

April 2015, Issue 4

BIZDIVAS

periodical

Inclusion starts with "I"

What is Right with the World??

Dinakshi Arora

Hey Women, Take Control!!

Sameer Rastogi

Now is Your Time

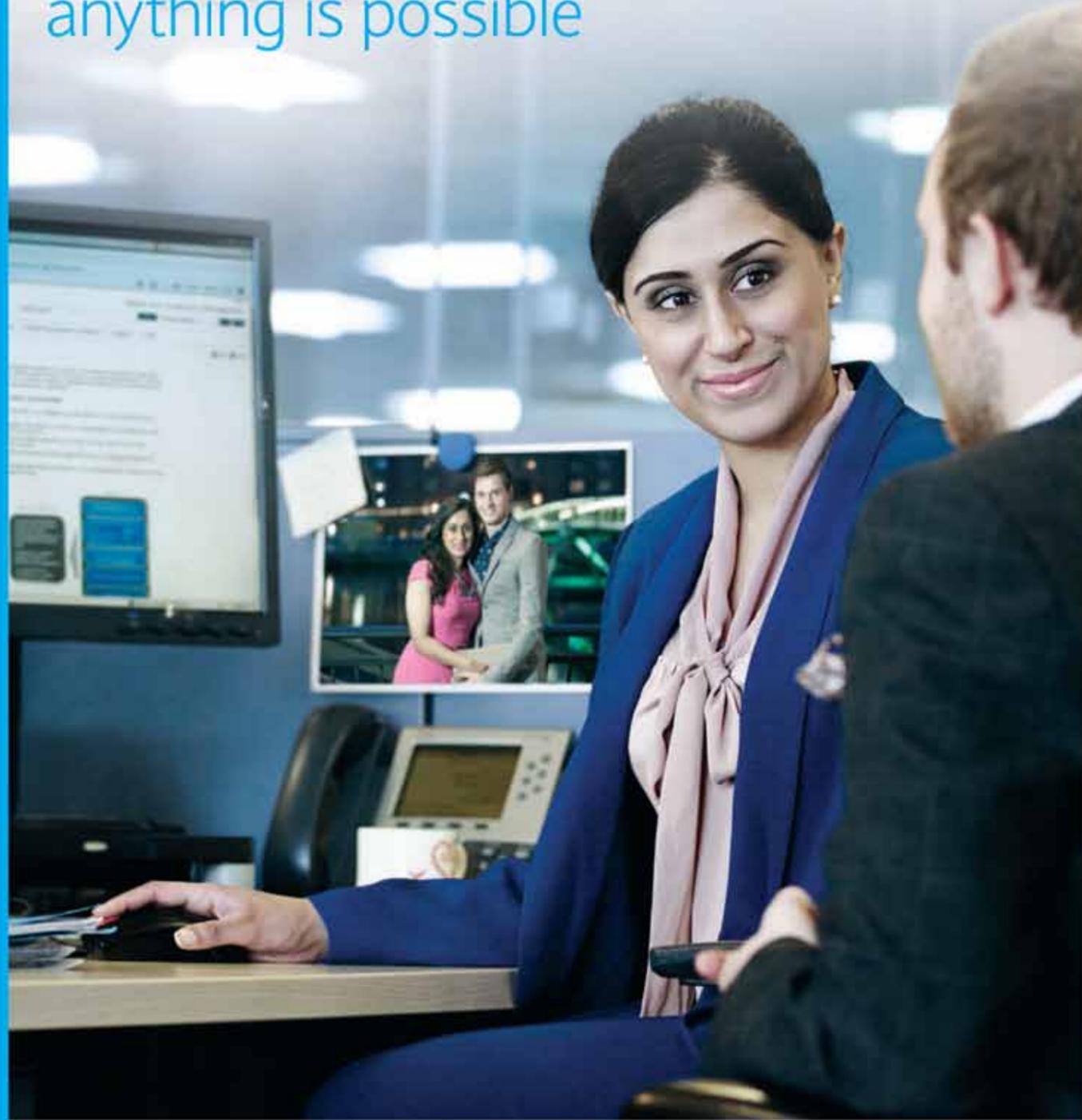
Rania H Anderson

Look Inside to Leap Outside

Shilpi Singh



When everyone is welcome,
anything is possible



Culture should be a true reflection of the world around us. Our Diversity & Inclusion strategy allows us to welcome and serve customers and colleagues from all societies, faiths and communities. We harness the power of diversity to drive innovation, improve the performance of our business and deliver a sustainable and successful future. Helping us become the Go-To bank for everyone.

barclays.com/diversity



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An Inclusive World

Very early in life I realized that the world is not inclusive. I was just five and I wasn't allowed by my maternal grandmother to play with kids from the scheduled caste strata living close by. My arguments weren't heard and my mother couldn't do much about it either. I had a vague notion that we were supposed to be different from these other kids but couldn't tell why. As I grew up I figured that though we were children of the same God, we weren't really equal or were made to believe that we weren't.

On the other hand, I had the most humbling experience as a marathoner while running with a blind child in an organized run last year. I thought I would be the one leading the pair; it was actually the other way round. There was so much to learn from these visually-challenged kids around.

Running, or any sport for that matter, is one such activity where the world around is fully inclusive. People from all over the world, differently-abled, young and old, from all walks of life, of either gender run together with one common goal. Everyone is welcome to join and there are no biases, at least while you are running or playing.

The statement that is being spoken, whispered and shouted by people of all ages, shapes, sizes, colors and cultures today is –“I want to be included”. It is a simple request and the answer is equally simple –“Welcome!”



Inclusion does not mean that we are same. It does not mean that we all agree. Rather inclusion celebrates our diversity and differences with respect and gratitude. The greater our diversity, the richer is our capacity to create new visions.

I would like to have a world which is as inclusive as my world of running. I am sure we all can work together to create an inclusive world. I believe that inclusive communities have the ability to create a better future and a much better life for everyone!

Ran

Ranjana Deopa,
Co-Founder & Board Practice Head,
Altavis & Biz Divas Foundation



Look Inside to Leap Outside

An insight into prejudices women carry

Yes, prejudice and discrimination do exist at modern workplace. Yes, as a female employee, the likelihood of experiencing those is more. Prejudice is an unjustified or fallacious attitude (usually negative) towards an individual.

Interestingly though, many a time the person facing prejudice unconsciously displays attributes that encourage such behavior towards her.

For most women it's quite easy to pigeonhole that everything unfair in her organization is because of circumstances and existing bias, that is, factors outside of her. It's time, however, to shine some light inside and ferret the prejudices and biases that women have!

Hungry Kya? Not Really

Would you bet on a team in a match where the team is very good but does not have the desire or belief to win? Or does not show the hunger to win the match? A logical thinking brain would say 'No'. A *McKinsey's* study *Women Matter* and related research does not show that women lack the ambition to get to the top. But it concludes that women's approach to the workplace in general, and to leadership in particular, can have the superficial appearance of a lack of ambition. It is this appearance that creates perceptions and prejudice in management decisions while accelerating (or not) women to leadership positions.

Personal Baggage in Office

While coaching and mentoring women (in senior leadership roles as well), many of my conversations start and end with their personal commitments. This 'forwards' a signal (which is not always the true picture) that work takes a secondary position in their lives. Women need to be consciously professional in their conversations in an official setup. Bosses/mentors/sponsors, irrespective of their gender, get jittery about women who cannot draw a line between personal and professional space.

We are Too Touchy

While working on a recent project on women leadership, every manager I spoke to (man or woman) said that it was very difficult to have tough conversations with women. They become too emotional and personal about the feedback. Most of the times it deprives

women of opportunities of being corrected, being pushed or being mentored. How do we expect to advance without the right inputs?

Biased Behavior by Women

No, it's not a stereotype. We would think that people with a background of being discriminated against in the workplace might show greater empathy for those sailing in the same ship. Research confirms exactly the opposite. Women are just as likely biased as men towards women in hiring practices, salaries and professional mentorship. This not only reinforces discrimination and prejudice, it also reinforces such behavior amongst our men colleagues. Come on, let's be sensitive and conscious of our own actions before we expect the same from the environment.

We Love our Silos

It's natural to form homogeneous groups. We all do that. However, forming silos at workplace alienates us from the majority. It also creates stereotypes. Stereotypes lead to prejudices. Of course, go ahead, hangout in your own comfort groups but please make a conscious effort to include your male colleagues.

“By sheer virtue of numbers, we fall in the minority but let that not stop us from picking up the baton and driving an inclusive environment at workplace. Let's begin with ourselves. Let's first look inside to leap forward!”

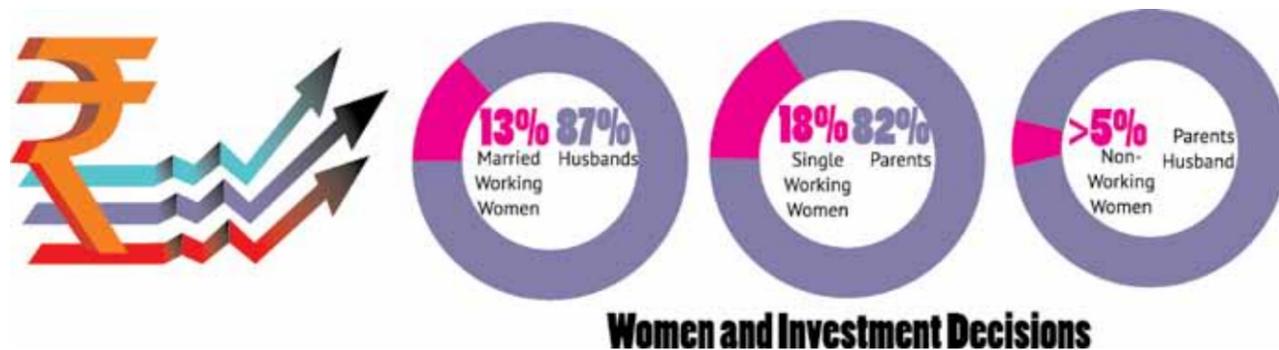
About the Author

Shilpi Singh is a Leadership Coach at Altavis Consultancy & Biz Divas Foundation. She is a performance catalyst for individuals and organizations to enhance their productivity, profitability and purpose.



Hey Women, Take Control!!

It's time to realize there are financial challenges that come with potentially longer life spans and probable absences from the workforce and it's time to take charge. Even if it means ditching old patterns and myths!



There has never been so much noise in our society about women empowerment before. In the Lok Sabha 2014 elections, a few politicians and journalists tried to make a good business out of it. Our young Rahul Gandhi ruined his election prospects with the first ever TV interview he appeared in. The term "Women Empowerment" is being heard so often that it has started sounding like a ridiculous cliché.

The government and law have an important role to play. But more importantly, women must think empowered and engage in empowering each other. On the positive side, I feel that the society is talking bold and the women segment looks determined to challenge most of male bastion.

But there is one worrisome area: Personal and Family Investments.

A recent *DSP Blackrock - Nielson Survey* in India brought out interesting observations that every woman should take note of:

- Barely 13% of married working women make investment decisions about the money that has been earned by them. Husbands are the key decision makers.
- Only 18% of the single working women make investment decision. Parents are the key decision makers in this case.
- Non-working women who make investment

decisions are less than 5% in Metro cities, and near zero in non-metro cities.

- Nearly 52% of the women are just informed about the decisions that have already been made.
- Proportion of sole women decision makers is significantly high among divorced and widowed. However, this is a forced situation in absence of fallback option.
- Majority of women invest with "rainy day" mentality or for kids' education. They don't have set retirement goals. Safety of money is top priority. Most women investors don't invest to become rich.

The lower participation in investment decisions by women raises several questions:

- A Are women less financially literate compared to men?
- B Is the theory that Men are from Mars & Women are from Venus true? Do women find investments an alien subject?
- C Are women reluctant towards investment decision making?
- D Are women discouraged to take financial decisions?

I think it's not A. The education quality available is same for men and women in our country. Every year, girls score better marks in our board exams.

Neither is it B. Research has proven that Women are more patient and cautious in their investment

approach. They don't go for leveraging and are always looking for debt reduction. This helps them generate stable return over long term.

Is it C? Yes, research shows that. Perhaps, women need to be more confident about their ability to make investment decisions.

Is it D? Yes. Blame it on the old and biased mindset of our society. Men call the shots when it comes to investments and risk taking. But the fact is - women are aware of their lack of financial knowledge, while men are less willing to admit what they don't know.

It is noteworthy here that the above mentioned problems are not unique to India. They are also being fought out in USA, Japan, Germany, Sweden and Russia. The New York Times raised a few questions on women's financial security and gender gap:

- On an average, women outlive men. Then why don't women plan for retirement?
- Women earn less than men. Then why don't women take control of their financial security?
- Women sacrifice most for family and move out of the labor force to stay at home with children.

Then, why is there a gender gap in family's investment decisions?

The answers to above questions have to come from women only!

About the Author

Sameer Rastogi is an Investment Coach for families. Director with Saksham Wealth Solutions, he has rich experience in Investment Research and Advisory.



Reality Check

Globally, women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages.

-World Bank Gender Data Portal

Women devote 1 to 3 hours more a day to housework than men; 2 to 10 times the amount of time a day to care (for children, elderly, and the sick), and 1 to 4 hours less a day to market activities.

-World Development Report 2012

When paid and unpaid work are combined, women in developing countries work more than men, with less time for education, leisure, political participation and self-care.

-EuroStat. 2014

It is estimated that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational effectiveness.

-McKinsey & Company. Women Matter 2014

Women continue to participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment-to-population ratio stood at 72.2 per cent, while the ratio for females was 47.1 per cent.

-International Labour Organization 2014

I Inspire Leadership Awards

I Inspire Leadership Awards celebrate leaders, innovators, thinkers and doers around India working to strengthen women's voice, increase economic opportunities for women and protect women rights. These are the crusaders who have given it their all to put an end to discrimination and disadvantages millions of women face. These are real life heroes (gender inclusive!) and role models who bring hope along with results at ground reality level.

The message we want to give out is to treasure these people who measure their success as others' dreams coming true, who walk their talk but not on the beaten path and who don't do things just because they are part of their KRAs. Be it the corporate world, remote rural areas or AIDS-stricken taboo red light districts, they work towards providing dignity every woman deserves.

These are the people who are going to change the world!

The **Women Rights Award** honors a leader who has taken action to protect and restore the rights, safety, and dignity women and girls exploited by gender-based violence, someone who has contributed significantly – often against great odds and at great personal risk – to increase awareness of the injustices women face on account of their gender.

The recipient, **Priti Patkar**, Social Worker and Human Rights Activist, Co-Founder and Director of **Prerana**, an organization that has done pioneering work in the red-light districts of Mumbai, India to protect children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. She has been working for the cause for the past 28 years and is accredited with several path-breaking social interventions. Prerana has to its credit the largest number of legal interventions and writ petitions in the country to protect the rights and dignity of the children and women victims of child sex exploitation and trafficking.



Priti Patkar - Photo by Vital Voices Micky Wiswedel

The **Social Innovation Award** recognizes an innovative leader who finds solutions to expand economic opportunities, relieve poverty, or increase the financial inclusion of marginalized communities.

Wouldn't it be heartening to see a man understanding the pain reserved only for women, even by nature? Something as simple as a sanitary napkin, taken as birthright by most of urban women, is a dream accomplished by only 2% fortunate ones among rural women. **Arunachalam Muruganatham**, the recipient, an Entrepreneur & Inventor, has given women from low income groups in India dignity, by making it possible for them to afford sanitary towels and provide them with income at the same time. From a poor background himself, he created the world's first low-cost machine to produce sanitary towels. Currently more than 1300 machines made by his start-up company, **Jayaashree Industries**, are installed across 27 states in India and 7 other countries.



Arunachalam Muruganatham

The **Young Trailblazer Award** recognizes a young pioneer whose vision, contribution, and leadership has broken through barriers, and brought people together to take action that hastens shared progress.

The recipient, **Sonal Kapoor**, Founder CEO & Creative Director of **Protsahan India Foundation** is one of the most inspiring young social entrepreneurs of our time. A Microbiologist-MBA who gave up her 'mainstream' job, right at 23, she started a youthful and a vibrant social impact organization for sex abused and drug abused street kids, special kids and their mothers. Understanding that rote learning would not make sense to girls from red light areas, she innovated through the creativity of Design & Art, Technology, Cinema and Photography to teach them.



Sonal Kapoor

The **Diversity & Inclusion Award** recognizes an individual for his/her efforts aimed at promoting diversity awareness, representation and inclusion within India Inc.

Dilip Kumar Ganta, Sales & Marketing Head (Tamil Nadu), **Vodafone** is the recipient for the award. Dilip's efforts on promoting women in sales, and that too in remote locations, are commendable. The Jury was unanimous in their choice for the award as Dilip's work in the space, like mentoring women leaders in his organization, is exemplary. He has shown a passionate commitment towards D&I agenda and has been influencing his organizational team and stakeholders consistently to adopt an inclusive culture.



Dilip Kumar Ganta

Saluting Women Power



*The Armed Forces opened its doors to women in 1992 and since then they have come a long way – whether it is the steadily increasing number of women officers or a woman officer, **Wing Commander Pooja Thakur**, leading the ceremonial Guard of Honour for the first time for US President Barack Obama at the Rashtrapati Bhavan - reflecting the theme for the year's Republic Day parade “Nari Shakti (women power)”.*

In conversation with Wing Commander Pooja Thakur

I don't know a lot about other jobs. I know a little bit about corporate sector because my husband is there. I can't draw a parallel between our kind of life and any other job because probably others are jobs and ours is our way of life. It's not about the number of hours we are staying in the office; it is on 24 by 7. Not just as 24 by 7 duty but also 24 by 7 family. It doesn't happen outside. Our social life is intertwined with our work.

Tell us about your journey. How did you choose the path you are on?

Well, I have served in the Indian Air Force for 13 and a half years, I am a para jumper. My father was from the army. I had always lived the 'army life'. Seeing my father go out in the uniform every day made me want to get into the armed forces. And then army families have a different kind of an inclusive culture which is not dependent on the place you are from etc. - it's *Fouji culture*. The broadmindedness, the adaptability, meeting so many people from everywhere and watching them become your family was very alluring for me.

What do you love the most about your work?

Being in the uniform is the best part! The pride in uniform is not comparable. It's an entirely different feeling to see people look up to you.

What are your biggest achievements so far?

If you talk about the forces, the first achievement starts when you get into the academy. The selection process is a long and difficult. Lacs of people apply and about 200-300 hundred of them get in. Second achievement is when you get commissioned and you wear a rank for the first time. Picking up each rank as you grow is a great journey. Then your professional life and family life also get mixed up. Getting married is another milestone, having a child is yet another.

What were the challenges that you faced on your way?

Not the conventional ones but once you get into the forces, there are hardships. The training is tough. Then every day is a new day, you don't know what's going to happen.

What keeps you going?

The will to do more and better. Small challenges along the way. I feel that challenges are opportunities

How would you compare your career with some... let's say a more conventional one?

to think differently and innovate. The feeling of representing my country and the forces here and in other countries!

Yours is a demanding job, how do you balance?

Yes, and to add to that, I am married to somebody who is in the corporate sector, so we do not get posted together. So you have to manage a long distance relationship a lot of time. I think, whether you are a man or woman, you need a lot of support from home to balance. If the spouse is not supportive then probably you'll have to make a lot of choices. I've been lucky. Of course, you need to know what you are getting into. Whether you are getting into a profession or a marriage, you need to be sure and prioritize accordingly. The spouse also needs to be clear on what to want and expect.

Who do you look up to for inspiration?

I do not have one specific role model. In every walk of life, after every few years, your challenges change and you look at somebody for some time for inspiration. But I have an aunt who has been my role model for motivation and the will to carry on. She's been ever since I have known her but she has tutored so many children in spite of being in constant pain. Then I guess, a father is always an inspiration for a daughter.

What is your take on biases against women?

I won't say there are biases 'against' women but there are biases in the society, right? We all have preconceived notions about how women are and how men are. And that's something which will not go in

a day. I have been fortunate to be in an organization that does not have gender bias. It maybe male dominant in number but right from our training days we are treated equally. So first we are officers then we are women.

If organizations are not biased and they look at you based on your performance, then you tend to do much better. Organizations should put more effort to support caregiving. Society is going to take time, the change will happen with each home front and each organization.

What is your message for women who want to pursue their dreams?

Pursuing your dreams is the most important part! There will be challenges but as long as you are "pursuing", you are going to overcome those. Nothing will happen if you are just dreaming.

Know that our professional and family life CAN go hand in hand. In fact, they can go very well.

I think there is nothing wrong in asking for help because sometimes we try and do everything ourselves - and by doing that we only sacrifice ourselves. Ask for help from family or outside because people around *are* supportive. It could be asking for a small help or a big one. There are times when you want to decide whether you want to carry on or you want to give up something and if you get timely help for a little while, it gets you going. You can overcome that vulnerable patch of low feeling which might blow up to lose whatever work you have done to pursue your dream so far.

Indian Books - Best of 2014

Being a flirty and voracious reader, I usually read 4 to 6 books side by side. And yet, just a handful of titles stand out as memorable in the Indian titles, and only a couple of them are debuts. Here they all are...with a fond hope that 2015 will see a longer list of quality Indian writing and debut authors.

Best Indian Fiction Debut

Inga
Piote Sengupta
Tranquebar Press

A stunning women focused first novel by an accomplished, experienced writer, and what a powerful punch it packs. Surprisingly overlooked and under marketed, this is a discovery I was delighted to make. A complex and intense plot based on the intricacies of relationships in the life of an extended Tamil family, and the prejudices and subjugation of the feminine and its sexuality.

Best Genre Fiction

Wrong for the Right Reasons
Ritu Lalit

A sincerely told story of a young mother who has to fight family, inner demons, friends and foes to get to be her own mistress. Neither Chick Lit, nor Romance but with shades of both styles, this is a book I recommend as a simple, feel good story with a message of hope. A beacon shines in this book on the path less travelled, on a woman taking her destiny in her own hands, slowly, surely and without stridency.

Best Literary Non-Fiction

Capital
Rana Dasgupta
Harper Collins

By far the most exciting, enlightening, intelligent and evocative book on Delhi written in recent times. It gets to the very soul of the place and its people. It shares the experience with the reader with a warmth and frankness that makes them feel unforgettably enmeshed with Delhi and its metamorphosis.

Best Indian Crime Thriller Mystery Debut

The Emperor's Riddles
Satyarth Nayak
Amaryllis

This captivating debut mystery novel is a melting pot of history, murder mystery, myth and fantasy. A page

turner from the word go, and a delight to read because of its gripping plot twists, suspense, revelations, and the tightly controlled narrative voice.

Best Historical Literary Fiction

The Way Things Were
Aatish Taseer

Covering a tremendous arc of time, ideas and culture, this book feels like a startling trail of breathtaking re-discovery, through the life journeys of its main characters, and the common leitmotif of Sanskrit and the shifting sands of time. The Sanskrit roots and links throughout the text hit home with such a strong 'Aha, of course' sensations that stay with you long after the book is read.

Best Travel

A Strange Kind of Paradise
Sam Miller
Penguin Books India

A rather different, fresh, funny and unique book about a place. Written from the perspective of foreigners, who have viewed India through various lenses over the ages, it is full of interesting, well known, little known and even startling facts and ideas.

Best Fiction Anthology

A Clutch of Indian Masterpieces
Extraordinary short stories from the 19th century to the present
David Davidar
Aleph Book Company

This is a collector's piece and a bookshelf staple - a very discerning, wide ranging selection of arguably the most notable, typical and powerful stories to have come out of India. Many of the stories are translations, and some were originally written in English. Most authors would be familiar to a serious reader, and at least some of the stories or authors are household names even in non-reading households.

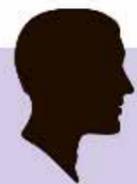
About the Author

Kiran Chaturvedi is an experienced sociologist, trained qualitative research and insights professional, entrepreneur and author. She believes in a life of authenticity, integrity and fun.



GLOBAL GENDER GAP

Iceland has the narrowest disparity between men and women; Yemen the widest.



1. Iceland
2. Finland
3. Norway
4. Sweden
5. Ireland
6. New Zealand
7. Denmark
8. Philippines
9. Nicaragua
10. Switzerland

22. US
31. Kazakhstan
71. Ghana
86. Bangladesh
101. Japan
102. Belize
103. Cambodia
- 105. India
134. Pakistan
135. Yemen



India's gender gap ranking in specific categories

- 17 in political empowerment
- 121 in educational attainment
- 123 in economic participation and opportunity
- 134 in health and survival

SOURCE: The Global Gender Gap Report 2012

Wait, Are You Forgetting Something?

The 'you' who you are, maybe?

Life is pretty fast-paced these days. You have to put your best foot forward at any endeavour, be it professional or personal, to be of any consequence. With so much happening, life could be a constant marathon of proving your worth out there while taking care of your loved ones back home. Women do have multi-faceted talents that help them play multitude of roles sincerely. But in the rut of life, it is easy to forget one thing – to be in touch with who 'you' are.

This 'you' I am talking about is you stripped of all labels – mother, wife, daughter, CEO, manager etc. This 'you' is your core that you meet when you go 'within'. Since the world today is so outward-inclined that it takes a lot of active intent and will power to even glimpse within. The significance of going within can't be emphasized enough because that's what gives a conscious direction to your life, as opposed to your life being a series of unprepared reactions to whatever comes up.

By going within, I don't mean any spiritual mumbo-jumbo, nor can everyone take off to the Himalayas. It could be as simple as sitting in a park for a while and just being in that moment.

Here are some ways you can incorporate in your busy schedules to nurture the most important person in your life – you.

First of all, turn off excuses: Like – who's got the time? Think instead that this is the only time you have, once gone it is not going to come back. One always (almost magically) finds time for what they think is important. Another common feeling is guilt about spending time on oneself instead of on family. I say, you would contribute more to family welfare, and more lovingly, if you are nourished yourself. And who wouldn't like a more radiant you?

Talk to yourself: May sound crazy to some, but benefits of self-talk are astounding. We do have chatter running across our heads all day anyway. Why not do it consciously and know what we really want and what is bothering us? Some people prefer writing or journaling their emotions. Choose any way, you are not going to find a better friend than yourself – ever!

Meditate: Take small steps if you are not the meditating kinds, like being in silence for some time or saying a small prayer before you go to sleep or offering some



gratitude right after you wake up. Combine it with your walks or other task if you have to, but have a small ritual everyday that connects you to you.

Take stock of your life: It's funny how we always analyze our life in retrospect. It's important to know where we are and where we are heading... at the moment. A staggering number of people realize at their deathbeds that they actually wanted to live a different life altogether. Sorry, too late!

Make a bucket list: As clichéd as it may sound, do make a list of what you absolutely want to do before you call it a life. These are the things that qualify your life as life and not a humdrum routine.

Exercise your right brain: I can go on and on about excessive usage of our left brains in our lives these days. Balance is the key. Let the creative you come to fore once in a while.

Go out in nature, read, listen to music, get massages, run, swim, sing, dance, write, cook, paint, take YouTube lessons if you can't attend classes, do what you always wanted to do but thought of doing later.

“ *The point is you only get to live once as you. Don't get lost in the grind!* ”

About the Author

Dinakshi Arora - Editor Biz Divas Periodical, freelance writer, consultant, software professional, educator, avid reader, blogger, poet, wellness coach - is completely in love with life and is its ardent student.



Education - A Necessary Foundation for Inclusion

“There is only one way to look at things until someone shows us how to look at them with a different eye.” ~ Pablo Picasso

It is our formative years that govern most of our unconscious behavior. Education and social conditioning in initial years play the biggest role in forming our deep rooted beliefs. Reprogramming subconscious learning after one reaches adulthood is a herculean task. It is heartening to see the world finally waking up to something as obvious and fundamental as significance of inclusion. But it would be so much easier and more sensible to incorporate 'inclusion' as a core value in one's belief system – right in the beginning!

Let me explain - especially in Indian context. The Indian education system and policies were framed way back when some of us were not even born or some were just toddlers. Recommendations to send children with disabilities to mainstream schools were first made in the Sargent Report in 1944, and again in 1964 by the Kothari Commission. Despite this, the change has been slow, with segregation in special schools dominating the scene until recently. The 1995 Persons with Disability Act (PDA) states that disabled children should be educated in integrated settings where possible, although it seems that the lack of implementation may be due to there being no enforcement agency for this legislation. In spite of promotion of inclusive education, government documents focus on inclusive education as being about including children with disabilities in the education system, but not specifically the mainstream.

It is a known fact that teacher education remains a very weak link with respect to equipping them to be prepared for an inclusive classroom environment. The teacher education diplomas and degrees offer “education of children with special needs” as an optional subject.

How many disabled children do you actually see studying in mainstream schools? The numbers will be on your fingertips for a whole school. Lets take a simple example of a student enrolled in school at kindergarten in 1995 would be joining mainstream workforce of as a management trainee in 2014. In all these years, they have hardly seen a disabled person being 'included' in their school environment. Now suddenly in 2015, they will be expected to have a paradigm shift in their attitudes.

Though I have taken example of disability, the same holds true for other aspects in varying degrees. For example: gender, social status, caste, wealth, state, region, rural/urban and so on. Yes, we still have all these stereotypes, thriving, right there from day one and making way to classrooms and beyond. How many of the 'unincluded' in their childhood reach a decent workplace to have a chance of being 'included'?



The point I am driving at is that root problem lies in attitudes and beliefs we grow up with and to the situations and environment we are exposed to. It will not help much to prune the leaves, we will also have to look at the roots. Education is about developing right attitudes and beliefs. Working towards an education system that really 'educates' children the right way is what will lead to a progressive society where 'inclusion' is not just a concept, but a way of life!

About the Author

Surekha Waldia, Founder ELNA, is an MBA from Symbiosis Institute, Pune and has done MS in non-profit leadership from University of Pennsylvania. She is passionate about bringing change in the field of education.



A Long Term Career - An Impossible Dream?

Let's examine a premise. Women from professional colleges are as ambitious as their male peers. Many would accept this declaration albeit in a slightly amended form; 'women from professional colleges remain as ambitious for a few years'. This is what the statistics indicate. This is what the corporate world has witnessed.

I remember a discussion I had with a boss a decade ago. We had to fill a post in my team and two candidates were shortlisted. A girl and a guy - both well qualified, young and ambitious. The girl was highly recommended by another team who had dealt with her professionally. But my boss said "she's newly married, we will train her but in a year's time she may pack up and leave". I was a young mom myself; did he have such doubts about me? Today, however, I can safely say the girl would be hired. Yet the dilemmas that team leaders face remain, the primary one being how to retain women talent. So why won't women stay for the long haul?

Some correctly argue that women's ambition does not wane but other factors force them to exit the economy prematurely. These factors revolve around increasing responsibilities and a shift in priorities. But can't we negotiate for flexibility or try to change jobs instead of dropping out altogether? It is not clear either - why most women don't return from a sabbatical. Or why these well qualified engineers and MBAs don't turn entrepreneurs.

Sure, one may be well off but it's a fact that a double income is an enormous plus point for any family unit. Layoffs are a fact of life. A single private sector job with no pension is no guarantee for a safe future. Family businesses also rarely survive beyond three generations.

Many say that they cannot return to work as their families are totally dependent on them. When I took a break, I suddenly had these extra twelve hours every day. So I went about making myself extra useful to everyone. Believe me, when I tell you that six months later I was more exhausted than I was working full time. It felt great to be back at my desk!

Do you know of a 13 year old whose mom packs his schoolbag? I do. If you are trying to be a superwoman

- sooner or later you will have to be exhausted. A well run house needs co-operation from all.

“Who you marry is your most important career decision.”
~ Sheryl Sandberg

Good help is tough to find but let's be thankful to at least have the option (instead of complaining about my helper, maybe I need to realize her true value!). We are also lucky to have relatives ready to pitch in if required. Rather than just being around, it's probably more important to make sure that kids communicate freely with parents.

Whether or not one is married, has children or not; surely a long term career is a fulfilling and rewarding experience in itself.

“There are hitches but this is also the best time to be a working woman. Never before has the corporate sector been so open and welcoming to women in all fields. The trick is to work for an organization that truly understands the needs of working women. Young women professionals need to talk about future needs, discuss flexible policies and negotiate better during interviews. And, of course, the prerequisite is to keep the fire within alive and burning!”

About the Author

Priyanka Awasthy, Co-Founder Biz Divas Foundation and Altavis Consulting, is an avid campaigner for inclusive leadership and a firm advocate of women's economic empowerment and best practices in talent management.



Flexibility - How to 'Earn' it?

Shalini shows up at work diligently, every day. She tries to be productive and strike off as many items from her to-do list as possible. But the distractions are many - she can almost predict the outcome of majority of the meetings she goes to, then there's the micro-managing attitude of her boss who needs to be told the progress of projects more than once each day, not to forget the ever-effervescent chit-chat about office politics with separate 'groups'. Sometimes, it just surprises her how little work happens in a 'working day'! And to top it all, the commute is killing.

Shalini keeps thinking of a utopian world where she could have flexible working hours, she's sure her productivity would go up to at least 150%. But there's no way her organization will allow it, is there?

Yes. There is.

Depends on **who** is asking and **how**.

Like with each transaction, it's important for us to understand what could be the requirements and fallouts of a proposal. After all, organizations run on systems and processes. They need to consider any change in relation to how it will impact the business. So here are some pointers for a successful proposal:

- **Due Diligence:** Before requesting for a change in work arrangement, one needs to conduct research like - is there a precedent of flexi-work in the organization, are those roles customer-facing, how much face-time is needed in the proposer's own role, what kind of technology support is needed etc. All these details need to be carefully drafted to display the seriousness of the request.
- **SMART Proposal:** Once the due-diligence is completed, the proposal needs to show the complete job responsibilities of the employee (let's keep it gender neutral!) and explain each of those will be handled with the suggested changes in hours.
- **Walking the Talk:** While one is asking for flexibility, it can be considered only fair that they display some unreservedness as well. So things like giving the boss the option of choosing the days to work-from-home, coming to office for some unplanned work/at short notice, proposing



a trial period to 'test' the flexi-hours etc. need to be thought and spoken.

- **Projecting Credibility and Confidence:** This is the part which focuses on who's asking - the gray part which can make or break a proposal's acceptability. Credibility, as we all know, is subjective and is the key to being respected and taken seriously. These qualities can be judged both by the content as well as body language and voice modulation of the person in question. The time spent in grooming facets of our personality which project one as full of substance is time well spent.
- **Let the Work Speak:** It's tough for a new joiner to look for change in work hours. The old timers, though, have the benefit of gaining credibility by the virtue of sheer work and work style that they have displayed over the tenure of their employment. In other words, the ones who need to be 'pushed' to deliver have less chances of getting opportunity to work without direct supervision than, say, one who's in charge herself!

Well, it's not a utopian world where all of us can telecommute and give our best productive hours. Let's take heart in the fact that we are moving in the progressive direction with each passing year!

About the Author

Garvita Chaturvedi is an inclusion and gender issues expert, and looks after South India region at Altavis. Also an independent Human Resources Consultant, her corporate experience spans 10 years in multiple HR roles.



What's **Right** with the World??

By Dinakshi Arora

We have come a long way, for sure - from a world that was divided into silos of nationalities, communities, tribes, genders, castes (especially in case of countries like India) to a global village where boundaries are friendly and permeable, if not entirely insignificant.

Not that we are completely there where there is no discrimination and everyone is equally respected, we do need to pat on our collective back for being where we are. So what brought about that much required change? A gradual evolution in human consciousness and realization that everyone is important in their own unique way?

Yes. Plus more. Apart from the intellectual discourse around inclusion, there is enough data and real world examples to show that inclusion makes sense - in every sense. Whether it's peace and harmony, economic affluence, social progress or any other aspect of life - inclusion adds incomparable value to each one of it.

Also, inclusion makes perfect business sense.

So instead of asking the done-to-death question - what's wrong with the world, let's see what's right!

Take **MakeMyTrip**, for example. The last decade has witnessed phenomenal growth of MakeMyTrip. From being a small organization fulfilling the ticketing needs of a niche segment of NRIs residing in the United States, they are now recognized as the largest online travel agency in the Indian market. While volumes were growing, so was competition, forcing them to constantly question their approach.

Having always professed the need for a diverse workforce, they came upon conceptualization of the **Holiday Expert** channel. Born in the year 2012, the Holiday Expert channel was created to hire women who had corporate experience, loved to travel but could not sustain the 9-to-5 work schedule due to domestic demands. What they offered women was simple: work from home, give your best and get high commission-based returns based on how well you do.

The advantages of this sales channel for MakeMyTrip were numerous. The biggest one was that this channel offered them a large talent pool of capable



resources - competent enough to create travel packages and empathetic enough to ensure high customer satisfaction levels. Needless to say this step ensured a high repeat rate. Since its inception, this channel has grown at double the rate of the total company growth and 20-25% of the holiday business can be attributed to this team of homemaker Holiday Experts. These women earn upto one third of the profits which MakeMyTrip makes on every booking. To add the cherry on top, MakeMyTrip's infrastructure costs on the Holiday Expert channel are negligible. Their only investment is the training & development costs and those incurred on engagement activities.

At present they have 1000 such holiday experts in 8 cities and it is evident that they have just hit the tip of the iceberg when it comes to harnessing the potential of women!

Another case in point is **Costa Coffee** chain that actively encourages recruitment of hearing-impaired individuals. Not only has it created jobs for these differently-abled people, it has created a strong buzz for Costa Coffee in social arena. In today's world of maddening marketing overdrive, it is easy to appreciate huge worth of goodwill. It's not like money can buy you positive limelight, well, not anymore!

They have obvious benefits like lesser attrition rates and not-so-obvious ones like higher customer loyalty. Call it human connect or whatever, it has been noticed that customers tend to develop a stronger bond with employees having disabilities. Once there is a good



rapport going, worth-of-mouth does rest of the work for them. Another interesting thing that works for them is that other employees are inclined to be more cooperative with their disabled colleagues and there is harmony at workplace.

"It's a learning process both ways and has its light moments. After dealing with their hearing-impaired colleagues for long, the rest of the staff often tend to speak to each other in sign language, forgetting their own gift of speech and sound," a staff-member at Costa Coffee mentions.

Lemon Tree, another champion of inclusion, started by employing differently-abled people with no grand vision other than to provide a couple of them livelihood. But soon they found great employees in them and realized that 10% of India is disabled in some form or the other. It's with no sense of charity that they have employed hundreds of differently-abled people presently. 90% of such employees are speech and hearing impaired but there are other categories like orthopedically handicapped.

They face issues like working on their qualifications, skills and career graphs along with sensitizing other employees towards them. Challenges notwithstanding, Lemon Tree is looking forward to expanding its vision and integrating 20-25% of disabled employees by 2019.

Tata Second Career Internship Programme, a career transition management programme for women professionals who have taken a break of 6 months or more for any reason, and wish to re-enter the professional space is another example of embracing inclusion. The programme provides opportunities for

such women to take on flexi-hour assignments with various Tata group companies. Launched in 2008 on International Women's Day, the programme provides live business projects requiring approximately 500 hours of engagement spread over 6 months on a flexi-time basis. Aimed at developing alternative talent pools in traditional/non-traditional formats, it provides access to mentors and guides on the project and HR support.

More often than not, these initiatives are highlighted more from a "helping women out" standpoint. Nevertheless, studies have shown that inclusive options like these increase productivity, have happier employees, decrease attrition and reduce infrastructure costs, not to mention having access to a huge talent pool. A total win-win situation!

I think the verdict is out. If you want to make your business great, make it a great place to work at (or work with, keeping flexibility option in mind). Any system will flourish intellectually, financially, emotionally, spiritually and wholistically only when all voices comprising the system are heard and acknowledged. And before that, when it is made sure that all voices are made a part of the system.

Translating it to organizational context, it is not just good to have diversity, it is of utmost importance. And once there is diversity, it has to be made sure that everyone is included, recognized and celebrated for their contribution.

The world needs all the flavors it can offer!

With inputs from MakeMyTrip, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>, <http://www.tatasecondcareer.com/>, The Lemon Tree Initiative (YouTube)

As We Sow, So Shall We Reap

My older sister always had a problem with people telling her that she couldn't do something because she was a girl. A small remark like 'stop gossiping like a girl' or 'you must like pink because you're a girl' or 'swimming can't be a career choice because you're a girl' would invariably annoy her. However much I love her, at times I found her irritation for such small remarks more annoying than the remarks themselves, which I thought could be easily ignored and forgotten. After all, nobody really meant them that way and, of course, peace was a higher priority - or so I thought! I was too young to understand and also too delusional about the world.

Growing up with boys in school who took male teachers more seriously than female ones; going to college in a metro city where a bus ride can be a shortcut to molestation; going to work at places where jokes are invariably made on women/wives and learning about increasing brutal crimes happening against women around the world, I've only learnt to respect my sister's indignation over small things - more with each passing day. I've come to realize that small things make a difference and lead to bigger changes. Unlike most women, she knew at a very young age when she was being treated wrong!

How many of us really knew? How many of our mothers really knew? How many of us even know today?

As a child, I thought things could be ignored. Ignoring them is the best you can do, we were taught. I remember when my friend from school had shared her mother's advice with me, "Whenever some uncle tries to touch you unpleasantly, remind them that you're like a daughter to them". Today, I doubt I would like to pass on the same advice to my daughter. Ignoring remarks has led to wrong ideologies being reinforced and subtler actions have led to heinous crimes.

Shenaz Treasurywala made a very valid point in her open letter, "It's the shame of perpetrators and not of the victims". It's time we teach our daughters to



not be subtle about it. It's unbelievable to know about India's Nirbhaya #2. She's only a six year old from Gujarat. She wasn't even out at night. She was only playing in front of her house with her brothers.

India has many daughters and none of them deserves to be raped or molested. Camps are split on the heated debate related to the documentary **India's Daughter**. There's been a ban on it. It's true that it doesn't show India in the right light. Possibly a lot of western opinion has labeled India a rape nation when there are relatively more rapes happening in their own countries. But that doesn't change the fact that there's an elephant in the room and we can't ignore it any longer.

A change that we expect to happen in men has to begin with a change in us. As long as we keep sweeping things under the carpet, chauvinism grows, perpetrators embolden and predators persist. Besides, raising boys in such times couldn't have been a bigger challenge. It's time to teach our sons to harbor genuine respect for another person, male or female.

“ Thinking/saying things like 'men will be men' or pretending you didn't notice the insinuation, however subtle, just will not do!

About the Author

Preeti Lamba is the Online Content Editor of Biz Divas blog. She has done travel features in India, Canada and UK, besides writing on society, lifestyle, art and entertainment in her last job with The Week magazine.



Don't just Have it, Harness it!

Those who know me well enough know that I am somewhat of a "Gadget Junkie". I love anything which is high-tech and regularly keep checking out new electronic gadgets, always wanting to own the latest. Needless to say, I am a huge Apple fan. As soon as I quit my corporate job to become an entrepreneur, my first task was to replace my Windows laptop with a Macbook, my Blackberry with an iPhone and to acquire an iPad.

When I bought my first iPad, it was the sleekest, fastest, most powerful tablet available. It was loaded with all different kinds of software and a bunch of other features, too numerous to mention. Trust me, this thing was cool!

The first time I pulled out my iPad at a meeting, people around me drooled at it. Feeling like the only kid with a fancy new toy, I connected my tablet to the small keyboard and began typing. Nothing important, but that's not the point.

As with most of the features Apple's designers so brilliantly included, after that day I never used the keyboard again. I don't use most of its features. I could but I don't. It's been four years, and I have used it only for mails, Microsoft Office (yes I got that on iPad!), surf the net and maybe a couple of other features. The other day we needed to edit a video and I had to outsource it to a vendor. Whereas I could have taken the pain to learn how to do it on my Macbook.

“ *Could I be more efficient if I took advantage of all those diverse features? Probably yes. Do I want to take the time and go through the hassle to learn about all these features? No.*

I brag about having all those cool gadget features, but I am yet to put most of them to use - to help me get more work done, to be more efficient... to be better.

How I fail to use features of my gadgets leads me to think about many organizations that don't leverage their diverse features! Their features are their talent pool and skills. They have categorized people in some way - by region, gender, age and so on. An organization's inability to embrace strengths



of all its people prevent it from taking advantage of opportunities that a global competitive environment might have to offer.

Taking steps to create a diverse workforce is one thing. Doing away with old structures and methods so that a diverse workforce can excel is quite another. But what are those steps we can take to leverage a diverse workforce?

- ⦿ Time and patience to transform traditional views.
- ⦿ Investing in reskilling for new & innovative ideas.
- ⦿ Learning to be comfortable being uncomfortable.
- ⦿ Openness to the idea of learning from peers, juniors and other colleagues.

Organizations that work through the pain of transformation will utilize the strength of diversity to its fullest. I will be taking my own advice and will learn more on how to use features of my iPad. It will take some time, but I am making a conscious effort to do so by enlisting the help of a young intern in my team.

Did I mention that I just got the newest DSLR Nikon camera? It has a lot of cool features too!

About the Author

Sarika Bhattacharyya, Co-Founder, Biz Divas & Altavis is a highly respected speaker on gender diversity and a strong advocate for gender targets within organisations to bring balanced perspective to decision making.



Biz Divas Journey at a Glance

Since April 2014

JOURNEY

April 2014

I INSPIRE 2014, Delhi

Biz Divas organized "I Inspire", national conference for women leaders. The event was a confluence of ideas, convergence of thoughts and celebration of the spirit of diversity and entrepreneurship.



April 2014

Launch of Biz Divas Periodical

At I INSPIRE 2014, Biz Divas launched the first Biz Divas Magazine. It is one of its own kind which celebrates women leaders from Business, Corporates, NGOs and Public leadership space. It promotes the spirit of entrepreneurship, diversity & inclusion.



June 2014

Leadership in Mentoring Award

It was a proud moment for us at Biz Divas when Sarika Gupta Bhattacharyya, co-founder Biz Divas was honored with the first annual Leadership in Mentoring Award by Vital Voices & Bank of America, given away by none other than Hillary Clinton.



Women on Boards



Women on Boards Research Report, Mumbai

Our report "Women on Boards" has influenced the decision makers in government and corporates to look at Corporate Best Practices at Boardroom level with a different lens.

August 2014

Pinkathon, Delhi

Biz Divas partnered with Pinkathon - Only Women's marathon, an initiative by Milind Soman. Biz Divas members participated in large numbers to raise awareness on fitness and breast cancer. Biz Divas Founder, Ranjana Deopa - an avid runner & fitness enthusiast was Pinkathon Champion for Delhi.



September 2014

Women on Boards Conclave at Dell, Bangalore

Biz Divas in partnership with Dell hosted a "Women on Boards" conclave to discuss the challenges & solutions faced by women to reach leadership positions. Leaders like Apurva Purohit and Kumud Srinivasan gave insights to their journey to reach the top of corporate ladder.



October 2014

Women on Boards Mentoring Program

Biz Divas Women on Boards Program was kickstarted in October 2014 with 10 CxO leaders being paired with 10 emerging women leaders for 6 months for guidance and support to develop a more structured approach to their professional career and board roles.



October 2014

December 2014

Webinar Series for Women Entrepreneurs

Biz Divas in partnership with South Asia Foundation conducted Webinar series to advance women's entrepreneurship in the region (South Asia) and build stronger economic ties between South & Central Asia.



January 2015

Retention of Women Talent

It is a known fact that retaining half the women employee population is a necessity rather than a feel-good need. Biz Divas Corporate Network conducted Focus Group Discussions across 40 organizations and 5 cities. The challenges and solutions for retaining women talent were deliberated on via case study methodology.



January 2015

Biz Divas Corporate Network Roundtables

Biz Divas Corporate Network conducted series of Knowledge Sharing Roundtables and Focus Group Discussion on topics of "Women on Boards" and "Retention of Women Talent - Challenges & Solutions" which were followed by published research reports on these issues.



March 2015

Inclusion in India Inc

Biz Divas in partnership with IIM Ahmedabad organized Inclusion Summit followed by a Research Report. It explored beliefs and mind-sets operating in the Indian social and corporate environment that would lead to a robust understanding of extent, issues, and way forward on 'Inclusion' in Indian corporates.



Biz Divas Dhaka Chapter

Launched Biz Divas Bangladesh chapter in Dhaka. It has received great response and we see opportunities in cross border trade and mentoring with Biz Divas India.



Global Mentoring Walk, Gurgaon, Mumbai, Bangalore

This Women's Day, Biz Divas celebrated the spirit of womanhood, mentoring and paying-it-forward.



Global Mentoring Walk, Dhaka

60 women leaders, 18 organizations, and 72nd city in 2015 to have the Global Mentoring Walk, it was the first time for Bangladesh.

March 2015

Biz Divas Bangladesh Chapter

Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.” ~ Lao Tzu

Have you ever been so excited by an idea that you wanted to start working on it straight away? That you started dreaming about it? You imagined yourself and the idea getting old together, sitting on your wicker rocking chairs, reminiscing about how it all began? Perhaps it was fate which brought me in touch with such an idea!

On the very first meeting with *Rashmi Mandloi*, when we discussed the concept of Biz Divas, I was hooked. Here was a chance to create a space where women like me could interact, support each other and create a self-fulfilling network. When I first moved to Dhaka in 2009, despite having a close and supportive family around me, I felt isolated. To have had access to Biz Divas Bangladesh network at that time would have been a godsend. With that in mind, we started making plans of how to take the success story of Biz Divas India and create our own version.

Dhaka is where we started the journey and that, in essence, is the city which is the melting pot for everything happening in Bangladesh. On a threshold of growth and changes, it is the ideal place for dreams to flow.

“ We discovered what women universally want – a need for change, a desire to follow their dreams and grow to their true potential.

Biz Divas Bangladesh took shape from this collective need to gain skills, find encouragement and share the understanding to actualize our dreams. The first networking event took place in my office on the 18th of January 2015. Yes, I am also a business woman and run a buying house. And it is heartening to say that the same passion connects my fellow women. We were a mixed bunch - coming from such diverse fields as law,



education, development, publishing, tourism and, of course, entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs. It was amazing to experience transformation of these individuals; from strangers in a room we became entwined to a joint purpose.

This was followed by an even more successful event in March; when we became the 56th country to participate in the Global Mentoring Walk. 55 women got together in Dhaka and bonded over the common challenges we face.

We found that there is a lot we can learn from each other, whether a mentor or mentee. The event was a big success and gave us the impetus we needed.

We are proud to have 200 members in our group in a short span of 4 months. The aim is to expand the network both within Dhaka and to other cities of Bangladesh. We believe in providing skills, mentorship and lean in circles to women. There is a long way to go, but now the journey has begun!

About the Author

Poonam Alam set up a buying house six years ago upon moving from the UK to Bangladesh. Since then she has forayed into various enterprises from consulting to construction.



Where are the Women?

Gurgaon is a Millenium city that takes pride in being host to top Fortune 500 companies in India and an ever-increasing corporate population. But how many women CEOs can it boast of? It's anyone's guess – most likely the answer is none. Metros like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore can still claim to have a handful of women CEOs, predominantly from the financial sector.

It is this kind of compelling numbers along with a strong business case for diversity which has woken up India Inc. to a harsh reality. The percentages of women at mid to senior levels are shrinking, which means as women gain more experience, they are dropping out faster.

numbers from others. After all, the talent pool hasn't changed significantly in the last few years.

As a head hunter specializing in Diversity Hiring, I face this challenge all the time. There is a small pool of talent available and we all head hunters are chasing the same women more often than not.

The bigger pool of talent will be available once the women who have taken a career break are given a second chance. There are a few organizations who already have robust plans for the same. They are offering flexi-working to accomodate to work-life balance, providing work-from-home options before gradually moving back to a full time office role.



Today organizations have realized that having diversity at senior management level adds depth and perspective to key decision making. Organizations today are keen on improving gender diversity at senior management level.

According to organizations, the quickest remedy to this situation is diversity hiring. So the head hunters are incentivized to provide women candidates for an additional 2-3% of hiring charges. But the larger question remains, where is the pool of talent? There is abysmally low number for women already and what we are trying to do here is to place talent from one organization to the other. However, while it may up the numbers for a few organizations, it would reduce

It is great to witness corporates trying to woo Indian women back to employment. We, as women who are looking for second career, need to be more focussed, determined and committed to given opportunity. We need to be role models and encourage our fellow women friends on a sabbatical to join back the work force.

About the Author

Ranjana Deopa Co-Founder & Board Practice Head, Altavis & Biz Divas, believes in promoting balanced leadership in the corporate world. She heads Diversity Hiring and Women on Boards initiatives of Altavis.



I haven't been everywhere but it's on my list...



So this may sound clichéd but we should take out time from our busy lives to live life as if there is no tomorrow..... (à la Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara!)

I am just back from an all-girl road trip where we covered 1100 kms in 40 hours. Yes, we broke a couple of stereotypes that we had picked up somewhere during the course of our lives.

We had a successful conference at IIM Ahmedabad. It was the right time to experience Gujarat's "vibrancy", maybe catch the sunset at the Rann of Kutch. But was it possible? Covering almost end of the country and getting back to Ahmedabad in time to catch the flight to Delhi?

Well, we did it and also gathered some important **Leadership Lessons** on the way. Here they are:

Just Do It: In the midst of IIMA summit preparations at Ahmedabad, we astutely gave it a thought: 385 km one way, road trip starting at 4:00 am, unknown place and literally no one to turn to if something happened. On a consensus, we decided to take the plunge. Did being entrepreneurs play a role in that? I am sure it did.

Learning: You wouldn't know what's in it for you till you take the steps to make dreams into reality.

Take Quick Decisions: We three had this amazing wavelength that matched even though we are seemingly different individuals. From agreeing to getting up at 3.30 am to deciding places to visit to shopping, catering to varied interests and tastes, to eating - we just got one of us to take the decision and went with it.

Learning: In a group, have faith in one another. It's ok sometimes to not have a say in everything, and go with others' judgements and thoughts for the collective good.

Be Nimble: The roads across Gujarat are built as it's a 'dream way to heaven' - smooth and buttery. Very soon on the road we realized that we can take some recourses along the way. So we packed in as much as we could. It was amazing we could explore Bhuj, Khamir, Hodka and the Rann, all in a day's work!

Learning : We should nurture the inherent child in us.

Be Curious : Bhuj and Rann is full of life, culture, colours

and, of course, shopping. One of us was very keen on picking up silver, the other had fondness for fabrics, whilst the third wanted to just click away. Since we had time having reached Bhuj in just about 4.5 hours, each of us explored the place a little deeper - visiting artisans and meeting local people.

Learning: Curiosity helps in getting us more aware and sensitive to things that we take for granted.

Laugh: We were laughing at taking the wrong route or laughing at not expecting on what we had expected - it was all ok. There was also something new that we learnt laughing at one another's idiosyncrasies, giggling over silly things, not being guilty on not being a responsible mother, daughter or wife for that day. It was simply priceless!

Learning: We have forgotten to pause and just laugh at ourselves. It's a great thing to keep practising it.

Inspire: It was absolutely amazing to meet inspiring women on the way who motivated us with their energy and passion. **Meera Goradia**, runs the Kutch-based NGO, **Khamir** which was set up in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake in Bhuj to help revive the livelihood of artisans and promote crafts of the region. The NGO is the foremost right now in supplying products to major retail stores across India and also has support from international brand Hermes on some of their projects. We also met **Gayatri Kodikal**, a NIFT graduate, who spent about 8 months visiting 54 villages

doing research and documenting the unique art of pottery which is getting extinct.

Learning: If you have the will you can do anything with focus and continuous pursuit of goal.

Share: The road trip gave each of us different insights and a deeper connect to one another's lives. The joys of connecting in person without technology and just being in the moment helped us connect to ourselves even more.

Learning: Connection and bonding increases with sharing.

Rashmi Mandloi, Sarika Bhattacharyya and Shilpi Singh took this road trip from Ahmedabad to Bhuj to Greater Rann and back in January 2015. They are already planning a road trip covering another exotic part of India soon.

Meanwhile Biz Divas has built a 2 day women leadership experiential leadership workshop with an objective to explore self and managing stakeholders on holistic leadership. Do get in touch with shilpi@altavis.co.in for details on the same.

About the Author

Rashmi Mandloi leads the Diversity & Inclusion practice for Biz Divas in South Asia. Her area of expertise is building 'inclusive work spaces' via customized attraction, engagement and retention strategies.



A Perfect Bite - Curry Leaf Fish

I have been fascinated by the flavour of curry leaves for a long time, but I have also felt that it's always a part of the dish, never the whole. Indian cuisine does not harness the full potential of these aromatic leaves! This recipe is my attempt at redressing that.

Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2

Ingredients

4 (100 gms each) fish filets
10-12 spicy Thai red chillies
30 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 cup curry leaves, finely chopped
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp oil
Juice of 1 lime



Method

1. Wash the fish and pat dry.
2. Combine the green chillies, garlic, curry leaves and salt in a bowl.
3. Divide in half and marinate the fish for 10 minutes in one half of the mixture.
4. Put the oil in a pan on medium heat. When hot, add the other half of the curry leaf mix and sauté for 2-3 minutes, till the garlic is golden.
5. Add the fish and fry on both sides, till cooked through and firm.
6. Alternatively, you can bake the fish.
7. Mix the fish into the fried herbs and arrange the pieces in a baking dish, cover with foil and bake in an oven preheated to 180°C for 20 minutes, till the fish is cooked through and flaky. Uncover and bake for a further 5-8 minutes to crisp it up.
8. Squeeze in the lime juice and stir gently.
9. Serve with steamed white rice!

Recipe from award winning book "A Pinch of This, A Handful of That - A Memoir with Recipes" by **Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal**. A corporate food consultant and food writer, Rushina also heads *A Perfect Bite Consulting* and *APB Cook Studio, Mumbai*.

Now is Your Time

This is the moment in time we've been waiting and working for. This is the time in history when everything is coming together for ambitious, working-age women in India, elsewhere in Asia, in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

I know because I've been watching and benefiting from advances for girls and women since I was a 10 year old girl living in India, and as a young woman growing up in the Middle East, a corporate leader, an entrepreneur and as a researcher synthesizing the career advancement of over 250 women in developing and emerging economies for my just released book **Undeterred: The Six Success Habits of Women in Emerging Economies**.

A combination of developments is creating this unprecedented opportunity for women:

- ✓ We are educated and our skills are in demand.
- ✓ Companies, markets and the world economy need and increasingly rely on the talents of women.
- ✓ Growth in emerging economies, technology, and innovation are creating opportunities.
- ✓ Governments, multilateral entities, corporations, organizations and individuals both men and women are recognizing that we cannot prosper without gender equality.
- ✓ Programs, initiatives, accelerators, capital and laws that promote women are increasingly in place.
- ✓ We believe in ourselves and believe it is possible to have success simultaneously both in our personal and professional lives.

In India, in particular, the business environment is improving. New investments are planned and economic growth rates are recovering and expected to even outpace China's. Women can be found leading in every sector in India including in space exploration to Mars.

“ So along with continuing to work for improvements in regulations, norms, corporate practices and in boardrooms what can we keep doing individually for ourselves?”

In my research for Undeterred I uncovered that women professionally thriving in Asia, Africa, Latin

America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe share a common trait and set of six habits. It is the combination of these habits, not just one, that leads to the results that women are seeking. It is not enough just to talk about confidence or about courage, or about mentors or

even about sponsors. There is no short cut or quick fix. There is no one thing that alone enables a woman to get where she wants to be.

Women in emerging economies are, above all else, undeterred. Undeterred women know that obstacles are a constant part of life; that as soon as they overcome one hurdle, there will likely be another. But, they don't give in and they don't give up. They persevere. They continue to work for what they want within the context of their cultures and values. They eliminate, reduce, or work around every obstacle that comes their way. What distinguishes ordinary women succeeding in emerging economies is that they are unwavering and consistent in practising a whole set of habits that leads to their success.

In *Outliers*, his seminal book about success, *Malcolm Gladwell*, repeatedly shows us how certain moments in time are hugely advantageous for specific groups of people.

This is your time!

About the Author

Rania H. Anderson, is the author of *Undeterred: The Six Success Habits of Women in Emerging Economies*, the founder of *TheWayWomenWork.com*, a global speaker, an executive business coach and an angel investor.



Musings of a Woman Entrepreneur

Until 2007, I had a very straight jacketed career path. I graduated from IIT as a chemical engineer, worked with a strategy consulting firm in Delhi, went to Silicon Valley, did a software start up there, pursued my MBA from INSEAD, France and then returned to Silicon Valley to first work with Palm and then with Adobe. It was in 2007, when I was in my late thirties, that a tragedy in my family suddenly sensitized me to my mortality. For the first time in my life, I realized that my own time on earth was limited. And for the very first time in my life, I was forced to ask myself

- ✓ What is my purpose?
- ✓ What do I want to be remembered for?
- ✓ What drives me and fulfills me?
- ✓ What do I want to accomplish in the time I have left? (Not that I was dying then but I knew I would one day)

It took me a long time to come up with succinct and honest answers to those difficult and uncomfortable questions. Once I developed a certain level of clarity, my life journey certainly became more meaningful. I realized that my key aspiration was the need for 'balance'.

Balance in the four key areas of my life: Work, Family, Self, Community.

This realization drove a lot of my decisions and actions - big and small. Which country do I want to live in - India or the US? Where do I want to work - a large multinational or start something really small? Spend time with my children in the evening or grow my business faster than the pace it was growing at?

I was fortunate that this process coincided with setting up of **Intellitots** and I realized that we as an organization had to do the same soul searching. When it comes to organizations, the process is more complicated but nonetheless as critical. In the case of organizations, you not only have to identify your *raison d'être* but you also have to ensure that the entire team believes in it and helps shape it.

Leadership in organizations is a lot about developing the shared vision, believing in it and ensuring that it breathes life into every small and big decision made at the organization.

At Intellitots when we went through the process of developing a shared vision. We did a small exercise in



which every teacher and staff member (didis and bhaiyas included) was asked to recall an instance when they felt proud of being at Intellitots.

A common theme emerged. People at Intellitots feel happy and proud when they touch other lives in meaningful ways. This theme provided the context for all the small actions that teachers undertake at Intellitots and reminded them about the importance of teaching - how teaching is not just about getting children to know "ABC" and "123" but about making a meaningful difference in children's lives.

“ It is the leader's job to tap into the deepest energies of employees, articulate a shared vision that connects them with a meaningful theme which promises a positive impact on the world around them.”

At a personal level, we are all busy doing routine stuff - taking care of our families and working to earn our living. At an organizational level we build products, sell services, manage money and so on. But the big question is, can we see beyond the day-to-day task to visualize our dream and what we will finally build out of our lives and organizations?

About the Author

Pooja Goyal is the Founder and Director of Intellitots which is known for its path breaking work in the field of early years education and care and is now making a foray into the K-12 education space.



A peek into the journeys of some brilliant, dexterous, inspiring go-getter divas associated with Biz Divas platform.

Gesu Kaushal

Executive Director and Co-Head - Capital Markets Group,
Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited

With over 19 years of experience in the investment banking industry in India, Gesu has been working with corporates to help raise money from public markets in India. She has played an important role in the regulatory evolution of the Indian capital markets and has been involved with many capital market innovations over the years. Gesu is the Vice Chairperson of the Association of Investment Bankers of India and a member of the REITs Advisory Group of the Bombay Stock Exchange. Gesu Kaushal is also a mentee in the Biz Divas Mentoring Leadership Program.

"Coming from the hinterlands of Uttar Pradesh, where I grew up on a farm, I went to a boarding school and graduated in Economics Hons. from LSR, Delhi University and completed an MBA from JBIMS, Mumbai University. Fascinated by the financial markets and the opportunity to deal with India's great entrepreneurs, I stepped into the "big boys club" of investment banking in the year 1995. The opportunity to make decisions, improvise and find solutions to various issues for a significant international offering very early in my professional life reinforced my decision to make a career in this industry. The fact that I could express my views and was heard fortified my confidence."

"I believe in being honest in my dealings, be it internally or with clients, speaking my mind, albeit politely, and not being conscious of being a woman. This industry that I am in, unlike banking, has always had few women. Gender ratios have not improved much over the years."

"I just followed my heart and took up opportunities as they came my way, focussed on doing what I was good at and to the best of my abilities. I would like to believe that the gender consideration did not come in the way of my career choices."

"Challenges came in different forms... there are people who are reluctant to take advice from women. So we have to prove ourselves to make them take us seriously... although these incidents were very few in my case."

"Other challenges are well known - the primary one is managing work-home balance. I have tried to not let my professional responsibilities come in the way of being a responsible mother, hopefully! At times, I do feel guilty but believe that the quality of time is more important than quantity of time spent. Emotionally, it has been a challenge but I wouldn't have done it any other way."

"I feel we have to constantly prioritize and we should be clear of our priorities. Take each day as it comes. Inspiration comes from many small things - client recognition, mentoring women who are starting off or a note of appreciation for a job well done."

"I have enjoyed my journey so far. I don't consider myself to be very ambitious but I do take a stand on matters I feel strongly about. I feel good that I have reached this far with the support of people around me - my family and my colleagues."

We women are wired differently. We have a maternal instinct and we cannot wish that away, nor should we. Caring is a beautiful experience and I think that makes us better professionals - more organized, efficient and compassionate!



Ishita Anand

CEO & Co-Founder, BitGiving.com

An alumnus of Lady Shri Ram College, Ishita is one of the founders of BitGiving.com. Ishita combines her educational background in fine arts, technology and business to plan, design and deliver the vision for BitGiving. An erstwhile filmmaker, Ishita is a young entrepreneur who started her first venture at an age of 22. Ishita is also affiliated with the Lean In Foundation and is heading the Circles for Women Entrepreneurs in India.

"I was working as a graphic designer with a start-up while I was at LSR and I guess the entrepreneurial experience stayed with me. After working in an ad agency for a while, I moved out to take independent projects for films and dabbled in a lot of different things. I met my mentor and co-founder, Fahad Moti Khan, while working on a product idea. In June 2013, we started exploring the idea of a crowdfunding platform and after 6 crazy months, we launched BitGiving."

"The Journey since then has been fascinating. In the last one year with BitGiving, we've managed to raise funds for many organizations, including Amnesty International India, Magic Bus, CRY and Stop Acid Attacks with individual contributions ranging from Rs. 100 to 4,00,000. We've got our proof of concept and we know how crowdfunding works in India. This year we're working on consolidating those learnings and our focus is on the growth of BitGiving as a platform."

"As an entrepreneur, raising funds for your startup is one of the biggest challenges. I faced something similar with my first product idea, which unfortunately never went beyond the drawing board due to lack of funds. That was one of the reasons why BitGiving as a concept resonated with me."

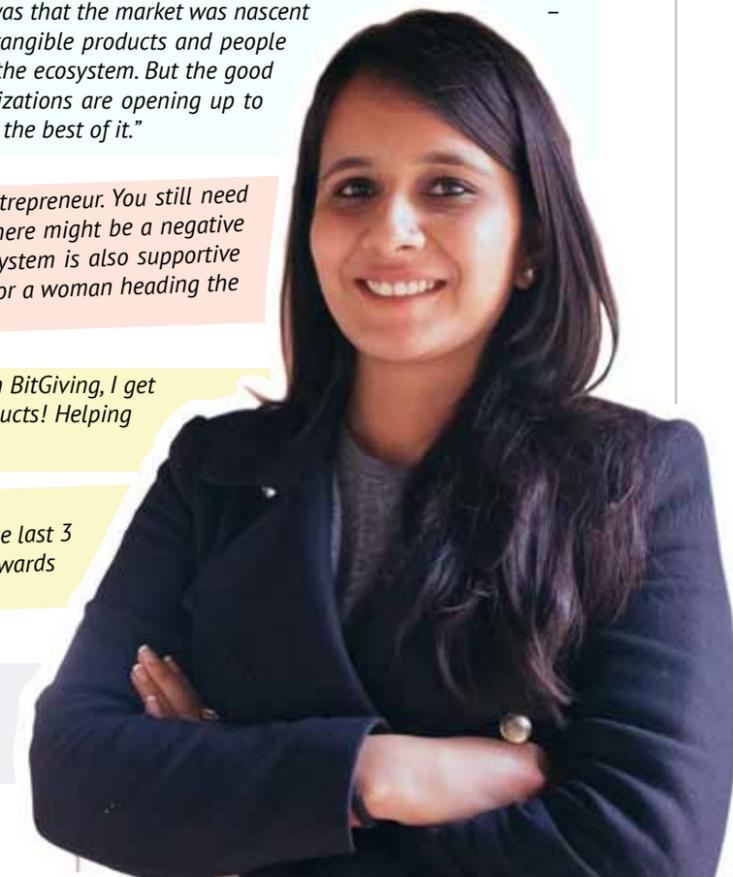
"As a business, BitGiving's biggest challenge when we started out was that the market was nascent both on the campaigner as well as the contributor side. The idea of tangible products and people coming together to make an impact took some time to take shape in the ecosystem. But the good news is that the market is now maturing and more and more organizations are opening up to crowdfunding. It's an interesting time and we're all geared up to make the best of it."

"As a woman entrepreneur, the challenges are same as a male entrepreneur. You still need to make your targets, achieve them and make the brand successful. There might be a negative perception of women being aggressive in the field but then the ecosystem is also supportive and recognizes achievements - regardless of whether there is a man or a woman heading the start up."

"The idea of building something new and tangible inspires me. With BitGiving, I get to be associated with campaigners with such brilliant ideas and products! Helping them get a step closer to their goal makes my day."

"To be honest, I haven't really thought about achievements - for the last 3 years I've pretty much been focussing on my next goal and working towards giving it my best shot."

"My message to fellow professional women out there is - 'Believe in yourself and take the leap!' It's important to learn how to stand your ground and take chances. Everything else falls into place."



The Grannies of Banaras

A story about two grannies in the oldest living city of the world that gives you another, rather feisty, side to the oft-told story of Indian women. At an age when most women would resign to a retired life with a sigh, this duo took up entrepreneurship and proved their mettle with gusto. Banaras is no longer a city where old women go to just breathe their last, it is a city where they go to live to their fullest potential, thanks to history rewritten by role models like Asha and Aruna!

Let me share about my visit to Banaras last year which would have been ordinary, if I had stayed anywhere else. Anywhere but at **Granny's Inn**, that had the caring and loving grannies lording over the house. That homely feel and the reception given to the guests give the place a magical aura of relaxed, comfortable well-being.

A visitor to Banaras goes there to immerse oneself in the glorious traditions of Banaras – the Ghats of Ganga



which witness both the rituals for the living and the dead; the majestic temples dedicated to Shiva and then the noise, food and chaos that exist even as India moves ahead. One of the best ways to explore the layers of this city is to make a long visit and take the time to explore not only the obvious places but the pulse of the city – its tea chaupals, its chaat shops, its street food and its uniquely Indian ethos.

This requires one to have a great base and a good guide, so one can experience the subtle nuances and become an insider. While luxury hotels can provide one with a comfortable stay and a predictable ambience, the best experience, in my view, comes from staying as a house

guest with a local family.

This granny duo - Asha and Aruna are fiery sisters, who in the autumn of their lives, have turned entrepreneurs. With love, hard work and large hearts, they have managed to convert an old family house into the No.2 B&B of Banaras (as per Tripadvisor). The home-stay has a limited number of rooms but has unlimited generosity to give guests time and attention to share stories, experiences, suggest options and discuss the day.

At an age where most of the people, let alone women, hang up their boots; their days are bustling with activities. They may not have studied leadership or entrepreneurship but they excel in it in their own comely way. The place speaks of warmth from its every nook and corner. It reminds you of visits to your own grandma's place as a child. It has a large family kitchen and guests are encouraged to visit it. WiFi service is also on offer, for the email and social media junkies, but it is the old world charm, so remote and unattainable these days that wins your heart.

“The story of Granny's Inn is one of hope, happiness, warmth and wisdom.”

It needs to be shared and seeded in many more Indian cities. The elderly in our society don't need an old age home; what they really need is an opportunity to lead a second spring in their lives - to explore and enjoy creativity, community & compassion.

In case you are a senior, or know of someone who would like to rewrite their life's story in a fun and enriching way, connect with the grannies at namastey@grannysinn.in

About the Author

Arvind Jha is a software professional, entrepreneur, mentor, angel investor with experience in both global companies and domestic business. He likes travelling, exploring places via its food, history, culture and literature.



Safety First

By Dinakshi Arora

According to a report by (WHO, June 2013), it is estimated that worldwide one in five women would be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. According to a NCRB report in India, one rape happens every 34 minutes, one act of molestation happens every 16 minutes, one dowry death every 78 minutes, one act of sexual harassment every 59 minutes. These aren't just statistics; women are living this truth every day of their lives.

The recent case of rape in a cab in Delhi bears testimony to negligence and lackadaisical attitude of the authorities concerned. Under the Nirbhaya act 2013, procedures to deal with cases of rape have been streamlined and punishment to the offenders has become harsher. However, there is no system that can prevent these crimes from happening. The only way women can deal with it is by strengthening themselves.

While the picture may look gloomy when you look at it this way, there is another side to it in the form of awe-inspiring people who have dedicated their lives to making safety a norm and a right for women.

Meet **Yudhajit Baul**, who had worked with various multinational banks like Barclays, Standard Chartered and HSBC before he co-founded **Sinew**, a self-defence training academy committed to train only women. Deeply moved by the state of affairs and nonchalant attitude of the people, Yudhajit, with a background of training in martial arts, designed curriculum which is easy to learn and apply for women regardless of their age and athletic ability.

“From our research, we have gathered that there are 20 most common forms of physical abuses that a woman can be subjected to. In our programs, we first break the inhibition which most women harbour that they are physically weaker than men. We train them on how to leverage on a weak body balance of the offender, and then how to hit hard earliest to the weakest portion of the offender's body. We endeavour to cultivate a sub-conscious instinctive approach,” Yudhajit shares.



Having trained more than 3000 women working with organizations (like member companies of NASSCOM, HSBC, Franklin Templeton, DuPont, Polaris, Wells Fargo and many more), colleges, rehabilitation centers, orphanages and police department through Sinew, Yudhajit does more than justice to his name that means Winning War. In *George Washington's* words: “To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.”

Veena Gupta is another first generation entrepreneur with more than a decade of experience in the field of women safety and self-defence. Founder President of **WESS (Women Empowerment Safety & Security Foundation)**, Veena has carved a niche for herself in the security industry. WESS works towards empowerment and upliftment of Women & Children by conducting workshops with a vision to build a safe, secure and empowered society - free of gender discrimination. Bestowed with the title of 'Lady Bodyguard,' Veena is famous for her groundbreaking initiatives and work with the government, corporates, schools, banks, export houses and hotels.

“I faced quite some challenges in my initial years that only helped in making innate qualities of compassion and integrity stronger in me. I don't believe in the myth that only men can protect. Women are capable enough to protect themselves, their families and society. Apart from inculcating courage in women to fight for their safety and rights, I teach mothers to change upbringing of their sons. Teaching our sons gender equality is the best way to stop crimes against women. We all are vulnerable, be it a man or a woman, hiring a taxi or walking on the road, so it becomes our own responsibility to take care of our safety. Women can sense bad things fast through our gut feeling, let's put that to use along with our physical and emotional strength,” she says.

Biz Divas applauds these heroes whole-heartedly for reinforcing the fact “strength lies within!”

(Facts and figures courtesy: Sinew)

Unpainful Portraits

Have to get your portrait clicked for your office? Magazine? Website? Think you look terrible in pictures? Congratulations, you form majority of the corporate 'junta' who thinks getting pictures clicked is probably one of the worst thing that could happen to them. Let's hope that these pointers can make this dreadful experience a little better for the next time.

Side Profile Madam

Phrases like "side profile" or "look over your shoulder" are very common for portraits. The side profile is believed to hide all flaws. The truth is - it does not matter unless it's a full-length shot. Portraits are generally mid length to close-up shots. Focus on the way you sit, with your back up straight and chin a little away from the neck (to reduce appearance of a double chin). Other than that, it really does not matter.

If studio is the only option, please do not hesitate in asking your photographer to recreate natural light while taking the shot.

Break the Rules

You don't need to get a regular run-of-the-mill chest length side profile portrait clicked. You've probably seen thousands of them in corporate websites/magazines and hate them.

Get a tight close-up clicked or maybe don't look directly into the camera or something else. Point is - there are no rules. Make your own.

Talk to your photographer, experiment a little and best of all, let your personality shine through in your portrait.

Those are the best kind!

Smile Please

A happy cheerful face certainly helps elevate an image and instantly makes a connection. It does not mean that you have to laugh your heart out the next time you get your image clicked. A slight smile would help unless, of course, the shot is deliberately being taken as brooding, where the smile would just kill it. If you feel nervous or uncomfortable smiling like that or if it feels fake, best option is to have a friend around to talk to you and help you relax.

Embrace the Sun

If there's an option, always prefer natural light to get your images clicked. It's extremely flattering and creates beautiful light and shadow. If the portrait is being shot at your house, let the natural light come in and try sitting by the window or in the balcony.

About the Author

Nitika Bhasin is corporate employee turned professional photographer. Delhi girl based out of Mumbai. Two worlds in one.



Diversity Jobs

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Description - Looking for a CA with 7-9 years experience in Accounting. Experience in Manufacturing/Automation companies preferred.
2. Leading KPO
Sr. Manager - Admin
Location - Mumbai
Description - Candidate should have 8-10 years experience in Administration. Government liasioning experience would be additional.
3. Consulting Firm
Manager/Sr Manager - Direct Tax
Location - Gurgaon/Mumbai
Description - CA with existing experience in Big 4 Consulting Firms in Direct taxation.
4. Fortune 500 IT Company
Sr Business Systems Consultant
Location - Bangalore
Description - MBA from Tier I Institutes with minimum 4 years of work experience in consulting.
5. Leading Pharmaceutical Company
Factory Manager HR
Location - Chennai
Description - MBA/MSW with experience of managing at least 1000+ employees. Experience with managing Labor Unions for at least 5 years and total experience of 9 years is mandatory.
6. Leading Captive BPO
Senior Manager - Business Transformation
Location - Gurgaon
Description - Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certified, 7-9 years total experience out of which 4-6 should be in process improvement.
7. Leading Real Estate Firm
Service Delivery Leader - Training
Location - Bangalore
Description - 8-12 years of training delivery work experience, managing a 10 member team. Measure training effectiveness, partner with local business and global learning teams.
8. Indian MNC
Manager - Talent Management
Location - Mumbai
Description - MBA HR from premier B School with extensive experience in Campus Recruitment.
9. Leading IT Firm
Senior Manager - Key Accounts
Location - Gurgaon/Mumbai
Description - Should have 8-13 years experience in Business Development, Account Management, Engagement with CXOs.
10. Luxury Retail Firm
Marketing Manager
Location - Gurgaon
6-8 experience in Retail Marketing for ATL & BTL. Experience in Luxury retail would be added advantage.

Contact: info@altavis.co.in



Jewellery Cleaning Tips



Always:

- * Apply lotion, cosmetics, hairspray and perfume before putting on jewellery.
- * While removing, wipe each piece with a clean soft cloth to remove oils and perspiration.
- * Store in a fabric-lined box, separately or individually wrapped in tissue paper, to prevent scratches.

Never:

- * Never wear jewellery when doing physical work such as housekeeping, gardening or exercise.
- * Never expose jewellery to household cleaning products.
- * Never expose jewellery to chlorine swimming pools or hot tubs.

Tips for Cleaning:

- * Clean in a secure location, not at the rim of a sink where a piece may slip down the drain.
- * Use only a soft brush, never sharp or hard objects, to remove dirt or particles.
- * Clean your jewellery often; lotions, soaps and skin oils alter the optical properties of diamonds and gemstones, causing them to look dull.
- * Seriously soiled jewellery should be cleaned professionally.
- * Clean diamond jewellery with a soft brush dipped in warm soapy water; rinse under running water.
- * Never expose pearl jewelry to chemicals or solvents and store each piece in a soft bag.
- * Don't expose colored gemstones to chemicals, solvents or ultrasonic without knowing their specific cleaning requirements.
- * If your polki jewellery turns black use an eraser at home to rub of the blackness over it. If it gets black again and again please consult a professional.

Tips for Long Life:

- * Have your jewellery cleaned and checked by a professional for worn mountings, loose prongs and general condition at least once per year.
- * Have white gold re-plated, platinum re-polished and prongs re-tipped as necessary to maintain original condition (generally every 24 months or so).
- * Have frequently-worn pearls restrung as necessary, with a knot between each pearl to prevent loss if the string breaks.
- * Some colored gemstones should not be exposed to sudden temperature changes; know your pieces and their needs.
- * Select daily-wear jewellery that is in harmony with your lifestyle and schedule of activities.
- * Treat each piece as if it were a family heirloom, for someday it may be.

Written by experts from Narula's Fine Jewellery. For any further assistance please visit our stores in Shop 115, DLF Grand Mall, M.G Road, Gurgaon. Or 8 Beadon Pura Ajmal Khan Road Karol Bagh. Mob: 9891362473.

8 Apps & Extensions that will make you a More Productive Business Diva

Running your home, managing your family and personal life, and attempting to keep up in your profession can take up all of your time. So I've put together a list of some impressive phone apps and browser extensions that will help make your life easier and more productive.

1. StayFocused

You probably love Facebook, but how often have you found yourself wasting precious time scrolling through it aimlessly? What if something could kick you off and totally prevent you from even opening the site? Rude? Yes, but it's going to be a real time saver! StayFocused is a bliss. This app allows you lock yourself out with a countdown clock. It can be used on Google Chrome and allows you to choose which websites to block or allow.

2. Grammarly

Don't worry about not being able to have an editor to perfect your writing; Grammarly takes care of it beautifully. Akin to your personal grammar coach, it proofreads and corrects with 10 times more authority than a regular word processor can. What makes it a smart choice is how it contextually scans your text for typos and gives suggestions to perk up your writing.

3. Session Manager

Imagine how wonderful it would be to be able to save and retrieve all the research tabs on your browser with just one click. Just install Session Manager and it will allow you to auto-save all your tabs and restore it if your browser crashes. This is a real life saver.

4. ToDoist

Preparing a to-do-list the night before is something we professionals simply can't do without. This sleek app helps you stay organized and focussed without worrying about keeping a notepad and pen with you at all times. Amazingly, it allows you to automatically sync between different devices, saving you the trouble of doing it manually. You may even choose to get reminders sent to you via SMS.

5. Sidekick

Ever wondered exactly when the emails you send to a prospective buyer or customer get opened (or not

opened at all)? Wouldn't it be really useful to know when your potential contacts usually check their emails so that you can time your messages to sit on the top of their inbox? Sidekick has become my personal favorite since it improved my email open and response rate by over 30%.

6. Boomerang

Timing your emails to make sure your contacts find them right at the top of their inbox just wouldn't be possible without Boomerang extension for gmail. The real perk is that the emails will be sent out even if you're offline. You will also be able to enjoy many functions such as response tracking, tablet optimized layouts, email signatures, infinity scrolling inbox, snoozing emails, and above all an intuitive gesture system that makes it a productive and simple way to access Gmail. Use it with Sidekick app to improve responses to your messages.

7. WiseStamp

Start with an impressive email signature with WiseStamp. Other than leaving a great impression, it has helped to send a significant number of readers and prospective clients to my blog where they can find the latest posts that I write.

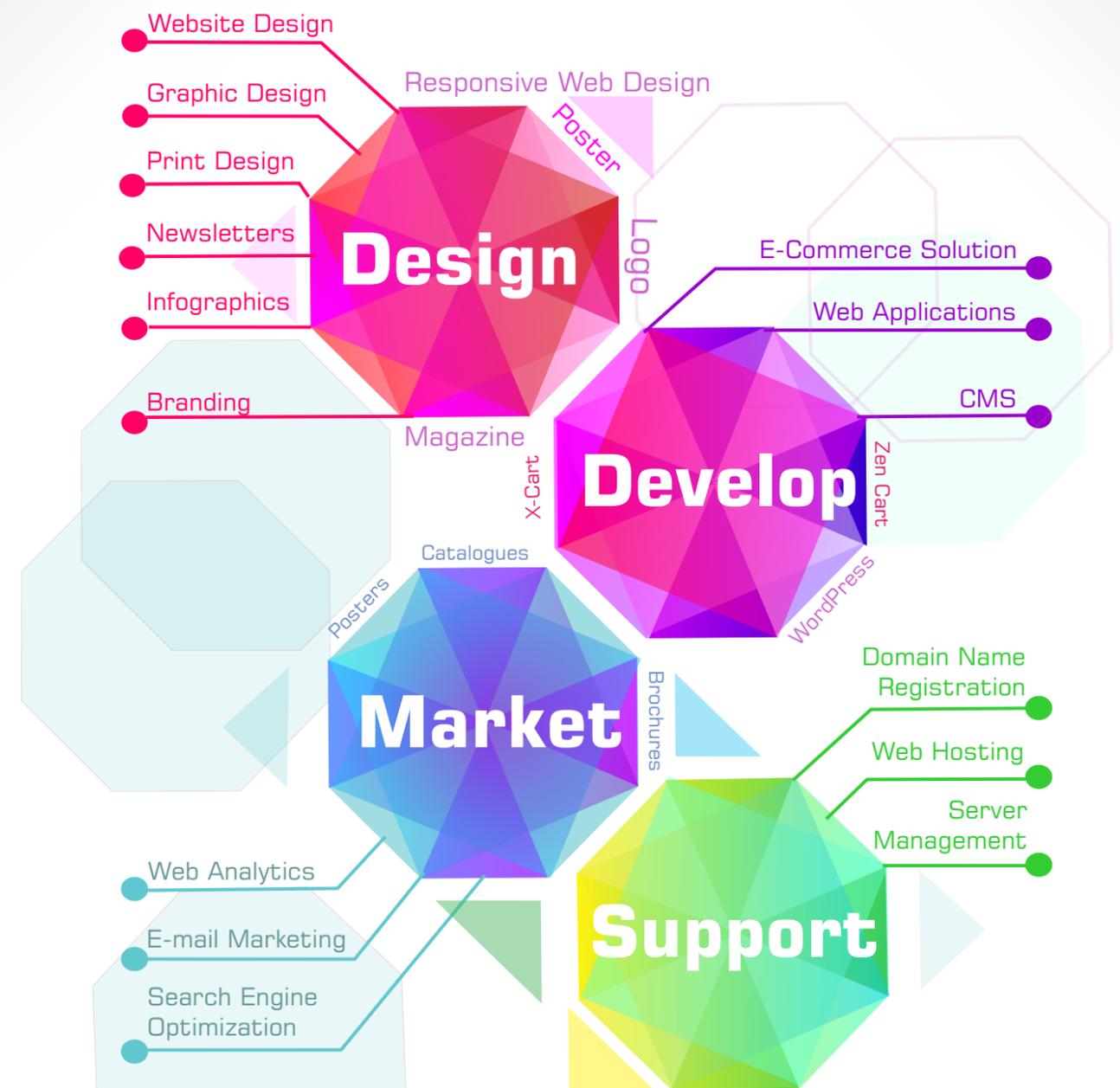
8. Join.Me

Setting up last minute conferences will no longer be an issue with Join.Me installed on your device. This app will enable you to communicate and collaborate in real-time. Using screen sharing, you can get creative together without delay. It saves time, it's dependable, it doesn't gobble up your PC's resources, it's excellent for emergencies that pop up without notice, and best of all, it's absolutely free. We couldn't really ask for more to get connected virtually.

These apps won't just make you more productive, they allow you to have that romantic dinner with your husband, or be with your kids on parents' day, or enjoy that *me time* you so deserve.

About the Author

Sunita Biddu is a Blogging & Social Media Coach and Internet Marketing Strategist. She is the author of "101 Social Media Answers for Entrepreneurs".



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A visit to Banaras anytime of the year is crazy & chaotic. But quite spiritual under the surface. And these two feisty grannies - Asha & Aruna will make your visit memorable with their warm hospitality and home cooked food! Granny's Inn is a collaborative experiment for the elderly based on hope, happiness, warmth & wisdom!

For bookings, enquiries & franchise opportunities, write to namastey@grannysinn.in | 9650400466, 9560550015



Biz Divas Supports

Some passionately founded and run ventures by our ever-inspiring divas.



Birdsong & Beyond is an experiential brand evolved out of passion and deeply held values about living and working in a way rich with meaning and connection and creativity. Founded by **Kiran Chaturvedi**, Birdsong & Beyond creates experiential journeys and creative expression workshops with focus on finding inner connect with one's authentic voice while discovering outer connect with places, people, stories, learnings and nature.

Email: easysojourns@gmail.com
Website: www.birdsongnbeyond.com



HSPP Consultants, a management consultancy firm co-founded by **Poonam Alam** brings progressive and innovative techniques to harness and optimize the potential of human resources. They strive to awaken human and organizational excellence through exclusive consulting, organizational development, and HR development services. HSPP is the harbinger of human and organizational development work in Bangladesh having in-house experts as well as bringing in global experts specialized in providing cutting-edge Behavioural and Functional Training.

Email: csd@yourconsultants.eu
Website: www.hsppconsultants.com



One Tree Spaces, co-founded by **Priyanka Bhatia** works towards including women in India's growing wealth. Today, there are more women in workplaces than in the history of India. One Tree Spaces comes in with substantial support in this area with workshops, webinars and one-on-one trainings. Their hands on programs are easy to follow but require a strong commitment, courage and a willingness to move past obstacles to financial freedom and independence.

Email: priyankabhatia@onetreespaces.com
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Sunita Biddu, Social Media & Blogging Coach, helps entrepreneurs build not only great reputation but also generate significant revenues online. She also helps homemakers use blogging to earn financial freedom. With a choice of personalized face-to-face sessions to online video coaching, she is best known for making most complicated things very simple and easy to understand for her coachees. She does a free consultation every second Thursday of the month.

Email: hello@sunitabiddu.com
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Surekha Waldia started her venture **ELNA** with the vision of educating children by connecting them with their social environment and developing their cognitive as well as non cognitive skills. Since tangible knowledge can't take place within four walls of a class room, ELNA helps young minds interact with society as a whole and various organs governing it. ELNA has been able to reach more than 5000 students both in urban and rural schools with its various programs till date.

Email: surekha.waldia@elna.co.in
Website: www.elna.co.in



Soul Purpose is co-founded and run by **Vidya Deshpande**, a print & TV journalist turned entrepreneur and a Biz Divas global walk mentee. Soul Purpose is almost unique in looking at customized travel for women that has elements of regular tourism, adventure, personal learning and networking. The concept is to design travel for women with a taste for adventure. Its tourist interest combined with offbeat experiences like village stays, camping, trekking.

Email: soulpurposetravel@gmail.com
Website: www.soulpurposetravel.in

Core Team

Sarika Bhattacharyya, Co-Founder, Biz Divas & Altavis has over 16 years of experience having worked with firms such as Merrill Lynch. She is passionate about economic independence of women and giving them a voice. Sarika was nominated by US Embassy for a prestigious Women Leadership exchange program (Fortune/US State Dept) where she spent a month in USA being mentored by CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. She was also felicitated prestigious "Leadership in Mentoring" award by Hillary Clinton, Vital Voices & Bank of America in USA in 2014. A highly respected speaker on gender diversity and related business issues, Sarika has been featured as the Top 50 Indian Women to follow in Twitter by WOW Asia. Sarika is an avid reader, enthusiastic traveler and dabbles in painting.

Priyanka Awasthy, is co Founder of Biz Divas Foundation and Altavis Consulting. She has over 15 years of experience in banks and multinationals including Citi, Blackrock and Standard Chartered. As an avid campaigner for inclusive leadership and a firm advocate of women's economic empowerment, she develops and facilitates programs that sensitize organisations to the needs of diverse groups. Priyanka speaks at various forums on inclusive leadership and gender issues. She organizes periodic round table discussions with industry leaders on key issues and best practices in talent management. She is involved in research projects on topics relevant to inclusion. Priyanka is a Mentor with FICCI for women entrepreneurs. She is also involved in various efforts for environment protection.

Ranjana Deopa, Co-Founder, Altavis & Biz Divas, has over 17 years of experience having worked with firms like Xerox, ABN Amro and ICICI Bank. Ranjana successfully established Altavis Consulting as a preferred partner for Executive Search with large MNCs. She believes in promoting balanced leadership in the corporate world. With that passion, she started the practice of Diversity Hiring and Women on Boards. A certified scuba diver & a marathon runner, Ranjana is a fitness enthusiast and is also a brand ambassador for Pinkathon, Delhi.

Shilpi Singh is an Executive Coach & Hospitality Entrepreneur. Shilpi is also on Board of Swachha, one of the best known NGOs of India, working in space of environmental issues. She has had

14+ years of HR experience with some of the world's best media companies – Ogilvy & IMG. She has handled PAN India responsibilities and challenging global matrix across multiple industries including FMCG, Luxury, Bank Telecom, Technology, Manufacturing and more. She now plays the role of a Performance Catalyst, working with individuals and organizations to better their performance, profitability and purpose. Shilpi has been trained and certified by Results Coaching System (Australia) and is amongst the early believers and practitioners of executive coaching in the country. She is also a certified Emotional Intelligence practitioner. A multi-tasker, she also runs a chain of homestays in India – Cinnamon Stays, Grannys Inn. Shilpi has been working extensively in the space of Woman leadership since past four years. She is a key player in Biz Divas Foundation. She is specially committed to working with women entrepreneurs.

Rashmi Mandloi is a Diversity and Inclusion consultant with a professional career of over 14 years with Deutsche Bank, Convergys and Standard Chartered Bank in India. She has collaborated with organization boards in charting out an holistic employee development plan. Via Biz Divas she aims to enable greater participation of women in the Indian subcontinent and also create a positive impact on their life and prosperity. She leads the Biz Divas Bangladesh chapter which aims to get entrepreneurial and professional women connected using technology, sessions, training and other innovative tools to help them advance in their roles and careers.

Garvita Chaturvedi is an Executive Coach and Human Resources Professional with direct and in-depth exposure to a wide swathe of services industries, within marquee MNCs as well as early stage entrepreneurial ventures. Earlier, in the corporate sector, Garvita worked in various HR functional roles in People Strategy, Compensation & Benefits, Performance Management and Content Development across IT/ ITES, Banking, Financial Services and Insurance sectors. As a coach, Garvita has moorings in Performance Coaching and Women Coaching. She is most passionate about working with women in various stages of the employee lifecycle as well as transitioning or growing entrepreneurs, helping her clients unleash their full potential. Garvita is an IIM Indore alumnus and a post-graduate in Commerce.

Namrata Bajaj, Program Manager, Biz Divas, is the latest to join the team. She has done her schooling from Modern School, Barakhamba Road and post graduation in Finance from Symbiosis, Pune. With over 6 years of experience working in industries like Education, Banking, Insurance and organizations like Citibank and Max Life Insurance, Namrata brings a rich experience in areas such as human resources, customer services and people management. She manages backend operations, communications and event execution at Biz Divas. Namrata is an avid traveller and is passionate about fashion.

Ela Gupta, passionate about empowering people and communities and instigate social changes, loves to work with social entrepreneurs and change-makers. As a Marketing and Communications consultant, Ela helps in understanding, measuring and articulating Biz Divas' social impact. Ela specializes in media, events & content strategy. Ela is an alumnus of London School of Economics, Birla Institute of Management Technology and Miranda House.

Dinakshi Arora, after a successful stint with in the IT industry as software professional with organizations like IBM, Satyam and Polaris, joined Biz Divas as Program Manager & Content Head. She then moved to her role as Editor at Biz Divas. She works as a consultant for a software company and freelances as a writer. Having versatile skills sets, Dinakshi is an avid reader, blogger and writes poetry in three languages. Being very passionate about education, she also takes creative writing and other workshops for children. She is deeply interested in spirituality, wellness and exploring life.

Preeti Lamba is the Online Content Editor of Biz Divas blog. She is sensitive to issues related to women and likes writing about social change. Preeti comes with experience of more than 5 years in communications. She has traveled to many places in India, Canada and UK for travel features, besides writing on society, lifestyle, art and entertainment in her last job with The Week magazine, based in Mumbai. Preeti is an alumnus of Shri Ram College of Commerce and Indian Institute of Mass Communication. She is currently based in London and is rediscovering her love for painting.

We identify, invest in & bring visibility to women leaders



Women on Boards
An Altavis Initiative



Executive Search



Diversity Consulting



Knowledge Forums



Research & Advocacy



Training & Coaching



Delhi | Mumbai | Bangalore | Dhaka

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