

STORIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS LEADING CHANGE





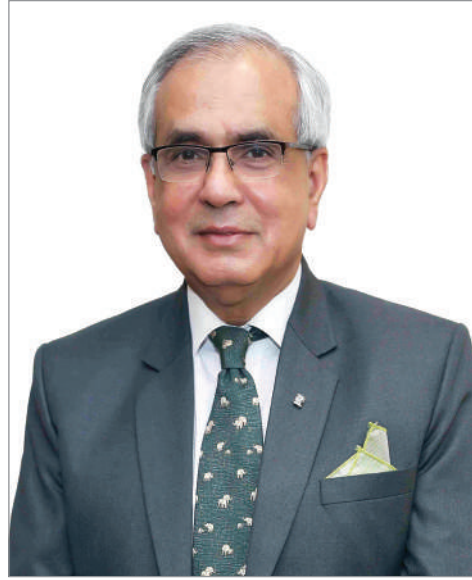
WOMEN
TRANSFORMING INDIA 2019

STORIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
LEADING CHANGE

In partnership with

YOURSTORY

Foreword



Dr. Rajiv Kumar
Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog

The International Women's Day is celebrated on 08 March every year to reflect on the strides made towards a gender equal society and calls for action on bridging the remaining gaps. It is also an occasion to celebrate women doing extraordinary work. The theme of this year's International Women's Day is "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" and is closely aligned with NITI Aayog's 'Strategy for New India @ 75'. NITI Aayog is committed to creating an enabling environment for women sans institutional and structural barriers and improving India's female labour force participation.

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is one such effort to empower women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations and gain access to resources. NITI Aayog aims to develop WEP to become a single point of access to information and services relevant to women entrepreneurs at different stages of their journeys. The platform achieves this by working closely with its partner organizations to develop customized information resources, capacity building programmes and linkages to services that are relevant to women entrepreneurs.

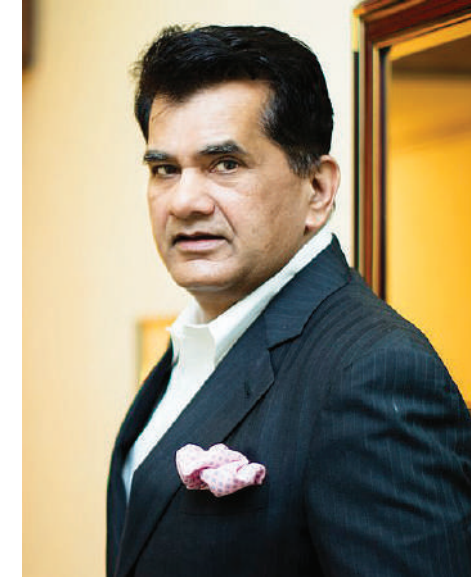
While the lack of access to resources and mentorship is being actively addressed through WEP's multivariate service offerings, the need to create more role models for women to look up to and be inspired has also been identified. The Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards addresses this

need by recognizing exceptional women from both commercial and social sectors. Since 2018, the WTI Awards have been hosted under the ambit of WEP and have had a special focus on entrepreneurship.

These Awards are NITI Aayog's initiative to highlight the commendable and ground breaking endeavours of India's most innovative and hard working entrepreneurs. I am pleased by the enthusiastic response and am highly impressed by the quality of the applicants this year. I congratulate the Top 30 for making it through a comprehensive evaluation process and wish them the best of luck for their journey ahead.

We at NITI Aayog hope to keep providing more support as WEP grows and look forward to supporting more women entrepreneurs who would like to contribute to nation building. I would also complement the NITI Aayog team lead by Anna Roy in making WEP and WTI Awards such great success. I wish them all the best. Jai Hind!

Message



Mr. Amitabh Kant
CEO, NITI Aayog

The shift of a large proportion of India's population from job seekers to risk takers and employment generators through startups has propelled India on a path of economic boom and growth. Startups have emerged as engines of growth for our economy. Over the last five years, India has seen the emergence of over 60,000 new enterprises which are contributing to the nation's growth and development. The last two decades have witnessed the Indian society become progressively inclusive, with active efforts to bridge gender based inequalities. Despite this progress, women only constitute around 14% of the total entrepreneurs in the country.

The country's economic growth has much to gain if women, who constitute 48% of the population, can exercise their agency beyond the domestic realm. However, women continue to be inhibited from entering the formal workforce due to deeply entrenched socio-cultural expectations and inadequate access to relevant knowledge and skills. Entrepreneurship provides the latitude for women to earn their livelihood on their own terms and gain financial independence in the process.

Cognizance of the scope of entrepreneurship to stimulate socio-economic development has led to a pan India adoption of policies and programs targeted at building a catalytic environment for entrepreneurs. I ardently believe that only a nation that encourages the full and unhindered participation

of women in economic and political life can reach its potential to transform society. For India to channel a positive disruption to her startup ecosystem, it is imperative to create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.

Since its announcement over two years ago at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, the 'Women Entrepreneurship Platform' has become a forum dedicated to educating, enabling and empowering women entrepreneurs. The platform has become a one stop solution for women to access information relating to funding, incubation, capacity building and compliance. WEP has also created a community of women entrepreneurs, which serves as a support system to enable mentorship, peer learning and improved access to information.

Under the umbrella of the WEP, the Women Transforming India Awards is an initiative to celebrate India's female pioneers. The changemakers that the Awards recognize are challenging social expectations to break the glass ceiling and drive India towards a gender equal society.

The thirty women featured in this book are trailblazers in their own right and are representative of India's exceptional entrepreneurial ambitions and capabilities. I look forward to WEP's successful engagement with these women leaders as we continue to support them in their endeavours. I wish Anna Roy and her team at NITI Aayog the very best for all future endeavours of WEP.

Message



Ms. Anna Roy
Chairperson WEP,
Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog

Realizing India's dream of becoming a five trillion dollar economy is possible only with the active participation of her female workforce. Women entrepreneurs are revolutionizing the country by taking the lead in fields that have traditionally been dominated by men. While women have increasingly become more active in the entrepreneurial landscape, the success of women entrepreneurs is often inhibited by socio-cultural norms. The information asymmetry amplifies the issue of access to requisite knowledge and services. It thus becomes critical to not only encourage women in their entrepreneurial journey, but to also support them in overcoming systemic barriers and contextual challenges.

Launched on the International Women's Day in 2018, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) has been envisioned as a novel unified access portal for women entrepreneurs. WEP strives to improve industry linkages and awareness of existing programs and services and provide access to peer support, learning resources, funding and mentorship.

In the span of just two years, WEP has observed several success stories. The platform has more than 14,000 registered women entrepreneurs and more than 30 partners supporting capacity building, providing compliance, taxation, mentorship and funding support.



WEP has been recognising the achievements of India's leading women changemakers through NITI Aayog's flagship initiative - the Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards. Since 2016 the awards have been celebrating stories of exemplary women leaders from across India who are breaking the glass ceiling.

The Fourth Edition of the Awards, launched in August 2019, focused on the theme "Women and Entrepreneurship" and received more than 2,300 entries. Through a rigorous three stage independent process, we have identified the top 30 finalists, all of whom have been path breakers in their own right. Leading industry leaders have helped NITI Aayog in selecting this cohort of WTI winners.

This coffee table book is an effort to showcase the heartening stories of grit, determination, hard work and success of the women who are leading a new wave of change.

Introduction to WTI Awards

Launched in 2016, the Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards mark NITI Aayog's annual endeavour to recognize exceptional women changemakers in the country. The Fourth Edition of the WTI Awards hosted under the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), was announced in August 2019 and built on last year's theme of 'Women and Entrepreneurship'. At the time of closing of the applications for the Awards in November 2019, NITI Aayog had received an overwhelming response from across the country. The applicant pool was as competitive and impressive as it was diverse and inspiring.

The selection of the top women entrepreneurs was an elaborate task that saw the coming together of WEP's community of partners and mentors. For the first round of evaluations, the WEP team undertook a rigorous appraisal of all applications to shortlist this year's Top 130 women entrepreneurs with the assistance of PwC - our evaluation partners.

In the second round, the Top 130 were invited to present their journeys to a panel of WEP's Jury

members on 06 December, 2019. The Jury comprised of thought leaders and industry experts across various fields who evaluated the presentations of the shortlisted 130. After a day of meticulous assessments, the Jury whittled the list down to the Top 30 women entrepreneurs from the applicants.

This cohort of WTI's Top 30 women constitutes an impressive array of trail blazers who have led strong business models or made groundbreaking innovations, shattering the glass ceilings to achieve success. The selection of the 15 winners called for a final day of deliberations on the impact created by these women's remarkable initiatives as well as their personal stories and struggles. In the last stage of evaluation, these 30 entrepreneurs were invited to NITI Aayog on 15 December, 2019, where a Super Jury comprised of industry leaders were called upon to determine the winners for this edition of the WTI Awards.

The Super Jury round was followed by a pitching session wherein the Top 30 had a chance to present before social impact investors, angel investors as

well as venture capitalists for funding. The exercise sought to harness the insights of the investors to provide funding guidance and support through subsequently planned sessions that will connect women entrepreneurs with potential investors.

Over the course of the last several months, the WEP team has worked to ensure that the WTI Awards recognize these incredible women, their perseverance, tenacity and hard work which have helped them emerge as winners in their own right.

It is important to note that this journey would not have been possible without the support of our partners who were ever so forthcoming with their assistance and guidance. We would like to thank you all for your constant support to the WEP family and look forward to collaborating on our efforts to inform, enable and empower the women entrepreneurs of this country.

Super Jury Members



Amit Chandra
Chairman and Managing Director, Bain Capital



Anjali Bansal
Founder, Avaana Capital



Anand Sherkhane
Additional Development Commissioner, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises



Chetna Gala Sinha
Founder / Chair, Mann Deshi Bank & Mann Deshi Foundation



C. P. Gurnani
CEO and Managing Director, Tech Mahindra



Debjani Ghosh
President, NASSCOM



Lakshmi Puri
Former Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations



Mira Kulkarni
Chairman and Managing Director, Forest Essentials



Namita Thapar
Executive Director Emcure Pharmaceuticals and CEO- YEA! (Young Entrepreneurs Academy India)



Radhika Kaul Batra
Chief of Staff, UN Resident Coordinator's Office



Renata Dessallien
United Nations Resident Coordinator in India



Roopa Kudva
Managing Director, Omidyar Network India



Ronnie Screwvala
Co-founder and Chairman, upGrad



Shobana Kamineni
Executive Vice-Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited

Jury Members



Ajay Khanna
Chief Strategic & Public Affairs,
Group Ombudsperson, Jubilant
Bhartia Group



Anasuya Gupta
Chairperson and
Managing Director, CICO
Technologies Ltd.



Anirban Gupta
Co-founder, Dhriiti - The
Courage Within



Anjana Menon
CEO, Content Pixies



Ashish Desai
CEO, Jumo India



Asoomee Dutta Baruah
Chief Functionary &
Secretary General,
Sreemanta Sankar Mission
of Guwahati



CA Kawaljit Singh Oberoi
Proprietor, K.S. Oberoi & Co.,
Chartered Accountants,
New Delhi



Deepti Ravula
CEO, WE Hub



Gayatree Anand
Chief Minister's Urban
Leaders Fellow, Delhi
Government



Gurinder Singh Malik
Distinguished Scientist &
DG(R&D) (DRDO) (Retd) &
Advisor, MHRD



Jagdish Mitra
Chief Strategy Officer
and Head of Growth, Tech
Mahindra



Julia Karst
Project head, Project
Her&Now, GIZ



Jyotsna Sitling, IFoS
Principal Chief Conservator of
Forests, Govt. of Uttarakhand



Kanneganti Rama Devi
President, Association of
Lady Entrepreneurs of India



Mudit Narain
Programme Director,
Atal Innovation Mission,
NITI Aayog



Mukesh Mohan Gupta
President, Chamber of
Indian Micro Small & Medium
Enterprises



Mukund Khadgi
Assistant General Manager,
Bank of Baroda



Nakul Saxena
Director - Public Policy,
iSPIRT Foundation



Nandita Mishra
Economic Adviser, Ministry
of Corporate Affairs,
Govt. of India



Nath Parmeshwar
Director, PayPal india



Raghavendra Singh
Joint President, Head -
Group Public Affairs, Kotak
Mahindra Bank Limited



Raman Sidhu
Co-founder and President,
PAFI



Raman Uberoi
Senior Advisor, CRISIL
Limited



Saachi Bhalla
Program Officer, Policy &
Strategic Partnerships, BMGF



Sangeeta Gupta
Senior VP, NASSCOM



Sayantani Mukherjee
Women's Entrepreneurship
& Financial Inclusion
Associate, UNDP



Shivani Malik
Director - Marketing,
Da Milano



Shriya Sethi
Director, International
Innovation Corps,
UChicago Trust



Shwetank Verma
Co-founder and General
Partner, Leo Capital



Sneha Jain
Founder & Trustee,
Daanish India Foundation



**Swarandeeep Singh
Kambo**
Lead - Investments and
Community, UNLEASH



Upasna Dash
CEO & Founder, Jajabor
Brand Consultancy



Urvashi Khemka
Vice Chairman - The Global
Education & Leadership
Foundation (tGELF)



Usha Sangwan
Board Member, Bombay
Stock Exchange



Yatin K Thakur
Chairman, GEN India

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LEADING CHANGE

Creating Inclusive Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

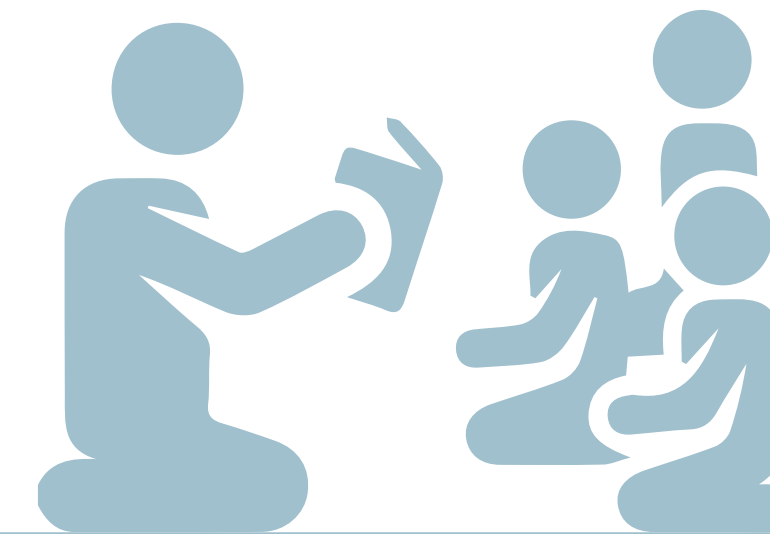
Aditi Agarwal
Gudgudee, Mumbai, Maharashtra



While taking a college course on Design for Special Needs, Aditi Agarwal realised the lack of outdoor play options for children with special needs during their formative years. At Gudgudee, Aditi attempts to reinvent the concept of a playground, allowing for it to be accessible and enjoyable for children with disabilities. Focusing on the needs and challenges of these children, Aditi and her co-founder Anjali Menon create a playground that integrates the magic of sound, smell, touch and visuals to create exciting experiences for kids with special needs.

Gudgudee also offers customised design services and has been creating an ecosystem around design for play and recently organized the International Play Conference. Since its inception, the company has been able to build 40 playgrounds in 16 cities across India. Aditi has also brought to light the stigma around physical disabilities, attempting to destigmatize the issue and empower millions of Indian children who have such disabilities.

Gudgudee works with occupational therapists, child physiologists and teachers to design play areas that suit the developmental needs of the children with special needs



Destigmatizing Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Growing up in a middle-class conservative family, Aditi Gupta, like many girls in India, was no stranger to the stigma around menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Due to the taboo on menstruation, Aditi would resort to using cloth in place of sanitary napkins, as it was a shame for the family to speak of their menstruating daughter and unthinkable for them to purchase the required goods.

Such experiences and the accompanying frustrations, coupled with her growing knowledge of menstrual care and hygiene, empowered Aditi to found Menstrupedia. Through this initiative, Aditi works diligently

to educate and destigmatize menstrual health and hygiene amongst the communities in India. Menstrupedia creates comic books in eight different Indian languages, as well as foreign languages, on menstrual health information. The comics have been well received across the board and have registered well with young girls, parents, and teachers. She has received a lot of recognition and acclaim with patrons of her cause even contributing funds. The support and praise garnered by Menstrupedia underlines the impact that such an initiative can have on the Indian society where such topics are usually swept under the rug.



Menstrupedia is a small but definitive step to shatter the myths and misconceptions around menstruation

Aditi Gupta
Menstrupedia, Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Ensuring Quality and Improving Performance

India is a fast growing consumer economy. With increased consumption of goods, society becomes more wary of product and packaging standards. Spookfish attempts to be transparent with consumers and reassures them about the quality of product packaging across India. The company conducts quality inspections predominantly in the food & beverage and pharmaceutical industries. Through this venture, Dr. Anupriya Balikai, the Managing Director of Spookfish Innovations, attempts to create a standard for products and to ensure quality control for food packaging.

Spookfish Innovations focuses on manufacturing inspection machines that are retrofitted and integrated into existing manufacturing lines - with the ability to inspect over 240 bottles per minute and 15,000 tablets per minute. Applying the latest computer vision technology and machine learning techniques, they deploy cutting edge, intelligent solutions, ensuring that their clients are a step ahead of competition.

Spookfish Innovations envisions using cutting edge, intelligent solutions to change the face of industrial automation



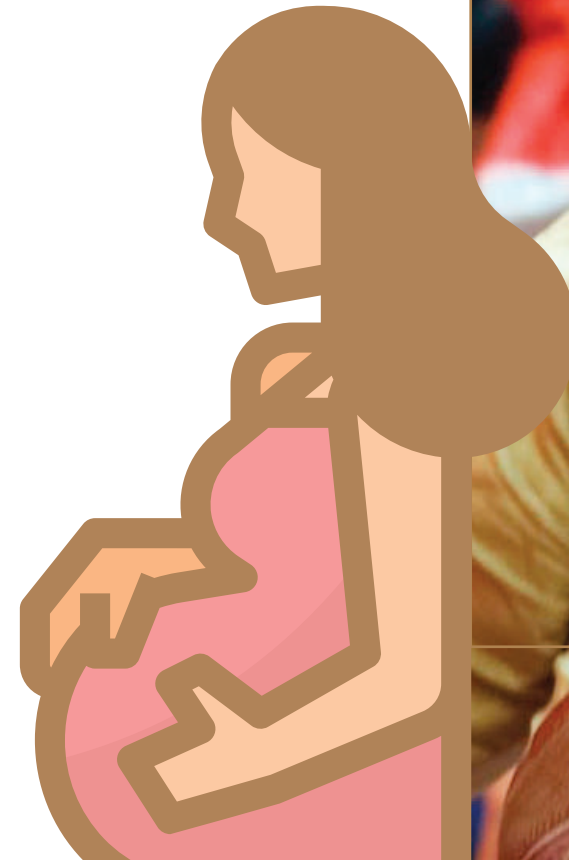
Dr. Anupriya Balikai
Spookfish Innovation, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Educate, Enable, Empower: Building a Better Future for India's Women

Dr. Armida Fernandez's experience as a medical professional exposed her to the health risks that mothers and babies face at birth and immediately after. With her knowledge of neonatal and maternal care, Dr. Fernandez set up Asia's first milk bank at Sion Hospital in 1989. After learning of an incident involving a six-year old child's rape, she felt the need to empower women by providing them with information and outlets that could protect them. In the 1990s, Dr. Fernandez went on to create SNEHA, an entity dedicated to educating women on the

problems they face domestically, as well as empowering them to appropriately deal with such situations.

The objectives of SNEHA are to change the mindsets and practices in maternal and adolescent health, and to educate the Indian society on maternal care. Through the initiatives of SNEHA, Dr. Fernandez attempts to improve maternal health awareness and health-seeking behaviors.



SNEHA shares the twin goals of improving health-seeking behaviour among underserved communities and enhancing the quality of public healthcare

Dr Armida Fernandez
SNEHA, Mumbai, Maharashtra



Eliminating Poverty: Hand in Hand

Hand In Hand works to educate and upskill rural women to fight poverty and gender inequality

Dr. Kalpana Sankar
Hand in Hand, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Holding a double doctorate in Nuclear Physics and Gender Issues, Dr. Kalpana Sankar has been actively involved in the realm of female empowerment for over two decades. Dr. Sankar helped establish Hand in Hand, an organisation dedicated to empowering the most marginalised and impoverished women in India through capacity building and training. Dr. Sankar has been able to mobilize and empower women across geographies ranging from India, Afghanistan, Cambodia to Brazil and South Africa.

Hand in Hand has provided disadvantaged women with the opportunity to gain financial, functional, and digital literacy training. In addition to the trainings, Dr. Sankar works with the Government of India to bridge gaps between women in rural India and access to government schemes that can help them overcome poverty. Her dedication has helped alleviate women from poverty as well as create jobs.





Hybrid Cooling Systems, Paving the Way Towards a Sustainable Future

Dr. Priyanka Mokshmar
Vaayu Home Appliances, Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Dr. Priyanka Mokshmar is the co-founder of Vaayu Home Appliances. The company provides a cheap and environmentally viable alternative to home cooling systems. Vaayu has created and patented the technology of their hybrid AC-cum-cooler unit. While running a home-based business, Priyanka and her husband ended up paying high electricity bills and identified that this was primarily due to the use of the AC.

Through many years of trial and error and even selling her home to fund their dream of creating Vaayu Home Appliances, the company began operations in 2014. Still, Dr. Mokshmar continued to face tribulations throughout her journey. Whether it was her pursuit to attain funding for Vaayu, or being taken seriously as a woman, she faced several challenges

every day but soldiered on. Leveraging her expertise in marketing and management she was able to receive Rs. 1 Crore in funding, under the collateral-free GCTMSE scheme from the state government of Madhya Pradesh.

Today, Vaayu Home Appliances provides economically affordable and environmentally feasible alternatives to traditional AC units across India - selling their products from Madhya Pradesh to Maharashtra and Delhi.

Vaayu India uses technology to provide novel home cooling solutions that are affordable and environment friendly





Drumlins focuses on developing cost-effective, portable, environment & user-friendly techniques to reduce the serious public health risks posed by Fluoride contaminants

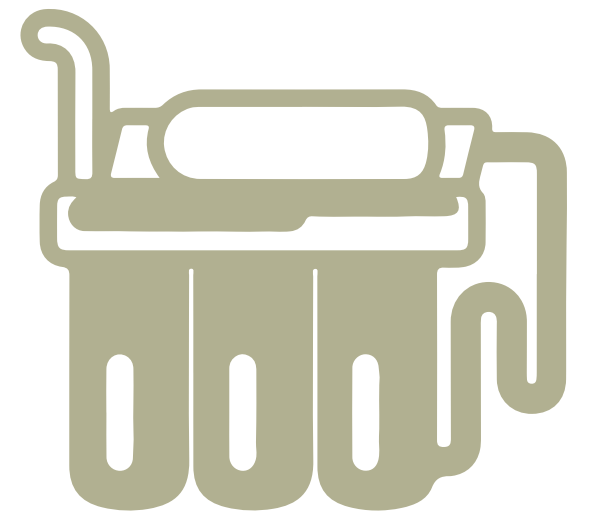
Dr. Suphiya Khan
Drumlins Water Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan

Providing Clean Drinking Water Through Cost-Effective Technologies

Although the field of biotechnology is infamously known as a hard industry for businesses to flourish, it did not stop Dr. Suphiya Khan from founding Drumlins Water Technology. As a professor of biotechnology, she worked in areas of DNA fingerprinting, chemoprofiling, development of nano-adsorbents and Fluoride (F) phytoremediation technology.

Her startup focuses on water purification as well as water distribution among

communities in India. Fluoride is a major contributor to the world climate crisis, affecting over 200 million people worldwide. Existing methods to deal with fluoride in water are either too nascent in their testing or too expensive to be implemented in developing countries. Not only has her company helped its beneficiaries access clean drinking water, it has also helped develop cost-effective defluoridation technology for both rural and urban communities in India.



By sharing best practices on mushroom farming and bee keeping, Gopal Biotech Agro Farms has helped establish 120 self-help groups for women, paving the way for their financial independence



Empowering Farmers Through Mushroom Farming

The cultivation of paddy mushrooms has been a lucrative arena for landless farmers to earn a steady livelihood. Jayanti Pradhan, an agro-processor and farmer from Odisha wanted to challenge the regressive stereotype of farmers being uneducated.

Education was always important in Jayanti's household - her father also a farmer, studied economics in college, however had failed to complete his education. But he ensured that Jayanti finished her education. Jayanti went on to study botany, which aided her knowledge and skills in farming. With her deepened knowledge, Jayanti was able to scale her family's farming business through breeding mushrooms. Her successful practices were then shared with other farmers in her community, leading to this form of crop harvesting becoming their main source of earnings.

Jayanti acknowledges the struggles rural female farmers face, as she too has experienced discrimination. To combat such mindsets, Jayanti is focused on educating women in her community and equipping them with the tools and knowledge of mushroom farming to enable them to become financially independent.

Jayanti Pradhan
Gopal Biotech Agro Farm, Bargarh, Orissa





India's First Commercial Tissue Bank

Dr. Jugnu Jain
Sapien Biosciences, Hyderabad, Telangana

In recent years Indian startups have been able to better India's healthcare systems by leaps and bounds. However, the one key area that had remained untouched until recently was tissue-banks. Dr. Jugnu Jain, founder and CSO, of Sapien Biosciences has addressed this need for tissue-banks in India. Her previous career in pharmaceuticals allowed her to realize the great demand for bio-banks that exist in the Indian market. As India's first central bio-bank, Sapien Biosciences has been able to collect and use medical waste for research and development of new diagnostics, drugs, and reagents.

The pioneering tissue-bank has also been successful in using medical waste to create medical innovations. Although Dr. Jain has faced several challenges in leading the first tissue-bank in India, she continues to persevere, conducting biosample curation and R&D services that are contributing to path breaking discoveries in the pharmaceutical industry.

Sapien Biosciences aims to develop a high quality bio-repository, by employing human translational platforms, to pave the way for new age healthcare solutions



Saving Lives Through Crowdfunding

Access to medical treatment in India is improving with time. However, patients' ability to pay for treatments has remained a pressing problem that was not tackled until Khushboo Jain created ImpactGuru. Her organization is a crowdfunding platform that empowers individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and social enterprises, by helping them raise funds for healthcare, social, and personal needs, from family, friends as well as strangers. ImpactGuru attempts to provide crowdfunding opportunities to those who live below the poverty line,

as well as middle class patients who have exhausted their financial resources due to out-of-pocket expenditure on the treatment of their illnesses.

ImpactGuru's platform enables crowdfunding to take place entirely online. People in need of funds draft a story and upload pictures/videos via this novel AI-supported story builder for medical fundraisers. Started in 2014, ImpactGuru is now one of India's largest crowdfunding entities, contributing to inspiring social change. It aims to impact 1 million patient lives in the

upcoming 5 years and foresees getting the attention of over 15 million donors.



ImpactGuru helps individuals, NGOs and social enterprises to raise funds for healthcare, social and personal needs through crowdfunding

Khushboo Jain
Impact Guru, Mumbai, Maharashtra

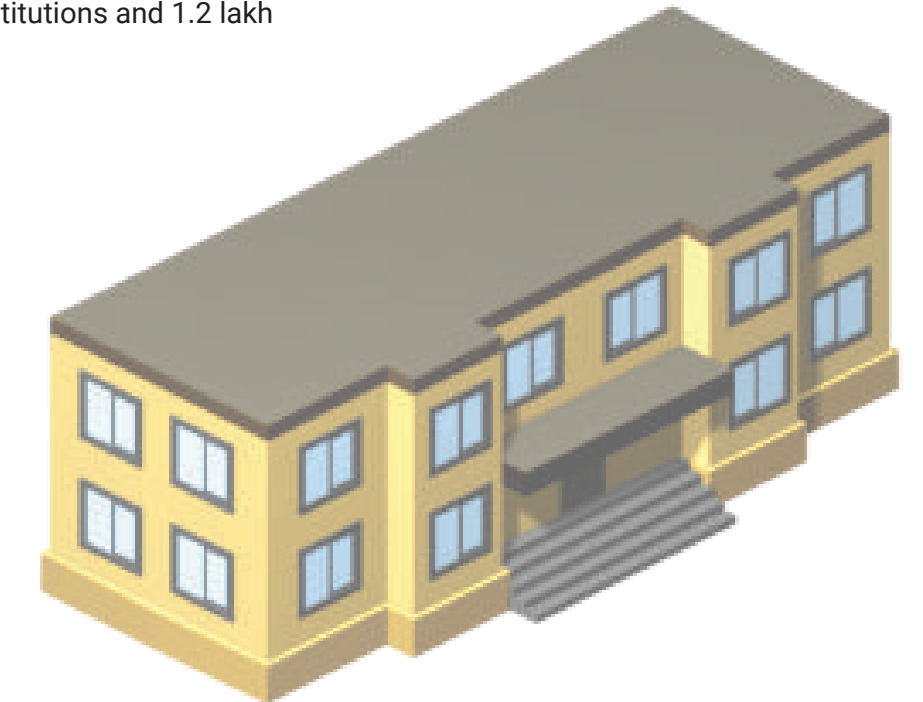


Making Hostel Life Secure

SpaceBasic is a company focused on tackling the administrative processes college students face, such as permission slips, data management etc. All these processes are very labour intensive and time consuming.

To solve this problem, SpaceBasic leveraged technology to digitise these processes. Madhavi Shankar, the Co-founder and CEO of the company helped develop an application that houses all the needed information

and clubs all processes that take place in a college campus. The company ensures safety checks and allows for communication channels, keeping all features accessible to students, faculty and parents. SpaceBasics now provides their services to over 60 institutions and 1.2 lakh users across India.



The SpaceBasic platform enables transparent ways to connect, collaborate and execute day-to-day tasks within student housing communities

Madhavi Shankar
SpaceBasic Inc, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Plastic Waste — Fueling a Better Tomorrow

India produces roughly 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste daily. Knowing the consequences that non-recycled plastics can have on human beings, Dr. Medha Tadpatrikar decided to utilize plastic in its entirety. By reversing the process through which plastic is acquired, Dr. Tadpatrikar was able to create poly-fuel. After much trial and error, and testing many iterations of her procedure in her own kitchen, Dr. Tadpatrikar successfully created fuel from plastic through the Thermo Catalytic Depolarization process.

Not only has Dr. Tadpatrikar tackled the issue of plastic waste disposal, she has also provided people in Pune's villages with an alternative fuel source. Across the villages of Pune, she discovered that households were unable to buy kerosene due to its unaffordability. She decided to solve this problem by selling her poly-fuel at a much cheaper price. Through her company, Rudra Environmental Solution India, Dr. Tadpatrikar has been able to collect 7,50,000 kg of plastic waste till date.



Rudra believes technology and innovation are the key to solving the biggest social, environmental and economic challenges that India and the world face

Dr. Medha Tadpatrikar
Rudra Environmental Solution India
Pune, Maharashtra



Astrome endeavours to provide broadband internet service to the most remote locations in India with their patented millimeter wave technology

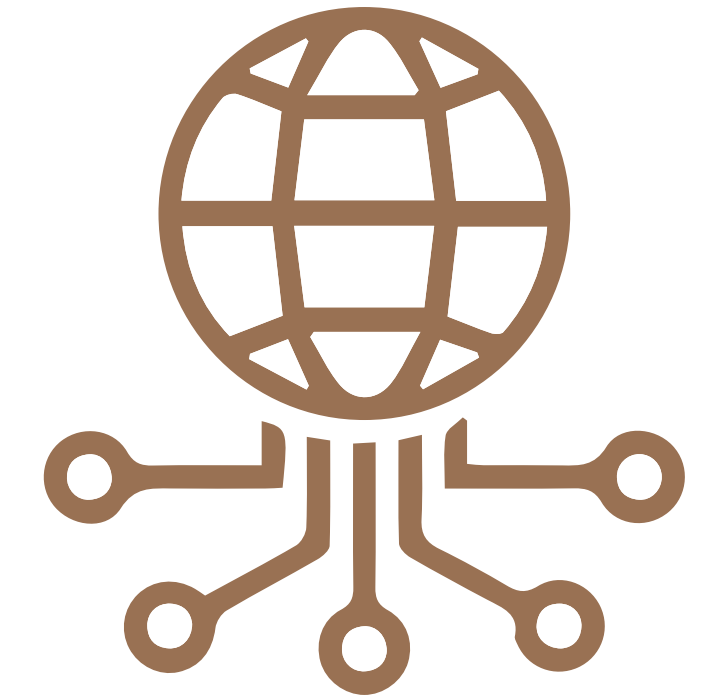
Dr. Neha Satak
Astrome Technologies, Bengaluru, Karnataka



Providing Internet for All

As a young nation, India's growing population seeks access to internet and broadband services. However, advances in this field still exclude a significant section of the population - the rural communities. Dr. Neha Satak, who holds a PhD from Texas A&M University in Aerospace Engineering, attempts to solve this problem through her company, Astrome. Astrome has created a new concept of providing internet to those in rural communities through launching a constellation of 198 satellites into the Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Her patented millimeter wave technology is said to be revolutionary, and is set to provide lightning speed broadband internet of 50 to 400 Mbps even in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. With a sound focus on core technology apart from innovative business solutions, this disruptive solution has the potential to transform more than 4 billion lives across the globe.



S4S Technologies' solar conduction dryers increase vegetable shelf life to six months and enable rural women micro-entrepreneurs to enhance the quality of farm produce



Nidhi Pant
S4S Technologies, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Protecting Farmer Livelihoods and Reducing Crop Wastage

The perishable nature of crops impacts farmers enormously. They often sell their products for cheaper prices later in the day as a relatively large portion of what they produce rots and turns to waste. To combat this issue around waste and farmer living standards, Nidhi Pant, who leads the Science for Society team, has helped create measures to minimise crop waste and improve farmers' livelihoods. Their innovative idea of selling dehydrated vegetable snacks is being consumed by more than 10 lakh people across India.

Farmer suicide is a growing problem in Indian society and the distress associated with owning land and creating a steady flow of income is evident. S4S Technologies provides the relevant technology to farmers to preserve their crops through dehydration, creating an alternate stream of income and protecting their livelihoods.



Making At-Home Composting Fun and Practical



Poonam Bir Kasturi
Daily Dump, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Founded by Poonam Bir Kasturi in 2006, the Daily Dump focuses on building products and services for decentralised waste management in homes, community offices and public spaces. Where many did not see composting as a mode of waste management, Poonam firmly believed in its merit. This designer from National Institute of Design (NID) has brought together design thinking, traditional pottery and the science of composting to lessen the load on public agencies dealing with garbage. Daily Dump also provides its urban audience a fun, simple and innovative way to save the planet from the comforts of their home.

Her company offers a wide variety of segregation products, ranging from composters to informational books and more. Poonam's goal is to try and minimize the byproducts of food waste that end up in our nation's landfills, water bodies, and air. Using her knowledge of design, Poonam attempts to challenge the misconceptions associated with at-home composting, making it a practical and viable venture.

Daily Dump focuses on creating easy and engaging solutions for sustainable urban lifestyles through portable composting techniques



Transforming India's Neonatal Care

More than 4,00,000 newborns die every year in India. Although tools exist to combat illnesses to which newborns are most susceptible, accessibility and affordability continue to remain an issue. To combat these preventable deaths, Pratyusha Pareddy founded her startup, NemoCare, in 2017. NemoCare aims to combat infant mortality and promote neonatal care.

Enrolling and undergoing the IIT-Hyderabad Healthcare Entrepreneurship Fellowship fostered Pratyusha's affinity to work in neonatal. Working with the Government of Gujarat on maternal healthcare for rural communities further exposed her to the harsh realities faced by many mothers and newborns. Pratyusha realized that creating a monitoring system that would detect preventable infections and illnesses such as Apnea and

Hypothermia could enable neonatal healthcare workers to take action promptly. Consequently, NemoCare has been able to impact over 20,000 babies across India and assist over 300 frontline health workers.



NemoCare strives to end all preventable neonatal and maternal deaths by building innovative affordable and accessible monitoring solutions for emerging markets

Pratyusha Pareddy
NemoCare Wellness, Hyderabad, Telangana

Empowering the Specially Abled to Live Life with Dignity and Independence

Dr. Radhike Khanna
OM Creations Trust, Mumbai, Maharashtra



India's competitive education system sometimes fails to recognize the different approaches to learning that are required to make students from all walks of life blossom academically and socially. This is particularly true for Dr. Radhike Khanna's intellectually disabled students. She founded Om Creations Trust, a non-profit organization which is dedicated to personalizing education for intellectually disabled girls and women.

Founded in 1991, the Trust works towards enabling girls diagnosed with Down Syndrome to lead relatively independent lives and provide them with

the skills that can help them earn an income. These activities empower young girls by making them self-sufficient and financially independent in a controlled environment. The Trust trains their beneficiaries to create artwork and foodstuffs for sale. The proceeds from this are used for the functioning of the NGO and the development of the girls involved with the Trust. Dr. Khanna believes that her efforts are not only a form of therapy but also a source of earning for these children that require special care.

Through professional training and support, OM Creations empowers women with disabilities to lead a life of dignity





Revolutionizing India's Education Landscape - One Teacher at a Time

Ramya Venkataraman
Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA), Bengaluru, Karnataka

The United Nations lists attaining a quality education as its fourth Sustainable Development Goal. In India, a country with significant disparity between education systems, Ramya Venkataraman attempts to bridge this gap in quality. India suffers from a shortage of 12 lakh teachers within the education system. However, this gap continues to grow as there is little aspiration to become a teacher due to the absence of incentives and aid to improve their skills and capacity.

To solve this issue, the Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA) was founded in 2014 by Ramya. The company has

created a certification framework that allows for teachers' skills and competency to be assessed as well as improved. Through her organisation, Ramya is helping revamp the education system and incentivize teachers to better their qualifications. CENTA's framework focuses on three main areas: core competencies, professional competencies, and technical competencies. In addressing these three key areas, CENTA is able to provide reliable teachers who will educate the next generation.

CENTA makes the noble profession of teaching more aspirational by connecting outstanding teachers to career opportunities, rewards and recognition



Through their products, Ecoware Solutions aims to eliminate waste, reimagine resource productivity and enhance customer value proposition

Rhea Mazumdar Singhal
Ecoware Solutions, Noida Uttar Pradesh



Reuse it or Refuse it: Beating Plastic Pollution

Upon her return to India in 2009, Rhea Mazumdar Singhal was taken aback by the sheer amount of crop burning and plastic waste creation that occurs in India. With a background in Pharmacology, Rhea was well aware of the harmful impact plastic waste can have, not only on the environment but also on the human body. As she shopped for her daughter's birthday in the search of safe yet disposable

packaging, she was shocked to find that there were no such options. This incident encouraged her to try her hand at resolving the problem of sustainable food packaging in India.

Founded in 2010, Ecoware is the first and largest company dedicated to the production of sustainable packaging. The organisation has championed the shift to

biodegradable food packaging alternatives in India. Today, Ecoware works with many restaurants, encouraging them to realize the necessity of switching to sustainable food packaging alternatives. One of the company's key milestones has been to work with the Indian Railways, one of India's largest users of food packaging, to switch to the more sustainable options.





Rinka Banerjee
Thinking Forks Consulting, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Providing End-to-End R&D Solutions to the Food Industry

Thinking Forks is a consulting organisation, with expertise in the food and nutrition industry. The organisation was founded in 2014 by Rinka Banerjee, who comes with over 19 years of industry experience. The consulting organisation prioritises R&D, which has allowed them to create products to combat acute malnutrition; a program aligned with the Indian Government's public health efforts. They have also worked with entities to develop a commercially viable, ready-to-transfer technology in the realm of child nutrition.

Along with its social triumphs, Thinking Forks has helped develop and launch

many Indian startups in the field of healthy food products. They wish to work with small and large businesses and provide solutions regarding product and packaging development, establishing feasibility on pilot and commercial scale, shelf life, nutrition & health communication, regulatory compliance & commercial manufacturing. The company is now working towards creating products for those who suffer from diabetes. With the help of their innovative technologies, they are also creating meal replacements.

Thinking Forks envisions itself to be a key enabler of growth in the food industry through a creative blend of design thinking, consumer insights and industry expertise



Increasing Access to Potable Water

Based in Kolkata, Rituparna Das' company Hydrotec Solutions aims to help those with limited access to clean and affordable drinking water. The social startup, founded in 2014, has been successful in implementing its technologies in schools, hospitals, factories and rural and urban communities across India.

The company provides many forms of water accessibility, ranging from their AROSIA Water ATMs to industrial pumps and treatment plants. Rituparna was set on using technology that could solve the water crisis many rural and urban communities in India face. The IOT real time monitoring technology allows for the quality of water to be constantly assessed, ensuring safe drinking water for those who now have access to it.



Hydrotec Solutions provides solar powered and cloud connected water dispensing systems that enable sustainable water management techniques

Rituparna Das
Hydrotech Solutions, Kolkata, West Bengal



Taru Naturals strives to build self-sufficiency across the value chain for farm produce and envisions to safeguard sustainable rural livelihoods & double small-scale farmer incomes

Ruchi Jain
Taru Naturals, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Empowering Small-Scale Farmers Through Technology and Fair Trade Markets

With topsoil depletion, groundwater contamination, continued neglect of the living, and working conditions for farm labourers, there has been mounting economic and environmental concerns for the agricultural community. This made Ruchi Jain found Taru Naturals. Quitting her high paying corporate job, Ruchi has focused on sustainable agriculture, striving to empower a network of small-scale

farmers by leveraging upon India's ancient wisdom and sustainable agricultural practices, while ensuring smarter ways of incomes for the communities Taru engages with.

Her goal has been to make this community more resource efficient, by enabling them to break free from the shackles of poverty and promote gender equality.

The organisation trains these farmers in regenerative agriculture techniques, in addition to providing them with the small-scale technology needed for their businesses to flourish. Ruchi has been able to impact the lives of more than 3,000 farmers across India, helping them connect with fair trade markets and restaurants to sell their produce.



Teach for India provides opportunities for promising youth to tackle the grassroots realities of the Indian education system

Shaheen Mistri
Teach for India, Mumbai, Maharashtra



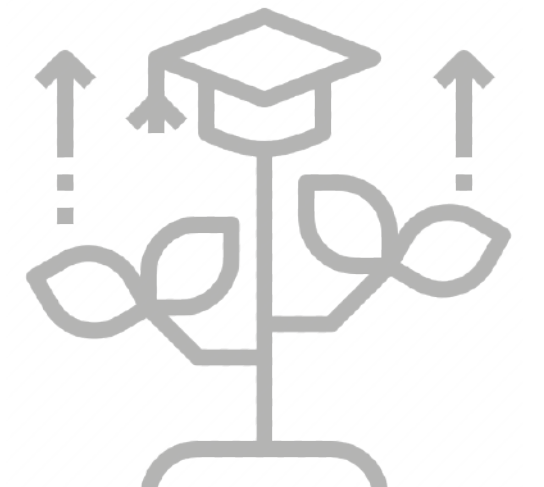
Building a Movement of Leaders to Transform the Education System

While walking through Mumbai's slums, Shaheen Mistri saw the plight of neglected children in India's most marginalized and forgotten communities. With a firm belief that the lack of education was at the root of many problems faced by these communities, Shaheen Mistri focused her efforts on projects that helped empower the young, neglected children of India's slums. She even chose to relocate her education from Tufts University to St. Xavier's College, to be more actively involved in her efforts to help the disadvantaged youth.

With her growing concerns regarding India's education system, Shaheen could no longer

be complacent. She founded Teach for India in 2008 in an effort to solve the problems she had identified in India's education sector. Teach for India, based on the proven model of Teach for America, aims to educate children from the most disadvantaged communities, to provide them with the means to lift themselves out of poverty.

Teach for India has made a fundamental change to the way disadvantaged children attain education by building a cohort of young leaders to fuel the movement of overcoming the inequalities that exist in India's education system. Today, Teach for India has nearly 38,000 students and over 1,000 fellows.





Shaikh Raziya
Bastar Foods, Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh

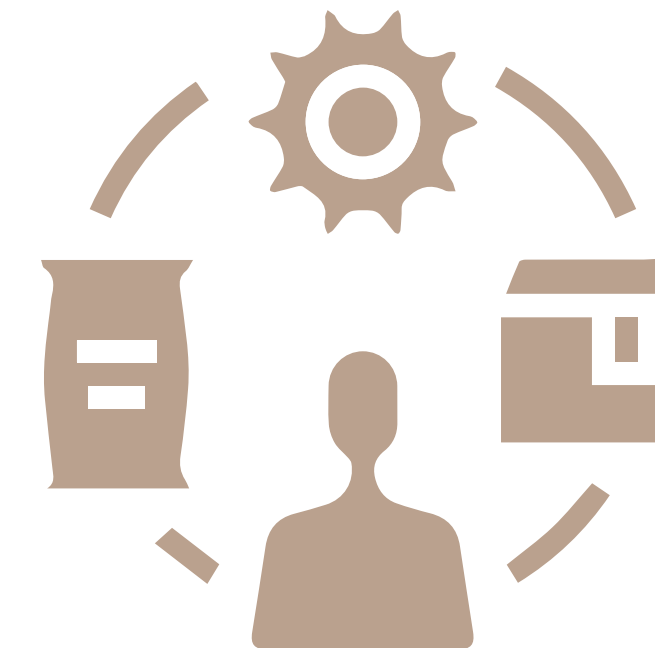
Innovating Food Technologies to Empower Rural Communities

Bastar Foods, founded by Jagdalpur native Raziya attempts to bring R&D in food technologies to the tribal belt of Bastar and in surrounding areas of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Her vision is to implement a strong food supply chain, raise awareness on nutrition and promote health through good quality food.

Raziya through Bastar Foods aims to combat the many obstacles women in

her community face while attempting to better their lives. Bastar Foods has set up factories in rural communities that teach women about food sciences, allowing them to learn food production and create eatables such as laddoos, which they sell to maintain a steady flow of income. Bastar Foods has helped empower and mobilize women in rural areas to better their knowledge and skills in food production and has made them financially independent.

Bastar Foods is bringing growth and development to the food industry in south Chhattisgarh by upskilling rural women on best practices in food tech



Creating Inclusion Through Greater Accessibility

Over 26 million Indians are differently-abled. People with disabilities face an insurmountable number of barriers in society, making living independently a challenge. Her mentor's disability inspired Shilpi Kapoor to innovate technology for the benefit of the disabled population. She started BarrierBreak, a company focused on the accessibility of technology for those with disabilities. The company uses digital access as a way to bridge some of the challenges differently-abled people face daily.

Founded on three principles: technology, hiring the differently-abled, and a for-profit model, BarrierBreak creates technologies that help those who do not have the motor abilities to partake in physical activities that can bring knowledge and joy. These products range from assistive listening devices, open inclusive libraries, braille displays and more.



BarrierBreak dreams of a society with ease of access to employment, education, social life and independent living for all through the support of technology

Shilpi Kapoor
BarrierBreak, Mumbai, Maharashtra



Bioscan Research offers an affordable, handy and non-invasive screening tool that effectively detects, the often undiagnosed, intracranial bleeding

Shilpa Malik
Bioscan Research, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Enabling Early Detection of Diseases

Over a million people in India are injured due to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Bioscan, founded by Shilpa Malik, provides services that enable early detection of TBI caused by various forms of accidents such as falling, violence, natural calamities, and road accidents. The Ahmedabad-based startup has developed an affordable, non-invasive screening tool for a quick on site scan that can be effectively used to detect intracranial haemorrhage in two minutes,

that can be used by a lay person. One key reason TBI goes untreated is because patients do not feel the need to pursue further medical tests when they experience mild symptoms, which results in irreversible brain damage. Shilpa's company has proven that making products easily accessible and portable can help reduce the number of TBI patients that go unadministered.



Bodhi Health Education aims to improve knowledge and skills of frontline health professionals in India

Shrutika Girdhar
Bodhi Health Education, Gurugram, Haryana



Upskilling Healthcare's Frontline Workers

Health workers form the backbone of India's public health systems. With the lack of access to hospitals and doctors, many rely on their treatments to be carried out by nurses and frontline health workers. Noticing this pattern in the Indian society, Shrutika Girdhar and her partner founded Bodhi Health Education in 2012. The organization has set up a platform dedicated to providing quality training to health workers, thus improving their skilling and efficacy. Through this venture, Shrutika aims to tackle the shortage of skilled frontline health workers in India.

Using low cost mobile technology allied with e-learning, Bodhi Health Education has created a scalable and valuable resource to assist Indian health workers in their training. Since its inception, Bodhi Health Education's application has been utilized by more than 45,000 medical students and medical professionals, and is projected to impact 100 million Indians in various regions.



Making Traditional Jewellery Aspirational

Shuchi Pandya, a Wharton Business School alumna realized a paradigm shift in Indian society in terms of decision making when it came to the purchase of jewellery - an industry previously dominated by men. Upon this realization, Shuchi created Pipa Bella, a company that aims to create 'aspirational yet affordable' jewellery.

Pipa Bella tries to capture the Indian woman's identity and sense of style. The in-house design team often incorporates traditional Indian manufacturing techniques in the jewellery design and focuses on perfection. Banking heavily on the use of technology to run her business, Shuchi uses data to predict market trends that will hit India in the near future and leverages the latest innovations for her company's inventory planning. With exquisite quality, the brand has now amassed a loyal following among its urban audience.



The Pipa Bella brand has been revolutionizing digital fashion with its range of classic and bold accessories for the modern Indian woman

Shuchi Pandya
Pipa Bella Accessories, Mumbai, Maharashtra



Making Learning Fun and Engaging

Founded in 2017 by Sneha Sundaram, Kutuki is a company that focuses on bridging the learning gap that exists in Indian pre-schools. While exposure to western television programs are abundant in the homes of young children, the learning from these are few. Through their mobile application, Kutuki provides an elaborate curriculum for preschool students which banks on different forms of stimuli such as music, colors, and words.

Kutuki has garnered over 50,000 users till date and attempts to use data to better their understanding of how information is received by these young children. The application's content includes many regional languages of India, thus being inclusive and accessible to all learners.



Kutuki nurtures the natural curiosity of children through engaging, meaningful and age appropriate and content for early learning

Sneha Sundaram
Kutuki, Bengaluru, Karnataka

By digitizing 120 schools, launching 230 libraries and setting up 140 playgrounds, 17000ft attempts to enrich livelihoods in remote areas of India and empower marginalized communities



Sujata Sahu
17000 ft Foundation, Gurugram, Haryana

Transforming Education in Ladakh

17000 ft Foundation is a social enterprise focused on providing education and exposure to the communities in the most rural and isolated regions of Ladakh. The company was founded when avid trekker, Sujata Sahu, went on a three day trek to a remote village in Ladakh. Seeing eager children wanting to learn even though the contents of textbooks were alien to them, inspired her to start 17000 ft Foundation.

17000 ft Foundation aims to reduce the desperate exodus of indigenous communities to faraway cities. The organisation works to educate children and adults in the remote

regions of Ladakh, along with building infrastructure and creating exposure for the rest of society. Her foundation has worked with over 250 communities in Ladakh, mobilising community members to contribute to their development efforts.

The program focuses on improving education in government schools, creating livelihood opportunities, and generating exposure through interaction with the outside world. Their work spans the entire 65,000 sq. km. of Ladakh, and aims to impact other similarly remote and inaccessible regions.



LEADERSHIP TEAM



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Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog



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