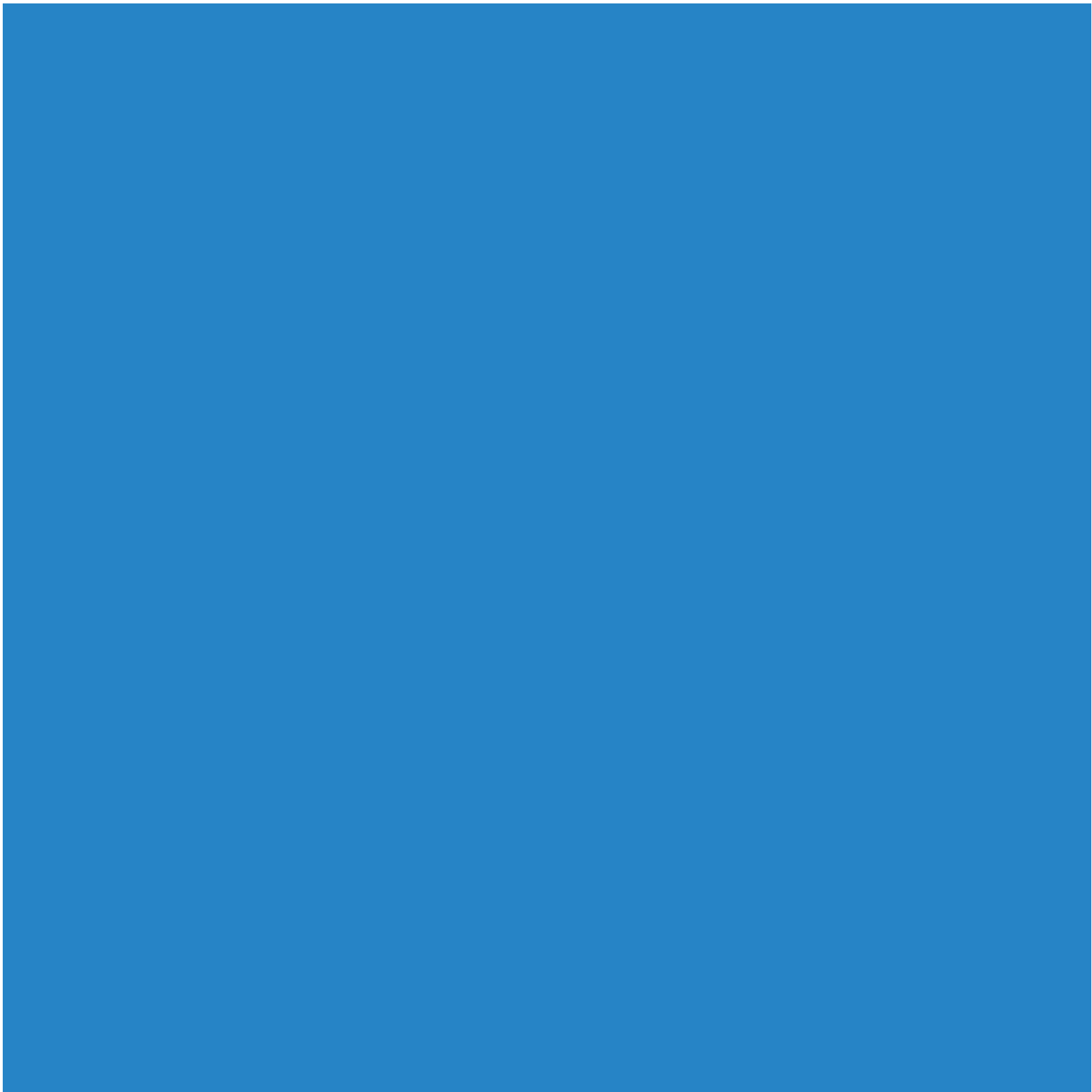




Celebrating the CII

# Woman Exemplars

Changing communities-with courage  
& commitment



# Introduction

CII's Development Initiatives Division is committed to the creation of an equitable and inclusive society and seeks to bring in social transformation through a multi faceted approach that includes critical interventions in key areas. The empowerment of Women is crucial to the development process and since 2005, CII, has institutionalized an annual CII Woman Exemplar Award.

The Award promotes women's empowerment at the community level by discovering and recognizing those who have, against all odds, excelled and contributed significantly to the development process in India.

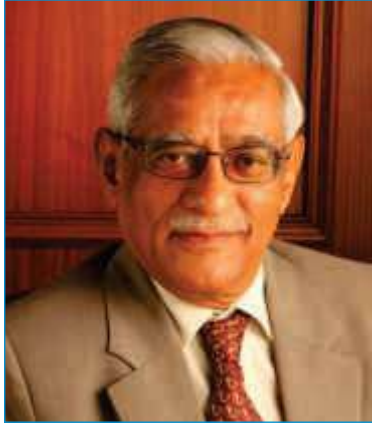
The Award is conferred on Women working at the grass roots level who have contributed significantly in the fields of:

- Education & Literacy
- Health
- Micro Enterprise

The Award is called EXEMPLAR because the talented Awardees set an example for others, igniting the spirit and the belief that they too can be empowered. The Awardees are self motivated individuals, exhibiting strong leadership skills. The Awardees are selected from nominations received from grass roots NGOs based all across the country.

The CII Woman Exemplar Award is presented at the CII National Conference and Annual Session where the Awardees are felicitated and presented with a medal, citation and cash award.

This year, CII has compiled a Compendium that carries the stories of the 21 Women Exemplars. It traces their journey and assesses the impact of the Award in their lives, in their work and on their community. CII would like to acknowledge with thanks, the evaluations conducted by Delhi School of Social Work and for the inputs received from Ms Swati Mirani & Mrs Aparna Khanna (Associate Professor, Department of Development Communication and Extension, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi).



### Message

I am very happy that CII is bringing out this compendium of CII Woman Exemplars. I believe this is a fitting way to recognize some truly exceptional individuals. It is also an initiative that reaches out to those who are most in need of enabling interventions. Through the CII Woman Exemplar Award, women from the most underprivileged sections of society are recognized and rewarded. This will, no doubt, inspire other women that they too can be change agents and improve their own lives and the lives of other women in their community.

The areas that the Woman Exemplar Award has chosen to focus on Micro-Finance, Health and Education are key areas of concern, and every encouragement to those who work in these critical fields will help countless other women to be better informed and educated and indeed empowered!

The CII Woman Exemplar Award is well aligned to CII's commitment to inclusive growth, as also its focus on Business for Livelihood. We are sure that in the years to come, this Award will continue to act as a catalyst for bringing in enabling change in the lives of those who are most in need of it.

I wish this programme continued success!

Subodh Bhargava  
Past President CII and Chairman  
CII National Council on CSR, Community and Rural Development and  
Chairman, Tata Communications Ltd





### Message

It is truly gratifying that the Confederation of Indian Industry has chosen to honour its Women Exemplars through this special compendium that documents their lives, and their work. These 21 profiles celebrate 21 success stories of women who overcame tremendous odds to make their mark in the fields of Education/Literacy; Health; or Micro Enterprise.

I consider myself fortunate to have been part of this inspiring programme that seeks to empower underprivileged women at the grass roots level from its inception in 2005. I believe the CII Woman Exemplar Award is a unique and innovative way to make a positive change in the lives of the underprivileged and the underserved through recognizing and rewarding women who, being part of the community, have shown the vision and the courage to make a positive change. These women set an example and inspired others to replicate their achievements, like true exemplars.

I am confident that this programme will go from strength to strength, and I look forward to celebrating more milestones as we move forward.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madhur Bajaj".

**Madhur Bajaj**

Co – Chair CII National Council on CSR, Community & Rural Development and  
Chairman CII Woman Exemplar Award Selection Committee 2012 and  
Vice Chairman, Bajaj Auto Ltd.



### Message

A compendium that captures and collates the lives of the 21 remarkable women that we are proud to call the CII Women Exemplars is a truly wonderful initiative. I congratulate CII for this and salute the women whom this compendium celebrates.

CII, under the aegis of its National Committee on Women Empowerment institutionalized the CII Woman Exemplar Award in 2005, and every year, three exceptional women who have made a mark in one of three areas: Primary Education and Literacy, Health, and Micro-Finance, are given this Award. These Exemplars, all underprivileged women from the grassroots, have demonstrated exceptional vision, dedication and made a significant contribution to the development process in India.

I am very proud to have been associated with this Award since its inception in 2005 and am cognizant that this small initiative has gained momentum with every passing year. It will undoubtedly, go on to inspire and empower even more women in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anu Aga'.

Anu Aga

Chairperson

CII Woman Exemplar Award Selection Committee 2005-2011 and

Director, Thermax Ltd



### Message

I am glad to know that CII is bringing out a Compendium on Woman Exemplars. Women represent almost half of the talent pool of the country, and for India to realise its full potential it is essential for women to participate fully across the spectrum of economic activity.

The CII Woman Exemplar Award reaches out to women who belong to marginalized communities both in rural and urban areas. It serves not only to encourage women who have achieved success in challenging circumstances, but also showcases their efforts as an inspiration to other women and the community as a whole.

I compliment CII for envisioning this initiative and I wish it even greater success in the years to come.

Chanda Kochhar  
MD & CEO  
ICICI Bank Limited



### Message

The Woman Exemplar Award is one of the most important initiatives undertaken by CII under its national movement for mainstreaming Corporate Social Responsibility for sustained inclusiveness as part of its Social Development Agenda. What makes this Award so very significant is that it cuts across very important barriers of gender, of caste, class and region.

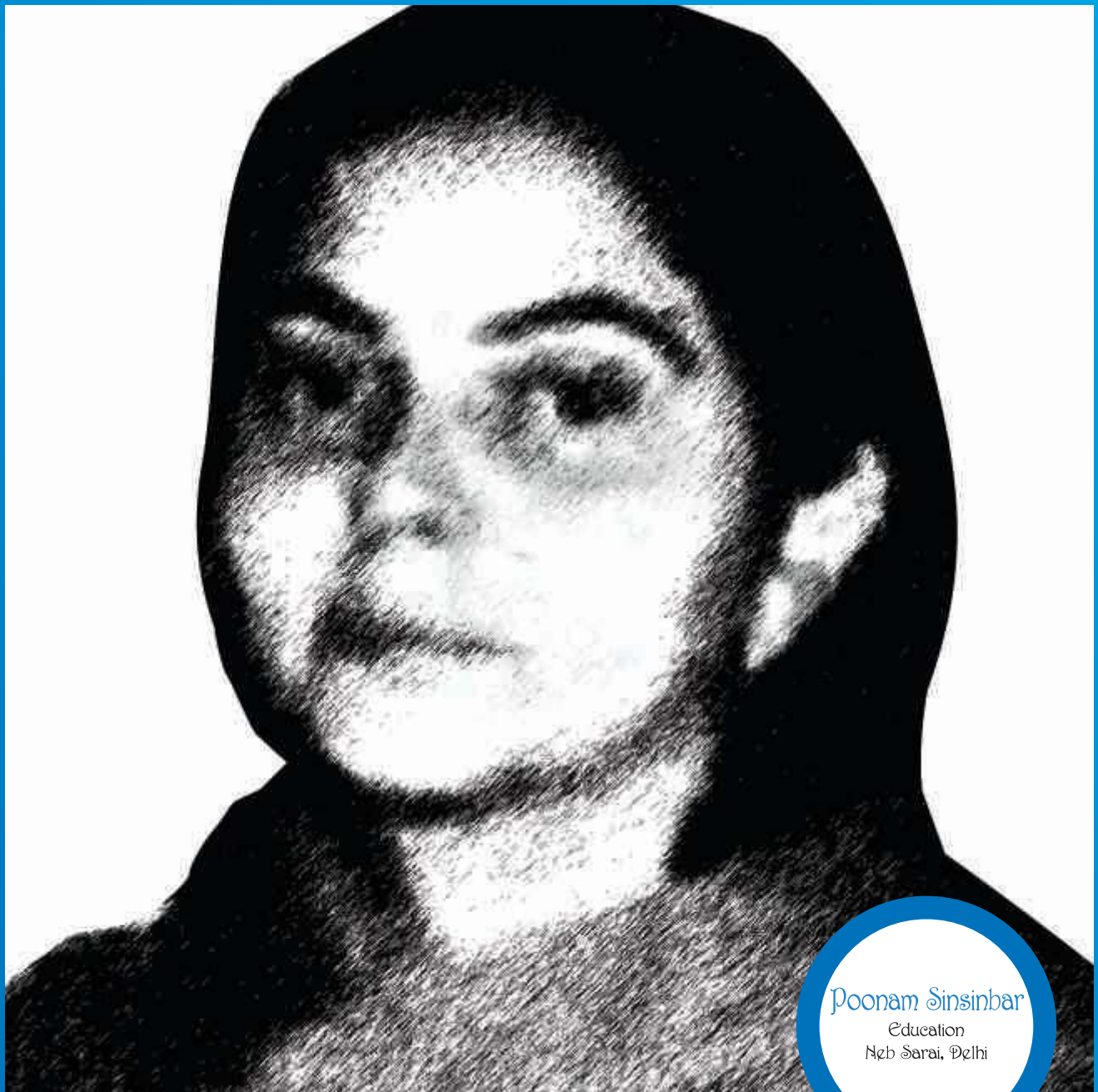
To do so, a formidable number of people are involved in a process that is both lengthy and rigorous. To identify the winners, nominations are invited months ahead, from civil society organizations from across the country for women who have made exceptional contributions in areas such as micro finance, health and education which are critical in empowering women. These nominations are then assessed by an independent Jury who arrive at their decision based on pre-determined criteria that ensure consistency and transparency. The Women Exemplars we recognize and thus honour, catalyze and hasten positive change in their communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and celebrate our Women Exemplars and convey our grateful thanks to our Jury members, the Sponsors of the Award, and all those who have so generously given their time and energy to make this Award possible. I wish this Award and the courageous and visionary awardees all success!

I wish the Woman Exemplar Awards all success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chandrajit Banerjee'.

Chandrajit Banerjee  
Director General  
Confederation of Indian Industry



Poonam Sinsinbar  
Education  
Neh Sarai, Delhi

# Poonam Sinsinbar

## Woman Exemplar: Education

Poonam Sinsinbar began her work in the area of community development at the Nib Sarai centre of Nav Shrishti, to help destitute women and children who were the victims of violence and abuse. She also reached out to children who were employed as workers and thus deprived not only of a childhood, but also of any opportunity of betterment in their adulthood. Poonam brought them the invaluable gift of an education.

Nominated by the Charkha Development Network, Haryana, Poonam acted as an enabler for the women of her community in Nib Sarai by introducing them to vocational training in areas such as tailoring and beauty culture, and helped them to hone their entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to be self-reliant.

She received very little support from the community initially, and when she began, there were practically no financial resources for the project. However her sincerity and determination slowly overcame resistance. She set up a school for slum children with contributions from the local slum community itself. She pioneered education among the slum children, enabling children, especially girls to be earners as well as learners.

Today there is a centre in Azad Nagar, where 200 children attend Balwadi and girls are learning vocational skills to help earn and take control of their own lives. What is noteworthy is that the centre is not dependent on external sources of funding and is managed through contributions by the community.

Poonam Sinsinbar has been a change maker who used the twin tools of education and employment to improve the lives of her community.

### Impact of the award

Poonam Sinsinbar is now known as “Adarsh Stree” in her community. She has now started an NGO that addresses the needs of women and children who are victims of violence and abuse.

2 0 0 5

A w a r d s





Kavita Santosh  
Shinde  
Health Pune, Maharashtra



# Kavita Santosh Shinde

## Woman Exemplar: Health

Kavita Shinde, a simple woman from rural Maharashtra, brought about a significant improvement in the lives of the women of her community by becoming an inspired and inspirational Community Welfare worker who chose to work in an area of critical importance, health education.

She also trained the women of her community in agri-based activities and thus assisted them in becoming self-employed.

Nominated by the KEM Hospital and Research Centre, Kavita's work had a transformational impact on the lives of countless women making them self-confident and empowered.

Coming from a poor family, Kavita had to struggle to get educated. Once educated, she had to face considerable opposition from the richer members of her community, and some members of the gram panchayat. In her endeavour to improve the condition of adolescent girls in her village. She skillfully worked with local cultural traditions to provide health education programmes and helped change her home environment. She has now become a role model for others in her community.

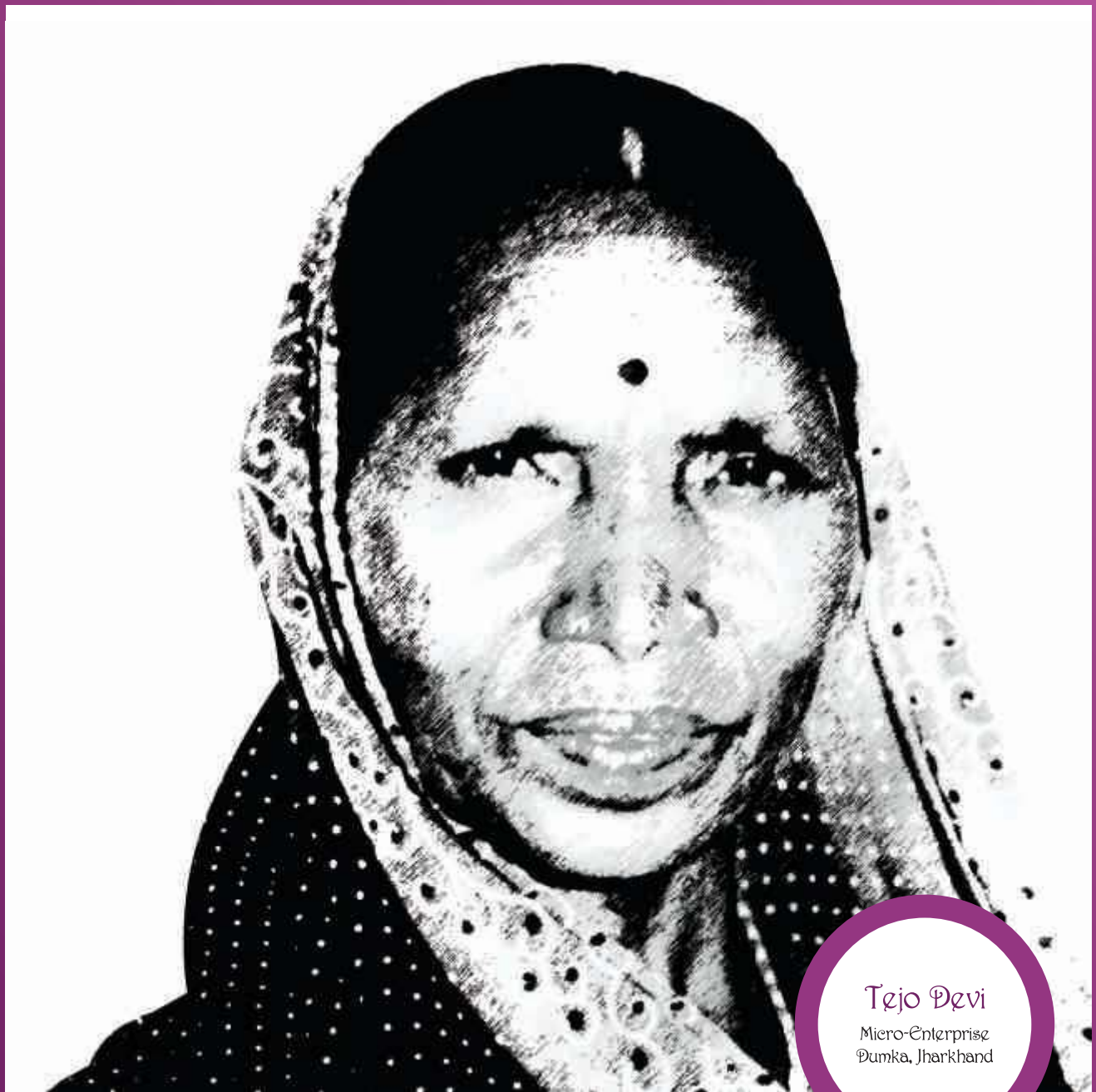
### Impact of the award

Kavita used the grant to bring in drinking water and improve the hygiene standards in her community.

She believes the Woman Exemplar Award made her realize her own potential and led to a far greater appreciation of her work in the community.

2 0 0 5

A w a r d e e



Tejo Devi

Micro-Enterprise  
Dumka, Jharkhand

# Tejo Devi

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Tejo Devi amply demonstrates the positive change that can be effected by one woman. Inspired by the work of the late Ms Viji Srinivasan, Managing Director, Adithi Women, Patna (the organization that subsequently nominated her for the award), Tejo Devi had an innate understanding of the issues that needed to be addressed for the empowerment of women. She showed energy and courage to bring in necessary change to ameliorate the condition of the women of her community. Tejo Devi did this in a way that was inspired and inspirational. She engaged in activities that ranged from weaving, cattle rearing, rope-making, bee-keeping. She also started crafts training and developed bank linkages to expand the market.

Born into a poor family in Dumka, a district of Jharkhand, she made a mark as leader of self-help group among women. She was able to integrate her own instinct for marketing with a production organisation to enable village self-help groups to develop products, such as colorful quilts made from old saris with traditional designs that found markets in London and Canada. She engaged in activities that ranged from weaving, cattle rearing, rope-making, bee-keeping. She initiated crafts training and developed bank linkages to expand the market. As a result each member of her group is now a confident entrepreneur.

Tejo Devi was instrumental in bridging the gap between those who needed help and those who wished to reach out to such people!

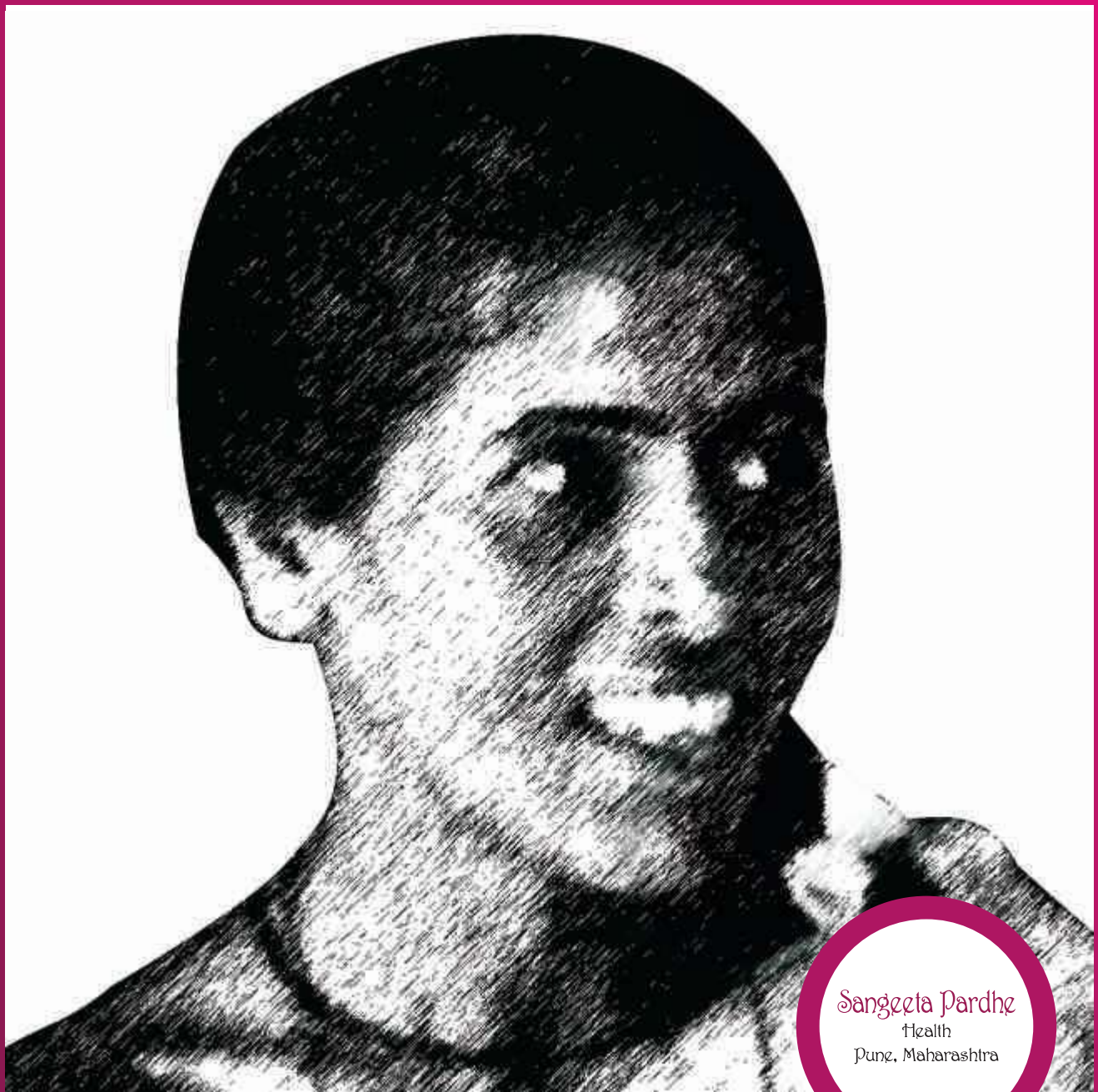
### Impact of the award

Tejo, says that the Award gave her a sense of pride and has engendered even greater responsibility towards her work. She spent the Award money on STGs she had formed. She aspires to make her village Rajasimariya, a model village. Her focus is on educating young girls to become more responsible and to help the women of her community to become more empowered and take independent decisions.

She is a credit to her village of Rajasimariya. We acclaim her as a very worthy Woman Exemplar!

2 0 0 5

A w a r d e e



Sangeeta Pardhe  
Health  
Pune, Maharashtra



# Sangeeta Pardhe

## Woman Exemplar: Health

Sangeeta Pardhe was the recipient of the Woman Exemplar Award 2006 for her untiring efforts as a community health worker in the Sharadnagar slum of Pune. Sangeeta was nominated by the IHMP's (Institute of Health Management, Pachod) Pune Centre in 1998 to work as a grassroots level link worker in the health programme.

This Woman Exemplar overcame tremendous adversity in her personal life to achieve her goals. She grew up in an orphanage as her mother was too poor to care for her. Sangeeta herself was widowed in adulthood, and had to bring up three children. She has demonstrated considerable courage in overcoming these personal challenges to go on to do very creditable work for the community.

Sangeeta underwent a 10 day induction training in health conducted by IHMP. As Sharadnagar was an unrecognized slum, it did not have an anganwadi. Therefore, Sangeeta provided a comprehensive range of services that included antenatal and post natal care, growth monitoring, nutrition, education of children, immunization, control and management of childhood illness. In addition, she was involved with the Referral for Safe Abortion and Management of Post Abortion Complications, RTIs Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment as also Family Planning, and Reproductive and Health issues for adolescents.

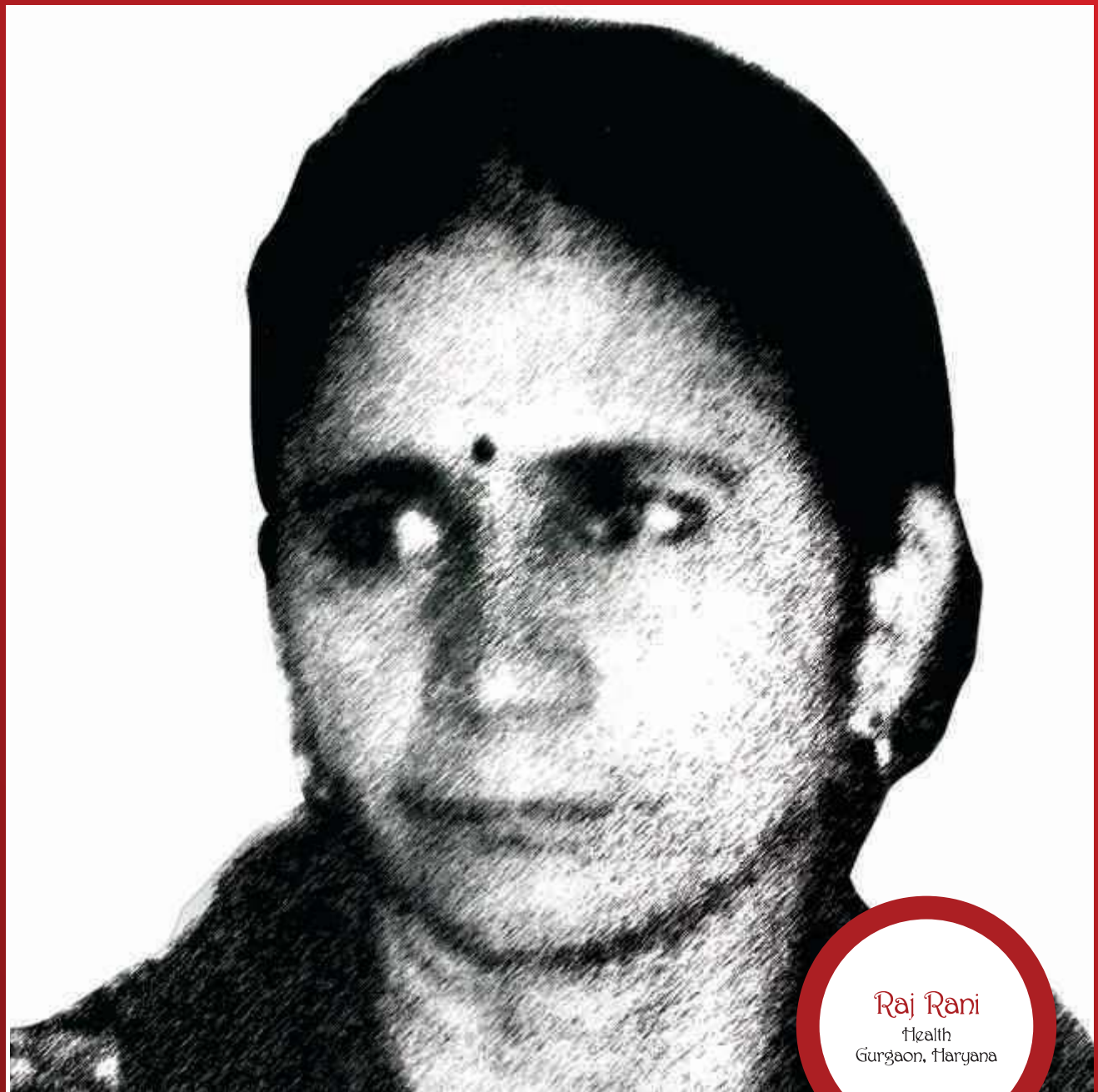
### Impact of the award

When Sangeeta started working with IHMP in 1998, Sharadnagar was the most underdeveloped of its 27 slums with the lowest female literacy rate and the highest number of low income households. By 2006, it had registered the maximum impact of all 27 slums.

Her commitment and dedication had a transformational impact on the health and well being of her community.

2 0 0 6

A w a r d e e



Raj Rani  
Health  
Gurgaon, Haryana

# Raj Rani

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Raj Rani, a resident of Daulatabad and a mother of four children, began her foray into community service after a brief stint with the state District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) where she underwent training for a Self Help Group foundation. This was an eye-opener to Raj as regards the immense potential a woman possesses to bring in empowering change.

In the year 2000 when the Mobile Health Van of the SHS Foundation (the organization that nominated her for the award) started visiting the village Raj was a regular visitor, not only accessing the services for her family members but also for neighbours or friends who were in need of health services. Identified as the Voluntary Health Worker for her village, she undertook her first one-week training on Reproductive and Child Health issues. Her confined upbringing did overwhelm her during the initial days of the training but towards the end, she shed her inhibitions and was able to discuss subjects such as Sexual Health with equanimity.

Married into a conservative Haryanvi family, Raj Rani of Gurgaon, Haryana, mustered courage to tread the path less trodden. "My in-laws considered it a waste of time and effort, but my husband and my kids were very supportive and I ended up investing most of my time in counselling the women of Daulatabad, addressing their needs on reproductive health issues," she says.

Raj Rani is totally committed to her work and is deeply involved with the Foundation's refresher courses provided to volunteers as part of the continuous value addition training.

### Impact of the award

After receiving the CII Woman Exemplar Award, Raj Rani was able to scale up her work. She spent the major part of her cash award on the community to take forward her work in this area. Raj Rani is now involved with many more SHGs with some having more than 30 women in each group!

2 0 0 6

A w a r d e e





Vanita Jalindar  
Pisze

Micro Enterprise  
Satara, Maharashtra

# Vanita Jalindar Pise

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Vanita Pise has demonstrated outstanding entrepreneurship, and has empowered and inspired many women to take charge of their lives and start their own businesses. Nominated by the Mann Desh Mahila Sahakari Bank, Vanita is a worthy Woman Exemplar in the field of Micro Enterprise.

Vanita Jalindar Pise belongs to a Backward Caste, rural family in Maharashtra, and has only completed the 9th standard of school. Vanita overcame these odds to become a microfinance client of the Mahila Sahakari Bank.

Since 2001 Vanita has organized 35 Self Help Groups (SHGs). She trains new leaders for each SHG and helps them get loans to fund their small business enterprises. Vanita serves as the co-guarantor on loans that each woman takes from Mann Deshi Mahila Bank. She also assists them with the procurement of raw material and helps market their final products for sale.

### Impact of the award

Vanita believes the Woman Exemplar award has raised her profile in the community. She is now heard with greater respect by those in positions of authority. This has strengthened the redressal mechanism in the community. She now feels an even greater sense of responsibility towards the other women of her community.

2 0 0 6

A w a r d e e







Noorti  
Devi  
Education  
Ajmer Rajasthan

# Noorti Devi

## Woman Exemplar: Education

Noorti Devi made a dramatic difference in the lives of the women of rural Rajasthan by introducing them to Information Technology. She trained herself and others in this, empowering women and raising their awareness and self confidence. Noorti Devi has also been a tireless campaigner for women's rights. She has been in the forefront of the movement for wage increase for women in the 1980s and has also campaigned for the abolition of Sati in Deurala.

The contribution of this remarkable woman is visible even in the area of water conservation through efficient mapping of rural water resources.

Noorti Devi is the embodiment of a true exemplar. She is illiterate and yet has educated herself enough to work on the computer and impart computer training to several other women. She has been active in women's groups and has raised the issue of women's rights at various international fora including the UN summit and the Beijing Women's conference.

### Impact of the award

Noorti Devi's has been instrumental in enabling women from the most underprivileged background to better their lives by introducing them to Information Technology. She worked tirelessly to do this, and we congratulate her on this praiseworthy achievement!

2 0 0 7

A w a r d e e



Vidya Thapa  
Health  
Seemapuri, Delhi

# Vidya Thapa

## Woman Exemplar: Health

Vidya Thapa, of Seemapuri, nominated by Action India is a living symbol of a woman's ability to overcome all odds to achieve her goal. Vidya's goal was to better serve the health needs of her community. She promoted holistic health, gender equality and self-esteem at an individual and collective level.

Vidya displayed perseverance and dedication in pursuing an education despite tremendous odds, and went on to become a trained medical examiner (allopathic) and medical practitioner (Ayurvedic). She proved to be an inspirational and imaginative trainer. As most of the women who participate in Thapa's collectives are illiterate, information is communicated through songs, theatre, role-playing and metaphor to reach out.

Vidya displayed rare leadership ability during the 1984 Communal Riots, and later during the Bhopal Gas Tragedy and the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Vidya's unstoppable drive to better the lot of less fortunate women on all health issues and on specific local problems such nutritional care of TB patients and expectant mothers will serve as an inspiration to other women. Also the youth in her community work very closely with her, developing newsletters on social issues of the community.

### Impact of the award

When she received the award, Vidya said, "My 23 years of hard work and struggle have finally borne fruit". Since then, Vidya Thapa has substantially increased and enhanced the scale of her work. A part of her award money was devoted towards helping Tuberculosis patients as also the development work she is associated with. She has taken up development issues in more target areas, and is now associated with a host of new programmes.

2 0 0 7

A w a r d e e





Lalithabai  
Micro Enterprise  
Tumkur, Karnataka

# Lalithabai

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Lalithabai, nominated by TIDE, Karnataka, helped women in her community to lead healthier lives, while also improving their economic status.

Smoke from domestic stoves is major environmental pollutant and adversely affects the lives of the women and children who are exposed to this smoke on a daily basis.

Lalithabai, a humble quarry labourer and agricultural labour in rural Karnataka, saw an opportunity for changing the lives of rural women through the smokeless choolah and was instrumental in setting up an enterprise that constructed more than 10,000 smokeless stoves in 3 years at an affordable price. She thus began a new revenue stream for the women of her community.

Lalitha signed up to be a stove builder because she wanted to earn the money to send her daughter to Teachers Training School. Lalitha went from village to village, built up such a successful business that not only did she get her daughter educated but she now manages her own stove installation business.

Her community in rural Karnataka has recognized her contribution by calling her Volli Amma (Stove Mother)!

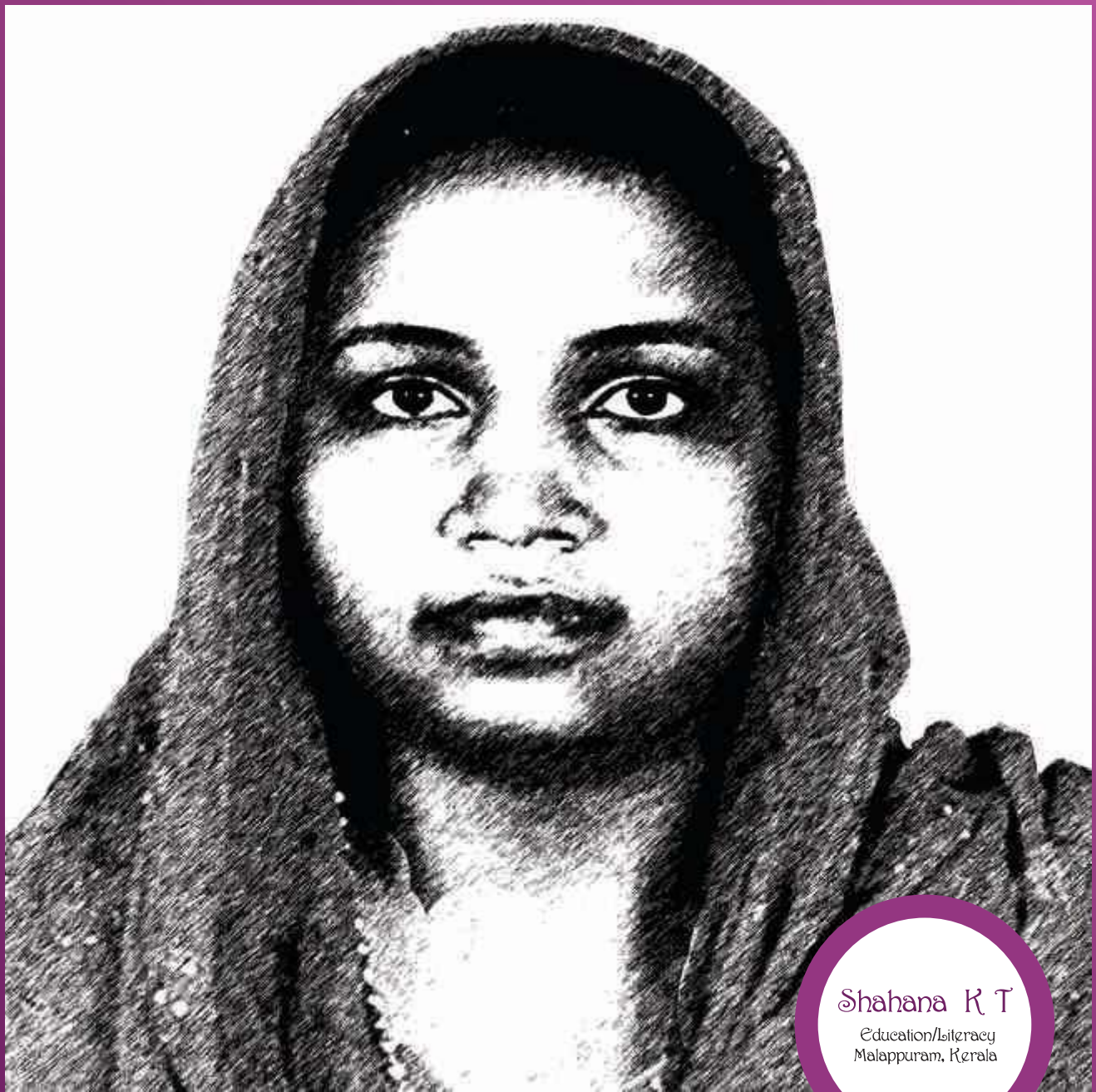
We congratulate Lalithabai for being seen as an expert trainer, problem-solver and role model of a successful entrepreneur. Lalitha Bai's unique contribution makes her eminently suitable to be called a Woman Exemplar.

### Impact of the award

Winning the CII Woman Exemplar Award has added value to Lalitha Bai's institution and work. She devoted a large part of the Award for the welfare of the village. The Award has also enabled her village people to understand her work and she is now an icon in her village.

2 0 0 7

A w a r d e e



Shahana K T

Education/Literacy  
Malappuram, Kerala

# Shahana K T

## Woman Exemplar: Education/Literacy

Shahana K.T was awarded the CII Woman Exemplar award for Education for her outstanding contribution in implementing e-literacy to bring about transformational social change in her village through Akshaya.

Born in Mannarkad, a remote village on the outskirts of Malappuram district, Kerala, where farming is the main occupation of men, and the women are confined to the home, Shahana dreamt of a better life. She wanted to make a difference and realised that education was the key to empowerment. Therefore, along with fulfilling her family responsibilities, she established a small business venture, a computer centre which later snowballed into a large enterprise which changed the lives of thousands of women in the area.

Shahana, used information technology to improve the lives of various community groups. Through the Bhumi Club, farmers were able to use technology to circumvent middlemen; through Shradha, children became net savvy, while women were empowered to reduce poverty through Shakti.

The focus on education benefited over 2000 children, and was particularly significant in its impact on the girl child. Shahana built linkages between communities and the state health system and has excelled in every venture she has undertaken.

### Impact of the Award

There has been a remarkable increase in number of women enrolling for the computer course and leadership programmes in her organisation. Various Self Help Groups, functioning in Shahana's neighbourhood, such as the Kudumba Shree Project, as also local Schools and colleges, now regularly invite her for meetings as a resource person for career guidance and leadership training programmes, and to share her work with their students. 'People suddenly started noticing me' says Shahana.

Shahana has emerged as a role model for the women in and around her district. Many young educated women now wish to become economically self-reliant.

2 0 0 8 A w a r d e e





**N. Nanda Devi**  
Health Wangkhei Ningthem  
Pukhri Mapal,  
Imphal

# N. Nanda Devi

## Woman Exemplar: Health

The CII Woman Exemplar Award 2008 for Health was awarded to N. Nandadevi for spearheading integrated Health Development Programmes with significant initiatives such as Child Line, Safe Motherhood camps, HIV/AIDS awareness through Rapid Intervention and Care.

Nanda Devi had a difficult childhood. She lost her father at a young age, and was the eldest of seven siblings and had, therefore, to take on substantial responsibility for her family. She did this with courage and good cheer, developing qualities that would enable her to accomplish achievements that would win her recognition in the days to come.

HIV/AIDS as well as child and infant mortality were growing at an alarming rate in Manipur. N. Nandadevi displayed exemplary courage in battling societal disapproval to be involved with the Targeted Intervention Projects for Truckers, training camps that benefited 7000 people of the community. She was also able to win all round support to set up Self Help Groups that were self sustaining and thus emerged as a role model for others.

Nanda Devi deserves credit for working in the difficult terrain of rural Manipur where the infrastructure facilities and health services are inadequate, and where people, especially women, struggle for daily subsistence. Her work with rural Manipuri women on micro-finance and community health was, and continues to be, very difficult and is fraught with risk as there is the possibility of ethnic and tribal clashes breaking out. Nanda Devi addresses this challenge by adopting an inclusive style that encompasses all ethnic identities, thus gaining acceptance and support for her initiatives from the community.

As Director, Manipur Voluntary Health Association, Nandadevi will be in a position to significantly impact the volunteer community. Going forward, she wishes to work in the area of counselling for poor and destitute women.

### Impact of the Award

After receiving the CII Woman Exemplar Award, Nanda Devi has been able to upscale the quantum and scope of her work in providing health services. She now addresses a wider set of issues for a greater number of beneficiaries.

The news of her winning the award, was covered in the press for many weeks. This has given rise to increased expectations and Nanda Devi feels that fulfilling these aspirations will be her biggest challenge in the future.

2 0 0 8      A w a r d e e



S Dhanalakshmi

Micro Enterprise  
Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu



# S Dhanalakshmi

## Woman Exemplar:Micro-Enterprise

S. Dhanalakshmi was successful in substantially improving family incomes among the destitute and Dalit families in Tuticorin in the state of Tamil Nadu through mushroom cultivation, an innovative idea in that environment.

This spirited pioneer was able to overcome the many challenges of caste and deprivation and braved traditional prejudices against the education of women. She became financially independent and went on to master the techniques of mushroom cultivation and also inspire other growers with her enthusiasm. S. Dhanalakshmi was able to introduce mushroom consumption amongst all castes and classes, changing age old eating patterns.

She has demonstrated exemplary leadership skills in training and mobilizing women belonging to different communities to set up self sustaining enterprises. This has empowered the women of her community who can now look forward to opportunities other than working on salt pans, the occupation that was traditionally available to them.

### Impact of the Award

Dhanalakshmi is today recognized as a key resource person in the district, and is a mascot for Sterlite Industries, the company that supported her initiative.

The Woman Exemplar award has led to a substantial increase in the scale of cultivation, as also the profitability of mushroom production in Tuticorin and neighbouring environs. Going forward, S. Dhanalakshmi aspires to become a mushroom exporter, an ambition that will help not just her, but also lead to greater prosperity for her community. For this, she has deservedly earned the community's title of Kalan Dhan or 'wealth of the mushroom'.

This Woman Exemplar has also started taking up more development based tasks in her community and wishes to be actively involved with all the issues that impact the lives of women.

2 0 0 8

A w a r d e e



**P. Madhavi**

Education/Literacy  
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

# P. Madhavi

## Woman Exemplar: Education/Literacy

P. Madhavi has been a champion of child rights in over 32 communities. She has set up Employment Training Centres for the young to combine life skills, formal education and career opportunities and has enabled women to speak out against sexual harassment through their local clubs.

P. Madhavi has also been involved in training and mobilizing over 1200 students to successfully get Microsoft Certification for relevant education in this field. She has also conducted Hyderabad's largest slum children and youth club programmes to change the lives of more than 700 members and participants.

Madhavi spent most of her childhood in the urban area at one of the biggest slums of Hyderabad. Born and brought up by an alcoholic father, she had to drop out of school because of lack of financial support.

However, Madhavi persevered and passed her intermediate, even as she worked to support herself, and completed her graduation through distance mode of learning.

Madhavi not only leads a strong team of more than 700 members but is also a big support for her family. Madhavi proudly declares that 'I am presently the highest earning member in the family'.

P. Madhavi is a true CII Woman Exemplar who defied tremendous odds to achieve her goals. She also encouraged other women to take on challenges that would enable them to become more competitive in a fast-changing and shrinking job market.

### Impact of the Award

After the award was conferred, Madhavi was entrusted with the responsibility of several additional areas and localities where her organisation, CIP Foundation has been working. From managing clusters, she is gradually looking after the entire programme component in several localities.

'Meri Kahani ghar ghar mein sunayi janne lagi' (My story was being told and retold in each and every home in all the localities I was working with) is what Madhavi proudly says today.

In the future, Madhavi aspires to run her own organisation which will be committed to the education of the most disadvantaged population and also address livelihood issues. She is an inspiration to all those who desire to follow their dream.

2 0 0 9

A w a r d e e





Manorama Ben  
Jaiswal  
Health Vadodara, Gujarat

# Manorama Ben Jaiswal

## Woman Exemplar: Health

Manorama Ben Jaiswal started as an outreach worker and went on to champion the cause of Health Worker Training and extended this service to achieve a substantial lowering of natal, maternal and child mortality. She systematically developed training modules for every stage of pregnancy; upgraded the dai or traditional health worker through education in modern medical practices and spread health facilities to tribal regions ensuring far greater safety in backward areas. Manorama Ben Jaiswal was successful in influencing health workers and households leading to an increase in institutional deliveries from 14% to 65% percent, ensuring far greater maternal safety in backward areas.

Manorama Ben was born into a family which did not believe in the importance of educating a girl child, and she had to struggle against formidable odds to reach where she is today. The deprivation she faced in her early years, made her especially sensitive to the needs of the less privileged.

Her concept of a Jan Sunvaji (Public hearing) in the rural areas in which public and government officials met at a common platform, made it possible for the administration to come closer to masses and thus get a better idea of the problems so as to arrive at appropriate solutions.

She has worked tirelessly with those running counselling programmes to bring about behavior change amongst those who are at risk for HIV-AIDS. She has played a key role in the formation of Village Health and Sanitation Committees under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

### Impact of the award

After receiving the CII Woman Exemplar Award, Manorama Ben Jaiswal has been promoted as Associate Project Coordinator of her organisation, the Deepak Foundation. The Award has been both inspirational for colleagues and field workers, who wish to emulate her, and has helped Manorama Ben to get a greater degree of understanding and support from the community. This has given a fillip to her efforts to reach out to a larger segment of people by developing a community level federation - Jan Vikas Parishad, to help those who are socially and economically less fortunate.

2 0 0 9

A w a r d e e





Minakshi Swain

Micro- Enterprise  
Jagatsinghpur, Odisha

# Minakshi Swain

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Minakshi Swain is a young woman who has been instrumental in changing the lives of 6000 people of her village.

She was a young girl paying a fee of Rupees 2 a week to a Self Help Group, when she first got involved with their effort at providing aid to the victims of a massive cyclone that devastated her village in Odisha. Today, she is a secretary of the Self Help Group Federation of the local Panchayat with membership of 44 active Self Help Groups and is involved with issues such as a literacy programme, a sanitation drive as also the introduction of a Right to Information Act for local issues.

As Secretary of her own SHG Marontorhi (meaning indigenous/ rooted), and also Secretary of the Federation of SHGs, Minakshi Swain has made a difference to the entire village of 6000 people, and beyond. She has mobilised women's groups on LIC memberships, on an awareness drive for HIV / AIDS, immunization, quality control of mid-day meals at schools, on the use of RTI for local issues, initiation of Night Schools for adults and a first of its kind initiative, a Self Help Group for adolescents. Her group has also addressed problems such as Alcoholism and Domestic Violence, as these issues negatively impacted the women in the area.

Minakshi belongs to one of the most marginalized, scheduled caste communities of Odisha. The women from her community are largely engaged in subsistence farming that includes selling dry fish and pottery. She has travelled a long way from being a simple, shy village girl to a dynamic SHG Federation secretary who is now being invited by different local non-governmental organizations as a resource person for their initiatives and also participates in various programmes arranged by the government officials at district level.

In the future, she looks forward to introducing a Tobacco free Panchayat and Nirmal Gram: to ensure total sanitation in the village.

### Impact of the Award

After receiving the Woman Exemplar award, Minakshi Swain is working more intensively for her community. She dedicated the grant to her group members, who have now taken the reins of PDS (Public Distribution System) and improved the distribution and quality of rice, sugar, kerosene oil etc. The award money also enabled the group to lease agricultural land and start a very profitable venture in vegetable cultivation.

The village women now describe her as the 'star of the village' and 'our heroine'.

2 0 0 9 A w a r d e e







Kamlesh Sherawat  
Education Literacy Mewat,  
Haryana

# Kamlesh Sherawat

## Woman Exemplar: Education/Literacy

Kamlesh Sherawat has done outstanding work in the field of Education. Kamlesh revived the Village Education Committees (VEC) and has been successful in motivating the education department to take action on many counts.

Kamlesh works in Mewat District of Haryana. This district has been one of the worst performers in the country on most socio-economic indices with large family size, low average income, and entrenched gender bias, low literacy rate among women and abysmal reproductive and child health. This is an environment that would be challenging for any individual, and therefore for a woman who herself belongs to one of the most discriminated groups of this area, to be able to overcome these factors and make a positive change, is truly remarkable.

Kamlesh worked with great dedication to address parents' concerns and persuade them to get their daughters educated. Her efforts include construction of boundary walls around schools, appointment of lady teachers, counselling parents of drop-outs, running awareness campaigns in the community.

Her involvement extends to educating farmers on good farming practices and forming village committees of women to monitor quality food in mid-day meal scheme and at sangarwadis. She has run awareness campaigns on issues related to public welfare such as immunisation, maternal and child health, electrification of streets, laying down pucca roads and fighting corruption in primary health care and public distribution systems. She has been training community members in using the RTI Act in these cases. Kamlesh Sherawat has been instrumental in getting Valmiki families living in the Gopla village subsidy for installing private latrines.

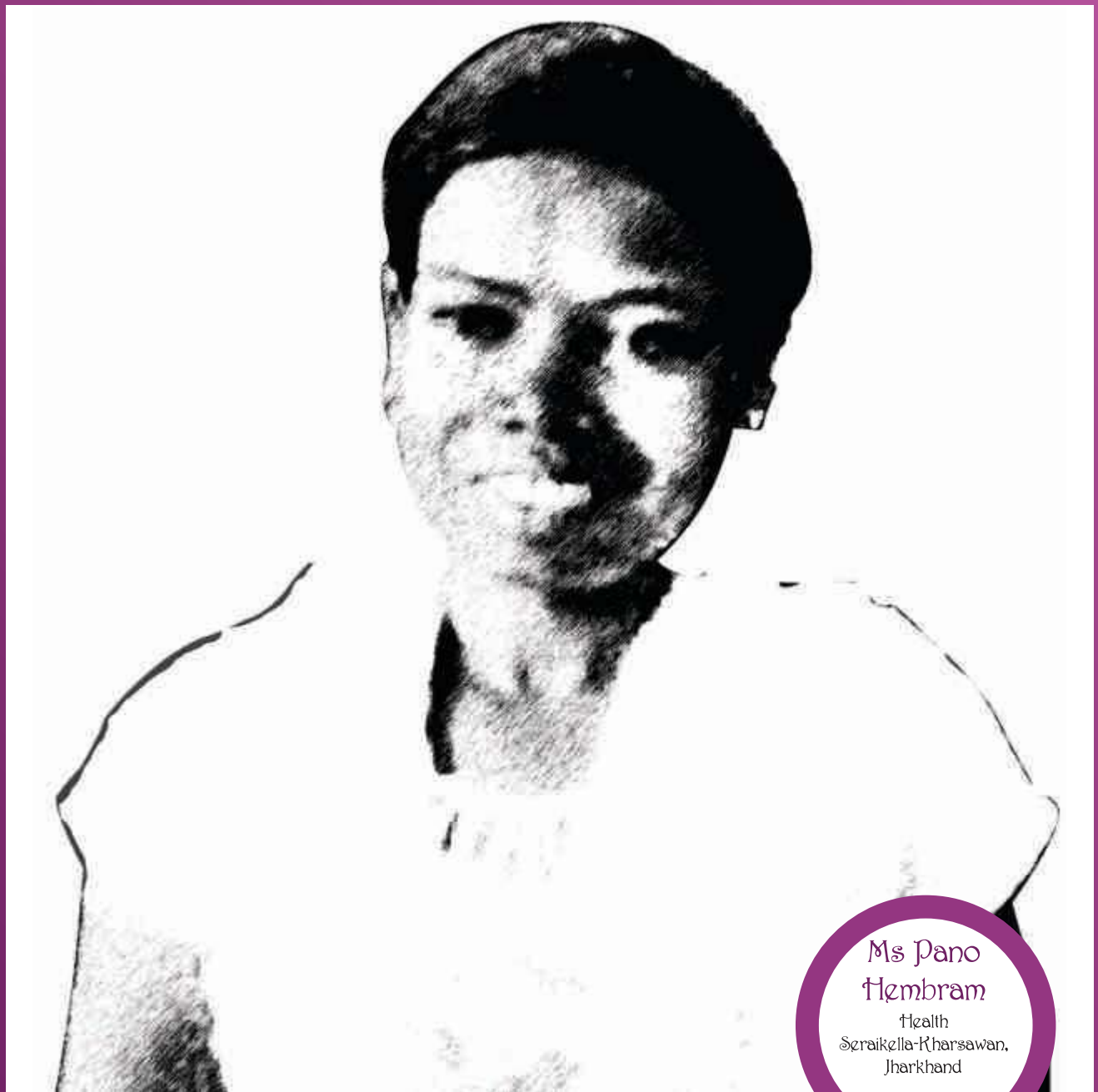
### Impact of the Award

After receiving the award, Kamlesh has expanded her target group. She now works with a larger group of women and children who need her help and support. She hopes that in the future, they too, will be inspired to change for the better, the lives of the less privileged. She is a guiding force for the people of her community.

2 0 1 0

A w a r d e e





Ms Pano  
Hembram

Health  
Seraikella-Kharsawan,  
Jharkhand

# Pano Hembram

## Woman Exemplar: Health

Pano Hembram has raised awareness in the area of reproductive and child health, under the Youth Access to Reproductive and Sexual Health (YARSH) Project promoted by TATA Steel Family Initiative Foundation (TSAFIF) and also worked with the health initiative of Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra (KGVK). Currently she is associated with the National Rural Health Mission and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) as a volunteer and is an intermediary between the various governmental schemes and the community.

Pano Hembram belongs to the Santhal tribe, identified as the most socio-economically backward tribe in Jharkhand. The community she belongs to traditionally followed cultural practices which prohibit modern health practices, allopathic drug use and assisted child-births. Pano is an orphan, and physically challenged, born with a congenital deformity of the spine. Due to her disability she was treated as a burden. She overcame these formidable odds, through grit and determination and went on to make a significant contribution in the field of health.

Pano has effected major transformations in terms of reduced incidence of unsafe abortions, increased use of contraception, and the induction of adolescent girls as peer educators has had a positive impact on her community, and the 17 neighbouring villages.

Pano Hembram has become a household name in her own village and in the surrounding areas..

She has received the Bhanumati Neelkanth award for contribution in social development, by the Dakshin Bharat Mahila Samaj, DBMS trust, Jamshedpur.

### Impact of the Award

Pano Hembram's believes her stature as a community leader has grown as a result of her being honoured as a CII Woman Exemplar. Pano used the award money to train women and girls in reproductive and sexual health. Her work now attracts a large number of volunteers, and therefore has greater impact.

2 0 1 0

A w a r d e e



Dipali Pramanik

Micro Enterprise  
Purva Midnapur,  
West Bengal

# Dipali Pramanik

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

Dipali Pramanik was the CII Woman Exemplar awardee 2010 for exceptional contribution to her community in the field of micro-enterprise.

Dipali worked with the Kolaghat Socio-Economic Welfare Society on the issues of health and education and raising general awareness of the people in the area. As part of KSEWS, Dipali helped the expansion of income generating programmes that included tailoring, that began with five women and has now increased to 38 women. The enterprise has increased turnover from Rs 300/- to Rs. 26, 00,000 and has earned a fine reputation for products such as gloves and potholders, aprons in international textile markets with buyers from U.K., U.S.A, and Italy. Since 1984, the sales of these products, through ঈর্ষাশান্তি (Sarba Shanti Nyog) an organisation that promotes crafts as livelihoods, has benefited scores of women.

To achieve these results Dipali transformed herself from a diffident young woman to an entrepreneur who could provide sustenance and support to marginalized women. She rose to handle responsibilities that came her way as the Executive Director of the textile artisan association promoted by ঈর্ষাশান্তি. Dipali constantly strove to deliver quality products while adhering to dead -lines. Her grit and determination were instrumental in overcoming the barriers of women's low status in a society, where they had to face challenges such as low levels of education, early marriage and domestic violence.

### Impact of the Award

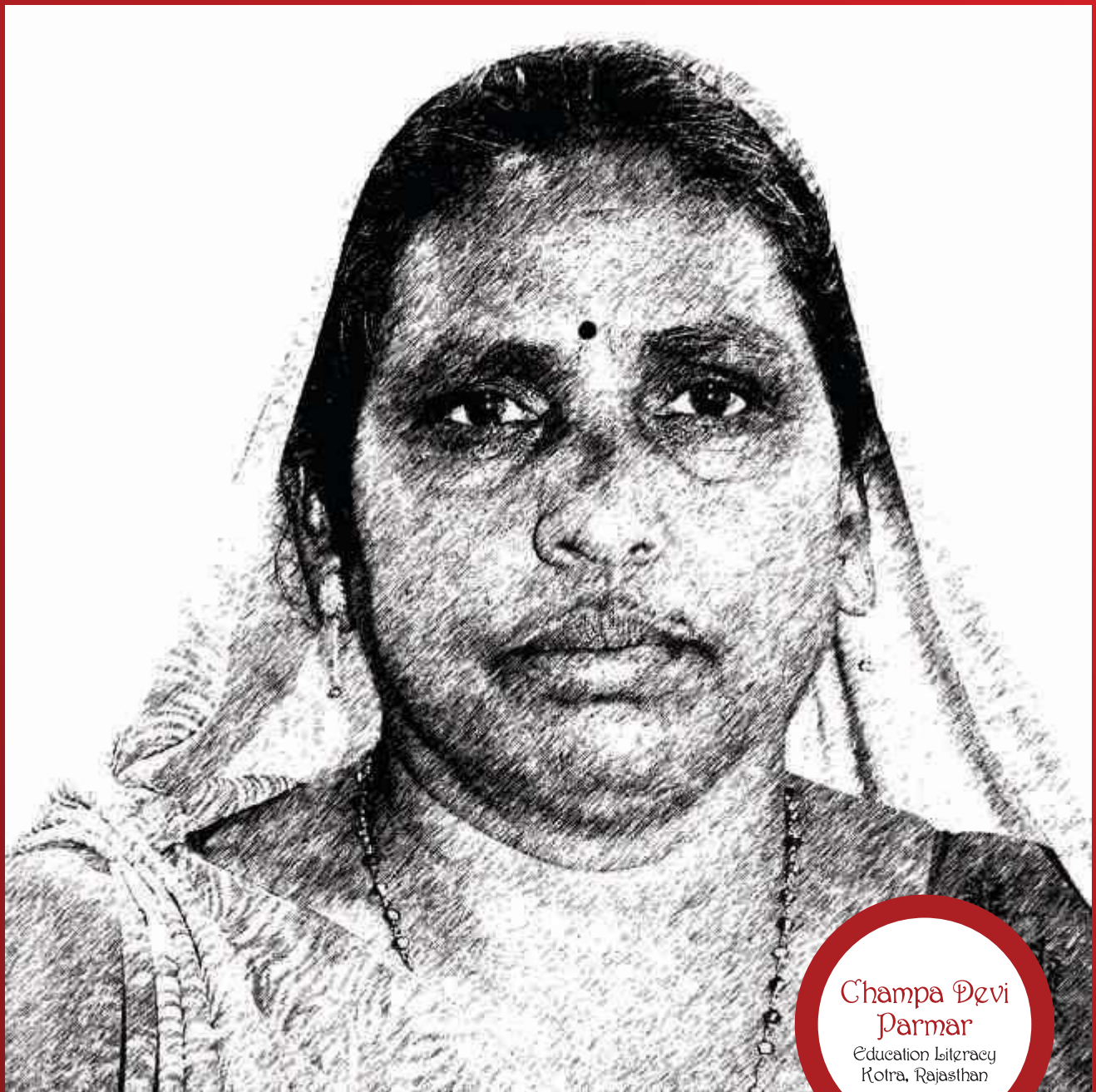
Ms. Pramanik has made the enterprise stand out among similar initiatives supported by ঈর্ষাশান্তি. The group is able to provide for the welfare of the 38 members in terms of health insurance and other benefits. They are able to plough back their efforts into the enterprise to make it successful. They are now able to explore newer products and newer markets with confidence.

Women now challenge the traditional systems that stood in the way of their empowerment. Many parents educate their daughters and send them to the socio-economic welfare society to enable them to learn skills. Ms. Pramanik stands out as a beacon of light for the people of her community.

2 0 1 0

A w a r d e e





Champa Devi  
Parmar

Education Literacy  
Kotra, Rajasthan

# Champa Devi Parmar

## Woman Exemplar: Education/Literacy

Champa Devi Parmar lived in Vasela village in Rajasthan where there were no opportunities for education and the attitudes towards women were antiquated. She challenged these oppressive customs and biases.

Beginning with Voluntary education and guidance of adolescent girls in Vasela village in Kotra Tehsil, she went on to mobilize women through SHGs (Self Help Groups) and challenged the hegemony of landowners on the common property of villagers.

Born into a tribal family, in a village with no schools in the vicinity, in her childhood, Champa Devi Parmar used to walk 15 kilometres to attend school. She was then married into a family, where the attitudes towards women were even more regressive.

Champa Devi Parmar faced these challenges resolutely. With the support of the Adivasi Vikas Samiti, she became the Community Education Instructor of Seva Mandir, and ran and promoted a Balwadi.

She contested and was elected the Head, Gram Panchayat, and Member, Zilla Panchayat, and used these positions to improve educational institutions, promote participatory grassroots democracy and livelihood projects for the common good.

She also worked to create awareness and bring in attitudinal change against oppressive customs and traditions.

### Impact of the Award

Champa Devi's efforts have resulted in changing the educational scenario in Mamr Panchayat. She began with Non-Formal Education and this initiative grew into a Government Secondary School. Supported by SHGs, the Adivasi Vikas Samiti and Seva Mandir, Champa Devi Parmar has successfully brought in empowering change that has positively impacted the lives of villagers in an extremely backward region of the country. In the future, she plans to replicate the model of Mamr Panchayat to other Panchayats and Regions of Rajasthan.

Champa Devi Parmar had to battle against many disadvantages, and demonstrated great vision and extraordinary dedication in achieving her goals.

2 0 1 1

A w a r d e e



K M Bhagyamma  
Health Chamrajnagar,  
Karnataka



# K M Bhagyamma

## Woman Exemplar: Health

K.M Bhagyamma has done outstanding work in the field of Health on the Chaitanya project, part of Indian Network of People living with HIV/AIDS, which addresses the concerns of people living with HIV/AIDS in the district of Chamarajanagar of Karnataka.

Herself an HIV positive person, Bhagyamma, overcame the challenge of negative societal attitudes towards people with HIV/AIDS and began to work with single minded determination to raise financial support for medication and nutrition for members of Chaitanya and their dependents, as also to provide psycho-social support, counseling and advocacy to them.

Aware that her efforts had to be sustainable, Bhagyamma has initiated vocational training programmes in trades such as tailoring and computers, arranged for driving lessons at concessional rates and assisted many HIV positive people to get employment in NGOs. 372 women members of the network who are widows have also been given an opportunity to run a papad making factory she has initiated.

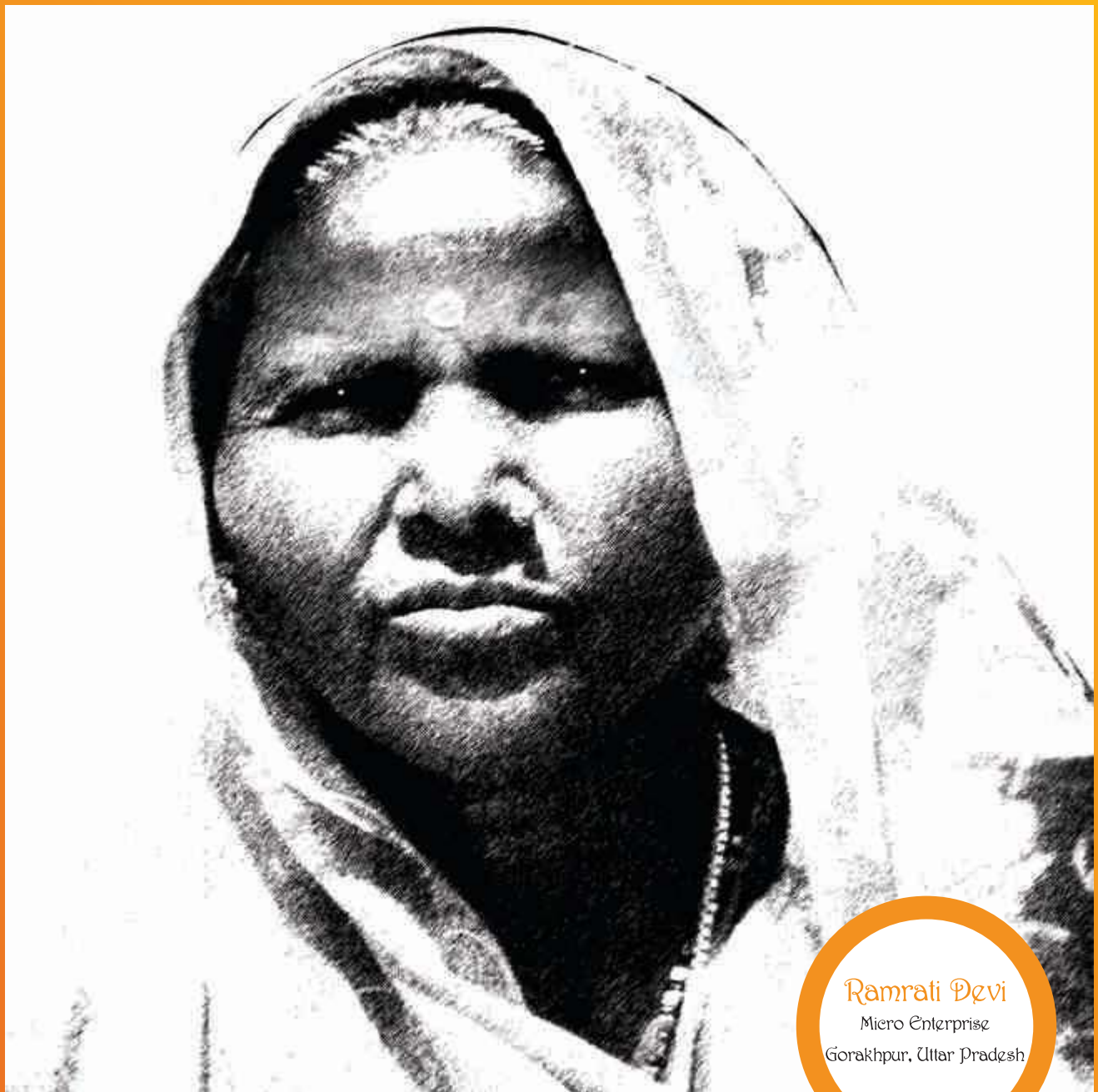
### Impact of the Award

Bhagyamma's efforts have contributed to building a strong, close knit and able community of people living with HIV/AIDS in Chamarajanagar. Around 1500 members and their dependents are beneficiaries of the Chaitanya programmes. She raises funds for sponsoring the educational and nutritional needs of 500 affected and infected children of HIV positive people. Her future plans include building a residential school for children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and building a home for HIV positive people who are destitute and homeless. Through these measures, Bhagyamma has empowered and inspired HIV/AIDS infected people and raised their aspirations

2 0 1 1

A w a r d e e





Ramrati Devi  
Micro Enterprise  
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

# Ramrati Devi

## Woman Exemplar: Micro-Enterprise

The CII Woman Exemplar 2011 award for Micro-finance was conferred on Ramrati Devi for her exemplary contribution to Livelihood Creation and Poverty Reduction through the practice of Sustainable Agriculture in Sarpatha Village, District Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Ramarati Devi had to overcome many challenges to achieve this feat. A marginal farmer who could produce only one crop from her flood affected field to support a family of seven members, Ramarati Devi was able to improve her own prospects and the prospects of her community, by joining an NGO, CCAFG, the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group which works to encourage and assist small farmers through five committees: Samuh Dekhbhal Samiti for the maintenance of SHG (Self Help Groups), Agro Service Centre Committee, Kisan Vidyalaya Samiti, Laghu Simant Krishak Morecha and Compost Samiti. The work is spread over 20 villages of Campiengunj block. In Sarpatha village, the project, based on the model of empowerment through information, has been running for the past ten years.

A Master Trainer who provides training to farmers on issues related to sustainable livelihood through agriculture and animal husbandry, Ramrati Devi is the coordinator of 'Kisan Vidyalaya' (farmers school), she also looks after the activities of the 'Krishi Sewa Kendra', and is the treasurer of the Kendra. She has been instrumental in forming 14 Self Help Groups, SHGs in the village each consisting of 10-12 members.

To deal with the limitation of land, Ramrati has given the village a model of mixed and rotation cropping so that farmers can enhance the productivity of the land while maintaining the sustainability of their source of livelihood.

### Impact of the Award

The Woman Exemplar award has led to media attention "as an Exemplary Woman Farmer." She has also got recognition from her community for her creativity in implementing agricultural techniques, and is today regarded as a role model for her community.

Ramrati Devi is self-motivated, hard working and innovative. Her excellent communication skills and leadership qualities have helped her to overcome the feudal mind set that was prevalent in the area. In the future, she wishes to usher in an integrated socio-economic approach for the development of her village.

2 0 1 1      A w a r d e e





# Thank you Jury



Anu Aga  
Director  
Thermax Ltd.



Madhur Bajaj  
Vice Chairman  
Bajaj Auto Ltd.



Rumjhum Chatterjee  
Managing Director  
Feedback Infrastructure  
Pvt Ltd.



Syeda Imam  
Member  
National Commission  
for Minorities



Chanda Kochhar  
Managing  
Director and CEO  
ICICI Bank Ltd.



Rakesh Bharti Mittal  
Vice-Chairman and  
Managing Director  
Bharti Enterprises



Priya Paul  
Chairperson  
Appzjay Surrendra  
Park Hotels



Satish Pradhan  
Executive Vice  
President Group HR  
Tata Sons Ltd.



Manju Bharat Ram  
Chairperson  
Shriram School



Chanda Singh  
Managing Editor  
World Affairs Journal

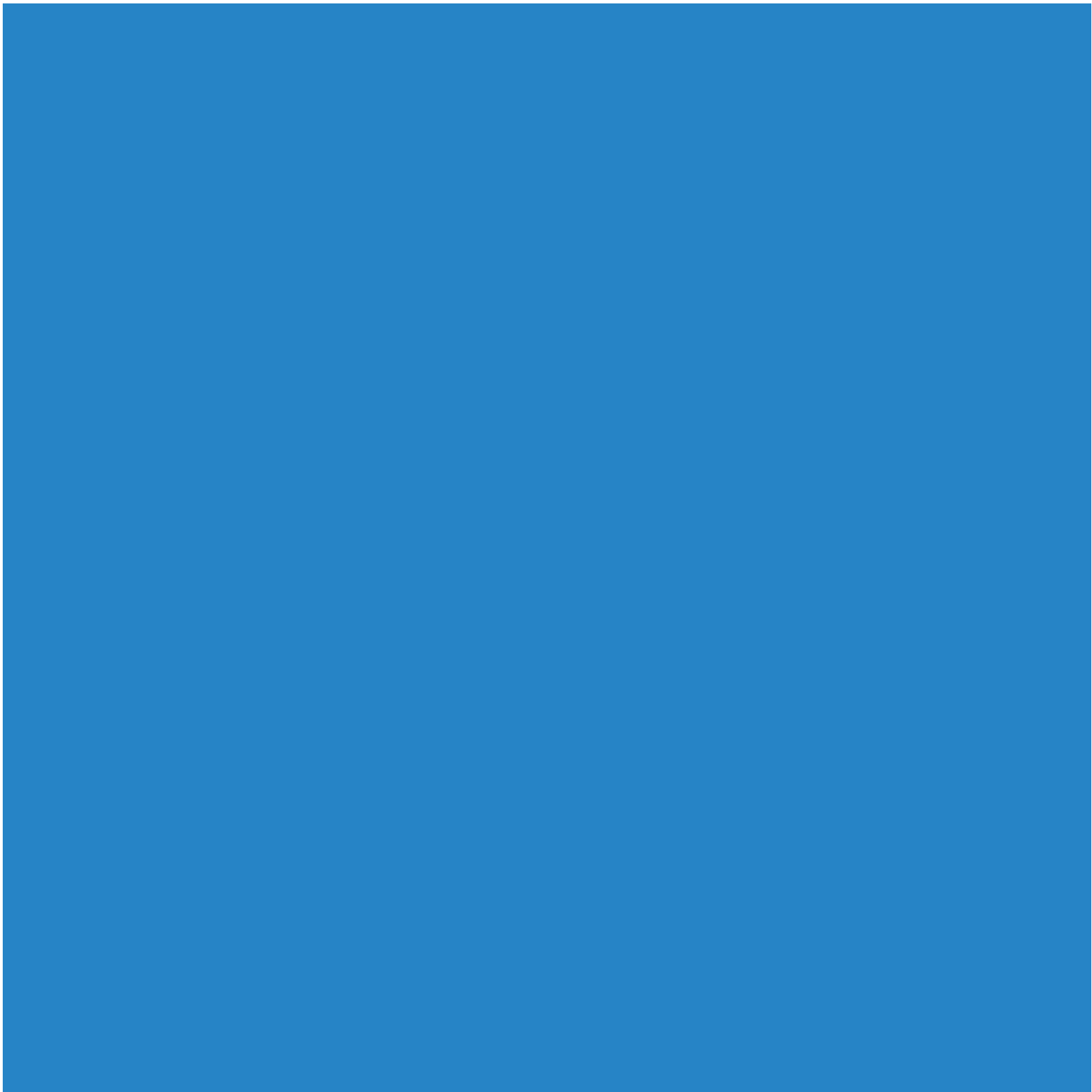


Sudhir K Sinha  
Country Head -  
CSR and R&R  
Arcelor Mittal India Ltd.



Malini Thadani  
Head Corporate  
Sustainability  
HSBC Asia Pacific Region







## Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the growth of industry in India, partnering industry and government alike through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry led and industry managed organisation, playing a proactive role in India's development process. Founded over 117 years ago, it is India's premier business association, with a direct membership of over 7000 organisations from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 90,000 companies from around 400 national and regional sectoral associations.

CII catalyses change by working closely with government on policy issues, enhancing efficiency, competitiveness and expanding business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and global linkages. It also provides a platform for sectoral consensus building and networking. Major emphasis is laid on projecting a positive image of business, assisting industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes. Partnerships with over 120 NGOs across the country carry forward our initiatives in integrated and inclusive development, which include health, education, livelihood, diversity management, skill development and water, to name a few.

CII has taken up the agenda of "Business for Livelihood" for the year 2011-12. This converges the fundamental themes of spreading growth to disadvantaged sections of society, building skills for meeting emerging economic compulsions, and fostering a climate of good governance. In line with this, CII is placing increased focus on Affirmative Action, Skills Development and Governance during the year.

With 63 offices including 10 Centres of Excellence in India, and 7 overseas offices in Australia, China, France, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with 223 counterpart organisations in 90 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.



### Development Initiatives

The vision of CII's Development Initiatives is to create an equitable, inclusive, knowledge-driven society.

The focus is on 10 critical areas, which include CSR and Community Development; Industry-NGO Partnership; Special Abilities; Women's Empowerment; Public Health; Rural Development; Skills Development; Affirmative Action; Disaster Management; and the North Eastern Region.

The mission statement of every initiative is to provide a bridge between different stakeholders in an environment that would encourage good governance, accountability, trust and transparency so as to have sustainable engagement.

## Confederation of Indian Industry

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