Choice of manhood

Hegemonic masculinity

English version PDF

Azad Foundation

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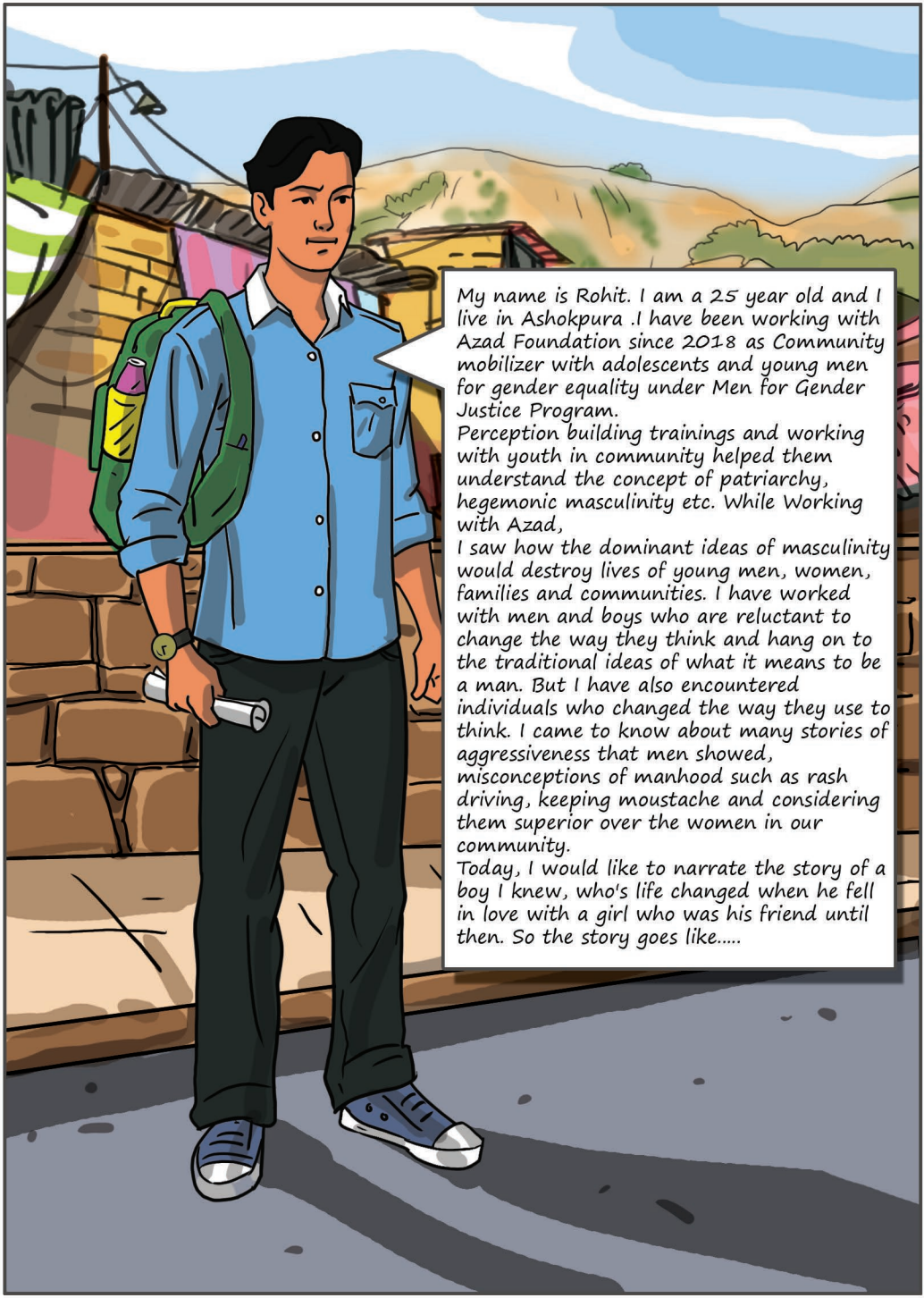
CHOICE OF MANHOOD...

Hegemonic masculinity


My name is Rohit. I am a 25 year old and I live in Ashokpura .I have been working with Azad Foundation since 2018 as Community mobilizer with adolescents and young men for gender equality under Men for Gender Justice Program.
Perception building trainings and working with youth in community helped them understand the concept of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity etc. While Working with Azad,
I saw how the dominant ideas of masculinity would destroy lives of young men, women, families and communities. I have worked with men and boys who are reluctant to change the way they think and hang on to the traditional ideas of what it means to be a man. But I have also encountered individuals who changed the way they use to think. I came to know about many stories of aggressiveness that men showed, misconceptions of manhood such as rash driving, keeping moustache and considering them superior over the women in our community.
Today, I would like to narrate the story of a boy I knew, who's life changed when he fell in love with a girl who was his friend until then. So the story goes like.....

Sunils mother

Sunils father

Sunil

Sujata

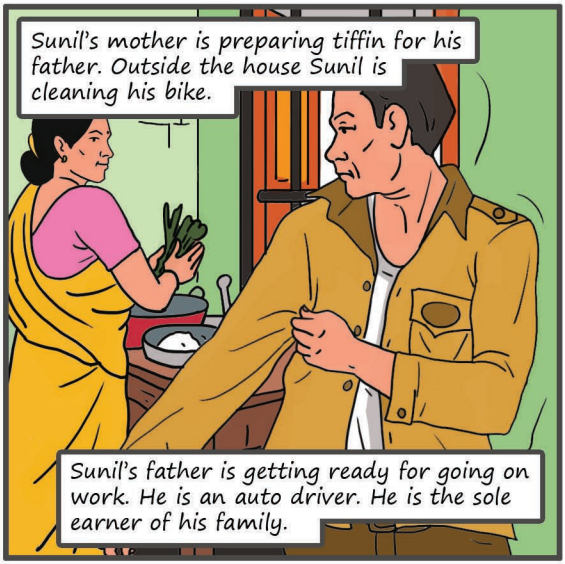
Sunny

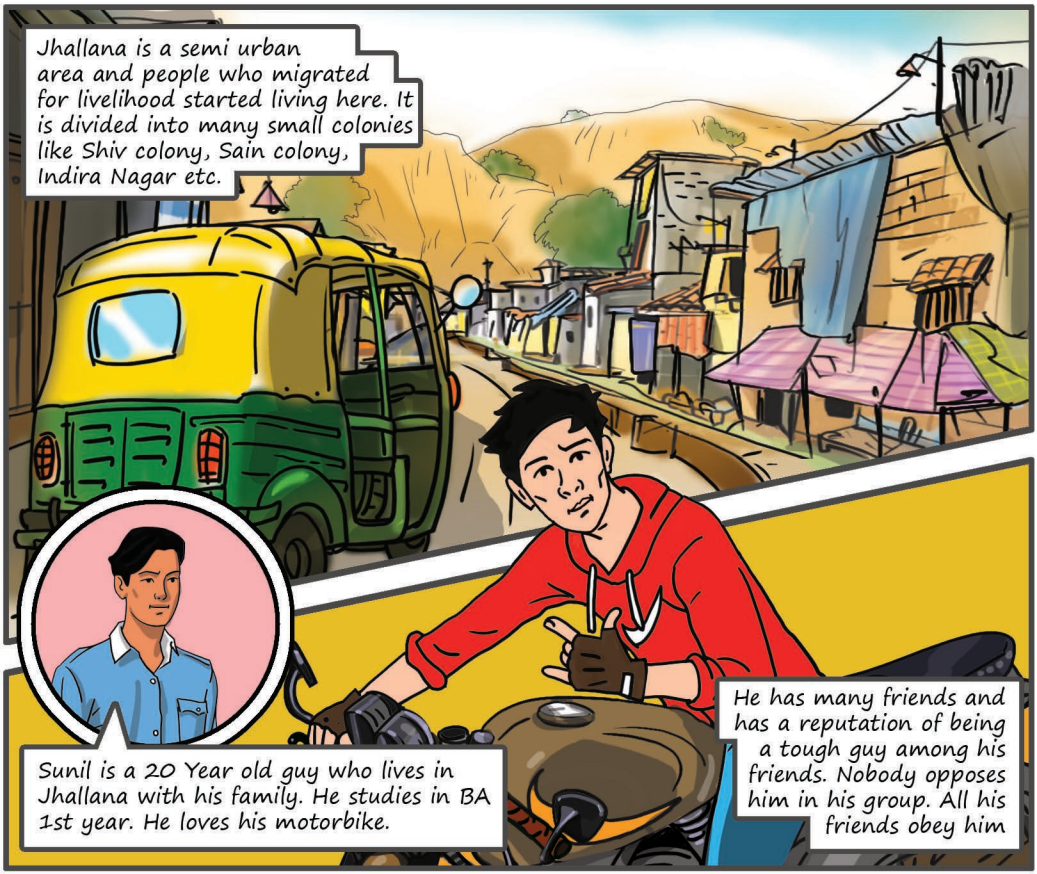
Rahul

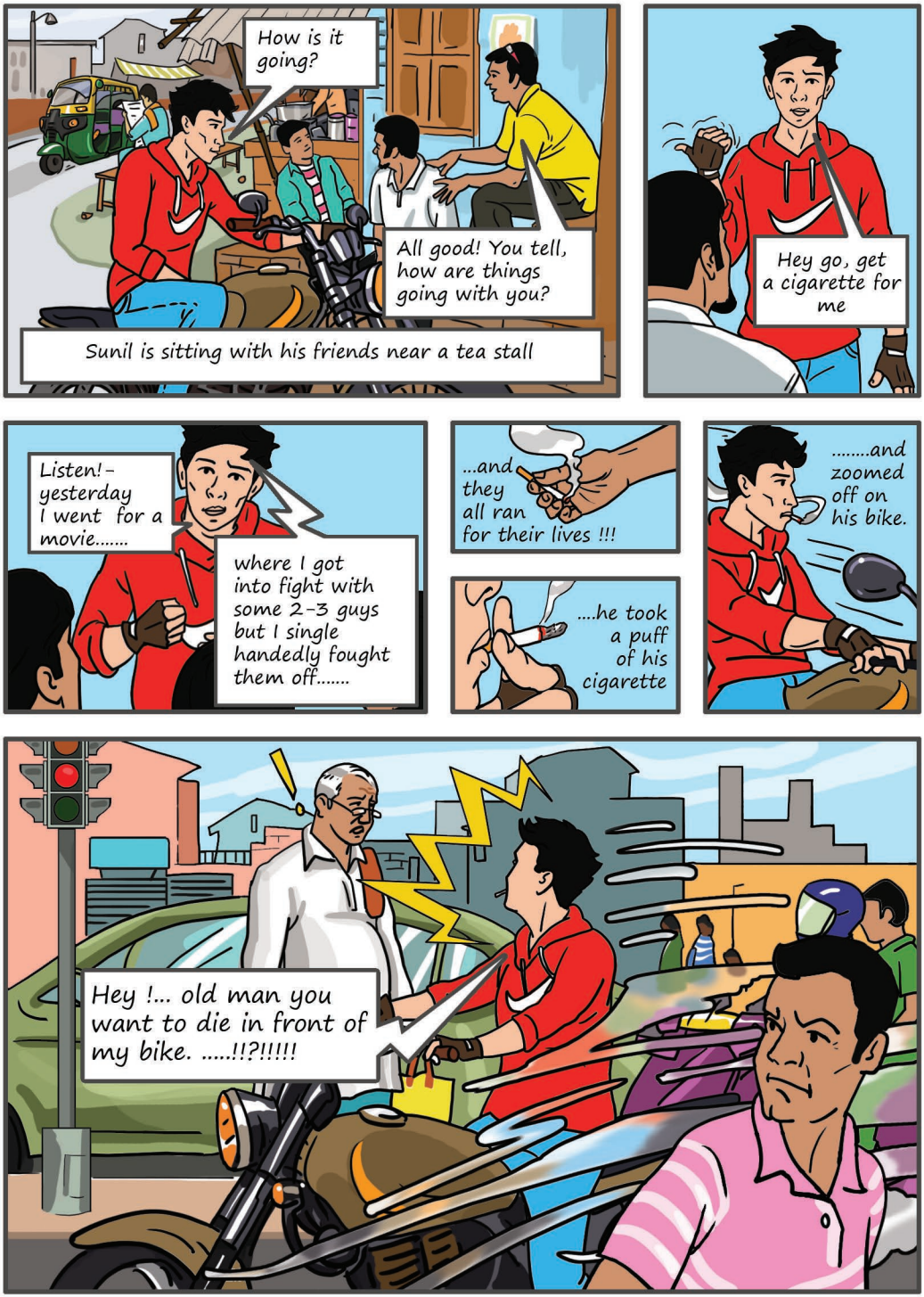
The story 'Choice of manhood' is about an incident that happened in Jhallana area between a girl and boy. They are neighbors and study in the same college. Sunil develops a liking for his friend Sujata, but Sujata doesn't seem to have the same feelings for Sunil.

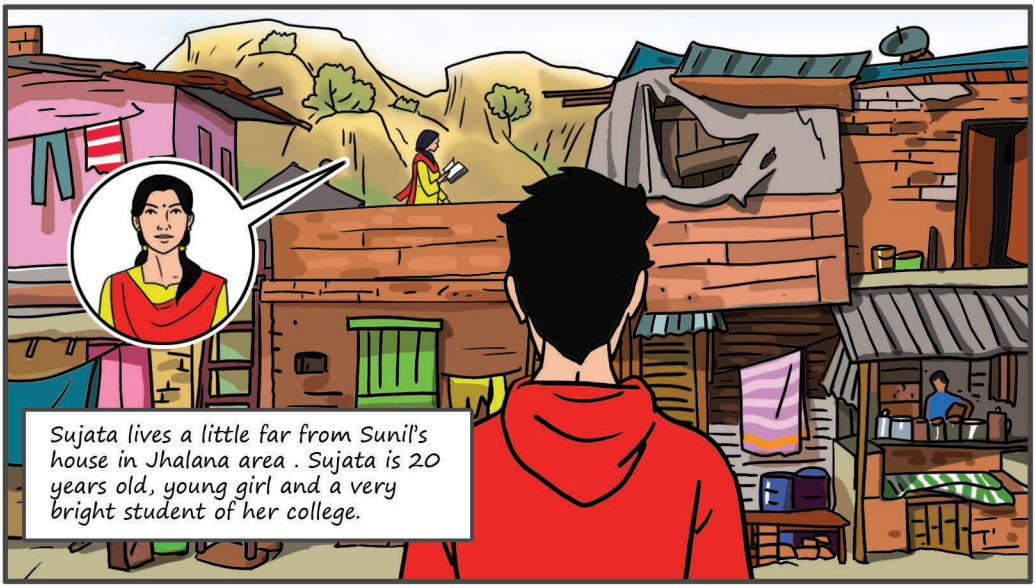
How does Sunil navigate this apparent rejection? What advices from his peer group guide his actions? This story will explore how the ideas of what it means to be a real man effects the lives of men and the people around them.

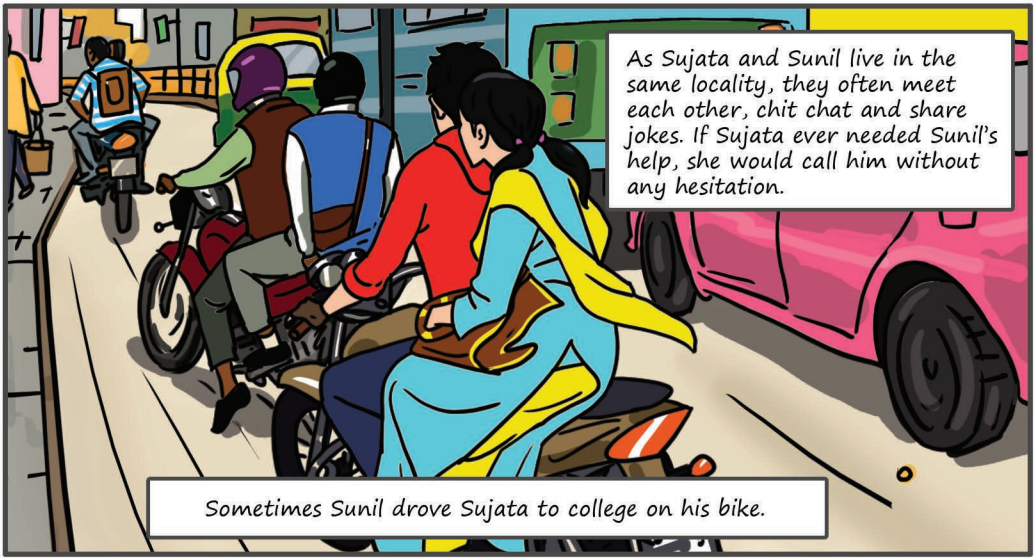
It's around 9 in the morning


Sunil's mother is preparing tiffin for his father. Outside the house Sunil is cleaning his bike.
Sunil's father is getting ready for going on work. He is an auto driver. He is the sole earner of his family.


Jhallana is a semi urban area and people who migrated for livelihood started living here. It is divided into many small colonies like Shiv colony, Sain colony, Indira Nagar etc.
Sunil is a 20 Year old guy who lives in Jhallana with his family. He studies in BA 1st year. He loves his motorbike.
He has many friends and has a reputation of being a tough guy among his friends. Nobody opposes him in his group. All his friends obey him


How is it going?
All good! You tell, how are things going with you?
Sunil is sitting with his friends near a tea stall
Hey go, get a cigarette for me
Listen!- yesterday I went for a movie.....
where I got into fight with some 2-3 guys but I single handedly fought them off.....
...and they all ran for their lives !!!
....he took a puff of his cigarette
.....and zoomed off on his bike.
Hey !... old man you want to die in front of my bike. .....!!?!!!!!

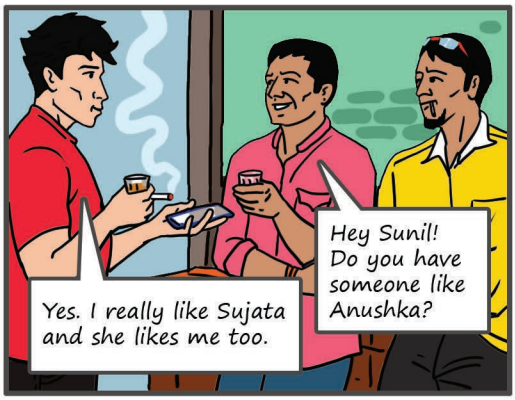

Sujata lives a little far from Sunil's house in Jhalana area . Sujata is 20 years old, young girl and a very bright student of her college.


As Sujata and Sunil live in the same locality, they often meet each other, chit chat and share jokes. If Sujata ever needed Sunil's help, she would call him without any hesitation.
Sometimes Sunil drove Sujata to college on his bike.

They share a good friendship

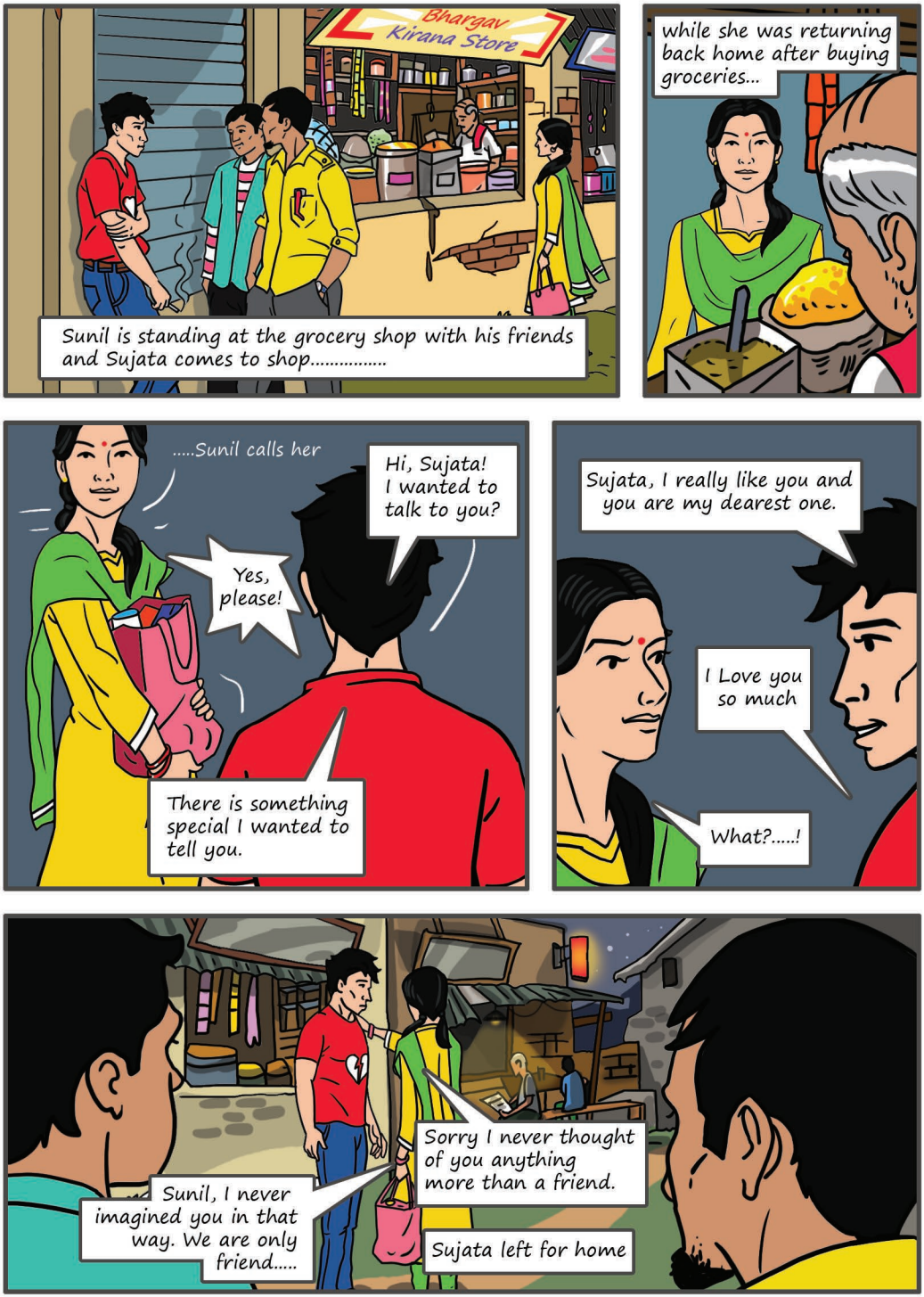
....both often used to chat on WhatsApp

Yes absolutely, they look sexy together. We don't have anybody, only Sunil can have a girlfriend.
Hey! Don't you think Virat and Anushka look so amazing together?
an usual evening at the tea stall

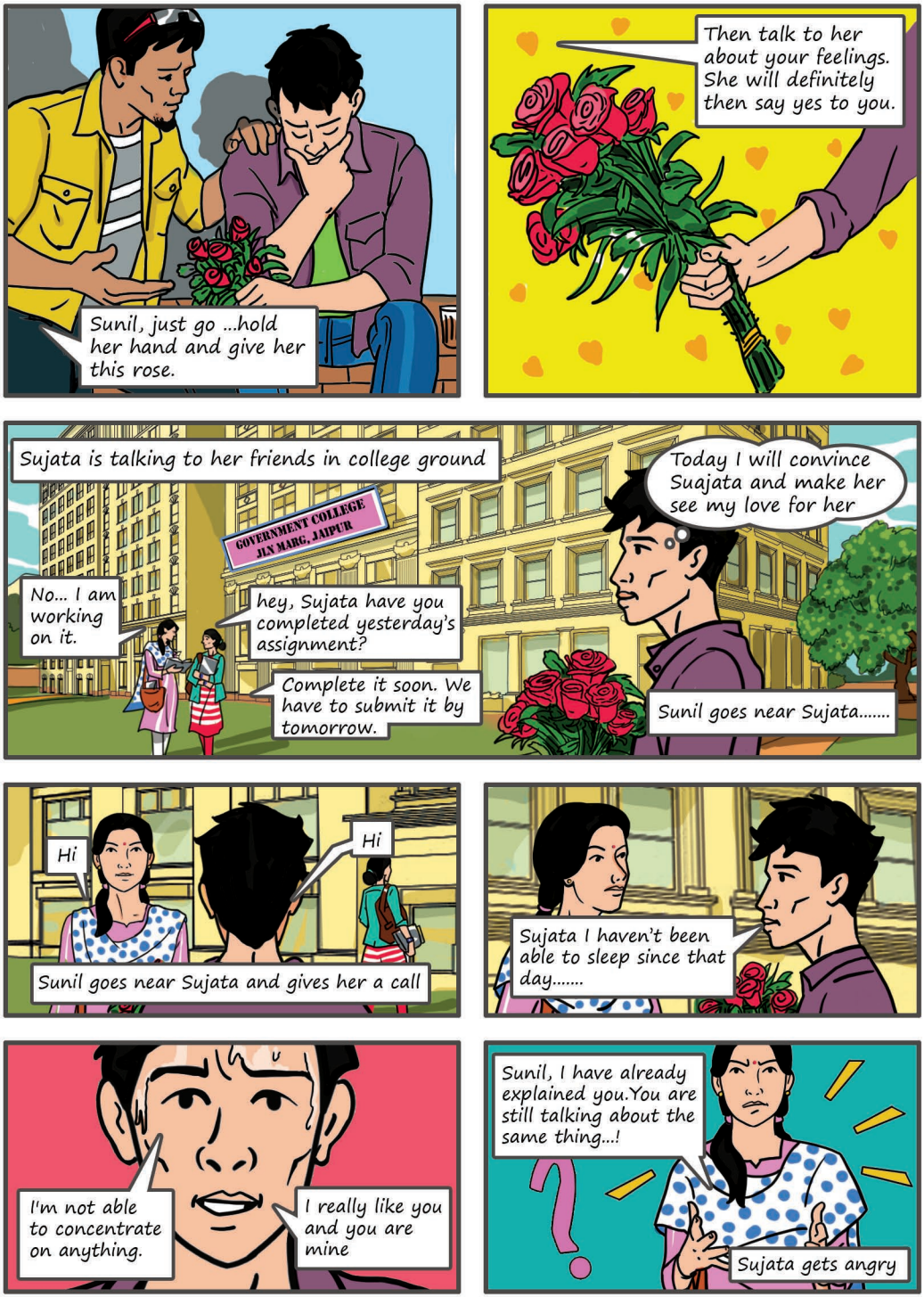

Hey Sunil! Do you have someone like Anushka?
Yes. I really like Sujata and she likes me too.

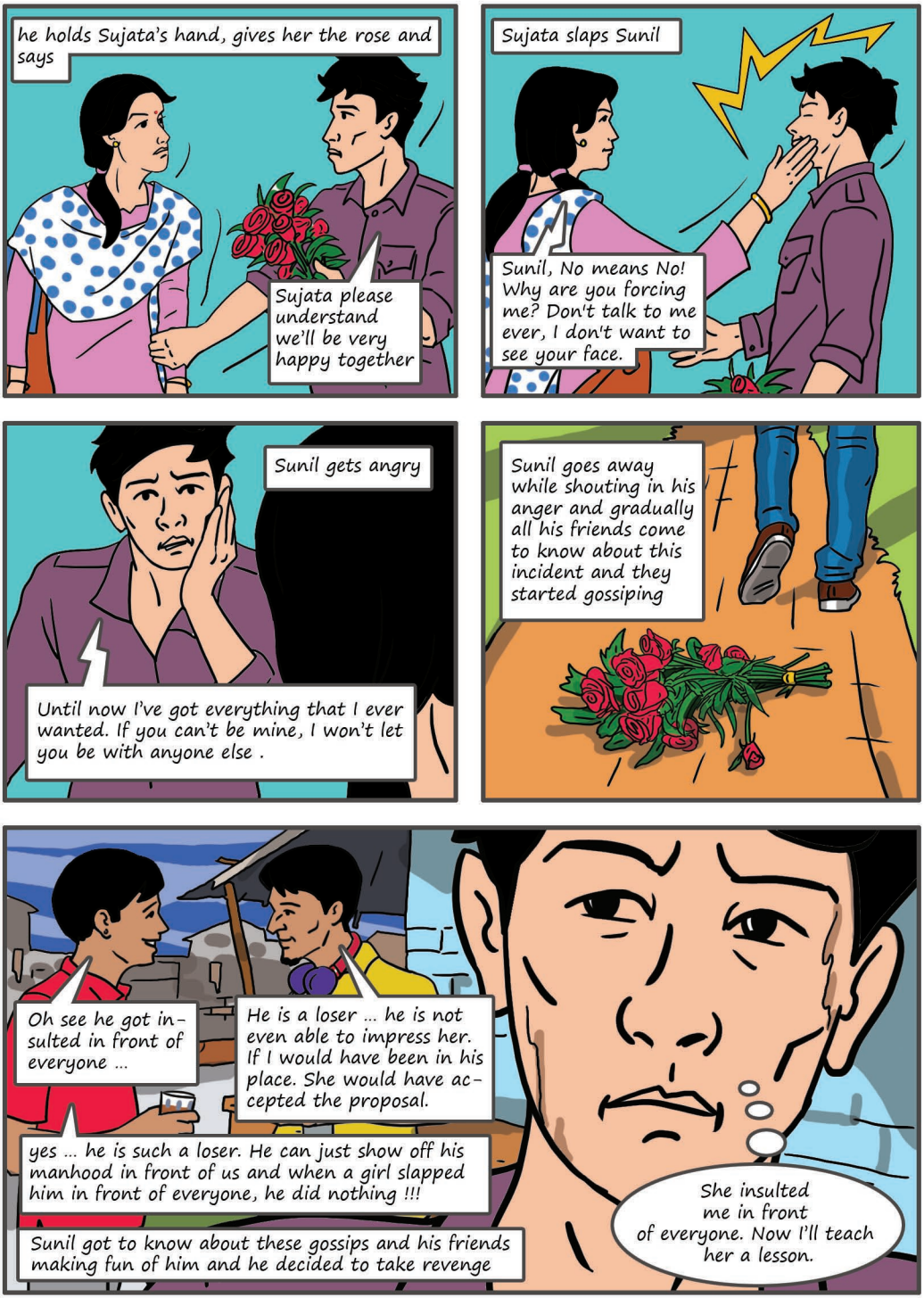
Great! Even you guys will look good together. You should confess your feelings to her. You will have to propose her.

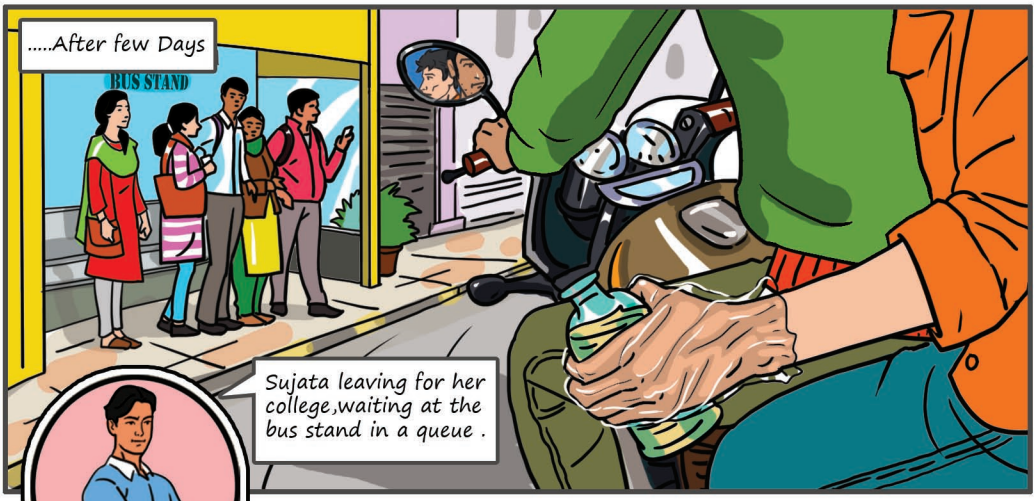
Sunil is dreaming about Sujata


Bhargav Kirana Store
Sunil is standing at the grocery shop with his friends and Sujata comes to shop.....
while she was returning back home after buying groceries...
.....Sunil calls her
Hi, Sujata! I wanted to talk to you?
Yes, please!
There is something special I wanted to tell you.
Sujata, I really like you and you are my dearest one.
I Love you so much
What?.....!
Sunil, I never imagined you in that way. We are only friend.....
Sorry I never thought of you anything more than a friend.
Sujata left for home

Heartbroken Sunil's phone is ringing and he is rejecting all phone calls. He does not wish to meet anyone.

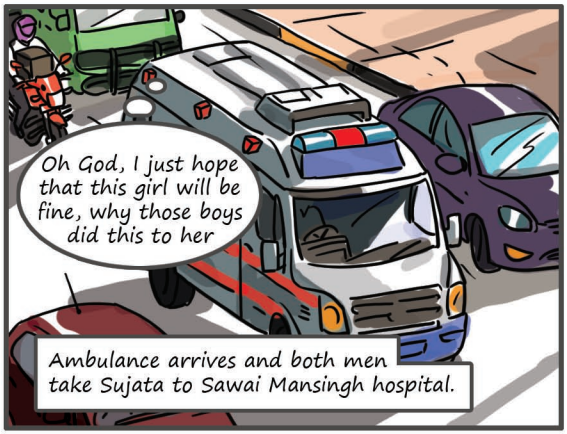

Sunil, just go ...hold her hand and give her this rose.
Then talk to her about your feelings. She will definitely then say yes to you.
Sujata is talking to her friends in college ground
GOVERNMENT COLLEGE JLN MARG, JAIPUR
Today I will convince Suajata and make her see my love for her
No... I am working on it.
hey, Sujata have you completed yesterday's assignment?
Complete it soon. We have to submit it by tomorrow.
Sunil goes near Sujata.....
Hi
Hi
Sunil goes near Sujata and gives her a call
Sujata I haven't been able to sleep since that day.....
I'm not able to concentrate on anything.
I really like you and you are mine
Sunil, I have already explained you.You are still talking about the same thing...!
Sujata gets angry

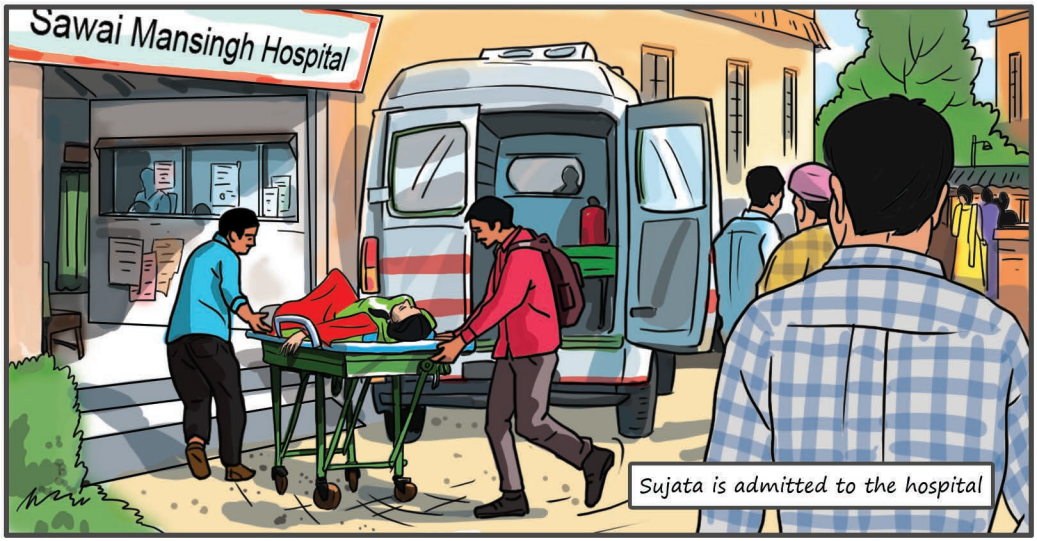

he holds Sujata's hand, gives her the rose and says
Sujata please understand we'll be very happy together
Sujata slaps Sunil
Sunil, No means No! Why are you forcing me? Don't talk to me ever, I don't want to see your face.
Sunil gets angry
Until now I've got everything that I ever wanted. If you can't be mine, I won't let you be with anyone else .
Sunil goes away while shouting in his anger and gradually all his friends come to know about this incident and they started gossiping
Oh see he got insulted in front of everyone ...
He is a loser ... he is not even able to impress her. If I would have been in his place. She would have accepted the proposal.
yes ... he is such a loser. He can just show off his manhood in front of us and when a girl slapped him in front of everyone, he did nothing !!!
Sunil got to know about these gossips and his friends making fun of him and he decided to take revenge
She insulted me in front of everyone. Now I'll teach her a lesson.

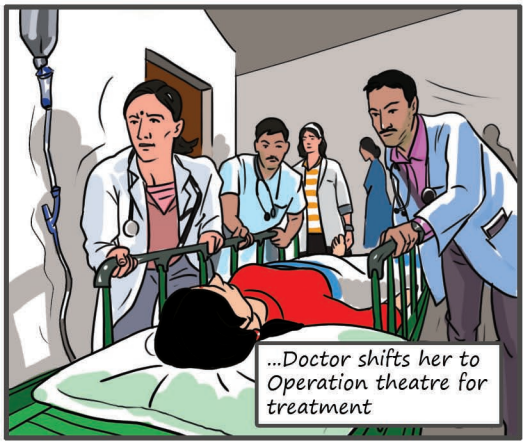

.....After few Days
BUS STAND
Sujata leaving for her college,waiting at the bus stand in a queue .

Sunil arrives at the bus stand - throws acid on her, and flee.... !

I'm calling the ambulance and informing the police.
Oh No, see what has happened
Two men standing in the crowd, watching the incident come forward to help Sujata.

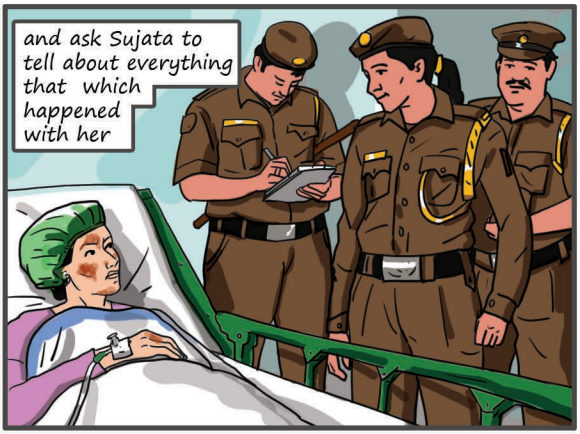

Oh God, I just hope that this girl will be fine, why those boys did this to her
Ambulance arrives and both men take Sujata to Sawai Mansingh hospital.


Sawai Mansingh Hospital
Sujata is admitted to the hospital

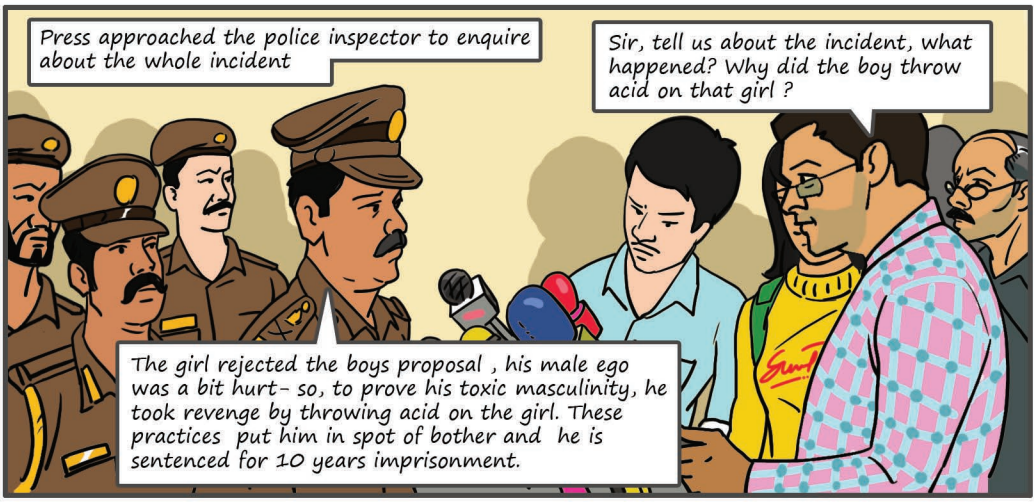

...Doctor shifts her to Operation theatre for treatment

Doctor starts Sujata's treatment immediately

Sawai Mansingh Hospital
Police comes to the hospital to investigate


and ask Sujata to tell about everything that which happened with her

Due to fear , Sunil was hiding from the police in his friend's house...
Police finds Sunil and arrests him, they now were in search for the other two absconding friends
The Judicial Court sentenced him for 10 years imprisonment


Press approached the police inspector to enquire about the whole incident
Sir, tell us about the incident, what happened? Why did the boy throw acid on that girl ?
The girl rejected the boys proposal , his male ego was a bit hurt- so, to prove his toxic masculinity, he took revenge by throwing acid on the girl. These practices put him in spot of bother and he is sentenced for 10 years imprisonment.

It was so unfortunate ! Sunil took such a big step, for such a small matter
It takes years to earn respect and Sunil Spoiled his whole life and also his parents are not able to face anyone and lost the respect
People in the community are talking about the incident.

Is there anything that we haven't done for my child? I never thought that a day would come when we would not be able to show our faces to anyone.

One year later
Sunil is sitting in the jail and he is thinking about the past events and feeling guilty for his act
My aggression and wrong sense of manhood has got me here. I have ruined the life of my parents and because of me they have to listen to the comments of people. I should have respectfully accepted the decision of Sujata instead of committing this crime.

Sujata has recovered and happily living her life
After few days Sujata overcame this trauma and she continues with her further studies . She is now a graduate working for a bank as an executive, happily living her life .

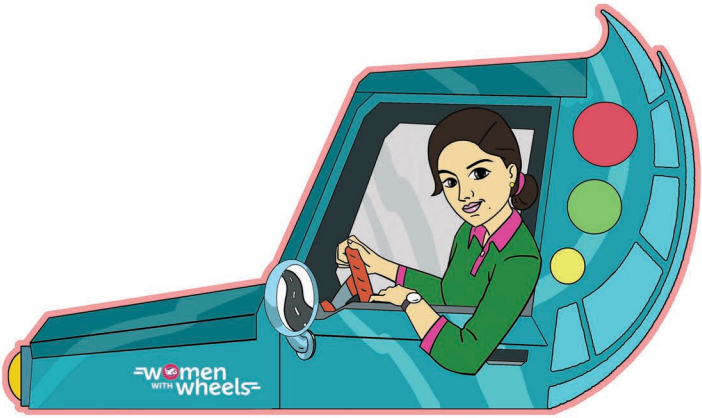
Debriefing note:

There are various socially constructed definitions of what it means to be a man, and these definitions change over time and from place to place. 'Masculinities' is used to describe these various social constructs of what it means to be a man. Generally, most of these notions promote, reward and encourage men for being aggressive, controlling over women, taking unnecessary risks and a host of other unhealthy behaviors. Such notions mean that men grow up feeling entitled to being served and obeyed. While this may not seem like something that should worry men, but Sunil's story is an example of how it can destroy the lives of men and the people around them. Notions of masculinities are often created by films and popular culture. We grow up listening to music, films and learn a lot from them. Unfortunately, many of the toxic definitions of being a man are also something we internalize from the movies we watch and the content we consume over years.Imagine if movies did not glorify stalking as true love, don't you think Sunil could have acted differently? It is surprisingly common, that most of the actions, interests and inclinations of adolescent Boys are shaped by their understanding of what it means to be a man. Young boys grow up wanting to leave an impression of being intimidating and powerful. Showing weakness, being vulnerable or being kind are not seen as the traits of a man.

There are a lot of lessons that we can learn from Sunil's story. Sunil tries to earn the respect of his friends by appearing intimidating. He treats them like trash and smokes cigarettes to look cool in front of them. Sunil's ego is hurt when he gets to know that Sujata doesn't love him back. Sunil cannot handle rejection and he resorts to violence to take revenge. All this while, his friends enable his behavior. From Sunil's story, we can learn that the ability to accept and move on from rejection is a quality that good men should have. Sunil feels hurt by Sujata's rejection and makes her uncomfortable by proposing to her multiple times.

We should respect the decisionsand choices of women and girls. It is a common myth that a girl's no means yes (ladki ki naa main haanhotihai"). Well, it's time to dump that, and all other regressive thoughts along with it. This is an example of stalking and harassment, and not 'true love' as many movies may portray it to be. Being a good man is therefore about being kind to others. It is about respecting the decisions and choices of women. A good man should use his courage to stand up and confront people like Sunil instead of enabling their behavior. A good man should be comfortable talking about their problems and seeking help from people, rather than always trying to appear strong and intimidating.
Take a moment and reflect on how you would do things differently than Sunil or his friends if you were in their place?

Young men receive many harmful, sometimes contradictory messages on what it means to "be a man." If young men don't conform to these messages of masculinity, that does not mean they are "less than" or not good enough. Young men can and should work to redefine more positive and more inclusive forms of masculinity. Hegemonic and Toxic masculinity is not just a men's issue, its consequences are pervasive and affect everyone, including girls and women. Boys and men should make choices about their behavior that can either perpetuate a culture of toxic masculinity or disrupt it.



About Azad Foundation :

We are a professional feminist organization working across social and religious divides to enable resource Poor women to themselves by engaging them in viable non-traditional livelihood options.

We are committed to breaking patriarchal boundaries and structures so that the women can exercise control over their lives and live a life of dignity.

We do this through transformative capacity building programs around the self and the skills needed for NTL, based on adult learning principles.We engage with both men and women in their communities so that both can construct a safe and supportive space for their development.

About the project :

Azad Foundation believes that engaging with young men. It is an integral part of the process for empowerment of women on their journey to access non-traditional livelihoods with dignity and reclaim control over their own lives.

Men for Gender Justice is a program of Azad foundation , work with young men and boys towards enabling them to build their Perspectives on patriarchy, gender based violence, masculinities facilitate men to change their behavior for gender justice and support women to pursue non-traditional livelihoods with dignity. Engagement of Men in unpaid care work also enable women to work outside home and dedicate more time to education and income generation activities.

Azad Foundation engages with young boys between age of 14-20 by organizing them through community youth clubs, street plays, campaigns and sports sessions. Azad's approach of peer groups helps support each other to take action against gender based discrimination in family and community.

My commitment / Action for Gender Equality

Individual/family level

1. .....

2. .....

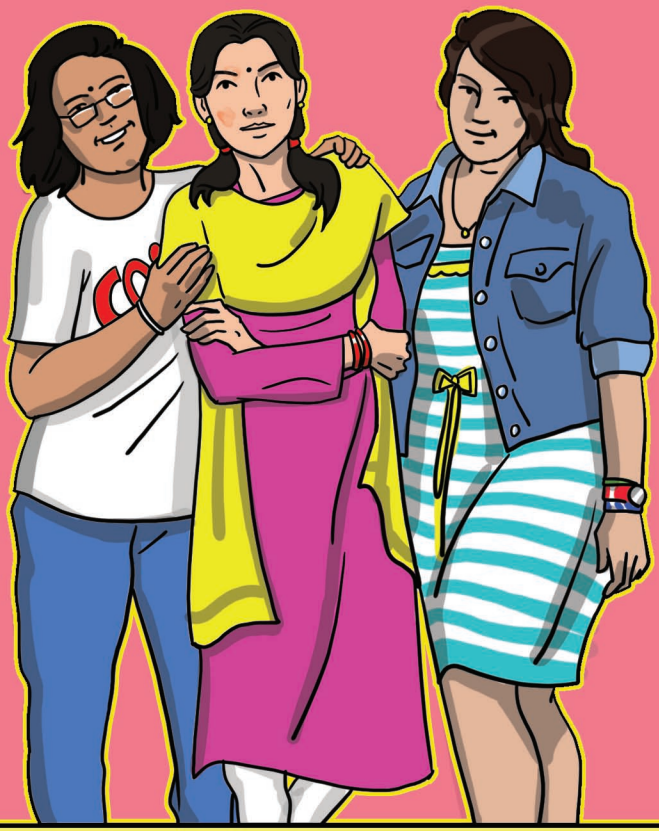
3. .....

Community level:

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....



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