

Outlook

Initiative



Nirmala Sitharaman



Mandhira Kapur



Meenal Goswamy



Nita Ambani



Upasana Arora



Meghna Ghai Puri



Deepika Padukone



Chandni Kapadia



Soma Mondal



Nisha Kaur Uberoi



Sohini Sastri



Dr Namita Pandey



Shilpa Kulshrestha



Rochita Venkataramanan



Ranjoo Mann



Shalya Raj



Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu



Alpa Kapadia Teli



Latha Poonamallee



Archana Dhawan Bajaj

WOMEN REDEFINING LEADERSHIP



The unseen wealth creation by **INDIAN WOMEN**

Unassessed contribution to the economy, critical for country's future

— M.Rajendran

The world is facing an economic slowdown, that began early 2018-19 and accelerated with two years of the pandemic. However, with the pandemic becoming endemic, a revival of the economy has begun.

In this process, the role of women, especially in a country like India assumes significance more than ever before. During the pandemic, the women proved they can play an important role in a digital ecosystem, with work from home being the norm.

The contribution they made is difficult to put a value on. However, no one can deny that they performed a much bigger role. It is not that they contributed less earlier, but unfortunately their contribution was not assessed, especially, where there was no direct wealth creation.

Over the years, women in India have proved, that their unassessed contribution to the economy has helped in managing the crisis both social and economic. In this package, we have not assessed but attempted to present the immense contribution women have made and why they became the newsmakers in 2021.

A Miss Universe, an actor, sportswomen play an important role in shaping the future of our country, as a CEO, doctor and woman Finance Minister do in their respective capacity. The profiles, that have been selected represent many unrepresented, unseen, unheard women of India.

The achievement and their views that you will read, will provide an insight into the indomitable spirit of these women. Their profiles narrate, the struggles and hurdles, that they overcame in achieving what they have achieved.



Every morning 36 lac women across 18,600 villages bringing in milk worth ₹150 crores, are now celebrating their economic independence. Thanks to the co-operative movement called Amul.

Amul
75
YEARS OF
MILK & PROGRESS

Balancing the Numbers and Nation

Steering the Indian economy amidst pandemic and global economic slowdown

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

Union Finance Minister

— M. Rajendran

As the first woman Finance Minister in NDA Government, Nirmala Sitharaman, had her task cut out. Even since she took over the mantle of managing the finance of India, the journey has been no less challenging than it was for the first Finance Minister of an Independent India R. K. Shanmukham Chetty.

During the last four years, she has had to manage, a global economic slowdown and, the worst pandemic in a century. Union Budget 2022-23, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, will lay the foundation for India's economic growth and expansion for the next 25 years. It was a tough year and the country expected her to deliver a Budget, that would ease the pain of pandemic and economic slowdown.

With India completing 75 years of Independence, the challenge was also to lay the roadmap for the future. It required a balancing, to address the immediate concerns of the Indian economy while planning for the next few decades.

Critics questioned the lack of initiatives to resolve the immediate concerns but appreciated her vision for India at 100, which she said was in line with her party's philosophy and

commitment. Her challenges continue to mount, with the Russia-Ukraine war, that threatens to nip whatever growth prospects, she has planned for the country till next year.

It would require enormous patience, stamina and grit, to help the economy from its current position, which is far from, what she and her party would have liked it to be. During the year and next, with several states going to elections, Sitharaman would be at the focus of attention, not only within her party but also the opposition, that seems to have woken up.

However, people who work closely with her in the Ministry and the party, feel, she has in her take India out of the current economic phase. The early, the better, since a lot depends on her

A strong votary of women empowerment, in her 2019 Budget speech, quoting Swami Vivekananda she said, "Nari tu Narayani" (woman you are a Goddess) Sitharaman emphasised the importance of woman empowerment.



managing the price rise.

An excellent student, her passion for books, which was developed in the early years of her childhood, still is the source of strength.

A strong votary of women empowerment, in her 2019 Budget speech, quoting Swami Vivekananda she said, "Nari tu Narayani" (woman you are a Goddess) Sitharaman emphasised the importance of woman empowerment. With Women being 50 per cent of India's 1.40 crore population, she has been highlighting the role of women in the growth of the Indian economy.

She was born in Madurai, Tamil Nadu and completed her graduation from Seethalakshmi Ramasamy College, Tiruchirappalli and obtained her M.A. (Economics) from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She joined BJP in 2008 and served as a national spokesperson for the party since 2010 and was elected to Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh and later from Karnataka.

As Minister of Defence, Corporate Affairs, she displayed the grit and determination, to implement policies, that were required to safeguard the Indian borders steer the Indian business interest respectively.

Chandni Kapadia: The Limitless Leader

"If you can dream it, you can achieve it"

MS. CHANDNI KAPADIA

Executive Director, GLS University

Chandni is a Destiny's Child which aptly describes her successful journey from a Luxury brand consultant to heading a leading University.

Her strong passion and a singular focus on goals helped her become Country Head, Business Head, and Asia Pacific Head of many luxury brands. Success for her is continuously growing to become better version of oneself each day. She says "You are your biggest competitor and to sustain yourself in this changing world you should love what you do. I may have made few mistakes along the way but never have regretted my path which I have chosen for myself. I believe that is success when you have the satisfaction of how far you've come in something you've always loved." She adds "When I look back today, there is nothing that I probably wouldn't do again. However, there are things that I would do in a different way"

Of course, none of this would have been possible without her parents' support, who have been her rock. She says "It surely must have required a lot of courage to send one's daughter to an unknown land during those times, but I am so glad and thankful that my parents did."

Chandni has always loved having her hands full!! Whether it is freelancing as a consultant or her role as director in GLS University or even learning something new. From being a fashion consultant to getting a law degree with 11 gold medals, she has excelled in all!! Chandni says 24 hours a day are just enough to go about the day. Meticulous planning and multi-tasking has always been one of her best traits!!

She has always adapted to the circumstances yet stayed true to herself as "In the end What makes or breaks you is your inner self" she says.

Her endeavor with education began more than a decade ago, when she was looking for bright minds for MNCs and ended up associating with it to grow and bridge the gaps in the education and the corporate need out there. Today GLS University has collaborated with Ivy League universities like Harvard, Luiss Business School, CBU, New Castle and the list goes on. She says, "It is a big high when you play a huge role in making dreams come true". She indeed feels blessed to have Shri Sudhir Nanavati as her mentor and to be a part of this huge institution which has become a family to her.

Chandni thanks her stars that she has had various opportunities in life where she could meet people who believe in similar causes. And reach out to women across the world and supporting their causes and businesses – a dream that she always had to give back to the society.

During her me time, Chandni loves to travel and play with her baby pet, Zoey, who is the center of her world. She says "Having Zoey has made me more compassionate, understanding and fun loving. She certainly keeps me grounded and calm". Chandni has been a strong advocate of preventing of street dogs against animal cruelty and has worked with various NGOs towards it.



She has worked towards her dreams relentlessly. She feels its very easy for youth of today to lose focus. So it is important for them to channelize their energy and time towards fruitful actions. Finally, she signs off with a message to the Gen Z, "Dreams won't ever work for you unless you do. So, channelize your mind and energy on the things that matter. Seeing that satisfied happy smile on your face at the end of having a fruitful day is always unmatched!!"

Some of the many achievements and recognitions of Chandni are listed below:

- Appointed as National Design Council President, WICCI
- World Women Leadership Congress Award for her immense contribution to fashion industry and also for Mumbai's Woman Leaders.
- Women Entrepreneur Award and Rastriya Samman Puraskaar by National Achievers' Recognition Forum.
- Black Swan Award for Women Empowerment by AsiaOne in support of UN Global Compact Network & Government of India.
- Self-Made Woman Award by Digilive, Asiaone.
- Iconic Women Creating a Better World for All by Women Economic Forum, All Ladies League.
- High Flyers' Appreciation Award 2021 in appreciation of Entrepreneurship
- CEO of the Year Award by Indian Achievers' Forum in 2020
- Awarded "Leaders of Change 2021" by Economic Times
- Ms. Kapadia has also featured in Forbes List of Top 10 Women Entrepreneurs of India and in magazines like Fortune India, India Today and Outlook.
- She has featured in Forbes India Women Power Issue and Business Today

Failure & Life – A Learning Process

Donning many hats, Mandhira has played a lot of roles in her life be it a doting mother, a caring daughter or a successful entrepreneur. Throughout her journey, she has crossed a lot of hurdles which have made her what is today. Her enthusiasm towards technology, startups and innovation has led her to set a Launchpad by taking the brand SMPL to become a global brand.

MANDHIRA KAPUR

Chairman and Managing Director,
Sona Mandhira Private Limited



Mandhira Kapur has always been passionate about innovations and quality in life and business. Her belief in continuous quality improvement has fostered in her a learning mode. She believes that the best lessons we learn in our life comes from failure. Failure and success goes hand in hand during the entire journey of life. Her journey is an example of commitment and conviction, where she accomplished tough challenges and overcame them with excellent discipline and determination to achieve success. During this journey, she has not only achieved her goals but has also helped and inspired thousands of youngsters to achieve their dreams. She has gained recognition as a distinguished business leader and is an inspiration for women who aspire for a prosperous life by bringing about a huge transformation in their lives.

Back in 2012, when Dr. Surinder Kapur inaugurated SonaMandhira Pvt. Ltd., Mandhira somewhere knew inside she will take her Father's legacy forward propagating his vision. She took the company's helm in 2020 when the business scenario was completely

changed due to Covid. Undeterred, Mandhiratook over the control with tremendous grit and established SMPL as a strong legacy of high-quality and innovative offerings. With her enthusiasm towards technology, startups and innovation, she has been able to give SMPL a launchpad become a leading global brand in automotive aftermarket space.

Subsequent to her career in fashion spanning over 15 years, Mandhira has been involved in developing marketing and PR strategies for various national and global brands. She recalls her first visit in the manufacturing setup with her father, "Mesmerized by the big

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machines and larger than life setup, I used to get fascinated by the manufacturing setup. I felt an instant connect with the industry and wanted to be the part of it someday. In the initial years of my career, I was engaged in building PR strategies and marketing plans for different brands, but my calling still remained in the manufacturing industry. Today when I look at SMPL and its growth, I feel really proud about the team that we have been able to bring together. It gives me immense pleasure when I see people aligning with my vision and referring to us as "SonaMandhira Parivaar" instead of just a company. This gives a great sense of belongingness and connects with the ownership at every level in SMPL. I now feel even more comfortable in this setup than I ever was in any other industry."

Mandhira is an ardent believer that one should have the zeal and the attitude towards trying innovative and new approaches to solve problems without being afraid of failure. This reflects in the approach that she brings in the company by making the employees feel involved and motivated

at work. She makes sure she lifts up the spirits of the employees by involving them in social activities such as reels, festivities, vaccination drives, health check-ups etc. Mandhira makes sure that every employee is welcome with their concerns, questions and suggestions by adopting an open door policy. This develops employee trust and makes sure important information and feedback reach management. She constantly supports the team and makes sure that failure doesn't influence their current path to success. According to her, Mandhira opines that failure is not a setback, instead it has three meanings hidden in the word **FAILURE** itself.

Mandhira doesn't see Failure as a negative word as we keep learning from it. In fact, she describes **FAIL** as **Future Assurance In Life** which emphasizes on the fact that without failure, there is no learning process. Today, children should be instilled with the feeling that failure is a not negative as it is perceived. We need to start viewing failure as a work in process instead of it as a final result. One cannot have the taste of success before getting an essence of failure and that is a part of life.

Failure has a lot of learning and motivation attached to it. The next step starts will seeing failure as **Forward Assessment** and **Inward Learning**. **Forward assessment** implies that with obstacles in our life, we gain the

perspective to think forward and introspect potential options to solve the problems. Once the problem has been identified, one is able to assess multiple options that could lead to success. With every failure comes a new experience that helps us in gaining perspective through **Inward Learning** using which we make better decisions in life. Understanding the inner self means, do master the weak points, strong points, which may or may not be applicable to every new success one would like to achieve. Only when one understands who they are, they will be able to make the next big step toward success.



The next most important aspect of **Failure** is **Lure**. Every success story comes with a learning and it's imperative that we realize that the word **LURE in failure** is very important as the failures lure us to become a hero. It should lure one to achieve more in life and understand that failure is good as it helps in moving ahead and grow in life which is necessary for growth. When it comes to failures and setbacks, she has believed that failure has always been a crucial step to climb the success ladder. And once one has overcome a failure, the essence of success turns out to be more significant.

Mandhira has been exhibiting an inspiring style of leadership that is authentic, confident and highly effective. Even through the pandemic, she has been courageous enough to effectively manage the turmoil across industry, workplace and home.

Being a parent forces one to prioritize the time and make sure they're making the best use of their time. Moms often have to wear different hats – as guide, a friend, a teacher...the list goes on. This is a skill entrepreneur must also have. "As an entrepreneur, you have to be able to juggle with multiple jobs and serve a lot of different functions in the business like being an expert in each task. The ownership of a decision taken not only impacts the top or the bottom line of the business but also changes future for the employees, the vendors and many other stakeholders.

As a women entrepreneur running a business and managing the family at the same time is always demanding beyond 100%. Mandhira meticulously handles her day to day business while spending the lunch hour with her team and ensuring that she hears her children out patiently. With children studying abroad and business running in India, she is literally living out of a suitcase with none of them having to miss her attention.

Mandhira believes that, "Success is not a coincidence, it is perseverance and hard work" provided if you are true to your dreams to achieve goals and constantly learning under rapidly changing environments and business acumen.

The steely will and compassionate approach

Building a new steel empire for India

SOMA MONDAL

— M.Rajendran



Juggling family and a career is not easy for a woman, it is especially difficult when one loses a partner. To reach the top of an establishment is no mean achievement, it is more satisfying when it is done against all the odds.

Soma Mondal is a bright mind from Bhubaneswar, Odisha, born to an agricultural economist father and a homemaker mother. The family was such that gave a lot of importance to education and her parents gave top priority to education.

It was not that she was bogged down with education, but learned the importance of education in one's life. A lesson that helped her meet various challenges in her life, with confidence.

Soma was fascinated by engineering and pursued it with all conviction. Despite her father's love for medicine, because of which he suggested Soma to become a doctor. But a doting father, he supported her decision to study engineering without hampering her dreams. She completed her secondary studies in Bhubaneswar and then graduated in electrical engineering and technology from NIT Rourkela.

The fascination she had for engineering attracted her to join the

aluminium manufacturer NALCO in 1984. At the public sector aluminium major, she worked as a trainee and intern for the first few years and later was promoted as the commercial director at NALCO. Not many women opted for engineering and even those who did were not too keen to take up jobs in the industry.

As a result, Soma had very few women colleagues, to begin with. Despite an intimidating atmosphere, with more men and a few women, Soma began to perform very well in her job with her seniors watching her work and also ensuring that she received the best support.

Soma had witnessed but did not experience gender discrimination. But the grit and determination in her and the passion for her work paved her way towards success.

The biggest breakthrough came in her career in March 2017, when she was selected as a director commercial in Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), the first woman director of the Steel public sector company.

She has achieved excellence in her work through patience and hard work. As a result, she successfully conceived and formulated various marketing strategies for products developed by NALCO in the domestic and global markets.

As she was climbing the corporate ladder, with the support of a strong family, tragedy struck, when she lost her husband in 2005. It was her parents and mother-in-law who stepped in to provide critical support to her and her three children.

The biggest breakthrough came in her career in March 2017, when she was selected as a director commercial in Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), the first woman director of the Steel public sector company. In 2021, Soma was selected as the as first-ever woman Chairman and Managing Director of SAIL.

In response to her selection, Mondal stated: "I know my selection goes a long way for the empowerment of women. I worked with passion and as much as any man would have worked."

From an official director to a chairman position, she took a huge leap that will inspire many women working in various PSUs.

Helping companies scout and nurture the best talent

The focus is on helping organizations achieve their full potential for addressing talent strategies while enhancing overall efficiency, effectiveness, and employee experience.

MEENAL GOSWAMY

Founder of iConsult India



Meenal Goswamy, Founder of iConsult India is of the belief that women in leadership positions play a crucial role in the society, despite the many challenges they face. iConsult India is one of the leading HR and Business consulting firms of India. They believe that growth depends on the alignment between the human capital strategies and business strategies, and hence strive to provide highly intuitive and data driven solutions to their clients. Being a first-generation entrepreneur, she faced multiple challenges. In our interaction, she said "Although leadership roles bring its own share of challenges for women, it is also efficient since we are accustomed to managing multiple stakeholders simultaneously, be it at the personal or the professional front."

Meenal started iConsult India in 2011 to offer support to organizations at any and every stage of their HR evolution with tools and methodologies that guarantee results. Her firm's vision is to participate in national economic growth by helping commercial organizations tap into and develop the vast human resource base of the country, whilst also working on their path towards realising their full business potential through careful strategizing. It helps business growth by aligning human capital initiatives with business objectives and strategies. iConsult India strives to provide highly intuitive and data driven solutions to their clients thus making a

difference in the market.

"Over the years, women have proved their mettle in the workplace and have gracefully managed power positions in various levels of various firms. The goal here is not to compete with men but to erase the distinction altogether. I believe that in an ideal world, hiring managers would not have an ideal gender in mind for the required candidate" says Meenal. She believes that the biases have already come down a lot and we should cherish the long way that we have come.

With an EDP – HRM from XLRI Jamshedpur and a Masters in Management Studies from MNIT – Jaipur, Meenal is highly revered as an expert in her field with 20 years of experience. She has worked with various prestigious MNCs as well as innovative start-ups through iConsult India. "I was motivated to work in the area of Talent Acquisition because of the wide gap that organizations were facing in meeting their skill requirements. Bridging this gap became one of my first objectives. Gradually, clients started demanding a wider plethora of services. This is when I had to push and upskill myself to meet the demand. This opened a whole world of possibilities for iConsult India. We expanded into providing a full range of HR services including Talent Acquisition, Designing Policies and Systems, Strategizing Compensation and Benefits, HR Audits, Capability Building and Implementing Technology and Innovation. Today, we

provide End-to-End HR solutions and have also branched out into providing business consulting services such as Providing Strategic Advices based on Business Intelligence Analysis." Quoted Meenal. She also feels grateful for how she has evolved with her business and has undergone great personal and professional development.

During Covid, when many of her clients were mulling scaling down the workforce to cut down costs, Meenal advised them all to rather align their expenses with an updated budget and optimise fund management by timing the expenses efficiently and helped organizations to design structures to dissuade layoffs.

Prior to starting her own consultancy firm, Meenal worked with reputed financial organisations. She has been a recipient of the prestigious "Woman Leadership Award" 2019 for her work in the field of HR, a guest expert speaker at Indian Institute of Materials Management (IIMM), Ahmedabad, and the CEO of India HR Summit.

According to Meenal, the biggest challenge for any woman entrepreneur is balancing her personal and professional life. When you reach a certain level, the expectations of the clients become multi-fold. Keeping up with them requires time and effort. However, she believes women are capable enough to conquer these challenges and shine nevertheless. In fact, it is because of these hurdles that women at the workplace display remarkable perseverance and practicality.

Guiding an Organisation and People

A balanced dealing with humans is an art, that binds family and organization

DR. ALKA MITTAL
ONGC's Chairman & MD

— M. Rajendran



Early this year, ONGC Director (Human Resource) Alka Mittal became the first woman to head the Energy major. Though, it was an additional charge of the Chairman and Managing Director of ONGC, which reflected the government's confidence in her abilities.

It is a journey that began in 1985 when armed with a post-graduate in Economics, MBA (HRM) and Doctorate in Commerce and Business Studies, she joined ONGC as a Graduate Trainee. Over the next three decades, she gained experience in various departments of one of India's energy majors in the world. In one of the meetings at her office by this writer, she explained the importance of developing the human face of an organization.

A skill that she has successfully imbibed and executed at her earlier assignments. In her capacity as Chief Skill Development (CSD) of the Company, she streamlined the activities and brought in uniformity in the working of the Skill Development Centres of ONGC. One of the bright spots in her tenure as CSD was implementing the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in ONGC engaging more than 5000 apprentices across all

work centres.

A mother of two girls, Mittal highlighted the importance of guiding an organization or children. She equated the two tasks as similar and that makes her work at the office and home easy. She has a special penchant for training and mentoring and has trained more than 11000 GTs of ONGC since 2001 on "Corporate Governance" as part of their induction program.

Dr. Alka Mittal is the first woman to hold the charge of a full-time Director in ONGC's history. As the HR head, insiders say, she has always strived to foster the philosophy of equal opportunity employer and has contributed towards creating an inclusive workplace ecosystem in ONGC.

Creating an equal opportunity employer is one of her strengths, that has helped bind the energy majors, every department. During her stint as Head of Corporate Social

It is a journey that began in 1985 when armed with a post-graduate in Economics, MBA (HRM) and Doctorate in Commerce and Business Studies, she joined ONGC as a Graduate Trainee.

Responsibility (CSR) at the Corporate Office, she took up major CSR projects across India.

In an earlier interview with Outlook Group, she said, "ONGC believes in the old adage, "Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day; teach the person to fish and you feed him/her for a lifetime". Beyond mere allocation of funds, we are committed to ensuring that our CSR Projects create a sustainable impact for the community."

As a senior HR specialist, Dr Alka Mittal has made rich contributions in various professional forums and bodies. She is an Executive Committee member of NIPM (National Institute of Personnel Management), was President of Forum for Women in Public Sector (WIPs) Northern Region till recently and heads the Women Development Forum of ONGC.

One of the contributions, that ONGC employees relate especially the women in ONGC is her push for more women in technical and field-role assignments. Another valuable input was 'People's Connect', an initiative to facilitate exchange between retiring employees and young professionals.

A role she is expected to play effectively and enthusiastically post her retirement in August.



Conquering Bastions of Education with Grit

RANJOO MANN

Pro vice chairperson, Delhi Public School (Sonepat)

In the year 2003, Ranjoo Mann started building a school in Sonepat, a burgeoning city on the peripherals of the National Capital region, with the intent to provide quality education to a largely unserved area. Her determination was structured and stubborn. She applied for the Franchise of Delhi Public School, which through its process took longer than she wanted. At the age of 40, a mother to two girls, Ranjoo Mann along with her husband founded the Mann Technical Education Society with the intent to build a world class school with fantastic architecture, soulful grounds, and infrastructure that spoke to the local prowess of Haryana.

Delhi Public School (DPS) gave her the franchise for DPS Sonepat, a brand that instilled trust in education in an upcoming city. The school organically grew to become one of the first world class schools in the area. This reversed

the education path of Sonepat to Delhi; it was now the opposite.

With her long experience with schools, Ranjoo was able to bring a multiple stakeholder experience to the school that encouraged diversity of students and resulted in bringing international students to the school. By 2010, DPS, Sonepat had the maximum numbers of foreign students in any CBSE school in the country.

One would think why such a fascination for this particular branch from a huge network of DPS schools? The credit would go to Ms Mann, who believed in skills that are taught beyond the classroom in various faculties that had been created in the school.

With a keen focus on diversifying a child's skill-sets the school invested in heavy infrastructure to develop a curriculum on art, culture, sport, community service, grooming, gardening, animal care, paper recycling, composting, and the good old

Japanese method of students cleaning their own classrooms.

This focus on 'out of syllabus education' was employed by her to slowly change the mindset of parents that the school has a larger responsibility than marks and covering the syllabus. DPS Sonepat was setup as a school that taught life skills, grounding its values in creating an environment where children can feel free to engage and make mistakes all at once. Nothing is out of reach.

She built one of the largest olympic size training auditoriums for Table Tennis players, becoming a major sporting venue Haryana that has coached children to compete at international levels. The government of Haryana and the Sports Authority of India work closely with the school to make it accessible not only to the children admitted to the school but the entire state providing boarding and lodging to anyone who would like to train.

During the pandemic, Ms Mann took a direct approach with the parents in coaching them as the children were returning home. This was a big change not only for her school but also for the Modern Indian Parent. Bringing a calming direction to the new normal, she enforced the hybrid model of teaching very early on and informed parents of how education formats are now going to change and that they must also restructure their efforts on the children by better caution on a child's mental and physical wellbeing during uncertain and chaotic times.

Not just interested in running a school, Ms Ranjoo truly wanted to educate a child. Ranjoo was not interested in just running a school, she wanted to truly educate a child. Rather than focusing on returns on investment as she built a school, Ranjoo focused on sustaining the school on its credibility as an inter-disciplinary institution. As an institution that maintained its standards not just with marks, but by exposing the child to a fully rounded childhood that gave nature, sport, study and character building equal emphasis no matter what the circumstances.

Mrs Upasana Arora: Empowering Women is Empowering the Nation

Mrs Upasana Arora, Director, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi, Delhi-NCR is acknowledged as a woman of brilliance who has worked to the top rank by dint of her hardwork, astute business sense and compassion for the vulnerable. She as a defining role in many other prominent organizations such as Chairperson, SEPC Healthcare Sector, Co-Chairperson-ASSOCHAM Healthcare Council. For her contribution to healthcare, she has been honoured with countless awards by leading organizations. Rooted to ground realities, she continues to support her sisters and daughter advocating their cause staunchly.

MRS UPASANA ARORA

*Director, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital,
Kaushambi, Delhi-NCR*

Q The awards and accolades bestowed on you from leading Industry associations and agencies is truly an inspirational story for tens of thousands of women of this country. From where do you draw this inexhaustible motivation to achieve so much?

I was self-motivated right from my school days and used to take a leading role in extracurricular activities as class monitor and school captain. This drive was always there to do something for the society, and being an extrovert, I was ready to help people at any given opportunity. Also, my mother, a strong lady, who single-handedly brought up my sisters and me after we lost our father at a very young age, is someone I look up to with admiration and who is my source of inspiration. After I was married, I became of part of the healthcare sector as a social worker and now as Director of Yashoda Super Speciality

Hospital, I am fortunate to get many opportunities to make a difference in many lives in so many different ways.

Q You are a strong advocate of issues related to private healthcare. What are they and how much success have you achieved in solving them?

India is a country with an overwhelming population and despite the best efforts of the government sector their infrastructure does not suffice to cover a sizeable population. This means there is a lot of dependency on private healthcare partners and its importance was felt during the Covid pandemic. I have observed that in healthcare the maximum work force is of women professionals, but they do not go beyond the middle-management rank. Sadly, a meagre 7 percent of women reach the top management level in an organization. One can't ignore the bias



that exists against women in work places, but I was fortunate to have rarely faced it. Nevertheless, I had to break the glass ceiling to reach where I am today. Yashoda, is a 700 bedded health facility providing ample scope to work diligently and I did so to reach this post.

Q As Director of Yashoda Hospital, what value addition have you brought to the approach of your centre?

I have definitely inculcated a culture of humane and personal approach in Yashoda Hospital and this is obvious from the moment a patient and their families enter our premises seeking medical attention. We are strong on soft skill sets. Besides, the aura of the hospital is made soothing with delicate fragrance and gentle chanting because people come to a hospital when in pain and apprehensions, so it is necessary to energize the ambience.

Add to this the choice of affordable world-class treatment, by the best doctors and cutting-edge technology infrastructure, which comes as a great relief for patients from middle-income and weaker strata of society, because not everyone has deep pockets. When it comes to the medical staff, we empower them with the pride of ownership by welcoming them to the Yashoda family and not to Yashoda hospital, which means they are not considered as employee. The motivation is then at a very different level and so is the mutual respect and co-operation amongst them. This reflects in the selfless and personalised treatment of their patient, which drew a lot of praise, particularly during the Covid pandemic because of the emotional empathy they had towards them. Hard work ushers in prosperity and prosperity brings joy to be felt and spread around and is the essence of Yashoda's success story.

Q As a woman, what were the challenges of addressing healthcare issues in a densely populated state like Uttar Pradesh?

Times are definitely changing and now 50 percent of women have come out of the societal cocoon to set-up their own enterprise or work in offices. Most importantly, after the launch of the 'Beti Padhao and Beti Bachhao' campaign, the ratio of female sex according to findings of surveys was 2000:2011 i.e., 2000 male and 2011 women. I was elated, as I am also involved in the campaign. I visited a hospital and saw a beautiful infant girl and her birth was celebrated not only by women but also men were happy on the birth of a girl child. It was a great change in an otherwise conventional society where such a moment puts a pall of gloom. Girls have achieved so much in every field and some are even flying fighter aircrafts and more are there waiting in the wings to take off! I have also

adopted a residential girl school in Loni and whenever I visit the institution, I get to see a remarkable change in the attitude of the girls who are keen to learn and have the big dreams that they want to achieve. The UP government is doing a lot in the direction of creating an environment for girls to grow to their full potential academically, socially and as professionals for which they continue to explore and tie-up with partners based on a PPP model.

Q What are the women-centric concerns that bother you the most and what are your initiatives in addressing them?

For me safety, health and then education figure as the top three most important issues to tackle for our female population. This will keep girls and women protected and they will then do well for themselves, otherwise they will not excel in academics and profession to their optimal extent because of a lurking fear for their safety. Health is the other prime factor for a girl child and women, particularly, pregnant women, who have to be sensitized about health and hygiene, besides dietary habits because a mother cannot be malnourished as she is going to give birth to a new life.

The urban mindset is changing fast when it comes to providing equal opportunities to girls, but there is need to now focus on rural areas. I am associated with and support many NGO's working in the area of girl and women development.

I call the World Women's Day as Women's Empowerment Day! To women I would say that first believe in yourself and put all your heart in your career or whatever you do, and this I can say from my own experience

A healthy child means a health family, a heathy society and a heathy nation.

Q With the kind of global exposure that you have gained, how are you leveraging the experience to imbibe them in the work culture of Yashoda?

In leadership positions in several eminent business organizations and having been part of delegations visiting foreign countries for conferences, I make it a point to closely observe the good practices in their healthcare systems. I try to emulate and apply them according to local needs in Yashoda. We are ensuring strict adherence to WHO guidelines and focusing more on patient and women safety and a pilot project is underway. Enhancing surgical safety in our OT is another of our focus area because of which Yashoda has zero incidence and 100 percent success in surgical procedures. It is my continued effort and goal to invest my experience and share my knowledge to improve the work culture systems. I believe that there is always scope to raise the bar of excellence.

Q On the World Women's Day what is your message to the society?

I call the World Women's Day as Women's Empowerment Day! To women I would say that first believe in yourself and put all your heart in your career or whatever you do, and this I can say from my own experience. Never expect anyone to come and handhold you unless you don't work for yourself. And it is you alone who has to take the right path, work and prove your capabilities and ensure your safety.

I believe that all empowered women have to handhold 20 other women and create a strong chain of empowering each other. My sisters who have reached a high stature should be committed to empower atleast 40 women. I have already moved in that direction.

To live, love and laugh

Conquering an ailment is an achievement, but to help others do is brilliance

DEEPIKA PADUKONE

Bollywood Actress

— M. Rajendran



A successful actor, especially in Bollywood, usually, goes through a phase of struggle. The journey to the top is not easy when you carry a famous surname, from another industry or field. Only those who can prove their ability in a sustained way, reach the top.

Deepika Padukone easily relates to this journey in the tinsel town of Mumbai. Everyone is aware of her acting prowess, but not many know the struggles she went through in terms of depression when she was at peak of her career.

But she successfully not only battled depression but also chose to help others facing similar ailments. She runs an organisation 'The Live Love Laugh Foundation,' that is focused on creating awareness about mental health.

In an interview with Outlook Money, she said, "Mental illness is the same as any other physical ailment. Just as having a severe headache would hold you back from concentrating on your work, so does mental illness. Rather at times, it can be more taxing since it becomes difficult to focus and concentrate as the individual often feels

directionless."

Deepika demonstrated a single-minded motive in terms of spreading awareness and also letting the world know that mental illness is curable, provided you follow the right path. Her Foundation is working on a plan guided by Deepika and her sister, to educate people more on mental illness, especially teachers at educational institutions.

As an actor, she is appreciated and recognised for her ability to portray the character, which allows filmgoers to see and feel the character. Deepika is not just an actor, but a smart business person. Her KA Enterprises is a production house that has invested in a bunch of start-ups across different industries and verticals. These include Epigamia (FMCG) which has invested in Drum Foods International Pvt. Ltd,

She is also not the one among those to surrender when the cause is right and just. Deepika Padukone once said, "Maybe because I am from a sports background, I don't give up easily. I am a fighter."

FrontRow (edtech) which is a celebrity-taught learning platform that offers lessons in creative arts like music, acting and sports, Furlenco, a furniture rental platform. BluSmart (electric taxis) which offers electric taxis in Delhi, Super Tails (for pets) and Bellatrix Aerospace (space tech) are private aerospace manufacturers and novel satellite company.

It should not come as a surprise, that the top businessperson Kiran Mazumdar Shaw is an inspiration to Deepika and an extent is a person to go when they are exploring a business idea.

As a business person, an actor and a human, she has responded to the responsibility. She respects the critics with silence, which is on occasions deafening, but loud and clear enough to send her message across. Her 10 minutes of presence at JNU with the student's protest, was a risk to her films and the brands for which she was the ambassador.

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More Woman Power in the Legal Profession

Ms Nisha Kaur Uberoi, a pioneering competition lawyer, is a Partner at India's top law firm – Trilegal. Her iconic "achiever" persona is adorned by many awards, such as the only Indian and Asian to be conferred with the prestigious award by GCR as Global Dealmaker of the Year 2021, but she is not one to just sit back and rest on her laurels. She shares her inspirational journey.

NISHA KAUR UBEROI

Partner and National Head, Trilegal



Q What kept you motivated to make a mark in what you do?

My passion and love for the law motivates me. Competition Law is a combination of business, law and economics so there is never a dull moment. Competition Law in India is just a decade old. It is the only branch of law that has a fusion of corporate and competition law and, to be a Competition lawyer, you need to be able to do both. The fact that there is no one size fits all approach – keeps the challenge alive.

Q The legal profession is tough for women who face bias. Your take on it?

The law is an extremely demanding profession Things have changed since I started in the profession in 2002. It is a delight seeing women breaking gender stereotypes and shattering glass ceilings at all levels, from the entry point to leadership positions today. But the change is still not enough. Today, there is a perception change and appreciation for trusted advisors, on a gender neutral basis. I see more women professionals in corporate law and litigation and am hopeful that this trend will only exponentiality continue.

Q Could you share about your move to Trilegal?

I started my career at Amarchand, which is a family-run legal firm, and then moved to Singapore to do law in

economics and Masters in Competition Law. After a seven-year stint with international law firms, I saw 2010 as an opportune time to return to Mumbai after Competition Law was introduced in India. I set up the Competition Law practice at then Amarchand Mumbai. Subsequently, I moved to Trilegal as its first woman partner in the Mumbai office in 2017 to set up our Competition Law practice and today the competition practice is recognised globally for our market leading work. As head of the practice, I have complete flexibility to run and build it the way I envisaged it. Today, we are a team of 30 with the highest ratio of women lawyers in the country, two equity partners and more in the pipeline.

Q What do awards and recognitions mean to you?

Awards momentarily validate your ability as a professional. I always believed that you are as good as your team and am blessed to have a brilliant one which completely shares my vision. These awards are just a culmination and recognition of our teamwork. We celebrate our wins as a team but it's business as usual after given the demands of a regulatory practice.

Q As someone in the elite club of women achievers, how are you empowering the less privileged?

I aim to ensure that women, right from

the entry point, are retained in every cycle of this profession because in their lifetime they go through different stages of responsibilities. They are given flexibility as professionals so they don't want to leave; therefore, our team at Trilegal has the highest women ratios in the country. I conduct specific women-mentoring programmes because I believe that every woman must have a voice and equal opportunity.

Q Family values that have stood by you?

I am blessed to have the kind of parents that I do. They have supported me in exploring my potential without any differential treatment between my brother and me. From them, I have learnt that each day will come with a challenge, so start your day by solving the toughest problem making the rest of the day easier. I was also encouraged by my mother to speak up fearlessly; therefore, I make sure that my team is equally empowered.

Q Message you'd give to your sisters on International Women's Day?

Break the barriers. And that is very important to me because society has preconceived notions of what a woman can and cannot do. That attitude needs to change and women should be the change makers – it's no longer about making space at the table, women add tremendous value in the workspace and this needs to be globally recognised.

A Helping hand to Indian Sports

Unravelling the potential sports has to change the lives of the poor

NITA AMBANI

— M. Rajendran



On February 2022, the 139th IOC Session elected Mumbai to host the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Session in May-June 2023 by 75 yes votes of the 76 valid votes cast.

In 2016, Nita Ambani, director of Reliance Industries and the chairman of Reliance Foundation, was elected as an individual member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

It was a responsibility, that many felt would be a challenge for her. But she was prepared for it, over the next few years, she has proved that. Speaking about her announcement, in a statement, Nita Ambani said, “I am truly humbled and overwhelmed to be elected by the IOC. This is a recognition of the growing importance of India on the world stage and a recognition for Indian women. I have always believed in the power of sport to shape our youth. I believe that sports brings together communities, cultures, and generations have the power to unify and unite people. I look forward to spreading the spirit of Olympics and sports across our nation.”

In 2017 when India's first woman International Olympic Committee member she made it to two important commissions of the global sport's governing body, including the

prestigious Olympic channel. Besides the Olympic Channel, she has also been made a member of the Olympic Education Commission.

As a member of IOC Member, she was part of the Indian delegation made up of Indian Olympic Association members that made a remote presentation to the IOC Members, offering to Mumbai to host the next IOC Session.

“Since we last had the honour of welcoming the Olympic family, we have made consistent strides and grown into a more prosperous, more self-confident India.”

To coincide with the IOC Session in 2023, Mrs Ambani proposed to launch a series of elite sports development programmes for young people across deprived communities: “I believe this is only the beginning and it is time to elevate our partnership with the Olympic Movement to greater heights,” she

In 2016, Nita Ambani, director of Reliance Industries and the chairman of Reliance Foundation, was elected as an individual member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

said, referring to the country's ambition to host the Olympic Games in the future.

She understands the importance of sports and the potential it has to change the lives of the poor. “Sport has always been a beacon of hope and inspiration for millions around the world. We are one of the youngest countries in the world today. I'm excited for the youth of India to embrace and experience first-hand the magic of the Olympics. It is our dream to strengthen this partnership further and host the Olympic Games in India in the years to come,” she said after India was given the honour to host IOC Session in 2023.

She is the owner of Mumbai Indians, the most successful cricket team in the Indian Premier League, the founder chairperson of Football Sports Development Limited, which launched the Indian Super League, and the head of the Education and Sports for All initiative for children.

She is an educationist, philanthropist, businesswoman, patron of arts, and champion of women and children's rights. Through various initiatives of Reliance Foundation, of which she is founder and chair, she seeks to empower millions of Indians with resources and opportunities.

Dr Sohini Sastri: An Astrologer

Dr. Sohini Sastri is one of the best astrologers in India today. Her immense knowledge in astrology and unique skill of accurate prediction have served her numerous clients over the years. Her truthful, candid and polite persona make her the stand-out from the other astrologers.

The well-known Astrologer and Gemmologist, Dr. Sohini Sastri, hails from a family of noble and acclaimed personalities like Swami Dharmamegharanya Aranya on the paternal side, and Swami Hariharananda Aranya from maternal side. She completed her Masters' degree and PhD in Political Science from a reputed university. Later, she got her Doctorate in Astrology. She has been rewarded with 'DLitt in Astrology' by National American University, USA.

Dr. Sohini Sastri specialises in Krishnamurti Paddhati, aka KP astrology branch. Created by Late K.S. Krishnamurti, KP System, is based on finer points of Indian and Western astrology and regarded as the most accurate system of our times.

Apart from traditional astrology, Dr. Sohini Sastri excels at Palmistry, Numerology, Vastu Shastra, Tantra and Colour therapy. As a certified Gemmologist, she guides us to recognize genuine gemstones & Rudraksh. The guidance she provides to her clients is an amalgamation of analytical data, helping to minimise the flaw in predictions and increasing the probability of good results.

Her devotion and worship of Goddess Kali has made her a well-known Kali Shadhika. She uses divine energy, draws from spiritual sadhana and tantra, to heal people.

She has been considered as an esteemed member of several communities like Asian Congress of Astrologers Associate member of the Astrological Association of Great Britain; Life Member Astrological Research Project, Kolkata Life Member of Bangiya Astro-Medical Research Centre; Golden Member of Dharma Research Centre (Chennai); Member of Astrological Association, Great Britain; Associate Member of American Federation of Astrologer Associate; Member of Federation of Australian Astrologer etc.

Over the years she has many accolades and recognition. Few of the latest are:

- Champion of Change, 2018 from Honourable Vice President, Shri Venkaiah Naidu



- Champion of Change, 2019 from former President Late Shri Pranab Mukherjee
- Pride of Nation, 2019 from Honourable Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh
- Indian Achievers Award, 2020 from Honourable Union HRD Minister, Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal
- Champion of Change, 2020 from Honourable Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari
- Felicitated by Governor of West Bengal, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar
- Felicitated by Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand, Smt Baby Rani Mouriya
- Femina Brand Award, 2021

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Recently, she has been regarded as the “Best Astrologer in World” by Astrological Association of Great Britain.

Being an avid student of astrology, she regularly updates herself and shares her knowledge through blogs and articles. She is a regular columnist of Femina, Times of India, Business Standard, Forbes India, Outlook, Mid-Day etc. Besides, she has been felicitated by eminent Bollywood celebrities, TV actors/actresses, and has been invited as Chief Guest or Guest of

Honour for many important events.

With a view to make astrology popular she has opted to write books intended to the common man, which has been received well. Within a short span, she has authored 3 books -- A Complete Guide to Astrology, Professional and Corporate Astrology, and Career Astrology Made Easy.

The regular cases she encounters are issues involving marital relationship, general relationship issues, career related obstacles, educational problems, property related and legal disputes, business related obstacles, health issues, pregnancy-related troubles, lack of concentration issues, treatment of Mangalik dosh, Kaal Sarp Dosh etc.

The Universe is her Life

Discovers the responsibility of being an Indian among the Nations of this World

HARNAAZ KAUR SANDHU

— M. Rajendran



The beauty pageant was always about beauty and brains. But, on average only a few people, appreciated the latter in a winner. This has changed gradually.

So when Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu, was crowned Miss Universe after a gap of 21 years, she represented the youth who know their power. Despite the low gender sensitivity, she was determined to achieve, what she felt was possible. "It's not just a crown, it's a responsibility. It takes a lot to wear this crown," she told the media.

Like the previous Miss Universe, Sandhu is determined to use her power to help solve lots of issues around the world, around topics that she deeply believes in. Her response to the final question, which one can say won her the crown is critical. She was asked, "What advice would you give to young women watching on how to deal with the pressures they face today?"

Harnaaz replied, "The biggest pressure the youth of today is facing, is to believe in themselves. To know that you are unique makes you beautiful. Stop comparing yourselves with others and let's talk about more important things that are happening

worldwide. Come out, speak for yourself, because you are the leader of your life. You are the voice of your own. I believed in myself and that is why I am standing here today."

This kind of confidence came from the upbringing her family gave, in her growing years. While her mother and brother supported her decision to be a model, her father believed that she would excel in whatever she decided to do. That is the strength of her beauty and strength.

In an earlier interview with Outlook, explaining beauty, Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu said, "To me, beauty is about how you feel beautiful and it's about having a beautiful mind that flowers and reflects on your face. It's about having a beautiful smile and having that confidence in your mind

So when Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu, was crowned Miss Universe after a gap of 21 years, she represented the youth who know their power. Despite the low gender sensitivity, she was determined to achieve, what she felt was possible.

and your eyes that I will get out of this difficult circumstance no matter what happens, and I am confident about it. So it's about the personality you have, the aura that you create from within.

That's how you can transform the whole surrounding around you."

The youth of India knows their power and the responsibility associated with it. Especially the young women in India have proved time and again, that they are equal and even better in all the fields.

Sandhu is committed to protecting nature and strongly believes, that every individual has a responsibility. She cautions that youth should play an important role and cannot afford to ignore it. She gave a mature response to a question lobbed at her during the competition.

"My heart breaks to see how nature is going through a lot of problems, and it is all due to our irresponsible behaviour. I totally feel that this is the time to take action and talk less. Because our each action could save or kill nature. Prevent and protect is better than repent and repair and this is what I am trying to convince you guys today."

Whistling Woods International (WWI): Creating Future Leaders

Whistling Woods International (WWI), one of Asia's most prestigious institutes of Film, Communication and Creative Arts, embarked on a journey 16 years ago. Established in 2006, WWI now offers an all-inclusive curriculum based on various aspects of the Media & Entertainment landscape such as Filmmaking, Acting, Animation & Game Design, Media & Communication, Fashion & Costume Design, Visual Communication Design, Music, Event Management and Sports & Esports Management. The institute offers degree, post-graduate and diploma programmes varying from 1 year to 4 years under an agreement with Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNID), an Institute of National Importance.

Elaborating on the journey of the Institute, **Meghna Ghai Puri, President, WWI** shared her insights on her vision to develop it into one of the finest thought leaders in the dynamic world of Media & Entertainment education. *Excerpts from the interview:*

MEGHNA GHAI PURI

Q Recently WWI announced the launch of School of Sports & Esports Management. Please share insights on the same.

As an Institute, we have always endeavoured to stay with the trends of the dynamic Media & Entertainment industry and this vision led to the introduction of our latest school – School of Sports & Esports Management. The school will offer 3-year degree and 2-year post-graduate programmes. Offering the students, a comprehensive curriculum, these programmes will engage in a detailed study with an emphasis on the Sports and Esports industries.

Q What are the USP's of the programmes offered?

The MBA programme comprises of imperative business management subjects along with integrated knowledge and information about esports, sports, online gaming businesses, and management of multiple companies in such industries. The aim of the MBA programme is to create future leaders with an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The BBA programme will initially focus on developing various skills required by students aiming to work in professional roles in the industry. In sports, esports and online gaming, the students will be given an overview of every aspect connected to these industries enabling them to be knowledgeable about managing various aspects of these businesses.

The aim of these programmes is to develop the students into major contributors to the future success of the national and global Sports and Esports industries.

Q Tell us about the distinct way, in which WWI provides its students with holistic learning?

As a creative institute, we have created a microcosm of the whole media & entertainment industry within the campus, ensuring the student's learning is collaborative and industry-oriented. This USP enables us to offer our students with the perfect holistic learning environment, helping them gain an edge over the others. WWI provides its students with a unique combination of conceptual and



practical, industry-oriented knowledge. The institute aims to develop professionals, who will be proficient to shape a rich career in the Media & Entertainment industry. With the help of its state-of-the-art teaching methodology and faculty, WWI enables the students to be well-equipped with the expertise required to succeed in these highly competitive industries.

Q In what ways has the institute designed the courses to make the aspirants ready to face the industry?

The curriculum of the programmes is aligned to meet the needs of the industry and provide students with the requisite training to be valuable to any stakeholder in the business of sports and esports. On successful completion of these programmes, the students will be job-ready and well-equipped to embark on a professional career in the large number of entities engaged in these businesses. Armed with world-class education and experience at par with the best in the industry, India's next generation is all set to leave their mark on the global media & entertainment sector.

Fighting Cancer with a Mesmerising Persona, Grit and Commitment

A perfect example of beauty with brains, Dr Namita Pandey, a Surgical Oncologist and Breast Surgeon at Dr L H Hiranandani Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, is an achiever. Dr Pandey was recently Crowned Mrs India-One in a Million 2021 contest in a glittering function in December at New Delhi. She credited the title to have given momentum to her efforts in spreading awareness particularly on breast cancer. Today, she is empowered with a persona that she uses to make a difference as a doctor and responsible citizen of the society in bringing solace to lakhs of women worldwide, who are increasingly falling victim to the scourge of cancer.

DR NAMITA PANDEY

MBBS, MRCS, Fellowship in Breast Cancer (Tata Memorial Hospital Mumbai)

Q To what extent are Indian women impacted by the disease?

It has been observed and studies have proven that urban women are more affected by cancer as compared to their rural counterparts. Though Indians come from common gene pool with largely similar lifestyles, yet the incidence of breast cancer in urban women is in the ratio of 1:22, whereas, in rural areas it is 1:60! Urban women are nearly three times more susceptible to breast cancer. Today, breast cancer has overtaken cervical cancer, which was once the biggest killer cancer in city-bred women, but it still remains the top cancer in rural women.

Post-menopausal (50 years and above) age is the commonest age for getting breast cancer. In India, younger patients are increasingly being diagnosed with cancer because of higher ratio of youth population. In fact, 75-80 per cent of my patients are less than 50 years of age.

Q How much has family history and lifestyle to do with triggering cancer?

Only a meagre 10-15 percent of cancers are attributed to family history, while majority of them are sporadic cancers which are related to faulty lifestyle. Breast cancer per se is a lifestyle disease, reasons being late marriage, late child birth, not



breast feeding properly, high amount of stress, alcohol consumption or any other substance abuse, repeated infertility treatment are among the main causes that increase the risk factor in women. The ideal age for carrying pregnancy is between the age of 22 to 28, which is now one decade behind with women getting



married when they are in their 30's. Personally, my opinion is that 30's is a very demanding age when a lot is happening on all fronts for the women be it career, family and a host of other things, resulting in stress build-up affecting the body and mind. Therefore, the chances of miscarriage increases which delays the first successful pregnancy. That's why we recommend women, who have a family history of breast cancer to get married early, to start a family early and breast feed the infant for an extended duration. Rural women comparatively are at an advantage as marriage is early, they breast feed their children for longer duration and lead a very active physical life.

Q What initiative have you taken to educate women about cancer e.g., breast cancer?

I would like to narrate an interesting incidence which is a landmark moment of my life. As destiny would have it, when our centre was planning a campaign before the Covid pandemic in October, which is recognised as the Breast Cancer Awareness month, I expressed my views on not inviting a celebrity for the campaign as I believe that an oncologist is the best and most credible person to send out an authentic message on cancer to the public! I was told, "Either call a celebrity

or become one"! Those words impacted me severely. I chose to be a celebrity and when the opportunity of Mrs India came up, I enrolled for it with minimal expectations as I belong to an altogether different industry from that of the world of glamour. To my utter amazement, I crossed all the levels of the competition and was crowned Mrs India-One in a Million in 2021! The publicity which came with it acted like a magic key opening the door to huge recognition, authentication, credibility, pride and acceptability among my patients and the public which made it easy for us to emphatically put across the Cancer message to the public. So, an Onco-surgeon who is also a Mrs India title winner definitely made heads turn and made me receptive to people as my words were taken more seriously. For the medical fraternity this achievement has proven that this is not the end, and we as women in whatever profession we pursue, we have a life and an identity of our own.

This crown has provided me a robust platform to explore so many new dimensions besides the opportunity to communicate better with people and many more ears to hear me out. My aim is to use the title to enhance and achieve what I have set out to achieve as an Onco surgeon. It is a long way from my 'Miss College' days, a background that gave me the confidence to go for the Crown of Mrs India!

Q At what stage does surgical intervention get necessary?

Surgical intervention is applicable throughout in all cancer treatments and in stage 1,2 and 3, except for stage 4, which is the terminal stage. Conventionally, we treat cancer by surgery and in some we also use chemotherapy before surgery. But mostly



surgery is done first followed by chemotherapy, radiotherapy and hormonal therapy.

In India, the general misconception amongst people is that in breast cancer, the entire breast is removed. With medical advancements breast conservation surgery procedures are now the standard method of treatment which enables Oncologists to preserve the breast of a patients in 80-85 percent cases. In fact, Mastectomy of the breast is not the only answer because removing the breast not only disfigures the body but it also takes away a patient's body image, sexual life, personal life, social life. In fact, losing a very feminine part of the body makes the life of a breast cancer patient very difficult to deal with and many of them go through depression.

Golden Rules for Women to Follow

My appeal to women is to:

- ✓ Go for regular screening of the breast. (Mammography).
- ✓ If anyone has any kind of lump do not take it for granted, instead get it screened, checked and documented to rule out cancer, as early as possible.
- ✓ Pregnancy Associated Breast Cancer (PABC), is seen during pregnancy or in the first year of lactation. If any lump is felt during this time, it could be ominous, so get it checked.
- ✓ Learn to do self-breast examination, which is very vital and can save you from a lot of trouble. It should be done in a proper technical way on the 7th to 10th day after the menstrual cycle.



Q What is the latest advancement in breast Onco surgery?

In the west, Oncologists are not only doing breast conservation surgery, but they have specialized in doing "Oncoplastic Breast surgery". Very few centres in India are doing this kind of surgery and our Centre is one of them. It is a combination of oncology with plastic surgery, where not only the tumour is removed but aesthetically acceptable shape is given to the breast. The surgery is done in a manner that cosmetologically it is more acceptable to the female patients giving them immense satisfaction, particularly the younger ones, who are very happy with the outcomes.

Q How can cancer care be made more patient-specific?

Breast Cancer treatment is very tailor-made depending on the age, the stage of the tumour and its biology. Recently, a landmark development has taken place in Breast Cancer treatment with the help of a study, SWOG S1007, also known as RxPONDER. This study was conducted with the help of a genetic test, on the tumour sample, called Oncotype DX test. This study helped many postmenopausal women to safely skip chemotherapy and receive only hormonal therapy, saving them from a lot of inconvenience and possible toxicities associated with chemotherapy. With the RxPONDER and TAILORx trials there is now clarity on who does and who does not benefit from chemotherapy among early-stage breast cancers with either node negative or node-positive disease in postmenopausal patients. At the same time, pre-menopausal women with breast cancer can be assured that chemotherapy can help them live longer without their disease spreading. The trial supports the role of the Oncotype DX test in shaping clinical practice estimated to impact lakhs of women worldwide.

Breast cancer is very treatable if it gets diagnosed early. Early diagnosis, correct and timely treatment can help to combat breast cancer successfully.

A heart and mind that cares for humanity

Inspiring women to play a great part in health care and be recognised

DR GAGANDEEP KANG

— M. Rajendran



Women from India have achieved many firsts and joining the list is virologist Dr. Gagandeep Kang, the first Indian woman to be elected Fellow of the Royal Society London, the prestigious scientific body that is more than three centuries old.

However, her undoubtedly the greatest contribution to science is in developing Rotovac, India's first indigenous vaccine against rotavirus, apart from developing vaccines for cholera and typhoid. She is a member of several advisory committees for the WHO, that is focused on research and the use of vaccines.

A prolific writer on medical books and research papers. She has to her credit more than 375 published papers in international and national journals. Her contributions are noteworthy as a Professor in the Department of Gastrointestinal Sciences at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu and as the Executive Director of, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute in Haryana.

Daughter of an Indian Railways employee and teacher she travelled across India, especially in the North

and East. Her parents always encouraged her to explore science and as a teenager, she along with her father built our lab at home. Developing a craving to read and acquire knowledge was helped by her grandparents.

She was a calming voice during the pandemic. She understands the importance of a calming voice in a crisis and serving and observing when all looks normal. As a young girl, when she was yet to take a journey on a flight, Dr Gagandeep came across an advertisement to join as an air hostess, she almost decided to be one. But the science in her guided her to be where she is now, flying across the world to spread knowledge to help science and healthcare.

A committed virologist, she could have opted to work in developed countries. But she decided to come back to India after receiving her

Dr Kang received post-doctoral training in the UK and US. She also studies the consequences of enteric infections and has shown that infections in early life impact future growth and cognitive development.

medicine and microbiology training, to continue her work on enteric infections in children. Dr Kang received post-doctoral training in the UK and US. She also studies the consequences of enteric infections and has shown that infections in early life impact future growth and cognitive development.

Her areas of research is around gut infections, their effects on nourishment and growth of children, the pathogens causing them, and prevention through vaccination.

Delivering a special talk a few years ago to celebrate Women in Science, Prof Kang said, "Science is incomplete without women as leaders and subjects for investigation. But we have for too long ignored this. Whether it is not considering women's physiology in medicine or excluding women from automobile engineering, I think we have many gaps to address today and well into the future."

She has fought her way in a society that discriminates against women when it comes to trusting their abilities. Incidents at the workplace that she narrated in media of daily discrimination women face is a testimony of the mindset that requires a complete change.

Heralding the White Stork in Lives of Couples!

A pioneering IVF specialist of India, Dr. Archana Dhawan Bajaj, Medical Director and IVF Doctor at The Nurture IVF Centre, has brought happiness in the lives of thousands of couples in her career of two decades. The recipient of several honours and awards for her stellar contribution to the relatively young speciality, is inspired by her father, an army personnel. On International Women's Day, she shares her happening life with the Outlook.

DR ARCHANA DHAWAN BAJAJ
NURTURE IVF



Q What perceptible difference do you see in people today as compared to when you started the speciality?

When we look back at our journey of last 15-20 years, when we started The NURTURE IVF Centre, it was fraught with challenges. ICF was an emerging speciality and not much heard or known about by the public. It not only included convincing couples with fertility issues to go for it, but most importantly to convince the male partner and their participation in the treatment because of the huge obstacle-The Male ego! The societal mind set was such that women were blamed for in case of infertility problems. Add to it limited public information on about IVF treatment. We have come a long way since then. Today, couples and people in general are more accepting and it is not a taboo subject anymore, especially in the urban population. Men are the surprise package who have a more liberal outlook!

Q Counselling is integral for the IVF treatment to be effective. How does it help?

Yes, counselling is a very integral part of the IVF treatment like any other. Nevertheless, the doctor's words in our speciality carries much more weightage because the completion of a family is at stake and couple comes to us as a last resort. Unlike in other parts of the

country, there is a marked difference in the way the IVF speciality is looked at in the north. In the north, the reproductive treatment is more doctor specific where couples prefer going to the speciality rather than going to counsellors at corporate-like clinics that have mushroomed in the last couple of years. Though counsellors are good at their work, but when it comes to couples making the choices, it's always the doctor's advise that is final.

Q What are the issues that really traumatise women opting for IVF treatment?

The fact that they are not getting pregnant is the foremost of their concerns. Family and social pressures are the other concerns that rankles their emotional and mental frame of mind. The other biggest concern is the affordability of the treatment because it's a long-drawn process and this also plays on their mind. Also, as a clinician, I can handhold them through the best customised treatment for the best results, but then the outcome is not in our hands, which again is a stress that they have to cope with in the event of a failure and cost implications involved. This shatters the confidence of women because they can't face failure and sink into depression.

Q Advancement of medicine and

procedures are giving better results. What is the latest in IVF?

A lot of changes and developments have occurred in IVF and fertility speciality, particularly in the last ten years, with frozen cycles being one of them. Blastocyst Culture, Embryo Cryo Preservation, Assisted Hatching, Polscope Microscope, Pre-Implantation and Genetic Diagnosis PGD are among some other treatments for which Nurture Centre is known for.

Q What is the reason for increasing infertility in the society?

There are multiple reasons, lifestyle being one of the major contributors. Smoking, alcohol, recreational indulgence, couples with different working hours, too much of travel and stress, environmental factors and exposure to different kinds of bacterial and viral disease such as the Covid -19 have only aggravated the reproductive ability of women.

Q What would you like to share with women based on your experience of life?

Learn to give back to the society what you have earned from it. And give the best of your best in whatever you do, because there are no shortcuts to success. Also, women as compared to men are emotionally stronger and give selflessly. Women are powerful, keep it up!

Guiding NASA's Perseverance Mars Rover

The journey to reach that position was not an easy one

DR. SWATI MOHAN

— M. Rajendran



“Touchdown confirmed!” an Indian American scientist Dr Swati Mohan’s voice was the first to confirm that NASA’s Perseverance Mars Rover, had successfully touched down on the Martian surface.

Soon social media was abuzz with her picture and captions. People were heaping accolades of an Indian woman scientist at NASA with a ‘bindi’ making a mark not just in the US, but the whole world.

But the journey to that position was not an easy one. “In my career journey, I faced more difficulty as being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field than I had being Indian, said Dr. Swati Mohan, Guidance, Navigation, and Control Systems Engineering Group Supervisor at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. talk organised by the US Consulate General, Chennai last year in July.

She had migrated to the US at the tender age of one and was inspired by the science fiction US TV serial StarTrek at nine. At that age, she was keen to become a doctor, but she was fond of Physics as a subject and reading about space was fun.

The attraction of space pushed her to enrol in a space camp at NASA. She

convinced her parents that she wanted to be in a school that offers a lot of space affiliated activities. The girl from Chennai joined Cornell to secure a B.S in mechanical and aerospace engineering and took up many internships at places that offered her the opportunity to learn more about space and the solar system.

The perseverance and determination resulted in Mohan securing an M.S and PhD from MIT in Aeronautics and Astronautics. Soon, she was close to realizing the dreams that she saw, while watching the StarTrek series. Mohan joined NASA’s Mars 2020 Perseverance mission team in 2013, shortly after the team was assembled. Soon, she became the guidance and controls operations lead for the mission. As mission

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commentator and guidance, navigation, and controls operations Lead Swati Mohan studies data on monitors in mission control, at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

“Being a part of the Mars 2020 project was my first opportunity to see the entire life cycle of a mission starting from when it was just a paper concept to actually when we got to operate it in space,” she told in one of the media interactions. She added, “It gave me the opportunity to bring all the pieces together from the different missions I had worked on or previous technology I had worked on and bring it all in one mission to see it from concept to design and finally to operations.”

According to NASA, a key objective for Perseverance’s mission on Mars is astrobiology, including the search for signs of ancient microbial life. The rover will characterize the planet’s geology and past climate, paving the way for human exploration of the Red Planet, and be the first mission to collect and cache Martian rock and regolith.

She strongly believes in the punch line of the StarTrek series: “Where no man has gone before.”

A Mission to Save More Lives

Dr Rochita Venkataramanan is a reputed lady Radiologist with more than 30 years of experience. She is one of the best talents we have today, and her contributions -- nationally and internationally -- showcase her reputation. Trained in the prestigious Grant Medical College and Tata Memorial Hospitals Mumbai, she has made Chennai her home, where her husband, Dr Venkataramanan, is a senior Orthopaedic surgeon.

She has authored many research articles and is the founder and President of the Indian Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology. She is also the founder and Chief Editor of the Journal of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology. She is the founder of several new signs to diagnose specific diseases in Radiology.

DR ROCHITA VENKATARAMANAN



Q You have recently started your private Radiology Clinic in Chennai. What motivated you to do this?

In the practice of modern medicine diagnostic evidence by Radiology plays a decisive role in patient management. Radiology is a field which depends on technology and sophisticated scan machines. There have been rapid advances in such technologies in the past few decades with which Radiologists need to keep pace. The work environment in a Radiology department also needs to be dynamic to match these changes to have the best utilization of such machines. Just as a spaceship cannot be launched from a train station so also high-tech machines require a scientifically designed work environment and workflow. Such a work environment is not always available to Radiologists limiting their productivity. Our centre, Advantage Imaging and Research Institute, has been founded to provide a work environment to Radiologists where compassionate patient care, strong commitment to science and quality, as well as innovation and clinical research are key.

Q What challenges did you face during Radiology Research and academics?

It is not easy to do Radiology research in India as there is neither any research mindedness nor facilities available. We do not have easily available funding. Though Radiology as a branch generates massive amounts of data, these often lie unutilized. To do the research work that I did, I funded it myself and did the work at the end of a full workday. It has been very hard. There is rarely any recognition for research work in our field and this can be demotivating.

Q What is the future of lady entrepreneurs in the field of Radiology in India?

There are very few lady Radiology entrepreneurs in India. It is daunting for women in India to take on risks and challenges that come with starting a new business. The family support that is required for such endeavours may also be wanting and women are happy with just being able to pull off a job in addition to all the responsibilities at home. However, having one’s own clinic offers the unique opportunity to help patients with one’s special signature service. It

also offers freedom to innovate and make a real impact on healthcare. To be a successful entrepreneur young lady radiologists need to cultivate special skills of networking with their colleagues, keep a clear vision of their goals and passions, talk to like-minded people and generate support to fulfil their dream, plan well ahead and act on it every day with clear markers of success and failure. I hope to help young lady Radiologists with my experience.

Q What is your special mission for yourself?

My mission is to save more lives. This can be done by accurate and targeted Radiology tests tailored to the particular conditions of each patient. The clarity of images and detail that we see with advanced scan machines are astounding. We hope to study these in detail and find disease in early stage for better treatment outcomes. We will be collaborating with our clinical colleagues for larger research studies as well as pay special attention to every case that we do every single day. We will share our learnings through medical meetings and the platform of medical journals.

Providing equal opportunities to all

Irrespective of gender everyone has a role to play in an organization

HARSHA BANGARI

— M.Rajendran



Dedication and commitment are an individual's attitude, not a quality. Harsha Bangari, Managing Director, India Exim Bank has demonstrated that in her life and career.

She spent her childhood in Maharashtra and studied at Carmel of St. Joseph's High School, M L Dahanukar College of Commerce and did he CA from Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

Having spent a substantial number of years in her career at India Exim Bank, a go-getter, Harsha has developed a robust pipeline of over 100 potential proposals and supported several companies across a diverse range of sectors.

India Exim Bank is the principal financial institution for coordinating the working of institutions engaged in financing exports and imports. It has played a catalytic role in facilitating India's integration with the global economy by promoting, financing and facilitating India's international trade and investment. The Bank's range of programmes has helped Indian enterprises become competitive and develop a global footprint.

She believes, "in providing equal opportunities to all employees irrespective of their gender." Harsha

also realised that at the top level consistent communication is the key and she joined social media platforms. "Therefore, this year I have resolved to be more connected with all our stakeholders, through my official Twitter handle. I will be here with all the important updates."

Harsha is confident that EXIM Bank has to push aggressively in the global market with its untapped potential. She points out that India is primarily a commodity exporter and this needs to be diversified. Her focus is to push for hi-tech manufactured exports, which is currently only 10 per cent of all exports. Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) she feels has a tremendous potential to help in increasing India exports in the electronic, semiconductor and solar panel industry. Another area that remains untapped is Defense equipment.

She feels India has not taken full advantage of low-cost destinations in supplier of manufactured goods.

Going forward, Harsha is keen to India Exim Bank to foster a network of alliances and institutional linkages with multilateral agencies who have a strong credit profile and are at the forefront of changing the development landscape in their

countries, especially in countries of Africa.

Harsha initiated an India Exim Bank study titled "Prospects for Enhancing India Japan Trade Relations". She said that India and Japan have been enjoying a strong and cordial relationship. Japan has been one of the most important economic partners for India in its development story.

She also wants more local products from India to capture global markets. As part of this theme, she recently organized EXIM The Bazaar, to showcase traditional and contemporary art and craft products from across the country.

"We are happy to bring together 75 artisans from all over the country to mark the 75 years of India's independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. It is inspiring for us to see such a positive response for the artisans from Ahmedabad. It also reflects the interest which the people in the state have towards the local arts of the country. ...This gives them access to direct customers and generates future sales leads, as well as understanding consumer preferences, improving industry knowledge and discovering latest trends," said Harsha.



Committed to Build Character and Empower Youth

PROF. (DR.) SHALYA RAJ

Chief Executive Officer, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut

Keeping in character with the changing times marked with technological breakthroughs, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University (SVSU) offers a seat of learning that encompasses the holistic development goals for the young minds. We are committed to the mission of service with the avowed objective of bringing people together by the virtue of spreading love and building moral & national character. SVSU is incessantly marching towards the realization of VASUDHAIV KUTUMABKAM. It longs to bring about social reform marked by a just society- free of biases, prejudices, communalism and terrorism.

SVSU is imbued with patriotic fervor that makes it harbor gratitude towards the martyrs who laid their lives for the cause of humanity, equality and independence of our country. The university is thus committed to the cause of national integration and social awakening. This is the reason that the University has been named after one of the most luminous sons of India- Swami Vivekanand.

The university is a highly rated (NAAC A grade) university and keenly sought after for admissions by students from across the country including a large number of foreign nationals. Being a huge education hub, it runs 220 plus vocational and professional courses of all streams under one roof. It has a distinct identity because of the world-class infrastructure for

Message

“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.”

-SWAMI VIVEKANAND

teaching-learning, research, and innovations.

The credo of quality education at SVSU is based on the motto - SHIKSHA, SEVA, SANSKAR, and RASHTRIYATA. The students receive global competence and professional know-how to compete in the field of their choice armed with the value system to sail through the personal and professional world.

SVSU boasts of a very active and well-established placement cell that helps to place the students in the top-notch companies suited to their choice and calibre.

The university has highly qualified and experienced faculty in their respective fields of study. At a regular basis, national and international conferences, seminars and workshops are organized by the university to disseminate the knowledge. Such events provide a variety of experiences to the students and inculcate skills such as leadership and team spirit which are helpful in the advancement of their career. There is a culture of active interaction between faculty and students in the campus. The learning experiences in the campus carve a strong path for the enhancement of overall development of the students.

Moreover, the campus of the university is ICT enabled providing digital platform to thrive in a digital age. The university is situated in a serene lush green environment that inspires free thinking. The green campus, alongside a complex structure of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities shape the physical, mental, intellectual and emotional growth of the young minds.

The University has commenced structured training programs on soft-skills and preparatory training for competitive examinations to raise the employability quotient of the students. The entrepreneurship development activities provide full support to the budding entrepreneurs to cultivate their ideas with innovation and ingenuity and establish a venture for knowledge transfer and wealth creation.

The university is marching ahead in the right direction, providing a holistic education to the future generation and playing a constructive role in nation building. We restate our endeavour to provide finest quality education accessible to all and an environment for the blossoming of over-all personality development of global professionals.

Swami Vivekanand Subharti University lives up to one of the most immaculate thoughts spelled by Swami Vivekanand that "There is only one purpose in the whole of life - education."

Dare to dream and drive to achieve it

Scripting a story that will inspire more women to overcome struggles

APARNA PUROHIT

— M. Rajendran



To dream and work your way to achieve it, is the most satisfying aspect of one's life. But the journey from dream to realizing it is seldom an easy one.

A young Delhi woman, armed with a degree in journalism and post-graduation in mass communication in film and TV, reached the city of films, Mumbai. She carried with her a dream of being a filmmaker.

This young woman achieved her dream-Aparna Purohit, Head of India Originals, Amazon Prime Video is an inspiration to many young girls aspiring to achieve their dream howsoever, challenging. As was demonstrated by Purohit.

"Aparna is thoroughly professional, dedicated & committed, she is at her tasks with ease. I guess there is hardly anything that one needs to advise her. One who has worked with her will observe her approach towards any job assigned to her and she will accomplish it with sincere dedication," says Zaheer Dharwar, Manager - Admin at Mahindra & Mahindra on her LinkedIn post.

Purohit was Head - Creative Initiatives Mantra Media Ltd

promoted by, Mahindra & Mahindra. Before joining Amazon Prime Video. In between this lies the real struggle and experience that she gained from her various stints and the challenge of launching her production house.

But the fact that she never gave up on her dreams defines the superwoman in her. One can call, the first job within a week of landing no less than a miracle and later moving up the ladder, the entrepreneurial bug bit her and a company that she floated with her three friends folded up due to lack of support from the industry for their work and the economic slowdown of 2008.

The grit and determination she demonstrated over the next few years, is something that is an inspiration for any young woman. Her classmates and colleagues, vouch for her ability to survive even in the worst circumstances, to realize her dream. She even did odd jobs like teaching and

Purohit was Head - Creative Initiatives Mantra Media Ltd promoted by, Mahindra & Mahindra. Before joining Amazon Prime Video.

doing voiceovers during the period between her stint at the National Film Development Corporation of India as a consultant and landing the dream job at Amazon in 2016.

Over the years, Purohit has worked hard on realizing every bit of what she dreamt of doing as a storyteller. The challenges came, but she had now the experience to deal with them. Her past stints at various production houses and working with top acotors and directors gave her the confidence to deal with them effectively.

"I have always believed that leaders create more than they consume and always leave things better than how they found them. As I interacted with 4000+ students across the country, alongside Puneesh Kumar and Siddhartha Nambiar the future of Amazon, as a place that enables future leaders to reimagine the world they want to live in and empowers them to make it a reality, is crystal clear, she tweeted a few months ago.

Aparna Purohit has set a few benchmarks that young women would dream to emulate and some will do.

A Game Changing Career Coach on a Mission To Murder Mediocrity!

A celebrity Game Changer Coach, Ms Shilpa Kulshrestha, believes that life is about 'Playing it Full!' Shilpa reached there by walking through the 'test of fire' and emerged stronger to help people in their mid-career as their Career Coach. With a belief that "We-No-Longer-Have-To-Engineer-Smallness-in-Our-Life". her mission is to help people break through the self-imposed mediocrity and enable them to build fast track careers. She shares her entrepreneurial journey threadbare for the rest of the world to learn from.

SHILPA KULSHRESTHA

Q Only the empowered can empower anyone. Could you share your story?

My parents were academicians, so education was the focus. It all started with multiple degrees- CA, CPA, LLB, MBA and I soon came to be known as THE one with a Midas Touch. Everything was going fine until a decade into my career. I became so adept as a juggler of work-life balance that my husband often called me a Woman-of-Substance, my friends named me a Super-Woman and my kids, Wonder-Mum.

However the truth was that I had no "identity" beyond those words. While the rest of the world applauded for this juggler, her own self-imposed mediocrity continued to eat all the excellence in her career. The realization came like a flash one day when after 16 years with top brands like Deloitte, Tech Mahindra, Westpac, I was made redundant - a hard hit for a person with an outstanding past. "How could they do that to ME?"

It was then that I realized that like slow poison, mediocrity had eaten up not only my excellence but also my voice. No matter how much I hated it, that was the truth.

In 2019, I ventured into a deep self-discovery path. Starting with Tony Robbins's island in Fiji, I was soon travelling the world to learn from the best coaches. I realized that I had been living a passive life and had only caught what life had thrown at me numbing my ability to choose.

I now decided to make my own choices, but choose WHAT? I discovered a prominent pattern that I had throughout was a knack to enable people to shine. Helping people in my team create exceptional wins, always gave me goosebumps.

Q Your professional trajectory as a Game changer coach?

I started helping people to create the next big thing in their career. Initially, as I saw clients getting big results like double salaries, out-of-turn promotions, career transitions with

I discovered a prominent pattern that I had throughout was a knack to enable people to shine. Helping people in my team create exceptional wins, always gave me goosebumps.



100% salary increase, I thought I got lucky. But soon the chaos gave way to a system, which I put into a repeatable framework. Today as a Game Changer Coach, I work with people across 15 countries helping them create extraordinary careers.

Q Your message on International Women's Day?

We talk about the big things for bringing large changes, but often the small things escape our attention. Till the time we:

- continue to accept sanitary napkins in that black polythene bag from the shops
- don't readily give NEW jobs to pregnant women (9 mon pre & 6 mon post- delivery)
- name the contribution of men in the kitchen as 'help' and not "work"

we cannot take pride in WHO WE ARE. It's the 2 mm shift in the small things that changes mindsets.

Women, be madly, crazily in love with yourself, BELIEVE and step into your powerful identity- the one you love. It all starts here!

Picking logs to win medals at Olympic

An iron determination and heart of Gold

MIRABAI CHANU

— M.Rajendran



The picture of a young woman from Manipur, facilitating a group of truck drivers, a few months ago had the social media going gaga over this act.

But for Mirabai Chanu, the Indian Olympic medalist at Tokyo 2020, it was her gratitude. It was the display of the human spirit, which is even more brilliant when she won the medal.

The Sports Academy in Manipur's capital Imphal was about 25 km from her village Nongpok Kakching. The daily commute from home to the training academy was draining on the family's budget. The truckers near her village stepped in and gave her a daily lift to the academy.

As a young girl of 12, she was able to lift the logs of wood and walk easily back home, which her brother found difficult to pick. A strength, that her family knew was special. Perhaps she also realised that she would be able to convert this strength to do something good for the family, more than cutting and carrying logs.

What she did not know was the inner strength she had. The road to

winning the first medal for India at the Tokyo Olympics was filled with challenges at every level. A disastrous performance at Rio Olympics had broken her down physically and mentally.

But soon, she gathered herself and displayed a sheer determination to win a medal at the next Olympics. It is a special one, since, the deferment of the Tokyo Olympics due to the Covid pandemic had upset her training. But it was her mental strength, that helped her to keep the fire for medal burning.

Late February this year, Chanu won a Gold medal in Singapore in the women's 55kg weight division. It was a new weight category for her from 49 kg in Tokyo. She has also ensured her qualification for the Birmingham

As a young girl of 12, she was able to lift the logs of wood and walk easily back home, which her brother found difficult to pick. A strength, that her family knew was special.

Commonwealth Games in July-August this year. "Six months of intense training and my never-ending love for the sport continues to pay off as I qualify for the CWG 2022. I would like to extend my thanks to our Weightlifting Federation of India & all the other stakeholders," she tweeted.

Sportspersons with injury, have a history of making a comeback and Chanu knew that very well. A back problem marred her progress in 2018 and resulted in her missing the Asian Games that year. But her indomitable spirit and focused practice, with proper treatment in the US, had ensured that she will remain India's hope.

So when Rio broke the hearts of many fans of her and also coaches and family, they all had the faith, that she would bounce back. She did at Tokyo with a silver medal and is determined to improve it in Paris Olympic next year.

Meanwhile, she not only trains her body but also her mind to lift the iron weights, which will help India win medals. Any colour of the medal is a fantastic achievement in sports at that level.

Ignite the Spark: Creating Transformation Inside Out

Alpa Kapadia Teli, Executive Coach, Trainer, and India's first Shadow Mastery Expert is a torchbearer for conscious living. She was heading Leadership Development for a large Indian conglomerate and discovered the huge gap that was present in the mindset and attitude of people. She chose to bridge the gap by offering programs for individuals and groups to transform their mindsets and redecorate their inner world. As a result, **Ignite the Spark**, one of India's pioneering schools of transformation was born in 2016. The Outlook team reached out to her to understand the context of coaching in today's world and helping women lead.

Excerpts from the interview:

ALPA KAPADIA TELI

Executive Coach, Trainer, and India's first Shadow Mastery Expert

Q What is your story?

I always wanted to make a difference in the lives of people. Whenever I was low, this vision kept coming back to me. I had to go through many challenges to prepare myself for this work. It was the much-needed manure for the vision to bloom. The system I use with my clients is holistic and takes into account intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects. It is an Inside – Out approach; As Wayne Dyer shared, "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

Q Why did you choose to start your business and not return to your Corporate Role?

In my corporate role, I saw most executives coming to work, indifferently going through the day, complaining about their supervisors and the company, stuck in the worldly trapping of success. There was no active participation from their heart in their own life. They were busy trying to impress others without any connection to their true desires. That is why I started **Ignite the Spark**. When you engage with your life at a mind level, it is transactional. I wanted to help people get their hearts into the mix so that they

can experience transformation, meaning, and joy. As each individual became happier, I believe the world would be a happier place.

Q How is coaching different from other training programs and how do people benefit from it?

Usually, training programs are a spray and pray approach. However, at Ignite the Spark we use this formula: Potential – Interference = Performance. Coaching, the way we do it, helps people build on their unique strengths instead of trying to fit into a pre-set mould of leadership. We offer specially designed programs for corporates to inculcate authentic leadership and create a coaching culture.

I work with powerful visionaries and changemakers, like executive leaders, coaches, and entrepreneurs who wish to leave a legacy with their work. My process starts with Self-Mastery, then I go on to doing Shadow Work to eliminate self-limiting beliefs. This is my USP. Once we clear the emotional debris, we work on consciously creating their new life and fulfilling their dreams, from a powerful space.

Clients have experienced magical results from fast-track promotions, unlocking inheritance, an exponential



surge in new clients or income, relationships transformations, some end toxic relationships, some quit their job to follow their passion, but all start loving themselves. I am so grateful I do this for a living – I get to witness their transformation and growth and there is nothing more I could ask for.

Q Why is it important for women to take charge of their own careers?

Not just women, I think it is important for each individual to take charge of their own careers. I have seen women give way to the wishes of others and sacrifice their own ambition at the altar of societal expectations. It is fine if a woman does not wish to work. But she should have the freedom to choose. For many years, with patriarchy being prevalent, this balance of masculine and feminine energies has been disturbed. I truly believe that globally we are in process of restoring that balance. I am on a mission to strengthen and support this movement. I create a lot of relevant and inspiring content on all my social media channels to fuel this movement.

Alpa can be reached at alpa@ignitethespark.in

Diamonds and Trust-Women-powered

A brand with women at its centre in more ways than the obvious – that is Senco Gold and Diamonds. Outlook talks to key women, powering the success and values of the company.



Subhasri Seema Shilpi Susmita Sanjukta Moulina Rajyashree

Diamonds are a woman's best friend, they say. In all cultures, jewellery is primarily associated with women's love of adornment. But jewellery is much more – gifts of love, a means of self-expression, and too often, a woman's only financial asset. Jewellery has been not just the expression of a woman's wish to look beautiful, but the currency of survival.

This has found expression in many jewellery brands' messaging. However, to effect true change, one has to walk the talk. And Senco Gold and Diamonds has done this by always putting women at its core in many more ways than the obvious.

This is apparent in what **Moulina Kumar**, Asst Manager Mktg., has to say. "I have received the strength to believe in myself. The management is extremely supportive and has constantly encouraged me to spread my wings. There is no discrimination - you are judged only by your work."

Subhasri Sengupta, Chief HR Officer, has a different perspective on the empowerment of women. She says, "Women are born empowered - it is a truth that society is strongly patriarchal, and women need more opportunities to be financially independent."



Ranjana Sen, Director

"In my generation, I was the first woman in the family to step out and work. This made me encourage other women to join my workplace. A woman's outlook enhances the performances of an organization and especially for a jewellery brand, her perspective is most important, and her understanding adds more and more value to the brand."

Seema Ray Choudhury, Manager, Merchandising (Gemstone and D'Signia), endorses this whole-heartedly. "I value the organizational culture which promotes working as a family to achieve common goals", she says.

Shilpi Das, Asst Manager, Designing & Merchandising, is associated with design innovations in accordance with brand aesthetic which involves a lot of research work and technicalities and coordination. "My take on women empowerment is acknowledging the power, the freedom, the dream, the value, the honour of womanhood that the society owes to her."



Joita Sen, Director & Head, Marketing

"It is difficult to empower an already empowered person. Women just need to realize this and overcome social stereotyping. At Senco Gold & Diamonds, we try to create the platform that will channelize and encourage everyone to bring out their best. An environment of equality prevails. Being a jewellery company, we believe that it is for the women by the women."

Susmita Das Chowdhury, Senior Manager, Human Assets, says, "The brand believes in equal remuneration, recognition of talent, safety and security of employees even in uncertain times. The expectation of a female employee is looked after which includes motivation. My workplace fulfils my expectation."

Sanjukta Bhowmick, Senior Manager, Customer Care, talks of financial freedom. "My workplace is an integral part of my life. Empowerment of women is possible only when women get a fair work environment."

This feeling is shared by **Rajyasree De**, Manager, Secretarial, "Working here always gives me that confidence and the feeling of 'don't take me lightly'. It gives me the strong belief that I can overcome any challenge."



Nita Mukhopadhyay, HOD, Diamond, Gemstone, Platinum & Factory Head

"I strongly believe that women are empowered by birth. Women are underpaid and underappreciated in general, once the society stops treating them as a minority, only they can really be empowered in its true sense. And in my 21 years, I have been seeing the encouragement and support that we get every day."

One Who Followed Her Own North Star and Succeeded!

An academican, author, innovative social entrepreneur, Dr Latha Poonamallee, Co-founder and CEO of In-Med Prognostics Inc., based in Pune-India, the US and Australia wears many hats as an achiever. She is the spirit behind the start-up, which was conceptualised over a plate of upma with business partner Mr Rajesh Purushottam!



DR LATHA POONAMALLEE

Q What inspired you to focus on a mission for social change?

The seed was sown early in my life by my parents to do something socially worthwhile as a professional and therefore my Doctoral dissertation was on radical social change for collective well-being. A socially conscientious and activist uncle of my childhood friend too had a strong influence on me. I volunteered in the activities of a library owned by him and was exposed to people from different social strata, a learning that remains with me even today.

Q At this stage of your life, why did you choose to become an entrepreneur?

My friend Rajesh Purushottam proposed this current venture in its fledgling form and I joined him in creating In -Med Prognostics Inc, after he committed that it would be embedded with social value as its core goal. My husband is the third founder who brings with him expertise in algorithms and image processing. Together, we make a fantastic team. Getting a grant from BIRAC, Government of India, gave us the cushion and the venture centre in Pune headed by the visionary Dr. Premnath who has created an excellent entrepreneurship ecosystem gave us momentum.

Q How do you see AI impacting social entrepreneurship?

AI has the capacity to help us scale access, reach, and services at optimal costs. We are the very first and the only one who take ethnicity into consideration for building the reference range for our

neuro assessment tool would move us closer towards precision medicine that takes into consideration age, gender and ethnicity. India is a price sensitive market, so our mission is to bring affordable and accessible diagnostics for everyone regardless of their location and economic backgrounds. We are focusing on 2 and 3 tier towns in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities and large hospitals. Exploring public -private partnerships is another crucial part of our strategy. Our products were made for functioning robustly in emerging markets such as India but also translates well into other developed markets.

Q Could you share about your 'India experience'?

During the Covid pandemic we had no attrition in our staff and that for us is a huge achievement. The year 2020, was very tough, but everyone worked diligently creating an excellent team, who are engaging with state-of-the art global talent and researchers, the reason why my India experience has been extraordinary. NeruoSheild is the first product of its kind which was ever developed outside the US and Europe. Currently, we are in some 65 leading health institutions across India such as Max Hospital in Delhi, Hinduja, Kokilaben in Mumbai and multi-speciality diagnostic centres. We are excited about some excellent collaborations with premier institutions such as AIIMS, Sri Chitra Hospital in Kerala. One of our goals is to improve brain health and destigmatise mental health and move it into a preventative space. I strongly

believe that if India's problems are solved strategically then, you are solving the problem of 25 per cent of the world where every 5th /6th person is an Indian!

Q To aspiring young women, how would you explain what is success?

Define what is success for yourself, and don't let the world dictate it for you. Disregard negative cues from the society. Also, women must learn to celebrate each-others success which is an incredible feeling. Seek good mentors, build good networks and never shy away from seeking help. Systemic patriarchy does not mean there are no good men who can be our allies and supporters. Be bold and fearless to get what you want and the world will catch up with you.

Q Where do you find refuge after a hectic spell of work?

I have a life-long meditation practise that keeps me anchored. Another shift is to give up perfectionism to accepting my own humanity; that we will make mistakes and it is okay. My son and husband are great support system and spending time with my family is an absolute essential. Also, I make time for things I love to do like reading for pleasure and consistently catching up with friends. I enjoy a walk in the midst of nature, which rejuvenates me.

Q On World Women's Day what message would you share?

Go for it, Support each other. Lift each other up, you have only one life. You deserve it!