK's office pointing a gun at him. He knew that it was the frustration of his failure as NK was cutting down the middlemen which reduced the benefits of contractors.

NK's dream slowly came into being...



On the personal front, NK was blessed with three daughters and two sons. While he was celebrating, society had other plans...



Sulochana, his wife, was sad. She said,
“People look down upon me as I gave
birth to three daughters.” Hearing this,
NK went into a dilemma and reached out
to his friend, Ilay.



Ilay said, “In your culture people differentiate between girls and boys and it is not right but you need to understand that girls are more efficient than boys and are better leaders.”



NK, even after facing strong opposition,
decided to treat his children alike and made
sure that all of them got the same education.



**Eventually, he took a bold step to send all his daughters to study in America.*



Meanwhile, NK's business was flourishing in Gujarat. However, with the growing number of artisans it became tough for him to connect with them due to rough terrains and no communication channel in place. So, NK thought of using walkie-talkies.

During this time, He realised that women are more sincere and have better managing capabilities compared to men. So, NK eventually decided that he would give more opportunities to women.



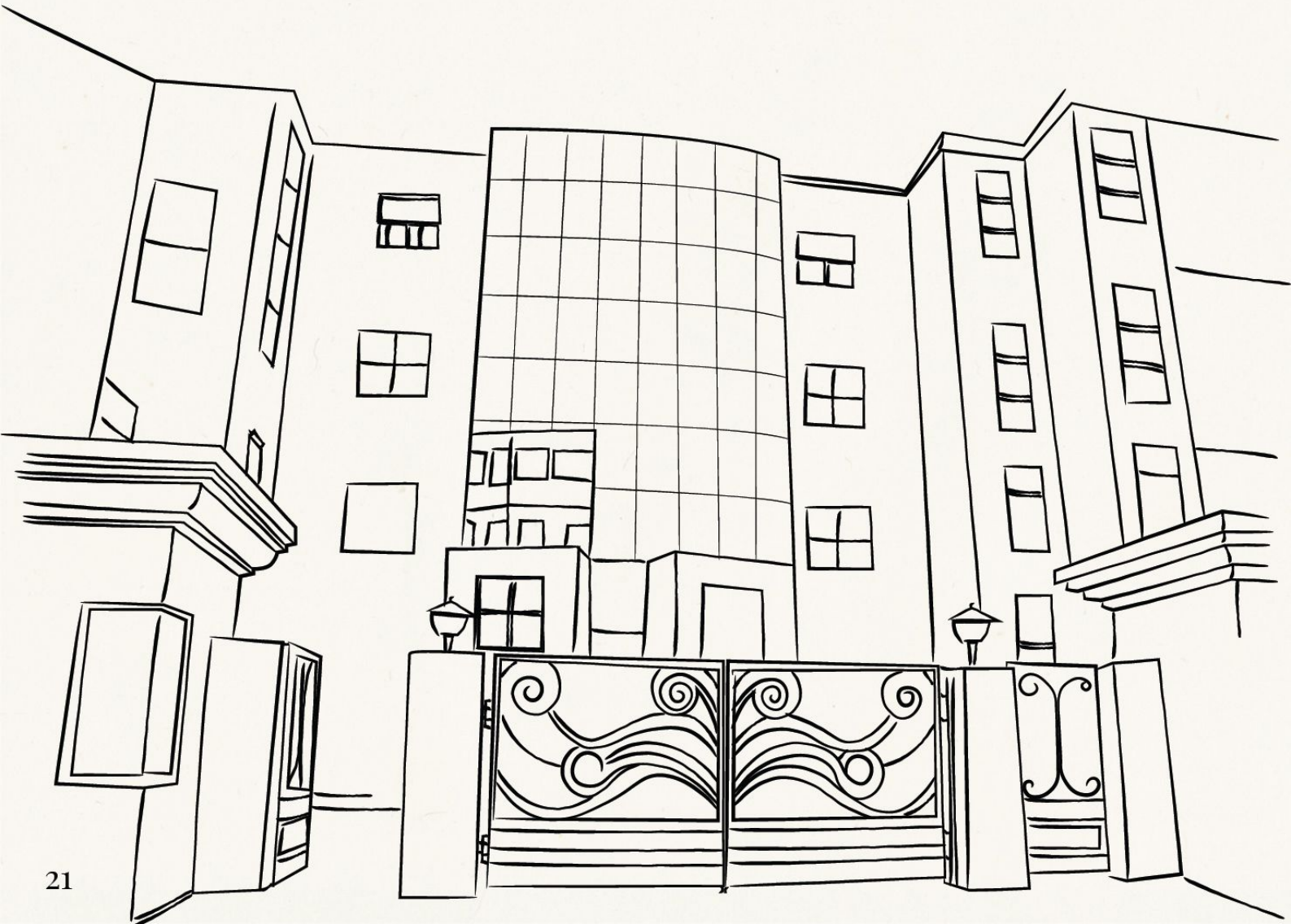
Journey back to Jaipur...

In the year 1999 due to unfortunate reasons and conflicts NK had to start over again. This left a void in him.

He was taken aback by the situation but he was determined...



Jaipur head office was set up and the vision was to go global.



Time had come to go global, but how?

With global ambitions, came bigger challenges! NK had only worked with weavers up until now. The road felt a little bumpy and needed a lot of effort to learn what he hadn't in the past 20 years.



NK realised that it was a difficult time. He felt he had been everywhere in making decisions, prone to his rural leadership, that restricted company's growth. NK realised it was time to unlearn.



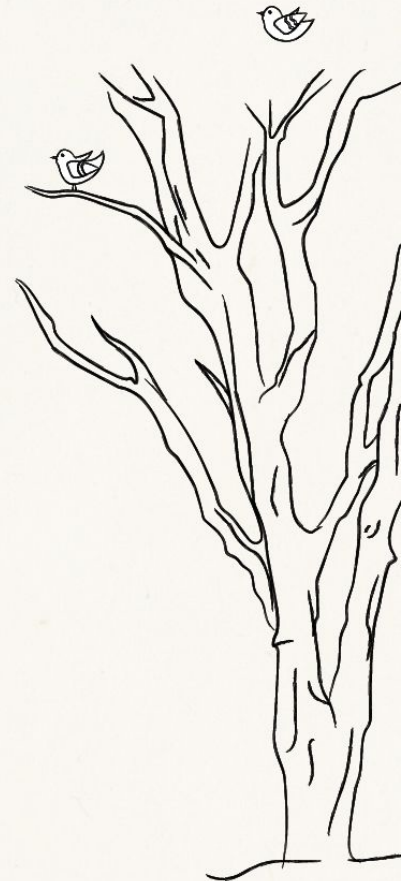
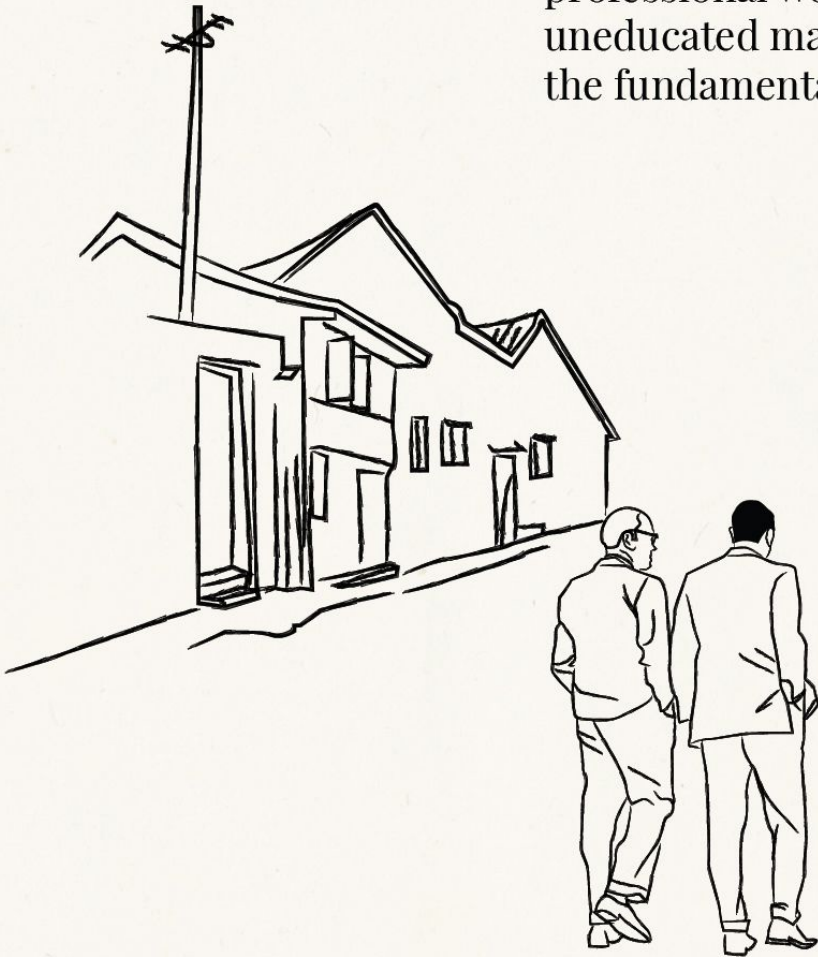
He started introspecting,
learning global strategies and
hiring professionals to
support him better. He
conducted a lot of interviews
but eventually realised that
everyone turned him upside
down.





NK thought about what could be done. He realised that knowledge is power but knowledge without practice develops ego. As he was unlearning, he thought of why not make the professionals unlearn as well.

In order to do so, he came up with the idea of 'Finding yourself through losing yourself' and set up the Higher School of Unlearning, where each professional would work along with uneducated managers to understand the fundamentals of business.



NK was not just concerned about the business but his artisans as well. He believed that the artisans would be able to contribute better if they are happy. So, he set up Jaipur Rugs Foundation to develop human connections at the grassroots.



In 2008, not knowing that his innocence is being appreciated widely across the globe, he received a call from Prof. CK Prahalad, the then renowned Management Guru. NK couldn't believe his ears when he heard that CK wanted to do a case study on the business model of Jaipur Rugs.



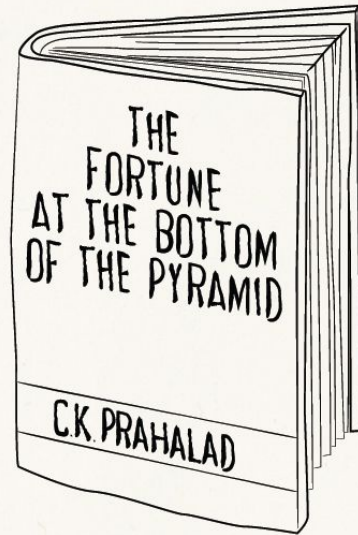
“We are very simple people, what we do is very simple. You're very welcome! We would love to have you but who would want to read our case study?”

“NK what you have done is brilliant. You have connected the richest of the richest to the poorest by enhancing the capabilities at the grassroots.”

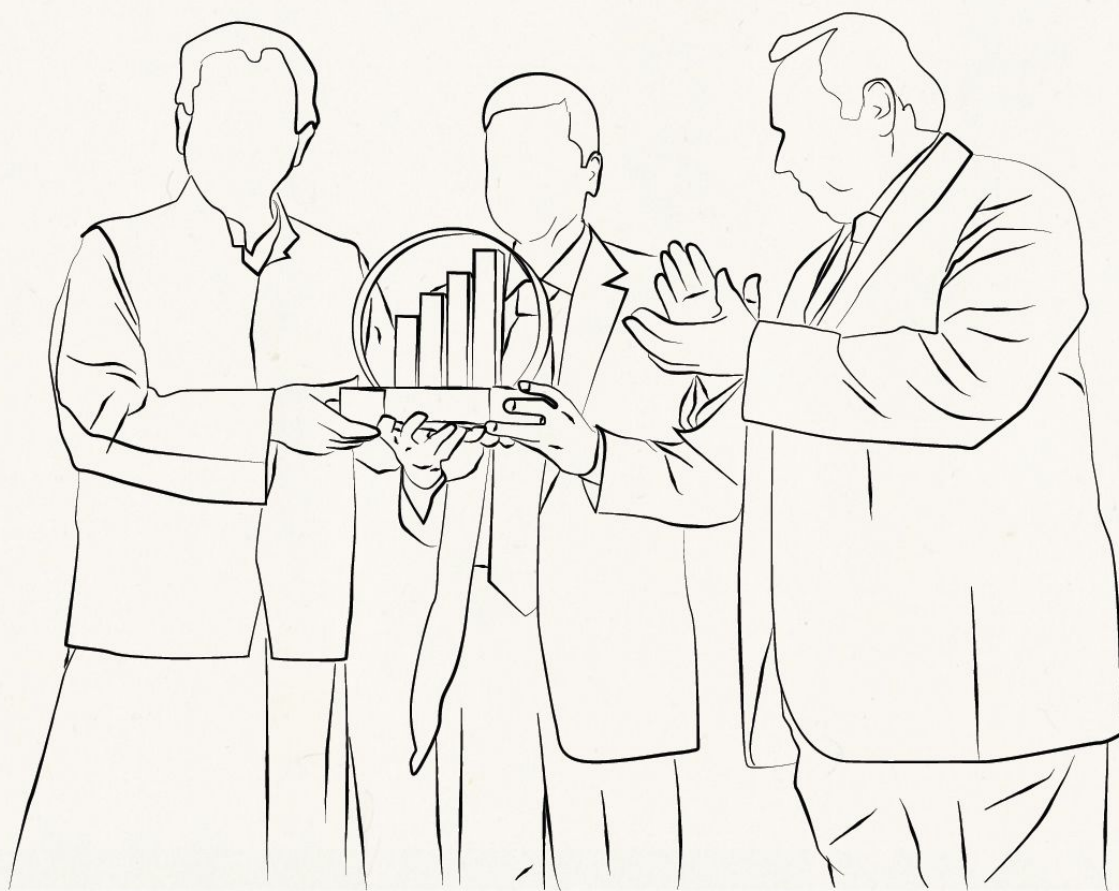


The BREAKTHROUGH...

The book, 'The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid' was published which changed the history of Jaipur Rugs in the international market. NK began to receive calls from around the world. Globally, the company's name skyrocketed. A new vision was set! It was a giant leap towards his dream.

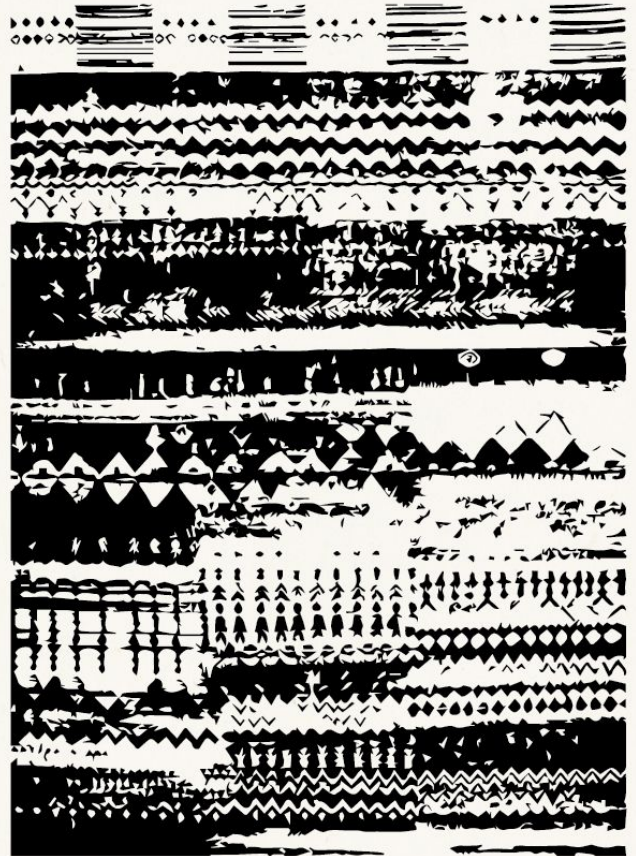


In the year 2010, NK received the Ernst and Young, Entrepreneur of the year award and Jaipur Rugs became a global name.



In early 2012, Jaipur Rugs conducted an experiment where three artisans, Neeraj, Mobin, Gaffar, were asked to design their own rug but they were not getting along with each other and that led to a creative explosion. Their disagreement eventually turned into coherence and a unique design pattern was born.

Kavita, NK's daughter, termed it as Project Error, which became a symbol of harmony as it appreciated the differences in nature.



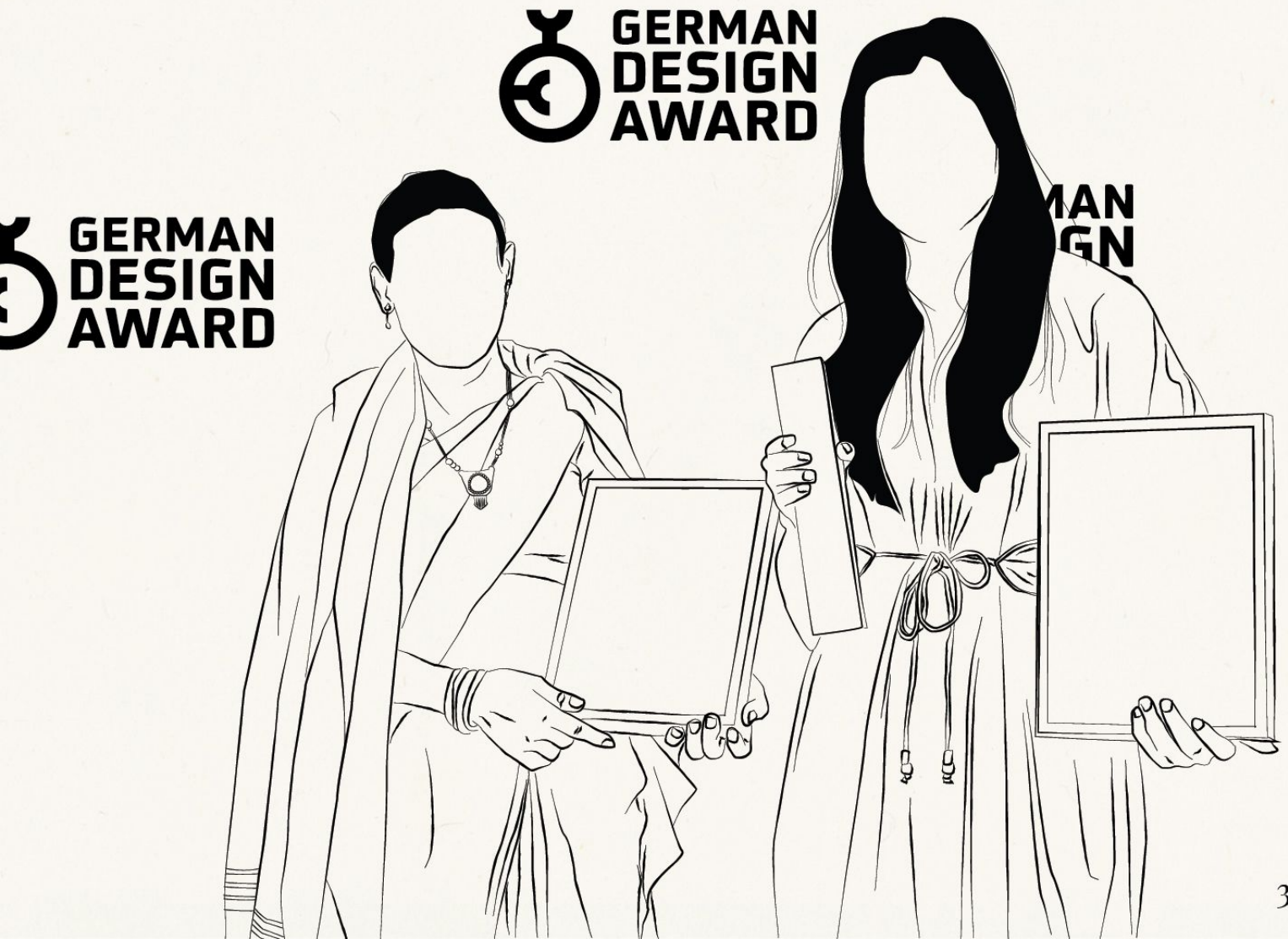


Project error was a revolution as it gave its weavers a platform to unleash their creativity through Manchaha, which means 'heart-felt.' Jaipur Rugs started Manchaha as a project, where weavers turned into artists and got to design their own carpets.

Chowkri
by Savitri Devi

And so it happened...

One of the Manchaha designers, Bimla Devi, a weaver, who had never stepped out of her village flew all the way to Frankfurt, Germany, in 2017. She walked on the stage leaving everyone spellbound to receive the German Design Award for her simple yet magical Manchaha, Kamal.



The business was going global. It was growing bigger but there was some problem. NK didn't know what it was but he definitely knew something was amiss. The wholesome picture of Jaipur Rugs went blurry that's when co-incidentally NK met with Sr. partners from Bain & Company and they decided to help him and Jaipur Rugs to address the issue.



Going back to the roots...

A detour began! NK asked himself, “Why did I begin all of this, what problem was I solving?” He understood that the company was losing its core values of ‘weavers first.’ A journey of ‘going back to the roots’ began.



The first step towards that was to initiate Weaver's Engagement Program in which weavers are brought to the head office. They are given exposure to the entire rug making process. It helps them to connect with their labour of love by allowing them to witness the fruit of their effort, the final carpet. This made them realise they are a part of something bigger.



Going back to its original mission, a second step was taken where NK decided to connect the customers and the artisans through 'The Postcard Project.'



This way Jaipur Rugs family was complete in a full circle. Weavers started writing postcards to the customers and soon after the customers began to write back.



Vision Ahead

A new vision was crafted keeping the core values of NK and Jaipur Rugs together making Jaipur Rugs a healing organisation. NK believes that the carpet heals every hand it passes through completing the circle of totality. NK often says, *“We don’t sell carpets, we share a family’s blessings.”*

NK believes in the world of Jaipur Rugs, every artisan would evolve into an artist. They would connect to the World of Design such that a customer, a designer and an artisan would enter a world of co-creation.



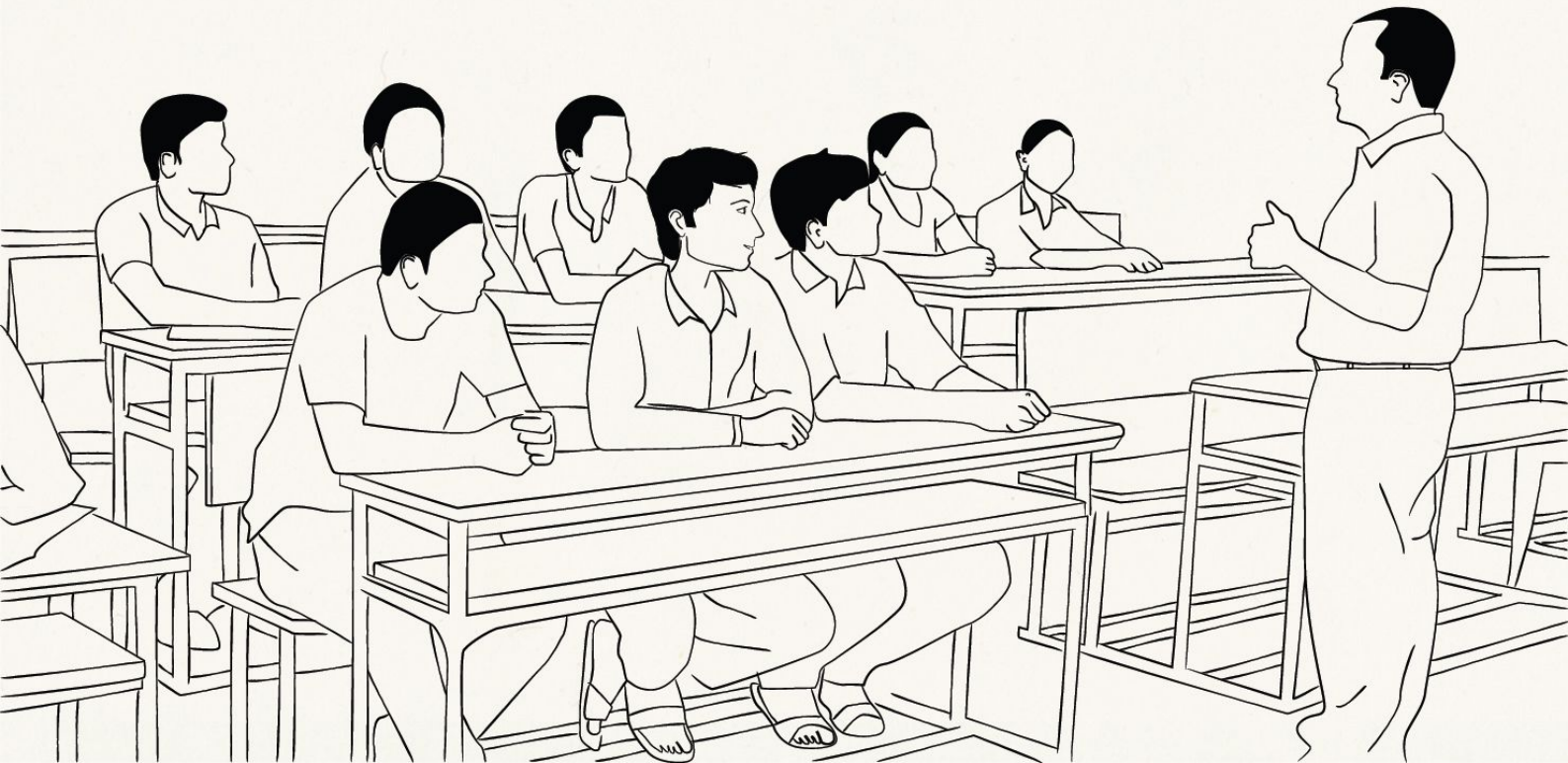
The End

(The journey continues..)

Reminiscence

During NK's college days, he got called out by his Business Administration professor.

“What is this NK, what have you written?”



The question was, what is the definition of business? To which NK had replied, “Business is next to love. It is the creator and preserver of civilization.”

“This boy would grow into a unique business entrepreneur,” said the professor.

