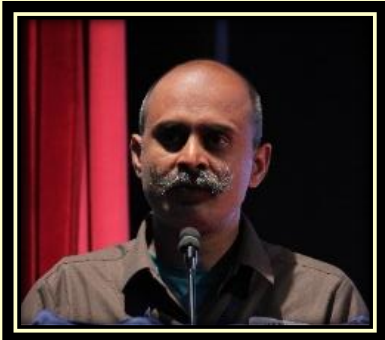



YUGAANTAR Awardees 2019

<p><u>Guria Swayam Sevi Sansthan (Mr Ajeet Singh)</u></p> 	<p>Guria Swayam Sevi Sansthan, founded by Ajeet Singh, is a dedicated foundation fighting human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children in India. His journey began with the adoption of three children from a woman in commercial sex at the young age of 17 in 1988, following which Guria was registered in 1993. Guria adopts a holistic end-to-end approach, which goes beyond rescuing victims to combat the organized criminal networks involved actively, addressing the root causes of trafficking such as poverty and inequality with a focus on justice and systemic change.</p>
<p><u>Ms. Arpita Vyas- (Wings to Fly)</u></p> 	<p>WINGS TO FLY is a not-for-profit founded by Mrs. Arpita Vyas. The main aim of the organization is to empower women and work for child welfare. Its major activities include women empowerment, skill development, livelihood enhancement, entrepreneurship, child education, child welfare, STEM education, healthcare, and linking beneficiaries with government schemes. The organization operates in Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Halol, Kheda, Kutch (Gujarat), Indore, and Kerala. Over its 10-year journey, WINGS TO FLY has impacted over 1.5 lakh families, 25,000 women, and 5,000 children. The organization has established Child Development Centers, Science Futuristic Labs, STEM Labs, and skill development livelihood centers to further its mission.</p>
<p><u>Mr Ashok Deshmane (Snehwan)</u></p> 	<p>Mr. Ashok Deshmane, an engineer with a compassionate heart, founded the "Snehwan" in response to the devastating 2014-15 droughts in Maharashtra. Recognizing the plight of children orphaned by farmer suicides, he established Snehwan, meaning "Ray of Hope," as a home and school. This initiative provides these vulnerable children with not just shelter and care, but also quality education, mentorship, and opportunities, aiming to offer them a brighter future amidst the tragic circumstances they have faced.</p>

<p>Mr Bhatu Sawant</p> 	<p>Mr. Bhatu Sawant is the visionary behind Signal Shala, an innovative school operating out of a repurposed shipping container located beneath the Teen Haat Signal flyover in Thane. Recognizing the vulnerability and lack of educational opportunities for children who spent their days selling small items or begging at the traffic signal, he established this unique learning space. Signal Shala provides these children with access to education, offering them a chance to break free from their circumstances. The Shala also conducts extra-curricular activities such as dance, sports, games and helps kids reach their dreams.</p>
<p>Mr Dadarao Bilhore (Pothole Dada)</p> 	<p>Driven by the tragic loss of his son to a pothole-related accident in 2015, Dadarao Bilhore has become a symbol of proactive civic responsibility in Mumbai. He took it upon himself to fill potholes, a dangerous and widespread problem in the city. To date, he has filled 1500+ potholes, earning him the title "Pothole Dada". Recognizing the need for a more systemic approach, he has also developed the "Spothole" app, which allows citizens to report potholes with photos and GPS locations, enabling faster action by authorities and community members. He has addressed the crucial problems of both the dangers of neglected infrastructure and the power of individual action in addressing civic issues.</p>
<p>Dr. Kausar Jahan</p> 	<p>Dr. Kausar Jahan, former Principal of a Primary School in Fafunda village, Meerut district, works towards the educational advancement of underprivileged women who were compelled to abandon their studies due to societal pressures and economic hardships. Taking personal responsibility, she actively educates impoverished rural women by going door-to-door to impart knowledge and inspiring them towards economic independence. She generously provides educational materials and covers transportation costs for these women. Her remarkable service has been recognized by the Uttar Pradesh Government, which bestowed upon her the prestigious state award. Her impactful journey has led to the successful enrollment of numerous women in basic education. Confident about her work, she even challenged parents with a promise to refund double the fees if their child did not show improvement in</p>

	<p>her school, signifying the phenomenal change she has initiated within the education system.</p>
<p>Mr. Jitendra Singh Gurjar</p> 	<p>Mr. Jitendra Singh Gurjar is a security guard at SVNIT, Surat who has penned over 8,500 letters to the families of martyrs. He honors soldiers from World War I, World War II, the Indo-Pak wars, the Indo-China war and the Kargil War along with the Martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the Nation. Mr. Gurjar has collected data on over 200,000 martyred soldiers and amassed 13,000+ photos and 10,000+ contact numbers of their families. His journey began during the 1999 Kargil War, driven by a desire to ensure that the sacrifices of soldiers are remembered. He continues this selfless service with heartfelt commitment, bringing solace to the families who feel recognized and remembered. Despite his modest salary, his devotion has transformed his home into a repository of military history, preserving the legacy of India's brave soldiers. He believes that while a soldier who fights for us is remembered for a day or two, who remembers them afterward, who cares? With this thought in mind, he performs this service with selfless devotion, and the families feel so happy that somebody remembers their sacrifice. His dedication serves as an inspiration to many, showcasing the profound impact of remembering and honoring those who gave their lives for the nation.</p>
<p>Mr. Rajeshwar Rao</p> 	<p>Mr. Rajeshwar Rao does the pious work of tracing the unidentified and unclaimed dead bodies from government hospitals and undertakes the work of doing their final rights. Initially aspiring to be a photographer, his path led him to the selfless work of tracing unidentified and unclaimed bodies in government hospitals and ensuring they receive proper final rites. Beyond this pious duty, he extends his compassion by providing shelter to needy patients and organizing blood donation camps, demonstrating a deep-seated humanitarian spirit that touches the lives of the vulnerable in multiple ways. His dedication brings solace and respect to those who might otherwise remain forgotten.</p>


Mr. Kalpesh Ahuja




Kalpesh Ahuja, the founder of Seva Sarvopari NGO based in Adipur Town, Kachchh District, is dedicated to improving food and promoting literacy among citizens in the town and surrounding regions. His firm commitment to community service led him to establish Seva Sarvopari NGO. The NGO focuses on initiatives such as 'CHOTU PADHEGA,' providing educational classes tailored for slum dwellers to enhance academic opportunities and empowerment. The 'NISWARTH Library' supports competitive exam preparation, serving as a valuable resource for aspiring individuals. 'SWABHIMAAN STALL' operates affordable lunch stalls across Gandhidham, ensuring nutritious meals are accessible to all, regardless of financial constraints. Additionally, 'SHRAVAN TIFFIN SEVA' addresses the nutritional needs of elderly individuals by delivering daily meals to 150 households, ensuring that no senior goes hungry.



Milaap stands as India's largest crowdfunding platform dedicated to personal needs, particularly critical healthcare. By simplifying online fundraising, Milaap empowers individuals to raise funds for emergencies and tertiary treatments like cancer care and organ transplants. Over the past eight years, their global community of funders, spanning over 130 countries, has contributed nearly ₹500 crore across more than 150,000 projects in India, establishing Milaap.org as a preferred and rapidly growing platform connecting those in need with compassionate donors. Their constant feature additions and extensive support services, ensure accessible and user-friendly crowdfunding for the masses.

<p>Mr. Ajay Sharma</p> 	<p>Mr. Ajay Sharma, the Founder Director of Satyakam Manav Sewa Samiti, was inspired to dedicate his life to social welfare after surviving a life-altering brain haemorrhage. His organization, established in 2004, focuses on providing comprehensive care and support to orphan children living with HIV/AIDS, who often face societal neglect. Demonstrating profound personal commitment, Mr. Sharma has adopted over 12 HIV-positive children, instilling in them his own fighting spirit while also reaching out to the wider community to raise crucial awareness about HIV/AIDS. Through Satyakam Care Home, he ensures these children receive education, nutrition, psychological support, healthcare, and recreational opportunities, striving to create a positive transformation in their lives and offer them a loving and hopeful future.</p>
<p>Ms. Anuradha Gore</p> 	<p>It was a quiet day in their Mumbai home, when Ms. Anuradha Gore received a tough request from her son, Captain Vinayak of the 31st Medium Artillery Regiment, when he learnt that his posting had been done at the volatile Kashmir border. "Promise me you will not cry if something untoward happens," he urged, "Remember you are a Captain's mother." Tragically, on September 26, 1995, at the young age of 26, he was martyred in Kupwara. True to her word, Mrs. Gore never shed tears publicly. Instead, she made a powerful vow to keep his memory alive. For the ensuing 24 years, she has consistently honored this promise, dedicating herself to sharing the stories and sacrifices of soldiers through talks to students and the public, impactful newspaper columns, and the authorship of eight Marathi books, many focused on the lives of servicemen. Her current endeavor involves penning a Marathi book on the arduous realities of guarding the Siachen Glacier. She has inspired countless young individuals in Maharashtra to join the armed forces, ensuring her son's legacy and the valor of his comrades endure.</p>

<p>Mushtaq Ansari (Pothole warrior)</p> 	<p>Mumbai's Mushtaq and Irfan have become known as the city's "Pothole Heroes" for their proactive mission to eliminate dangerous potholes. Frustrated with inaction, they've taken on the responsibility of filling over 186 significant potholes across Mumbai, directly improving road safety for countless commuters. Their dedication extends beyond potholes with their "Batti Gull" operation, where they've repaired over 1086 non-functional streetlights at night. This dynamic duo has also initiated impactful campaigns such as painting speed breakers, beach cleanups, anti-snatching drives, and drainage chamber maintenance, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to enhancing the overall well-being and safety of their city.</p>
<p>Ms. Neehari Mandali</p> 	<p>Ms. Neehari Mandali, a Hyderabad based administrator and counselor, is the inspiring founder of Burn Survivor Mission Saviour (BSMS), an NGO supporting burn victims under the banner "BURN SURVIVOR MISSION SAVIOUR" and tagline "Burns to shine." A survivor herself from Puligadda village, Krishna district, her life drastically changed after surviving 55% burns following severe harassment by her husband. Her life has inspired many, leading to her story being featured in the German book "Invisible" (2014) and her photograph being recognized in an Italian exhibition, showcasing inner beauty. Through BSMS, she has provided free surgeries, counseling, and rehabilitation to hundreds across India and connected survivors globally, earning numerous accolades as a beacon of hope.</p>
<p>Mr. Rajaram Joshi</p> 	<p>Mr. Rajaram Joshi, a fisherman in Vashi, Mumbai, has become a ray of hope at "Vashi", sadly gaining limelight for suicides, a trend tragically linked by locals to a popular 2013 movie. The trend once started seems never ending now. There comes Mr. Rajaram Joshi, along with his colleagues and sometimes the police, who has bravely intervened to save individuals attempting to end their lives in the waters. His courageous actions have resulted in saving over 49 lives, but unfortunately some couldn't make it. Despite the persistent issue, there is a Real Hero who resides in the seas, "Mr. Rajaram Joshi", who has not only saved lives but also kept humanity in India Alive!</p>

<p>Ms. Saroj Kumari (IPS)</p> 	<p>Ms. Saroj Kumari, (IPS) is a determined officer on a mission to empower children against sexual harassment through her initiative "Samaj Sparsh Ki." Leading a team of 12 specially trained policewomen, she has reached over 2000 children in 20 Gujarat schools, equipping them with the confidence to speak out and protect themselves. Notably, Mrs. Saroj Kumari is also the first woman IPS officer to conquer Mount Everest and has a strong track record of rescuing and rehabilitating girls from human trafficking during her tenure as SP in Botad, Gujarat. Her impactful work with "Samaj Sparsh Ki" recently earned her the Women Icon Award, felicitated by the Tamil Nadu Governor, further recognizing her significant contributions to child safety and women's empowerment.</p>
<p>Shri Aditya Sharma</p> 	<p>Shri Aditya Sharma, upon retiring from Coal India Ltd., embarked on a mission to nurture the future of India, driven by his strong belief in giving back to the nation. Recognizing schools as the foundation where the nation's future is shaped, he actively works towards equipping these institutions with essential facilities for a child's academic journey. Through his contributions, he provides schools with necessities like water coolers, benches, and books, as well as financial assistance for students' fees, offering comprehensive support in every possible way. He firmly believes that investing in the education of today's children will empower them to shape a brighter tomorrow for the nation. He also advocates for fellow retired professionals to unite and contribute their experience and resources to uplift the younger generation, emphasizing that after a fulfilling career, it is now their turn to pave the way for the future leaders of the country.</p>

Shri Kalpesh Joshi

Shri Kalpesh Joshi, an accomplished scholar holding an M.A. and M.Ed in Sanskrit Grammar and an Acharya in Literature from Sola Bhagvat Vidyapith, also lends his expertise as a writer at Gujarat Rajya Pathyapustak Mandal. Driven by the vision to re-establish the Bharatiya Education System, he established Gotirth Vidyapith in 2013, along with Shri Gopalbhai Sutariya in Ahmedabad. Since then, he passionately served as its Director, nurturing this Gurukul which uniquely blends life skills with an ancient educational model. Furthermore, Shri Kalpesh Joshi brings approximately 20 years of experience in performing traditional Shastrokt Yagya and Pooja ceremonies across the globe.