



NITI Aayog announces winners of the Women Transforming India Awards 2017

Honourable Minister for Textiles and Information and Broadcasting, Smriti Irani awards top 12 winners, honouring their courage and role in transforming societies

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Celebrating the outstanding achievements of women in India, NITI Aayog, in partnership with MyGov and the United Nations, announces winners of the Women Transforming India Awards, 2017. Crowdsourcing thousands of stories of women undertaking phenomenal work to transform societies across India's cities, towns and villages, the second edition of the Awards, celebrates the critical role of women in empowering themselves and their communities.

"NITI Aayog strongly believes in the power of women to contribute towards the development of the country, and we have instituted these awards precisely to recognize these contributions and encourage many more women to step forward," says Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog.

Today's awards ceremony recognizes the exceptional work of 12 women in critical areas such as preventing violence against women; bridging the gender gap in education; providing healthcare; building livelihoods and enterprises for women; and promoting inclusion for persons with disabilities.

"This is a very ambitious project to honour unsung women in our society and there is a real need for such initiatives. Such efforts by the Government will go a long way in motivating women working to transform their societies, and in turn the country," says Indian Olympian and Jury member, P.T Usha.

"Women Transforming India received a record number of entries this year, demonstrating that all over the country, women are championing change. These inspiring stories speak to the tremendous potential of women to build an inclusive future for all and accelerate India's growth and success story at the same time," says Yuri Afanasiev, Jury Member and United Nations Resident Coordinator.

The awardees were selected after a rigorous process by an eminent jury comprising P.T. Usha, track and field Olympian; Pooja Thakur, Wing Commander, Indian Air Force; Nirupama Rao, Former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador, Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog; Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog and Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator.

Launched on International Women's Day on 8 March, the contest aimed to gather lesser-known stories of women leading change. It was hosted on MyGov.in and ran till 1 June and was supported by an extensive outreach campaign to promote equal opportunity for women.

See below for the full list of winners:

TOP 6 CONTESTANTS

Laxmi Agarwal: Attacked in 2005 in broad daylight at the age of 15, Laxmi Aggarwal is today a champion of violence against women. She has filed public interest litigations in India's highest court to restrict the sale of acid.

Safeena Husain: The founder and executive director of Educate Girls, a non-profit organization working for girls' education, Safeena Husain has worked to bring education to some of India's most backward districts.

Kamal Kumbhar: Broke free from the shackles of poverty and a suffocating marriage to create a micro-enterprise network, enabling women like herself to realise their dreams of a brighter tomorrow.

Subasini Mistry: After losing her husband at a young age, Subasini Mistry saved for two decades to build a hospital for the needy.

Arunima Sinha: Is the first female amputee to scale the highest mountain in the world.

Jamuna Tudu: Along with her band of women activists, Jamuna Tudu has conserved 50 hectares of forest land around her village in Jharkhand, taking on encroachers with little more than bows and arrows and courage.

RUNNERS-UP

Rajlakshmi Borthakur: Determined to save her child’s life, Rajlakshmi Borthakur researched epilepsy for more than three years and developed a simple wearable device, a smart glove, that can predict epileptic seizures before they happen

Harshini Kanhekar: is India’s first woman firefighter.

Sunita Kamble: As a goat doctor in the severely drought affected region, Sunita Kamble worked with her team to protect the community’s livestock and create alternative and sustainable livelihood opportunities for women.

Kiran Kanojia: Survivor of a horrific accident, Kiran Kanojia, is a champion blade runner, constantly pushing the limits on her quest for the next challenge.

Shima Modak: For almost a decade, Shima Modak has been working relentlessly for the welfare of the distressed. Albeit with very little financial assistance, Shima has helped improve the future of children in her community by taking free education to the doorstep of the vulnerable.

Kanika Tekriwal: A self-made aviation entrepreneur and cancer survivor, Kanika Tekriwal launched her company, JetSetGo in 2013. JetSetGo, India’s first marketplace for chartered jets, is an interactive technology-driven platform enabling users to charter aircrafts and helicopters around India.

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