

Unspoken Changes of Miscarriage

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UG 21**



Final Design Project

Title

**Unspoken Changes Of
Miscarriage**

Student

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Year

2024



the design village

**BACHELORS IN
DESIGN**

FASHION AND TEXTILE DESIGN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to The Design Village, Noida, for granting me the opportunity to explore an impactful and unspoken project. My sincere thanks go to my mentor, Ms. Meghna Menon, whose unwavering guidance, constructive feedback, and insightful direction have been invaluable throughout my journey. I am also deeply appreciative of our coordinator, Ms. Abir, for her encouragement and motivation, which pushed me to strive for excellence.

This project would not have been possible without the openness and transparency of the gynaecologists, psychologists, and interviewees who shared their experiences. Their contributions have deepened my understanding of the subject, allowing me to explore my topic with greater clarity and insight. I am especially grateful to my friends and family, whose support and belief in my vision kept me grounded and focused.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of writers, researchers, and academics in textile art, psychology, and maternal health. Their insights provided a strong foundation and significantly shaped the understanding reflected in this project.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to raise awareness among pregnant women and the general public about the physical changes post miscarriage. By visually representing these often-unspoken transitions, the textile installation hopes to build empathy and compassion for a solitary experience.

This project focuses on the often-overlooked physical changes women experience after miscarriage. Through textile installation, it aims to shed light on these unspoken transformations, fostering empathy and understanding. By making the physical journey visible, the work seeks to support women and open conversations around this deeply personal yet widely unaddressed topic.

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DOMAIN



UNSPOKEN CHANGES OF MISCARRIAGE

Representing miscarriage
through textiles that showcase
the physical changes a women
experience post-miscarriage.

02

MISCARRIAGE

TYPES OF PREGNANCY LOSS

Abortion

An abortion is the **termination of a pregnancy through a medical procedure**. There are chemical and surgical options for abortion.





Miscarriage

A miscarriage is the **loss of a foetus before 20 weeks of pregnancy**. It's a natural event that can occur in about 20% of early pregnancies.

Stillbirth

A stillbirth is the **loss of a foetus after 20 weeks of pregnancy**. Most still births happen in the uterus, and providers can often diagnose the loss before the due date.





WHAT IS A MISCARRIAGE?

A Miscarriage

(also called a spontaneous abortion)
is the unexpected ending of a pregnancy
in the first 20 weeks of gestation.

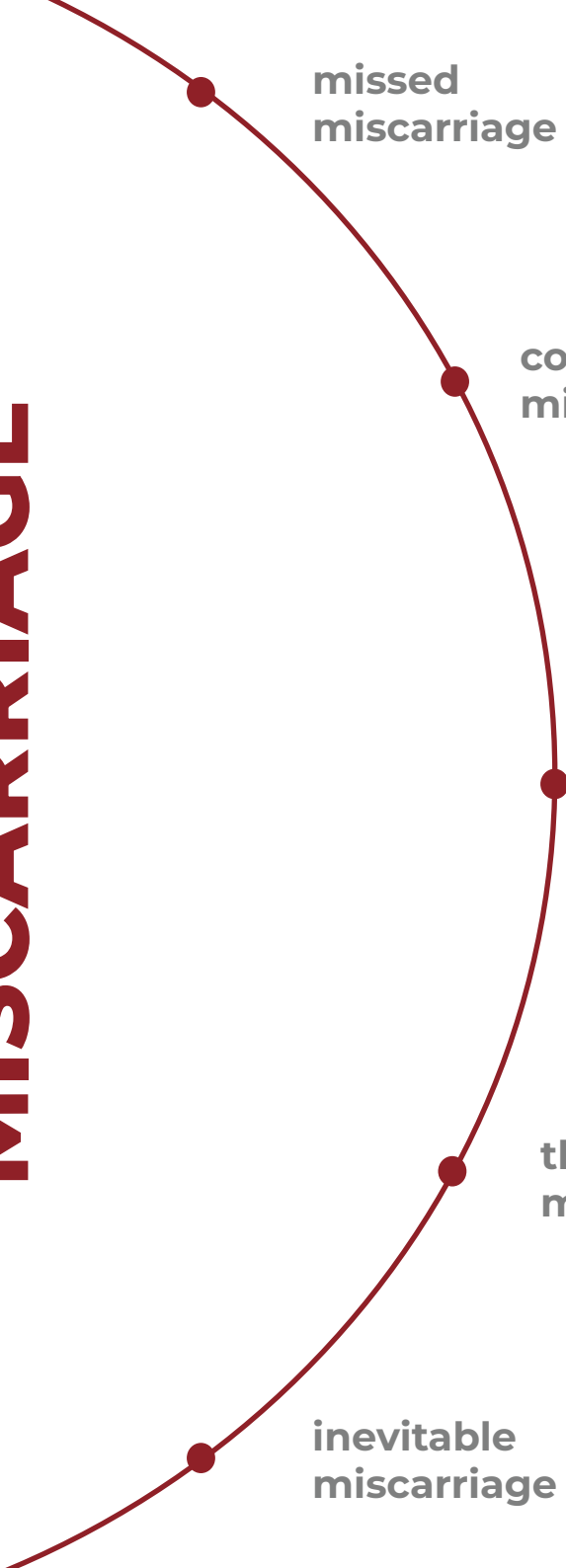
WHY MISCARRIAGE?

I was inspired by Nikhita Rajesh Andi, an MA Textile Design graduate from UAL, whose work uses textile installation to de-stigmatize mental health conversations.

Her innovative approach motivated me to address a similarly unspoken social issue. Through research, I discovered that miscarriage remains a sensitive and largely taboo subject in India. Recognizing the need for open dialogue, I chose to focus on the physical changes women experience post-miscarriage, an often-overlooked aspect.

My project seeks to visualize these transformations through textiles, fostering empathy and understanding for women navigating this silent journey.

TYPES OF MISCARRIAGE



missed
miscarriage

complete
miscarriage

recurrent
miscarriage

threatened
miscarriage

inevitable
miscarriage

missed miscarriage

Also known as a silent miscarriage. This occurs when the pregnancy fails but there's no bleeding or other signs.

complete miscarriage

All pregnancy tissue is expelled, and the uterus is empty, usually before the 12th week of pregnancy.

recurrent miscarriage

A woman experiences consecutive loss of three or more pregnancies during the first trimester.

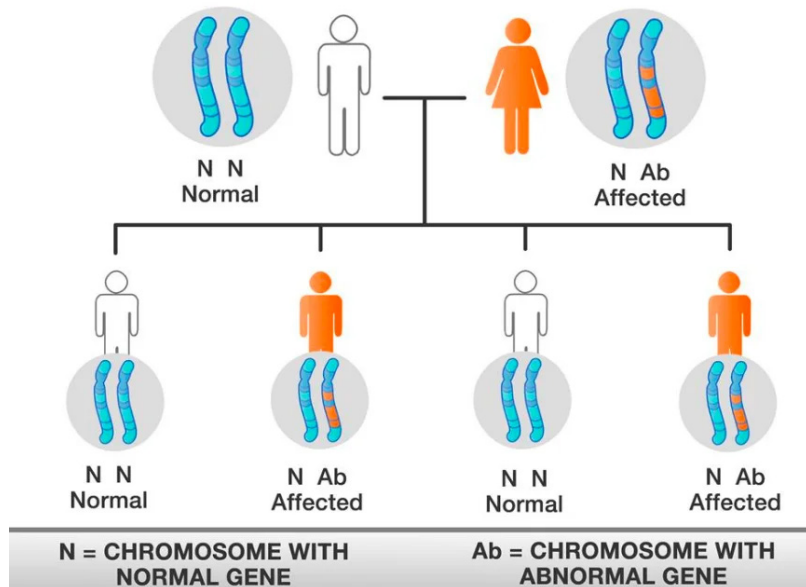
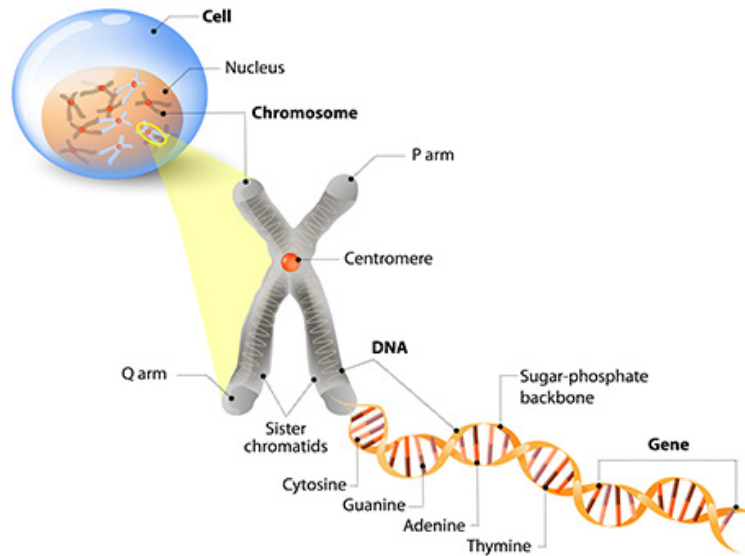
threatened miscarriage

Symptoms like bleeding occur, but the cervix remains closed, and the pregnancy may continue.

inevitable miscarriage

Bleeding and cramping occur with an open cervix, indicating that pregnancy loss is unavoidable.

CAUSES OF MISCARRIAGE



50%

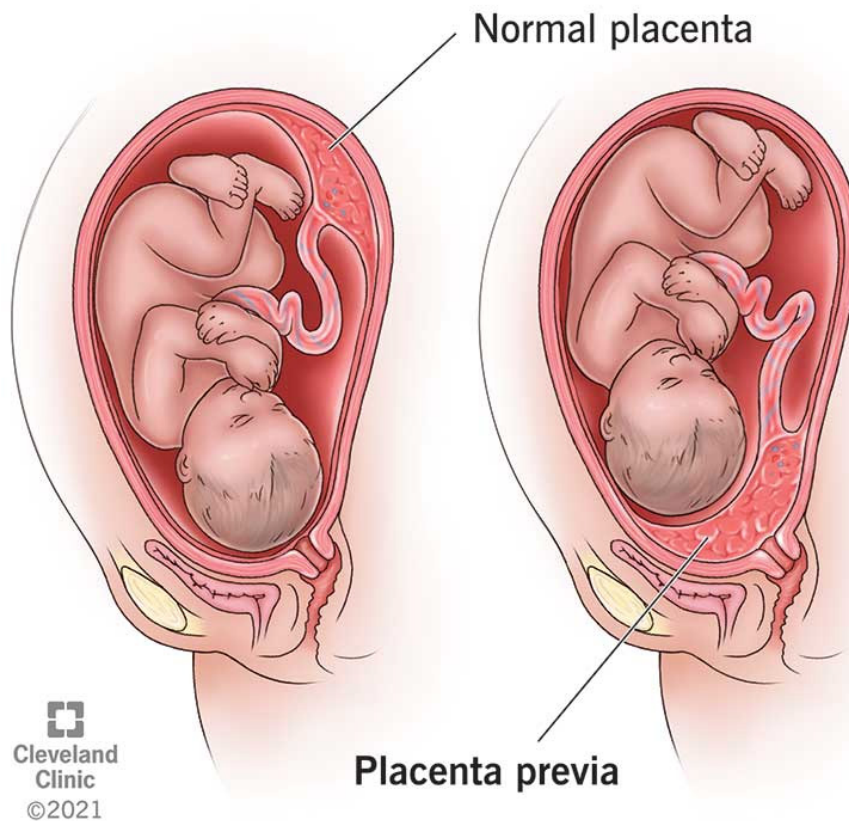
of first trimester losses
are caused by

Chromosomal Abnormalities

⋮

a genetic disorder that
occurs when there's a
change in a person's
chromosomes.

**Chromosomes are part
of DNA cells that con-
tain genes.**

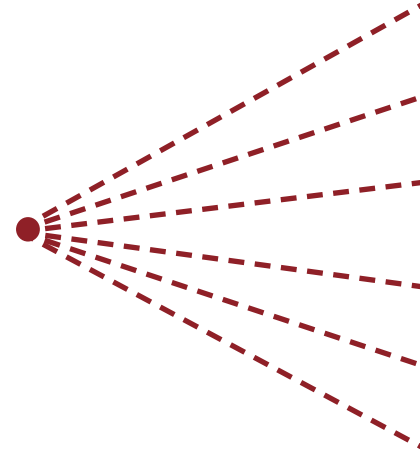


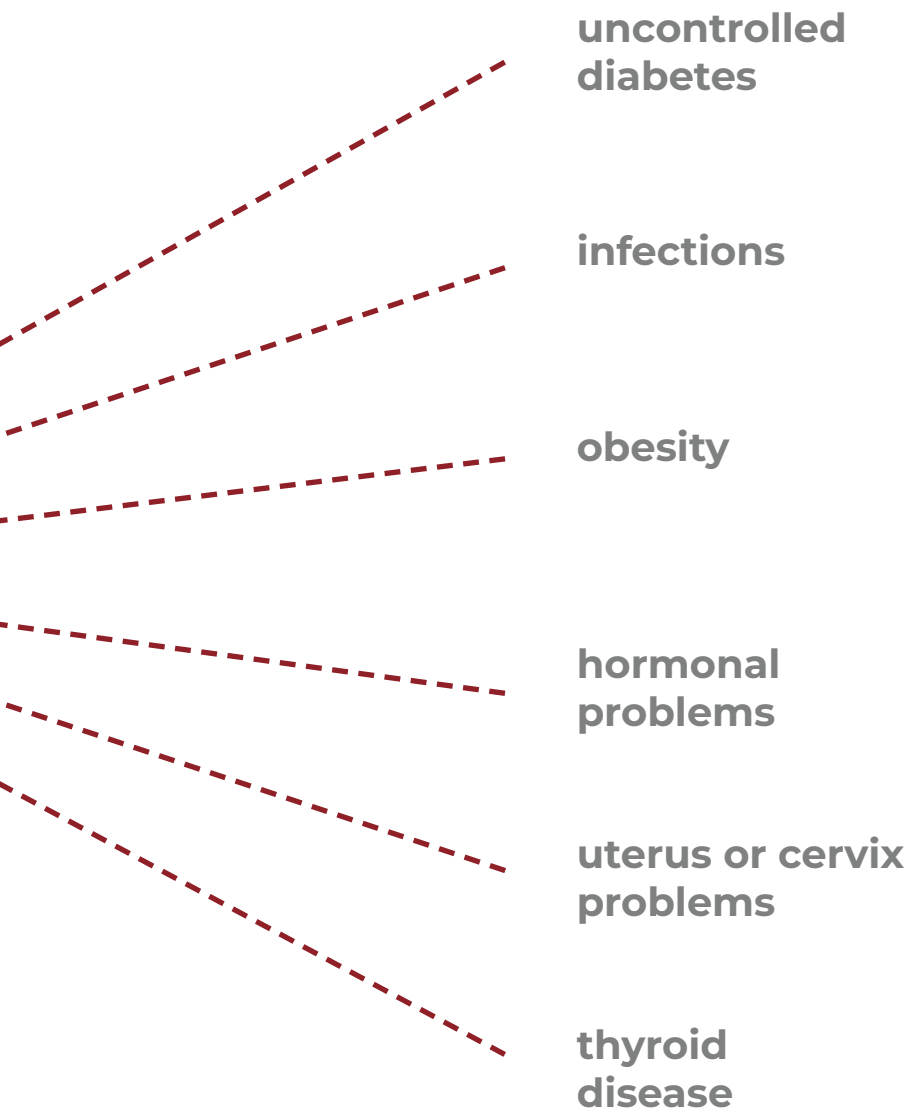
The placenta is the organ linking the blood supply to the baby's. If there's a **problem with the development of the placenta**, it can lead to a miscarriage.

Placenta Problem

Placental abruption is a serious condition in which the **placenta starts to come away from the inside of the womb wall**. It can cause stomach pain, bleeding from the vagina, and frequent contractions.

Maternal Health Conditions





**WHY SHOULD WE
DISCUSS
ABOUT THE CHANGES
ASSOCIATED
WITH MISCARRIAGE?**

Discussing the changes associated with miscarriage is
ESSENTIAL TO BREAK THE STIGMA AND FOSTER UNDERSTANDING.

Miscarriage impacts women both physically and emotionally, but these experiences are often
FACED IN SILENCE DUE TO SOCIETAL TABOOS.

By addressing these changes openly, we can
PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT, PROMOTE EMPATHY, AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES WOMEN ENDURE.

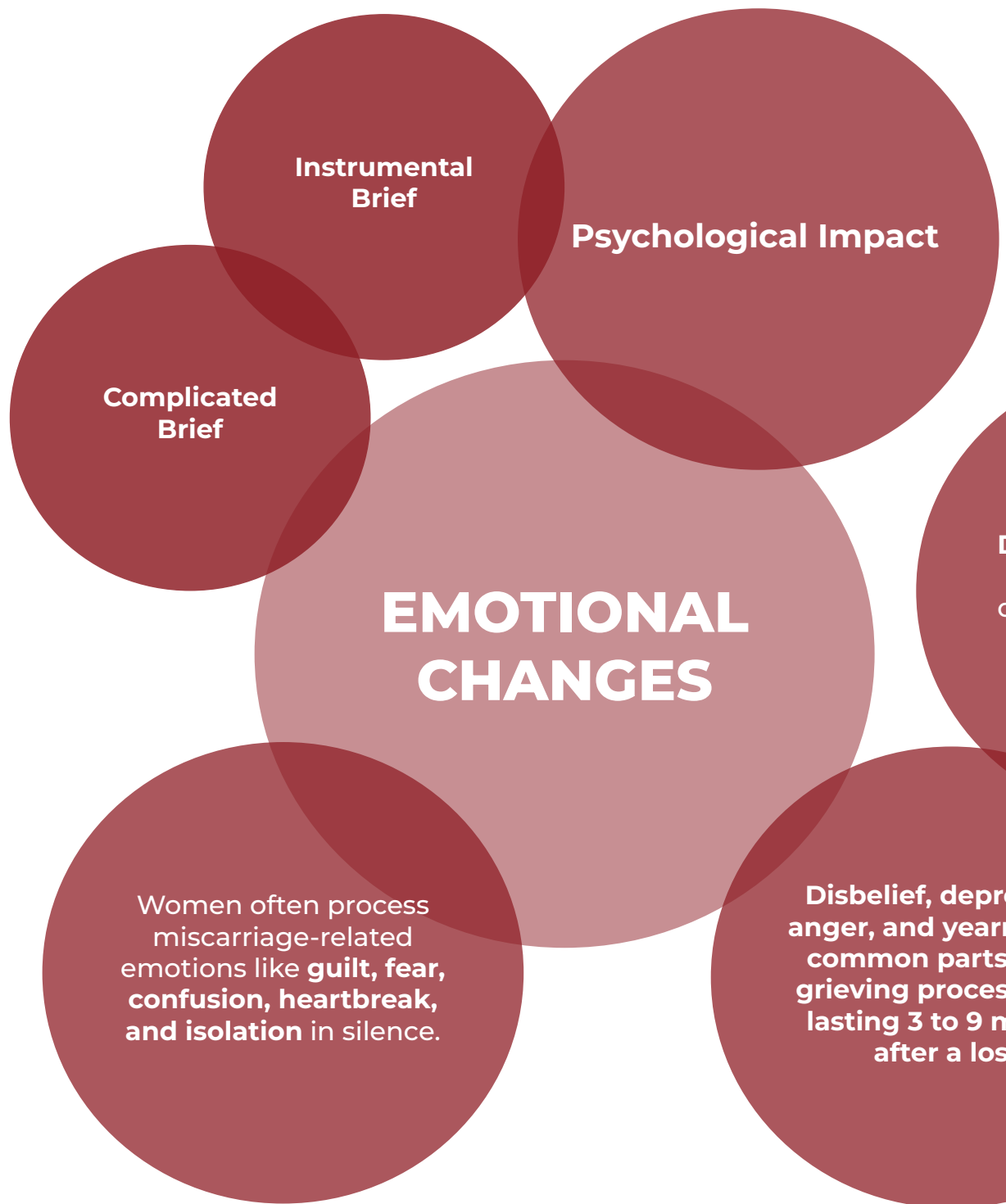
This dialogue helps normalize conversations around miscarriage,
CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE WOMEN FEEL SEEN, HEARD, AND VALIDATED IN THEIR JOURNEYS.





03

CHANGES



Depression and anxiety rates among those who have had a pregnancy loss are shocking.

One year after a loss, 35% of women are clinically depressed.

Three years after the loss, 15% of women are still in depression.

Depression and bipolar disorder become evident after a miscarriage in **43% of women.**

Even after having a healthy child, women who miscarry have a higher risk of **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)**

Depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder are often evident within months of the loss.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Instrumental Grief

It focuses on action and problem solving, such as engaging in projects, exercising, or playing an instrument. Men grieving the loss of a baby often experience this form of grief.

Complicated Grief

Is prolonged and intense,
marked by overwhelming emotions
and persistent thoughts
that interfere with daily life.

Women often process miscarriage-related emotions like **guilt, fear, confusion, heart-break, and isolation** in silence.

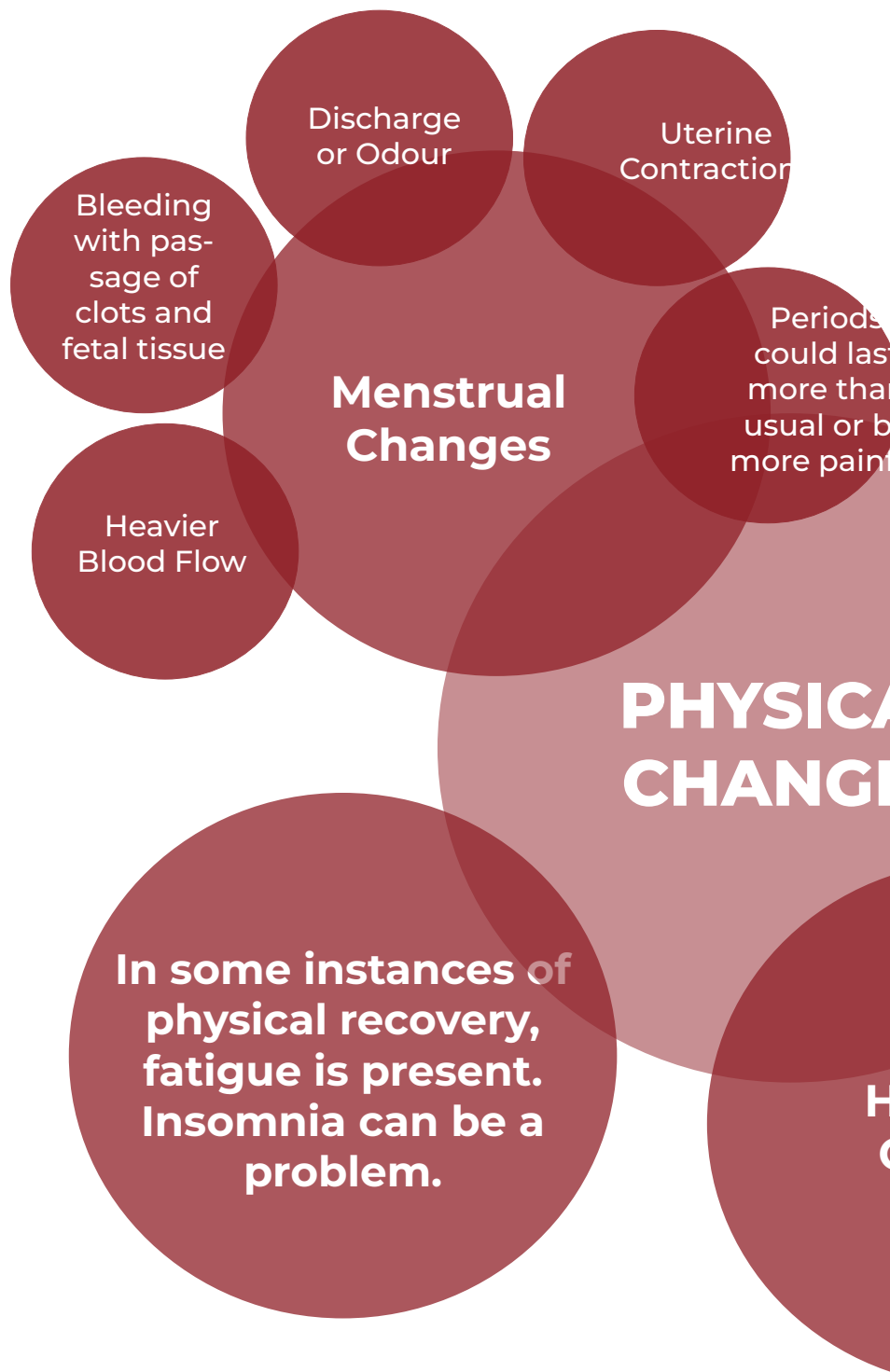
Women often experience intense emotions after a miscarriage, such as guilt, fear, confusion, heartbreak, and isolation. These feelings can stem from self-blame, uncertainty about the future, or the emotional pain of loss. Unfortunately, many women process these emotions silently due to societal stigmas or a lack of supportive environments. This silence can make them feel even more alone in their grief. Understanding and acknowledging these emotions is crucial to providing empathy and creating spaces where women can share their experiences without judgment.

**Depression and bipolar
disorder** become
evident after a miscarriage in
43% of women.

After a miscarriage, 43% of women may experience mental health challenges like depression or bipolar disorder. These conditions are often triggered by a combination of hormonal shifts, emotional pain, and the trauma of pregnancy loss. Depression can involve feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in daily activities, while bipolar disorder may bring extreme mood swings, ranging from deep depression to episodes of heightened energy or irritability. These mental health impacts highlight the need for support and open dialogue after miscarriage.

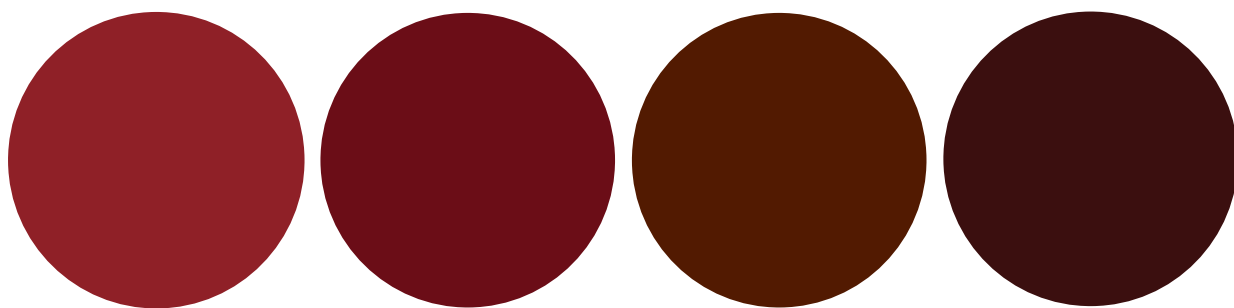
Even after having a healthy child, women who miscarry have a higher risk of
**POSTPARTUM
DEPRESSION (PPD)**

Even after having a healthy child, women who have experienced a miscarriage are at a higher risk of developing postpartum depression (PPD). This is because the emotional impact of the previous loss can linger, amplifying feelings of anxiety, fear, or sadness during and after subsequent pregnancies. The psychological strain of coping with grief while navigating the challenges of a new child can intensify these emotions. Hormonal fluctuations after pregnancy, combined with unresolved grief from the miscarriage, can contribute to a higher likelihood of PPD, making mental health support crucial.





MENSTRUAL CHANGES



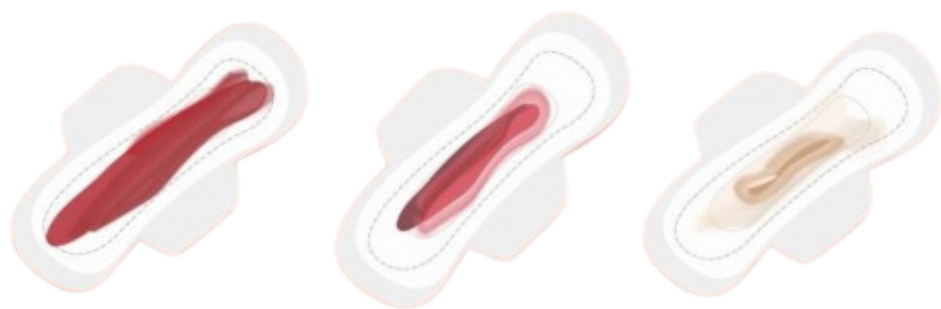
Heavier Blood Flow

During a miscarriage, the uterus expels all tissue, including the thickened uterine lining, placenta, and fetal tissue. The amount of bleeding varies depending on the woman's health, medical history, and the pregnancy stage. Bleeding is often the first sign of miscarriage and can range from bright red to brownish toward the end. It may last from a few days to over two weeks or more.



Bleeding with passage of clots and fetal tissue

Bleeding with clots and fetal tissue usually occurs during a miscarriage, where the uterine lining sheds and contracts to expel the pregnancy tissue, resulting in the passage of blood clots and sometimes recognisable parts of the foetus, often accompanied by cramping pain; this is a natural process where the body is trying to clear the uterine contents after pregnancy loss.



Discharge or Odour

Vaginal discharge is the term for fluid or mucus that comes from the vagina.

After miscarriage, the discharge is dark or bright red for at least three or four days. The flow is heavy and may also pass small clots.

After about a week, discharge is more watery and transitions to a pinkish brown colour. The flow is lighter, and you may not fill pads as quickly.

Finally, after about 10 to 14 days, discharge changes to a creamy, yellowish-white colour.



Uterine Contractions

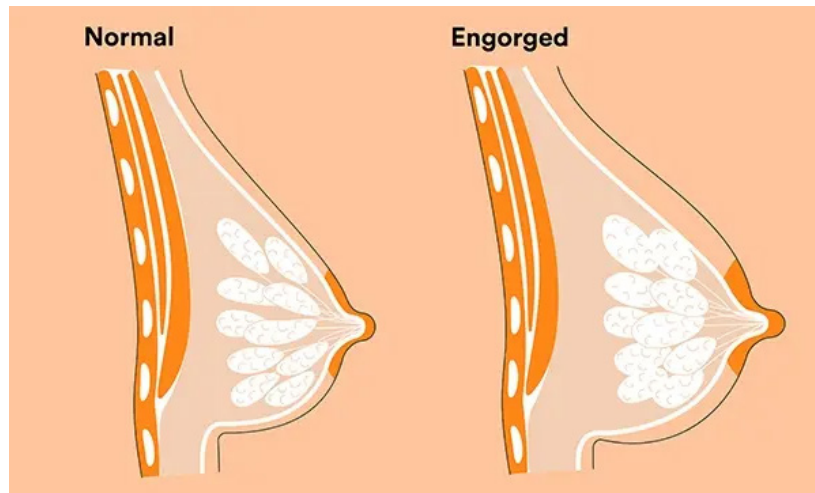
Uterine contractions are a common symptom after a miscarriage and are usually caused by the uterus contracting to push out its contents. These contractions can feel like muscle cramps or period-like cramps and can be very painful.

BREAST DISCOMFORT



Breast Discomfort

Breast discomfort after a miscarriage is common and may include tenderness, swelling, hardness, and pain due to gradually decreasing pregnancy hormones. Some women might also experience minor milk production. The severity of discomfort often depends on how far along the pregnancy was.



Engorgement

Breast engorgement can occur 2–5 days after a miscarriage, characterized by swollen, painful, and hard breasts. This discomfort may last up to 14 days, with milk leakage and tenderness peaking around the first week. Engorgement helps suppress milk production and typically resolves on its own. If severe, breasts may feel hard, warm, and lumpy. Proper management can prevent unnecessary pain.



Leaking Milk

Milk leakage after a miscarriage is common due to hormonal shifts, lasting about 2–3 weeks as milk production ceases. Breasts may feel sore, swollen, and tight, with potential pressure and fullness. In rare cases, milk glands can become infected, causing fever and extreme tenderness, requiring antibiotic treatment.

HORMONAL CHANGES

After a miscarriage, sudden drops in estrogen and progesterone levels can trigger mood swings, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and insomnia. The stress hormone cortisol may also rise, intensifying anxiety and keeping the body in a constant state of tension, making relaxation difficult.

that is - IUD (Intra uterine
third trimester

a person who had first pre
d be more devastating than t
nd pregnancy.

Survival of a baby is good af
eks.

ynes empathise with the
family.

depends on the person in ha
e they cope up with the mis

Death)

04

pregnancy

the

ter 28

husband)

so much

average.

INTERVIEWS

questionnaire for psychologist and gynaecologist

Emotional Changes

Common feelings/emotions mothers experience after a miscarriage.

How do the emotional experiences vary based on the stage of pregnancy at the time of miscarriage?

How do mothers typically cope with the grief and loss associated with a miscarriage?

Are there any rituals or practices that mothers might find comforting after a miscarriage?

Whom do mothers blame for their miscarriages?

What symbolic elements or colours are often associated with healing from loss, and how might these be incorporated in textiles?

How do the tactile qualities of textiles (eg. softness, texture) influence emotional processing and healing in the context of grief?

Physical Changes

What are the physical changes that a mother experiences after a miscarriage?

How does the body typically heal after a miscarriage? And how much time does it take to get healed?

Are there any long-term physical affects of a miscarriage?

Are there specific textures or forms that might effectively convey the physical pain or the sense of emptiness associated with miscarriage?

questionnaire for mother

Emotional Changes

Can you describe how you felt emotionally immediately after your miscarriage?

Your first emotion/reaction after listening about your miscarriage?

How did you cope up with the grief and loss associated with a miscarriage?

Did you feel supported by your family, friends or healthcare providers?

If so, in what ways?

Did you experience feelings of guilt, anger or confusion after your miscarriage? If so, how did you cope with these emotions?

How has this experience affected your mental health overall?

Did you find any coping mechanisms (eg: art, journaling, therapy) helpful in processing your emotions?

Physical Changes

What physical changes did you experience in your body after the miscarriage?

How long did the physical healing process take?

Did you experience any complications or unexpected physical symptoms following the miscarriage?

Inferences

“ pain, depression, hormonal changes, stomach ache, and weakness are the physical changes experienced by the women. ”

“ 80% women said NO for any complications or unexpected physical symptoms they have experienced after the miscarriage. ”

“ 50% women between the ages of 30-35 experienced miscarriage. ”

“ first emotion/reaction: cry, heartbreak, sad, shock. ”

“ 10-15 days average bleeding. ”

“ physical weakness for 1.5 months. ”

After conducting interviews and watching videos of loss journeys, I observed that many women are reluctant to discuss the physical changes they experienced after a miscarriage.

While they openly share the emotional challenges and the support they received from loved ones, their physical experiences remain largely unspoken.

Although people acknowledge that bodily changes occur post-miscarriage, they often lack understanding of the specific physical processes involved.

To address this gap, I chose to focus my project on raising awareness about the physical transformations women undergo after a miscarriage.

05

MOOD BOARD

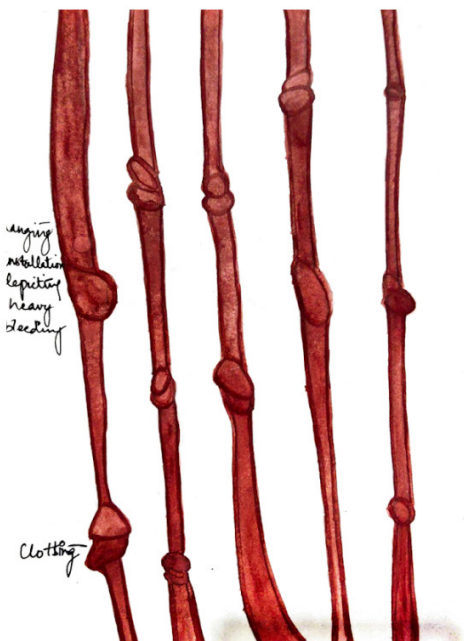
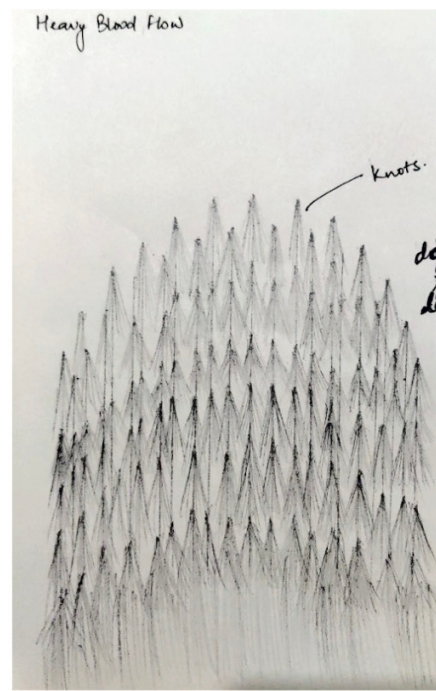
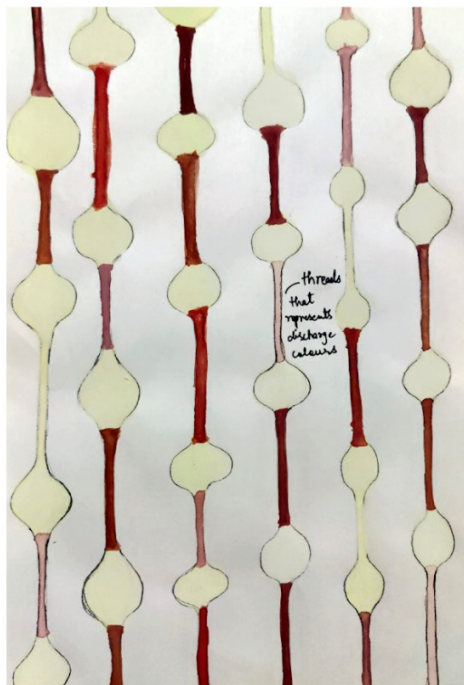




06

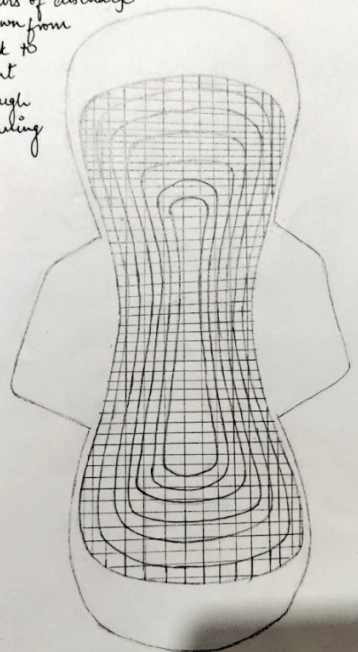
INITIAL IDEATIONS

These ideations symbolize the physical transformations women experience post-miscarriage, focusing on heavy bleeding, clotting, and discharge.



dark to light

Colours of discharge shown from dark to light through weaving

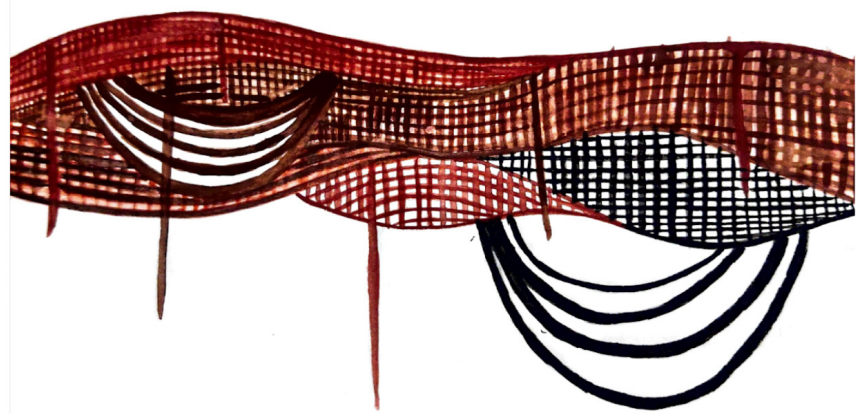


- hanging installation

dark to light blood flow shown as the days pass
shown by making knots.

heavy blood flow - weaving

Heavy Blood flow through weaving



07

MODIFIED INTERVIEWS

questionnaire for mother

Physical Changes

1. What physical changes did you experience in your body after the miscarriage?
2. How did these physical changes impact your daily routines or physical activities?
3. Were there any changes in your physical health, such as energy levels, weight, or appetite, after the miscarriage?
4. Did you experience any hormonal fluctuations or changes that affected your physical well-being?
5. How would you describe the process of recovery, physically, in the days or weeks following the miscarriage?
6. Did you experience any physical discomfort or pain, and how did you manage it?
7. Were there any changes in your menstrual cycle or other reproductive health aspects post-miscarriage?
8. Did you experience any complications or unexpected physical symptoms following the miscarriage?

PHYSICAL CHANGES POST MISCARRIAGE

Pain in the body.

Internal infection.

Same type of pain happens during a miscarriage that happens while a delivery.

Miscarriage happened in 3rd month.

HOW DID THESE PHYSICAL CHANGES IMPACT YOUR DAILY ROUTINES OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES?

Couldn't move for 1.5 months.

Experienced **weakness, heavy bleeding**, and fainting during the miscarriage.

Recovered in 1 month.

People don't take care of women who had miscarriage, but take care of those who are pregnant.

WERE THERE ANY CHANGES IN YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH, SUCH AS ENERGY LEVELS, WEIGHT OR APPETITE, AFTER THE MISCARRIAGE?

Low energy.

Heavy pain, low appetite

Pain until the foetus didn't come out of the body.

Ate medicine to bring out parts of foetus from the body.

After ultrasound, heavy bleeding happened.

DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY HORMONAL FLUCTUATIONS OR CHANGES THAT AFFECTED YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING?

No hormonal changes.

DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT OR PAIN, AND HOW DID YOU MANAGE IT?

Physical pain - joints pain below uterus.

WERE THERE ANY CHANGES IN YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE OR OTHER REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ASPECTS POST-MISCARRIAGE?

After 26 days of bleeding post-miscarriage, my period returned, with the bleeding lasting approximately 23–24 days.

TULSI SHARMA
45 YEARS

ASHA BHASKAR

44 YEARS

PHYSICAL CHANGES POST MISCARRIAGE

Stomach gets loose.

Baby tube also gets loose.

Incorporating medication and yoga can significantly improve overall well-being and recovery.

HOW DID THESE PHYSICAL CHANGES IMPACT YOUR DAILY ROUTINES OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES?

If recovery has happened properly, then there is no impact.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY, PHYSICALLY, IN THE DAYS OR WEEKS FOLLOWING THE MISCARRIAGE?

Varies from body to body.

Also noticed in many cases, once miscarriage happened, you can't conceive again.

DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT OR PAIN, AND HOW DID YOU MANAGE IT?

For pain, doctors give you painkillers, rest you have to deal with the pain by yourself.

DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY COMPLICATIONS OR UNEXPECTED PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS FOLLOWING THE MISCARRIAGE?

Body gets **weak** after dealing with miscarriage.
Stomach bloating.

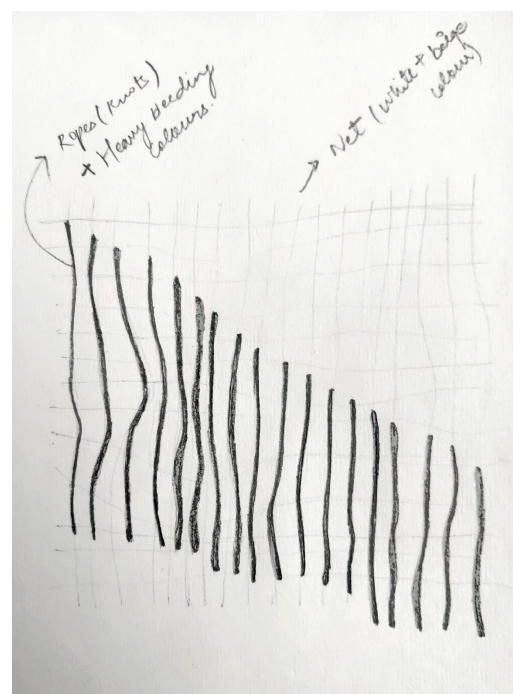
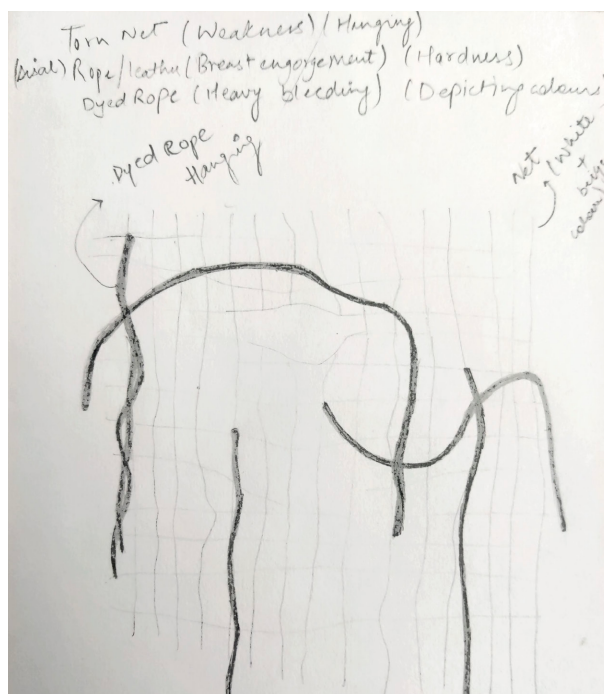
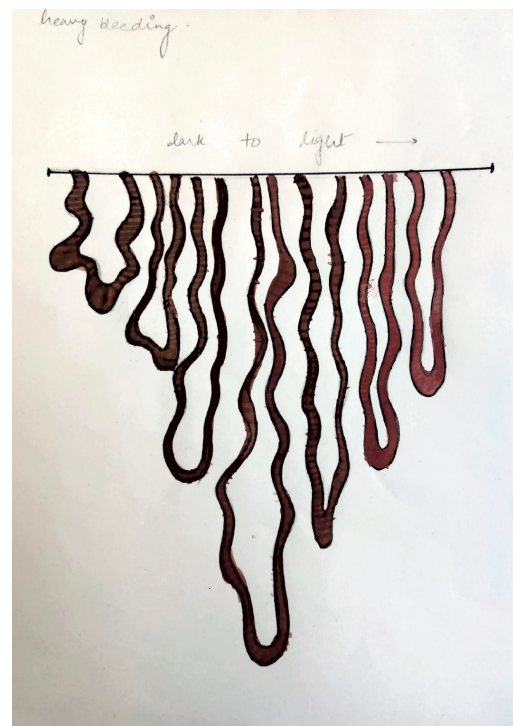
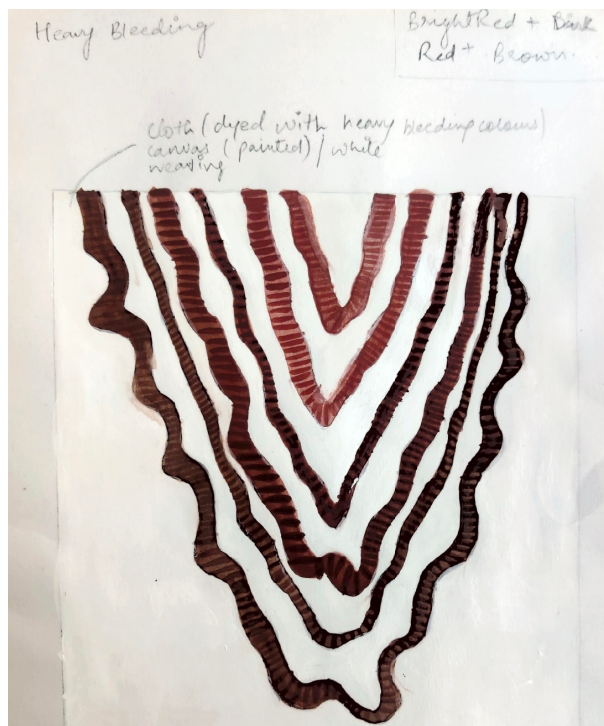
08

FINAL





ITERATIONS



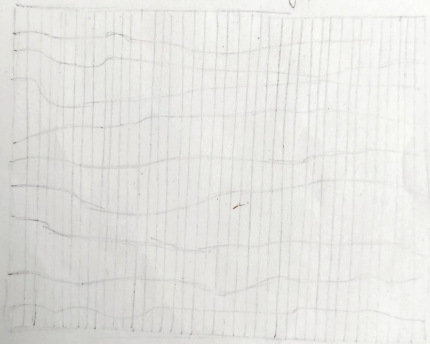
Torn Net.

in grey colour/white

Weakness

- when you're weak, you look dull.

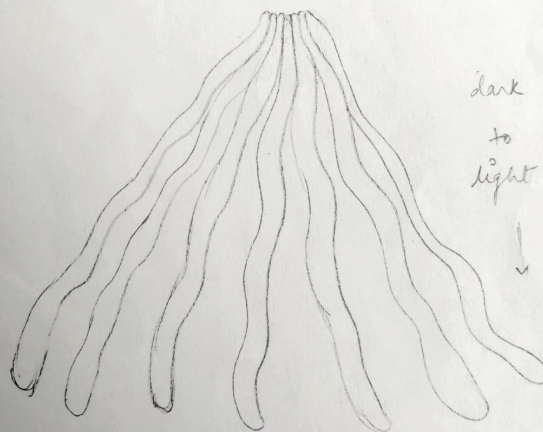
loose threads (weaving)



- Black canvas, above it loose weaving using grey/white colour.

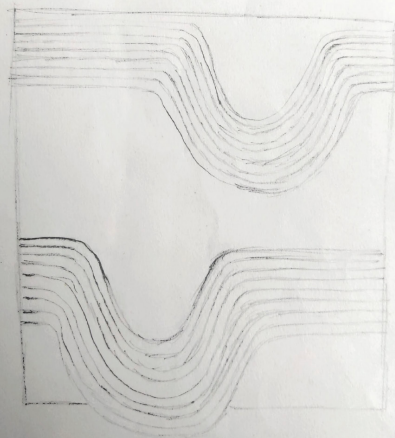
heavy bleeding

dark to light colour's threads wrapped.



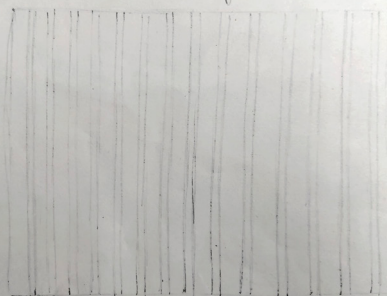
Weakness

loose threads

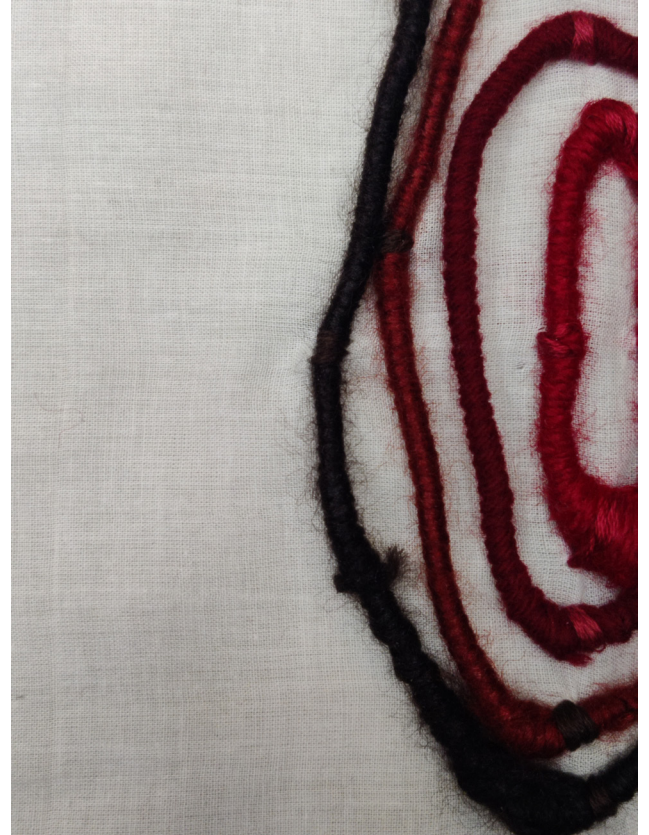


Heavy Bleeding
Material - chiffon,
silk,
wool
dots - thick yarn
cotton

dark to light →



EXPLORATIONS



A gradient of heavy bleeding transitioning from lighter tones near the center to darker tones towards the edges, symbolizing the progression of bleeding, depicted in the organic shape of the vagina.



A torn grey net symbolizes weakness, paired with threads in heavy bleeding colors wrapped around a rope to represent the hardness and tension experienced during breast engorgement.



A torn grey net symbolizes weakness, paired with threads in heavy bleeding colors from light to dark wrapped around a rope to represent the hardness and tension experienced during breast engorgement.

FINAL IDEATION



A dress form was used to represent physical changes during a miscarriage. Cling foil and tape were wrapped for structure and stability.

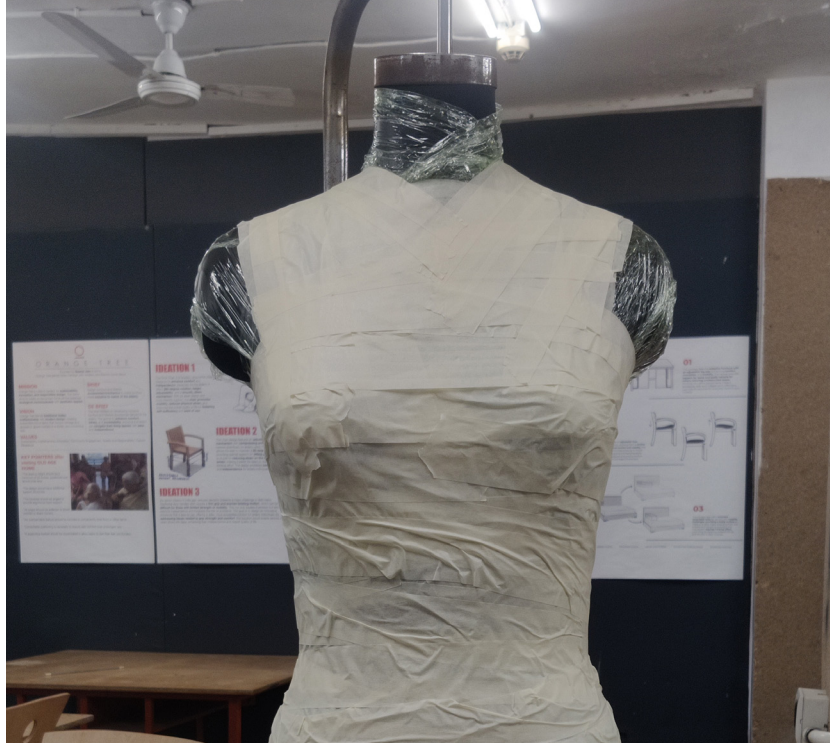
Light grey thread was applied on the chest, medium grey between the breasts, and dark grey on the waist to symbolize the weakness experienced.

Canvas fabric, dyed in skin, light brown, and dark brown tones, was woven to illustrate the hardness of breast engorgement, cut into breast-like shapes, and attached.

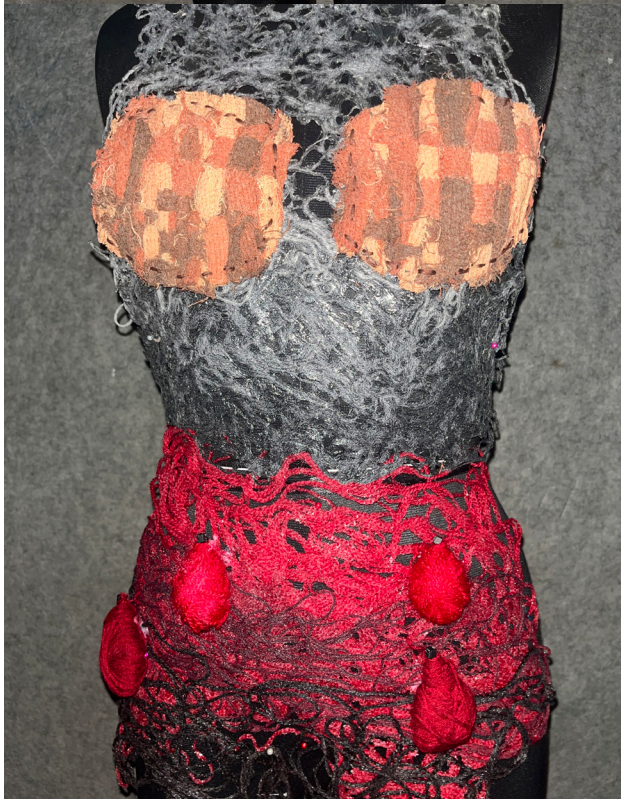
Red, dark red, and brown threads depicted heavy bleeding, forming a flow from the abdomen to inner thighs, with drops signifying heaviness.

PROCESS





**FINAL
PROTOTYPE**



FEEDBACK

Expert Feedback

The topic and concept of this project are deeply thoughtful and meaningful, shedding light on the often-overlooked impact of miscarriage on women's health. The storytelling is compelling and forms a strong foundation for the work. With further refinement, the execution has great potential to deliver an even more visually powerful and impactful result, enhancing the physical connection and narrative strength of the project.

- Rohit Kumar, Textile Designer, Jaipur Rugs

User Feedback

The project created a strong emotional connection by thoughtfully showing the physical changes women go through after a miscarriage. The use of color gradients and textures to represent weakness is very effective. The threads and woven canvas used to illustrate breast engorgement and bleeding were especially impactful.

- Shagun Sharma, a homemaker

Really appreciate for bringing to light an often-overlooked topic. The use of red threads to indicate bleeding is interesting to see. Certain aspects of the design could be improved to make it more clear and visually appealing.

- Rekha Saran, a homemaker

09

CONCLUSION

This project focused on highlighting the physical changes women go through after a miscarriage using textile. By using colors, textures, and woven patterns, it visually represented experiences like weakness, heavy bleeding, and breast engorgement. The goal was to share these personal challenges, encourage understanding, and start conversations about a topic that is often ignored. The project aimed to build empathy and raise awareness about both the physical struggles that come with miscarriage.

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Unspoken Changes of Miscarriage