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The logo for the AWESuM CONFERENCE 2025 features a stylized purple icon of three people in a circle, followed by the text 'AWESuM CONFERENCE 2025' in purple and white.

AWESuM CONFERENCE 2025



Advancing Women's Enterprises through Sustainable Models

*Collaborate to Empower:
Strengthening the Women's Enterprise Ecosystem*

**Advancing Women's Enterprises
through
Sustainable Models**



AWESuM
CONFERENCE
2025



Advancing Women's Enterprises through Sustainable Models

Collaborate to Empower: Strengthening the Women's Enterprise Ecosystem

**December 5, 2025
The Grand, Vasant Kunj-II, New Delhi**

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) is recognised as a critical driver for achieving equitable and resilient growth. In recent times, Women's Entrepreneurship has emerged as a potential pathway to achieving WEE and has become central to inclusive and sustainable development agenda. As the nation advances toward its vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, driven by the principle of Women-led Development—especially those in rural areas—are emerging as catalysts of economic transformation. They are driving change within their communities and contributing to national development.

However, despite all the progress, India continues to face a persistent paradox: women contribute nearly 18% to the country's GDP despite constituting almost half of the population. While the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has risen from 23% in 2017–18 to over 41% in 2023–24—indicating meaningful progress—it remains below the global average of 47%. Further, women account for only about 20% of all enterprises in the country, most of which operate in the informal sector. Of these women-owned enterprises, more than 95% are microbusinesses positioned at the lowest level of the economic pyramid, operating with minimal capital and limited access to funding. While large in absolute numbers (approximately 13–15 million), the majority are single-person enterprises engaged in small-scale production.

With several efforts made to advance women's entrepreneurship in recent years, this is perhaps an opportune time to engage in conversations that will collectively support and strengthen ongoing efforts to integrate more women into the mainstream economic landscape for fostering inclusive and equitable growth. There is also a need to collaboratively address the gender-based constraints women entrepreneurs face in accessing higher value markets, capital, resources and opportunities for skill development and mentorship. Collective efforts in these areas will contribute to advancing women's labour force participation, enabling them to set up sustainable enterprises and improving their contribution to the national GDP.

In this context, ACCESS is hosting ‘**Advancing Women’s Enterprises through Sustainable Models (AWESuM) Conference 2025**’, on **December 5, 2025, at The Grand, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi**. The AWESuM Conference is a multi-stakeholder, national convening that will bring together around 150+ participants from the WEE and livelihoods space, especially those working on women’s enterprises. The conference aims to accelerate systemic change by positioning women not just as beneficiaries of growth, but as architects of sustainable economic transformation — through key discussions centred around diverse themes including transforming market strategies, bridging the gender financing gap, skilling & mentorship, and the private sector role in accelerating efforts towards women entrepreneurship. The delegates will engage in an innovative format with a mix of inaugural performance, keynote address, panel discussions, fireside chat and TED-style talk focused on topical WEE themes, offering the chance to learn best practices and explore emerging trends in India’s rapidly evolving entrepreneurship landscape. This flagship gathering will bring together policymakers, civil society, ecosystem influencers and enablers, private sector/philanthropies, financial institutions, academia, international organisations and last but not least, women entrepreneurs — all united by a shared vision of advancing women’s economic participation and to deliberate on ways to scale women-owned and women-led enterprises in India.

The conference will conclude with the **AWESuM Awards**, instituted to honour and celebrate outstanding women entrepreneurs and community-based institutions that have demonstrated leadership, resilience, and innovation in driving sustainable and inclusive economic change across rural and urban India. The awards will spotlight exceptional stories that exemplify women’s agency, enterprise growth, and community transformation, aligning directly with the conference’s overarching themes.

By uniting diverse voices and showcasing inspiring change-makers, the AWESuM Conference aims to commit to collective action, strengthen partnerships that position women’s entrepreneurship as a cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable growth and pave the way for a more equitable, resilient, and women-led economic future for India.



AWESuM
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2025

Programme Schedule



December 5, 2025

10:00 – 10:20 AM	Inaugural Session
10:00-10:30 AM	<p>Welcome Remarks Meenakshi Rathore, Vice President, Gender & Diversity</p> <p>Performance by WeBhor All-women band champions empowerment through music</p> <p>Inaugural Address Dr. Rashmi Singh, IAS, Secretary - Department of Women & Child Development and Secretary - Department of Art, Culture & Languages, Government of NCT of Delhi.</p> <p>Keynote Address Swati Sharma, IAS, Joint Secretary (Rural Livelihood), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India</p>
10:30-11:15 AM	<p>In Conversation with Women Entrepreneurs - Innovation, Inclusion, Impact: Women in the forefront</p>
Session 1	<p>Across India, women at the grassroots are transforming the economic landscape in ways that are often overlooked by mainstream narratives. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to markets, finance, technology, and leadership spaces, women entrepreneurs are successfully establishing resilient enterprises rooted in community well-being rather than individual profit alone. Their enterprises uplift local value chains, generate dignified livelihoods, preserve traditional knowledge, and foster social equity. Importantly, these models often thrive not despite barriers but because they embrace collaboration and shared ownership as pathways to economic justice. This dialogue brings together women changemakers who are redefining entrepreneurship at the grassroots through creativity, collective action, and inclusive economic leadership. Together, these women leaders will bring forth grounded insights on how women are leveraging traditional skills, collective strength, and market access to build sustainable enterprises with strong social impact. The session celebrates their innovative spirit, highlights systemic enablers and constraints, and reinforces the message that women entrepreneurs are not just running businesses—they are shaping inclusive economic futures for their communities and beyond.</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Madhu Sharan, President, Hand in Hand</p> <p>Panelists: Rakhi Gupta, Founder, Aipan Art Rakhi Anjana Singh, Member, Kirti Agro Seeds Chanda Bairagi, Chairperson, Shivohum Mahila Farmers Producer Company Mamta Arora, Secretary, Satguru Self Help Group Kamla Patidar, Manager, Kala Maitri</p>

11:15 – 11:30 AM	Networking Break
11:30-11:45 AM	Grit, Grime, and Glory- Inspiring the Next Generation of Women Leaders
Ted style Talk	<p>This session is envisioned as a powerful, personal, and inspiring narrative that spotlights the courage, resilience, and leadership that define pathways for women changemakers across India. Chhavi Rajawat will draw on her own extraordinary journey reflecting on what authentic and inclusive leadership means for women today, especially those navigating difficult terrains, limited resources, and deep-rooted barriers.</p> <p>Her pioneering work as the former Sarpanch of Soda village, her bold leadership in local governance, and commitment to driving community-centred development makes her an exceptional voice to anchor this session. The session will deeply resonate with participants—especially young women leaders and entrepreneurs—who look to role models who have challenged norms and created meaningful impact on the grassroots.</p> <p>Speaker: Chhavi Rajawat, Two-time former Sarpanch of Soda, Rajasthan, and India’s first MBA Sarpanch.</p>
11:45 – 12:30 PM	Bridging the Gender Financing Gap: Policy Pathways for Action
Session 2	<p>Women-owned and women-led entrepreneurs face persistent and systemic barriers in accessing finance across the enterprise lifecycle. Despite their growing participation in the MSME and entrepreneurial ecosystem, they remain disproportionately credit-constrained due to gender bias in lending, lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, inadequate data visibility, and weak linkages between policy frameworks and financial institutions. Most operate in the ‘missing middle,’ being too large for microfinance but viewed as high-risk or inadequately collateralised by banks and investors. Structural barriers - such as limited asset ownership, insufficient formal records, weaker networks, and bias in credit assessments - are compounded by gaps in gender-disaggregated data. Addressing this financing gap is critical to unlocking enterprise growth, job creation, and inclusive economic development. Closing this financing gap is essential for accelerating women-led enterprise growth, enhancing productivity, and advancing inclusive economic development.</p>

	<p>In this context, the session will aim to spotlight the persistent demand–supply gaps in financing women-led enterprises, explore the business case for gender-intentional lending, and identify actionable interventions to strengthen women’s access to formal finance and position gender-responsive financing not as a standalone intervention, but as a cross-cutting enabler for women’s economic empowerment and a critical driver for national growth.</p> <p>Moderator: Amit Arora, Senior Development Finance Specialist, World Bank Group</p> <p>Panelists: Aditi Singh, Chief Strategy Officer, Satin Creditcare Network Swati Chowdhary, VP - Network Development & Advocacy, South Asia, Women’s World Banking Smita Ram, Co-founder & CEO, Rang De Priya Naik, Founder and CEO, Samhita Social Ventures Pvt. Ltd.</p>
<p>12:30– 01:15 PM</p>	<p>From Local to Global: Pathways for Women-Led Market Transformation</p>
<p>Session 3</p>	<p>India’s women entrepreneurs are increasingly stepping into high-value markets—from artisanal and agri-value chains to digital commerce and export-oriented manufacturing. Yet their ability to scale beyond local markets is often challenged by limited access to market intelligence, digital visibility, quality standards, logistics infrastructure, trade networks, and procurement opportunities in both domestic and international value chains. While enabling schemes, e-commerce platforms, and export promotion interventions exist, most women-led enterprises remain confined to local, informal, or low-value marketplaces due to fragmented support, low awareness, and a lack of tailored market development pathways.</p> <p>This session brings together key voices from government, market platforms, and sector enablers to explore how women-led enterprises can grow from local markets into mainstream, national, and global value chains. The conversation will delve into existing and future strategic interventions that link market access with finance, innovation, infrastructure, branding, and skill development.</p>

	<p>By identifying scalable pathways that position women as equal market contributors, the session aims to transition women-led enterprises from local participation to global value creation.</p> <p>Moderator: Krishna Thacker, Senior Program Officer, Gates Foundation</p> <p>Panelists: Ajit B. Chavan, Additional CEO, Government e-Marketplace, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI Shilpa Mittal Singh, Joint Managing Director, Women on Wings Aparna Suresh, Lead - Community Action Collaborative (CAC), Catalyst Management Services (CMS) Rajesh Jain, Co-founder & President- Partnerships & Programmes, Ayekart</p>
1:15-2:00PM	Lunch Break
2:00 – 2:45 PM	Scaling New Heights: Capacity Building & Mentorship for Women Entrepreneurs
Session 4	<p>As women-owned enterprises evolve from ideation to growth, the demand for sector-relevant skills, business strategy support, and mentorship networks becomes central to their success. Yet most capacity-building and entrepreneurship programs continue to be fragmented, short-term, or focused on generic skilling rather than enterprise growth. Women business owners frequently lack access to tailored advisory, market-oriented skills, leadership development, technology know-how, legal and financial literacy, and sustained mentorship from experienced industry leaders. The absence of structured pathways—from skill development to enterprise competitiveness—keeps many women-led businesses confined to micro-scale activity, limiting their potential to scale.</p> <p>This session will examine priority pathways for building competitive, growth-ready women entrepreneurs, including sector-smart and demand-driven skilling, professional mentorship ecosystems, technology integration, enterprise growth and acceleration, and business support services tailored to women’s realities. The conversation will explore how capacity-building must evolve from skill creation to enterprise competitiveness, integrating leadership, finance, market intelligence, innovation, legal and digital capabilities. The session aims to define accelerated learning and mentorship systems that help women entrepreneurs scale sustainably, compete effectively, and thrive in high-growth sectors.</p>

	<p>Moderator: Amit Kumar, Head – Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, UNDP, India</p> <p>Panelists: Suhela Khan, Country Programme Manager, Women’s Economic Empowerment Smita Jacob, Director Policy Advocacy, South Asia, Women’s World Banking Asmita Joshi, Head of Public Policy, India & South Asia, Airbnb Pritha Dutt, Founder, Merabiznet</p>
<p>2:45 – 3:15 PM</p>	<p>Threads of Change: Women weaving a new future</p>
<p>Fireside Chat</p>	<p>India’s handcrafted traditions represent far more than aesthetic heritage—they are living economies, sustained largely by women who weave, stitch, dye, and design with skills inherited over generations. Yet, for decades, these women have remained on the margins of the market: working invisibly, earning below-minimum wages, and having little say in decisions that shape their creative and economic futures. As the global demand for sustainable, culturally rooted products grows, a powerful shift is underway. Women artisans, once seen only as producers, are increasingly becoming entrepreneurs, leaders, and changemakers within community-owned enterprises.</p> <p>This fireside chat explores how women artisans across India are shaping a new economic future through traditional crafts, contemporary design linkages, and sustainable market ecosystems. The session brings together leaders from craft-based social enterprises, retail platforms, and artisan-led organisations to showcase what it takes to build inclusive value chains that honour heritage while enabling women’s economic agency. The conversation will highlight innovations in the handloom and handicraft sectors, collective leadership, and a deeper understanding of how women artisans are driving sustainable development and cultural preservation, share about effective and scalable models in the craft sector that enhance livelihoods for women, identify policy and ecosystem gaps, and recommend potential avenues for intervention to weave pathways to women leadership and transformative social change.</p>

	<p>Moderator: Sumita Ghose, Founder Director, Rangсутra Crafts India</p> <p>Panelists: Rashmi Bharti, Co-Founder, Founding Secretary and Director, Avani Society Manorath Dhillon, CEO & Trustee, Okhai</p>
3:30 – 3:45 PM	Networking Break
3:45-4:30 PM	Investing in Women – the Private Sector Role in Advancing Women Entrepreneurship
Session 5	<p>Across India, women-owned enterprises are emerging as drivers of job creation, innovation, and social impact, yet they continue to be underserved by mainstream investment channels. Private investment channels– angel networks, corporate supply chains, and private financial institutions still allocate a disproportionately small share of capital, procurement contracts, and business services to women-led enterprises. Barriers such as gender-biased investment norms, perception of risk, narrow market networks, and limited visibility of women’s business potential continue to restrict women’s access to private-sector opportunities. At the same time, a growing movement toward ESG, gender-lens investing, inclusive supply chains, impact finance, and corporate responsibility present a transformative opportunity for private sector leadership.</p> <p>This session examines how the private sector can move beyond CSR-driven support to strategic, market-led investments that enable women entrepreneurs to build scalable and competitive businesses. It will explore mechanisms such as inclusive corporate procurement, gender-lens investment mandates, acceleration and incubation partnerships, blended finance models, corporate mentorship alliances, and women-focused supply-chain integration. The session will emphasize how private capital, markets, and networks can unlock sustainable enterprise growth, fostering an ecosystem where women-led businesses are not beneficiaries, but equal business partners.</p>

	<p>Moderator: Aarti Mohan, Co-Founder, Sattva Consulting</p> <p>Panelists: Dr. Nidhi Pundhir, Sr. Vice President-Global CSR, HCL Foundation Megha Jain, Senior Advisor, Private Sector, Gates Foundation Ashwini Saxena, CEO, GMR Varalaxmi Foundation Sudarshan Suchi, CEO, Reliance Foundation</p>
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Valedictory Session
	<p>Facilitation Ceremony - AWESuM Entrepreneurship Awards A dedicated awards to recognise, celebrate and elevate the remarkable journeys of women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Valedictory Address Mercy Epao, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India</p> <p>Key takeaways</p> <p>Vote of Thanks</p>

Guest Speakers





Swati Sharma, IAS

Joint Secretary (Rural Livelihood)
Ministry of Rural Development
Government of India

Swati Sharma is a distinguished IAS officer of the 2003 batch (AGMUT Cadre) currently serving as Joint Secretary, NRLM, Ministry of Rural Development. She has over 2 decades of experience in public administration, finance, urban, and allied sectors in Chandigarh, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Delhi. Before joining the Govt of India in June 2023, she was working as Special Secretary to Lt Governor of Delhi from 2013 to 2020, then as Secretary Tourism, Govt. of Delhi, and during COVID times as Secretary Health, Govt. of Delhi. In 2017, she was selected as one of the 32 Eisenhower Fellows in the US, from across the world, exchanging knowledge and ideas with American thought leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in their respective fields. She is also an Edward S. Mason Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Govt and holds a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University. She now leads initiatives focused on rural livelihoods in the Ministry of Rural Development.



Dr. Rashmi Singh, IAS

Secretary - Department of Women & Child Development
and Secretary - Department of Art, Culture & Languages,
Government of NCT of Delhi.

Chairperson - Delhi Commission for Women

Chairperson - Delhi Commission for Protection of Child
Rights

Dr. Rashmi Singh is a distinguished IAS officer with over three decades of extensive work experience focused on women's empowerment and human development. Currently, Dr. Singh serves as Secretary of the Departments of Women & Child Development and Art, Culture & Languages in Delhi, as well as Chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Women and the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights. She has received the Highest Awards for Public Service from the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) twice for her notable initiatives, Stree Shakti and Mission Convergence, which have inspired similar programs across India. Her accomplishments include the Stree Shakti Award conferred by the President of India and the Leadership Award for International Alumni from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Singh has played a crucial role in nurturing human capital, especially among women.



Mercy Epao

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises,
Government of India

Prior to her current posting, Mercy served Government of India in various capacities across the Ministries/ Departments for the past 25 years. Some of her important postings inter alia are Ministries of Finance, Housing & Urban Affairs and Development of North

Eastern Region (DoNER) in various capacities. During her service, she handled different subjects viz. Agriculture and Allied Sector in DoNER, externally aided projects for the NER, Pay related matters, Cadre review of All India Service (AIS), HR and Administration etc the MSME sector through capacity building, technological up gradation amongst others. National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), National Institute of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (NiMSME), Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI) are the organizations under her charge. Besides, the media cell under her gives wide coverage to the benefits/schemes of the Ministry. Her passion is to see women and weaker / marginalized section entrepreneurs to attain knowledge for gainful entrepreneurship leading to social upliftment and economic empowerment. She holds additional charge of CMD, Director (Planning & Marketing) and Director (Finance) of NSIC. In addition, she also looks after coordination of various subjects such as Vision India @2047, Toy Manufacturers Hub, Swachhta Campaign and Director in few Autonomous Bodies



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Speakers



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Amit Arora

Senior Development Finance Specialist
World Bank Group

Amit Arora is a commercial banker turned development finance specialist, working with the World Bank Group since 2016. Having started his career with ICICI Bank in 1996, he has over 27 years of experience across commercial banking, capital markets, and development banking, including stints at IndusInd, IDBI, and Axis Bank. Prior to the World Bank Group, he served as a Sr Rural Finance Specialist with GIZ, focusing on Rural-Cooperatives and Digital Financial Inclusion. Currently, he is involved in several projects at the World Bank Group and IFC focusing on Agri Finance and Digital Financial Inclusion for the new to credit segment, with women centrality as a common thread.



Asmita Joshi

Head of Public Policy,
India and South Asia, Airbnb

Asmita Joshi, currently serving as the Head of Public Policy for Airbnb in India and South Asia, is at the forefront of advocacy for leveraging technology to empower communities. With a background spanning critical public policy roles and social impact mandates across policy teams at Uber, Apple, and Razorpay, she navigates complex regulatory landscapes. In her current role, she leads advocacy for progressive governance and strategic partnerships to harness the potential of digital empowerment within the tourism landscape. Driven by a vision of inclusive growth, she is dedicated to shaping a more equitable future through innovative policy solutions.



Dr. Madhu Sharan

President
Hand In Hand India

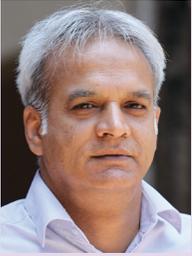
Dr. Madhu Sharan is a Livelihoods and Gender Specialist with over three decades of work experience in academia and the development sector. As President of a leading, international NGO, Hand in Hand India, she oversees projects related to livelihood promotion, financial inclusion, women empowerment and community development. Additionally, she has worked as a Consultant with several multilateral organizations, including ADB, GIZ, and DFID, for monitoring and evaluating projects related to MSME, financial inclusion, and women's entrepreneurship; and has published several articles in leading international journals and print media on the above themes. She is a Sociologist, having completed her graduation from Delhi University and her post-graduation, M.Phil and PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.



Aarti Mohan

Co-founder and Partner
Sattva Consulting

Aarti Mohan heads the Practice areas of Gender and Responsible Supply Chains, delivering impact across diverse ecosystems. Over 15+ years, she has brought large-scale initiatives to life in partnership with global and domestic philanthropies, non-profits, and governments, across India, Africa, and Asia. Her notable contributions span women's economic empowerment, digital transformation, agriculture, healthcare, and water. Rooted in the belief that markets should work for and with everyone, she pushes for sustainable pathways in business. Her gender-focused work includes advising philanthropies and leading initiatives around women's entrepreneurship and agriculture. She holds a degree in Computer Engineering from BITS Pilani.

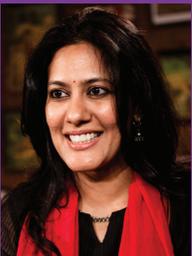


Amit Kumar

Head – Sustainable and Inclusive Growth
UNDP, India

Amit has over 28 years of progressive experience in the UN system, bilateral cooperation, and international development organizations – with a proven track record of designing and leading governance and participation programmes, providing high-level policy advisory services, and managing large, multi-sector portfolios that promote effective governance, gender equality, inclusive participation, and sustainable development.

In his current role at UNDP, he heads the sustainable and inclusive growth portfolio which encompasses policy and programmatic response, promote inclusive development that leads to transformational change in people’s lives with the overall aim of leaving no one behind. He holds a Master of International Business from the Delhi School of Economics.



Chhavi Rajawat

Former Sarpanch of Soda
First MBA Sarpanch of India

Chhavi Rajawat, a two-time Sarpanch of Soda village in Tonk, Rajasthan, is India’s first MBA Sarpanch and an Aspen Fellow. A celebrated rural development leader, she has spoken at national and international forums and received numerous honours, including the First Ladies National Award, Reebok’s Fit to Fight Award, and recognition from former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. An alumna of LSR and IIMM Pune, she has also attended programs at ISB and Harvard. During her decade-long tenure, she transformed Soda through water conservation, infrastructure development, education, and community empowerment. She now leads the revival of Eminent Girls College to strengthen rural women’s futures.



Krishna Thacker

Senior Program Officer-Women's Economic Empowerment,
India Country Office, Gates Foundation

Krishna Thacker is a Senior Program Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in India. Krishna is focused on accelerating women's economic empowerment with a special emphasis on rural livelihoods, digital and other innovations to expand access to capital and markets and, building strong public and private sector partnerships.

Krishna brings 20 years of experience working at the intersection of public, private, and nonprofit sectors in design and delivery of high-impact economic and financial inclusion programs. He has worked directly across 14 developed and developing countries across Asia Pacific as well as in the United States and Latin America. Previously, Krishna led a fortune 40 corporation's philanthropic work in the Asia Pacific region where he deployed more than \$80 million in grants and impact investments directly reaching >11 million low-income individuals in the region, 65% of whom are women.



Sumita Ghosh

Founder Director
RangSutra Crafts India

Sumita Ghose is the Founder-Director of rangSutra, a social enterprise that facilitates socio-economic transformation for rural artisans through the market. Founded in 2006, rangSutra bridges the gap between artisans and buyers of handcrafted products. Before this, she lived and worked with rural communities, primarily in Rajasthan with the URMUL Trust, focusing on women's empowerment. She holds Master's degrees in Economics and Conflict Transformation (as a Fulbright Scholar). She is a recipient of the Nari Shakti Award.



Ajit B. Chavan

Additional CEO, Chief Seller Officer & Chief Marketing Officer
Government e-Marketplace, Ministry of Commerce and
Industry

Shri Ajit B. Chavan, a Civil Servant from the 1995 batch of the Central Secretariat Service, currently serves as Additional CEO and Chief Seller Officer at Government e-Marketplace (GeM), Ministry of Commerce & Industry. Since January 2023, he has led major inclusivity and seller-growth reforms, onboarding over 9.8 lakh sellers and reducing the cost of entry for MSEs by nearly 90%. Under his leadership, GeM achieved a ₹5.43 lakh crore GMV in 2024–25.

With 27+ years of experience across Textiles, Commerce, Agriculture, Health, and Heavy Industries, he has driven impactful policy reforms, including significant growth in agricultural exports. Shri Chavan holds advanced qualifications in Economics, International Business, Journalism, Disaster Preparedness, and Public Procurement.



Smita Ram

Co-founder & CEO
Rang De

Smita Ram is the CEO and co-founder of Rang De, a pioneering peer-to-peer lending platform in India. With a Master's Degree in Social Work and extensive experience in social initiatives, she is dedicated to creating a meaningful impact. Since co-founding Rang De in 2008, she has led the organization in providing affordable credit to low-income entrepreneurs, fostering sustainable livelihoods. In 2017, she guided Rang De's successful transition to an NBFC P2P. She is a recipient of the International Women's Day Award from the Delhi Commission for Women, recognized by SheSparks of Bharat in 2023. Additionally, she won the Start-Up Karnataka's Elevate - Competitive Grant in the financial inclusion category.



Swati Chowdhary

Vice President- FSP Network Development and Advocacy,
South Asia
Women's World Banking

Swati Chowdhary is the Vice President, FSP Network Development and Advocacy for South Asia at Women's World Banking, with over 20 years of experience in financial services, MSME, and financial inclusion. She leads business and partnership development, collaborating with donors, corporations, government agencies, and policymakers to design innovative programs for women's financial inclusion. Prior to this, she worked with a leading private bank for a decade across financial inclusion, product management, and credit risk. She holds an MBA in Rural Management from the Institute of Rural Management, Anand, and is a champion of the Energy Dozen under the EU-India Clean Energy Partnership.



Priya Naik

Founder and CEO
Samhita Social Ventures Pvt. Ltd.

Priya Naik is a prosperity accelerator and systems orchestrator driving inclusive growth in India. Over the past 15 years, Samhita has partnered with 250+ funders, 500+ social organizations, and 30+ government institutions, impacting 17 million Indians across livelihoods, health, education, and environment. Priya has previously worked with the International Finance Corporation, the Poverty Action Lab at MIT, and Arthur Andersen. She holds master's degrees from Yale University, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and Mumbai University, where she was a Gold Medalist, along with an Executive Education degree from Harvard Business School.



Suhela Khan

Country Programme Manager- Women's Economic Empowerment Programme
UN Women

Suhela Khan is the Country Programme Manager for the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme at UN Women in India. She has extensive experience in managing large-scale transformational programmes focused on integrating feminist principles to advance women's economic rights. Her expertise includes programme development, management, implementation, measuring impact, and partnership building. She has worked extensively with Central and State Governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations. She is a Ford Fellow and holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Michigan. technology & finance and bringing people, purpose & profit together. As a founder, he was responsible for building the company from scratch to a sustainable level of profit generation. His deep interest into emerging new normal space of trisection of sustainability, technology and finance encourages him to support start ups, companies in space of clean tech products, Electric mobility, innovative IT tech solutions.



Dr. Nidhi Pundhir

SVP, Global CSR, HCLTech
Director, HCLFoundation

Dr. Nidhi Pundhir is the Senior Vice President, Global CSR, at HCLTech and Director of the HCLFoundation. As an international humanitarian services and development specialist, she leads the global CSR agenda and heads HCLTech's CSR arm in India. She strategizes and executes impactful programmatic frameworks aligned with SDGs for disadvantaged communities. With over 27 years of experience in Human Rights and Environmental action, she has held key roles at SOS Children's Villages and Plan International. She holds a doctorate in Public Health Management.



Megha Jain

Senior Advisor– Private Sector
Gates Foundation

Megha Jain is a senior advisor in the private sector team at BMGF and works across the different program teams at ICO on efforts to increase engagement with the private sector. Prior to joining BMGF, she worked with Insitor Partners, a Venture Capital fund, and led the India investment team. Prior to Insitor, she worked with Lincoln International in an M&A advisory role for 5 years and with EY in a strategy consulting role for 3+ years.

She holds an MBA from FMS, Delhi and a Bachelor's in Engineering from Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology (NSIT / DCE), Delhi. She is also a CFA (AIMR-USA) Charter holder.



Aditi Singh

Chief Strategy Officer
Satin Creditcare Network

Aditi Singh has around two decades of experience in the financial services industry. She possesses extensive knowledge in Investment Banking, Private Equity, Fund Raising, Mergers and Acquisitions, Deal Structuring, and Negotiations. At Satin, her responsibilities include Strategy, Investor Relations, Public Relations and Communication, Collections, Foreign Debt Raising from DFIs, Credit Ratings, Stakeholder Management, Environmental Social Governance, and Social Performance Management. Prior to Satin, she worked with CG Corp Global as Head M&A, heading projects across Middle East, Africa, and North America. She is a gold medalist in Economics (Hons.) from Banasthali Vidyapith.

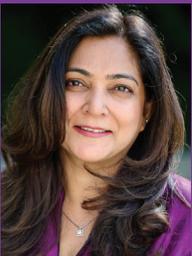


Aparna Suresh

Lead - Community Action Collaborative (CAC)
Catalyst Management Services (CMS)

Aparna Suresh leads the Community Action Collaborative (CAC) at Catalyst Management Services (CMS), a multistakeholder platform of 300+ organizations working to strengthen the resilience of communities and institutions against everyday and future crises.

She also leads CMS's work on social procurement, engaging corporates, social enterprises, and ecosystem actors to promote responsible and inclusive procurement approaches. Trained as a lawyer, Aparna works at the intersection of collaborative action and systems change to expand access and visibility for impact-focused enterprises and networks.



Shilpa Mittal Singh

Joint Managing Director
Women on Wings

Shilpa Mittal Singh is the Joint Managing Director of Women on Wings, a nonprofit dedicated to creating one million jobs for women in rural India. A management postgraduate with over 25 years of experience in sales and business strategy, she has worked with organizations such as ITC and Monster. She focuses on advancing women's economic empowerment by partnering with social enterprises and government institutions to drive scalable, sustainable livelihood opportunities.



Rashmi Bharti

Co-Founder, Founding Secretary & Director
Avani Society

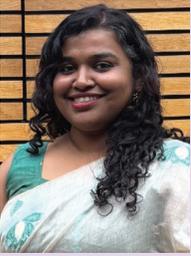
Rashmi Bharti is the co-founder and founding Secretary of Avani, an NGO in the Indian Himalayas, where she has worked with rural communities for 34 years. She is an award-winning craft revivalist, enabling rural women to be financially independent. She set up a handloom cooperative marketing high-quality textiles using natural fibers and dyes. Her innovation in indigo farming is now implemented across four Indian states, promoting regeneration and wasteland reclamation. She won the Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 2024 and the Nari Shakti award in 2018 for Avani's women's empowerment work.



Pritha Dutt

Founder
Merabiznet

Pritha Dutt is the Founder of Merabiznet, a 'phygital' platform for women entrepreneurs, established in 2023. She has over 20 years of experience in the development sector spanning vocational skills, employment, and entrepreneurship. She previously served as Chairperson on the Domestic Workers Skill Council Board and headed ASTP, the nodal advocacy body for the skill sector. She also leads the Centre for Gender Equality & Inclusive Leadership at XLRI and is an Independent Director on Company Boards. Prior to this, she spent 16 years in the corporate sector post her MBA.



Smita Jacob

Policy Advocacy Director - South Asia
Women's World Banking

Smita Jacob leads Policy Advocacy for Women's World Banking in South Asia, working with governments and regulators to advance women's financial inclusion and empowerment. Prior to this, she worked extensively on large-scale programs for women's economic empowerment. She was part of the founding team of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), contributing to the program's design and establishing the institutional architecture in the North Eastern Region. She is also the founder of Krea Collectives. She holds a Master's degree from both Johns Hopkins-SAIS and TISS, Mumbai.



Manorath Dhillon

CEO & Trustee
Okhai centre for empowerment

Manorath Dhillon is a Designer, Artist, and Entrepreneur whose work spans various disciplines, materials, and industries. She joined Okhai to help build their design philosophies and drive social innovation through craft development and design transformation, leading to sustainable growth of the brand. As an entrepreneur and a passionate advocate for social change, she deeply believes in pushing boundaries, challenging conventional norms, and using the power of creativity for a deep and transformative impact on communities. She is an alumna of NID Ahmedabad and Istituto Europeo Di Design.



Rajesh Jain

Co-Founder and President
Partnerships & Programmes, Ayekart

Rajesh Jain is the Co-Founder and President – Partnerships & Programmes at Ayekart , where he leads inclusive, tech-enabled solutions for agri-supply chains and rural enterprises. With over three decades of experience spanning livelihoods, financial inclusion, and program management, he has held senior leadership roles at organizations such as Wadhvani AI, Grant Thornton Bharat, Swades Foundation, ACCESS Development Services, Indian Institute of Crafts & Design, RUDA as well with Govt. of Rajasthan.

Rajesh is widely recognized for building sustainable empowerment models that bridge farmers, collectives, and markets, and for driving Ayekart’s mission to transform rural commerce through innovation and collaboration. He is also on board of Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains.



Ashwini Saxena

CEO
GMR Varalakshmi Foundation

Ashwini Saxena currently serves as CEO of GMR Varalakshmi Foundation. Prior to this, he transformed the JSW Foundation as its CEO and was a Founding Board Director of JSW Shakti. In his 32+ years of experience with organizations like UNIDO, IFC (World Bank), and corporates, he led MSME development and Sustainability programs across India and Africa. He contributes to various Task Forces and Jurys, including the CII National Task Force of Water. He is a Certified ESG Director and holds Master’s degrees in Geology and Business Management.



Sudarshan Suchi

Chief Development Officer
Reliance Foundation

Sudarshan S., currently, serves as the Chief Development Officer at Reliance Foundation. Formerly the CEO of Save the Children India, he is a seasoned civil society leader and an authority in participatory practices for empowering communities to lead transformation. He has rich local and global experience in academics, development, and in the corporate environment. An alumnus of Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, UK, and St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, he is a leading development professional, with myriad professional achievements including successful advocacy for reforms in cooperative laws and the Producer Company Act Enactment; turnaround of AP Dairy cooperatives; launching of the largest bio-diesel cultivation initiative in India; and executing one of the largest Rural Transformation initiatives at Reliance Foundation. He also brings in academic experience, having teaching experience at IRMA and IIMHR.



Rakhi Gupta

Founder
Aipan Art Rakhi

Rakhi Gupta, from Haldwani (Nainital, Uttarakhand), has been passionate about art since childhood and later trained in Bombay Art. After marriage, she began practising Aipan folk art with women in her community, gradually receiving small orders. During the 2020 lockdown, she started wall painting, which gained strong appreciation on social media and led to growing work opportunities. She has since trained 40–50 women, including a 45-day programme for inmates at Haldwani District Jail. Rakhi now works to promote authentic Aipan, expand its market globally, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for women in Uttarakhand.



Anjana Singh

Member
Kirti Agro Seeds

Anjana Singh, an M.A. graduate from Tilav, Mirzapur, is the dynamic force behind Kirti Agro Seeds, a flourishing seeds plantation business established in March 2021.

Demonstrating exceptional dedication, Anjana initially secured a large loan from the Agriculture Department and invested her personal contribution to start her venture. Her enterprise, affiliated with the Lakshmi SHG and Lakshya Prerna Mahila CLF, has grown remarkably. She recently received a CCL loan under the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Project by Development Alternatives, which was used, along with personal savings, to expand her seed processing business. Anjana's leadership provides significant employment, currently supporting 25–30 workers daily, which scales up to 50–60 during peak seasons. Importantly, her workforce predominantly consists of women from local self-help groups, making her a powerful agent for women's empowerment in her community.



Chanda Bairagi

Chairperson
Shivohum Mahila Farmers Producer Company

Chanda Bairagi, a 12th-pass homemaker from Jagar, Mirzapur, with six dependent family members, transformed her life by embracing entrepreneurship. In 2022, she attended the inaugural meeting of the Farmer Producer

Company (FPC) where she learned about the PMFME scheme and decided to start a Spice Processing Unit. Despite initial family skepticism and significant domestic responsibilities, Chanda was determined. She secured a bank loan and invested her personal savings to launch the business. Facing a lack of production experience, she proactively utilized YouTube, consulted spice traders, and incorporated immediate feedback from SHG sisters who sold her initial products. Today, Chanda is the Chairman of the FPC and a successful entrepreneur. She has earned decision-making power at home and is seen as a role model in her community. Her future plan is to further expand her enterprise and provide training and self-employment opportunities to other women, fostering economic independence for all.



Mamta Arora

Secretary
Satguru Self Help Group

Mamta Arora, a dedicated schoolteacher by profession, also serves as a key member and leader of the “Satguru Self Help Group,” popularly known as the “Satguru Notebook Making Unit.” Under her guidance, the group has grown into a strong rural enterprise, enabling women from village communities to gain financial independence and build sustainable livelihoods.

Through her leadership, the enterprise has successfully completed significant orders, including a major project worth ₹2,80,000 for HMEL. Her efforts have not only strengthened the group’s economic stability but have also created meaningful opportunities for women to enhance their skills, confidence, and entrepreneurial capabilities—making her a true champion of women’s empowerment in rural India.



Kamla Patidar

Manager
Kala Maitri

Kamla Didi, Manager of the Kala Maitri women-led textile collective in Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh, transformed her life through entrepreneurship. Joining in 2019, she quickly moved from being unsure to leading. Kamla Didi embraced specialized training to master cutting and apparel design, helping the collective transition to producing kurtis and palazzos. When the group needed structure, she courageously took on the role of manager, building robust systems for raw material procurement, quality control, stock inventory, and digital record-keeping—skills she learned from scratch. Her journey has dramatically increased her mobility, taking her from her home to major exhibitions in Delhi and Mumbai. Kamla Didi now embodies the power of shared ownership and transparent systems, turning Kala Maitri into a powerful model for women’s economic and social empowerment.



Reshma

WeBhor



Sakshi

WeBhor

WeBhor is an all-women band - a vibrant collective of musicians who use music to champion women's empowerment and gender equity. For six years, we've been writing and performing original songs on menstrual health, reproductive rights, safety, and equality, along with folk music and Kamla Bhasin's powerful works. Our performances - featured by organizations like Bridgespan, Plan India, Breakthrough, ILSS, and Ford Foundation, blend soulful melodies and strong messaging to spark dialogue and inspire change.



AWESuM
CONFERENCE
2025

**AWESuM Entrepreneurship
Awards 2025**



The **AWESuM Entrepreneurship Awards 2025** stands as a dedicated initiative to recognise, celebrate, and elevate the remarkable journeys of women entrepreneurs across India who have emerged from low-income, underserved, and marginalised communities. These women represent the spirit of grassroots entrepreneurship—individuals who have refused to be defined by their circumstances and instead transformed adversity into pathways of possibility. These stories often remain invisible in mainstream narratives, and AWESuM aims to give them the platform, visibility, and respect they deserve.

By highlighting these trailblazing women, the Awards not only celebrate their achievements but also contribute to reshaping societal perceptions of who an entrepreneur can be. They inspire young women and aspiring changemakers across the country, particularly those facing similar challenges, to envision themselves as leaders, innovators, and creators of economic and social value. Each AWESuM Award category reflects a powerful truth—**that India's growth story is incomplete without the women who drive its grassroots economy.**

This year, we received an encouraging and diverse range of nominations from across the country—including Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. The applications reveal powerful, recurring themes that reflect the evolving landscape of grassroots women-led enterprises in India. Across sectors—from handicrafts and food processing to green technologies, menstrual health, and agriculture—women entrepreneurs are driving change rooted in resilience, innovation, and deep community impact.

A total of 60 inspiring applications were submitted, of which based on the assessment criteria of– Business Growth, Innovation, and Governance, 26 applications were advanced to the final round across three categories: Individual Enterprise, Group-Based Enterprise, and Promoting Institution. After a rigorous evaluation by a Jury based on eligibility criteria and assessment parameters, **10 outstanding awardees** have been selected for AWESuM Entrepreneurship Awards 2025. A consistent pattern emerges of women transforming traditional skills into sustainable livelihoods, building collective strength through SHGs and cooperatives, and leveraging digital tools to expand markets. Their journeys highlight a strong commitment to environmental sustainability, financial independence, and social empowerment, even as they navigate gender bias, limited resources, and cultural constraints. Together, these stories demonstrate that when women lead, communities thrive, enterprises grow, and the vision of an inclusive, equitable India comes closer to reality.

Meet our awardees at the AWESuM Conference 2025!

**AWESuM Entrepreneurship
Awardees**



AWESuM
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2025



Shainaz Shaikh

Founder & CEO
AI- Genix International

Shahnaz Shaikh is the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of AI-GENIX INTERNATIONAL Pvt Ltd, a pioneering agritech company headquartered in Mumbai, India. With a bold vision to revolutionize farming practices, she leads AI-GENIX in developing AI-driven, chemical-free crop protection solutions that serve as complete replacements for traditional pesticides.

Her patented technologies empower farmers to grow safe, sustainable, and environmentally friendly food while protecting global ecosystems. Under her leadership, AI-GENIX has become a recognized innovator in the Agri tech space, combining artificial intelligence with sustainable agriculture to address one of the world's most pressing challenges — climate change, food security without chemical dependency.



Babli Koranga

Founder
Babli Enterprises

Babli Koranga is from the Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. For the past four years, she has been associated with a self-help group, creating eco-friendly products from cow dung and enabling livelihood opportunities for women. She has been honoured as a “Lakhpatti Didi” and has also been featured on national television as “Bharat Ki Farm Lady – Babli Koranga.” She is working to transform waste into valuable resources and promote nature-friendly living.



Aruna Dara

CEO & Founder
Apna Green Products

Aruna Dara is a visionary social entrepreneur and Founder of Apna Green Products, pioneering biodegradable sanitary napkins made from natural plant fibers.

She also established the Apna Green Foundation to empower next-generation entrepreneurs through sustainability, digital innovation, and AI-based support. With 10+ years of experience in women's livelihood development, she mentors startups, MSMEs, and students as an MHRD External Mentor and Walmart Vriddhi Mentor.

She serves as Board Director at the Vasantha Keshav Rao Foundation, advancing eco-innovation and women empowerment initiatives. A World Book of Records Power Woman, she was honoured with the Telangana Best Manufacturer Award (2023).



Ila Shah

CEO of Shri Gujarat Mahila Lok Swasthya SEWA Sahakari
Mandali Ltd - Lok Swasthya Sewa

Ila Shah CEO of Shri Gujarat Mahila Lok Swasthya SEWA Sahakari Mandali Ltd (LOK Swasthya SEWA). Lok Swasthya SEWA Cooperative (Shri Gujarat Mahila Lok

Swasthya Sewa Sahakari mandala Ltd) a membership-based organization of frontline health workers, midwives, health educators and pharmacists was registered in 1990. It is registered under the cooperative laws of Gujarat with 1543 shareholders, all of whom are women. LSM is the first of its kind in India where informal women workers use, own and manage their Cooperative. Lok Swasthya was set up with the objective of providing lifesaving, health education with a preventive focus and low cost, appropriate curative services including medicine at women's doorsteps. It also creates linkages to help women avail of government schemes and services.



Anjali Singh

Founder

Jute Artisans Guild Association

Anjali Singh fondly known as Jutewali Anjali I, is a passionate social entrepreneur and the visionary founder of the Jute Artisans Guild Association. With a mission to empower women and promote eco-friendly alternatives, she has built a strong community of 1000+ artisans who work intermittently across Lucknow and nearby areas.

Through her leadership, the association has transformed jute—the golden, sustainable fiber—into a tool of livelihood and dignity. Anjali has created consistent work opportunities, skill training programs, and a vibrant ecosystem that champions sustainability and women’s economic empowerment.



Sunita Kashyap

MD

Mahila Umang Co Producers Ltd.

Sunita Kashyap is from Naini village, Almora district of Uttarakhand. She has completed her education in M.A. Sociology, Correspondence Business Management, and Master of Social Work. She started working 18 years and 4 months ago, and during her employment, she continued her studies for 8 years. She has been engaged in social work for the past 30 years and is deeply passionate about her work. She is currently the Managing Director of Umang, an organization of women farmers and weavers from the Kumaon region. Umang began with just three women under the guidance of Grassroots, and today, 2,500 women are associated with the collective. The organization is entirely operated and managed by women of Kumaon.



Aakriti Srivastava

CEO, Co-founder
Yukta Bahula Foods

Aakriti Srivastava is an impact entrepreneur and co-founder of Bahula Naturals, India's first community-pastoral milk brand based in the Thar Desert. She transformed her early experiences as a journalist documenting pastoralist communities into a mission-driven enterprise that bridges sustainable dairying, climate resilience, and rural livelihoods. Under her leadership, Bahula works with over 4,000 camel herders to build a regenerative dairy ecosystem bringing good food from resilient geographies to conscious consumers while restoring dignity, income, and ecological balance across desert communities.



Sadhna Parmar

President
Saundarya Safai Mahila Ltd.

Sadhna Parmar is the President of Saundarya Safai Mahila Ltd. She has been working with the Saundarya Mandali for 32 years. The organisation was registered in 1986 and has been working for 39 years. The organisation provides housekeeping facilities for government officials, schools, hospitals, residential towers, societies, complexes, etc.



SEWA

SELF EMPLOYED WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is India's largest national trade union of self-employed women in the informal economy, representing over 3.2 million members across 18 states and seven South Asian countries. Rooted in Gandhian values, SEWA has spent five decades organizing poor women workers toward its twin goals of full employment and self-reliance. Through technical training, microfinance, market linkages, and resource management across various trades, SEWA builds collective strength that transcends caste, community, religion, and borders. Its integrated strategy—combining union power with cooperatives—supports better incomes, skills, credit, and resilience, enabling women to adapt to economic shifts and secure sustainable livelihoods.



Okhai Centre for Empowerment

Okhai is an artisan-led social enterprise that brings together heirloom Indian crafts and contemporary design. It began in Okhamandal, a village in Gujarat, with a small group of artisans and a simple mission - to support rural makers, empower women, revive traditional crafts, and make them accessible to the world. Today, Okhai is India's largest artisanal e-commerce marketplace, representing 30,000 artisans across 68 tribes and indigenous craft clusters.

By enabling artisans to sell directly to customers, Okhai gives them a platform to sustain and grow their craft. When you choose Okhai, you preserve India's craft heritage and support the communities behind it.

If it's Okhai, it's Authentic.

Advancing Women Entreprises India Network

The AWE India Network is a collaborative platform dedicated to Advancing Women Enterprises, across the country. Inspired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for women as equal partners in a self-reliant India, the network aims to create a supportive ecosystem that brings together diverse stakeholders to foster the growth and success of women-led businesses. The network intends to engage with concerned ecosystem stakeholders to strengthen the enabling environment by facilitating and fostering collaboration, mentorship, and access to resources, to help the advancement of women enterprises. The "AWE" SOME Vision of the network is to reach out to 5 million women entrepreneurs by 2030.



In a short span of time, the network has grown to 71+ member organizations, bringing together CSOs, domain experts, and grassroots voices committed to strengthening the ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. Over the past year, four convenings have been held, engaging more than 200 stakeholders from diverse sector represented by civil society organisations, the private sector, financial institutions, and policymakers, positioning AWE as a catalyst for inclusive entrepreneurial transformation.

AWE India Network functions as a collaborative platform to foster a robust ecosystem that actively drives gender equality and economic progress. The network's strategic work is supported by four pillars - **Knowledge Sharing** aims to build a dynamic platform for continuous collaboration and exchange among entrepreneurs, CSOs, and partners; **Institutional Product Creation** focuses on developing and widely sharing critical resources, such as research papers, policy briefs, and other innovative knowledge products specifically for women entrepreneurs; **Capacity Building and Mentorship** involves facilitating crucial access to markets, personalized mentorship, and essential enterprise development opportunities. Finally, **Policy Support** involves convening national and state-level forums to advocate gender-responsive entrepreneurship policies. Since its inception, AWE India has convened four national meetings, bringing together key stakeholders to discuss challenges and define strategies for women's enterprise development, leading to formulation of four of a core group to provide guidance and advise to the AWE India Network and four thematic working groups to deep dive into the entrepreneurial ecosystem to address critical issues of women enterprises related to access to finance, markets, skilling and mentorship and cross-cutting policy support issues.

We encourage potential members, including NGOs supporting women entrepreneurs, Microfinance Institutions & NBFCs, state-level networks, private sector companies and CSR units, grassroots organizations, women entrepreneurs and collectives, and development experts, to join the AWE India Network. By sharing your knowledge and resources, you will help us empower 5 million women by 2030 and build an India where every woman has equal opportunities to succeed as an entrepreneur.

AWE India Secretariat is facilitated by **ACCESS Development Services**.

About the Organiser

ACCESS Development Services is a national livelihoods support organization based out of New Delhi, with focus on incubating innovations for promoting sustainable livelihoods of those living in poverty. Set up in 2006, with support from DFID (Govt. of U.K), ACCESS is structured uniquely, to work at all

levels of the development sector eco-system. On the ground - Tier I, ACCESS engages directly with the community through an integrated set of intertwined interventions, seeking to empower them to participate in the mainstream economic milieu. Over the last 19 years, ACCESS has implemented over 185 diversified programmes, impacting the lives of over 410,000 households.

At Tier II, ACCESS provides techno-managerial services to large programmes of the government and multilateral/bilaterals, builds the capacity of other capacity builders, undertakes studies, and develops training content as a public good. At Tier III, ACCESS seeks to strengthen the enabling environment through supporting policy. It annually organizes two national level Summits and brings out annual reports on financial inclusion and livelihoods. ACCESS also periodically organises policy round tables, and thematic retreats, among others to build consensus on issues.

ACCESS works with the most marginalized and excluded communities, including scheduled castes, tribal populations, small and marginal farmers,

and weavers and artisans among others. Since 2016, ACCESS has started to proactively expand its portfolio in women's empowerment, with the cross-cutting focus to economically empower women and bring them into the mainstream economic milieu.



ACCESS Development Services

AWESuM Conference Secretariat



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AWESuM
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VISION 2030

*5 million
Women Entrepreneurs*



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