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# FORTUNE

INDIA  
—exchange

## INSPIRING WOMEN OF INDIA

Dr.  
MARIAZEENA  
JOHNSON



ALISHA  
MOOPEN



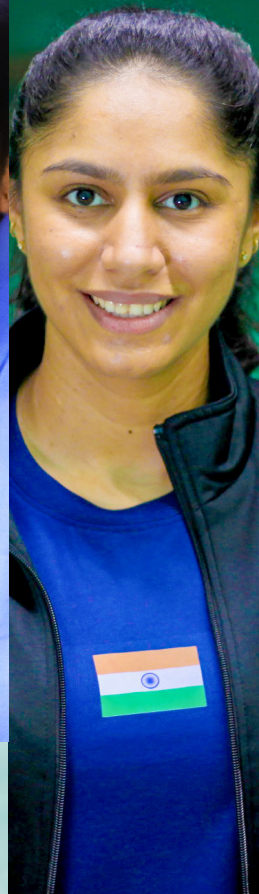
ANURADHA  
GUPTA



Dr.  
KIRAN BEDI



MANASI  
JOSHI



SUCHITRA  
ELLA





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'Fortune India Exchange – Inspiring  
Women of India' – A special digital  
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# PREFACE

## AN ODE TO INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

*"They dared to dream...and they dreamed it big..."*

From the field to the skies and from classrooms to boardrooms, it is a woman's world through and through... From an entrepreneur, head honcho of organizations and leading nations to being the ultimate nurturer in her role as a mother, daughter, sister and wife – a woman is the most beautiful embodiment of the Creator... Acknowledging this glorious creation of the Almighty, Fortune India brings to you '**An Ode to Inspirational Women**' portraying those amazing women who have not only excelled in their respective fields but also inspired and nurtured the aspirations of millions around them.

*"Whatever women do they must do twice  
as well as men; to be thought half as  
good...luckily, this is not difficult."*

An unstoppable force who can achieve everything without a superhero cape, the journey of these wonderful women has been bereft with challenges at every step. Be it the fighting against patriarchy to become the country's first woman IPS officer; breaking the glass ceiling to develop a vaccine that placed our country on the global centrestage; diluting the gender divide to be elected Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum; or overcoming physical limitations to become a World Champion...each of these women have proven their mettle with great finesse.

*"I have realised my dreams...now I  
would like to give wings to yours..."*

While these women have achieved success, the most commendable fact is that they continue to support and take along many more into their fold. From motivating them with their awe-inspiring stories to empowering them with their determined approach, these women are donning the role of being a sculptor and carving the lives of millions of other women.

'**An Ode to Inspirational Women**' salutes the indomitable spirit of these magnificent women and takes you through their world of varied manifestations to inspire your journey of self-discovery...



# C O N T E N T



**Dr. KIRAN BEDI**  
*A National Icon!*



**MANASI JOSHI**  
*Indian para-badminton player*



**Ms. ALISHA MOOPEN**  
*Deputy Managing Director  
of Aster DM Healthcare*



**Mrs. SUCHITRA ELLA**  
*Founder and Joint Managing  
Director - Bharat Biotech*



**ANURADHA GUPTA**  
*Founder CEO - Vows for Eternity*



**JAYA VAIDYANATHAN**  
*CEO - BCT Digital*



**Ms. APARNA REDDY**  
*Executive Director at  
Aparna Enterprises Ltd.*



**Dr. MARIAZEENA JOHNSON**  
*Chancellor of Sathyabama Institute  
of Science and Technology, Chennai*



**SRI PREETHAJI**  
*Co-creator - Ekam, Co-Author -  
The Four Sacred Secrets  
Co-Founder - Lokaa Foundation*



**NEERU SHARMA**  
*Co-founder and Director -  
Infibeam Avenues*



**SHWETA DESHMUKH**  
*The Principal Architect*



**TANUJA GOMES**  
*Co-Founder and Co-CEO - Furtados  
School of Music*



**Ms. SHEEZA ALI KHAN**  
*Prominent International  
Baccalaureate Leader and Educator  
Member of IBEN Asia Pacific.*



# Dr. KIRAN BEDI

*A National Icon!*

**T**he first woman in India to join the officer ranks of the Indian Police service, voted as India's most trusted woman, a social activist, a mega icon, Dr. Kiran Bedi is one of the most inspiring women in India. One who was ahead of her times.

Born on June 9, 1949, in Amritsar, Punjab, Kiran Bedi was the second of four daughters born to Prakash Peshawaria and Prem Peshawaria. Her father was a firm believer in giving his daughters the best education and making them self-reliant. Despite his father's resistance, he sent his daughters to the best School in Amritsar, and all four daughters went on to outshine in their respective fields.

## HER CAREER PATH

### Breaking stereotype

Kiran Bedi was born in an era that belonged to the boys, but she was brought up by parents who understood the value of educating girls. And also the importance of sports in their lives. Her father was a tennis player of his time, and all 4 girls went to the tennis court straight from School. She excelled in her studies and played competitive tennis, and became the Asian Tennis champion in 1972.

In 1970, Kiran Bedi graduated with a Master's degree in Political Science from Punjab University, Chandigarh.

Kiran Bedi, while in service, obtained a degree in Law from the University of Delhi. And in 1993, Kiran Bedi did a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and completed her thesis on 'Drug Abuse and Domestic Violence'.

In 1972 she became the first woman in India to join the officer ranks of the Indian police service. With a strong background in both NCC and sports, IPS was her natural preference, and she made history when she reported to the National Police Training college in Mt Abu as the only woman in a batch of 80 men.

She saw, in policing the potential for "the power to do, the power to get things done and the power to correct." She completely reorganized and disrupted policing in every post she held.

### The Super Cop

During her career in Indian Police Service, she

“  
*Life is  
on an incline,  
You either go  
up or you come  
down.*  
”



served as DCP Traffic, DIG Range of Police in Mizoram, Special secretary to the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau, and Civilian Police Advisor for United Nations Peacekeeping operations. She was awarded the United Nations Medal for her work.

Some of the critical initiatives she took as a police officer are etched in the history of policing in the country. The Police Beatbox system is one such initiative introduced by her. Quoting from the Magsaysay citation, “As deputy commissioner of police in Delhi’s west and north districts Bedi posted constables in blue and white beatboxes where citizens could consult them daily.”

As an Inspector General of Prisons at Tihar Jail, from 1993 to 1995, she came up with several reforms in prison management. She initiated several programs such as education for all prisons, vocational skills, Vipassana meditation, and yoga. She also introduced the system of feedback boxes in prison wherein the prisoners could directly write to her anonymously to air their grievances which were attended to immediately.

For her pioneering work in prison reforms, she was awarded the 1994 Ramon Magsaysay Award and the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship to write her book, *It’s Always Possible*.

As the citation states, “In electing Kiran Bedi to receive the 1994 Ramon Magsaysay award for government service, the board of trustees recognizes her building confidence in India’s police through dynamic leadership and effective innovations in crime control, drug rehabilitation, and humane prison reform.”

Her last appointment at IPS was as Director-General of India’s Bureau of Police Research and Development. Kiran Bedi was also awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Law in acknowledgment of her “humanitarian approach to prison reforms and policing” in May 2005. In 2007, Kiran Bedi took voluntary retirement from IPS when she was overlooked for being appointed as the Police Commissioner of Delhi Police, despite her seniority and merit.

She returned to writing, speaking engagements, book readings, and her own Foundations.

## WHAT SETS HER APART

Her conviction that what she has is meant to be shared for the betterment of society

### For a cause

In 1987, Kiran Bedi launched an NGO named Navjyoti India Foundation (NIF). The foundation initially began working towards de-addicting and rehabilitating the drug addicts and expanded to other social causes like literacy, women empowerment, and water issues.

She also dedicated the Ramon Magsaysay award to start another non-profit organization called India Vision Foundation in 1994, to work on prison reforms and education of children of prisoners. Both the NGOs have been reaching out to thousands of people over the last three decades.

Kiran Bedi hosted a popular TV show called ‘Aap Ki Kachehri’ that aimed to resolve the family disputes of citizens.

In August 2011, Kiran Bedi joined social activist Anna Hazare in India Against Corruption movement. Bedi was a prominent face of the campaign.

### Political stint

Kiran Bedi was BJP’s chief ministerial candidate in the 2015 elections in Delhi.

In May 2016, she was appointed as the LG of Puducherry. During her tenure of almost 5 years, she introduced pioneering reforms like the open house, the Puducherry water-rich model, and the weekend morning rounds where she was seen cycling with her team and attending to civic issues.

## WHY SHE INSPIRES US

### Against all odds

All through her career, Bedi has faced challenges which she took head-on. She is synonymous with being fearless and iron-willed.

Dr. Bedi’s life is an inspirational story of a woman who succeeded in a male-dominated world. With utmost courage, and was able to make a huge difference to society. A woman of many honors, she has inspired millions of young girls to take a stand and not let anyone else take control of their lives. Her simplicity and humility are worthy of being emulated. Her journey from a small-town girl in Punjab to being the true icon she is today commendable, and we salute her for that.





# MANASI JOSHI

*Indian para-badminton player*

Manasi as one of 100 most inspirational and influential women and Self-Made women of 2020.

## HER CAREER PATHS

Manasi is an Engineer by qualification. After completing Engineering from KJ Somiya College of Engineering, Vidyavihar in 2010, she started working with Atos India as a Software Developer. In December 2011, on her way to work Manasi met with a road accident. She had an above knee amputation and a compound fracture in her left hand radius and ulna. After 45 days of hospitalisation, Manasi was home minus mobility.

Playing sports and representing India was never the plan, the plan was to do an MBA, earn well and provide a comfortable life to her parents, get married and reach leadership position at work. But then she had an accident, then the dreams changed and it expanded. After the accident, she had to relearn everything - she started from scratch, setting small goals - from learning to walk on crutches to balancing on her prosthetics to conducting daily chores and activities on her own. After 2.5 months of discharge from hospital, Manasi began her rehabilitation and re-joined the office. She used badminton, her childhood hobby which she pursued actively through school and college, for rehabilitation. In 2011, just before her accident, she had participated and won a Gold in

Women Singles at Atos Mumbai Badminton championship, an intra corporate badminton tournament organized by her company. In 2012, 3-4 months after re-learning to walk, she played the same tournament and won a Gold again against the able-bodied athletes this time.

Eventually, training regularly alongside a 9-6 job, Manasi started

her badminton journey. She attended the selection trials of Asian Para Games 2014. While she didn't get selected, she got noticed by the para badminton fraternity which began her journey as an athlete. In 2015 Manasi along with her mixed doubles partner won a Silver medal in Mixed doubles at the BWF Para Badminton World Championship held in Stoke Mendeve, England. She continued to clinch titles in various tournaments around

## WHO

Manasi Joshi is an Indian para-badminton player, the current World Champion and a changemaker. She wishes to drive a shift in how disability and para-sport are perceived in India and across the world. A software engineer by profession, Manasi started her sporting journey in 2015, and at present, she is ranked world no. 2 in women's singles. From setting examples to breaking stereotypes, Manasi has been a trailblazer ever since she took up para-sport following a road accident (in Dec 2011).

She has been using her voice (provided by the sport) to change the narrative around para sports and disability and advocating for equality. She was listed as the Next Generation Leader 2020 by TIME Magazine and was featured on their Asia cover, making her the first para-athlete in the world and the first Indian Athlete to receive such honour. On the occasion of the International Day of Girl Child, Barbie (American toy company) celebrated Manasi and her achievements by creating a one-of-a-kind (OOAK) Barbie doll modelled to her likeness, to inspire young girls across the World. Global media leaders like BBC World, Forbes recognized

## IN ADDITION TO BEING AN INCREDIBLE ATHLETE, MANASI IS ALSO A CHANGEMAKER.

the world, steadily rising up the rankings. In 2018, Manasi moved to Hyderabad to train at P. Gopichand Badminton Academy. In 2018, not only did she get selected in the Indian contingent but she won a Bronze medal for the country at Asian Para Games held in Jakarta, Indonesia. In 5 years of playing the sport, in 2019, she became a World Champion winning a Gold at the BWF Para Badminton World Championship in Basel, Switzerland.

Currently, employed with Bharat Petroleum as a sports person, Manasi is training for the Asian Para Games in 2022 and the World Championships where she will be defending her title.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

In addition to being an incredible athlete, Manasi is also a changemaker. There have been road blocks, there have been setbacks but it did not deter Manasi and she has continued more fiercely on her journey. From a successful career in Software Development, Manasi decided to switch and pursue para-badminton professionally. Throughout her journey, she has been learning and leading the way in changing perception around disability and para sports. Speaking at public events, at schools, colleges, hospitals, sensitizing the police force (Gujarat Police), meeting with new amputees and providing them support for a smooth transition – she always, always takes out time for these. She says as a country we still have a long way to go in accepting disabled people into mainstream. She faces challenges daily, in her day to day life, not only as a woman but also as a person with disability. But she is aware and informed of her rights and she is



vocal about her needs and challenges. She has fought for what is right and raised her voice to fight inequality and injustice. She is not only a brilliant achiever in her field but she is also a role model to the youth, to young girls and women equally. She has a very positive (and different) outlook towards life and sports is proving to be a great vehicle to help spread her ideas and thoughts to different parts of India and World.

### WHY SHE INSPIRES US

Having experienced life and her formative years as a non-disabled person and then as a person with disability since 2011, Manasi has seen disparity in the quality of life and mindset of people. While her accident only changed the physical aspect, for the world (people around) it changed so many things. There are times when I wanted to tell people off but Manasi has always encouraged people around to ask questions (especially children and youth). She is like how in school you don't understand something you ask, this is the same! She always tells me that it is the children and the youth who need to be educated and sensitised about disability and inclusion and only then we will be able to change the perceptions. Manasi challenged her adversity to become her advantage. "Everybody deals with their loss in their own way. At first, I thought my loss was the biggest loss. Then I realised you can't give ranking to which is the worst loss," says Manasi adding that we face so many ups and downs that it teaches us empathy. She has a very unique and beautiful way of looking at life. She has not only made phenomenal achievements on court but has done her bit for her community in India through her exemplary attitude and story.

*Manasi challenged her adversity to become her advantage.  
"Everybody deals with their loss in their own way."*



# Ms. ALISHA MOOPEN

*Deputy Managing Director of Aster DM Healthcare*



**A**ster DM Healthcare, the largest integrated healthcare provider network in GCC and India, reported a whopping annual revenue of ₹8608 crores in FY'20, while remaining at the epi-centre of managing the pandemic across 7 countries, the toughest healthcare crisis that has been seen in recent history. Leading the growth strategy for the company, while remaining at the helm of Covid-19 crisis management to help as many people as possible, Alisha Moopen – Deputy Managing Director of Aster DM Healthcare has been steering the company forward to make quality healthcare accessible for people across the world.

## WHO

Alisha Moopen is the Deputy Managing Director of Aster DM Healthcare, leading the company's operations in India and GCC and driving the entry strategy for Cayman Islands. Having joined the company as a Director in 2012, she is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and development of the company, and notably spearheading

the expansion of the group into new markets and business verticals. With 34 years of strong track record of providing compassionate care to patients, Aster currently provides the complete circle of care to all segments of the population through its primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary care services, and its network of 27 hospitals, 115 clinics and 223 pharmacies. The organisation currently employs more than 21,900 people, of which 2970+ are doctors and 6500+ are nursing staff.

Over the years, Alisha's work has won her recognition, awards and accolades from multiple international bodies. In 2018, she was elected by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader which enabled her to work alongside other global leaders to tackle some of the main challenges affecting the world today, with healthcare being one of them. She has been awarded with the International Executive's Award by the Harvard Business Council in 2021, recognized as the Most Promising Woman Leader of 2021 by Economic Times, recognized as one of the Most Influential Women in the Arab World by CEO Middle East magazine in 2020, among many others over the years.

## HER CAREER PATH

As a Chartered Accountant, Alisha chose to specialize in auditing, gained immense experiences through stints at different companies. "I had access to the secret sauce or formula of successful companies, and each one of them had one running theme – they all had the right people, the right systems, the right governance and the right values. I also learnt what made companies click and what didn't. And while it was exciting to go from one company to another and gain tremendous amount of learning, at the end of the day the consulting work was not fulfilling my soul's purpose."

A traumatic incident changed her perspective towards the healthcare industry and she realized that her calling lies in healthcare. Alisha joined Aster in 2012 and ever since, it has been an enriching experience with its share of challenges and rewards. "The excitement was to work with my father, Dr. Azad Moopen, who is my role model. I had to prove my mettle. I got into the system, learnt the ropes on the job and the focus was on driving growth with a humane approach to business. My father has dedicated his life to healthcare; it is close to our hearts and today, ten years on, we have made significant accomplishments that



are consistent with our vision to serve people across the world with quality healthcare that is affordable and accessible,” she says with pride.

Over the last 10 years, Aster DM Healthcare has witnessed a phenomenal growth trajectory. From entering new markets to expansion of the luxury healthcare portfolio under Medcare Hospitals and Medical Centres, expansion of the Aster Hospitals and Clinics network in GCC, to listing of Aster DM Healthcare at the Indian stock market affirming the company’s strategic growth plans in the country, Alisha has been the key driver behind all of these. Following Dr. Moopen’s Vision to make quality healthcare affordable and accessible for all, Alisha is shaping the future of Aster DM Healthcare founded on sustainable business, with asset-light model, technology and digitization being the core USPs.

The pandemic has been one of the toughest crisis in the history of Aster DM Healthcare and healthcare systems across the world, however through meticulous efforts, Alisha managed to convert the crisis into an opportunity. Under her leadership, Aster became one of the first private healthcare players in UAE to offer telemedicine services and the company took all efforts to shift care delivery to the homes of patients. Within 8 months of launch Aster Telehealth managed to enroll 800 doctors, serving patients across 7 countries. Through integration of digital, e-commerce and home-based solutions, the entire primary care model has been shifted to the comfort and safety of people’s homes. While digital health and use of technology to enhance patient experience is fast becoming central to Aster’s service delivery, new business verticals are fast gaining momentum. Aster’s diagnostics business in India-Aster Labs launched during the complete lockdown in March’20 managed to expand rapidly to serve 3.93 lakh patients. Similarly, Alisha paved the way for a slew of innovation and integration of technology into the home care vertical, making Aster@Home an omnichannel player.

## WHAT SETS HER APART

Alisha Moopen’s philosophy in life is ‘Healthiness is Happiness’. She wants to enable quality healthcare across the globe through treating people with compassion,



## MARCHING AHEAD TO MAKE QUALITY HEALTHCARE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL.

precision, and excellence. This became instrumental in her taking charge of Covid-19 operations management on behalf of Aster. She worked hand-in-hand with local governments to support as many patients as possible and became the only Non-Emirati woman to join Dubai Covid-19 Command and Control Centre taskforce which was chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council. Till date, Aster has served more than 28,000 Covid-19 patients and

screened over 1.9 million people across 7 countries.

She believes in diversity of workforce, strength in differences and focused on improving the glass ceilings at work for women. Currently, 56% of Aster employees are women and two of the key global functions: Quality and Medical Excellence and Human Resources are led by women leaders. She is also an active philanthropist, being a trustee of Aster DM Foundation and involved in social welfare through Aster Volunteers programme which bridges the gap between people who would like to help with those in need. “I saw how much my father did and is still doing to help society, so it came very naturally to me. As humans, we try and help everyone around us, while enabling individuals and empowering communities. This is part of our DNA and it is our responsibility to touch the lives of the lesser privileged and give them hope for a better future,” says Alisha.

## WHY SHE INSPIRES US

Alisha believes that ‘health is a birthright of every human on this planet’. She is dedicated to ensure that humanity leverages on advances in science as well as personal re-engineering of self, ranging from lifestyle choices to dealing with the external environment, to staying happy and healthy, both physically and mentally. As she says, “We need healthcare to be effective, efficient and sustainable. This is a key challenge faced by nations across the globe, in both developing and developed countries. Creating this balance is key, and the driver for this balance are committed people operating in good systems. If we take care of our people, they will extend this care to others who they interact with. It is this domino effect powered by humanity that is the biggest lesson that I have learnt.”

# Mrs. SUCHITRA ELLA

*Founder and Joint Managing Director – Bharat Biotech*



## WHO

Success hasn't come on a platter for Mrs. Suchitra Ella, the Co- Founder and Joint Managing Director of Bharat Biotech, the past 25 years has been a journey of challenge, grit and determination to succeed against all odds, in a business involving public health for this first-generation entrepreneur. But she feels it's worth the effort.

She is the heart of Bharat Biotech, and has successfully carved a path quite different from her original academic training as an economics graduate from Chennai, a young girl from Neyveli, a small town in Tamil Nadu, post her education and marriage, moved along with her husband Dr. Krishna Ella to the United States of America.

But not many know how she multi-tasked in the US, managing her two small children, working as a

## PERSEVERANCE IS VITAL TO SUCCESS AGAINST ALL ODDS

marketing personnel to support her family when her husband Dr. Krishna Ella was pursuing his Ph.D.

She credits her ability to handle diverse roles to her upbringing. Her father was her first role model, she attributes her early lessons learnt from him for life lessons, value systems, work culture, and hard work. "My father was a mining engineer in Neyveli, a small town in Tamil Nadu, and we had all the comforts at home. Yet, I wasn't allowed to commute by car to school. I took the school bus or my bicycle. Little things like that taught me how to manage things on my own" she says.

## HER CAREER PATH

After earning his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in Molecular Biology, her husband Dr. Krishna Ella, a gold medallist at university, worked as a research faculty at the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston. Mrs. Suchitra Ella too was holding a good position in a multinational company in the United States of America, both were well settled and were in well paid jobs.

But somewhere deep in her heart Mrs. Ella wanted to come back to India, she conveyed her wish to return to motherland, put that seed of thought in her husband's mind. In mid 90s, when many from India were thronging to go to the USA for career option and higher education, here is a couple who wanted to return to India from the United States leaving a well-established successful career to start from scratch in India. The passion for science was dominant, the 40-foot container they brought along to India with them had more lab equipment than the usual belongings that one would expect to bring while they are back from abroad.

She agreed and strongly believed with her husband Dr. Ella's thought, that innovative technology in vaccine development is essential to solve public healthcare problems caused by infectious diseases and hence thought to start a biotechnology company to solve this issue.

Back in India, it wasn't an easy task for Ellas, as



a startup, they met many investors and presented a detailed description of their business and the idea to set up a biotechnology lab, but not many investors came forward during their initial days.

The couple went ahead to set up a small lab in Hyderabad with the medical equipment that they had brought along from the United States to start producing the protein.

## WHAT SETS HER APART

It wasn't a relaxed journey to be a first-generation entrepreneur for Mrs. Ella, during her early days, the best part of going to the office every day was not knowing what was out there to be done. Everything was unknown and new for her. But not knowing sometimes helped well. Implementing and inculcating good business practices was very important to her right from the beginning.

She did everything including answering the phones at the front desk, turning into a marketing executive to meet medical institutions or to travel to Delhi to meet Government officials for necessary regulatory permissions, she did not take a back step working beside her spouse.

Mrs. Suchitra Ella was a risk taker. Her mind was so open to learn, absorb and execute, that is what entrepreneurship is all about, learning the unknown, she always says. Every aspect of running a business was important to her, however big or small it was, she had a keen eye to all.

Back then, in 1996, Bharat Biotech's founders presented a concept to set up Biotech Knowledge Park to then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, it was a new concept in India and APIIC (Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation) were impressed with the presentation and agreed to Ellas idea and allotted land to setup the lab in the outskirts of Hyderabad and thus Genome Valley was born.

Today Genome Valley is touted to be India's first systematically developed, largest RandD focused life sciences cluster in a single location and has emerged as the most preferred destination for life sciences companies for not just India, but across the globe.

Bharat Biotech was the first company to be established in Genome Valley, 50 km away from the center spot of Hyderabad, during 1996, 25 years ago, the land was barren, with stones, bushes, snakes, no phone lines, no Internet connectivity, no roads, no neighbours around, it was like entering into a new planet. But as they say, "Passion is the Genesis of Genius" and only those who dare greatly, can ever achieve greatly.

From then on there was no looking back for Mrs. Suchitra Ella, Bharat Biotech in the last 25 years, built a pioneering vaccine research and development company, creating a portfolio of world class vaccines including India's first indigenous COVID 19 vaccine COVAXIN under her leadership.

## WHY SHE INSPIRE US

While Covaxin is a big victory during this pandemic, and had put Bharat Biotech as one of the foremost vaccine makers of the world, nonetheless it is just one of the many milestones Mrs. Suchitra Ella has seen in her entrepreneurial journey. One cannot come this far without high quality product, enthusiasm and unshakable confidence, she has these qualities in plenty. She believed in working hard and dreaming big.

She inspires many, according to her, youngsters must be bold, courageous, ambitious and determined, especially for entrepreneurs. Without courage, one cannot face any situation, it is sometimes intimidating to walk into unknown territories and get work done. But one need to be bold to communicate.

Her road to success was very challenging. For her "endurance" is a word to remember, may her tribe increase to Inspire the Next Generation!!!



*Mrs. Suchitra Ella was a risk taker. Her mind was so open to learn, absorb and execute, that is what entrepreneurship is all about, learning the unknown, she always says.*



**SHE HAS ALWAYS  
BEEN A PATH BREAKER  
- BE IT HER THOUGHT  
PROCESS, JUDGEMENT  
AT THE DOOR POLICY  
OR AVERSION TO  
MEDIOCRITY.**

# ANURADHA GUPTA

*Founder CEO - Vows for Eternity*

## WHO

Anuradha Gupta juggles many roles in her professional space, that of being an angel investor, philanthropist and the one closest to her heart - that of Founder CEO of global matchmaking service, Vows for Eternity. At 47, she is a successful entrepreneur, and a hands-on mother to her young kids. She thrives on the challenges that start-ups bring with them and immensely enjoys the process of ideating, establishing a brand, scaling it and rolling it out globally. Her focus has always been on building something that is scalable, as long as it is built on a strong foundation where the leadership sets the tone and integrity is non-negotiable.

As an angel investor Anuradha has invested in various businesses looking to promote other women that are establishing start-ups. Her ability to intuitively pick up ventures across different industries and add strategic value by being a part of the early investor team is something that she values and enjoys immensely. A key selection criteria for her to decide which project she would like to invest in is largely determined by the person at the helm, as she believes in backing the person before all else. She believes that women are strong and creative and generally very principled but often lack the confidence,

courage and belief in themselves and hence impose limits on their potential, a reason why there is a strong need to empower and give ownership to them so that they can make informed choices.

Having spent her formative years in India, growing up in Nainital, she has now spent more than half her life living in Australia, England and now the US which allows her to appreciate and imbibe the best of eastern and western cultures into her personality. Anuradha is a global citizen with a unique balance of Indian-ness mixed with over two decades of western exposure. She is completely at ease reciting the Gayatri Mantra to her 5-year-old twins and thriving in her Indianness and culture, as she is with her American surroundings and western aesthetics.

Her journey from Nainital to New York is an example of what one can achieve if they believe in themselves and can get out of their comfort zone, and use their life-experiences along the way as a strength to make a difference to others. Being chair of the Armaan Gauri Foundation and trying to make a difference in the lives of little children, be it through offering medical treatment, which is often life altering, or working to get young kids off the streets, is about taking those baby steps to fulfilling her philanthropic goals.



## WHAT SETS HER APART

This unique personal journey of experiencing what makes people tick across different continents motivated her to start her own matchmaking venture, Vows For Eternity – as there is nothing more meaningful and gratifying than helping people find their right partner and soulmate and making a difference in their lives. Today, VFE has a global presence and an elite clientele, and Anuradha is considered a leading thought leader and influencer in her space.

While matchmaking has been done for time immemorial, Anuradha's approach to matchmaking is honest, empathetic and changes traditional biodata led matchmaking into a more personalised approach. She firmly believes that while marriage is an institution that brings people to live together, it is successful when people bring trust, acceptance and love into the relationship. It's not about who you can live with but always about who you cannot live without. Finding that soulmate requires time and while Anuradha promises to put her team's time and best effort into every search, she is upfront about offline searches being slow. While this does make the searches more meaningful, it does not fulfil ideas of instant gratification and is best suited for those who are looking for a life partner and believe that this part of their life is very private and personal.

## HER CAREER PATH

Having established the business 10 years ago in New York, Anuradha has made it into a global brand catering to global citizens looking to connect with like-minded individuals. Having had a corporate career that included a stint with Arsenal FC in London, she has begun expanding a boutique business into a larger worldwide network catering to senior professionals, industrialists, and public figures that are seriously looking for a life partner.

Matchmaking and matrimonial services are an extremely mature business segment and conventional wis-



*Anuradha firmly believes that while marriage is an institution that brings people to live together, it is successful when people bring trust, acceptance and love into the relationship.*

dom many times strongly guides us “against” entering this space. However, Anuradha is confident that her unique knowledge of different cultures, the changing attitudes among Indians towards marriage and her own personal experiences, would allow her to add value to her membership base. She continues to meet her clients personally, because she strongly believes that no computer algorithm can capture the essence and uniqueness of an individual and her ‘quality over quantity’ focus is reflected in Vows for Eternity's matchmaking process. She serves in a highly trusted role to her clients and her integrity, ethics and high standards set her apart in this space.

Anuradha has an innate ability to empathise with her clients with a deep-rooted passion to help them achieve their personal goals. She is able to see the nuances in changing society and often acts as a bridge between two generations, never bringing judgement to the table. She relates to not just individuals looking for partners but their families as well who often come with a traditional mindset and value system, possibly a bit different from their children. Her global vision, emotional intelligence and excellent listening skills add to her expertise as head matchmaker at Vows for Eternity. Anuradha has a small, global team consisting mainly of strong women that are entirely in sync with her vision and bring a richness of diversity in thought which she always encourages.

## WHY WE THINK SHE INSPIRES US

For people who have known her - she has always been a path breaker - be it her thought process, judgement at the door policy, aversion to mediocrity and walking the talk when it comes to hard work. What sets her apart is challenging the status quo, her entrepreneurial drive and choosing to live life on her own terms. This is reflected even in her choices, both personal or professional, whether it be having her first child at 40 or investing in the stock market whilst she was still in school. Undisputedly, her belief in Karma, in giving back, not believing in setting boundaries and the limitless nature of possibilities just add to her gravitas.



## JAYA VAIDHYANATHAN

CEO – BCT Digital

### WHO

Jaya Vaidhyanathan is the CEO of BCT Digital, the fintech company of the Bahwan CyberTek (BCT) Group. BCT Digital, under Jaya, has the distinction of being the first company in India to develop a tech-enabled early warning system (EWS) for detecting potential NPAs. The EWS product, rt360, is now saving minimum ₹3,500 crore per bank per year for each of the company's clients.

Ms Vaidhyanathan has been an evangelist of corporate governance, introducing global best practices to all of her board positions. She is currently on the board of UTI AMC Capital.

Jaya is a member of the CFA Society New York. An engineer-turned-into-a-management professional, she holds an MBA in Finance and Strategy from Cornell University.

She lends a focused effort both within and outside of BCT to encourage women into the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field. At BCT, she serves as the chairperson of the Women's Advancement, Transformation, Empowerment, and Recognition (WATER) Committee. Jaya is involved in many philanthropic activities that includes providing education and healthcare to underprivileged children, and women empowerment.

### HER CAREER PATH

Jaya began her career in the US as an investment banker, specialising in MandA.

In 2001, she moved from Wall Street to HCL Technologies and won the first large outsourcing deal worth \$780 million, creating opportunities for 6,000-

## JAYA HAS CREATED A GLOBAL ACCEPTANCE FOR THE 'MADE-IN-INDIA' PRODUCT, RT360.

plus engineers in India. In the following five years, she won many more deals worth over \$100 million each.

Next, she joined Accenture as a Managing Partner. Subsequently, she joined Standard Chartered Bank in a senior leadership role heading Strategic Transformation and Technology.

She joined BCT in 2014.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

Jaya's courage, risk-taking ability and ability to inspire colleagues sets her apart. At a time when the term 'Fintech' stood for digital payment gateways, she started a product company. Also, it took great nerves, a generous risk-taking appetite and boundless energy to pick a problem such as NPA that had a huge national impact.

As mentioned earlier, the EWS product, rt360, is now saving ₹3,500 crore per bank per year. No other product can claim to be offering such value to its customers and its customers' depositors and the overall economy.

In mid-2020, on Jaya's inspiration, BCT Digital almost overnight launched two products – real-time EWS for credit monitoring and Expected Credit Loss framework – that enabled banks to quantify Covid-related recovery and get a head-start on future roadmap/strategy. Otherwise, RBI's moratorium on loans would have gone waste, burdening the economy further.

### WHY SHE INSPIRES US

Jaya has created a global acceptance for the 'Made-in-India' product, rt360. Many foreign banking regulators such as the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency in the US, the European Banking Authority, the Central Bank in the Middle-East and the Prudential Regulation Authority in Australia recognise/use rt360 as a product of choice since the last two years. This acceptance and recognition is now helping BCT Digital expand to many global markets, including the US, Western Europe, the Middle-East, and Australia.

*Jaya began her career in the US as an investment banker, specialising in MandA.*





## Ms. APARNA REDDY

*Executive Director at Aparna Enterprises Ltd.*

**M**s. Aparna Reddy is the Executive Director at Aparna Enterprises Ltd, a flagship company of Aparna Group, which has grown to become one of the leading players in the country within building material segment. Closely involved in streamlining of the company's highly diversified operations, Ms Aparna is in-charge of Business Strategy, Marketing, Finance, IT, Branding and HRM functions. Her business acumen and leadership skills made her add several accolades to her portfolio. Ms. Aparna Reddy has received '40 under 40' award by Times group and 'Most Promising Women Leaders' from Economic Times in 2021, 'Black Swan Award for Women Empowerment' by Asia One in 2020, 'India's Most Inspirational Leader' by White Page India in 2019 and 'Women Entrepreneur' award by Zee Business in 2018.

### WHY SHE INSPIRES US

In 2012 she launched her first initiative and set up a high-end outlet for luxury bath spaces and kitchens in Hyderabad.

Ms Aparna draws her inspiration from her highly successful father. She officially joined the family business after completing graduation and spent initial few years in understanding the business. She identified gap areas which needed improvements and started putting her ideas forward. In 2012 she launched her first initiative and set up a high-end outlet for luxury bath spaces and kitchens in Hyderabad. This 9 year old brand is doing pretty well and is growing steadily. During her tenure the

### SHE HOLDS DEGREE IN ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATION ENGINEERING FROM MJCET AND HAS UNDERGONE A MASTER'S PROGRAM AT INDIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, HYDERABAD.

company diversified and introduced several successful products in market. Aparna Enterprises now is known as one of the very few companies in India which are involved in production and trading of a wide range of building material products. The company also has started exporting its products to several Asian markets outside India. Under her able guidance, Aparna Enterprises continues to grow in India and around the world.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

Ms. Aparna knew that she will have to earn respect and trust of the people in order to lead them and work with them.

She grew up listening lot of strategy discussions from her father. In her own words "When it came to my own career, there were no second thoughts for me. Since my teenage years, my intentions and those of my father, the founder, were apparent: we wanted to build a company for the generations". Being a visionary father's daughter, Ms Aparna knew that she will have to earn respect and trust of the people in order to lead them and work with them. As a second generation business woman, she paved her own way to gain trust and acceptance in her company. After formally joining the business she worked hard to understand the business traits and gain trust of the partners. "What delights me the most is I never took advantage of being the chairman's daughter" she says. She worked hard to earn the respect and confidence of clients, employees, and partners. "Its people that matter at the end of the day and I could contribute to the company's growth for them to accept me". In her own words "It's a different challenge altogether for the first generation. For the second, third and the generations to come, I think you should be well accepted in the system to find success". Due to her unrelenting drive for setting high standards, AEL has been able to sustain multi-fold growth year-on-year.

She holds degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from MJCET and has undergone a Master's program at Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. Apart from work, she loves to spend as much of her time as possible with her three young children.

# Dr. MARIAZEENA JOHNSON

*Chancellor of Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai*

**D**r. Mariazeena Johnson is the Chancellor of Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, one of the leading Universities in South India. She is a revolutionary educationist who has a great vision of redefining the education system. Under her leadership, Sathyabama has made remarkable achievements in various fields.

## HER CAREER PATHS

Chancellor of Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai

She always believes and chooses the route of “Technology driven entrepreneurship”. In her words “Technological advancements are driving the market. Yesteryears strategies of entrepreneurship needed attention to fine tune as per the modern day requirements. But the key is **“Thoughts are Roots of Life”**. I was fortunate enough to have strong roots of life as well as entrepreneurship imparted diligently by my father in the early days of my career”.

The uniqueness of her success is interesting; in the way it is defined in this travel. Every success taught her to select the next challenging idea that leads to a different dimension of subsequent success. Exploring hidden opportunities is

one thing, she consistently do to understand and deal with the gaps in the market.

Every challenge that she had faced in entrepreneurial ventures was converted into an opportunity. She always believes **“Good is good enough”**. For a successful entrepreneur, “Completeness” is a prime factor in handling any issue at work. Entrepreneurship road as known to everyone is not smooth always. In her perception, an Inconvenience in negative perspective is the “Problem”, an Inconvenience in positive perspective is a “Challenge”. Ignoring inconvenience is not the solution, encountering with enough strength and resolve is should be the mission in overcoming challenges. Opportunities always welcome such positive minded people and become ladders of their success.

## WHAT SETS HER APART

The uniqueness of her success is interesting; in the way it is defined in this travel.

Entrepreneurship journey has not only economical but also emotional dimension. Family support is crucial in facing and overcoming challenges. Opportunities emerge out with lateral thinking. Any linear method of understanding a problem makes it more complex at times;

**THE UNIQUENESS OF HER SUCCESS  
IS INTERESTING; IN THE WAY  
IT IS DEFINED IN THIS TRAVEL.**





*A leader should have a wonderful coordination between mind and heart. She says “I wonder sometimes, when she know about certain incidents from Dr. M. G. R and my father. ”*

exploring other means to resolve helps to find solution. A path finder does this act more smartly. Not all roads leads to destinations, it's a crazy maze puzzle. One has to explore with determination to arrive at the destination.

“Turning Point” is another aspect in success. Sometimes, Life turns around and around at the same junction. Time seems to be too slow in our journey, a quick moment, a spark of intelligence, a step towards future changes the pace with which we think, act and achieve. This moment in everyone's life is a Turning Point.

For an Entrepreneur, the turning point is the “Idea to Prototype” stage. Once the business model at small scale is ready, next step is attracting the financial resources to implement in bigger canvas. Business Model Canvas also hints at such short journeys in the early stage of entrepreneurship. Gender becomes rarely significant in this saga of this entrepreneurial success.

Women entrepreneurs are most successful in past few decades. Passion driven Perseverance is the cause behind every success story. Please never allow setbacks to stop you in moving forward. In my view, Women shall become Wonderful Mentors to Men, this mentoring starts when we are mothers, this mentoring creates impact on many lives, when we transform ourselves into able administrators. The inspiration we draw from most successful women entrepreneurs is phenomenal. In the past one and half decade, we all have witnessed the global presence of women entrepreneurship.

## WHY SHE INSPIRES US

A leader should have a wonderful coordination between mind and heart. She says “I wonder sometimes, when she know about certain incidents from Dr. M. G. R and my father. ”

Leadership is another important part of entrepreneurship. We have a well-established and deep-rooted opinion that every successful entrepreneur is a great leader. This need not be true in every case. **“Leaders are not just successful people; they see indeed the people in their success”**. She had a fortune of being experienced and brought in the presence of two of such tallest leaders. One is Dr. M. G. Ramachandran, and the other is her father Col. Dr.

Jeppiaar, incidentally the staunch-follower of Dr. M. G. R. Both of them dreamt and dedicated their lives to the people. There are list of leadership qualities one can make out from the way they celebrated their lives with people centric thinking.

Today human-centric empathy is missing in technology driven mechanized modern society and the minds steering the society. In her view, a leader should have a wonderful coordination between mind and heart. She says “I wonder sometimes, when she know about certain incidents from Dr. M. G. R and my father. Mind and Heart function in synergy that energizes the surroundings. We are awestruck often, the way they thought about others and the pace with which they worked for the welfare of people”.

Ironically, technology made by man is challenging human potential. Modern day leaders often are tech-savvy. Time management, Self-discipline, Sustained growth and Successful thoughts are the four essential attributes of a good leadership. A point to mention is the transformation of a good leadership to great leadership. This is not a simple task. Early success guarantees good leadership but great leadership demands a heart that beats beyond horizons of follower expectations. To quote in simple terms, Climbing Everest is a simple challenge compared to standing on the peak of it for a long time. Great leadership demands such courage when it is most needed. Organizational Challenges, Unforeseen outcomes, Pressure from different corners, Over expectation of people around, Our own success created benchmarks will always try to test a good leader, when they surpass this test with grace, this is the sign of transformation into a Great Leader. Great leadership requires such capacity, will power and integrity. Dr. Mariazeena Johnson believe in such leadership quotient that is **bigger than our own imagination and humble to reach out majority expectation**.

The road ahead is wonderful. The road covered so far is eventful. The turnings are amazing; the thoughts supported in such narrow turnings are precious, and all the above my people stuck to my ideology in realizing organizational dreams are my real assets. Every morning should inspire us to do something good to others, every night before we sleep; our work should inspire us to plan for a better tomorrow is my philosophy towards **LIFE**.



# SRI PREETHAJI

*Co-creator - Ekam, Co-Author - The Four Sacred Secrets  
Co-Founder - Lokaa Foundation*

## SRI PREETHAJI, ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND SRI KRISHNAJI, CREATED THE GIGANTIC ANCIENT GEOMETRIC STRUCTURE OF EKAM, THE WORLD CENTRE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.

### WHO IS SRI PREETHAJI

Sri Preethaji is a realized spiritual master, philosopher and mystic. She is known along with her husband Sri Krishnaji for the power of limitless field meditation – A silent meditation that pushes people across thousands of miles into peace and serenity.

She has authored *The Four Sacred Secrets*, a book that offers a rare transformational adventure into love and prosperity to the readers. It has been an American and Korean best seller and has sold several thousands of copies worldwide in 12 languages.

Sri Preethaji's awakening to her mission on Earth began when she was nine years old. She was a tranquil child known for her compassion and sagacity by her family. In her own words, Sri Preethaji says, "when I was nine years old, I realized one day that people around me did not experience other people the way I did. To me, there were no boundaries as me and the other, myself and the other. I could feel what people felt. It is from that knowing I would respond to them. At the age of nine, it was a painful realization that people did not experience each other the way I do. They could not feel what their fellow human beings were feeling, nor did they care to know. That was the beginning of my journey. This knowing transformed into passion in my life to awaken humanity to connection, compassion for each other, and create oneness in the world".

Sri Preethaji married Sri Krishnaji, also a fearless thinker and a mystic par excellence in 1997.

Sri Preethaji is not only a revolutionary philosopher- but

also a revolutionary mother. She home-schooled their only daughter until she entered university. She teaches that if parents have the energy, resources, and time, every parent should home school their children at least until the age of seven. She teaches that until a child is seven years old- every child must be loved and cherished. Every child must be allowed to play and not be compared with another child. She guides millions of her followers into birthing awakened children and bringing them up into blissful human beings, who are at peace with themselves and the world.

### WHAT IS HER PATH

**Sri Preethaji's purpose is to awaken human consciousness from suffering to peace, separation to connection, and division to oneness.**

Sri Preethaji, along with her husband Sri Krishnaji, created the gigantic ancient geometric structure of **Ekam, the World Centre for Enlightenment**. Today seekers from over 100 countries throng to Ekam and experience transformation, God-realisation and Enlightenment. Built in marble, Ekam is a column-less space that accommodates 8,000 seekers in a state of meditation. Ekam has been built as a Surya Yantra, or the Sun's mystic form. It towers majestically at the foothills and on the vast open plains of the Vellikonda range, 80km north of the city of Chennai.

Sri Preethaji is also the co-creator of **Ekam World Peace Festival** – a peace initiative that has impacted several millions of individuals across 100 nations worldwide. Meditating for peace in their consciousness, they push

collective human consciousness away from violence towards peace.

The guests at Ekam World Peace Festival include Kailash Satyarthi - Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from India, Gregg Braden - scientist and author; Erik Solheim - former minister of international development of Norway; Dr. Joe Dispenza - author, physicist, and neuroscientist; Ms. Golriz Ghahraman, Member of New Zealand Parliament; Satya S Tripathi, Secretary-General - Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet, to name a few. The 4th Ekam World Peace Festival was held this year on September 17, 18 and 19.

Together with her husband and daughter Lokaa, Sri Preethaji created **Lokaa Foundation**, a charitable organization that seeks to make a difference in 1000 villages around Ekam.

The charitable activities of the Lokaa Foundation include:

- Providing clean drinking water facilities
- Pioneering afforestation in the local areas,
- Offering specialized medical services to the specially-abled.
- Initiated - Bless India with 45000 Covid safety kits distributed to covid positive cases.

Sri Preethaji is also the main inspiration behind **Oneness Youth Change Makers**, a non-profit initiative. It is a humongous life education program that focuses on creating young people into transformed leaders who impact young people in schools, colleges, and neighbourhoods. Over 5,00,000 students from various schools and colleges in India and the world have gone through this life-transforming education.

Sri Preethaji has created **Oneness Yoga Challenge** to help the world realize the true spirit of yoga. The Ekam community all over the world undertakes Oneness Yoga Challenge for the International Day of Yoga in June.

Sri Preethaji created a virtual meditation space called **Breathing Room** that brings ancient practices magnificently crafted to suit the present-day needs of individuals, families, corporations, educational institutions, and healthcare professionals.

## WHAT SETS HER APART

Learning from Sri Preethaji, for seekers worldwide, is a very delicate process of self-discovery, never an aggressive experience. Sri Preethaji's teaching style is like a

balms to a world that is already wounded. When she teaches, deep, profound insights arise in the seeker's consciousness like the clouds that part and reveal the beautiful moon behind it. She teaches in the ancient spiritual tradition of insights conveyed through parables and mythology and direct experience from the processes.

Sri Preethaji has addressed prestigious gatherings of conscious world leaders at WME IMG, FIESP, Fudan University, CEISB, Flagship Summit at Los Angeles, Sun Valley Wellness Festival Idaho, TEDx Kansas City, TEDx Shanghai. She has been on prestigious online platforms such as Goop, Marie Forleo, and Commune and covered in magazines including Forbes, Authority, and The Huffington Post.

Through the Peace in Your Eyes event, Sri Preethaji was instrumental in healing division and civil unrest in San Rafael, Colombia. After more than 50 years of civil war, millions of victims, and a 3-year-old peace treaty that had polarised the nation, 75 influential leaders of Colombian society discovered peace guided by Sri Preethaji. They learned to live in a beautiful state.

Renowned Leaders mentored by Sri Preethaji and Sri Krishnaji into learning the art of enlightened leadership are Usher Raymond, Antony Robbins, Ari Emmanuel, Lewis Howes, Mike Novogratz, Casey Sheahan, and Elliot Bisnow.

The world is a more caring place because of her presence in it.

## WHY SHE INSPIRES US

Travelling around the world more than 200 days a year, she awakens millions to live free of emotional suffering regardless of their circumstances. A rare sage in the modern world, she impacts people with the power of her silent meditations.

<https://www.pkconsciousness.com/>  
<https://www.ekam.org/>







## NEERU SHARMA

Co-founder and Director - Infibeam Avenues

### WHO

Neeru is the Co-founder and Director - Platform Business at Infibeam Avenues, a listed company offering the full stack of Online Digital Payments and Enterprise Software Platforms to merchants and businesses in India and abroad.

### HER CAREER PATH

Neeru started her professional journey as a Software Engineer with Tata Consultancy Services in 2001. As part of her tech experience, she took up Tech leadership roles for various products in the Financial Services and Telecom domain, with clients in Australia, India and France. Thereafter, she decided to pursue an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University, specializing in Finance and Strategy.

As part of her MBA program, she got an immense exposure into multiple industries, learning how to evaluate business ideas, understand business sustainability while accounting for growth, risks and changing market dynamics. Post MBA, she got the opportunity to work for Amazon in the MandA division and got tremendous insights in ecommerce. She was intrigued by the role business leaders play in moving any industry forward and was inspired to step into the world of entrepreneurship in the booming digital space.

It was at Amazon that she got connected with like-minded people with an aspiration to launch an entrepreneurial venture in the Indian ecommerce ecosystem. Together they started Infibeam as an eCommerce enabler in 2007, went public in 2016 and entered into the payments sector through the merger with India's leading payment gateway platform CCAvenue in 2017. With a strong B2B customer focus and solutions covering full stack Online Digital Payments (Payments) and Enterprise Software Platforms (SaaS) including cloud service, the company processes online transactions for merchants across industries in various sectors both in India and internationally, catering to end-to-end digital needs of businesses.

### WHY SHE INSPIRES US

She is a leader who believes that success is possible only with the right team. A true leader should recognize and unlock the potential of the team members so they grow professionally, improve, learn and excel at what they do. Unblocking unnecessary hurdles is equally important to make sure that

each person performs their best.

According to her, entrepreneurship needs a team with the right passion, belief and spirit of working together towards a common goal despite all market unknowns, customer feedbacks and changing business models. With limited resources - manpower or financial, optimal decisions are to be made. You might win some, you might fail some but the idea is to move on and take each win/failure in your stride. The goal is to make alive what you believe and then evolve it regularly so it stays new and in demand. Entrepreneurs never fail - even if they don't succeed in a venture, they grow.

For her, learning from decisions that do not go well is an opportunity to keep evolving. Learning and acceptance is key to success. Every human interaction is an opportunity to learn. Only when we keep learning, we grow as individuals. Business has to be above personal opinions or egos. Whiteboards teach us that all ideas start raw and only when we separate the person from the idea, we critique in the right spirit.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

Neeru's journey as an entrepreneur has been a rather unique one.

Coming from a middle class family living in a small town with limited business mindset and finances to dream big, she is a simple girl who was determined, sincere and committed. Her dad's short sprint with entrepreneurship did not go very well leading to financial hardships in her early life. Her mother, a housewife, stepped in to support the family needs and together, they were able to come out. She asserts that from those years, she inherited the spirit of never giving up and believing in oneself. Values like integrity, accountability and commitment, which are also core to entrepreneurship, should never be compromised.

Despite the tough circumstances, her father made sure that education was never compromised for his children, even if it meant selling their family home and leasing a smaller space. This incident strengthened her belief to never limit aspirations. She believes that an entrepreneur is not defined by gender, but by the idea and drive to make it a reality. She is not afraid to face challenges or take risks. She is an exemplary leader today who has carved out a strong name in the digital growth story of India. She actively mentors women dreamers who reach out to her for any guidance - personal or professional.

Infibeam's leadership believes in an open and entrepreneurial drive. They have successfully built a strong team and culture that allows people to challenge ideas and take initiatives. They welcome performers with work ethic as the only defining criteria for success.

*You might win some, you might fail some but the idea is to move on and take each win/failure in your stride.*



## SHWETA DESHMUKH

*The Principal Architect*

**T**he only daughter of her parents, Shweta Deshmukh is the Principal Architect of Shweta Deshmukh and Associates and Dezinebox. Born in Nagpur city of Maharashtra, her childhood was bereft with a struggle against epilepsy and the challenge to prove that she was as normal as others. Despite this, she is grateful to God for having given her the strength to overcome all odds and emerge successful. While these experiences made Shweta a spiritualist at heart, the creativity she inherited from her mother made her a passionate architect. An ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, she is an Isha meditator and follower of Sadhguru. The mother to a seven-year-old girl, she is a nature lover who believes it is the duty of each individual to conserve and protect each of God's creation on planet earth.

### THE CAREER PATH

Shweta established her architectural and interior firm at Navi Mumbai in 2010 and has become a well-known name in this field over the last 10 years. Shweta Deshmukh and Associates has worked on many weekend homes, multiplex and mall, farm houses, many commercial and residential interiors. She founded Dezinebox with her husband Abhijeet Deshmukh. Dezinebox is a tech driven start-up that makes architectural and interior designs accessible and affordable to people across all geographies.

With 20 years of domain experience, Shweta has many awards and recognitions to her credit. 'Exceptional Woman of Excellence', 'Best Coworking Design of the year', Archid award by Fortune Street and 'Most Innovative Firm of the Year 2019' are some of these accolades. She is a jury for AceTech Design wall powered by The Economic Times from the past five years and has also featured in the list of 'Top 10 Women Led Start-ups of Mumbai in 2020'. She was invited to speak on "Architect Building an IT platform" at WADe Asia. Shweta has also featured in various architectural and interior magazines as 50 Phenomenal Architects, Young Architectural Practices across country, Woman Achiever, Inspiring 50 Architects and Interior Designers of India, India's Young

## SHE WANTS TO DESIGN EVERY HOUSE ON THIS PLANET AND IF POSSIBLE OTHER PLANETS TOO!

Architects and Interior Designer, Wonder Women. She was also featured on the cover page of 'Swift n Lift' as "Asia's top 10 transformational interior designers".

### THE UNIQUE TOUCH

Shweta says she wants to design every house on this planet and if possible other planets too! She has used this passion in her work to take architecture practice to the next level. She explains that many times clients only wanted designs and do not expect an architect to visit the site; as they love executing it themselves. This not only saves their cost but also gives them the joy of designing, especially in Tier-2,3 cities. In fact, designing many small and big projects without site visits is her practice. When online furniture portals started flooding the Indian market, Shweta had conceived the idea of Dezinebox in 2014. But as she was pregnant, motherhood was prioritised and so it was only in 2017 that she decided to revive it with her husband and they both started working towards it.

Over the last three years, Dezinebox has worked on 250+ projects in more than 65 Indian cities and 5 countries that includes Kenya, UAE, Australia and USA. Thus the geographical barriers are dissolved for any kind of design work. Also, the transparent design file acts as a Design Insurance to customers and protects them against the unaccountable escalations of contractors and delays in work. Dezinebox ([www.dezinebox.io](http://www.dezinebox.io)) is already wooing its customers across the nation and fast growing in popularity. This idea is validated with its presence at Cohort15, Launchpad of NSRCEL, IIM Bangalore in 2020. And this year Dezinebox is getting incubated at NSRCEL, IIMB.

### THE FINAL WORD

Shweta's love, devotion and determination for her profession is truly inspiring. She has carved her success with great determination and perseverance, thus setting an example for others. She gives all the credit to her Guru and the omnipresent, Shiva. She explains that when she had hit the most depressing moments of her life, she surrendered herself at the feet of the Lord. And since then, she has never questioned about anything that has happened to her. She accepts everything as the wish of the Almighty and just dives in to give her best. Surrounded by her loved ones, she feels truly blessed to have a supportive and caring family who have always stood by her during challenging times, be it personal or professional.



## TANUJA GOMES

Co-Founder and Co-CEO – Furtados School of Music

### WHO

“You will never experience growth and satisfaction if you fear taking chances” Keeping this motto in mind, Ms. Tanuja Gomes the Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Furtados School of Music has always believed in the power of music and envisions making music education accessible to every individual.

### HER CAREER PATH

Tanuja Gomes is an adept banking professional who has contributed 16 years working for multinational banks like Standard Chartered, HSBC and Barclays in various geographies including India as well as Singapore. Her passion for entrepreneurship and music led her to start Furtados School of Music in 2011 with her close friend and fellow-colleague Dharini Upadhyaya.

Her personal goal is to reach out to as many other fellow women entrepreneurs and aspires to build a thriving community that inspires and supports each other. What keeps her going is her determination and aggression to keep learning and not get intimidated by any encounters. Every challenge is an opportunity, while this may sound cliché, the business model of FSM has only demonstrated that attitude. FSM, a business pre-pandemic, was essentially offline. With over 75,000 students across India, this business came to a complete standstill as schools were closed down during pandemic. The online business, an offering which was being fostered and worked upon a few months before pandemic, was put together in a record time. The DNA of the business

## HER PASSION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MUSIC LED HER TO START FURTADOS SCHOOL OF MUSIC IN 2011.

transformed since then, they have successfully taught over 25,000 students online since launch of their online music learning vertical.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

This particular perspective has encouraged her to innovate things that one would have considered impossible or difficult to attain. Today, Furtados School of Music has successfully launched Music Buddy - An online tool for students to practice at home and get instant feedback for their performance. This tool makes practicing music at home extremely easy and fun.

Tanuja's experience is her greatest teacher. She is an iron-willed leader and tries her best to understand the needs of the student by being observant and finds the easiest solutions to fulfil those needs and make the process of learning memorable. We (FSM) strive to build the best music learning experience for our students and for teachers in an environment which nourishes them and encourages them to learn further and grow.

### WHY SHE INSPIRES US

She is an ardent believer that The Core values matter the most - While the whole education delivery style has completely changed, our (FSM's) commitment to quality and solution for the same has been consistent. In difficult times, a great team that rallies together and supports the leaders unconditionally is one of the greatest assets. The core value of our company has always been how we can offer the best learning experience to our students. The transition to use digital tools while teaching music, creating the best content to deliver the classes, online performances, online jamming all this has been possible for our students. It takes years to build value and it takes time to test your values.

Tanuja's journey as an entrepreneur has been an upward learning curve and inspiration. Each day brings along its own new challenges and getting through those to continue keeping the ship of FSM sailing into the never-ending sea of possibilities is the plan!

*While passion is a very common word thrown in the ring by many, by far it can be the wings that can make you fly.*





## Ms. SHEEZA ALI KHAN

*Prominent International Baccalaureate Leader and Educator  
Member of IBEN Asia Pacific.*

### CHANGING AND CHALLENGING THE EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM

The influence and power of education is an ever-rising and unstoppable phenomenon. The recent pandemic has proved that education has no boundaries and can grow by leaps and bounds even under tremendously odd circumstances.

**Ms. Sheeza is a dynamic and ardent educator who aims to inspire people to keep learning and keep growing.** She is a proponent of active learning and supports constructivism and experiential education to achieve the real meaning of educating the youth.

From conceptualizing and establishing forward-thinking plans to collaborating with teachers and administrators to achieve consensus across multiple levels, she excels at leading and taking strategic decisions and enhancements to drive and achieve academic and operational goals while communicating openly and respectfully with all the stakeholders of the institution.

### WHAT SETS HER APART

**Being heuristic in nature is one of her most powerful attributes that sets her apart.** Her experience has been divergent and inspiring. She continuously strives to bring in a lot of value in the field of education. She believes that instilling the combination of conceptual understanding paired with learning values and life skills is quite impactful and also the need of the hour.

**Ms. Sheeza is open-minded, adaptive to multicultural environments, and supports multilingualism.** She has travelled to numerous countries for work and passion. She is also an expert in the French language and possesses various degrees and certificates from India and abroad. She was also a part of an elusive exchange program to visit different parts of France experiencing culture and values. In her quest of learning and being a lifelong learner herself,

*For her, "leadership is an act of imparting purpose" and she desires to "continue chalking her path to make a difference in her own unique way".*

she is pursuing another masters from the University of the people, California, United States.

### HER IMPRESSIVE CAREER PATH

Ms. Sheeza has diligently worked on multiple roles across the national and international curricula. **The curriculum that has caught her attention and resonates with what she aspires to achieve being an educator is International Baccalaureate (IB) - which keeps the learner at the center.** Over the years she has become a highly experienced member of the IBEN network.

Ms. Sheeza has always supported and promoted the IB philosophy across the globe. She strongly feels that the IB teaching and learning process makes the learners lifelong and independent. By the end of their academic timeline, they are proficient enough to face real-life challenges.

Her contribution to the IB community has been splendid with her visits to various schools in APAC for global quality consistency in the delivery of IB services around the world and training the Head of Schools, Coordinators, and Teachers to better implement and embed the IB philosophy in their school context.

### SHE AS AN INSPIRATION

It has been a year like no other and during this very challenging, exacting, and unexpected pandemic, when the responsibilities of educators have increased enormously, **Ms. Sheeza has galvanized many national and international educators with her most innovative, creative, and technical expertise in using virtual platforms and tools.** She embraces change and enthuses the quality of being critical and creative towards education even during tough times.

Ms. Sheeza has set a benchmark in building professional communities that value learning and creating coherence by connecting students, teachers, and learning goals. She encourages and emboldens the educators to create stimulating, engaging, and positive learning environments. She reinforces the significance of providing a platform to educators, parents, and students to voice their opinions for the betterment of learnability!