



5th to 7th September 2025



A Brief History

The idea of finding Unsung Heroes of Bharat emerged from a revolutionary National Youth Conference – Yugaantar, which was held in The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda for the first time in 2012. Subsequently, the other editions of the Conference followed in 2018, 2019 & 2020 respectively.

The highlight and the most touching element of each edition of Yugaantar was "*Unsung Heroes*" also known as "*Yugaantar Awardees*". These individuals, driven by a noble cause, have been making a significant impact on society without seeking recognition or the limelight. Over the years, more than 75+ such heroes have been discovered across India and brought into the public eye, ensuring that their invaluable contributions receive the recognition they truly deserve.

With the vision to unite like-minded individuals, striving to bring Positive Change in society, Yugaantar became a platform that brought not only real-life stories of people on a single platform but also encouraged people to take up the Changemaking process.



AN IDEA HAS NO BAR,
A CHANGEMAKER HAS NO LIMIT



Gujarat Changemaker Meet (GCM)

Walking on the path of “Finding and Recognizing the Real Unsung Heroes,” Gujarat Changemakers Meet (GCM) was introduced by Samanway Pratishthan in association with the India Foundation in July 2024. Building on this vision, GCM emerged as a transformative initiative, creating tremendous waves across Gujarat. The Meet was organized on July 20 & 21, 2024 at i-Hub, Government of Gujarat Campus, bringing together 57 Changemakers from all across Gujarat in on a single platform. These individuals were actively driving impact in diverse fields, including education, healthcare, preservation of armed forces history, anti-human trafficking, agricultural innovations, and social movements.

“A Changemaker is an individual, a group of individuals, an entity or an institution striving to bring a POSITIVE CHANGE in society.” Being the drivers of positive change, they “Nirakarans” rather than just discussing the “Kaarans”.



The Changemakers Network (TCN)



CHANGE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

Building upon the success and vision of the Gujarat Changemakers Meet (GCM), the concept of The Changemakers Network (TCN) emerged as the next step in driving India towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. TCN envisions creating a National platform to identify, connect and empower the unsung heroes driving positive change across the country.

The 1st National Changemakers Meet 2025

The National Changemakers Meet 2025, a unique platform, brings together Changemakers “Driving Positive Change” throughout the nation on the grassroots level, embodying the spirit of **“कारण नहीं निराकरण”**. These are real heroes who move beyond discussions and solve problems with existing resources. They lead by example, with the vision to see differently and the drive to create change.

In its inaugural edition, the Meet has brought 51 Changemakers from 28 states of India representing diverse categories, Government, Individuals, Institutions, NGOs, Corporates, Social Impact Enablers, and Public Administration onto a single stage to create a broader impact on society and the nation at large. Guided by the mission **“समस्या से समाधान की ओर”** (From Problems to Solutions), the Meet facilitates the exchange of ideas and experiences, leverages networks and collective strengths, and creates a community of changemakers that transcends geographical boundaries.

The Meet has been organized by Samanway Pratishthan, a Vadodara-based non-profit organization, in collaboration with the India Foundation, a Delhi-based think tank working closely with the Government on policy-level initiatives. The prestigious Banas Dairy, Asia’s largest dairy cooperative, proudly hosted this historic gathering from September 5 to 7, 2025.



WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE

OUR VISION

Unleashing the potential of Changemakers by creating an ecosystem where interlinkages is at the heart of social initiatives and work for Viksit Bharat 2047.

WHO WE ARE,WHAT WE DO

OUR MISSION

To fill in the gaps between the needs and wants for social impacts, by plugging in all the stakeholders, i.e. Civilian Changemakers, Industries and their CSR wings, and the Government together.



OBJECTIVES

- To converge the efforts of various stakeholders and bring impact on the ground
- Celebrate the Changemakers and their work
- To structuralize and institutionalize the social efforts of Changemakers
- To leverage the existing networks and support systems available
- To create a strong networking platform for Changemakers
- To build their capacity and enhance their skills for social change

OUR MODEL



51 Changemakers

We bring together 51 Impactful Changemakers from all across India.



Work

Working towards bringing a Positive Change at their level in any segment or category



Age

No age criteria



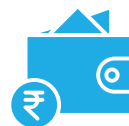
Category

A Changemaker can work in any capacity, like an individual, NGO, Startup, CSR wing/Foundations, Content creators etc.



Experience

Experience is preferably minimum 3 years but we would love to consider exceptional cases too.



Expenses

Just precious time of three full days

WAY FORWARD...

YEAR 2025-26

The Changemakers Network aims to create an ecosystem of Changemakers, which will include:

ANNUAL CHANGEMAKERS MEET

Bringing all the Changemakers till date on a single platform

CHANGEMAKERS PODCAST

Covering and leveraging the real life stories of Changemakers

YUGAANTAR YATRA

Travelling through the length of Bharat to discover and engage with Changemakers on field.

CHANGEMAKERS PORTAL

A one-stop solution for Changemakers to connect and collaborate

Organised by



"Samanway Pratishthan" an organization, highly committed to taking the entire society to a higher level of enlightenment through correct thinking, conduct, and efforts. Samanway Pratishthan is a Vadodara based organisation, registered with the Office of Charity Commissioner under the number F/2684/Vadodara and is accredited with Certificates.

Hosted by



Banas Dairy, based in Palanpur, Banaskantha, is one of India's largest dairy cooperatives and a key member of Amul (GCMMF). It empowers over 5 lakh farmers across thousands of villages. Focused on rural development, innovation, and sustainability, Banas Dairy is a leading example of how cooperative strength can drive inclusive growth and communities.

In Association With



India Foundation is an independent research centre focusing on the issues, challenges and opportunities of the Indian polity. It seeks to articulate Indian nationalistic perspective on issues. India Foundation's vision is to be a premier think tank that can help understand the Indian civilizational influence on our contemporary society.



OUR DEFINITION

CHANGEMAKER

“A changemaker is an individual, a group of individuals, an entity or an institution striving to bring a positive change in the society.”

*Ideas Are Limitless, And So Are
The Changemakers Who Bring Them To Life.*

JOURNEY SO FAR

The idea of finding Unsung Heroes of Bharat emerged from a revolutionary National Youth Conference – Yugaantar, which was held in The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda for the first time in 2012. Subsequently, the other editions of the Conference followed in 2018, 2019 & 2020 respectively. The highlight and the most touching element of each edition of Yugaantar was "Unsung Heroes" also known as "Yugaantar Awardees". Walking on the path of "Finding and Recognizing the Real Unsung Heroes," Gujarat Changemakers Meet (GCM) was introduced by Samanway Pratishthan in association with the India Foundation in July 2024. Building upon the success and vision of the Gujarat Changemakers Meet (GCM), the concept of The Changemakers Network (TCN) emerged as the next step in driving India towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

2012



Youth for Socio-
Political Changes
in India

2016



Institute of Leadership
and Governance (ILG)

2018



भारत का विश्व को योगदान
(India's Contribution to
the World)

More than 150 Heroes from all corners of India have been celebrated for their extraordinary contributions since 2012 and the legacy continues....



2019

2020

2024

2025



राष्ट्र

(Rashtra-Nation)
From Controversies
to Clarity



विविधता मे एकता

"विविधता मे एकता"
"Unity In Diversity"



GUJARAT
CHANGEMAKERS
MEET

समस्या से समाधान की ओर

GCM

समस्या से समाधान
की ओर



THE
CHANGEMAKERS
NETWORK

समस्या से समाधान की ओर

TCN

समस्या से समाधान
की ओर

OUR MENTORS



Dr. Jigar Inamdar

Chairman, Ram LalAnand College,
Delhi University

Organiser



Premraj Keshyep

Chairman, CII Gujarat State
Council & Managing Director,
Conmat Heavy Industries



Hiranmay Mahanta

CEO, I-HUB Government
of Gujarat



Dr. Reena Bhatia

HOD, Clothing & Textiles,
The M.S. University of Baroda



Arjun Solanki

Director Human Resources,
Saurer India



Parthesh Vyas

Co-Founder, Fulcrum -
Capitalizing CSR



Nimish Narshana

Physics Teacher & Founder,
Inspirons Academy of Science (IAS) &
The Complete System (TCS)



Ms. Archana Joshi

Consultant - Public Private
Partnership



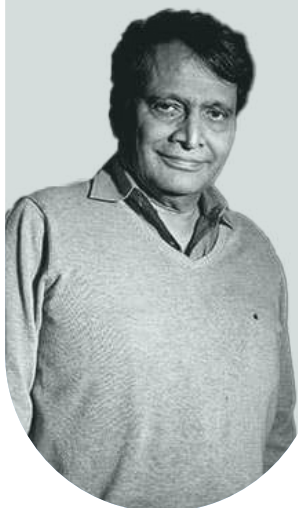
Bhargav Parekh

Senior Program Manager
Piramal Foundation,
Coordinator - SHIL

OUR PILLARS

Where policies cannot reach, a changemaker can!

Shri Suresh Prabhu
Chancellor,
Rishihood University &
Former Union Minister,
Government of India



Dr Ram Madhav
President
India Foundation



Shri Shankar Chaudhary
Speaker of Gujarat
Legislative Assembly



Shri Ajay Ranka
Chairman &
Managing Director,
Zydex Group



Dr. Hemang Joshi
Member of Parliament
(Lok Sabha) Vadodara
Constituency



Shri Yatin Gupte
Chairman, Wardwizard
Group

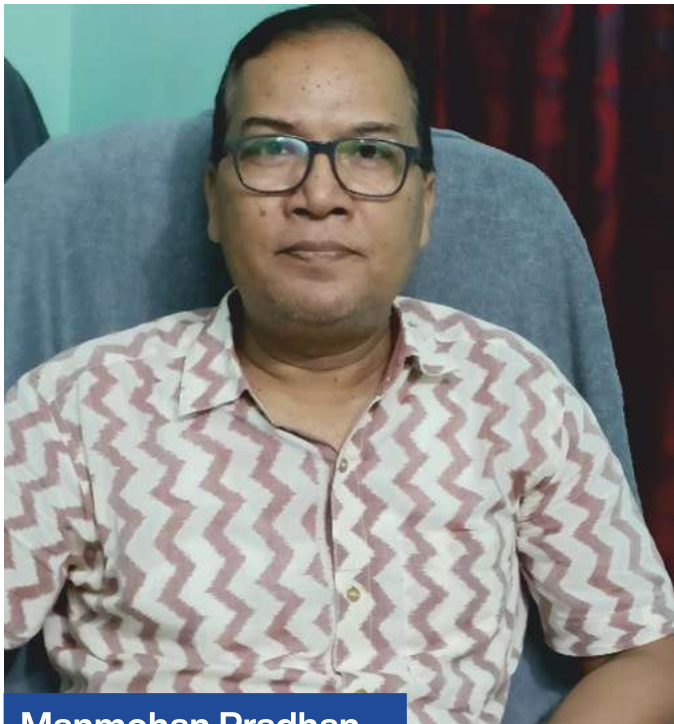




बदलाव की शुरुआत
हमसे होती है

Presenting the Changemakers of

1ST NATIONAL CHANGEMAKERS MEET 2025



Manmohan Pradhan
Executive Secretary

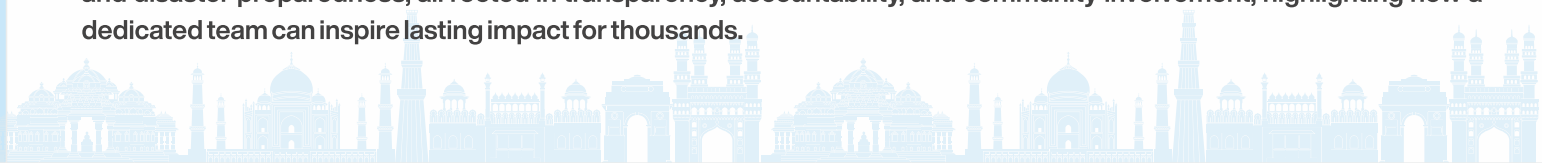
Agraneer, Odisha



A non-profit founded in 1989 by local youths in Mayurbhanj, Odisha, focused on tribal development and sustainable progress to improve marginalized communities through education, livelihood, health, and capacity-building initiatives.

Since its inception in 1989, Agraneer has been dedicated to supporting and empowering the tribal communities of Mayurbhanj, Odisha, working towards a sustainable and equitable society where every individual, regardless of caste, creed, or gender, can live with dignity. Its grassroots efforts have positively impacted nearly 30,000 people through diverse development initiatives. In 2024–25, Agraneer strengthened its role by focusing on education, renewable energy, women's empowerment, disaster preparedness, and social research. The establishment of "Digital Community Schools" is one of the most significant achievements. By using solar-powered projectors and iPads, Agraneer created inclusive spaces for dropouts and working children to continue their education. Today, 81 tribal children are learning in three community centers, bridging the digital divide in some of the most underserved villages. Access to clean and reliable energy has been another life-changing intervention. With 100 decentralized solar home lighting systems, 15 solar streetlights, and two microgrid systems installed, Agraneer illuminated households, schools, and streets in non-grid villages, ensuring not only light but also safety, extended study hours, and reduced dependency on kerosene. The initiative has also created local livelihood opportunities by training "Solar Mamas", whereby local women learn solar electrification skills to bring sustainable energy solutions to rural communities, empowering them to become community leaders and technicians. They also run "Solar Digital Night Schools" in the Kaptipada block of Mayurbhanj, providing educational opportunities for children who are unable to attend regular school during the day by utilizing solar power and digital resources. At the heart of the Foundation's mission is Women's Empowerment. Through the "Aage Badhein" Financial Literacy Program, 200 rural women enhanced their knowledge of savings, budgeting, and digital transactions. By making women confident in handling finances, Agraneer strengthened their role as decision-makers in households and communities. To strengthen disaster preparedness, Agraneer facilitated the creation of Village Disaster Management Plans (VDMPs) for 30 villages, training community members to effectively handle emergencies. Simultaneously, the organization provided its expertise for a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) study in Bhadrak district, supporting data-driven and informed policymaking.

Agraneer drives sustainable change through digital education, women's financial empowerment, solar power projects, and disaster preparedness, all rooted in transparency, accountability, and community involvement, highlighting how a dedicated team can inspire lasting impact for thousands.





Mr. Ashwinbhai N. Patel
Founder & Chairman

Bal Gopal Savings & Credit
Cooperative (बालगोपाल मंडळी)
Gujarat

Meet the Architect Behind India's First Children's Cooperative

From the heart of Sabarkantha district, Gujarat, Ashwinbhai N. Patel is leading by example in financial innovation. Driven by a vision to empower children with the virtues of saving, responsibility, and self-reliance, he founded the Bal Gopal Savings & Credit Cooperative Mandali—the First registered Children's Cooperative Society in India. His leadership, honed as the former President of the Idar Taluka Panchayat, transformed an innovative idea into a movement spanning 350 villages and impacting thousands of young lives. The genesis of this movement was humble yet profound. Mr. Patel began by distributing Piggy Banks (बचतपेटी) among rural children, encouraging them to deposit spare coins and practice daily savings. What started as a gesture to instill money management skills quickly evolved into a community network with 30,000 active child members by 2025. Each child is not only a member but an active participant, attending regular meetings where they learn about financial discipline, solidarity, and ethical living. By March 2025, the children's cooperative had amassed savings of over ₹27 crore, highlighting the remarkable capacity of young savers when given the right support and guidance. However, the impact of his vision transcends numbers. The cooperative acts as a guiding platform for value-based education. More than 5,000 children have taken part in counseling sessions designed to prevent addictions and promote healthy, positive habits. Members are taught the importance of sensible saving and are encouraged to invest their earnings in educational pursuits, healthcare, and future opportunities. The touch extends to families as well: parents of the young savers can avail of microloans from the cooperative, making the initiative a lifeline not just for children but entire households. Ashwinbhai Patel's model is an inspiring example of how financial literacy and social responsibility can be instilled from a young age. By actively involving children in collective savings, responsible lending, and community decision-making, he is nurturing future citizens who blend financial prudence with strong ethical values. The Bal Gopal Mandali is now recognized both at the state and national levels for its pioneering contributions to social development.

By placing trust and responsibility in children, Ashwinbhai Patel has sparked a ripple effect, i.e., cultivating young changemakers whose impact uplifts entire communities. His pioneering model proves that empowered young minds become catalysts for transformation, carrying forward values that uplift families and entire communities.





Chanphua Wangsu

Arunachal Pradesh



He has made a significant contribution to the educational advancement of Longding district, Arunachal Pradesh, through his charity tuitions and the establishment of a free library.

In the Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh, where opportunities are limited, social activist Chanphua Wangsu has dedicated himself since 2017 to transforming education and youth empowerment, turning a modest charity tuition centre at his home into a hope to study for countless students. After completing his education, he initially started taking tuition classes to earn a side income. However, even a nominal fee of Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 was a heavy financial burden for many students, causing them to drop out and eventually leave education to pursue livelihoods that could sustain them. Deeply concerned that education should never be halted due to financial constraints, he began offering charity tuition classes. Motivated by the pressing concern that very few civil servants were qualifying from their region, he took the initiative to set up a reading room equipped with resources for these aspirants, with support of local governance authorities. Beyond running charity tuition classes, Chanphua established a free library-cum-reading room tailored for present students, civil services aspirants, and avid readers. Recognizing the need for holistic development, he introduced extracurricular activities focused on skill and personality growth every year. His efforts to conduct free mock test series for various government examination aspirants, including Sub Inspector, CGL, and others, have bolstered many youths' confidence and preparedness. Moreover, free computer courses and crash courses for APSSB aspirants, in collaboration with the District Information and Public Relations Office (DIPRO) Longding, have been instrumental in equipping learners with relevant skills for today's competitive environment. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, he volunteered to assist the district administration in combating the crisis by innovating and donating PPE kits and touring villages across Longding to raise awareness about health and hygiene. Importantly, he maintained the continuity of education by voluntarily teaching students, including Sainik School aspirants, ensuring that the disruptions caused by the pandemic did not halt learning. His proactive approach kept the educational spirit alive during challenging times. In 2022, he received an appreciation certificate from the Wancho Society in the presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and an Appreciation Certificate from the Central Oriah Committee 2022 for his impactful work. He also celebrates community milestones, such as Children's Day at his tuition center, and leads cleanliness drives during local elections.

Today, the Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh stands strong in education, with significant contributions from dedicated youth like Chanphua Wangsu.





Mr. Chenithung Humtsoe
Chief Functionary and Executive Director

**Bethesda Youth Welfare Centre (BYWC),
Nagaland**



He left a Government Job to work for the youth of Nagaland to come out from the influence of drugs and alcoholism.

Nagaland, renowned for its vibrant culture and natural beauty, has also grappled with significant social challenges. In the mid-1980s, the state experienced a peak in drug addiction, which, along with the rise of HIV/AIDS, harshly impacted its social fabric. Addressing this, the Bethesda Youth Welfare Centre (BYWC), led by Chenithung Humtsoe, has worked tirelessly across the state. Their efforts have driven a remarkable positive change, reducing the HIV prevalence among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in Nagaland from 40% in 1997 to below 5%. A native of Lower Range of Wokha District from the Lotha Naga Tribe, Humtsoe made a powerful choice at the age of 23, leaving his secure government job as an Excise Officer to dedicate his life to social service. Motivated by deep concern for the youth of Nagaland, he joined BYWC to help young people overcome the destructive grip of alcoholism and drug addiction and guide them toward a progressive future. His work is deeply intertwined with the region's challenges, particularly drug dependency and HIV/AIDS. In the mid-1980s, when drug addiction was at its peak in Nagaland, BYWC is credited with being a "Saviour Angel" for drug addicts who faced ignorance and discrimination. Under his leadership, the center has sheltered and rehabilitated multitudes of former addicts, with many experiencing a "second rebirth" and now living normal lives. A professionally trained expert in Addiction Recovery Management and Urban Ministries from the International Centre for Urban Training (ICUT), San Jose, USA, Mr. Humtsoe has travelled globally as a voice of lived leadership, yet he remains deeply rooted in the struggles and resilience of his people. He also co-founded and led several important networks, including the Network of Nagaland Drugs and HIV Organisation (N-NAGA-DAO), North East Harm Reduction Network (NEIHRN), North East India HIV/AIDS Network (NEIHAN), Nagaland NGOs Forum (NNF), and the North East Dialogue Forum (NEDF). He is also a life member of the Indian Red Cross Society and the Christian AIDS National Alliance (CANAN).

Humtsoe embodies his core philosophy that "Life is Hope and Hope is Life", a principle that continues to guide his work in creating a more sustainable and hopeful future for the youth of Nagaland and beyond. His work for over 38 years is commendable beyond words!





Dr. Alexandar Das
Founder, Director & CEO

Aryalex Foundation for Social Activities (AAFSA), Odisha



Meet the person behind “My Home Green Home” and other such initiatives bringing change at the grassroots level in Odisha!

Dr. Alexandar Das, an educationist, social worker, and motivational speaker, has emerged as a key figure in grassroots empowerment in Odisha. His journey is deeply rooted in his upbringing in rural Jajpur, where he was inspired by his father, a primary school teacher who believed in “*Education for All*”. This foundation stone instilled in Dr. Das a promise to uplift rural communities, artisans, women, and students, blending traditional values with an innovative and sustainable approach. With over 15 years of experience, Dr. Das serves as the Chairman of the Kalinga Group of Institutions (KGI). What began as a small computer institute has grown into a well-regarded conglomerate of educational institutions, all driven by the aim of providing affordable, high-quality education from KG to PG to rural communities. He has actively promoted Government Skill Development Schemes and offered scholarships to financially disadvantaged students through the Satyananda Scholarship Test (SST). These efforts have not gone unnoticed; he has been awarded the “*Most Inspiring Educationalist*” by the Governor of Odisha and the “*Best Youth Entrepreneur Award*”. A direct extension of his mission is the Aryalex Foundation for Social Activities (AAFSA), which he founded to consistently dedicate himself to the welfare of communities in times of crisis and to create a long-term impact. Their work is multifaceted, ranging from providing immediate assistance to victims of natural disasters and sponsoring the education of children affected by tragedies, such as the Coromandel Express train mishap. Beyond immediate relief, AAFSA focuses on sustainable livelihood generation. Dr. Das has played a pioneering role in reviving traditional art forms by strengthening artisan clusters, such as the Soro Stone Cluster, which provides a livelihood to over 1,200 artisans, and the Haripur Royal Dress Cluster, a women-centric initiative that has made over 500 rural women self-reliant. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he empowered local women by training them to make masks and persuading local authorities to purchase from them. A key aspect of Dr. Das's work is his focus on climate resilience through the “My Home Green Home” campaign. This initiative has successfully transformed 5,425 homes, making them free from single-use plastics. This achievement was made possible by the commitment of 3,000 “Greenvocates” who pledged to combat climate change at the grassroots level. He has also mobilized volunteers for mangrove conservation to protect Odisha's coastline. For his efforts towards Sustainability, he has also been awarded as Sustainability Global Changemaker in Dubai.

Dr. Alexandar Das exemplifies transformative leadership by blending education, social welfare, and environmental sustainability to empower Odisha's grassroots communities and inspire lasting change.





Dr. Sangita Jha
Founder of Customik India Pvt. Ltd.

Advait Welfare Foundation
West Bengal



Dr. Sangita Jha is on a mission to "Eradicate Period Poverty" so that no woman suffers due to critical health issues arising from poor hygiene during period days.

Dr. Sangita Jha, an alumna of IIMC Calcutta, the University of Vienna, and Visva-Bharati University, is not just a corporate advisor with over two decades of expertise in TQM, HR, ISO, Lean Six Sigma, POSH, and startups, she has emerged as one of India's strongest voices in the fight against period poverty. The turning point for Dr. Jha came when she recognized the painful reality that millions of girls and women in India face: the absence of menstrual health education, lack of access to hygienic products, and the deep-rooted stigmas associated with menstruation. This silence and neglect, she realized, were costing countless girls their education, health, dignity and even lives. Determined to act, she founded Advait Welfare Foundation and launched the flagship program "Period With Pride." Her project tackles the issue of menstrual health in a multi-pronged, sustainable way. It begins with Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) education in schools, conducted in collaboration with CSR partners. These sessions encourage open conversations, dispel myths and taboos and equip girls with scientific knowledge about their reproductive system and menstruation rights. To ensure practical solutions, her program provides free premium sanitary pads, installs vending machines in schools so that during school hours, sanitary pads are available and sets up incinerators for safe, hygienic and eco-friendly disposal of used sanitary pads, reducing absenteeism and promoting menstrual dignity. What makes her model innovative is its self-sustaining structure. Alongside education, local Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are trained and supported to run manufacturing and packaging units of sanitary pads. This guarantees a steady supply for schools and also ensures livelihood opportunities for women, transforming the fight against period poverty into a movement of "Women's Empowerment." So far, 1.2 lakh girls across India have been empowered with menstrual health education and access to safe products. Over 86 women have gained sustainable livelihoods through training and entrepreneurship opportunities. Her campaign has firmly communicated that "Period is Pride." She has received national awards, including *Women of Excellence*, *Wonder Woman by MSME*, *Social Impact Excellence by Rotary*, and *Women Empowerment Icon by Lions Club*.

Yet, for Dr. Jha, the journey is far from over. She is now preparing to file a PIL seeking a 'National Menstruation Rights Policy', aiming to guarantee education, awareness, and affordability of safe menstrual products for every woman and girl in India.



Dr. Sapan Kumar “Patralekh”

Jharkhand



He converted bare walls and village lanes into Blackboards to impart “Education” come what may!

From the remote villages of Dumka, Jharkhand, where poverty and lack of resources have long denied access to quality learning, Dr. Sapan Kumar Patralekh has emerged as a beacon of new hope. Known as the “Janak of the Blackboard Model,” he transformed education during the most difficult of times – the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools were closed and online learning was impossible for children in tribal and rural areas without internet or smartphones, Dr. Sapan created the “Har Ghar Vidyalaya – Blackboard Model.” With support from the community, the walls of homes, village lanes, and even electric poles became classrooms. He mixed mud, coal, lime, cow dung, and natural colors from leaves and flowers to turn bare walls and village lanes into blackboards. Every child had a blackboard near their doorstep, and villages turned into open schools. This low-cost, zero-investment idea not only kept children connected to education but also sparked awareness among parents and communities. What began in Jarmundi block of Dumka soon spread across Jharkhand and India, adopted in many states under names like Mohalla Class, Gali Pathshala, and Tola Kaksha. The model transcended borders, reaching countries like Japan, Germany, USA, England, Cyprus, Argentina, and Indonesia. Scholars from Osaka University researched it, while China’s CCTV-17 broadcast it internationally. During the Pandemic, this initiative educated lakhs of students across Jharkhand, ensuring first-generation learners did not slip into child labor, migration, or early marriage. Its impact drew national recognition and was praised by Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji in “Mann Ki Baat,” highlighted by NITI Aayog, MyGov, and international media. Professors abroad even recommended it for refugee camps as a sustainable education model. Beyond the Pandemic, Dr. Sapan continues to use the Blackboard Model to teach children, adults, and the elderly (ages 3 to 80) in Dumka’s villages. From literacy campaigns for marginalized communities to reducing school dropouts to creating green and vibrant schools with community participation, his work embodies Gandhiji’s vision of Gram Swaraj. Today, the Blackboard Model stands as a global symbol of inclusive, accessible, and innovative education. It proves that resources are secondary; what matters is compassion and commitment to do something for society.

Through his efforts, Dr. Sapan Kumar Patralekh has shown that true education extends beyond classrooms, embodying the idea that “all that is, is in the mind.” He believes education is the most powerful weapon against poverty and inequality.





Dr. Sunil Kalai
Founder

MONDRA (A Social Welfare Society)
Tripura



From “Roots to Routes”, Mr. Sunil Kalai is bringing a change with Entrepreneurship in Tripura with his Agricultural Farmland and Blue Economy!

Dr. Sunil Kalai is a multifaceted person whose passion has taken him in various ways in life, perfectly embodying the spirit of “Roots to Routes”. His work is dedicated to integrating academic knowledge with grassroots action to empower communities in Northeast India. As the founder of MONDRA, a social welfare society, his vision is to create sustainable livelihood models for tribal and rural populations. His approach goes beyond theory, directly linking education with practical rural innovation to support community development and entrepreneurship. Dr. Sunil Kalai, from the self-sustainable village of "Jampuijala," founded MONDRA, a non-profit society, on his late father's land to serve the community. MONDRA, which means “The Village Deity” and considers “Nature” as its God, focuses on promoting the welfare of humanity through education, health, and development for various groups, including children, women, youth, and farmers. Through MONDRA, he supports artisans and farmers, blending livelihood creation with cultural preservation. A key aspect of Dr. Kalai's impact is his hands-on approach to sustainable farming. He manages 40 Kanis of land where he practices integrated farming, including fish ponds, orchards, and horticulture. This farm serves as a "living classroom" where students, researchers, and local youth learn about sustainable agriculture, agro-tourism, and entrepreneurship. By linking academic theory with practical farming, he has developed a replicable model for sustainable livelihoods, directly inspiring a new generation of entrepreneurs. As both a passionate photographer and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Tripura University, he skillfully blends his passion and profession by teaching visual communication and providing students with hands-on exposure to live projects at MONDRA. In addition to this, Dr. Kalai actively mentors tribal and rural youth, helping them build confidence, acquire skills and find pathways to opportunity. His advocacy extends to peace education, women's empowerment, and cultural dignity. His journey from a humble village to an academic leader and social activist exemplifies his belief in moving “from problems to solutions,” making him a powerful symbol of innovation and inclusive progress for Tripura and beyond.

An academician, photographer, author, filmmaker, farmer, founder of MONDRA (a social welfare society) and social activist, he stands as a rare blend of scholarship and grassroots action.





Shubham Badhani
Ghoda Library

Uttarakhand



His "Ghoda Library" makes books available to children in remote areas and promotes inclusivity by engaging both children and adults in literacy activities.

Nestled in the rugged terrains of Uttarakhand's Nainital district, access to quality education has long posed a challenge for remote mountain communities, beset by frequent school closures due to landslides, heavy rains, and difficult road conditions. In response to these persistent barriers, Shubham Badhani, a librarian by profession based in Nainital, pioneered the innovative Ghoda Library, a mobile library service carried on horseback, designed to bring books and learning directly to children in far-flung villages. The inspiration for the Ghoda Library emerged from Shubham's firsthand experience witnessing how harsh monsoon seasons routinely shut down schools, leaving children disconnected from books and educational materials. Additionally, schools weren't always ready to give books to the children, fearing that they would be torn or damaged. Determined to bridge this gap, he devised a unique solution, "Ghoda Library," a horse laden with a collection of books would trot from village to village, stopping for reading sessions and encouraging a love for literature beyond traditional classrooms. Starting with just one horse and a modest collection of books, the Ghoda Library's journey began in villages such as Baghani, Jalna, Mahaldhura, Alekh, and nearby hamlets. The initiative quickly evolved into a community endeavor, with local parents volunteering their horses and villagers actively supporting the operation. NGOs like the Sankalp Youth Foundation have further bolstered the project by providing crucial books and funding. The Library's impact has been remarkable, ensuring continuous access to books and fostering inclusive literacy in over 12 mountain villages, even during times when road connectivity and normal schooling were impossible. Its innovative approach blends education with local culture, incorporating Hindi, Garhwali, and Kumaoni languages to make reading accessible and engaging. Ghoda Library has been praised by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, in Mann Ki Baat, applauding it as "A Meaningful Service to the Country in the Field of Education" and spotlighting how it sustains the reading habit among rural children despite geographic challenges. Looking ahead, the Ghoda Library envisions expanding its reach to more remote regions of Uttarakhand, introducing digital learning corners to connect children with global knowledge, and evolving into hubs for community dialogue on environment, health, and livelihoods.

In the remotest villages, often with just 10 to 12 homes, children eagerly await the arrival of the Ghoda Library, cherishing the precious gift of books that come to them on a rotational basis!





Mr. Abhishiek Agarwal
Founder & CEO

**Goodeebag (Ecovani Waste
Management Pvt. Ltd.), Telangana**



To make sustainable drywaste management so **effortlessly rewarding** that it becomes a natural part of every home, cultivating a greener future.

“ He gives you Goodee if you give him your “Ghar ka Kachara”!

Abhishiek Agarwal's entrepreneurial journey began with family roots and a sharp eye for opportunity. Born in Hyderabad and a graduate of G. Pulla Reddy Degree College, Abhishiek learned early that progress required vision and patience. He entered the family garment business in 2009, developing his business acumen before founding Raghav Roadlines in 2011. Over the next decade, he transformed a modest logistics operation into a fleet of 70 vehicles, acquiring the skills and financial insight that would later underpin a much larger ambition. In 2022, driven by mounting concerns about India's waste crisis and a desire for meaningful impact, Abhishiek founded Ecovani Waste Management Pvt. Ltd. and launched the Goodeebag brand. His idea was simple and need of the hour, i.e., reimagine waste not as a burden, but as an opportunity for rewards, dignity and sustainability. Goodeebag introduced a seamless app-based system for households and communities, making waste segregation and recycling effortless and incentivized. Can we ever imagine that taking “Kachra” could also be a white-collar job? He proved it! The results speak for themselves. Goodeebag now serves over 1,20,000 households and has processed more than 2,000 tons of recyclable material, keeping vast amounts of waste out of landfills. Collaborations with schools, housing societies, Indian Army cantonments, and retail partners mean their reach extends into every corner of urban Hyderabad. Focused drives have led to saving over 8,000 trees, achieving a 70% reduction in vehicle pickup emissions through an all-EV fleet, and onboarding thousands through rewarding pickup models. Their innovative "dark store" network and digital dashboards empower users to see their environmental impact in real time. Abhishiek's philosophy is clear that real innovation must deliver both economic and human value. For him, responsible waste management is about caring for people and the planet, offering jobs to those in need, and building systems that encourage every citizen to become a steward of sustainability. With plans to expand the circular model of Goodeebag to ten metro cities and five countries, and to reach five crore families within five years, his vision for scaling social good is commendable. The company also aims to create over 1,000 new jobs, supporting economic growth alongside environmental stewardship.

Abhishiek believes that business can and should solve urgent social challenges. Through every pickup, he strengthens the idea that doing good for the environment is good for everyone and always comes back.





Mr. Sandeep (Sandy) Sharma
Founder

Green Pencil Foundation, Haryana



“Inspired by a near-death experience, Green Pencil Foundation has impacted over 2 Lakh lives now and is committed to “Empowering Minds and Sustaining the Earth.”

Founded in 2021 by passionate youth changemaker Mr. Sandeep Sharma, Green Pencil Foundation has rapidly emerged as a dynamic, youth-led nonprofit committed to empowering marginalized communities across India and beyond. Starting from humble roots in a countryside setting, the foundation has blossomed into a structured movement with over 55 core team members and an extensive volunteer network of more than 1000 young changemakers. The story of Green Pencil Foundation is inspired by a personal story that stems from Sandy Khanda's near-death experience in 2016. Confined to the ICU for months after a severe accident, his journey has transformed him from an engineering student to a dedicated social activist. This life-changing event fueled his determination to serve the community through Green Pencil Foundation, focusing on menstrual health, child education, mental well-being, and climate action. One flagship campaign, "Periods of Pride," addresses menstrual health challenges in underserved communities by distributing reusable cloth pads and educating thousands across over 400 slums and villages. Sandy discovered that many women in rural areas used non-biodegradable sanitary pads, often disposed of improperly, harming the environment and agriculture. By introducing eco-friendly cloth pads, the foundation not only improves health but also protects the environment, breaking taboos surrounding menstruation. The Foundation's outreach has influenced over 200,000 girls and women, reshaping mindsets through medically backed workshops involving gynecologists and hands-on education. Complementing this, the "Slum to School" program provides free weekend classes in 30 urban clusters, benefiting more than 1,000 children. The foundation actively engages parents to increase awareness of government education policies, encouraging families to prioritize schooling over child labor. Remedial classes help children catch up academically, easing their integration into formal education. Green Pencil Foundation is also deeply committed to climate action. It has organized tree-planting drives, planting over 3,000 trees, climate awareness workshops, and campaigns such as "Power the Paddle" in partnership with Greenpeace, training over 300 women cyclists and promoting sustainable transportation. Recognized as an MHM Goodwill Ambassador in 2024 and widely covered by national media, Green Pencil Foundation continues to expand its impact. By 2026, it aims to reach 1,000 schools and positively affect two million people across India.

Embodying its motto, “A Promise for Change,” Green Pencil Foundation blends education, advocacy, and community intervention to create lasting wellness, equity, and awareness, inspiring hope and progress in countless underserved communities.





Nidhi Rai & Zafar Alam
Founders

Kiwaad Foundation, Uttar Pradesh



Kiwaad Foundation believes that every individual deserves a gateway to growth, independence and empowerment!

From the time she was a Gold Medalist in Social Work, Nidhi Rai had dreamed of a world that would not bind women and youth from disadvantaged communities with a lack of opportunity. That vision rightfully took shape when she co-founded the Kiwaad Foundation, popularly referred to as Gateway to Opportunities, with Zafar Alam. They partnered to find a deep and pressing need within the value proposition of skill development, i.e., most Youth in India, particularly from marginalized communities, are unemployed or underemployed due to the absence of comprehensive support and training that goes beyond offering basic skills. They realized that existing initiatives were missing the essential building blocks like building aspirations, life skills, placement, and above all, long-term post-placement support. Kiwaad started as a small initiative in Kanpur to empower youth and has expanded as a movement across six states, including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi-NCR. The company identifies young people aged 14 to 32 from underprivileged communities and trains them in industry-relevant skills in areas such as retail management and BFSI, as well as newer occupations such as digital marketing, hospitality, AI literacy etc. Its holistic training model combines technical, soft skills, digital literacy and career readiness, providing a solid foundation for sustainable employability. Their leadership is deeply rooted in community engagement and collaboration. They focus on creating safe learning spaces that empower young women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. With around 70% of trainees being young women, their approach emphasizes gender inclusion. Their support extends beyond training to include job placement, counseling, and mentorship, helping youth transition into successful careers. Partnerships with organizations like Piramal, Adani, PWC, BATA, HDFC, GIZ, and Vishal Mega Mart play a vital role in providing job opportunities and strengthening program quality. Kiwaad has more than 2000 young people trained with a 90 percent placement rate, and programs sensitized to the local cultural context through collaboration with grassroots groups and government agencies. The Foundation also empowers the disabled by modifying training methods and materials, demonstrating that everyone can succeed with the right assistance.

Nidhi's vision, combined with Zafar's deep expertise in youth empowerment and financial inclusion drives Kiwaad's mission to break poverty cycles. Their approach focuses on equipping individuals with skills, confidence, and dignity. Together, they aim to empower 1 million young people by 2030 across India.





Kunal Kabra
Founder

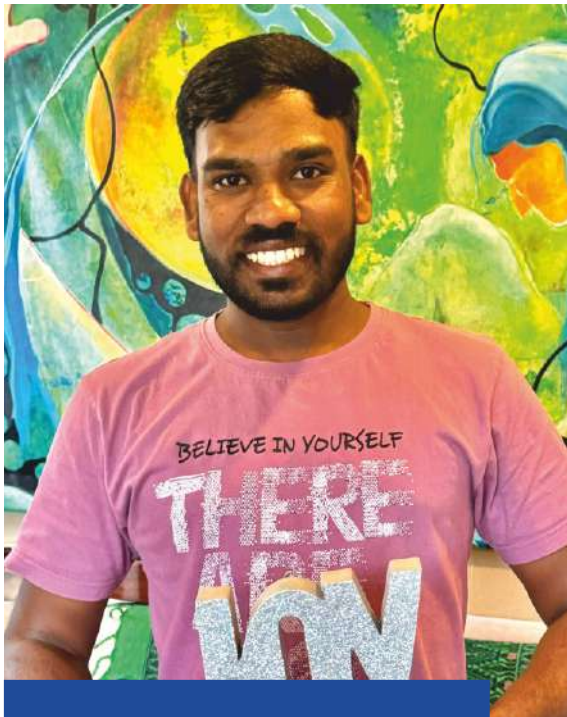
Kustodian.life, Karnataka

Kustodian.life is a tech-powered company that simplifies financial settlements and legacy planning!

In the quiet aftermath of a sudden and heartbreaking loss, a family found themselves caught in a second, silent storm. They were not only grieving the loss of their son but were also completely unaware of his financial assets, making an already devastating situation even more stressful and complex. This personal experience revealed a widespread, unaddressed problem: the lack of a streamlined process for families to manage and claim their loved one's financial legacy. Driven by a deep sense of empathy and to address this "hardly-talked-about problem," Kunal Kabra, a veteran of the tech and finance sectors, set out to create a solution. The result was Kustodian.life, a pioneering "death-tech" startup born from the simple, yet powerful, idea of bringing peace of mind to grieving families. Their mission is to be the trusted partner that takes the burden of financial settlements off their shoulders, allowing them to focus on healing. Kustodian.life provides a compassionate and comprehensive platform to simplify the complex journey of claiming a loved one's financial legacy. Their services range from retrieving funds from forgotten bank accounts and multiple EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) accounts to securing assets like shares and mutual funds. Using a blend of technology and human expertise, they transform a daunting process into a streamlined, efficient one, ensuring that families receive what is rightfully theirs without unnecessary stress. Their fair approach is reflected in their fixed-fee model, which is based on effort rather than a percentage of the claim. Beyond the vital task of asset recovery, Kustodian.life also advocates for proactive legacy planning through services that assist with creating wills and trusts. Kabra's vision is to make these essential tools accessible to everyone, ensuring a seamless transition and securing a family's future before things go wrong. His dedication extends beyond his professional life, as he also runs an NGO called Lakshya, which provides better educational opportunities for underprivileged children. Through Kustodian.life, Kunal Kabra is providing a lifeline and a sense of order in a time of profound emotional chaos.

His vision goes far beyond his current work; he aims to expand this initiative across India, targeting a market segment that remains largely untapped.





Mangesh Pol

Maharashtra



From a child doubting his future to a world-traveling peace ambassador, he changes lives through love and gratitude.

Born into an untouchable family in a Pune slum, Mangesh faced hardship with a single mother raising three children. A pivotal moment came when a kind woman, Sister Lucy, asked him, “What do you want?” and he simply said, “Love.” At six, he found refuge and love at Maher Ashram, a Pune-based NGO founded by Sister Lucy Kurien in 1997 to support destitute women, children and men. Here, he gained shelter, care, and a family that embraced him beyond caste and religion. Growing up within Maher’s inclusive environment, Mangesh witnessed the transformation possible when vulnerable individuals are embraced with compassion and dignity. Inspired by the care he received, he resolved to give back to society and chose to work toward empowering those in need, particularly youth who face challenges similar to his own. After completing his Master’s Degree, he dedicated himself to uplifting others through various initiatives, including youth workshops on gratitude, sports camps, gender reconciliation programs, and interfaith peace efforts. Mangesh’s journey has taken him beyond India’s borders as an International Peace Counsellor at Peace Camp International in Washington, USA, traveling to countries including Uganda, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Germany, Nepal, Costa Rica, the UK, and the USA to spread a message of love, unity, and healing. Despite his global achievements, he remains deeply rooted in the values that shaped him at Maher: love as the essence of all religions and the power of service to transform lives. His work is underpinned by initiatives such as the USA GERI Program (Gender Equity and Reconciliation International), where he facilitates workshops creating safe spaces for truth-telling, compassion, and collective healing. Through this program, he fosters “beloved community,” where past oppressions give way to oneness and mutual respect. Through the Interfaith Association for Service to Humanity and Nature, Mangesh unites over 600 people worldwide in daily spiritual practices of love, kindness, and environmental care. He promotes openness, empathy, and collective action to protect the earth, nurture humanity, and help those from troubled backgrounds heal from past trauma.

From a child who once doubted his future to a President’s Gold Medalist and International Peace Leader, Mangesh defines the transformative power of love, gratitude, and service. His story continues to inspire countless others, proving that no matter the beginnings, each one of us can choose to heal, uplift, and change the world.





Mr. Dibyajyoti Nath
CEO

Impact Weaver Pvt. Ltd., Assam



A social-tech startup based in Assam, working towards creating a digital ecosystem for social impact stakeholders across India.

It was in college that Dibyajyoti Nath's passion for community service ignited, setting him on the path to becoming a social entrepreneur. While serving as the founder of SOVIC, the Social Responsibility Cell of Assam Engineering College, he witnessed the significant potential of volunteer-driven efforts for tackling grassroots issues. His experiences with various social enterprises and fellowships highlighted a critical challenge: many non-profits struggled to scale their impact due to a lack of digital tools, operational efficiency and visibility. This observation led him to found Impact Weaver, a platform dedicated to bridging this digital divide and empowering Changemakers with the technology to amplify their work. Headquartered in Assam, Impact Weaver is a DPIIT-recognized Startup in India, also recognized under the Assam Startup (MASI) Policy 2016. Their vision is to create a unified digital ecosystem where social impact organizations can maximize their reach and amplify change, while their mission is to empower NGOs, CSR organizations, and donors to collaborate and manage operations with AI-driven tools, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in the social sector. Impact Weaver also has offices in Guwahati and Silchar. The Company addresses the challenges faced by India's over 3.6 million NGOs, 78% of which are small or mid-sized. These organizations often struggle with limited digital visibility, difficulty in accessing funds and skilled manpower, and compliance issues. At the same time, CSR teams and donors face challenges in identifying credible NGOs for partnerships. Impact Weaver's solution is an AI-powered digital platform for NGOs, CSR units, donors, and volunteers. The platform offers a suite of tools, including AI-driven NGO-CSR matchmaking, automated reports, dynamic websites, and real-time impact dashboards. The Company offers freemium and subscription-based models to ensure digital adoption is accessible to all. Since its inception, the Company has touched the lives of over 70,000 people, has developed a network of more than 200 NGO partners and has facilitated over ₹3 crore in fundraising for NGOs. Impact Weaver has worked with over 100 clients, including NGOs, government agencies, and public sector undertakings (PSUs), and has delivered more than 50 innovative projects. Notable projects include Sahayata, a flood damage assessment tool that has assisted over 39,000 people in Assam, and e-CFRC, a digital platform for rural service delivery. Impact Weaver has received numerous awards, including the NEC Ignite Grant and the NRL Ideathon Grant in 2025.

By bringing a unified digital ecosystem to the social sector, he is bridging critical gaps to maximize impact and drive sustainable community development.





Naziya Hurra

Bandipore, Jammu and Kashmir



Inspired by a personal story, she becomes the vision of the visually impaired by imparting education in Braille!

In the picturesque valley of Kashmir, a region known for its breathtaking beauty and a spirit of immense resilience, emerges a remarkable story of compassion and change. It is here that Nazia Hurra, a dedicated social worker from the Bandipore district, embarked on a journey that would profoundly impact the lives of countless visually impaired children. Inspired by the struggles of her nephew, who was born visually impaired, Nazia realized that many families viewed these children as a liability, not an opportunity. This realization ignited a fire within her, and she set out on a mission to empower these children through education. To achieve this, she pursued a course in Braille, underwent professional training, and began teaching visually impaired children, their parents, and even other teachers. Her work ensures that blind children have access to an inclusive education, providing them with the necessary tools like Braille kits and large-font materials. She even coordinates with the Government for the kits and tools available for these students to make their lives easier in any manner possible. Beyond academics, Nazia's social work extends to providing comprehensive support. She arranges clothing and essential supplies for deserving students, often with the help of local donations. Her holistic approach aims to improve their quality of life and educational experiences. Going beyond, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she selflessly distributed food and essential supplies to over 2,500 families and assisted the local administration. Despite facing numerous challenges and even being subjected to ridicule, her will to work for the visually impaired children never faltered. She recently established a Computer Lab to equip these special students with modern technological skills. The most inspiring aspect of her work is that her former students are teaching computers now. Having pursued higher education, they have returned to assist her, becoming teachers themselves. She has tirelessly visited schools, colleges, and villages to raise awareness and funds for her noble causes. Currently, she is in the process of registering her own social organization to expand her efforts. Her ultimate goal is to establish a dedicated school for the blind in Kashmir. Going beyond, Nazia has used her social media platforms to successfully raise significant funds for various causes, including cancer treatments. Nazia has even registered an NGO, "Jammu and Kashmir Able Hands Foundation," to scale up the impact more.

As she continues her mission, she embodies her own words: "Working for humanity is my religion."





WATSAN
Clean Water & Safe Sanitation for All

Jayaraman Chandrasekaran
Director

**Watsan Envirotech Pvt Ltd.,
Tamil Nadu**

**Watsan is turning Science into Dignity, bringing
safe Water and Sanitation to millions!**

Jayaraman Chandrasekaran is a distinguished social entrepreneur and innovator with nearly 4 decades of experience in plastics technology and sustainable product development. As a national-level topper from the Central Institute of Plastics & Engineering Technology (CIPET), he has founded and leads four pioneering startups, including Watsan Envirotech Pvt Ltd, Custom Parts Online, Ancient Heritage Conservation Pvt Ltd. and Cureall Medicare OPC Pvt Ltd. His most notable work is through Watsan Envirotech, where he has developed groundbreaking electricity-free, zero-wastage, natural gravity-based water purifiers. These purifiers cater to rural and underserved communities across India, effectively removing contaminants such as arsenic, fluoride, and iron. His innovations include region-specific arsenic removal cartridges developed in collaboration with IIT Madras, and fluoride removal systems created with PSG College of Science & Technology. The Watsan range spans from standalone units to large IoT-enabled Water ATMs, helping millions access safe drinking water without energy consumption or water wastage. This work has made Watsan one of the most economical and sustainable water purification solutions available and trusted by major organizations like World Vision and Water Aid. Among his remarkable inventions, Chandrasekaran holds multiple patents, including a modular toilet design and a trauma care Spill Sink developed in partnership with a military plastics surgeon. He also designed a patented arsenic-removal cartridge used in his water purifiers. Recently, he was awarded patents for two novel medical devices, i.e., a female contraceptive and an electricity-independent oxygen generator, produced under his startup, Cureall Medicare. These inventions aim to provide affordable healthcare solutions to Indian households. Chandrasekaran's expertise transcends product innovation; he actively mentors sustainability-focused entrepreneurs, serves as a national consultant for UNIDO, and is recognized globally with awards such as the Royal Academy of Engineering's Global LIF Innovator of the Year and the Waterpreneur Award by FICCI and best innovation Startup by CII. Chandrasekaran has won 3 National awards as well for his various innovations. His unique blend of technical skill, social impact vision, and entrepreneurial success has made him a key figure in addressing India's critical water, sanitation, and healthcare challenges. His additional passion for heritage conservation is reflected in his creation of Ancient Heritage Conservation Pvt Ltd, focusing on preserving India's rich cultural legacy through scientific restoration methods.

Through his inventions and leadership, Jayaraman Chandrasekaran continues to advance affordable, sustainable technologies that improve health and quality of life for millions, while inspiring innovation in social entrepreneurship.





Nirmal Chandel
Founder

Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS)
Himachal Pradesh



She is known as the "Game-Changer"
for single women in Himachal Pradesh!

In the hill state of Himachal Pradesh, where cultural norms have long silenced single women, Nirmal Chandel transformed personal tragedy into a mission to help women in similar situations. Widowed at a young age, she underwent stigma and social exclusion, but instead of accepting her fate, she chose to rewrite it, not just for herself, but for thousands of women walking the same path. In 2005, she founded the Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS), a grassroots movement to fight for the rights and dignity of widowed, divorced and single women. What began as a small support network has today grown into a statewide organization with over 100,000 members across Himachal Pradesh. ENSS works to ensure that women, once pushed to the margins, can access government schemes, secure property and pension rights, and receive much-needed legal aid. Their outreach has spread into remote villages, where women now receive financial literacy training, vocational opportunities, and social support systems that allow them to live independently with confidence. The results have been transformative. In communities where women once lacked visibility, 29 widows have been elected to local panchayats, a powerful reminder that leadership is not defined by marital status. Hundreds of others have become Anganwadi workers, para-legal volunteers, and grassroots leaders, strengthening local governance and social services. ENSS has also successfully advocated for better pension coverage and improved healthcare access, bringing thousands of single women under state-supported welfare schemes. For many, this has meant not just survival, but the ability to rebuild their lives with pride and purpose. This impact has not gone unnoticed. UN Women and NITI Aayog have recognized ENSS as a pioneering initiative, while platforms like The Better India have celebrated its ability to turn grief into strength. Women once seen as dependent or invisible are now active participants in decision-making, breaking stereotypes and reshaping social norms. The philosophy of Nirmal Chandel and the Sangathan rests on the belief that no woman should undergo stigma, isolation, or discrimination because of her marital status. Widowhood, divorce, or separation should never define a woman's value; instead, every woman deserves dignity, equal rights, and the freedom to shape her own future.

Nirmal Chandel, through ENSS, is creating a safe space where women can access opportunities, rebuild their lives with confidence, and lead their lives with dignity.





Jitendra Singh Bhati
CEO

**People's Awareness Network
Society (PANS), Rajasthan**



**He's empowering women in the
farthest corners of Rajasthan, making
them financially independent!**

In the heart of Rajasthan, an organization is quietly rewriting the future of rural communities. People's Awareness Network Society (PANS), led by its dynamic CEO Jitendra Singh Bhati, is empowering rural women and building gender-equitable, prosperous villages through education, sustainable livelihoods and leadership development. The idea to empower women took root from what Jitendra saw in home, especially his mother, who handled many responsibilities but lacked empowerment. Believing charity begins at home, he encouraged her to start a YouTube channel, and now they enjoy making recipes together. Founded with a vision to create self-sustainable villages by 2033, PANS believes that true social change begins with women's empowerment. At the core of its work lies the "3 L's" framework: Learning, Livelihood, and Leadership. This model equips rural women with education and life skills, enables them to earn with dignity, and nurtures leadership so they can guide their communities towards transformation. PANS runs impactful programs such as "She Dares", which trains women in stitching, craft making, and entrepreneurship, and "Janshruti", which creates safe learning spaces for adolescent girls. The organization also offers a Youth Fellowship, encouraging educated rural women to teach underserved children. These initiatives go beyond capacity-building; they nurture confidence and a sense of agency among women who were once confined by early marriages, illiteracy, or financial dependence. The numbers speak for themselves. PANS has directly impacted 2,500 women and reached over 10,000 beneficiaries indirectly. Their programs have led to a 40% increase in family incomes, helped 20 rural women restart formal education. We have also worked with 400+ rural girls ready to shape their villages. Through Unmukt, a women-led enterprise, beneficiaries have forged partnerships with seven export houses and five craft artists, taking rural creativity to global markets. From craft exhibitions and exposure visits to medical camps and digital literacy sessions, PANS has embedded a holistic development model into rural life. Equally noteworthy are PANS's community initiatives, such as campaigns for beggar-free villages and waste upcycling, where factory fabric waste is turned into eco-friendly gifting products, creating income streams while promoting sustainability.

The organization is revamping the philosophy to "समारोहण Samarohan – Let's climb together; for when we climb, we grow, and when we grow, we climb for equality. As PANS expands its work across Rajasthan, its story showcases how grassroots leadership, when equipped with the right tools, can truly build happy and prosperous villages for a stronger India.





Prajwal Sandeep Uniyal

Renuka Samiti, Uttarakhand



He carried the legacy of his father to prevent the villages of Uttarakhand from becoming “Ghost Villages” due to migration.

In the rugged terrains of Uttarakhand, where the harsh realities of migration often turn vibrant hamlets into “Ghost Villages,” Prajwal Sandeep Uniyal chose to stay back and fight for his roots. Carrying forward his late father’s vision, he left behind a corporate career to lead Renuka Samiti, a community-driven organization that works to ensure villages do not empty out due to a lack of opportunities, schools, or livelihoods. Since childhood, he watched and assisted his father work tirelessly for the villages of Uttarakhand, striving to transform communities for the better. Just as he was about to begin a new chapter with a corporate career, his father’s sudden passing changed everything. He chose to return to his village and carry forward his legacy and prevent it from being forgotten. What began as a modest effort has today grown into a large movement across Uttarkashi, Tehri Garhwal, and Dehradun, where Renuka Samiti focuses on three key pillars, “Education, Agriculture, and Community Empowerment”. A shining example of its journey is a school that started with just ₹23, which now benefits more than 3,000 children by providing access to books, transportation, libraries, and even digital education. Career counseling and reading programs nurture curiosity and confidence, preparing young minds for futures that don’t require them to abandon their mountains. On the agricultural front, Prajwal is restoring dignity to farming by training over 17,000 farmers in improved practices that balance traditional wisdom with modern innovation. From promoting organic farming and Shri Anna cultivation to advancing horticulture and reducing dependence on chemical inputs, these interventions have increased profits for many farmers by nearly tenfold. With the creation of more than 2,515 Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Renuka Samiti has strengthened collective bargaining, reduced transportation costs, improved access to loans, and given rural communities the financial guidance they long lacked. Equally significant are its social initiatives. Women in villages receive skill-based training for self-employment, while relief and rehabilitation works are conducted in disaster-prone regions. During the Uttarkashi floods, Prajwal and his team worked hand-in-hand with the local administration to carry out rescue and relief.

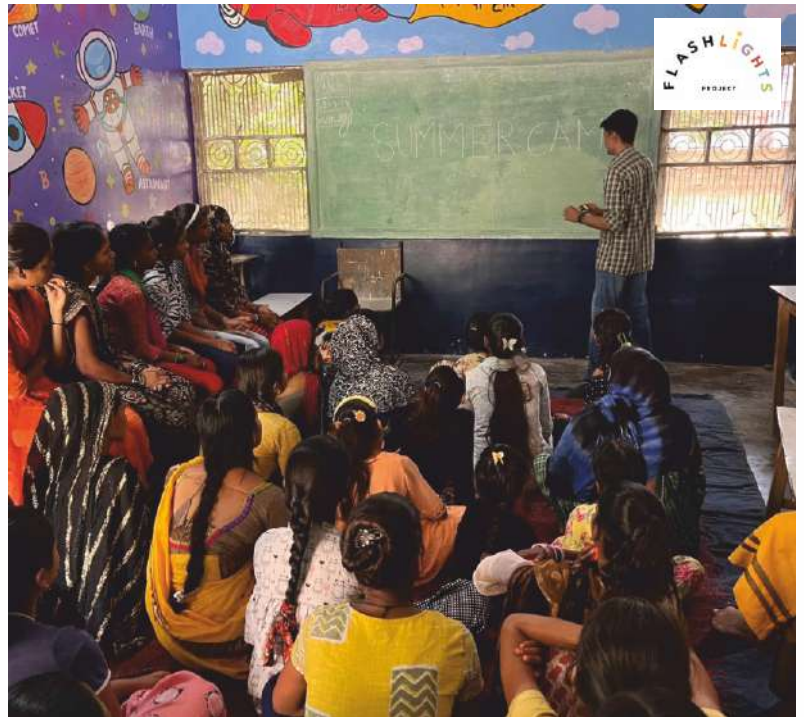
For Prajwal, the work is deeply personal, rooted in the philosophy that “गाँव बढ़े तो देश बढ़े”. Carrying forward his father’s legacy, Prajwal shows us that true change begins at the grassroots, i.e. when villages thrive, India thrives.





Akash Nema
Founder

Project Flashlights, Madhya Pradesh



They spread light through “Education” in the underserved communities, making learning accessible to all.

In the underserved lanes of forgotten communities, one vision asked: What if every child had the right to learn and dream? That vision belongs to Mr. Akash Nema, founder of Project Flashlights. What began as small sessions for first-generation learners has, in just four years, grown into a movement of education, inclusion, and empowerment—shining light on out-of-school children, women without livelihoods, and persons with disabilities seeking dignity in learning. Through its innovative programs, Project Flashlights is redefining education and community engagement. Project Sunshine reimagines classrooms under the BALA (Building as Learning Aid) model, turning dull walls into interactive, inclusive spaces where every child, including those with special needs, can thrive. Complementing this, Project Drishti empowers visually impaired students by equipping them with digital literacy, communication, and leadership skills that foster confidence and independence. To ensure no child is left behind, the Mission School Admission Drive mobilizes families, bridges gaps between homes and classrooms, and guides children into formal education. Beyond schools, Daan Utsav has become a nationwide movement of kindness, channeling the collective power of communities to donate thousands of clothes, food items, and learning materials to underserved families, spreading hope, dignity, and opportunity. What distinguishes Project Flashlights is its embrace of youth voices in decision-making. Through its Flashlights Fellowship and a unique Student Parliament model, young leaders not only volunteer but also debate, propose, and shape community solutions. This approach transforms education into a two-way dialogue, where children learn civic responsibility while designing real solutions for their communities. The impact of Project Flashlights is both wide-reaching and transformative. Over 700 children have been engaged through its community learning centers, while more than 40 visually impaired students have been supported with inclusive education and mentorship under specialized initiatives. Through vocational workshops, the organization has trained 80 women and girls, equipping them with practical livelihood skills that foster both confidence and economic independence. In addition, over 250 families have directly benefited through giving initiatives like Daan Utsav, receiving essential items such as food, clothes, and educational materials. Beyond grassroots impact, Project Flashlights has also initiated policy conversations with Gram Panchayats and local governments, embedding the principles of inclusivity and equity into governance frameworks, ensuring that change is both sustainable and systemic.

Beyond numbers, Project Flashlights has built a lasting culture of shared responsibility and active citizenship. By bridging slums, rural communities, educators, and policymakers, it proves that true transformation happens when compassion meets structure.



Sneha Bharti
Founder

PurnKuti, Bihar



She left the Boardroom to empower Thousands of Women and Children!

The inspiration for PurnKuti was born out of a powerful vision that if women are empowered, families and entire communities transform. In 2011, after more than 12 successful years in investment banking with Morgan Stanley, Citibank, JM Financial, Kotak Securities, and ATC Polaris, Sneha Bharti felt a deep need to give back to society in a more meaningful way. She chose not to measure life in terms of profit and loss, but in dignity gained and potential realized. Guided by this belief, she laid the foundation of PurnKuti as a women-led initiative that would put marginalized women and their children at the heart of sustainable change. Beginning in Bihar with small interventions that addressed women's health, hygiene, and education, PurnKuti soon grew into a wider movement. She recognized that poverty and gender inequality were not just economic challenges, but were deeply linked to dignity and opportunity. Thus, Skilling and Entrepreneurship programs became the cornerstone of their model. Rural and urban poor women were trained in tailoring, handicrafts, masala-making, beauty services, and more. Their crafts and products, later sold via Amazon, Flipkart, and corporate exhibitions, became vehicles of income and self-reliance, turning creativity into sustenance. To ensure children did not inherit cycles of disadvantage, Sneha established the Waterlily Public School in 2011, providing quality education to the children of women beneficiaries. As migration swelled in cities, she expanded programs in 2016 to include skilling initiatives for migrant labor women, alongside remedial classes for their children. When the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, PurnKuti moved swiftly into Pune's red-light areas, assisting 2,500 sex workers and transgender individuals with rations, medical kits, counseling, and vocational courses. These efforts gave individuals who had been excluded from mainstream society the tools to reimagine life beyond survival. PurnKuti, undoubtedly gave them a new life and hope! Over the years, the scale has been remarkable: 2,000+ women trained, 3,000+ sex workers supported, 500+ transgender persons reached, and 2,000+ children educated. Behind these numbers are powerful stories. Ankita, a sex worker who now runs a tailoring and food business; Monika, abandoned by her husband, who rebuilt her dignity as a boutique owner and trainer; and Sangeeta, diagnosed HIV-positive, who overcame despair to create an honest livelihood.

For Sneha Bharti and PurnKuti, empowerment means creating opportunities where women can lead lives of their own. What began as one woman's decision to act now shows that when women grow stronger, their communities do too!





Kaushav Sanyal
Martial Arts & Sports Welfare
Association

West Bengal



**The Cop who teaches young girls to fight like a
“Tigress” for their safety!**

In a truly powerful act of transformation, a father's personal anxiety became a widespread mission to empower girls and the nation. Kaushav Sanyal, a police constable and a martial artist from West Bengal, was deeply shaken by the brutal gang rapes in Delhi and West Bengal between 2012 and 2013. Overwhelmed by anxiety for his own daughter's safety, he felt a profound failure as a father and a citizen, which spurred him to simply stop blaming society and instead, take action. His journey began in 2015, when he launched what would become "Mission Anonnya". Drawing on his lifelong training in Karate, Judo, Taekwondo and Gymnastics, which he began at the age of 14, he started a mission to train girls in self-defense, entirely free of cost. He travels up to 150 km daily to different schools and colleges, often after completing his demanding night shifts as a police constable. He developed a unique, "Deadly Combat Martial Arts" form by combining his knowledge of various martial arts, believing that modern sports karate is not effective for real-life self-defense. His course teaches practical skills like identifying weak body parts, escaping from holds, and using everyday items like pens, bags, or hairpins as weapons. He has trained over 60,000 girls and women to date, spreading his mission across various districts in West Bengal and into the state of Jharkhand. Due to his training, his students are now more confident and capable of protecting themselves. A powerful example of this came in 2018 when a 17-year-old student of his, who was a green belt in karate, fought off two youths who had been harassing her. Instead of fleeing, she defended herself with kicks and punches, forcing them to retreat and earning praise from the police chief for her bravery. This success story brought his mission to the attention of local media. For Sanyal, the mission is also about a larger societal change. He now includes yoga in his training, believing it is essential for a physically and mentally healthy generation that can stand up to crime. He also inspires his students with the story of his wife, an expert martial arts teacher who returned to training just six months after giving birth, proving that marriage or motherhood is not a barrier to empowerment.

What began with a Father's concern for his daughter's safety became a movement to “Empower Girls”.





Our Accelerator Programs offers curated mentorship, connections, and a comprehensive support system for growth-stage startups.

India Accelerator (IA)

Haryana

IA is a multi-stage, fund-led startup accelerator that works to transform early-stage startups into successful businesses.

About India Accelerator (IA):

Founded in 2017, India Accelerator (IA) is India's leading multi-stage, fund-led startup accelerator dedicated to nurturing and scaling high-potential ventures. With a mission to build and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, IA not only invests financial capital but also provides strategic mentorship, industry linkages, and resource support to accelerate the growth journey of startups. IA operates at the intersection of innovation, investment, and industry, enabling ventures to thrive across diverse sectors. Its specialization spans FinTech, DeepTech, Gaming, Robotics, Unmanned and Space (RUMS), Energy, Mobility & Connectivity (EMC), Impact & Sustainability, and other emerging industries. By engaging with academic institutions, incubators, corporates, and government bodies, IA plays a pivotal role in identifying promising founders and supporting them from the early stage through to scale-up. The accelerator stands apart with its fund-led model, global network of mentors and investors, and a curated ecosystem designed to provide startups with access to capital, markets, and industry expertise. Over the years, IA has emerged as a key player in India's entrepreneurial ecosystem, fostering innovation pipelines both within the country and internationally.

About IA Impact Labs:

IA Impact Labs is the dedicated impact-focused vertical of India Accelerator, designed to foster impact-first innovations aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Its mission is to support entrepreneurs building transformative solutions that directly benefit the Next Half Billion lives in India, driving inclusive growth and equitable development. Through its focused programs, IA Impact Labs has supported innovations in critical domains such as Climate Tech, Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI), Poverty Alleviation, and Marginalization Eradication. By blending entrepreneurial agility with social purpose, Impact Labs enables startups to scale solutions that not only generate financial returns but also deliver measurable social and environmental impact. With an extensive network of mentors, corporate partners, investors, and development organizations, IA Impact Labs provides a structured platform for startups to access capital, market linkages, policy advocacy, and global partnerships. It serves as a launchpad for entrepreneurs who aim to solve India's most pressing challenges while creating sustainable, future-ready businesses.



Sudhanshu Sharma,
Founder & CEO

Charitism, Rajasthan



A trusted crowdfunding platform of India!

In 2019, a young man from Rajasthan, Sudhanshu Sharma, set out to solve a problem he had personally experienced that how difficult it was for ordinary people with urgent needs or compassionate causes to raise meaningful support in a transparent and effective way. This vision gave birth to Charitism, which has since grown into one of India's most trusted crowdfunding platforms, empowering both individuals and organizations to create social impact without financial or technical barriers. In just six years, Charitism has facilitated over ₹25 Crore in donations, running more than 500 successful campaigns with the support of 4 lakh+ donors. What sets Charitism apart is its 100% transparent, zero upfront-cost model, which allows anyone to launch a fundraiser instantly, supported by features like dedicated fundraiser experts, instant 80G/10BE certificates for tax benefits, international payment options, and round-the-clock customer support. This blend of simplicity and integrity is what Sudhanshu envisioned when he started the platform, crowdfunding rooted in empathy and trust. Beyond numbers, Charitism is defined by the stories it has made possible. When a landslide destroyed Gayatri's animal shelter, her hope seemed buried, yet with Charitism, she raised ₹60 Lakhs and rebuilt the haven for hundreds of animals. Sundar Gopal Prabhu raised ₹80 Lakhs to construct an ashram in Vrindavan where elderly women could live with dignity. Dattu Agarwal Ji, himself visually impaired, collected ₹65 Lakhs to provide education and vocational training to blind girls, proving that limitations cannot stop leadership. And in perhaps one of its most inspiring campaigns, Zareen raised ₹2 Crores in just 20 days, saving over 200 starving dogs in her shelter. These case studies show the platform's true power, i.e. a bridge between compassion and action. What also differentiates Charitism is its ecosystem of CSR collaborations with partners like Tech Mahindra, Imagica Health, Skylight Gaming, and 9Stacks. By combining corporate social responsibility with grassroots needs, Sudhanshu has created a model where corporations, individuals, and communities unite to fuel change. Today, Charitism is not just a crowdfunding website; it is a movement of empathy, driven by the belief of Sudhanshu that transparency and accessibility can transform how India supports its changemakers.

In his words, "We didn't build Charitism to be the biggest; we built it to be the most trusted."





Geetha

Senior Associate - Outreach
and Partnerships

Eco Thozhi (Svarnim Puducherry)
Puducherry



Sri Aurobindo Society is working towards a vision for making Puducherry a Model State with Svarnim Puducherry!

Puducherry, with its unique blend of Indian tradition and French heritage, has always been a meeting point of cultures, ideas, and innovation. Known for its vibrant educational landscape, spiritual heritage and scenic coastal ecosystems, it represents both continuity with India's past and a canvas for building its future. Yet like many regions, Puducherry faces challenges of ecological preservation, sustainable livelihoods, and inclusive development. These very qualities and challenges make it the perfect ground to cultivate a movement towards a model state. This vision is being realized through Svarnim Puducherry, one of the most ambitious initiatives of the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS), an international not-for-profit headquartered in Puducherry with over 300 centres in India and abroad. The project seeks to catalyze transformative growth by integrating sustainability, creativity and community empowerment while inviting citizen participation in shaping a brighter future. At the heart of its work are programs like the Bridge Education Centres, which expose children to creative and critical learning approaches, and the Device Engineering Lab, which builds innovation and problem-solving skills through hands-on education. By nurturing emotional well-being, eco-awareness, and practical competencies, these centres ensure children grow as confident, skilled, and socially conscious individuals. Their flagship program, Eco Thozhi, transforms water hyacinth choking Puducherry's lakes and ponds into crafting eco-friendly products like mats and baskets. Women from rural communities are trained to craft eco-friendly products like mats and baskets from these weeds, creating new streams of income while restoring water bodies. This improves local biodiversity and empowers women with entrepreneurial opportunities and financial independence. Svarnim Puducherry has created both ecological and social impact, reviving over 20 acres of water bodies, restoring biodiversity by clearing invasive hyacinth, and empowering 250+ women through eco-craft training to earn steady incomes from over 1,000 sustainable products. Its Bridge Education Centres and Device Engineering Labs have reached 1,800+ children, nurturing creativity, problem-solving, and eco-awareness. Svarnim Puducherry promotes holistic development in students and youth through mental health, environmental stewardship, experiential learning and sustainable livelihoods. The program focuses on life skills training to build emotional resilience and positive behavior, engages children in biodiversity documentation and water conservation, and transforms schools into eco-campuses with kitchen gardens. The Aurovanam Environmental Interpretation Centre connects classroom learning with nature, aiming to create environmentally conscious, resilient, and future-ready citizens while promoting community participation in sustainability.

Svarnim Puducherry revitalizes nature, uplifts communities, and nurtures youth by combining ecological restoration, livelihood creation, and holistic education, making Puducherry a model of sustainable growth and the ideal state envisioned by Sri Aurobindo.



Vijay Narayan Bhujbal
Founder

Sunrise Public School, Maharashtra



Once a soldier, he is now on a mission to provide free education to the children who have lost their parents!

In Maharashtra, the scourge of farmer suicides continues unabated, with over 700 farmers losing their lives in just the first three months of 2025. This devastating crisis leaves behind countless orphaned children grappling with the trauma of loss and the harsh reality of poverty. Many of these children come from families where mothers toil endlessly in fields, struggling to keep their households afloat. The impact on these young lives is profound. They are denied basic necessities and education, with their futures often hanging in a fragile balance. Vijay Narayan Bhujbal belongs to Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra, where the struggles of children from poor and labourer families are a painful reality. It was this reality that deeply moved Vijay, a retired army man from a humble farmer's family. After 17 years of service to the nation, Vijay returned home determined to serve his country again, this time by championing the cause of vulnerable children. He founded the Sunrise Public School, a beacon of hope providing free education, school supplies, uniforms, and nutritious meals to children from marginalized communities affected by farmer suicides and extreme financial hardship. His journey was fueled by the struggles he faced during his own childhood, sparking a lifelong commitment to ensure no child suffers similar educational barriers. One of the significant challenges he encountered was that many students could not attend regularly because they lived far away, which became a major hindrance to their education. His promise to "Educate Kids" goes beyond ordinary bounds. He uses his army pension to fund teacher salaries and school operations, purchased a school bus to transport children from remote areas, and personally drives it because he cannot afford a driver. His school even operates from his in-laws' home, sending teachers to villages so children can continue learning without relocating. The Sunrise Public School has transformed the lives of many children, offering them a chance to dream, learn, and grow despite their challenging circumstances. Since founding Sunrise Public School, he has provided free education to 120 children aged between 4 and 16 years from marginalized communities in Maharashtra. In a region often overshadowed by despair, poverty, and loss, Vijay's unwavering dedication has illuminated the path for his students, guiding these vulnerable children toward a brighter and more inclusive future.

A single man's vision, that no child should be deprived of education due to circumstances beyond their control, has charted the journey for kids in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra.





Trisakha Foundation

Tamil Nadu

"Trisakha" signifies the power of three, "Education, Empowerment, and Environmental Sustainability."

Established in 2022 and based in Chennai, the Trisakha Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting self-reliance and sustainable development throughout India. "Trisakha" is a term born from a harmonious connection to Lord Shiva's Trident and the sacred Bilva Patra Tree in Hinduism, signifying a deep spiritual bond. It is rooted in its core philosophy, the "Three E's": Education, Empowerment, and Environmental Sustainability. This holistic approach is symbolized by the trifoliate leaf in its logo, which represents the three pillars working in harmony to build a stronger and healthier nation. The foundation's initiatives are diverse and impactful, addressing a range of community needs. In the realm of empowerment and education, Trisakha has implemented key projects like "CyberShikshaa," a collaboration with DSCI and Microsoft. This program has successfully trained 50 young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in cybersecurity, AI, and ML, with 38 of them securing corporate placements. As a knowledge partner for India's first Cybersecurity Finishing School in Karnataka, Trisakha also helped the first cohort of 50 students successfully transition into the workforce. In addition to these efforts, Trisakha recently organized a specialized health camp at Tashi Lunpho Monastery and the Home for Aged and Disabled in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, reaching out to one of the largest Tibetan settlements. Audiologists and experts tested 60 people across all age groups, raising awareness about hearing health and providing guidance on ear care. This initiative demonstrates Trisakha's commitment to community health and empowering marginalized populations through healthcare education and specialist services. The tangible impact of the Trisakha Foundation is significant, with its programs touching over 13,000 lives across the country. The foundation has mobilized hundreds of volunteers and provided medical care to over 1,200 beneficiaries through various health camps and initiatives. By aligning its projects with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Trisakha continues to make a measurable difference in critical areas such as health, education, and environmental conservation, proving that collective action can build a healthier and more sustainable future for all.

Trisakha Foundation is on a mission to "Empower through Education" and "Preserve through Action."





The Radical Era Kanishka and Hitakshi

Delhi



This 11 year old turned street stalls and startups into thriving businesses!

In an economic landscape dominated by large corporations and rapid digitalization, a unique enterprise is making its mark by empowering local, small-scale businesses. The Radical Era, a company founded in 2019, operates with the mission to help small businesses and startup builders scale their operations, specifically guiding them from "zero to one". They work with entrepreneurs of all kinds, from street vendors to home-run kitchens to fast-growing tech startups, turning local businesses into entrepreneurial legends. They roll up their sleeves and get involved in every step, from branding, marketing to simple growth ideas that work in the real world. They indulge in a diverse range of projects, which clearly highlight tangible impact. One such story is that of "Achaari Amma," a 65-year-old woman whose dream was to build a pickle brand from her home. The Radical Era took on the entire process, from branding and packaging to marketing and distribution, helping her grow from selling a single product to offering over 10 different items to more than 1,000 customers monthly. Their work extends beyond commerce to community initiatives. Through the "Sashakt" program, The Radical Era launched an innovation challenge for students to develop women's safety products. This initiative drew over 500 submissions, with at least 10 ideas evolving into full-fledged startups. The Company demonstrates its adaptability by addressing challenges faced by different types of small businesses. For example, they revitalized a local bookseller named Amit Bhaiya, increasing his sales by 150% using a unique marketing strategy. They branded a food stall for a single mother, Annu Aunty, and used a targeted notification strategy to boost her sales by over 250%. Similarly, they helped a boutique owner, Heena Aunty, gain brand awareness by organizing a live fashion show featuring her customers as models. Recognizing the threat of quick commerce apps to traditional businesses, The Radical Era also helped a local general store owner, Amit Uncle, digitize his processes, allowing him to retain 75% of his local customer base. They truly prove that small, focused initiatives can create significant change. By applying innovative strategies and providing direct support, they are not just helping businesses; they are empowering individuals and preserving the entrepreneurial spirit in local communities.

They don't stop at this, but rather share it all on their platform, "The Radical Era", leading an example of positive content creation.





Tariq Ahmad and Jannat Tariq

Jammu & Kashmir



This father-daughter duo has been cleaning Dal Lake for decades now to preserve the lives and futures that flow within it!

Kashmir, often referred to as "Paradise on Earth," is a place of breathtaking beauty, and at its heart lies the serene and iconic Dal Lake. Surrounded by majestic mountains and gardens, the lake is not just a scenic wonder but the lifeblood of the local community. However, like many natural treasures, it faces the threat of environmental degradation. Yet, amidst these challenges, a father-daughter duo, Tariq Ahmad and Jannat, have dedicated their lives to preserving its pristine beauty. For over 25 years, Tariq Ahmad has been a silent guardian of Dal Lake, cleaning and preserving it just like his "Home"! Inspired by his tireless efforts, his daughter, Jannat, joined him in his mission when she was just five years old. Together, they form an extraordinary team! Their initiative, affectionately known as the "Jannat Mission," focuses on solid waste management and community engagement, inspiring local residents and tourists to take responsibility for the environment. Their dedication has not gone unnoticed. This father-daughter duo has been rightly recognized as "Changemakers," a title they embody with every passing day. Their most significant contribution is the creation of the first-ever floating Multi-Purpose Water Ambulance. This innovative vessel is a game-changer for the Dal Lake community, equipped with not only medical facilities but also a fire service pump and dewatering capabilities for rescue operations. This unique solution addresses the geographical challenges of the lake, providing timely medical assistance and enhancing safety for everyone on and around the water. Tariq and Jannat's inspiring work has also earned them a special mention from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, in "Mann Ki Baat", bringing their years of selfless service to a national platform. Jannat, in particular, has become a symbol of youth leadership, proving that age is no barrier to making a profound impact. They are preserving our natural heritage, putting their best efforts forward. Through their continuous cleanliness drives and preservation efforts, Tariq and Jannat are actively working to protect their natural heritage and ensure that the title, "Kashmir - Paradise on Earth," remains true for generations to come.

It is dedicated individuals like them who lead the way, ensuring that the jewel of Kashmir, Dal Lake, continues to thrive.





Mr. Suket Amin
Co-Founder & CEO,

Sunbots Innovations LLP, Gujarat



He created products leveraging AI and Technology that help the blind and visually impaired!

In a world where innovation often prioritizes convenience over compassion, Suket Amin stands out as a visionary engineer and social entrepreneur who has redefined how technology can serve humanity. Armed with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Mechatronics and Robotics from the University of Leeds, UK, Suket has consistently used his expertise to bridge the gap between advanced engineering and real-world social needs. With over seven years of experience in research, design, and product development, Suket has led groundbreaking projects ranging from prosthetic hands that restore mobility, to autonomous ground vehicles for security to UV disinfectant devices designed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, his most transformative work lies in the field of assistive technology for the visually impaired. As Co-Founder of Sunbots Innovations LLP, Suket spearheaded the creation of SMARTON, the world's most affordable AI-enabled smart glasses for the blind and visually impaired. Unlike conventional solutions that are costly and fragmented, SMARTON is a lightweight device that seamlessly connects with a smartphone, transforming visual inputs into audio feedback. With features like object detection, currency recognition, text reading, AI tutoring, and navigation, SMARTON empowers users with greater independence in mobility, education, financial transactions, and daily living. Already, this innovation has impacted the lives of over 10,000+ visually impaired individuals, particularly from underserved communities. For millions of people who are blind or visually impaired, everyday life is filled with barriers sighted individuals rarely notice. Crossing a busy street, reading a schoolbook, identifying currency for a bus fare, or even recognizing simple objects at home can turn into exhausting and isolating challenges. The lack of affordable assistive devices has meant that independence, education, and dignified participation in society remain out of reach for many. Suket's vision is to change this reality, transforming struggle into strength by offering accessible, human-centered technology that restores confidence and autonomy. Recognized globally, Suket has been invited as a TEDx Speaker, participated in leading national and international incubation programs, and was recently selected for the Royal Academy of Engineering's LIF Global Leadership in Entrepreneurship Program 2025, representing India among just 10 innovators. His efforts have also earned him a DEI Award for championing diversity, equity, and inclusion through technology.

Mr. Amin's journey proves that true innovation is not about creating gadgets, but about shaping a vision where no one is left behind."





Stanzin Saldon (Shifah),
Founder and CEO

rZamba Trust, Ladakh



**One woman's belief in equality is
bringing a major change in even the
remotest corners of Ladakh!**

Stanzin Saldon (Shifah) is a passionate education leader and child well-being advocate from Ladakh, who has dedicated over a decade to transforming public education and empowering marginalized communities through holistic and inclusive interventions. Her journey is marked by a deep personal commitment to social change, fueled by early experiences that shaped her resolve to create equitable learning opportunities in one of India's most remote and challenging regions. Originally pursuing a medical degree, her path shifted when she discovered her true calling lay beyond the walls of college, i.e., in service to society. Inspired by volunteer work in rural communities and driven by a natural empathy for children's needs, she felt that social service cannot be restricted to a particular project. Thus, she made the courageous decision to leave medical school and instead focus on social work. This pivotal choice led her to Kargil, where, alongside close friends and allies, she launched rZamba in 2015, a charitable trust named after the Balti word for "bridge," symbolizing its mission to connect people, resources and systems. Starting with small but impactful efforts such as building proper toilets for girls and raising awareness about adolescent health, especially menstrual hygiene, rZamba quickly grew into a beacon of change within the region. Its approach emphasized community-rooted education reform, teacher capacity building, and the inclusion of gender-sensitive and socio-emotional learning programs. Today, under the umbrella of rZamba's Holistic Child Well Being Initiative, the organization reaches around 8,000 children from foundational learning years, has directly benefited over 300 teachers, and serves 100+ communities across Ladakh. Additionally, since 2019, rZamba has engaged and empowered 120 rural youth through its flagship rISE (rZamba Initiative for Sustainable Education) Educators Fellowship program. Stanzin's work navigates the difficult realities of Ladakh's geography, cultural conservatism, and infrastructural challenges. Programs under her leadership encourage open conversations on sensitive topics, bridging gender gaps in education, and fostering safe environments where both boys and girls can learn about physical and emotional changes during adolescence. Beyond education, rZamba extends its impact through volunteer-driven initiatives during crises, such as COVID-19 relief, and continual engagement with government stakeholders to sustain systemic improvements.

Through rZamba, Stanzin has become that vital bridge ensuring that children in Ladakh have the rights, resources, and dignity every learner deserves.





Dr. Tankbund Shiva

Telangana



A hero who saves lives from drowning and recovers bodies of those drowned in the Hussain Sagar Lake of Hyderabad!

In the heart of Hyderabad lies the Hussain Sagar Lake, a scenic landmark that, for many, is a beautiful cityscape feature. Yet, beneath its surface, it holds a darker reputation as a suicide point. For over 25 years, one man has dedicated his life to this lake, becoming its silent guardian and a beacon of hope for countless families. He is Shiva, widely known as Dr. Tankbund Shiva, a local hero who has selflessly saved over 140 people from drowning and recovered over 1000 bodies. What began with a disturbing childhood, being orphaned at the age of 6 with no knowledge of his parents, became a journey of helping others. Shiva's journey to becoming a lifesaver began with a deeply personal tragedy. When he was just 12 years old, his younger brother, his only family, accidentally drowned in a Lake in an attempt to save others. Shiva went to the lake to retrieve his brother's body. The pain and grief of this loss became his defining motivation. He decided at that moment that he would dedicate his life to ensuring that no one else would suffer a similar fate in the lakes. He began living near Tank Bund and started rescuing people who attempted to take their lives by jumping into the water. His efforts go far beyond the typical role of a lifeguard. He serves as a vital first responder and a crucial assistant to the police, often retrieving bodies from the murky depths of Hussain Sagar and other water bodies across the city. The work is challenging and dangerous due to the lake's pollution and underwater obstacles, but his dedication never falters. His selfless acts have earned him the name "Tank Bund Shiva"! Hussain Sagar lake has unfortunately become a location for suicides, often driven by complex factors such as family disputes, financial difficulties, and mental health challenges. In response, authorities, including the Lake Police, have implemented measures like increased surveillance and dedicated patrols, even enlisting locals as lookouts. Those rescued receive counseling to address underlying issues. Inspired by actor Sonu Sood, Shiva launched a free ambulance service during the Pandemic.

In the waters of Hussain Sagar, you can spot a true saviour, his name is Shiva!





Ms. Shailja Sharma
A Content Creator, popularly known as
"Nerd with a Bindi"!

Uttar Pradesh



She will make you "Fall in Love with Bharat"!

India's rich heritage is a vast and intricate tapestry, woven with countless stories, traditions, culture, languages, wisdom, and much more, often remaining unknown to the very people it belongs to. In a world where cultural knowledge can be easily lost in the digital noise, Shailja Sharma, an educational content creator from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, is using her platform, "Nerd With A Bindi," to make Indian culture "cool again". A Computer Science engineer by education and a folk art enthusiast by passion, Shailja is on a mission to celebrate the rich heritage and traditions of Bharat through storytelling that is "Real, Relevant, and Deeply Rooted". Her journey as a Content Creator began with a desire to make India's cultural wisdom, from ancient traditions to everyday practices, accessible and engaging for a modern audience. Through her 60-to 90-second documentaries, she delves into a wide range of topics, including the decoding of folk music from every Indian state, the untold origins of district names, folk music, textile, culture, artists and the list is never-ending! She believes that authenticity and depth are more important than algorithms and virality. For her, the ultimate reward is when her content sparks a sense of pride and discovery in her viewers, making them say, "I didn't know this about India" or "This makes me feel proud". Her dedication and unique approach have earned her national recognition for her work, including awards from the Ministry of Culture for a National Essay Writing Competition and the Ministry of IT for a National Quiz Competition. She was also honored as the District Winner at the First National Youth Parliament Festival, organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Her extensive preparation for the Civil Services has given her a strong research-oriented approach and a deep understanding of India's socio-cultural fabric, which is evident in the quality of her content. Shailja is building a space where India's roots are seen and celebrated. Her work is an invitation for people to rediscover Bharat in all its richness. By focusing on storytelling that is both authentic and impactful, she is helping a new generation connect with their heritage and take pride in their identity.

Once you see her video, we can assure you that "You will fall in Love with Bharat"!





Sadam Hanjabam
Founder

Ya_All, Manipur



He has used sports to revive distressed and marginalized youth in Manipur, promote inclusivity, and break stereotypes. From battling addiction to curating Asia's first all-trans football team, his journey is full of inspiration.

He has used sports to revive distressed and marginalized youth in Manipur, promote inclusivity, and break stereotypes. From battling addiction to curating Asia's first all-trans football team, his journey is full of inspiration. As an overdose survivor, Sadam uses sports to advocate for inclusion, mental health, substance misuse awareness, gender equality, and the overall well-being of young people. A passionate advocate from Manipur, he has shaped how youth empowerment, inclusion, and equality are viewed in India. As the founder of Ya_All: The Youth Network, the first registered United Nations-recognized, youth-led LGBTI+ organization in North East India, he has dedicated himself to promoting safe, supportive spaces where young people can live free from stigma or discrimination. His work creates opportunities for youth to grow confidently and authentically. One of his most pioneering initiatives is curating Asia's first all-Transmen Football Team in 2020, which uses sports as a powerful medium to promote inclusivity and break stereotypes. Recognizing the lack of safe spaces and social support, Sadam used football to revive distressed and marginalized youth in Manipur. Through this team and events like the Queer Games, he provided a platform where young LGBTQ+ individuals could find acceptance, build confidence, and challenge stigmas in sports. Football became more than just a game; it became a means for healing and community-building. This included coaching conflict-affected children in shelter camps as part of the 'Football for Heal, Football for Peace' initiative, helping many young people overcome trauma, find a sense of belonging, and embrace their identity with pride. Under his leadership, Ya_All has received global recognition, being listed among the 10 Global Initiatives led by queer people by the United Nations Envoy on Youth. His advocacy and compassion have also been honored by Dettol's 100 Protectors campaign, UNESCO's 50 Stories of Kindness, and international media platforms. His personal journey and work have been documented by Apple TV's "The Me You Can't See," co-produced by Oprah Winfrey and Prince Harry, and Amazon Prime's "Rainbow Rishta." Through Ya_All, incubated by UNDP, Citi Foundation, and Accelerating Asia under the Youth Co:Lab Program, Sadam works extensively on health and well-being, gender equality, sexuality education, and mental health. A TEDx Speaker, UNDP Youth Co:Lab Fellow, and Transforming Communities for Inclusion Fellow, he continues to inspire through grassroots work.

His leadership is guided by the belief that inclusion is not just about representation but about creating systems where everyone has equal opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute.





Raja Bhaiya
Vidya Dham Samiti (VDS)

Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh now has a hero who uplifts the marginalized in multiple ways!

Bundelkhand, a part of both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, is a land where courage meets crisis, where generations have battled drought, migration, and poverty. Scarred by recurring droughts, agrarian distress, debt traps, and large-scale migration, the region has long been known for farmer suicides, child malnutrition, and families vanishing to cities in search of subsistence. Here, where poverty and injustice became inherited burdens, Raja Bhaiya has brought change to the core, individually and through Vidya Dham Samiti (VDS), founded in 2001. Founded by visionary social worker Raja Bhaiyya with a small group of committed youth, VDS set out with a mission to give people a chance to stand tall. Instead of charity, the organization rooted itself in rights, dignity, and grassroots democracy. Over two decades, it has become a people's movement across 69 villages of the Banda district, empowering communities to claim what is rightfully theirs. Through community meetings, awareness drives, and the nurturing of grassroots leaders, VDS has equipped over 1,300 members of local groups like the Chingari Sangathan, an inspiring women's collective that fearlessly demands justice. These women have reclaimed land, resisted violence and confronted corrupt practices, settling over 216 serious rights-related cases. Their courage has reshaped local governance, with Women Pradhans and ward members emerging from among their ranks. The impact is profound. 1,125 children who had dropped out are back in school. Corruption in mid-day meals and ration systems has been halted. 38,000 families have secured the full 100 days of work under MGNREGA, breaking free from exploitative contractors. 1,200 families have received rightful control over farmland, while 500 farmers now practice organic farming, and 150 have boosted yields by up to 40% through irrigation and sustainable methods. For many in Bundelkhand, this has been nothing short of a return to life with dignity. At the heart of this transformation is Raja Bhaiyya, a grassroots leader who chose to walk beside his people rather than ahead of them. His style is neither confrontational nor elitist; instead, it is deeply participatory, ensuring change is community-owned. Despite facing threats and even being jailed several times, he continues to work rather fearlessly! In a region where despair once bred silence, VDS has sparked a culture of questioning, demanding and building together. Through community meetings, awareness drives, and the nurturing of grassroots leaders, VDS has equipped over 1,300 members of local groups like the Chingari Sangathan, an inspiring women's collective that fearlessly demands justice. These women have reclaimed land, resisted violence and confronted corrupt practices, settling over 216 serious rights-related cases. Their courage has reshaped local governance, with Women Pradhans and ward members emerging from among their ranks. The impact is profound. 1,125 children who had dropped out are back in school. Corruption in mid-day meals and ration systems has been halted. 38,000 families have secured the full 100 days of work under MGNREGA, breaking free from exploitative contractors. 1,200 families have received rightful control over farmland, while 500 farmers now practice organic farming, and 150 have boosted yields by up to 40% through irrigation and sustainable methods. For many in Bundelkhand, this has been nothing short of a return to life with dignity. At the heart of this transformation is Raja Bhaiyya, a grassroots leader who chose to walk beside his people rather than ahead of them. His style is neither confrontational nor elitist; instead, it is deeply participatory, ensuring change is community-owned. Despite facing threats and even being jailed several times, he continues to work rather fearlessly! In a region where despair once bred silence, VDS has sparked a culture of questioning, demanding and building together.

Raja Bhaiya's belief in the power of community has revolutionized Bundelkhand, proving that one determined individual can ignite a development that generations will follow!



Shri Vishnu Kumar Bunty
Founder

Manav Upkar Sanstha, Uttar Pradesh



For the last 26 years, he has been performing the final rites of unclaimed and unidentified bodies.

Shri Vishnu Kumar Bunty, lovingly known as Bunty Ji, is the Founder of Manav Upkar Sanstha in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. This social welfare organization has today become a living symbol of compassion and public service. For the past 26 years, he has dedicated his life to a profound and often neglected cause, offering dignified last rites to thousands of unclaimed and unidentified bodies. His selfless work ensures that even in death, every individual is treated with dignity and receives a proper farewell, irrespective of their social status or religious background. Manav Upkar Sanstha acts like a family for the forgotten, taking full responsibility for their cremation. The organization also arranges important rituals such as Pind Daan at Gaya, bringing peace to departed souls and providing them with the dignity of a final farewell. Each year, the Sanstha organizes an Asthi Visarjan Yatra (immersion of ashes) at sacred sites such as Pashupatinath Temple (Nepal), Dwarka, Rameshwaram, Jagannath Puri, Ujjain, Prayagraj, Kashi, Haridwar, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Gangasagar, and other holy destinations. Recently, under his leadership, 194 members of the organization carried the ashes of 184 unclaimed bodies and immersed them at Sultanganj "Vaidyanath". Vishnu Ji firmly believes that every person, no matter how they lived, deserves the dignity of proper last rites. Beyond serving the deceased, the Sanstha has also extended its mission to support the living. It provides vehicles for funeral services and even offers freezers to families so that the body of a loved one can be preserved until relatives return for the last rites. A touching example of this service was when a family returning from the United States was able to see their late mother one last time, thanks to a freezer provided by the Sanstha. The Sanstha's compassion also reaches the underprivileged sections of society. It celebrates festivals in orphanages, distributes food to the differently-abled and destitute, and runs the Annapurna Rasoi, a community kitchen that serves thousands of needy people with affordable and nutritious meals every day, fighting against hunger in a holistic way. The quiet dedication and selfless service of Shri Vishnu Kumar bring him thousands of blessings daily, giving him the strength to continue this noble mission, no matter the challenges.

Till date, Manav Upkar Sanstha has performed the last rites of more than 6,400 bodies—and this eternal service to humanity continues unbroken.





Tejas Ghadge
Prabha Hira Pratishthan
Palawi

Maharashtra

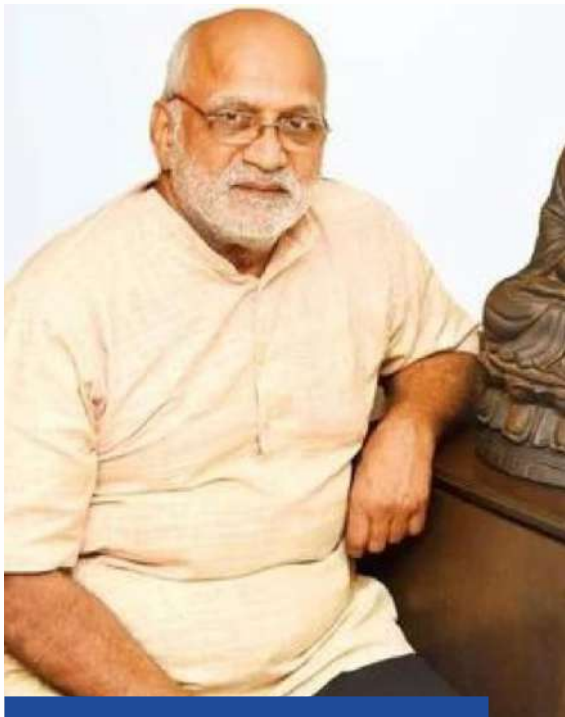


Palawi is a haven of hope, a lifeline for HIV-positive orphaned children and marginalized women with care, dignity, and a future.

In India, where over two million people are estimated to be living with HIV, the most vulnerable bear the heaviest burden, i.e., children born into the epidemic. Thousands of them, orphaned or abandoned, face not only fragile health but also the crushing weight of stigma and social exclusion. At the margins of society, they are left with little hope for survival, let alone the prospect of a dignified life. Against this grim reality stands Palawi, a sanctuary of care and compassion spearheaded by Prabha Hira Pratishthan since 2001. Founded by Ms. Mangal Shah and nurtured along with her daughter Ms. Dimple Ghadge, Palawi has become a lifeline for children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. Today, it safeguards more than 150 children, including 86 girls, offering not just shelter, but an entire ecosystem of care that addresses the physical, emotional, and social voids in their lives. At Palawi, children receive comprehensive medical care through the Sanjeevani Medical Unit, ensuring access to ART treatment, counselling, and timely interventions that are vital for their survival. Equally critical is education, provided through Palawi Gyanmandir, a self-sustained school that not only empowers children with knowledge but dispels the myth of their social invisibility. Beyond classroom learning, Palawi equips children and young adults with vocational training, tailoring, handicrafts, and farming skills, nurturing pathways to independence and dignity. For adolescent girls, often the most invisible victims of the crisis, collaborations like one with Cienvidas Spain reinforce rights, protection, and leadership, enabling them to grow with confidence in a society that too often silences them. Initiatives such as tree-planting drives and cultural activities foster a sense of belonging, resilience, and pride in their identity. Over the past 24 years, Palawi has rescued and rehabilitated more than 1,000 orphans and abandoned children and women, creating what may be the only multi-generational HIV-positive caregiving model in Maharashtra. Awards, including the International Woman Achiever's Award (2024) and the Shining World Compassion Award (2021).

Palawi is more than an institution; it is a family where healing and hope replace fear and abandonment. In a world that often turns away from HIV-positive children, Palawi looks into their eyes and says: You matter. You belong. You have a future. The true impact of Palawi is etched in the faces of children who dream again, free from shame, hunger and despair.





Dr Ravindranath Shanbhag
Founder

**Human Rights Protection Foundation
& Consumer Forum, Basrur, Karnataka**



He empowers vulnerable individuals to solve their legal problems through Alternative Dispute Resolution methods or by creating public opinion against injustice and has guided over 40,000 cases to date!

With an already overburdened judicial system, many people find the path to justice to be long, complex, and intimidating. But in Udupi, Karnataka, Dr. Ravindranath Shanbhag has been working for decades to simplify this process and empowers the vulnerable. A distinguished Professor of Pharmacology, Dr. Shanbhag's journey began after he was imprisoned during the 1975 Emergency, where he witnessed the exploitation of inmates and was inspired to work for human rights. This experience ignited a lifelong mission by establishing a Consumer organization in 1980 to start with. After gaining sufficient experience in handling several complex cases in 1992, he founded the Human Rights Protection Foundation, an organization that operates on a unique and highly successful model. Rather than engaging in traditional litigation, they focus on educating individuals and empowering them to fight their own battles. Their methodology is based on Gandhian principles, using systematic correspondence and dialogue with authorities to resolve issues, with an impressive success rate of 78% across more than 40,000 cases. Dr. Shanbhag has brought justice in several high-profile cases. One such case is "The Akku and Leela" case. Akku and Leela, two illiterate women, worked as temporary cleaners at a government training institute for over 40 years for a meager salary of ₹15 per month. Despite a Government Order to make all temporary employees with more than 10 years of service permanent, their pleas were ignored. In 1998, with the help of HRPF, they approached the Karnataka Administrative Tribunal. The Education Department responded by firing them, but the two women continued to work without pay. After a 14-years legal battle, they won their case in the Supreme Court, which ordered the government to regularize their positions and pay them their back wages from 1971. This brought their total compensation at that point to 27.79 lakhs each. HRPF has handled several human trafficking cases and is successful in bringing several female victims from the Middle East countries. HRPF also specializes in protecting the rights of senior citizens, particularly those who have been abandoned or exploited by their children. One such case is of a retired teacher in Mangaluru who was forced to live on the streets. Through creating public awareness and using the provisions of the Senior Citizens and Parents Protection Act, HRPF not only secured the return of her property but also ensured her dignified return to her home.

Dr. Shanbhag neither collects any fee from the victims nor accepts donations from any funding sources. The organization's expenses are met through contributions from his articles and publications, ensuring its independence and integrity.





**Col Mickie Uberoi (Retd)
Founder**



**A charitable home of
SANT ISHWAR
FOUNDATION**

**A Safe Heaven on Earth, which we call
Home and “GHAR”!**

GHAR, Maharashtra

While many institutions offer shelter, GHAR is a unique home, built on the vision of a family, a safe and comfortable place that brings warmth under one roof. This was exactly what Colonel Mickie Uberoi, a retired Army officer, envisioned and the journey of GHAR began! Driven by a childhood dream to help orphans, abandoned, and vulnerable children, Col Mickie Uberoi used his life's savings to create GHAR, a charitable home under the aegis of Sant Ishwar Foundation in Pune. His vision was to provide not just a roof, but a loving family environment for girls in need of care and protection, women with loco motor disabilities, and the elderly. **GHAR** GHAR, which means 'home,' is a specially designed seven-story building that houses these three groups, creating an integrated family environment. The core concept is to weave together three generations of people from diverse backgrounds into one family, promoting togetherness, belongingness and love. The Foundation's vision is to ensure that the lives of marginalized children, the differently-abled, and the elderly are secure, productive, and fulfilling. Col Uberoi, who treats the girls as his own daughters, ensures they get quality education in prestigious schools like the Army Public School, St. Joseph's Convent School and the like. They are also given extensive exposure through visits to defense establishments, corporate offices and other places of interest and learning in order to raise their aspirations and help them realize their full potential. GHAR provides a holistic approach to shaping a girl's life, quality education and abundant learnings and opportunities to promote independence, and ensures physical and mental well-being through healthy nutrition, good healthcare, counselling and recreational activities. The home also ensures that girls have all the necessary facilities for their overall growth, from emotional support to opportunities in academics, sports, yoga, art and culture. For women with locomotive disabilities, GHAR provides a specialized, wheelchair-accessible living space. They receive skill training and support to empower them and help them become independent and productive members of society. The elderly residents are provided with a comfortable stay and caring support, with well-furnished rooms and recreational activities. This intergenerational setup allows for a strong bond between the seniors and the children, creating a lively and homely atmosphere.

GHAR is a “Safe Heaven For Girls”, a place of warmth, encouragement, and learning, where girls reach for the stars and are nurtured to become successful, compassionate, and conscientious adults!





Dr. Chinu Kwatra

Maharashtra



This Changemaker believes that “Insaan Bano! Bohot Scope Hai!”

In the bustling landscape of Mumbai, Dr. Chinu Kwatra carried responsibility at a young age! His work is driven by the philosophy, “Insaan Bano! Bohot Scope Hai!” (Be a human being! There's a lot of scope!) and has brought hope to countless individuals and communities. Born into a lower-middle-class family, his early life was marked by responsibility and struggle, from undergoing financial distress, running his mother's roadside food stall at the age of 16 to battling depression after a personal loss. These experiences, however, became the foundation of his empathy and the desire to help others. Khushiyaan was founded in 2014 as community service gave him happiness after overcoming suicidal thoughts. The Beach Warriors campaign started in 2017, and Khushiyaan was officially registered in 2018. This dynamic, youth-driven organization has since become a beacon of positive change. It all started with a Beach-Cleaning Drive and grew into a series of initiatives, creating widespread social impact. His work began with beach cleaning, an initiative that grew from a personal commitment into a widespread movement. Dr. Kwatra pioneered India's first volunteer-led Ocean Clean-Up drives, mobilizing over 1 million citizens. His team of "Beach Warriors" is recognized in the Limca Book of World Records for their efforts. Through the Beach Warriors initiative, Kwatra and his team have cleared over 4,000 tons of waste from Mumbai's beaches, not only protecting marine life but also upcycling the collected plastic into school benches for underprivileged students, a powerful example of environmental and social impact combined. The Roti Ghar program has served over 20 million meals to hungry children, directly combating food insecurity and nourishing thousands of young lives. His vision extends far beyond food and a clean environment. The Khushiyaan Foundation is working to uplift 20 tribal schools and convert them into SDG Aware Schools. They have also built and now operate shelters for abandoned seniors, orphaned children, and even stray animals, providing a safe haven for the most vulnerable. Additionally, the foundation has provided crucial disaster relief nationwide and empowered women through initiatives like MARD (Menstruation - A Right To Discussion), which champions menstrual hygiene awareness. Dr. Kwatra has earned the affectionate titles of "Papa" to thousands of children, Dada (Brother) to 13000 children and "Beta" to abandoned seniors, a journey made from deep and personal connections throughout his life.

Dr. Chinu Kwatra proves that one man's struggles can become hope for millions. The journey is long with many more initiatives in the pipeline!





Sanjeev Kumar

Bihar



He left his Modelling Career to work for Untouchability in the most remote and internal corners of Bihar!

Sanjeev Kumar, once a high-profile fashion model in Delhi, gave up the runway to fight for Dalit dignity in rural Bihar. Born into an upper-caste family, his life took an unexpected U-turn following a disturbing incident in 2005. While at a family wedding in his ancestral village, he witnessed a stark display of untouchability that shook him to his core. After the upper-caste guests had finished eating, their plates and leftover food were thrown into a pit. He saw members of the Dom community, often denied basic dignity, forced to collect leftover food thrown into a pit by upper-caste guests. This shocking discrimination inspired him to dedicate his life to the rights and dignity of Dalits. He faced immense challenges. Born into an upper-caste family, he chose to serve a community where even a touch was seen as a sin. In solidarity and protest, he adopted "Dom" as his surname, an open rebellion against society. In 2006, he founded Bahishkrit Hitkari Sangathan, a grassroots movement empowering the marginalized with a simple goal: "to restore dignity and provide opportunities," rejecting foreign funding. His work has spanned a wide range of social issues. He launched the "Lout Chalo School Ki Ore" (Let's Go Back to School) campaign, successfully enrolling hundreds of children in schools and inspiring many to pursue higher education, with some even becoming engineers and teachers. He has actively undertaken campaigns against manual scavenging and drug addiction. He has led campaigns against manual scavenging and drug addiction, secured land and housing for the homeless, and helped rehabilitate former Naxalites. Even today, in many villages, Mahadalits and Dalits are barred from taking part in "Ganga Snan". In 2006, Sanjeev led a Kalash Yatra from the Ganga banks to Parbatta, enabling Mahadalits to collect water from the main flow, breaking untouchability barriers with the belief that "Ganga belongs to everyone." Between 2009 and 2012, he also organized the Bahishkrit Chetna Yatra to promote Dalit upliftment. His story was featured on Satyamev Jayate in 2012, and he has been honored with the Karmaveer Chakra by the United Nations as well as awarded by former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu; his work is also documented in the book *The Vision of Antyodaya*.

He has faced life threats and survived murder attempts, too. Yet, he refused protection from the Government, believing that "Jitna Time Likha Hua Hai Kaam Karunga, Baaki Dekha Jayega".





Divyanshu Upadhyay
Bharat Disaster Relief
Foundation (BDRF)

Uttar Pradesh



**A 100% volunteer-based organization
working to provide immediate and effective
disaster relief across India.**

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, can devastate communities, causing widespread loss of life, livelihoods, and infrastructure. From flash floods and cloudbursts to landslides and pandemics, these calamities create immense suffering and a critical need for rapid, organized humanitarian aid. In a country as vast and diverse as India, the ability to provide swift and effective relief is paramount. While government agencies and large international organizations play a significant role, the efforts of grassroots, volunteer-led groups are crucial in reaching the most vulnerable and forgotten. One such organization is the Bharat Disaster Relief Foundation (BDRF). The Bharat Disaster Relief Foundation (BDRF) is a volunteer-led organization dedicated to providing immediate and effective disaster relief and support across India. The foundation operates with a 100% volunteer workforce, led by Divyanshu Upadhyay and distinguished by its core team of former Army personnel, who bring invaluable discipline, precision, and strategic experience to relief operations. This unique leadership structure enables BDRF to respond within hours of a crisis, ensuring that essential aid, including food, shelter, clothing, and medical supplies, is delivered quickly to those in desperate need. Their comprehensive work covers the full cycle of disaster management from prevention to long-term recovery. For immediate relief, their teams have been on the ground in various locations, providing crucial assistance to affected communities. For example, they delivered essential relief kits, including gas stoves and food supplies, to families impacted by flash floods in Uttarkashi and Himachal Pradesh. During floods in Prayagraj, the team distributed ration kits and tarpaulins. Following floods in Bihar, they conducted health camps to provide medical aid. BDRF has also provided financial support to individuals who lost family members and homes in landslides. Beyond immediate rescue and relief, BDRF focuses on post-disaster recovery and prevention. They assist communities in rebuilding homes and restoring livelihoods, offering financial aid and educational support to affected children. They are actively engaged in disaster prevention efforts, such as promoting sustainable practices, reducing pollution and addressing climate change to mitigate the impact of future disasters. Their work, driven by volunteers and supported by donors, exemplifies the vital role that grassroots initiatives play in reaching those most vulnerable during emergencies.

BDRF exemplifies rapid, volunteer-driven disaster relief and sustainable recovery across India.





Advocate Yogesh Parshad
Founder

Law Power Association (LPA), Punjab



**He freed an entire village from the
chains of Bonded Labor!**

In India, child abuse and bonded labour remain some of the most harrowing human rights crises, entrapping thousands in cycles of exploitation, poverty, and silence. Children from vulnerable communities, often lacking access to justice and protection, suffer unimaginable trauma while their perpetrators roam free. Against this grim backdrop, Advocate Yogesh Parshad stands as a fearless champion fighting to break these chains and restore dignity to the oppressed. Moved by this stark injustice, Adv. Yogesh could not shake the image of these trapped workers. What began as isolated efforts soon culminated in the founding of the Law Power Association (LPA) in 2018. The mission was to serve those who are often voiceless, i.e. the victims of bonded labour and child sexual abuse. His journey began with a deeply personal, gut-wrenching experience: an 11-year-old girl victimized for months by her neighbour. The result? Such a young girl ended up giving birth to a baby. Witnessing the family's agony and uphill struggle for justice amid police inaction and social stigma ignited Yogesh's resolve to create an NGO offering not just legal aid, but emotional and psychological support to victims and their families. Under his leadership, LPA has achieved staggering impact. The association has legally liberated over 17,200 bonded labourers, freeing entire communities from the shackles of forced labour. One landmark triumph includes freeing an entire village in Punjab where generations had laboured in bondage. Additionally, the Association has secured convictions against 60 perpetrators in child rape cases, including two death sentences, signaling a powerful deterrence and justice for victims. The Association takes a holistic approach to justice, combining legal victories with counseling and community support. They also advocate for policy reforms and runs awareness campaigns on bonded labour, child exploitation, trafficking, and sexual abuse across India. LPA works closely with communities and partners to ensure rescued labourers access education, healthcare, and livelihoods. Its mission is to make legal systems accessible to marginalized families burdened by poverty and fear, empowering survivors and their families to heal, know their rights, and build dignified lives.

The fight against bonded labour and child exploitation is fraught with challenges, including social stigma, intimidation, and legal hurdles. Yet, Adv. Yogesh's determination exemplifies hope and transformation. He proves one person's belief can ignite systemic change, restoring justice and dignity to those whose voices have long been silenced.





**The Assam Innovation and
Startup Foundation (AISF), Assam**

A Government initiative aimed at creating a robust startup ecosystem in Assam by empowering youth, providing incubation support, and promoting entrepreneurship to transform the state into a leading startup hub.

The Assam Innovation and Startup Foundation (AISF) is a visionary initiative launched by the Government of Assam aimed at creating a vibrant startup ecosystem within the state. Focused primarily on empowering local youth, the mission seeks to transform Assam into a prominent startup hub in India by encouraging young entrepreneurs to become job creators rather than job seekers. At the core of their efforts is the drive to create a culture of entrepreneurship by providing essential support and recognition to startups operating exclusively within Assam. The mission offers official recognition to startups through the My Assam Startup Id (MASI), which unlocks access to various monetary benefits and streamlined facility booking systems. This recognition helps startups gain credibility and resources crucial for growth in their nascent stages. Their incubation support is distinctive with its "Hub & Spoke" model. This model facilitates incubation services across the state by establishing a central innovation hub supported by satellite incubators at the district level. The Central Innovation Hub is equipped with world-class physical and virtual incubation facilities, promoting innovation and collaborative development. The district-level spokes ensure entrepreneurship support is decentralized and accessible to a wider audience. This structure bolsters new and existing incubators by providing them with infrastructure, mentorship, and corporate connections, thus easing the entrepreneurial journey for many startups. The strategic focus of the organization extends to building an enabling ecosystem by developing robust networks. Its comprehensive mentor network connects emerging entrepreneurs with experienced industry veterans who provide guidance and strategic assistance. Furthermore, the incubator and corporate networks cultivate partnerships that enhance access to funding, technology, and markets. Since its inception, the Assam Innovation and Startup Foundation (AISF) has registered and supported over 700 startups, reflecting significant progress in nurturing the entrepreneurial ambitions within the state. Since its inception, the Assam Innovation and Startup Foundation (AISF) has supported over 400 startups and aims to foster 5,000 new startups in the next five years, positioning Assam as a key startup hub in Northeast India and attracting significant investment and employment opportunities. The Government targets to position Assam as a major startup destination in the northeastern region of India.

The Assam Innovation and Startup Foundation (AISF) is a transformative initiative that combines recognition, incubation, and networking to build a thriving entrepreneurial environment. By empowering youth and leveraging modern infrastructure and partnerships, it is rapidly positioning Assam as a growing startup hub that contributes significantly to regional economic development and inspires innovation among entrepreneurs.





**JAI
HIND
PROJECT**

Jai Hind Project

Uttarakhand



“They bring us the 'Real Life Stories' of India's Unsung Heroes!”

Founders:

Ms. Pallavi Chaturvedi, Co-Founder & CEO, Jai Hind Project and The CommsPur Collective

Mr. Atul Bokhandi, Co-Founder & COO, Jai Hind Project and The CommsPur Collective

The Jai Hind Project, a not-for-profit initiative based in Dehradun, is driven by a powerful vision: to inspire Indians to solve the nation's grassroots problems by celebrating heroism. Guided by the belief that "the opposite of a hero is not a villain; it's a bystander," they focus on shining a light on individuals and organizations who choose action over indifference. By highlighting the work and dedication of these everyday heroes, the Jai Hind Project aims to ignite more efforts toward building a better and more connected India. Their primary method of communication is "Storytelling", which they believe has the power to inspire, unite and spark change. They bridge the gap between "Bharat" and "India" by sharing real stories of heroes who saw something wrong, took risks and acted for the benefit of others. This is done through two main series: "Jai Hind Stories: Kahaniyan Hamare Heroes Ki," which spotlights the incredible journeys of grassroots heroes, and "A Day in the Life of an Indian," which offers an intimate glimpse into the lives of unsung heroes and the vital roles they play in society. In addition to storytelling, the Jai Hind Project also empowers the social sector through communication and leadership programs. The "Democracy Digital" is a 10 day immersive workshop that teaches changemakers the art of cost-effective filmmaking and storytelling, equipping them with the skills to document their work and engage with supporters. They also offer an exclusive day leadership program called "NAYAK" for social sector leaders, helping them align their communication with their purpose to inspire real-world change. As of July 2025, Jai Hind Project has developed a community of over 30,000 followers and subscribers across platforms, with a rich database of over 175 original story driven videos. They have a significant presence on YouTube (4.7K followers), Instagram (20.6K followers), and LinkedIn (3K followers). Through their "Democracy Digital Program," they have trained over 250 individuals from the development sector, creating a ripple effect of awareness and heroism across India.

By bringing powerful storytelling and leadership training, Jai Hind Project inspires and empowers India's grassroots heroes to drive meaningful change.





Smt. Radhaben Rathod

Gujarat



True strength lies not in avoiding adversity, but in rising and thriving despite it.

It is often said that those who struggle in adverse conditions are the ones who succeed. Radha Ben Rathod, a skilled artisan of Suf embroidery, embodies this truth. The beloved daughter among five brothers, Radha Ben got married and went to her in-laws' house, where the entire household consisted of one daughter-in-law, four parents-in-law, two sisters-in-law, two daughters, and a son, all involved in the craft of Suf embroidery. In 1993, she became the first awardee of the Gujarat Government's Handicraft and Cottage Industry award for excellence in Suf embroidery. Within a year of receiving this award, tragedy struck when her husband passed away, leaving her, illiterate and economically vulnerable, to bear the entire responsibility of the household alone at the young age of 28. Though widowed and stigmatized in society, Radha Ben refused to succumb to circumstances. Determined, she resolved to support her family through her skill. At that time, Srujan, an institution in Bhuj, was searching for trainers and experts among Suf artisans to help produce quality goods. Though Radha Ben was a state-level awardee, her impoverished economic state and the social stigma attached to widows, who were generally not allowed to step out of their homes, posed severe challenges. Yet, Radha Ben accepted the opportunity to become a trainer for Srujan, producing Suf products on a 10% commission basis. Under this role, she taught and guided artisans in making various intricate products like shawls, dupattas, and sarees, enabling her household to earn a livelihood. Following her husband's demise, she sold her inherited jewelry to fulfill social obligations and ensured that her three children were educated and employed. Over a span of 30 years, Radha Ben has trained more than 500 women and girls in Suf embroidery. Two of these trained women have themselves received awards. When her daughter-in-law joined the family, Radha Ben started a self-help group to revive this dying art form and provide employment to women like herself, who were otherwise confined to their homes. Suf embroidery is a highly intricate form of needlework that requires counting the fabric's weave without using printed patterns, creating designs like Lair, Phali, Suf, Golda Buta, and Mor Chaki. Thanks to dedicated efforts by organizations like Kala Sakhi Mandal and Pragati Mandal, this craft earned a GI tag. Due to its complexity and delicacy, Suf embroidery is considered expensive and time-consuming. To reach more consumers, Kala Sakhi Mandal began producing smaller, usable products.

Today, Radha Ben's efforts have revived Suf embroidery, employing over 500 women artisans and supporting their families. As a widow facing social stigma, she continues to defy norms and uses government schemes to achieve economic independence.





Onkar Pandey
Director

Livelihood and Prosperity
Social Alpha, Karnataka



A seasoned development professional building sustainable livelihood models and leading innovation-driven ecosystem solutions for underserved communities.

Onkar Pandey is a seasoned development professional with over 19 years of experience in creating sustainable livelihood solutions for underserved communities. As Director of Livelihood and Prosperity at Social Alpha, he leads initiatives that strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, bridging the gap between startups, investors, and communities. He also serves as an Independent Director and Advisor to several technology-based startups and NGOs in India and abroad. Previously, he played a key role in designing and scaling Tata Trusts' "Lakhpatri Kisan" program and began his career with PRADAN, working extensively in conflict-affected regions. Onkar holds an M.Phil. in Political Science and a Diploma in Entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania.

Social Alpha

A national innovation and entrepreneurship platform that nurtures science and technology-based solutions from "lab to market" to create large-scale social, economic, and environmental impact. Founded in 2016, Social Alpha is a pioneering ecosystem enabler dedicated to nurturing science and technology-based innovations that address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. Operating through the not-for-profit platform Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (FISE), and supported by Tata Trusts, the organization's mission is to bridge science and society and empower mission-driven startups. What sets Social Alpha apart is its three-tiered ecosystem architecture that supports entrepreneurs through every stage of their journey, right from "lab to market." This includes incubation infrastructure, venture accelerators, and investment pools that provide entrepreneurs with both technical support and patient capital. Their unique investment approach focuses on creating a new category of patient capital to back early-stage science and technology startups that may otherwise struggle to find long-term support. Over the years, Social Alpha has built a nationwide network of innovators, investors, policy-makers, and civil society organizations to strengthen the innovation landscape. Its interventions span crucial impact sectors including livelihoods, healthcare, agriculture, energy access, and climate action, all aimed at ensuring equitable progress and prosperity for communities across India.

Driven by a vision to harness entrepreneurship for social good, Social Alpha has become a powerful enabler of inclusive growth, transforming innovative ideas into scalable solutions for communities.





Ms. Shilpa Vaishnav

Gujarat



She has dedicated over two decades to uplifting tribal communities through transformative initiatives in education, health, and livelihood, empowering thousands across Gujarat's remote regions.

Ms. Shilpa Arunkumar Vaishnav, a dedicated social worker and visionary leader, has been a beacon of hope for tribal communities in the Banaskantha district of Gujarat. With over two decades of relentless service, she has made significant strides in education, child rights, women empowerment, livelihood support, and community health across hundreds of remote and tribal villages. Starting her career as a Lecturer in Hindi at Banas Gram Seva Mahavidyalaya, Ms. Vaishnav soon took on the pivotal role of Coordinator at M.G.P. Sarvodaya Kendra and Director of the Samvedana Trust in Virampur. Through these platforms, she has overseen the implementation of diverse socio-economic development programs impacting more than a thousand villages in the Banaskantha region. One of her most noteworthy contributions is in the field of education. Since 2000, Ms. Vaishnav has operated informal schools for tribal children living in remote hilly areas, successfully mainstreaming over 3,500 children into formal education. She also manages a free hostel that shelters brilliant yet economically challenged tribal students, enabling many to pursue higher studies for the first time in the area. Her commitment to child rights and protection is exemplary. Coordinating UNICEF-funded initiatives since 2010, she has created awareness and provided training on child rights to over 2,500 children. She also supports the establishment of Child Protection Committees and organizes life skills training for thousands of adolescent girls, contributing to their overall well-being and empowerment. Women empowerment forms another cornerstone of her work. Organizing Self-Help Groups, conducting vocational training in beadwork, bamboo craft, and sewing, Ms. Vaishnav has enabled hundreds of tribal women to generate sustainable livelihoods. She has forged market linkages, including export avenues, to ensure these women benefit economically from their skills. Her efforts extend to relief and rehabilitation, where she has organized shelter construction, food distribution, cattle camps, and drought relief activities. Notably, she participated actively in earthquake relief in Kutch and recently led flood rehabilitation campaigns across several blocks in Banaskantha. In agriculture, she promotes eco-friendly practices, water-saving technologies, and horticulture among marginal farmers. She has facilitated the construction of check dams and well deepening to support farming communities. Running a free medical center since 2006, she has treated thousands, provided free operations, and conducted de-addiction campaigns that have benefited many tribal people.

Her dedication has earned her prestigious awards such as the Champaben Gondiya Paritoshik, Gandhi Mitra award, and recognition as the "Outstanding Woman of the Decade" by ASSOCHAM Ladies League.





Lomas Dhungel
Founder cum Developer

Hariyo Makha Project, Sikkim



He brings Sikkim together with his socio-environmental project "Hariyo Makha – Sikkim Against Pollution".

In the serene hills of Sikkim, Mr. Lomas Dhungel, a Mathematics teacher at Government Senior Secondary School, Makha, has been quietly driving change since 2015 by founding “Hariyo Makha – Sikkim Against Pollution,” a socio-environmental movement rooted in his village. “Hariyo,” means the “Green” in Nepali, a language spoken in Sikkim, symbolizing Mother Nature and ‘Makha’ is the village in Gangtok district where the project began. A small effort to upcycle discarded plastics into book covers has grown into 10 diverse initiatives, including plastic upcycling, the Clean Paper Initiative, Pyaro Mauri (bee conservation), and Nawa Nikunja Prakaran (fruit tree planting to reduce human-wildlife conflict), all dedicated to environmental sustainability. Started in 2015, the plastic upcycling initiative has turned discarded multi-layered covers into hygienic book covers, raising awareness and supporting needy students. Over 95,000 pieces have been transformed into 9,200 covers so far. The Clean Paper Initiative repurposes semi-used A4 pages into rough copies and low-cost notebooks at nominal prices to fund education, with 1,50,000 pages upcycled into 1,500 notebooks, generating resources for student admissions. “The ‘Lukeko Paisa’ (Hidden Treasure) Initiative found that 47% of exam papers had unused space, repurposed into rough copies to cut waste and support students. Similarly, the ‘Mero Khata’ (My Copy) Initiative promoted plain over ruled copies, recovering 20-27% of writing space, otherwise wasted in margins, increasing its utility. “The ‘Nawa Nikunja Prakaran’ (New Forestry Initiative) is a 5-year mission to plant fruit trees in forest reserves, reducing human-wildlife conflict by providing food for animals, especially monkeys; over 500 saplings were planted this year in its second phase. Complementing this, the Golden Rupee and Outsource Recycling Initiatives promote waste segregation and support rag pickers, while Pyaro Mauri (Dear Bees) conserves bee populations by planting mustard seeds in lean winter months, all contributing to a pioneering ecological effort. Supported by local panchayats of Patuk-Singbel GPU (Gangtok district), self-help groups, ward development societies, Eco club Makha, different schools and local intellectuals together with government bodies like Education Department, Forest Department, Sikkim State EIACP Hub and the Sikkim Pollution Control Board, the Hariyo Makha project has become a strong grassroots movement. Its modest revenues, along with founder Lomas’s contributions, support needy and dropout students in NIOS and IGNOU.

So far, 20 students have been aided, out of which one has completed a Master's degree, 3 have become graduates, and 3 have passed Class 12, with others progressing steadily.

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Banas Dairy, is Asia's largest milk production cooperative, based in Banaskantha district of Gujarat, India. Founded in 1969 under Operation Flood program, it is headquartered in Palanpur. The dairy collects around 83 lakh liters of milk daily, especially increasing in winters, and serves as a major milk producer cooperative in the region. In fiscal year 2024-25, Banas Dairy achieved a turnover exceeding ₹21,200 crore and giving farmer ₹2,900 crore as bonus apart from milk money. Banas Dairy is part of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation and markets its products through the AMUL brand. It has over 200,000 shareholders distributed across 1,750 cooperative societies and procures milk from more than 550,000 milk producers in the district. Processing over 1.02 crore liters of milk in a single day, solidifying its leadership in the dairy industry in Asia. In recent years, Banas Dairy has also diversified into potato processing and buttermilk packaging and has been praised by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for its contributions to the dairy sector. It embodies cooperative values and has a mission to empower farmers and provide high-quality dairy products across India. The cooperative has a strong focus on innovation, sustainability, and community welfare.



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