The I Inspire Leadership Awards celebrates the change-makers and the impact they have on the communities and society at large. Its all about inclusion champions who innovate and inspire taking the road less travelled. Since 2015, BD Foundation has shined a spotlight on these leaders representing the business, philanthropic, entrepreneurs, academia, media, & social sectors. Every year, we celebrate and honour leaders for their exemplary contributions towards building linkages and making the world a better place. These are champions of change who use their skills, experience and resources to make a positive difference. These are disruptors who are challenging the status quo and inspire others to do the same as well. They fight for human rights, socio-economic equality, equal opportunity workplace, inclusive policies & advocating for a more just & fair world.

Now more than ever, the world needs to invest and join them in their dream of creating a more sustainable and inclusive world. We feel honoured to be a small part of their inspiring journey and we urge you to join us as well by supporting these champions in their mission to bring a positive change in the world.

Sarika Bhattacharyya
CEO, BD Foundation
Sunitha Krishnan wanted to help the poor children of a village near her city, so she went to college to become a social worker. One day as she was organizing the village to teach the children, a gang of eight men did not like that a woman was interfering with what they claimed as “man’s society.” The male dominancy of Indian society influenced the eight men to rape her, beating her so badly that she is partially deaf in one ear. She has had to deal with all that and more. Though violated, she refused to be broken and she co-founded Prajwala, an organization that assists trafficked women and girls to find shelter.

Each year, more than a million women and children, many younger than 10 years old, are bought and sold around the globe. Till date, Prajwala has rescued, rehabilitated, or served over 17,000 survivors of sex trafficking, making it the largest anti-trafficking shelter in the world. Dr. Krishnan has been physically assaulted multiple times and she receives regular death threats. She says that these assaults have only steeled her resolve to carry on her crusade against human trafficking. Dr. Krishnan has sparked India’s anti-trafficking movement by coordinating government, corporations and NGOs. Through her work through Prajwala, Dr. Krishnan is making it possible for the government and citizens’ groups to manage jointly a range of protective and rehabilitative services for women and children who are survivors of human trafficking. For her humanitarian efforts, she has been recognised all over the world and has been bestowed numerous awards and accolades. The Government of India honoured her with the fourth highest civilian honour, the Padma Shri, in 2016.

For her exemplary work and her passion and courage in making this world a better place; BD Foundation honors Dr. Sunitha Krishnan as I Inspire Leadership Awardee for Women Rights 2018.
Gurmehar Kaur is an Indian student activist and author. It all began when Gurmehar Kaur decided to raise her voice and be a part of the 'Save DU campaign' following the February 2017 clashes at Ramjas College between members of the All India Students Federation (AISF) and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) when JNU students Umar Khalid and Shehla Rashid were invited for a campus seminar. She posted a photo of herself on social media holding a placard reading, “I am a student from Delhi university. I am not afraid of ABVP. I am not alone.”

As the image went viral, an earlier picture surfaced from an unrelated online campaign to promote peace between India and Pakistan. In it, Kaur held a placard about her father, an Indian army captain who had died fighting militants in the disputed region of Kashmir. “Pakistan did not kill my dad,” it read. “War killed him.” In the context of her challenge to the ABVP, those were seen as fighting words. Suddenly, Kaur was a target for online trolls and thrust to the center of a national debate on free speech and dissent in an increasingly nationalistic India. She was mocked by a leading cricketer and criticized by a Bollywood actor.

In the following months, Kaur was targeted with verbal abuse and death threats. But she refused to be silent. “Why should I keep quiet?” she says. “While I never asked for it, I was pushed to the forefront. I realized that people listen to what I say. And if I have something positive to say, why shouldn’t I say it?”

She has authored a book, a memoir, called Small Acts of Freedom which was published in January 2018 by Penguin Random House. She is also an ambassador for Postcards for Peace, a UK based charitable organisation that helps eliminate any form of discrimination and has been hailed as a 'free speech warrior' by the Time Magazine.

Gurmehar Kaur is the Young Trailblazer awardee 2018.
For their innovative way to bring about financial inclusion; BD Foundation honors them as I Inspire Leadership Awardee for Social Innovation 2018.

In a country where over 200 million people live below the poverty line, Haqdarshak is a social impact organisation that aims to bring awareness to the rural population about their entitled welfare schemes (they have information on over 1,700 schemes in their database), and empower them in the process.

Aniket Doegar had been working with several for-profit and non-profit organisations when he realised a major problem for the community he was working in was a basic lack of awareness of the welfare schemes to which they were entitled. It was after working with Mayank Garg and PR Ganapathy and developing a sustainable business model was Haqdarshak established in 2016. Its core idea was to use technology in order to disseminate information to the people. Using a mobile app, Haqdarshak is helping rural India benefit from government welfare schemes and has over 1500 Haqdarshaks working across ten states in the country. They currently working with other organisations to train thousands more women to find such livelihoods and become empowered. Haqdarshak plans to keep growing and expanding their enterprise. They look forward to reaching out to more villages and training even more entrepreneurs.

These Haqdarshaks are entrepreneurs who work at a grassroots level within the community and are trained to use the mobile platform to disseminate information. They go door-to-door in order to spread awareness and charge a nominal fee, between Rs 40 and 200, for a variety of different services. What makes a difference is that the entrepreneurs generally work within their own communities and villages, making it easier to reach out to their own people and spread awareness.

Within two years of its establishment, Haqdarshak is already experiencing success in the impact they have had on the citizens they have reached. At a grassroots level this impact is evident.
It all started as another university project. Ria had to complete a project about acid attacks that were happening at an alarming rate in India. Once she started working on this, she knew this would be not just another project. She knew she would never forget about it and she didn't want to forget about it and she chose to do something about it.

She set herself out on a journey across the length and breadth of the country only to connect with victims of such brutality and extend her hand of compassion and support. But what took her aback was the impeccable fighting spirit and courage that each victim summoned within them amidst the prolonged suffering. The effects of an acid attack last an entire lifetime. Nevertheless most of these women of grit always sport a positive outlook in life. That's when Sharma realised that they are not victims but survivors in their own right.

In no time Sharma founded, Make Love Not Scars, an NGO that supports not just acid attack survivors but victims of gender-based violence. The NGO has an army of volunteers who contribute their time and skills in different ways. Since setting up of Make Love Not Scars, it has come a long way. Under Sharma’s leadership, the organisation has conducted many successful campaigns to raise funds for medical care and rehabilitation of the survivors beneath its wings. They have also filed numerous petitions to amend the existing laws under which the government provides rehabilitation and compensation to acid attacks survivors.

Ria was the winner for the UN Goalkeepers Global Goals Award 2017 and has been listed under Forbes 30 under 30 2018.
Shabia defied death when she was a 21 day baby. The doctors said if she survives she would go mad. Survive she did and ever since, her madness to change her destiny and that of others is impalpable. She started working very early in life, since her father separated from her family when she was about 10 years old. She and her mother gave tuitions to about 80 kids every day. Despite the lack of time, she topped her school results every year by always being in the top three.

Shabia always wanted more from life. While people handle one career, Shabia manages three. A successful media professional for 24 years, she grew from being an assistant director to Siddharth Kak and then learnt on her way up to become a creative director, writer, director, producer and everything else that one could be in media. She has worked with several channels as consultant and is considered one of the best in her field. She even jotted her experiences of pregnancy and has authored the best-selling book 'Mamma Mania'.

When media failed to challenge her creative abilities anymore, She founded the very successful natural skin care brand called 'Wild Earth'. Despite no business background or funding from any sources, Shabia has managed to take her brand global in a matter of just two and a half years. Starting with a 1000 rupees and using her kitchen as her manufacturing unit, Shabia self learnt and started creating amazing soaps, body butters, shampoos, lip balms which then by word of mouth publicity grew to the brand it is today. Today Wild Earth exports to Phillipines, London, Canada and Dubai and is also a well established brand in India. Till today, Shabia manages her brand with a lean team and is the ceo, publicist, brand manager, accountant, and everything else, all rolled into one whilst being a very, very hands on mother to her 8 year old daughter.

Shabia Walia is BD Foundation's Woman of Influence Awardee at I Inspire Leadership Awards 2018.
Sameer Chadha

Sameer has been a fierce believer and a brand ambassador of Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) throughout his career. He has led from the front; organisation wide Inclusion & Diversity strategy and implementation, the impact of which has not only been seen in increasing representation of women in the workforce, colleague engagement and consequent better business results. His passion in driving the I&D agenda is well recognised by colleagues and peers alike, as he has continued to relentlessly push for greater inclusion and engagement.

As the CEO of KPMG Global Services, Sameer brings 25 years of industry experience to the table. A seasoned professional, he has held a number of strategic leadership positions across diverse fields, including at third-party service providers and captive units of major multinational organisations.

Prior to joining KGS, he spent eight years with Barclays Shared Services, initially as the COO and then as the CEO for about six years. During his tenure, the company grew rapidly from 700 employees in one city to about 10,000 in three cities, with a suite of capabilities covering the entire range of banking services.

He believes, while external factors such as government programmes, films and advertisements are increasingly supporting the cause of gender diversity and equal rights, organisations such as ours theirs can do our their bit by creating a culture and atmosphere where women feel supported, confident and enthused to achieve their full potential.

Sameer has continued to be an advocate of I&D as he believes, it is not just imperative for driving better business outcomes, but more so for it is the right thing to do. His contribution and passion to driving Inclusion & Diversity continues to be an inspiration to many.

His vision and commitment to promote inclusion in workplace is truly commendable and he is the proud recipient of BD Foundation's Inclusion Leadership Award at I Inspire Leadership Awards 2018.
Ishita Anand is the Founder and CEO of BitGiving, India’s leading online crowdfunding platform which helps raise funds online for entrepreneurial ideas, creative projects as well as social enterprises and organisations. Ishita’s core vision for BitGiving was simple – to create a technology platform that powered fundraising for unheard stories and helped them create a community that was engaged and involved beyond transactions.

Launched in December 2013, BitGiving started out in the social space by powering crowdfunding initiatives for NGOs and social enterprises. Since then, the platform has evolved and catered to projects across categories and is constantly redefining community driven crowdfunding in India.

In the last 4 years, the platform has hosted more than 1200 campaigns, some of which have been pivotal for Crowdfunding in India - including the fundraising for the National Ice Hockey Team, Friendicoes - an animal shelter which was about the shutdown, Kuntal Joisher’s dream to summit the Everest and an advertising professional turned social entrepreneur whose innovative light bag is now being used by more than 500 children in villages across India.

Passionate about building products, Ishita is a self confessed geek who spent the first few years post college making animated and corporate films before diving into the technology world. She started her first venture at the early age of 22 and then went on to work with a technology company that build products for banks and businesses in India, Middle-east and South-East Asia.

Her exposure to the financial world and her background with storytelling led her to conceptualize and build BitGiving when she decided to go back to entrepreneurship in 2013. Despite being bootstrapped till early 2016, in an industry which is still in its nascent stage in the country, Ishita’s infectious energy, perseverance and foresightedness has helped BitGiving grow from a two member company to a leader in the crowdfunding niche.

Ishita is an alumnus of Lady Shri Ram College. She has also been associated with Sheryl Sandberg’s Lean In Foundation as its regional leader for Women Entrepreneurs in India.

BD Foundation recognises Ishita as a role model for many millennials and she is I Inspire Leadership Millennial Impact Awardee 2018.
Rashmi Tiwari

Dr. Rashmi Tiwari is an uncompromisingly fearless person doing remarkable work in the social sector with tribal girls by mentoring & developing women leaders. Working to dismantle the machinery of trafficking in the notoriously dangerous Naxalite regions and among human traffickers to rescue young girls, she many a times had to face severe encounters and pressures from the Naxalites, traffickers, local leaders and the Panchayat. Many a times she also had to face the opposition from the parents of girl victims themselves as she herself was taken as a human trafficker. But all this couldn't deter the motivation or spirit of this courageous and perseverant person.

The severities, discrimination and hardships of her own childhood only made her more resolute and determined to study hard and establish herself in the corporate world. During her corporate career, she used to actively help social welfare organizations by providing them guidance and connecting them with corporate donors in her attempt to give back to the society. In one such funding related cause she went to a small village in Orissa. The plight of the tribals who were offering their children to her in exchange of money shook her to the very core and had such a powerful impact on her that she quit her corporate life and dedicated herself to the cause of preventing trafficking of tribal girls and empowerment of tribal women and founded Aahan Tribal Foundation of India.

The obstructions or barriers for her as she took on this humongous task were numerous, but she was determined to overcome them all. Gaining trust of the villagers and the tribal girls, geographic inaccessibility and naxalites was another hurdle; not only is it extremely difficult to reach such areas, it is also extremely dangerous. But like we know, no challenge was big enough to stop her and she managed to penetrate these areas undauntingly.

Not to be unnerved or discouraged by any obstacle, she approached the women leaders, police force, media community, and women business owners of Jharkhand. These influential leaders of Ranchi region understood her fight against the insurgent practices, placed their trust in her and became a part of Aahan’s initiatives and supported her in her fight.

In the past few years, lives of more than 5000 tribal girls have been touched. The success stories and the number of lives for whom the difference has been created, makes the journey worthwhile for Rashmi.

For giving voice to these tribal girls and women when everyone else would rather forget them, BD Foundation salutes her courage, tenacity and passion to create a more inclusive world and she was the Women Rights Awardee 2017 at I Inspire Leadership Awards.
Every child deserves proper education and should have access to arts and music learning. However, in India, this is not the real picture. Thousands of children in Delhi live in community homes or in slum areas or even worse are street children without access to quality education. A child growing up in an unstable environment without an enabling support system is ill-equipped for life’s challenges.

Faith Gonsalves is a young graduate from LSR who took a conscious and courageous step towards working for and with the street children. Children who lack access to information and education; who live without the support systems of caring families and communities; involved in child labour, trafficking, exploitation; abandoned by families and education; and children in situations of abject poverty.

This young energetic person strongly feels social change isn’t just about identifying a problem and working towards changing it. It is about reinventing older methods, and reapplying traditional methods in a contemporary perspective – for a larger impact. At an early age of just 23, she started to bring music to the street children of Delhi. Her charity Music Basti, set up in 2008, trained street children to sing and play musical instruments across three centres. Music Basti reaches out to children who have a history of trauma and delinquency and provides them the healing touch with the help of music. They also get opportunities to showcase their talent at music events across the city.

Faith Gonsalves is the Executive Director for Integrated Development Education Association (IDEA), and is the founder of the project Music Basti whose approach is an unconventional solution to an age old challenge. From creating fun musical experiences for vulnerable children in 2008, Music Basti has matured into an organisation focussed on creating a space for personal growth and nurturing key life-skills today. Today, this Delhi-based organisation has a team of 20-25 full and part-time staff who are assisted by a large number of volunteers. Every year, they teach about 200-300 students from low income families, who attend government and private schools, and also involve NGOs working with kids from slum areas.

Faith has also been selected for the Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list. Being selected as one of the top promising young leaders further exemplifies the value of Team Music Basti’s work.

Faith Gonsalves

For making such a remarkable impact in the field of education, Faith Gonsalves was the Young Trailblazer Awardee 2017 at BD Foundation’s I Inspire Leadership Awards.
In 2014, after only working for six months in a company since becoming a graduate, Abhijit Sinha quit and moved to a tiny village called Banjarapalya, only about 30 kilometers from Bangalore city. Such a city is Bangalore, where a software bloom has been in process for the past decade. And only 30 kilometers away from the city awaited Abhijit’s disillusionment. Banjarapalya had not seen computers before; no one had ever touched it or typed in it. It made him sad that this village, and surely millions of others, will not have participation in democratic knowledge, being shared freely in the world.

But then Abhijit noticed that the kids at the corner shop took to playing games on his smartphone. Now of course that’s no biggy, given that even toddlers are playing Youtube videos. The point to look at, however, is that smartphones did not exist in this rural system. No one else at the time had smartphones there, and yet these kids effortlessly played Temple Run.

This observation led Abhijit to set up “Project DEFY”. The Project which is inspired by Sugata Mitra’s “Hole in the Wall” initiative where in he started what is called, “school without teachers” using a combination of cheap makerspaces and the Internet, for rural Indian youth. And there are no instructors there, children learn to use them on their own. At the Banjarapalya makerpsace children are learning how to use internet together; how to identify problems and look for solutions and appreciate each other. People of all ages use the space to learn everything from arts to science, from music to food to farming and dance to technology. And this, without a trainer or a teacher, but out of an insatiable quench and interest to learn more.

Abhijit Sinha, is a young visionary who is redefining the traditional educational norms in the society. Project DEFY questions if the traditional concept of a teacher is still applicable? It functions on the premise that everybody can be their own teachers and students. And that education should be experiential and practical, rather than being theoretical. Project DEFY has very low costs. Most of the material used to build these projects come from trash.

What started in the tiny village of Banjarapalya about three years ago has taken a stand on the public stage and is challenging the Indian education system. This project is now ready to reach out to many places. The team is building schools in Cochin, Mangalore, Bellary and Nellore.

**Abhijit Sinha**

Born with Arthrogryposis, a rare congenital disorder leading to a lack of muscles in arms and legs, Nioun Malhotra was doomed for a life on wheelchair. Further, the medical literature stated that he will live the life of a wooden doll. Nipun has successfully proved this wrong. An alumnus of St. Stephen's College and the Delhi School of Economics and recognised as a Global Shaper by The World Economic Forum, Nipun Malhotra has not only achieved accolades for himself, but has also been passionately working for all those with the same limitations.

In the year 2011-12, his second year at the Delhi School of Economics, he decided to sit for placements in the corporate sector. Having studied at St Stephen's and having got into the DSE with a nationwide 52nd rank, he entered the placement process with great anticipation. However, a good placement was a bubble that didn't last too long – he soon witnessed the discrimination persons with disabilities face while trying to find employment. A leading corporate rejected him due to the lack of a disabled-friendly toilet after making through seven rounds of interviews. He also went through interviews where he was questioned on whether he had ever read a book in his life; while common sense eventually prevailed that he had, in fact, read a book, still corporates consistently found creative ways to reject him.

In March 2015, Nipun was denied entry into a South Delhi restaurant due to him being on a Wheelchair. He tweeted and spoke up against it forcing the Delhi Government to set up a magisterial enquiry. Later he also successfully lobbied with Zomato to add Wheelchair access filters to restaurants.

It was these rejections in life that inspired this young fighter to start the Nipman Foundation. He strongly felt that coming from a position of strength with his own foundation he could bring about a change in society.

His Foundation; Nipman Foundation has collaborated with the Ministry of Social Justice to take the Accessible India Campaign forward. Nipman Foundation has executed various accessibility audits on behalf of the Govt, institutions, & corporates. The Nipman Foundation Equal Opportunity Awards were instituted in 2014 to recognize companies and institutions that not only promote employment of Persons with Disability but also remove all physical and attitudinal barriers encouraging them to flourish in their lives with dignity and equal opportunity. His current project Wheels for Life is raising funds to provide wheelchairs for many who only dreamt of mobility or accessibility. He is a dynamic man with an attitude of ‘never give up’. His relentless energy and passion to make the world accessible and inclusive for all makes him a true leader.
The Future is Female. Women across the world are actively joining the workforce, asserting themselves on issues and networking to become a strong force. In India over 60 million women are set to get online.

A visionary leader saw this as a huge opportunity to rewrite the story for Indian women, breaking every type of glass ceiling. She founded SheThePeople.TV with an aim to build India’s largest digital media platform for women. Her resolve to contribute a platform to women in India who enrich our lives, inspire, achieve and shatter glass ceilings in every sector, is indeed commendable.

As one of India’s top television editor-presenters, Shaili Chopra has been at the forefront of achievers in journalism. She started her digital entrepreneurial journey in 2012 and has authored 3 books. Shaili was earlier the Senior Editor and Lead Anchor at ET NOW, the Economic Times Business News Channel and earlier before that with NDTV. In 2012, Shaili received India’s biggest journalism honour The Ramnath Goenka Award for best in business journalism. She also won the Media Foundation Best Business Anchor Award for 2010 and in the same year the Federation of Indian Industry gave her the Young Women’s Achiever Award for contribution to media. She also won the News Television Award for the Best Reporter in India in 2007 and later in 2008, her business-golf show Business on Course, won the Best Show Award. Shaili was also ranked among the 30 witty, intelligent and incredibly fun Indian women to follow on Twitter by CNN-IBN. She was also voted among the top 50 to follow by WOWFactor Asia.

She has influenced many women and business leaders to change the conversation on gender and is continually stepping her efforts to elevate the focus on women. Last March she was named one of the top 50 most influential women in media, marketing and advertising in India.

Shaili Chopra was BD Foundation’s Woman of Influence Awardee at I Inspire Leadership Awards 2017.
Deep Kalra founded MakeMyTrip.com in 2000, revolutionizing the way Indians research and purchase travel services. What makes this organization stand out is the able and humble leadership of a visionary who believes in walking the talk. We’ve heard many a time that real businesses take a lifetime to build and Deep Kalra’s journey epitomizes this sentiment. Having steered the MakeMyTrip business as CEO since its inception in 2000, Deep continues to lead the Group’s strategic developments and overall execution excellence. Complete devotion for more than a decade and a laser sharp focus is what has taken for Makemytrip to reach where it is today.

As a professional, he has deep respect and appreciation for what women bring to the workplace. He strongly feels they invest in their work personally, are generally more conscientious workers, better team-players and great collaborators.

At MakeMyTrip he has tried to leverage the strengths women bring to the Travel business with a work-from-home model. Their Holiday Expert program has been designed specifically for stay-at-home women between the age group of 20-45, who have a knack for travel. The program empowers homemakers to fulfil their professional ambitions by offering them the freedom and flexibility to choose the pace of their career. The program has showcased remarkable results within a relatively short time. Today MMT has about 650 women travel consultants.

Deep has been associated with TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs) Delhi Board since 2007 and took over as the President in January 2013. He served on the NASSCOM Executive Council from 2010-2013. Keenly interested in contributing to society, Deep is a founding member of “I am Gurgaon” - an NGO focused on improving the quality of life in Gurgaon. He is also closely involved with Udayan Care and GiveIndia.

Not only does MakeMytrip make the best trips for the rest of the world but also promise the trip of a lifetime to their employees. Everyday is a new trip for them, and that is precisely why they are called “Trippers”. It is their unconventional culture and strong employee centricity that makes MakeMyTrip the preferred place to be and has consistently ranked high on the Great Places to Work List.

A visionary, a believer, and a true model of Inclusion Champion, Mr. Deep Kalra was honoured as I Inspire Inclusion Leader Award 2017.
If someone is diagnosed with cancer at the age of 21, the whole world comes down crashing for them. But for this young woman, her cancer diagnosis not only made her stronger, but also helped her to achieve her dreams fearlessly. She defied all glass ceilings and entered an industry, traditionally dominated by men. The aviation industry is not an easy place to break into. Glass ceilings abound and preconceived notions of women continue to thrive. But for this young business woman who defied cancer & glass ceilings to launch the ‘Uber of the Skies’, the challenges of overcoming patriarchy are minor hurdles in the path of offering customers a hassle-free, one-of-its-kind experience.

Impossible means nothing and now at the age of 28 and fully recovered, Kanika Tekriwal is the Founder and CEO of JetSetGo, that controls the chartering of 80% of India’s private jet and helicopter fleets. As someone, who has had a decade long experience in the aviation industry, ever since she started working at the age of 17, Kanika noticed the frustration of customers while dealing with charter operators and brokers. The lack of a professional charter service was felt by the customers, this is where Kanika saw a huge business potential. JetSetGo is considered to be India’s first and possibly the only marketplace for private jets and helicopters that enables the users to search and charter aircrafts across India. It is a digital platform that enables customers to reserve their own private jets and helicopters. Founded in 2013, the company boasts the country’s largest fleet of private jets and helicopters at its disposal. Customers can avail the flight for a variety of purposes, from destination weddings to medical emergencies.

In 2016, she made it to the highly coveted Forbes’ 30 under 30 list. The year before, she was one of the seven Indians in BBC’s list of 100 most inspiring women. As one of India’s youngest entrepreneurs, Kanika has almost single-handedly stormed a male bastion and inspired millions with her personal story of grit and determination. This millennial is giving many “established players” a run for their money. And she is unstoppable. A marathon runner, a painter, a traveler and more, Kanika is a role model for women to not bogged down by any challenge in the pursuit of their dreams. She has truly shown that by overcoming every challenge that came her way.

BD Foundation recognises her for being the role model for many millennials – men and women and the impact she has created in the aviation & digital industry. She was I Inspire Leadership Millennial Impact Awardee 2017.
Growing up in the coal belt of West Bengal, Ravi, Nishi and Rishi Kant often witnessed the plight of disadvantaged women. This fuelled their desire to do something about it. Taught by their parents to always respect and protect women, the three brothers decided to set up an organisation to combat violence against women.

Kant Brothers co-founded Shakti Vahini in 2001; an organization that works for the rights of women and children in India with the help of their father’s money. “Shakti” is the mother goddess and “Vahini”, a brigade. Initially they were met with lot of resistance and mockery from the people. Nothing deterred Kant Brothers from actively working for the cause and reaching out to the hostile areas where such incidents were reported. In a couple of years, Kant Brothers caught attention of individuals and government. Whether it was trafficking, honour killing or violence against women, Shakti Vahini has been involved, whenever there was any abuse or violence against women.

They have indeed come a long way in their journey that began 15 years ago. From not being taken seriously when they started, to now being one of the consultative bodies constituted by the Government of India, Shakti Vahini is doing some meaningful work at the ground level. Today the organization is the leading voice on policy and legal changes to combat violence against women and children. Shakti Vahini works in six states and is working on India’s skewed gender ratio and trafficking in young girls and women.

Kant Brothers (Shakti Vahini)

For their exemplary work in combating violence against women; BD Foundation honors the Kant Brothers as I Inspire Leadership Awardee for Women Rights 2016.
Anusheela Saha decided that lack of electricity cannot be a reason for little kids to quit education and she came up with a simple yet unique solution. Attach solar panels to schoolbags that collect energy during the day to power an LED light in the night. The backpacks look like regular schoolbags but turn into a lamp when their front pockets are unzipped. Solar panels are attached on the sides, and can power the lamp for over eight hours.

While one would think such an idea would be immediately picked up by manufacturers but after facing several rejections, Saha eventually had to approach a local tailor to give shape to her vision. Today, Anusheela has impacted many kids in various slums across country making them happy owners of this special bag and in process making sure they have a strong chance to an education.

Anusheela Saha’s innovative product “The Light Bag” has won the prestigious One Show Pencils award, among other major global awards. Anusheela intends to make her invention reach out to the rural India so that the students have a reason to stay in school. She wants to distribute the bags for no profit.
For the impact they are creating, Elsa and Supreet won the BD Foundation's I Inspire Leadership Award for Social innovation 2016.

The infamous Nirbhaya gang rape that had the whole nation in uproar triggered ElsaMarie D’Silva to take the matter in her own hands, and led her to start Safecity in December 2012.

Inspired by Sweden based HarassMap, Safecity was launched in India to help women share their stories of abuse and harassment in public spaces. The app then translates that information on a map in the form of location based trends or hot spots. A unique and first of its kind in India, women can report places and incidents which then get captured on a map and can serve as vital source of information to take further action for the individual cases/areas.

Safecity is the first platform that crowdmaps sexual harassment in public places, and utilises this collection to map hotspots or unsafe places. This data then helps to propose solutions that are the most suitable with each individual urban context.

ElsaMarie D’Silva, the Founder & CEO and Supreet Singh, Director and COO are true leaders in social innovation. They are building a safer ecosystem where women can help others by sharing their experiences and voicing opinions.
Indian writer and LGBTQ rights activist, Ashok Row Kavi founded Humsafar Trust in the late eighties after returning from Canada. At that time prejudice and conventional Indian societal values prevented MSM and transgender Indians from getting effective health services. The initial focus of Humsafar Trust was on activism for providing HIV/AIDS health services to gay men, but soon expanded to provide guidance, checkups, hospital referrals, confidential HIV testing, counseling and outreach for the complete spectrum of the LGBT community.

The Humsafar Trust is the oldest LGBTQ organization in India and is one of the leading organizations covering the spectrum of sexual minorities in India.

Humsafar Trust provides counselling, advocacy and healthcare to LGBT communities and has helped to reduce violence, discrimination and stigma against them. Through its six primary projects on prevention, care, support and treatment, the organization reaches out to over 9,000 MSMs and transgenders in Mumbai.

For their amazing efforts in bringing the community together, BD Foundation recognizes Humsafar Trust with the Community Excellence Award 2016 at I Inspire Leadership Awards.
One fine day, a woman walked into Patu Keswani’s office to thank him. She was the mother of one Lemon Tree’s employees and had come to express her gratitude as her son had just got married. It was a big deal for her visually impaired son to have been able to get married in a society like ours, and this was only possible because he had a job. She mentioned that most of his other friends with disabilities have been able to find either, job or partner.

Keswani realized how the boy’s life changed because of employment. One opportunity had led way to many more.

This led him to ponder and develop the inclusion mandate that Lemon Tree Hotels follow. Since then, Patu has ensured that 15% of group employees are from this disadvantaged segment of the population.

Patu Keswani, an entrepreneur by chance as he likes to call himself, is famously known as a master hotelier. He sowed the seed of Lemon Tree in 2004, and has been flourishing ever since its inception. A chairman and managing director/CEO of Lemon Tree Hotels, which owns and operates 29 hotels across 18 cities pan India, with over 3600 direct employees, he is an equal opportunity employer and offers opportunities to physically disabled Indians.

An awardee of the “Best Employer of Persons with Disabilities” by the President of India in 2011, and second time National Award in 2012 for being a ‘Role Model in providing a Barrier Free Environment to Persons with Disabilities’, Patu has a standardized process to induct people with disabilities into its entire hotels pan India. Lemon Tree Hotel employs persons with disabilities and imparts relevant employability skills to them and sensitizes others too, to help them realize their true potential and enable them to live with dignity.

Patu Keswani

BD Foundation recognizes Patu's leadership in inclusion and awarded him the Inclusion Leadership Award 2016.
It all started when Ms. Patkar visited Kamathipura, Mumbai’s red-light district, for her research as a university student studying social work in 1986. What began as a simple survey turned into something much more as she began to learn about the living conditions of the children of sex workers in Kamathipura.

When Pravin Patkar and Priti Patkar began their work in 1986, they often faced if it was worth “investing” in the education of these children when the mothers did not really care for their children. Today, their work is yielding great benefits for the society. They hold camps, workshops and counselling and all that a school aims to do.

Priti co-founded Prerana, a non-profit and is fondly referred as Priti Tai. She has completely dedicated more than 29 years in protecting and rescuing children and women victims of sexual exploitation. Prerana’s three pronged approach to address the issue of trafficking of sex workers' children includes a night care centre, an educational support programme, and an institutional support program.

Prerana has tackled the issue of child trafficking in many ways. It filed litigation in the High Court of Bombay in 2000 seeking help to establish guidelines for rescuing and rehabilitating victims of trafficking. The children who were born there ended up as prostitutes or became part of the allied activities of the sex trade. Prerana is committed to ensure that a child born in a red-light area is not doomed for the sex trade.

Priti Patkar has received several awards efforts to restore the rights and dignity of children and women victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. They have worked with 30000 sex workers, and have provided direct protection to 10,000 children and indirect protection to another 15,000.

For her remarkable efforts on human trafficking and her dedication to touch lives of women and children victims in the red light districts of Mumbai for more than 28 years, she was

**BD Foundation's I Inspire leadership awardee for Women Rights 2015.**
A microbiologist-MBA by qualification, Sonal was quick to quit the herd mentality of the routine, monotonous work schedule, and follow her heart instead. The idea of combining innovation with creative education which is now making waves across the globe was ignited when Sonal encountered a pregnant woman who was forced to send her 8 year old to a brothel, in order to feed starving children in the family. It took her just about an hour to make up her mind that she wanted to change the life of girls like her. And within three weeks, Protsahan started as a one room creative arts and design school in a dark slum in Delhi.

Sonal Kapoor

For her dedication, passion & bravery
Sonal Kapoor was 2015 Young Trailblazer awardee at I Inspire Leadership Awards 2015.

Sonal is one of the youngest social entrepreneurial woman in India who is encouraging creative education and sustainable livelihoods through art, cinema and technology. She is a Founder Director at Protsahan India Foundation, a young non-profit that is making waves across the globe for innovatively using creative education and empathy for at-risk street children rescued from red light areas, slums, drugs and disabilities. She has been instrumental in transforming the lives of ultra poor urban slum women using the most fun and creative medium: art and information technology.

Through Protsahan, Sonal seeks to empower every at-risk adolescent girls so that she can break the extreme cycle of poverty. And they seek to do this with the help of the '5 pillars of creativity model' which includes design, art, digital stories, photography, technology and cinema.

Today, Protsahan has been lauded with several awards and recognitions, and is growing one child at a time with numerous projects and campaigns. And for Sonal, it is not the numbers that matter, but the quality, consistent and sustained betterment in the lives of every adolescent girl or street children she touches.

Sonal takes pride in not following the race to showing big numbers or big impact but continuously working with 400 girls to ensure that they are nurtured with utmost focus and care, ready to take on the world.
When Murunganatham discovered that his wife was forced to use dirty, unhygienic rags during menstruation and the choice was between family meals vs sanitary pads, he vowed to help her solve the problem. Though the research which began in 1998, started on a personal note— it has now evolved to be a powerful business model. Murunganatham and his journey has intrigued not only writers, filmmakers, but the elite educational institutions who have been curiously following his story.

But his journey hasn't been easy. He didn't find any takers for his indigenous pads, not even his wife or sisters. What he did raised a lot of eyebrows, resulted in him being called a ‘pervert’ and his wife serving him a divorce notice. But Murunganatham who was unwilling to give up, went around wearing the sanitary pad himself. With the pad in his underwear and a bottle filled with animal blood, Murunganatham got a first hand experience of what women go through, and he salutes and bows to all women for the hardships they face.

Finally after 2 years of research, Murunganatham finally figured out how to procure the exact material he needed and the process to manufacture a good quality sanitary pad at home. His low cost sanitary pad making machines are now sold across India and are even being procured internationally.

It is Murunganatham’s commitment to make India 100% sanitary-napkin-using-country which fuels his passion. In 2014 Time magazine featured him as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. Murunganatham takes pride in serving the rural population and is happy to be not only providing low cost sanitary napkins but also generating employment for thousands of women. Most of Murunganatham clients are NGOs and women self-help groups.

There are still many taboos around menstruation in India. Women can’t visit temples or public places, they’re not allowed to cook or touch the water supply – essentially they are considered untouchable. Murunganatham, also a recipient of Padma Shree, has taken his invention to the farthest of Indian villages and districts.

A school drop-out from Southern India, Murungnatham has revolutionised menstrual health for rural women in India and across the globe by using simple machine that can be used to make low cost sanitary napkins.
Dilip Kumar Ganta is an integral part of the Sales and Marketing team at Vodafone for 8+ years and he has led the sales and marketing function for two of the circles. Dilip’s efforts on promoting women in sales, and that too in remote locations, are commendable. His 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 the inclusive culture.

Dilip Kumar Ganta deserves a special mention for busting a long standing belief of Sales being a male bastion and Tamil Nadu being a relatively conservative society. The gender ration in sales & marketing team shot up from 14% to 21% in 2014-15. This was made possible through a series of concerted efforts with a vision, crafted by Dilip and his team. It has not been easy to convince female candidates to make careers in sales and that too in consumer side of business which is distribution led. In addition, infrastructure of organization and market especially in non- metro location continues to be a challenge.

Dilip authored the concept of the first ‘all women sales trainee batch’ under the umbrella of “Shakti”. Under his able guidance and close monitoring, the first batch of 15 trainees have graduated and been deployed in full time roles across the circle. The year also saw women being hired in remote locations in roles in distribution.

His vision and commitment to promote inclusion in workplace is truly commendable and he was the proud recipient of BD Foundation’s Inclusion Leadership Award at I Inspire Leadership Awards 2015.