

# BIZDIVAS

periodical



*We are all in  
it together!*

# CORE TEAM

**Sarika Bhattacharyya**, Co-Founder, Biz Divas & Altavis started her entrepreneurial journey in 2011 with more than 14 years of experience in corporate world. Sarika is passionate about economic independence of women and giving them a voice. She has been nominated for prestigious Women Leadership programs including Fortune/US State Department Mentoring Program - Global Ambassadors Program. She has been featured one of the Top 50 Indian Women to Follow in Twitter by WOW Asia.

**Ranjana Deopa**, Co-Founder & Board Practice Head, Altavis & Biz Divas, has over 14 years of experience in Office Automation and Private Banking, having worked with firms like Xerox, Max New York Life Insurance, ABN Amro and ICICI Bank. In her last assignment with International Private Banking Group of ICICI Bank she was looking after NRI Business from US, Canada and South East Asian markets.

**Priyanka Awasthy**, Co-Founder, Altavis & Biz Divas, has over 15 years of experience in Investment Advisory and Relationship Management with multinationals like Citibank, Standard Chartered and DSP Blackrock.

**Shilpi Singh** is an Executive Coach & Hospitality Entrepreneur. She has 14+ years of HR experience with some of the world's best media companies like Ogilvy & IMG. She has handled PAN India responsibilities and challenging global matrix across multiple industries from luxury to telecom.

**Rashmi Mandloi** is a Talent and Diversity consultant with a professional career of over 13 years with Deutsche Bank, Convergys and Standard Chartered Bank. She specializes in consulting with organizations that are keen on building 'inclusive work spaces' via customized Attraction, Engagement and Retention strategies.

**Dinakshi Arora**, after a successful stint with in the IT industry with organizations like IBM, Satyam and Polaris, joined Biz Divas as Program Manager. She then moved to her role as Editor at Biz Divas.

**Garvita Chaturvedi** is an Executive Coach and Human Resources Professional with in-depth exposure to a wide swathe of services industries in various HR functional roles in People Strategy, Compensation & Benefits, Performance Management and Content Development across IT/ ITES, Banking, Financial Services and Insurance sectors.

**Ela Gupta**, Marketing & Communications Manager, Biz Divas is a Marketing and Communications professional who has previously worked with Synergy Consulting and Adfactors PR. She has experience in strategizing media and communications functions of corporates planning to raise funds from conceptualization phase to the implementation phase.

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# TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD!



The world has recognized Kailash Satyarthi for improving the lives of countless children. No doubt the work done by him has had an impact on the country's economy. When hundreds of children are rescued from labor and trafficking into safety and education, poverty alleviation will take place in the long run.

It would be interesting to know what motivates some people to work selflessly for a cause while most of us are content to curse the system. They find solutions where others see only insurmountable obstacles. In their raw courage and lack of interest in personal reward, they are indeed unique. Their ideas are innovative but also practical and easy to implement on the ground.

One of the most important gaps filled by social enterprises is the provision of employment to those who are ignored by the formal sector. The differently-abled and marginalized segments living on the fringes of society need a push to help them rise above their situation. There are many who will never get an opportunity to contribute in the organized sector because they are at a real or perceived disadvantage as far as employability is concerned (marginalized women, illiterate people, LGBT, disabled, mentally challenged etc.).

When we set up Biz Divas three years ago, it was in response to the need for a platform that could connect and support working women from different organizations.

In this issue, we meet social entrepreneurs who provide an innovative product or service or simply raise issues which help transform lives. Dr Kshama Metre, Ms Priti Patkar and Kant Brothers are role models for society. Each of them has addressed critical needs and solved problems to help our diverse populace live dignified lives.

This issue is dedicated to those who make the world a better place to live in!

Priyanka Awasthy  
Co-Founder  
Biz Divas Foundation

# EMPOWERING SOCIETY

DINAKSHI ARORA

*A peep into the lives of some truly inspirational people who help transform lives.*

Not everyone has the drive enough to follow their true calling and devote their life to it. **Dr Kshama Metre** is one of those fortunate and courageous women who found hers, in 1985, made a commitment to it, and never looked back. Giving up her lucrative paediatric medicine practice in New Delhi wasn't much of a challenge in the face of deep fulfilment she had set her heart on. Following her heart, Dr Kshama Metre headed for Sidhbari, Kangra district, in Himachal Pradesh to join the Chinmaya Rural Primary Healthcare & Training Centre (CRPHC&TC) which had just been founded by Swami Chinmayananda under the Chinmaya Tapovan Trust. She joined CRPHC&TC as a project Doctor at its inception in 1985 and took over as Director in 1987.

As I called up to talk to her about this feature, a very sweet and joyful voice greeted "Hari Om" from the other end. When asked about her choice of path, she chuckled, "All of us want to be on the path to happiness, don't we? I had a great passion as a medical doctor to do something that rural India and I met my guru Swami Chinmayananda and was greatly inspired by him. I am very fortunate to be working on foothills of Himalayas. It has been a beautiful journey within and without."

It was outside people's idea of conventional wisdom for someone to throw away a thriving medical practice in Delhi to go serve the poor in remotest of unknown villages. "But I remembered a quote from Tale of Two Cities: 'It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known,'" she shares with deep contentment.

Starting with Health Sub-centres in remote rural areas of the Kangra district not reached by the government and training MPW (F) (Multi Purpose Workers-Females) through classes and on the field, it became clear to Dr Metre that the reality of village life needed more intense intervention and that the key was self-help. So under her able leadership, several community based organization programmes were launched soon like Mahila Mandals, Alcohol Abuse Awareness & Management of Alcoholics Programme, Yuvak Mandals, Yuvati Samoohs and Balwadis and Kisan Club for men.

Talking of challenges, she says, "It wasn't challenging in terms of work I was doing but there were small challenges like - 29 years back in HP, nobody knew what an NGO was! I used to get



Dr Kshama Metre

questions like: What do you mean by an NGO? It was difficult to get active participation from people. They wouldn't believe you are a doctor as doctors don't visit remote areas," she laughs.

The Self Help Groups became the means for the underprivileged to learn microfinance and become entrepreneurs. In 2004, CRPHC&TC was succeeded by a new NGO called **CORD (Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development)** with Dr Metre as its National Director.

Dr Kshama is the winner of the Guardian International Development Achievement Award 2012, given to recognize individuals who have made a profound and significant contribution to alleviating poverty in the developing world throughout their working lives, not to mention numerous other awards.

Her programmes are built and designed through discussions with the villagers in groups as well as individually. Since the programmes have evolved from the grass roots, the process is very replicable. Because of this, it has also been able to contribute to the development policy dialogue and advocacy for change at different levels.

Dr Metre and her team at CORD offer a flexible approach to livelihood and encourage a large number of villagers to leverage their aptitudes. Diverse activities related to agriculture,



Dr Kshama Metre guiding weavers

horticulture, dairy, petty shops, food products, fabrics (weaving, sewing, knitting, and embroidery), traditional arts and crafts, bamboo and other non-timber forest products, and various services are facilitated. Ensuring self-reliance, building operational management, and mainstreaming the micro-entrepreneurs into the local markets are all integral parts of the process. Educating people, immunization, family planning, nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation are promoted. Prevention of diseases from diarrhoea to AIDS is emphasised. Besides therapeutic management, the CBR Program works on the inclusion and integration of the disabled into the community with dignity.

Through CORD, Dr Metre and her co-workers are motivating and training people to develop and implement micro-plans for managing and sustaining their natural resources. They promote the 'interconnectedness' of seven J's: Jal, Jungle, Jameen, Jan, Janwar, Jeevika and Jeevan (water, forest, land, people, animal, livelihood, life).

Be it full-fledged Adult Literacy classes or weaving literacy into everyday lives such as reading bus signs, dialling telephone numbers, keeping



Dr Kshama Metre education villagers

basic accounts and records of their livelihood, learning how to sign their name, Dr Metre has helped inculcate enhanced confidence in the villagers. Going a step further, Computer & Conversational English Classes for Rural Youth allow them to gain necessary computer skills for employment.

Dr Metre's strategic approach is based on four main principles: Participation, Integration, Sustainability and Networking.

Today, under Dr Metre's leadership, CORD is active in 726 villages in 5 states through its Comprehensive Integrated Rural Development programme and runs an orphanage in the sixth state. Over 100,000 beneficiaries have been reached directly and over 500,000 indirectly.

Since 1999, Dr Metre and her team, in collaboration with NABARD (National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development), has trained more than 30,000 development professionals in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and J&K in making micro-credit available to the rural poor through Self-Help Groups. CORD has already started replication of this work at four sites in Odisha and Tamilnadu. Work has also started at three sites in Sri Lanka with Dr Metre as an advisor to CORD Sri Lanka.

"We have to tell women that they are great.

**“ You don't mind challenges if you are working on your calling. Passion gets fuel from your soul.”**

They have to realize that sacrifices that they make are something to be proud of, not to be submerged by it. Women have great potential but they have to come out of their shells," she talks about women, "For men being good is enough. Women have to work much harder to prove themselves before people actually take notice of their abilities. Women are capable of doing much more than many men can do. And men have to start understanding that they can cry. They can change nappies. It is time we question lifetimes of stereotyped thinking."

Talking of what keeps her going, she says cheerfully, "Amount of Enjoyment. Happiness. Creative work. Happiness of people who are benefitting. Not many people can boast about these job benefits!"

"Joy is in doing something for others. Find joy and you will find your way. You will attract your answers," she signs off with one of the most humble voices you will ever hear.



Dr Kshama Metre helping women with their livelihoods

# UNSHACKLING LIVES

It was not a conventional career path but **Priti Patkar**, a gold medalist from The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, has dedicated her life to protection, abolition of intergenerational trafficking into the sex trade, rescue of children and women victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Laying the foundation of **Prerana**, an NGO that works in the red-light districts of Mumbai, in 1986, she went on to pioneer path-breaking social interventions like world's first Night Care Shelter in the midst of a red light area, first Institutional Placement Programme, first comprehensive Education Support Programme for children living in red light areas, first Network of Anti Trafficking Organizations and first comprehensive programme for AIDS Affected Children.

Her intervention under Children Affected by AIDS programme was adjudged and documented by Washington University as one of *world's 7 best interventions of working with AIDS affected persons*. Author of 7 books and several research reports, her organization Prerana has to its credit the largest number of legal interventions and writ petitions in the country to protect the rights and dignity of the children and women victims of child sex exploitation and trafficking.

Having held many distinguished positions and designations, Priti is also a recipient of many prestigious awards.

As a student she visited the red light area once and it affected her so much that she began to visit regularly after completing her studies to listen to one of Mumbai's most marginalized groups - prostituted women. She was dismayed by their plight and the sense of entrapment as they knew no other means of living. Children of prostituted women grew up to become prostitutes and pimps without being aware of any other possibilities.

Not the one to be discouraged by set notions, however hardened by time they may be, Priti decided to dedicate her life to the cause of bringing much required change in this neglected stratum of society.

The key to Priti's success is her sociological realism. She understands that threatening those who control and protect the business is not the best approach. She is also well aware that her clients constitute some of India's poorest, most illiterate and dependent. Being a realistic person, she worked on practical problems like building night shelters for children so the children are not dragged into the 'business' for lack of places to keep them or people to watch them. As a simple and effective solution, Priti opened her first night care centre in Kamathipura. Today, the organization she cofounded with her husband Pravin Patkar runs four shelters. They offer comprehensive child care to needy children on a 24X7 basis. Kids receive meals, healthcare, education, and a safe place to play. Their mothers can also avail medical care and vocational training. Priti opens up avenues for alternate options for those who are conditioned to believe there is no other way out.

"Way back in 1986, human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children were decades away from becoming mainstream issues. The first UN Protocol related to human trafficking was only passed in 2000," Priti says.

Always being ahead of times, Priti still strives to innovate.

"It is important for activists to network to combat perpetrators' conspiracies," she feels.

Since they are fighting intricate crime syndicates with the resources, manpower, and

motivation to evade police, Priti trains police officers to recognize traffickers and adapts her model to keep pace with new developments. An advocate of improved legislation, she believes in solutions that work.

The results are there for everyone to see, hundreds of children are now out of the shackles of caste and circumstances, having freed their future generations as well.

"I have to take as a starting point the felt needs of my clients, very much taking into account their pride, and fears, which include losing custody of their children. The mothers who reject foster parent arrangements because they would undercut their ties to their children favor boarding schools as a solution," Priti lets on.

Helping them getting an education and a relatively stable and healthy environment is not as simple as it sounds. Priti and her team struggled and succeeded to open the doors of the city's

boarding schools for poor children, some run by government, many by private and religious agencies. She has faced and overcome a lot of resistance due to stigma attached to these children by spending a good deal of time educating these institutions and their constituencies. Her dedication has brought results and all Kamathipura children are attending school now.

Literally meaning "inspiration", her organization Prerana and Priti have taken up this task to keep experimenting and demonstrating practical, feasible ways of giving the downtrodden a new lease of life.

**"I have a strong belief that all people deserve compassion, to live with dignity, and that a person's vulnerability should never be exploited."**



Priti Patkar

# THE JUSTICE BRIGADE

While we are surrounded with news of injustice and exploitation of the poor, downtrodden and women, it is heartening to the extent of extreme gratitude to see people making society just, free and equitable society a mission of their lives. What is even more heartening is to see men striving to give voiceless women voice!

**Shakti Vahini**, co-founded by the **Kant Brothers** in 2001, works towards combating human trafficking and violence against women and children in India. Headed by **Ravi Kant**, its president, Shakti Vahini is strongly supported by **Nishi Kant**, its executive director, and **Rishi Kant**, a social activist.

The Kant brothers have been doing this inspiring work, that they equate with being a part of mother goddess's brigade to fight injustice, for more than 10 years now. Starting from getting the plight of abused women acknowledged to lending a strong voice on policy and legal changes to combat violence against women and children in India, the Kant brothers has done exemplary work in the field.

"We all come to know of horrendous stories about crimes against women, rapes, forced labor etc. It touches each and every one of us and everyone is responsible for making society a just and safe place to live. We all need to do something!" says Nishi.

Ravi points out that challenges are even bigger in the large hinterlands of the country where awareness and media outreach is far less.

To ensure fair implementation of the law, Shakti Vahini has been proposing legislation, demanding that laws be enforced, improving access to services and empowering victims to take action.

Explaining further, Ravi says, "Law enforcement agencies like the police need to be sensitized to deal with crimes against women as they are the first response agencies."

Shakti Vahini has been involved in training of more than 6,000 policemen across India, and has developed specialized training units and intervention teams to work closely with the police.

Kants also work through the law courts and through political advocacy. Shakti Vahini has prepared a report on honor killings for the National Commission for Women, and Ravi has been a member of the Central Advisory Committee to Combat Trafficking and in 2011 was appointed by the Supreme Court in a panel to rehabilitate victims of sex trafficking in India. He is also an advocate at the Supreme Court of India and has worked on public and pro bono litigation cases.

**“ We have to work with the system while fighting the system.”**

Shakti Vahini is supported by a strong professional team, best known for its work on rescues, interventions to repatriate victims who have been trafficked and give them back their lives. Seeing an oppressed life go back on track is what keeps them going.

"When we rescue a girl child, she expresses her willingness and desire to have a happy life," says Rishi. "That is what makes us feel so motivated."

"Every girl you rescue has a story, how they were exploited — personally, sexually, physically,



The Kant Brothers

Picture Courtesy Mickey Wiswed

mentally. A trafficked girl has no ability to express her emotions. You have to stand with her. Our responsibility is to give voice to the voiceless."

The brothers put together an admirable mix of skills and outlooks. Shakti Vahini's strength lies in building partnerships, engaging with other groups — government, police, judges, prosecutors — even while trying to change the way the country works.

"When I talk about patriarchy — law-enforcement, administrative officials, the state government, the law makers, they all have the same patriarchal views," he says. "We have to fight the mindset of society."

They are completely aware of the magnitude

***“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope... and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”***

***- Robert F. Kennedy***

of the work they have taken up as well as the force of opposition. On the other side are powerful organized groups with best of lawyers to defend them. They have been threatened and attacked physically and legally in the past.

"But we know that once we're on the right path, we have to go ahead," says Ravi. The brothers feel that the best response to these attacks by organized crime is persistence and transparency.

Breaking stereotypes and a slumbered state of apathy towards issue related to women and children, Kant brothers kindle the hope that access to justice is available to everyone as a basic human right, as it should!

# BIZ DIVAS

## MARCHING FORTH WITH ELAN!

SHUCHI BHARTI

It is often said that the conception of a dream is easier than making it a reality, however, at Biz Divas Foundation, each and everyone associated with this wonderful dream has yearned to make a magnificent reality with a splendid and memorable journey to treasure so far. At this juncture, it becomes indeed a proud prerogative to recapitulate our resplendent voyage that has given a prized feeling to everyone associated with the Biz Divas initiative. The journey so far has included unique and inventive methodologies of bringing together women who inspire and aspire, who deserve success in every walk of life. Being one of the country's pioneer national network of professional women connecting with and inspiring each other, the journey of Biz Divas has been a victorious one wherein the flagship programmes of **mentoring, roundtables, webinars and many more** well-planned endeavours have contributed in the growth of all women professionals associated.



Launching Women on Boards Report in Mumbai

The journey so far has been fortified by unending support of the members across, women leaders and inspiring change makers. They have come together and built a robust platform to women across asserting future aspiration of inclusion and diversity with women holding the positions of inspiring leaders. The vision and mission of Biz Divas has continuously been substantiated by the multiple inputs from the visionaries as well as the burgeoning talents who have been involved with this journey since its inception and throughout its evolution. Here are some snapshots from the enriching and inspiring journey of Biz Divas in the quarter that has just passed by.

### Women on Boards Report

With the new Companies Act making it mandatory for companies to appoint at least one woman director on their board and including activities related to promoting gender diversity and women empowerment, Biz Divas proposed that the Indian corporate sector will have to diagnose the challenges in the way of women leadership and commanding a position of respect and recognition leading to success. Travelling ahead with this aim in mind Biz Divas Foundation launched its first report along with Khaitan & Co. titled **“WOMEN ON BOARDS – A Policy, Process and Implementation Roadmap”** in Mumbai on August 7, 2014 and in Bangalore on September 11, 2014. The focus of the report has been on presenting a clear picture of the diverse perspective of multiple professionals across industries on the issue of

women on boards. The novel endeavour of coming up with the report has involved immense hard work and commitment of people involved, who have consolidated discussions during the eight city tour conducting ‘roundtable discussions’. The eight cities covered were **Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, New Delhi, Gurgaon, Pune & Mumbai**. These roundtables were attended by CEOs, CFOs, proprietors and HR heads of various organizations. Different perspectives that were received with respect to Companies Act are captured in the report.



Sarika Bhattacharya (Biz Divas), Ashu Suyash (CEO, L&T Investment Management Limited), Mr. Bharat Vasani (Director and Group General Counsel – Tata Group) and Mr. Ravi Kulkarni (Khaitan & Co.)

### Webinars

Biz Divas' viewpoint has always resonated with the matter of gender diversity essentially being a business issue and the manner in which business, technology and workforce are perceived. In order to move ahead towards achieving this goal of empowering women at workplaces and in entrepreneurial initiatives, Biz Divas is committed to build avenues that inspire change and success. This quarter witnessed two immensely admired webinars by two successful names in the world of entrepreneurship, **Suman Dash**, co-founder, Vastradi Jewels and **Tanvi Bhatt**, Managing Director, Panache Studio.

**South Asia Women's Entrepreneurship Symposium (SAWES)**, an initiative by **The Asia Foundation** in partnership with the Biz Divas Foundation hosted a series of five webinars to build the capacity of women entrepreneurs and to facilitate networking among business associations through Social Media Marketing. Suman Dash shared her success story and provided priceless advices to the budding entrepreneurs and those who aspire to succeed using online business platform.

The fourth webinar of this series was held in order to make participants aware of the importance of the techniques of creating a brand of oneself. Valuable insights were provided by Tanvi Bhatt. The webinar focussed on understanding the concept

of Brand YOU; discovering the personal branding uniqueness that facilitates the process of bringing the change with more women leaders coming to the forefront.

### Biz Divas Speak

The future plans of Biz Divas Foundation are bright and lucrative as ever as the determination is to take more challenging responsibilities. Last quarter has been a vibrant one where in Biz Divas have been present at multiple avenues to speak up on varied issues. Co-founder, **Sarika Gupta Bhattacharyya** was invited as a speaker for **Indian Institute of Management (Ahmedabad)**'s Executive Programme on **“Enhancing Leadership Capacities and Potential Among Professional Women”**. She discussed about the setting up of Biz Divas, working with women in leadership positions and her personal journey as a woman leader. Sarika was also invited to the **Women of India Leadership Summit**. **Rashmi Mandloi**, Diversity Lead, was invited to the **Catalyst & Community Business panel**. Co-founder, **Priyanka Awasthy**, addressed to the esteemed audience at **IIFMA Mumbai Chapter panel** on **“Sexual Harassment at workplace”**.

**Series of Biz Divas Roundtable Discussions: Retention of Women Talent – Challenges, Strategies & Solutions**

Diversity and inclusion are the two most important tenets of future workplaces. The key to successful work environment in the contemporary world lies with the increased concern regarding recruitment and retention of women employees. Organizations need to be cognizant of the talent of women at work, safeguard the sanctity of right talent reaching out to right place ensuring there is no discrimination. Retention of women is largely looked as a prominent goal but many a times lacks attention when it comes to practicing in reality. Biz Divas has undertaken considerable research work on the issues pertaining to the retention of women at work. It has also been observed that there is an emergent need of understanding the key aspects that influence employees and particularly women to stay in an organization.

Biz Divas Corporate Networking Group decided to take up the endeavour of brainstorming in order to assess the challenges faced with respect to retention of women and solutions that could work best. Biz Divas designed a series of roundtable discussions to find holistic ways of harnessing the talent of women employees and tools to retain them. **Biz Divas Corporate Networking Group (CNG)** is dedicated to bring out innovative techniques through a large partnership of varied groups - Business, HR and D&I practitioners. The methodology of the roundtable includes case-study, debate and discussion to explore innovations in mentoring, networking, career and learning opportunities. The series aimed at showcasing the



Bharat Doshi, Director, Mahindra & Mahindra

best practices of Retention Strategies & Solutions across India Inc.

Areas of discussion focussed on the three main categories – Junior & Middle Management Women, Women on Maternity and Senior Women Leaders.

Target audience included Senior Managers with minimum 8 years of experience.

The outcome of the meticulous efforts of the participants of the roundtables would be published in the form of a white paper. The Biz Divas CNG discussions spanned across Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Pune.

**Launch of Biz Divas Dhaka Chapter**

Biz Divas India in partnership with the HSPP



Renuka Ramnath, Founder, Multiples Alternate Asset Management Pvt. Ltd. at Women on Boards Report Launch in Mumbai

Bharat Doshi, Director, Mahindra & Mahindra at Women on Boards Report Launch in Mumbai



Sarika Bhattacharyya at Women of India Leadership Summit 2014

**Foundation** launched the first Biz Divas chapter in **Bangladesh** on 23 November, 2014. HSPP Consultants are a leading Learning and Development company in Bangladesh providing training to diverse industries including telecommunications, banks, financial services, logistics and freight forwarding.

The aim of this chapter is to run a professional network for women to build skills in professional women to contribute to the Bangladesh's economy. The targeted sector is educated women professionals – from corporates, entrepreneurs, women on sabbatical and the ones who have dropped out of careers.

The chapter launch was attended by diverse set of women from e-commerce, education, garment industry to the development sector. The difference between this professional group versus other women associations within Bangladesh is twofold - Masses and Technology Platform. Apart from face to face workshops and networking meets, there will be the first online platform which will get women professionals to connect and learn from each other. Biz Divas India will mentor and support Biz Divas Bangladesh and will also explore cross border trade opportunities.

The first skill building workshop and session is scheduled for 18th January, 2015 at the HSPP Training centre at Baridhara, Dhaka.

*“I believe very strongly that corporations could and should be a major force for resolving social and environmental concerns in the twenty-first century.”*  
**William Clay Ford, Jr.**

# TANGO

## OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE DEMOCRACY MEETS CIVIL SOCIETY

KIRAN CHATURVEDI

*“Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it’s something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles.”*

Abbie Hoffman

The new government has been in power for over 6 months. The early euphoria and song and dance of the victory lap has quieted. Looks like the “achche din” are all about disciplined, efficient and quiet work away from the media circus.

What role is civil society seeing for itself, and what are its expectations from the government that promises change? Is there still a need for citizen activism or is that a need only for times of government inaction and public despair?

The tendency among so many of us is to give up all work of running our community, cities, and governance issues to the big brother or the “mai baap” who is seen as the messiah with all the answers in the wave of their magic wand. This abdication of the duty of citizenship to engage with local governance is the bane of Indian democracy at all levels and in particular at the local governance level. It is, in fact, one of the biggest causes civil society is campaigning for in our city because with little local power comes lack of action and accountability. The best of civil society activism works for change and with a strong, accountable, local government that has actual powers. There is never a time when civil society is not important

and critical to functioning of a robust democratic government.

Civil society takes up issues that matter in the larger vision of the nation - in a sense of entitlement to better services and a fair implementation of the rules and laws of the land and to uphold principles and the spirit of the constitution. They are the voice of the nation’s conscience. They are the watchdog against the tokenism of governments and bureaucracy. They lead movement with the “actual” on ground work of community minded citizen volunteers in the neighborhoods. They make politicians consider the mood and needs of people beyond the narrow calculations of traditional vote banks.

And this is borne out by the interplay I witness between government and civic society over the numerous community initiatives in my city - both by citizen volunteers and by organized civil society forums. As they campaign and cajole and petition local authorities for better services, implementation of rules and laws, and systems.

It is a long winding road plagued with roadblocks of inertia and apathy and downright stalling and stonewalling. And yet, it is a road most vital to be taken.

Because I have seen the relentless pressure and significant campaigns led by ordinary citizens with extraordinary ideas, making a real difference.

The greening of Gurgaon with Bio-Diversity Park in the earlier degraded and neglected Aravallis, the Raahgiri fun on Sundays when pedestrians, cyclists, Zumba dancers and yoga lovers take over the roads for a few hours, the street lightning and safety for women campaigns where urban planners and gender rights specialists work together with Town Planning and Police authorities, the CleanGurgaon group which relentlessly pursues the cause of better sanitation and waste disposal systems with the MCG... The list of areas where the work of civil society is making an impact and a difference to the otherwise “chalta hai, janne do” attitude of the government officials is diverse and impressive.

More than anything else, all this makes the citizens an active agent and participant in the governance of their city, and it keeps the officialdom aware that they do not operate in a vacuum or in an ivory tower of zero accountability. The confidence, collective awareness, expertise, skill level, reach to media and other platforms of

information dissemination, and desire for and sense of entitlement to something better makes civil society powerful despite the small numbers. The political leadership has to make space for this voice of public concern even though issues raised may not at first seem a matter that excites the majority or is a vote-bank issue.

With the new government in power, we wait to see how this tango is going to play out. Given the effort being made to include citizens ideas in finding solutions to many issues of development, I want to think that there is a greater than ever role for civil society to actively engage in the process of nation building. The emphasis on efficiency and accountability being brought to bear on the bureaucracy can offer a great window of opportunity to highlight cases of feeble or non implementation of laws, and to demand action. Each one of us can start to be an agent of change and demand the rights to tax paid services that are ours as citizens and voters.



Picture courtesy <http://www.dgde.gov.in/>

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

## MUCH MORE THAN THE RIGHT THING TO DO



**Alok Ohrie**, President & Managing Director, Dell India, has over 25 years of experience in the IT industry across various leadership positions. *Prior to joining Dell, Alok led IBM's Systems and Technology Group in India from January 2010. Alok holds a Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication from the National Institute of Technology (formerly REC), Suratkhal (Karnataka). Alok is an accomplished business leader with proven track record of managing businesses, people and customer relationships. At Dell India, he is an executive sponsor for D&I and Dell Giving Initiatives. Alok is the Chairperson, Dell India D&I Council.*

In conversation with Dinakshi Arora

### Why is it important to have women in senior leadership roles?

Having a strong female representation, particularly in senior leadership roles, is a business imperative, responsibility and opportunity. Dell is committed to accelerating the increasingly powerful role that women play in driving global economic growth. Women share a unique approach and insight into managing a business. They constantly demonstrate a better understanding of the importance of people relationships and are committed to their roles. There is a need to visibly demonstrate equal opportunity of employment and career progression.

### What has been your organization's focus to promote women in senior leadership roles?

Strong leadership development is part of the missing link for directing women's career paths upward in many companies. This is not so at Dell,

which offers its 'Women in Leadership' training to women employees - director-level and upwards. The course provides women leaders with not only executive-level classes to help groom them, but with specific action plans to get them there. Dell has in place many programs and initiatives that focus on promoting women in leadership roles such as Women Powering Business, Women in Search of Excellence (WISE), Women Inspired to Learn & Lead (WILL) and Dell Women's Entrepreneur Network (DWEN). Dell has also partnered with Catalyst - a leading non-profit organization with a mission to expand opportunities for women and business - to foster an inclusive culture within Dell.

### Why is it important for men to be involved in ensuring that women have upward mobility?

Dell believes that men play a critical role in creating opportunities for women leaders. Men have the potential of being powerful ambassadors for implementing many diversity and inclusion

initiatives, as well as influencing other male peers to support gender initiatives. The involvement of men is crucial to the realisation of the gender-equality movement and any attempt to coalition of support must include men.

Dell has been associated with MARC (Men Advocating Real Change), a community currently being incubated by Catalyst, with a mission to expand opportunities for women and business. The program showcases member-generated advice, insights, and best practices to inspire men who wish to expand gender diversity within their organizations. Dell is a member of this community and has 20 senior and emerging Dell leaders engaged in the program, aimed at galvanizing solutions to create lasting benefit for women in IT. We have additional programs like 'Maximizing Team Performance' that helps remove unconscious bias that hinders diverse team members from delivering their best.

### What is success, when it comes to gender inclusion?

Despite the implementation of various government schemes for women, the fact is, with nearly 160 million women in India, the Sixth Economic Census by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation found that women comprise only 25.56 per cent of the country's total workforce. Gender equality is not a gender issue. It's a human issue. While both diversity and inclusion are now increasingly valued as vital characteristics in most companies, neither the acceptance nor the appreciation have equated to an ideal, all inclusive workplace. To be a successful company and a great

place to work, businesses must be able to leverage the similarities and differences of all team members, and use it as competitive advantage. Having an environment that positively values individual differences sounds like successful inclusion.

### What characteristics do you look for in a prospective leader?

Progressive organizations leverage their leadership and hierarchy to influence and maintain open lines of communication. Leaders must share critical information in a timely and forthright manner. This emanates from a strong sense of equality, where every team member has an innate desire to know the exact direction where the organization is headed. This also comes with a strong sense of trust, where leaders must have enough confidence to be transparent with their team members. The ability of an organization to identify and invest in the right people is critical to build leaders. Dell has pioneered this through talent management; providing support to encourage, nurture, and build the leaders. More importantly, Dell goes to the extent of sponsoring potential leaders.

### What advice would you give to a woman who aspires to be CEO of a Fortune 500 Organization?

To be at the helm of the most reputed companies globally, women need to overcome any reservation they may have in advocating for themselves. I would say - challenge yourself, take risks, choose growth and development above all else!

*"We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion."*

*-Max de Pree*



*"I believe that the rights of women & girls is the unfinished business of the 21st century."*

*Hillary Clinton*

*"Only the woman makes the choice of being the heroine, the victim or the bystander of her story . No one else can make that choice for her!"*

*Apurva Purohit*



*"Leadership is not dependent on position, power or gender. I believe it is about being the best version of yourself."*

*Debjani Gosh*



*"We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced."*

*Malala Yousafzai*



*"Know what you want and it should be worth the effort. The locus of control lies only within ourselves."*

*Gagan Singh*



*"The key is not to worry about being successful, but to instead work towards being significant and the success will naturally follow."*

*Oprah Winfrey*



*"Women are women's greatest enemy is a big myth. When women bond, they build strength beyond what we can imagine!"*

*Nandita Das*



*"Most of us don't recognize or believe in our own potential. It is easier to lament about what is wrong than to get up and take life head on despite all the unknown challenges waiting in the path to success!"*

*Preeti Monga*

*"Just be yourself!"*

*Maharani Gayatri Devi*



*"Women's empowerment must be owned as a culture."*

*Kaku Nakhate*

# PRESENTING

## I INSPIRE 2015

The Biz Divas I Inspire Awards honor and celebrate leaders in India working to strengthen women's voice, increase economic opportunities for women and protect women rights. We are seeking leaders that help tackle discrimination and disadvantages millions of women face around the world. The nominees may be working to help provide access to skills and training for women or creating opportunities for women to actively, safely and fairly participate in the economy.

Nominate an extraordinary individual who has improved the lives of women and girls. Nomination forms must be completed and submitted to Ela Gupta by January 15, 2015.

Pease contact Ela Gupta at [ela@bizdivas.in](mailto:ela@bizdivas.in) or +91 9990256669 for any queries.

### Timeline

Applications open: **17th November, 2014**

Deadline for all applications: **15th January, 2015**

Finalists announced: **10th March 2015**

Award ceremony at I Inspire, Delhi: **17th April, 2015**

### The Women Rights Award

The Women Rights Award honors a leader who takes action to protect and restore the rights, safety, and dignity of all people, especially women and girls who have been exploited by gender-based violence. This woman leader should have shown exemplary leadership skills and innovation to

create ripple effects for any women rights issue. S/he is a leader of high integrity and extreme passion. An individual who have contributed significantly – often against great odds and at great personal risk – to advance the rights of women and girls and to increase awareness of the injustices women face on account of their gender.

### The Young Trailblazer Award

The Young Trailblazer Award recognizes a young pioneer whose vision, contribution, and leadership has broken through barriers, and brought people together to take action that speeds up shared progress.

### The Social Innovation Award

The Social Innovation Award recognizes an innovative leader who finds solutions to expand economic opportunities, relieve poverty, or increase the financial inclusion of marginalized communities. This award is for the individual who attracts, supports and inspires some of the most innovative, high-impact social entrepreneurs in India.

### The Diversity & Inclusion Award

The Diversity & Inclusion Award recognizes an individual for his/her efforts aimed at promoting diversity awareness, representation and inclusion within India Inc. S/he should have shown a passionate commitment towards D&I agenda apart from his/her own KRAs and has been influencing organizational team and stakeholders consistently to adopt the inclusive culture.

**We identify, invest in  
& bring visibility to  
women leaders**



# Women on Boards

An Altavis Initiative



Executive Search



Diversity Consulting



Knowledge Forums



Research & Advocacy



Training & Coaching



Delhi | Mumbai | Bangalore | Dhaka

Contact: [info@altavis.co.in](mailto:info@altavis.co.in)

Website: [www.altavis.co.in](http://www.altavis.co.in)

# BIASED? ME??? NEVER!

## UNDERSTANDING 'UNCONSCIOUS BIAS'

RASHMI MANDLOI

Unconscious Bias means having a view within split seconds, negative and/or positive, about someone or some issue without even realizing. In an increasing multicultural world, where we have to interact with people from various backgrounds, we need to be aware of our imitations and behavior impact on others.

People considered to have a high degree of emotional awareness are generally more in tune with their feelings and this, in turn, directly impacts their thought processes, decisions, behaviour and overall performance. Hence it is extremely important to understand the biases that are ingrained in us. Equally important is to understand - *when & where* do we get biased and *why & how* do we get biased?

To answer the above, we need to step back and go down the memory lane on our personal journey of evolution. Our values & beliefs, and consequently our views start taking shape from early childhood. The major influencers are parents, family, friends and culture, the dynamic environment where we are bought up with its unique rules, regulations and boundaries. This interplay of environment feeds our mind continuously and automatically lots of imagery and thoughts get stored at the unconscious level which we are not aware of. It manifests itself in conversations, habits, viewpoints, likes and dislikes. As we grow older, we mature in our thoughts and expressions. Although adults master the art of camouflaging emotions, especially on sensitive issues, by building a barrier yet the deep-set beliefs play out in their behavior unknowingly when a situation presents itself.

For example, a hiring manager will have all the right intentions to hire a candidate who

fits the requirement in terms of technical and behavior standards. But more often than not, due to unconscious beliefs and values, they may end up hiring someone who is closer to their approach to life.

In one of my interactions with a hiring manager of a large manufacturing company, we ended up talking on subtle differences between men and women. He complained that he was just not able to hire women in his team. On examination of records of candidates applying into that organization, there was a healthy mix of men/women applicants. In spite of that there were more men being hired than women.

On probing further with the manager on why he chose a man over a woman (in case both were equally suitable), he came up with reasons like 'plant being away from town' or 'harsh work conditions' which deter women to accept the job. In theory it is quite plausible that those could be reasons but if there were women candidates already applying for the job, then why would that be a deterrent to their joining?

In actuality, this is what was happening: While interviewing there were unconscious bias and beliefs playing out within the manager. If it was a young woman applying then the unconscious belief playing out in the hiring manager's mind was - "she should not be commuting so far every day from home into this plant and should probably look out for jobs that are closer home." Coupled with the belief that women are soft and can't handle harsher environment from a physical perspective, his questioning centred around difficulties associated with the job. Instead of giving support to the women candidate in terms of good transport arrangements and giving a workable perspective on working conditions, he was

accentuating their own fears which acted as deterrent for them to join. In this case, the beliefs of the manager came in from his experiences of staying in a joint family where women were supposed to be taken care of, and men folk were supposed to be doing all the harsher jobs.

**Caroline Graham, Head of WeAreTheCity India**, a website aimed at empowering and connecting Indian women, says, "It's fair to say that most people would have encountered some unconscious bias in the course of their career. Women may feel they are not heard in a roomful of men, or are passed over when a new project is being allocated. Cultural biases are also common. When working in Chennai, my team sometimes thought I was being too direct, but I felt I was just trying to get the job done in the most efficient way. The good news is that most organizations are addressing unconscious bias and raising awareness, and the issue is being tackled in a positive way."

As Caroline mentions, research has now emerged which shows that giving people better cognitive strategies not only reduces unconscious bias but that the bias levels continue to fall after intervention. To comprehend this better, I hosted a **D&I Expert Session on Unconscious Bias at I-Inspire 2014 in Gurgaon** where industry experts shared their organizational best practices.

The discussion centred around practical strategies, solutions and the biggest mindsets that are currently being encountered in the work space. Organizations like **Capgemini** had a holistic approach to unconscious bias and have implemented forward looking practices by identifying four pillars through which the challenge can be dealt with - recruitment, maternity practices, helping women with their self-beliefs and working on the broader culture in the organization. The solutions ranged from conducting manager awareness trainings, working on affirmative policies, ring-fencing performance ratings of women on maternity and project allotment post maternity to building a sensitive culture of Inclusion.

**Gayathri Ramamurthy, Talent - COE, Leadership Development and D & I Head - India, Capgemini** said, "Bias by its very definition implies an inclination to hold a partial perspective and a refusal to consider the possible merits of alternative points of view. Based on my varied experiences, I find that people are more receptive when another point of view is brought to the forefront backed by appropriate data. So, is unconscious bias then an oxymoron? Nevertheless, it is each and every one's responsibility to question/challenge status quo that is not being inclusive!"

**Katharine Nisbet, Director, Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) of Community Business** talked about the concept of insider and outsider group that drives our unconscious biases. According to her, we belong to many different groups, sometimes insiders' sometimes outsiders' group. For instance, in the UK, where she hails from, she is a part of the large insider group of the British. But living in Asia, she belongs to the outsiders' group of foreigners. Similarly, from generational point of view, we may be considered old by our children, but young and adventurous by our parents' generation.

Over the past year some good work has been done in this space and we have been able to get more organizations and individuals believing in Diversity & Inclusion. There could be implicit and explicit biases that are playing 'against' or 'for us' and we need to be conscious of the fact.

A positive step forward to look at the extent of our unconscious, preconceived notions will go a long way in understanding our 'self' and our 'universe' well. Creating steps that we can take to treat each other more equally will make the foundation of an inclusive world.

# 5 Website Design Mistakes

## ENTREPRENEURS MUST AVOID

SUNITA BIDDU

How much business a website makes is output of some good decisions and a great team an Entrepreneur chooses.

Building a website may not sound that daunting, but the real catch is to make it really usable. This can be achieved with right cooperation and understanding between an entrepreneur and his chosen team. The website reflects how you conduct business and think of your customers, both online and offline.

Therefore, it's your responsibility to learn to take charge of things and guide a team of website architect, graphic designer, developer, and copywriter to maintain quality asset online. Yes, your website is a virtual asset with an ever growing value. And to help you get there, make sure you avoid the following mistakes:

### 1. More Focus on Making it Pretty

One common mistake entrepreneurs make is that they give looks and creativity priority over usability and practicality. A good design is more about how it works, not how it looks. It's actually a right mix of form and function. Of course, it is important to ensure that fonts are nice, the graphics are attractive, but such concerns shouldn't take the driving seat. After all, people aren't going to compliment how your looks only, they would come there to look for their own needs.

Excessive creativity isn't the way to go. It may be rather distracting. In fact, some websites

have differently designed web pages on one website, hoping it will look awesome. It doesn't, period. Moreover, image-rich, flashy websites won't look good on mobile devices. It's an important consideration with a large majority using smart devices to access the internet. So, know where to draw the line.

### 2. Ignoring the Foundation

Entrepreneurs feeling over-zealous about getting a graphically astounding website tend to ignore the foundation and the basics of web design. Before building your house, you get a floor plan done. Similarly, the website needs the architecture to serve the audience right. The foundation is to plan things early and develop a website blueprint before you let a graphic designer and developer turn your imaginations into reality.

Many entrepreneurs make the mistake of hammering nails without putting in some effort to create the proper plan. And then they feel sad that designing company didn't do a good job. In fact, they might have done their best already but they were sailors without a captain. Get a strategist in place to help you with planning and architecture. Not having a plan or having a flawed plan will lead to unforeseen obstacles and the final web design won't show as much potential as it should show.

Your website architect knows it all – and together with the whole team, he or she gives you the website you've planned for promising returns.



### 3. Spending Time on Researching Others' Websites to be Different

Don't waste your time checking others websites only to be different. The best web design is the one that works and connects with your audience. An experienced strategist & web design company together will share impressive work based upon the given visual concept. So, don't just sit on the fence or aimlessly jump from one site to another to figure the elements you 'should' or 'shouldn't' have on your website.

### 4. Thinking Too Much about the Spend

Whether you're an established organization or a fledgling start-up, it makes sense to determine how much you can spend. This may well include funds for development, content, web design and web hosting. Discuss it all with a right marketing strategist. Remember, taking the DIY route and writing your own content or designing websites may save you money, but it will keep you from creating a

good first impression unless you're a professional in this industry. A good website should cost 50,000 INR minimum and goes up to 10 lakhs INR depending on your business and goals. Anything less than that may turn into a compromised presence.

### 5. Not Taking Control of your Properties

Last but not the least to conclude, is making sure you register your domain and buy your web hosting yourself. Keep control of these two things. 90% of the entrepreneurs hand over the booking and hosting to designing company and I personally have seen nightmares with a few friends. No matter how trusted the development company is, control these two initial steps of your digital presence yourself.

The bottom line is that planning a website ahead of time will pay big time – it's a great investment actually. With a plan in mind, you can have appealing digital presence that serves you well for years to come.

***“Technology should be an important ingredient. It may be and should be a tool for social development.”***  
- Aleksander Kwasniewski

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE... TO BE WHO YOU ARE!

VIDYA DESHPANDE

So you are a working woman with a hectic schedule and added to that you are a mother of school-going kids. And you feel that there is no 'me' time for you? Take heart, it's never too late to start off on anything that you wish to do, whatever your age may be.

Take my own case. I am pushing 50 and on the way to menopause. But in spite all the hot flushes, I have also taken up running as a sport. In the last week of October this year, I ran my first half marathon, from Qutub Minar to Red Fort, passing several other Delhi landmarks on the way. For more than two decades I worked at a journalist with offices at Delhi's Fleet Street: Bahadurshah Zafar Marg near ITO. And on that October morning when I ran past ITO crossing, nostalgia flooded my memories. Here I was running past Delhi Police Headquarters (PHQ), where I used to hang around as cub reporter, looking to get an 'exclusive' angle to murder or fire that had rocked the city. Who would have ever thought that one day I would be running past PHQ, instead of looking for a news story there? And there's more: I quit my job at 47 after working as a journalist for more than 25 years and translated my passion for adventure into a business venture. I take groups of women on adventure trips now for a living!

But I'm not the only one. Here's 36-year-old Shailja Sridhar. She was an active person but two kids and the challenges of stay-at-home parenthood kept her grounded. Then she decided to break out and make time to follow her passion. "I started cycling on a whim and enjoyed it a lot. Running

with some friends occasionally, I decided to sign up for my first half marathon. Now, just two years later, I have done more than 20 half marathons, my first full marathon and I have an ambition to become faster!" she says.

Shailja's crowning glory was the moment she clocked 3:51:58 at the Berlin Marathon, a timing of under four hours for a distance of 41.195 kms and when won the Delhi Pinkathon half marathon in Delhi earlier this September. "I have enjoyed every moment of this journey. And found hidden reserves of energy and passion within myself for everything in life," says Shailja.

Mirroring Shailja's case is Deepa Ajit's. She too began running four years ago, when she first moved to Gurgaon after a stint abroad. She recalls her first run, a 5 km one, where she struggled to even finish. "It was during this event that I met many other runners and people who had a passion to do new things," says Deepa. And she hasn't looked back



Deepa Ajit at Annapurna



Shailja Sridhar

from there. From running she moved on to trekking and mountain climbing. "I decided to climb to Everest Base Camp without too much planning. My sister-in-law and I hired a Sherpa from Kathmandu and some porters and we set off," she says.

That was her first experience of a high altitude mountaineering trek. But she had tasted blood. The very next year she planned a proper trip with 8 other like-minded women and undertook an even tougher climb to the Annapurna Base Camp. And now her sights are set on Mount Kilimanjaro for next summer. "Age is no barrier," she says, "When I was young, my parents never introduced me to any sport, I too bunked sports class in school. But when I took up running, I began training hard and now have the stamina, endurance and the right knowledge to undertake such treks."

But it's not only adventure that women are finding compelling. They are taking to book clubs, professional baking, classical music and dance lessons with renewed vigor and passion. Shilpi Singh, business coach and entrepreneur, decided to take dancing lessons at 42. Shilpi always had a

yearning to become a classical dancer and decided to take Kathak lessons. Not many in her circle believed that she had it in her, including her guru. "My guru is amazed to see how fast I have been able to pick up the tukra moves and the other nuances," she says.

Being a self-made entrepreneur and business coach, Shilpi's work schedule was very hectic. "I found I was working too hard and promised to myself to reduce my work without taking stress. So I took stock of my schedule a decided dance was the answer," says Shilpi. "Kathak slows me down, relaxes me and helps me shed those stubborn calories as well," she adds.

“ “ *The time for action is now. It's never too late to do something.*  
Antoine de Saint-Exupery

As George Elliot's famous quote goes: It's never too late to be what you might have been! So step out of the box and pursue what you are passionate about. Trust me, you have nothing to lose, you might run into a more magnificent version of you!



Vidya Deshpande

# SO HERE'S HOW WOMEN LOOK LIKE!!

## THROUGH THE LENS OF COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

SHILPI SINGH

I can say I have a more than keen interest in advertising. Having worked in Ogilvy Mumbai HR department and being with a husband who had an advertising career, I have seen the industry up, close and personal.

One of the things I believe to be true is that the portrayal of women in advertising is a lot more progressive than their general depiction in a majority of TV soaps and even Bollywood.

While the '*dekho mere pati ki kameez kitni safed hai*' advertising also exists and the occasional inner wear ads do regress; a spate of TV ads in the last few years have pushed the norm and busted many societal mores. Here's my observation as a woman and a coach.

**Soch Badlo** - Woman as the influencer and the soft power centre at home. The *Tata Tea Jaago Re* TV ads have portrayed everyday women as conscience keepers in the home amazingly well. Whether it's chiding the husband to avoid triple riding on bike even while going out to vote or gently saying to bring about real change, '*humein soch badalni hogi*'; the Tata Tea Jaago Re campaign to my mind is amongst the best. It uses normal situations and moments and yet successfully reframes the male-female power equation.

**Meri Beti Hai Mera Beta** - Again I have seen a few TV ads that have managed to successfully

punch holes in this Indian '*beta syndrome*'. Be it daughters stepping up to shoulder financial responsibilities or buying a car for the family in insurance ads; the traditional role reserved for boys has been questioned and gently appropriated. A much welcome change, I would say.

**Woman as Father Figure** - Another great ad is by the health drink - *Bournvita*. For years, the mother was shown as the silent caregiver and provider; but this ad where she eggs on her son to outrun her again successfully reframes the women's role as the coach, motivator and the father figure. We are unclear whether she is a single parent or whether the husband works in another city. Regardless of the reason, it successfully pushes the envelope of the role a mother plays in her child's life.

**Second Marriage** - Hats off to *Tanishq* to really make this bold commercial. From the days when a traditional Indian household wouldn't even want to disclose that it has a divorcee daughter or a widow daughter-in-law, to this ad where a leading jewellery brand makes second marriage as its central story, Indian advertising has definitely come a long way.

**I am not a kitchen appliance** - This *Havel's 'Respect Woman'* series is one of my favourites. The series successfully demolishes the old advertising and media archetype of a husband-



wife relationship. It's a great series that makes viewers think - if the man and the woman play equal roles outside in the world, why should the home be any different? Simply, firmly and yet not in a preachy way. The quiet humour makes even more hard hitting. Respect!

**Wife cum Boss** - Lastly, this *Airtel TV* ad where the man and the woman work in the same office and the woman is the boss, generated one hell of a controversy. The woman is shown as doing more important work in office, she goes home early while the husband is left to complete the work. But then the 'boss woman' rustles up a great meal to compensate her man. The verdict was divided whether it pushed for a more career driven empowered woman or whether the wife is still shown subservient to the man in the house. I, for one, would say this ad pushed the boundary. 8 out of 10 Indian men might be quite uncomfortable with the idea of their wife being their boss, be it at home or in the office. So this ad

did reframe the spousal relationship and reflected the changing reality and social adjustments.

There are a lot of innerwear, perfume and deodorant, and low priced cleaning powder ads on TV that still portray a more regressive woman - submissive to the male, with limited influence and often there just to prop the glamour quotient of a SUV or a bathroom fitting. But things have changed. Little by little, women in advertising today look and act very differently than those in the 80's and 90's. They have a voice and they get their way!

Many leading brands have done innovative bold scripts and taken the lead. So the change has both reflected the changed reality and also inspired more change.

Power to such efforts and stories. May their tribe increase!



## DIVYA JAIN

*Director Service Excellence,*  
Global Business Services, American Express

things about the world every day. She loves reading and travelling, apart from pursuing her childhood dream of learning to play piano.

What keeps her going is the feeling which comes from a job well delivered, a team well engaged, a customer delighted, a boundary tested, a tough problem brainstormed, an error prevented... and so much more!

She believes that your skills and job/ role make a powerful and unique combination which has the potential to create new possibilities for your customers, organization and team. How you spend each day will determine whether you reach that potential or not!

She believes that a woman needs to have an identity of her own, one which is separate from her

“Daily wins, however small, are important for me as are the big achievements!”

identity as a daughter, wife or mother. Career serves exactly that purpose.

Having been associated with Biz Divas for a long time now, Divya had the opportunity of being a part of the **Mentoring Leadership Program** where she was connected to a senior woman leader who helped her figure out answers to some relevant questions that helped shaped her career. She strives to pay it forward by mentoring younger women herself now.

A science student in school who landed up studying Economics at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi and then Management at MDI Gurgaon, Divya considers herself lucky to land her dream job at ICICI bank during campus placements. She was one of the youngest women branch managers during her tenure. Regional level meetings during her stint in Chandigarh often started with Lady & Gentlemen, with her being the only woman branch manager there in those days! She got her first flavor of working for an MNC when she left ICICI Bank for American Express after 6 enriching years. 8+ years in Amex have given her exposure to so many roles, businesses and customer groups making her a well-rounded professional.

It hasn't been all been hunky dory, she reflects. At work, she had her share of conflicts and clash of expectations. She also feels she has still cover a lot of ground where work life integration and working mother's guilt is concerned. Yet, she considers herself extremely to have a great support system at home and always having found a window when a door closed.

Divya takes pride in the fact that she lives in a joint family and her in-laws have supported her career choices just as much as her parents would have. She is blessed with two children who teach her so many new



## SONIYA MATHUR

*Founder, Hues Technologies,*  
A web and graphic designing company providing creative IT Solution

solutions, script customization, newsletter designing to web site hosting, and domain name registration. With creative approach of thinking and ability to reflect the same in the final product, Hues Technologies also provide graphic designing services like corporate identity, logo, business cards, stationary, posters, brochures, catalogs, flash banners, exhibition design etc.

Having consciously decided to be available to kids while they were growing up, Soniya was very focussed when she invented her career at a rather late stage in life. Driven and talented, Soniya takes a lot of pride in what she does. She feels career or profession is very important for women – financially as well as emotionally. It is a necessary boost to a woman's confidence, personality and identity.

A versatile person with more than 14 years of experience, Soniya has an aptitude for the latest trends. Extremely passionate about colors, designs and technology, she founded Hues Technologies, with the objective of providing a single window service for creative IT solutions.

Even though she pursued B. Sc. Science and M. Sc. Botany, her passion was always aligned towards arts. When her younger son started going to school, she had an opportunity to follow her passion. Always interested in trends and technology, she felt that computer graphics would lead the future of designing. With her sharp learning abilities, she quickly finished the course she opted for and her centre head offered her a job. Very soon she was teaching her own batch mates.

She figured creating something was much more fascinating for her than teaching, so she left the job after 6 months and started taking up small graphic designing work. Soon, she realised her interests aligned with web designing too. With a strong entrepreneurial sense, she then established Hues Technologies.

Hues Technologies, found in 1998, provides services ranging from website designing and development, application development, e-Commerce









“Working and balancing it with other aspects of life takes time and strategy... but it's worth it.”

Biz Divas can vouch for her talent, professionalism and commitment as she is the person behind all IT and design jobs of Biz Divas. Introduced to Biz Divas via facebook through a friend, Soniya went on to become an integral part of team Biz Divas with her work on websites, marketing materials and this magazine.

Having worked on more than 60 projects with clients across the globe and ever fascinated by latest technology, Soniya plans to help small and medium businesses implement practical solutions and realize their vision on the web better and better!

# JOIN BIZ DIVAS!

## Benefits of Corporate Membership

<p><b>Three Tickets</b></p>  <p>I-Inspire Women Leadership Conference (Value Rs.15000)</p>	<p><b>Three Tickets</b></p>  <p>Global Mentoring Walk (Value Rs. 5000)</p>	<p><b>Three Nominations</b></p>  <p>Mentoring Leadership Program</p>
<p><b>Four</b></p>  <p>Corporate Network Events including I INSPIRE &amp; Global Mentoring Walk</p>	<p><b>Four</b></p>  <p>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Round Table Workshops / Toolkits / Learning / Experts</p>	<p><b>15%</b></p> <p><b>15% Discount</b></p> <p>Discount on Consulting &amp; Training</p>
<p><b>Employer Branding</b></p>  <p>Get featured in Success Stories on Biz Divas Website, Blog, Newsletter reaching 30000+ subscribers</p>	<p><b>Access to Network</b></p>  <p>Post your Jobs on Website &amp; Access Biz Divas Members Directory</p>	<p><b>Knowledge Partner</b></p>  <p>For your Internal Women Employee Network</p>

# TAKING A STEP

## FOR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Here's how you can connect or help!

**ACT - Action Centre for Transformation**

Area of work: Livelihoods, Rural Development, Women Empowerment  
 Contact Person : Nilanjana Das  
 Email: nilanjana.ds@gmail.com  
 Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ACTION-CENTER-FOR-TRANSFORMATION-ACT/148094998592629>

**Prabhaav Foundation**

Area of work: Women Empowerment  
 Contact Person: Parul Kumar  
 Email: prabhaavfoundation@gmail.com  
 Website: <http://www.prabhaavfoundation.org/>

**CORD – Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development**

Area of work: Healthcare, Livelihoods, Education, Rehabilitation  
 Contact Person: Mona Malkani  
 Email: cord@chinmayamission.com  
 Website: <http://www.cord.org.in/>

**Happy Hands Foundation**

Area of work: Livelihoods, Art & Culture  
 Contact person : Medhavi Gandhi  
 Email: info@happyhands.in  
 Website: <http://happyhands.in/>

**Prerana**

Area of work: Human Rights, Trafficking, Women and Children Welfare  
 Contact Person: Priti Iyer  
 Email: contactprerana@gmail.com  
 Website: <http://www.preranaantitrafficking.org/>

**Protsahan**

Area of work: Education, Livelihoods, Free Vocational Training & Self Employment Training  
 Contact person: Sonal  
 Email: sonal@protsahan.co.in  
 Website: <http://www.protsahan.co.in/>

**Shakti Vahini**

Area of work: Human Rights, Trafficking, Women and Children Welfare  
 Contact Person: Lokendra Kaushik  
 Email: shaktivahini@yahoo.co.in  
 Website: <http://shaktivahini.org/>

**We Plant**

Area of work: Environment, Conservation  
 Contact Person: Atula Jamir  
 Email: weplantindia@gmail.com  
 Website: <http://www.weplant.in/>



1. **AM - ERM & Compliance - CA**  
Industry: Banking & Finance  
Function: Audit  
Description: Risk Assessment, Internal Audits, Process Reviews, Control Assessments  
Required Experience: 5-7 years  
Location: Gurgaon
2. **Assistant Manager - Finance - ICWA**  
Industry: Banking & Finance  
Function: Accounting  
Description: Accounting, Booking of Bills and Expenses, TDS Calculation, Payment Processing, Audit  
Required Experience: 5-7 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
3. **Manager/Sr Manager - HR Generalist - BPO**  
Industry: HR  
Function: HR  
Description: All Human Resource functional areas (Benefits, employee relation, Communication, Total Rewards)  
Required Experience: 8-12 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
4. **Assistant Manager/Deputy Manager - HRMS/HRIS**  
Industry: HR  
Function: HR  
Description: Implementation of group wide HRMS system.  
Required Experience: 3-7 years  
Location: Mumbai
5. **Service Delivery Leader - Recruitment Process Outsourcing - Auto**  
Industry: HR  
Function: HR  
Description: Managing entire team, Managing operational delivery centre and regional locations for frontline recruitments.  
Required Experience: 10-15 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
6. **Product Manager – BFSI**  
Industry: Banking & Finance  
Function: Wealth Management  
Description: Client Portfolios, Assess Strategies, Investment Advisory process, Risk Profiling.  
Required Experience: 2-4 years  
Location: Mumbai
7. **Product Marketing Manager - Auto/Engg/FMCG**  
Industry: Sales & Marketing  
Function: Product Management  
Description: P&L of a Brand, New Product Launches, Pricing, Working with R&D/Sales/Strategic leadership team.  
Required Experience: 7-15 years  
Location: Chennai/Pune
8. **Director - IT - BPO**  
Industry: IT  
Function: Senior Management  
Description: Project Planning, Requirements Gathering, Scheduling, Communications, Issue Resolution, Cost Tracking, Financial Reporting, Change Management.  
Required Experience: 14-18 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
9. **HR Director - BPO**  
Industry: HR  
Function: Senior Management  
Description: HR Generalist, OD/Talent Management/ Soft Skills Training.  
Required Experience: 15-30 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
10. **Branch Head - Bank**  
Industry: Sales & Marketing  
Function: Senior Management  
Description: Team Leading, Branch Profitability, Customer Relationship Management, Branch Supervision, Complaints Handling.  
Required Experience: 5-10 years  
Location: Bangalore
11. **Demand Planner/Inventory Management – FMCG**  
Industry: Operations  
Function: Operations  
Description: Demand Planning, Inventory Management.  
Required Experience: 2-5 years  
Location: Chennai
12. **Sr Manager - Debt Capital Markets**  
Industry: Banking & Finance  
Function: Treasury Sales  
Description: Supporting Offshore Relationship Manager, Structuring Deals.  
Required Experience: 5-8 years  
Location: Mumbai

13. **Channel Sales Manager – FMCG**  
Industry: Sales & Marketing  
Function: Channel Sales  
Description: Channel Sales.  
Required Experience: 5-7 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
14. **National Sales Capability Manager**  
Industry: Sales & Marketing  
Function: National Sales  
Description: Sales Capability Building, Identifying T&D Needs, Sales & Distribution Strategy, Coaching Regional Trainers.  
Required Experience: 6-8 years  
Location: Delhi/NCR
15. **Product Manager - NRI – Securities**  
Industry: Sales & Marketing  
Function: Product Management  
Description: NRI Revenue, Internal Market Share, NRI Equity Marketing, Capability Building, Promotional & Marketing Activities, NRI Customer Product & Research Communications.  
Required Experience: 3-5 years  
Location: Mumbai
16. **Employee Relations Manager - FMCG**  
Industry: HR  
Function: Employee Relations  
Description: Designing and Implementing of MU ER Strategy, Employee Productivity Metrics, Community Outreach Initiatives.  
Required Experience: 8-10 years  
Location: Mumbai

Contact: info@altavis.co.in



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**Dinakshi Arora**  
After a stint in the IT industry, Dinakshi chose to work for the cause of helping women reclaim their due space in society and workplace. Currently Editor Biz Divas Foundation, she is a curious explorer of life and loves to write, mostly on self help, spirituality, women issues and creative education.  
dinakshi@bizdivas.in



**Rashmi Mandloi**  
Rashmi Mandloi is passionate about Inclusion. Over the past year she has focused on work on Unconscious Bias and its ramifications. She is currently doing a research on 'Women on Boards' which has taken her across the country and consciously giving her a sneak peek on the cultural biases and behavior.  
rashmi@altavis.co.in



**Shilpi Singh**  
Shilpi has had 14+ years of HR experience with some of the world's best media companies including Ogilvy and IMG. She now plays the role of a Performance Catalyst, working with individuals and organizations to improve their performance, profitability and purpose. A multi-tasker, she runs a successful chain of Bed and Breakfasts in India, 'Cinnamon Stays & Granny's Inn' and is a key player in Biz Divas.  
shilpi@altavis.co.in



**Shuchi Bharti**  
Shuchi is a freelance consultant practicing in the area of Corporate Governance and Development Advisory. She is also pursuing her Doctoral Research in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility and Labour Rights. She has worked in the domains of Sustainability Advisory Services and Fraud Investigation and Dispute Services in organizations like KPMG and EY.  
roy.shuchi@gmail.com



**Kiran Chaturvedi**  
After a long career in qualitative research Kiran Chaturvedi started her own experiential lifestyle brand Birdsong & Beyond. They create bespoke journeys and experiential workshops to facilitate deeper, authentic connections with nature, culture and self.  
kiran.chaturvedi@gmail.com



**Sunita Biddu**  
Sunita is an Online Marketing Strategist, Social media & blogging coach with over 9 years of passion into her profession. She helps businesses & entrepreneurs create successful online visibility and branding.  
sunita@contentaxis.com



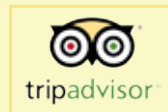
**Vidya Deshpande**  
Vidya is a freelance writer and takes trips with women travellers to off-beat locations, with her business venture, Soul Purpose Travel.  
vidyadeshpande1@gmail.com





# The Tall and Short of it...

Grannies **Asha** & **Aruna** run the **No. 5 Homestay in Banaras**



Feisty and full of life they pamper their guests and go over-board making them feel at home.

If you want to experience their large hearted hospitality, or run a **Granny's Inn franchise** in any city, mail to Shilpi at **namastey@grannysinn.in**



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*Society  
won't change itself,  
if we don't!*



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