

समवादे

Issue IX

Creating an Equal World

KEYNOTE



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Group Leader, Tech Mahindra Limited
Lead Pune, Tech Mahindra Foundation

Dear Friends,

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them" is one quote which has stayed with me through all these years. I've come across many anecdotes of the sheer determination of our beneficiaries such as Divya Thorat & Priyanka Gaikwad (who are radio jockeys despite their visual impairment) and Karishma Danane (a student from Kalamb, who relocated 30 kms from her home to pursue her dreams at our SMART centre). Such stories continue to remind me of the commitment and resilience of our programs towards eliminating gender gaps.

In recent years, various global organizations have made significant strides towards accelerating gender equality. Tech Mahindra Foundation works with the mandate of ensuring that at least 50% of all its beneficiaries are girls or women each year. Over the years we have taken various initiatives in skilling and uplifting women under our flagship employability program called Skills for Market Training - SMART. One such project that aligns with this vision is our all women Healthcare Academy at Mumbai. The Foundation has also worked towards sensitizing and fostering a culture of acceptance for the transgender community. A beauty and wellness training centre was started in 2019 with the objective of making them confident and independent.

This ninth edition of Samvaad is dedicated to gender equality and the endeavors made by the Foundation to address the gender gap. It also carries the voices of the beneficiaries from the transgender community from the TMF-SMART Ruchika centre, Bhubaneswar as well as insights from TMF partners Safa and Shusrusa who work relentlessly to serve women from under-served communities. A highlight of this edition is an interview with Ms Meenu Vadera, founder of Azad Foundation who talks about the gender discourse in the development space and the importance of women welfare at workplaces.

While we gear up our efforts to achieve gender equality, it delights me to say that working in the social sector and in particular with the Foundation has helped me find a purpose to work towards their betterment. In the same breadth, I truly hope that the readers of Samvaad also find ways or create opportunities to work towards this greater cause with equal fervour.

"It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals".

BENEFICIARY CORNER

As we step into the 76th year of independence, Tech Mahindra Foundation takes this opportunity to present to you its commitment towards gender equity and economic empowerment of members of the transgender community. Although India has become cognizant of the third gender, it is still a long pursuit for them to feel accepted, included and having voices that are heard without biases.

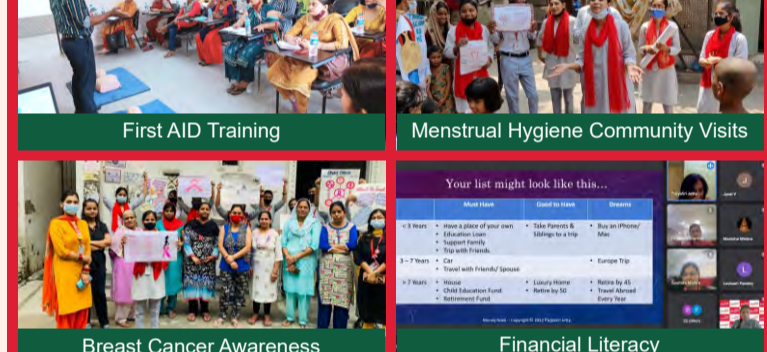
Bharatpur in Khordha district, on the fringes of Bhubaneswar city has a sizeable transgender population. Transgenders have very little choice, or no choice at all, when it comes to livelihood options in the organized service sector. They face issues of health, social acceptance and education, among many others.

Here's a small snippet of our conversation with the beneficiaries from the Ruchika - SMART TMF centre, Bhubaneswar.



TMF INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN

Empowering women has been one of central focus areas of Tech Mahindra Foundation. Here is a glimpse of some of our women-centric initiatives.



INTERVIEW WITH MEENU VADERA



Meenu Vadera, a graduate of the London School of Economics, is a grassroots practitioner, trainer and founder of Azad Foundation, working for the socio-economic development of women for over 20 years now. In 2008, she started SAKHA cabs - Professional cab services for Women by Women.

In this interview, Meenu throws light on the scourge of sexual harassment and gender discrimination that women face at workplaces. While stressing on the need to increase female participation in workplaces, she points out that organizations working for women must consider investing in post-employment support services for them. This could include counselling and information services, supportive infrastructure and safe spaces, capacitating their legal knowledge on personal as well professional front.

PARTNERS IN CHANGE



RUBINA NAFEES FATIMA

CEO & Founder, SAFA

Rubina Nafees Fatima, CEO & Founder of SAFA is working in the field of social and economic empowerment of women and upgrading the skills of women in trades such as tailoring, cooking, beauty and wellness, General Duty Assistant Nurse, Retail Management. Around 30+ women are now a part of the Micro Entrepreneurship Development Program (MEDP) where they are trained in skills such as financial knowledge and digital literacy. These women entrepreneurs hold diverse profiles like - Chefs, Shopkeepers, flower sellers, real estate agents and many more in and outside the community.

Know more about SAFA here - www.safaindia.org



SWARNA MISHRA

Founder, Shusrusa

Mrs Swarna Mishra, Founder of Shusrusa is providing livelihood support to poor and distressed rural women from different parts of Odisha. Shusrusa provides training in-home nursing and geriatric care. At Shusrusa, post-employment women welfare is a priority. This is being done by equipping them with life skills and scrutinizing their working environment.

Know more about Shusrusa here - www.shusrusa.org

Samvaad is a quarterly e-newsletter. You can participate by writing an article or sharing your project experiences with us. If you have ideas on what you would like to see included in our newsletter, then we are all ears!

Please e-mail us your thoughts and ideas at samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org

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