



Press Release

The work of grassroots women is shaping India: Smt. Annpurna Devi, Minister of Women and Child Development

Announcing Winners of the CII Woman Exemplar Award 2025

30 May 2025, New Delhi: These grassroots women have emerged out of small villages, overcome many challenges to emerge as champions of change and are shaping India said Smt. Annpurna Devi, Minister of Women and Child Development, as she presented the CII Woman Exemplar Award 2025 to the winners at the session on 'Women Leading the Charge for Social Change: CII Woman Exemplar Awards' at the CII Annual General Meeting and the Annual Business Summit 2025 today.

The status of women is a key indicator of a country's progress she said, adding that women are progressing and present in diverse areas of work whether it is aviation, research, or mining. She mentioned several Government initiatives such as *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* to support women, emphasizing the Government's vision of women-led development. Women play a pivotal role in realising the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*, she stressed. Appreciating the role of industry in supporting and promoting women, she urged everyone to step forward to support women to meet India's goal of being 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

The CII Woman Exemplar Award honours grassroots women leaders from rural and underserved communities who have overcome deep-rooted social and economic barriers to drive transformative change. This year, a new award category—Community Strengthening—has been introduced to honour women who are fostering stronger, more resilient communities

through a range of initiatives. The existing award categories—Health, Education, and Micro-enterprise—remain integral to the program.

Alamelu V from Salem, Tamil Nadu, received the award in the Community Strengthening category; Farheen Hussain from Mewat, Haryana, in the Health category; Varsha Ankush Patil from Kolhapur, Maharashtra, in the Education category; and Narmada Jha from Madhubani, Bihar, in the Micro-enterprise category. Each winner received a trophy, a certificate, and a cash prize of ₹3 lakh. Over 400 nominations were received for this Award, and an eminent jury selected the finalists based on their impact, leadership, and potential to scale change.

Appreciating the determination and resilience of the woman exemplars who have emerged as community leaders despite their challenges, Mr Sanjiv Puri, President, CII, said, “These women represent the spirit of India that never gives up.”

Mr Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said that CII has been recognising grassroots women leaders since 2005. He mentioned that the women have done tremendous work to drive social change and are capable of doing so much more with the right support.

These woman exemplars are now part of a powerful national network of over 150+ woman exemplars, each contributing to significant social change in their communities and positively impacting over 2 million lives annually. The CII Foundation continues to support the exemplars through a range of initiatives to build their capacity for greater social impact.

For additional information about the Award and the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Program, please visit [Woman Exemplar Program \(ciifoundation.in\)](https://www.ciifoundation.in/woman-exemplar-program).

For media inquiries, please contact:

Priya Shirali

Lead- Communication, CII Foundation

E-mail: priya.shirali@cii.in