



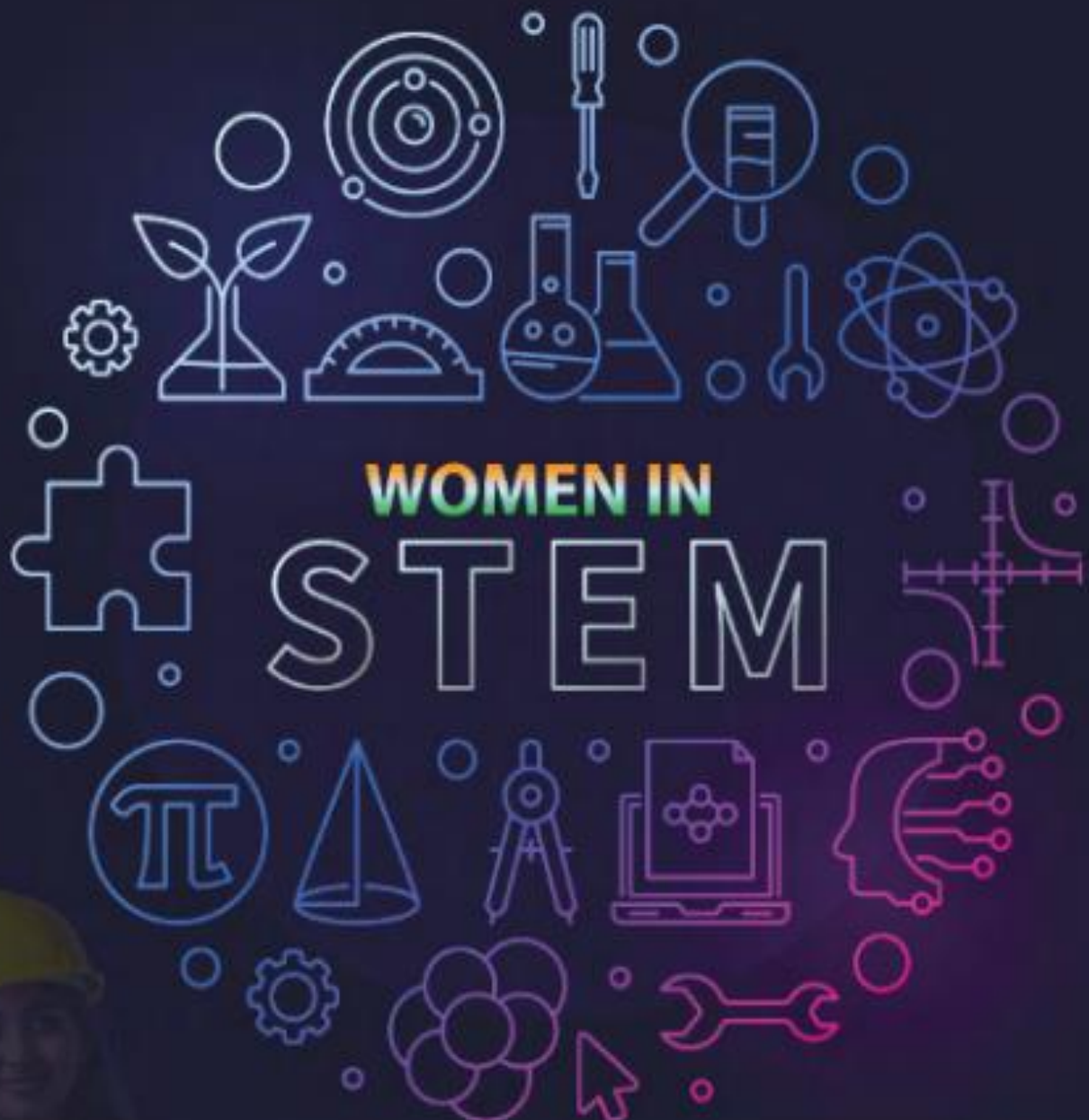
Confederation of Indian Industry

CII Women in STEM Leadership Summit

"Powering Inclusive Innovation for India's Technology Future"

29 July 2026; Silver Oak, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Speaker Profiles



**Dr Jitendra Singh**

Honourable Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Government of India

Dr Jitendra Singh has taken over as the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology as the Ministries were included under the charge of Office of the Prime Minister.

He is a physician known for his work on diabetes and endocrinology. He has been a professor, a consultant, clinical practitioner, author of eight books, and a newspaper columnist as also the ex-chairman for the National Scientific Committee Diabetes and the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India.

With an M.B.B.S. degree from Stanley Medical College, Chennai and M.D. from Government Medical College, Jammu, Dr Singh has authored several books including Monographs on Diabetes and World Book Fair best seller, "Diabetes Made Easy". He is also the author of chapters on diabetes in text books for Post Graduate Course (Medicine) and runs a syndicated weekly column "Tales of Travesty", popularly read and regularly published for three decades. He is Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space.

**Dr Philipp Ackermann**

German Ambassador to India and Bhutan

Dr Philipp Ackermann studied art history and economics in Bonn, Heidelberg and Utrecht, and received his doctorate in art history in **1993**.

That same year he joined the German Foreign Service. His overseas postings include Rabat (Morocco) and New York (German mission to the UN).

From 2006 to 2007, he headed the German Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kunduz, Afghanistan.

Between 2007 and 2010, he served as political counsellor in New Delhi (India). He was Deputy Head of Mission in Washington DC from **2014 to 2016**.

In Berlin, he worked between **2002 and 2006** in the offices of Federal Foreign Ministers Joschka Fischer and Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

From 2010 to 2014 he held the position as Head of Task Force Afghanistan-Pakistan in the Federal Foreign Office and as Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Before being assigned to his current job, he was Director General for Africa, Latin America, Near and Middle East at the Federal Foreign Office for five years.

**Dr Parvinder Maini**

Scientific Secretary, Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India

Dr. Parvinder Maini is currently serving as the Scientific Secretary at the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, where she is responsible for enlarging the R & D ecosystem in the country, formulating policies for science, technology and innovation and creating regulatory mechanisms, forging collaboration among the industry, academia and government for delivery of citizen centric solutions.

Dr. Maini has a doctorate in Meteorology and Oceanography and has vast experience spanning over 33 years in diverse fields. With a Master's in Mathematics, she spent the initial 20 years of her career working at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and was instrumental in development and implementation of Statistical Dynamical Models for providing location specific forecast. In 2009, Dr Maini moved to MoES Headquarters to spearhead the Atmospheric Science and International Cooperation programs of MoES. She has several publications across national and international journals. Her research interests include monsoons, downscaling techniques, forecast evaluation studies, socio economic benefits of weather and climate-based services.

She is currently the Vice President of the Federation of Indian Geosciences Associations and an Executive Committee member of the Indian Geophysical Union. She is also a life member of the Indian Meteorological Society and Association of Agrometeorologists.

During her tenure, the office of PSA has initiated several national programs like the One Health mission for pandemic preparedness, One Nation One Subscription, National Research Foundation, National Deep Tech Policy, Zero emission trucking, RUTAG (Rural Technology Action Group) 2.0, Regional Science & Technology clusters, Livelihood Mission etc. Her role also requires her to engage with various International agencies to continuously discuss and develop common frameworks for addressing contemporary global S&T policy issues.

**Dr (Smt) Chandrika Kaushik**

Distinguished Scientist & Director General

Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Government of India

Dr. (Smt.) Chandrika Kaushik is a Distinguished Scientist and **Director General (Production Coordination & Services Interaction - PC & SI)** at the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Ministry of Defence, Government of India**. With over three decades of experience in defence research and technology management, she has played a pivotal role in advancing India's indigenous defence capabilities, fostering industry–DRDO collaboration, and strengthening the integration of cutting-edge technologies into the armed forces. She has also contributed to key strategic programmes, including missile systems, technology management, and international defence R&D collaborations.

A strong advocate of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, Dr. Kaushik is driving initiatives to accelerate the adoption of emerging technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence, space technologies, and geospatial systems** for defence applications. She emphasizes the importance of indigenous innovation, strategic autonomy, and industry partnerships in building a technologically advanced and self-reliant defence ecosystem. Her contributions to defence technology management have been recognized with the **DRDO Best Techno-Managerial Services Award**.

**Ms Candace Johnson**

Founder/Co-Founder Société Européenne des Satellites, Loral Teleport Europe, Europe Online, and Chair, Seraphim Space

Candace Johnson is a serial global infrastructure, network and innovation entrepreneur and investor. She is Founder/Co-Founder of one of the world's largest satellite systems, SES (Société Européenne des Satellites); Loral-Teleport Europe, Europe's first private satellite communications network; Europe Online, the world's first Internet and satellite based online service and network, and Oceania Women's Network Satellite (OWNSAT), a founding investor in the Kacific Satellite System. Ms. Johnson is also Founding President of the VATM, the Association of Private Telecom Operators in Germany and Founding President of the Global Telecom Women's Network (GTWN). Currently, Candace is Chair of Advisory Board and Partner of Seraphim Space Fund, Founding Vice Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space, and Non-Executive Director of VUSION, the world's leading IOT/Electronic Shelf Labelling group. Ms. Johnson is Executive Board Member Emeritus of the ICC, International Chamber of Commerce, Member Saudi Space Agency Advisory Council, Vice Chair of Institut EuroplA, the European Institute of Artificial Intelligence, and Council Member Singapore Space & Technology Think Tank. She was also Vice-Chair of the B 20 Task Force on Technology, Innovation and R & D for 2023.

She has been decorated by the Luxembourg Government with the Commander of the Order of Merit and the Officer of the Oak Leaf Crown as well as being decorated by the German Government with the Officer of the Federal Order of Merit. Ms. Johnson has received numerous Lifetime Achievement Awards from such prestigious organizations as the World Communication Awards, Women in Aerospace, The International Alliance of Women and the Global Telecom Women's Network, (GTWN). Ms. Johnson has an honorary doctorate from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; a master's with honors from the Sorbonne and Stanford and an undergraduate degree from Vassar College.

Ms. Johnson is the 2025 Arthur C. Clarke Foundation "Innovator" Awardee which was bestowed on 20 November 2025 in Washington D.C. at the French Embassy: <https://en.paperjam.lu/article/candace-johnson-joins-bezos-and-musk-with-arthur-c-clarke-innovator-award> and the Gold Medal of the European Institute of Merit which was bestowed on 02 December 2025 in Luxembourg and was inducted into the Space and Satellite Hall of Fame in March 2026.

**Ms Vaishali Nigam Sinha**

Chairperson, CII Women in STEM Initiatives &
Co-Founder, Renew and Chairperson Sustainability

Vaishali Nigam Sinha is the Co-Founder of ReNew, a leading decarbonisation solutions company listed on NASDAQ. As Chairperson Sustainability, she plays a pivotal role in positioning ReNew as a global ESG leader, spearheading the net-zero agenda and implementing strategies that have earned the company top international ESG rankings.

She is the Founding Chair of ReNew Foundation and leads the ReNew India Initiative, through which ReNew has reached remote regions, positively impacting over 1.5 million lives with CSR programs aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Under her leadership, ReNew led India's energy sector in S&P Global's 2025 Corporate Sustainability Assessment—ranking in the 93rd percentile globally and among the top 10% of energy companies worldwide.

In 2025, Vaishali was elected as President of the UN Global Compact Network India (UNGcNI)—the first private sector leader to hold this position since the Network's inception over two decades ago. Vaishali serves as Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Alliance for Clean Air, tackling air pollution through the lens of climate action, health, and sustainability. She is a member of WEF's South Asia Regional Action Group, a senior advisor to the Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders, and serves on the Global Advisory Council for the 1 Trillion Trees Initiative.

**Ms Soni Kaul**

Principal Expert, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

Senior Technology Leader with 25+ years of experience in mobile communications and semiconductor industries. Successfully commercialized wireless technology solutions across Mobile, Automotive, IoT, and Retail sectors, delivering to premium tier technology companies and global retail leaders.

Spearheaded advanced validation frameworks and next-generation Electronic Shelf Label solutions, enhancing retail operations worldwide. Built and scaled engineering excellence across US, UK, India, China, and Finland, leading diverse global teams of 150+ engineers and establishing state-of-the-art R&D facilities. Deep expertise in wireless technologies including 5G, 4G, Femto Cells, and BLE. Proven track record of successful engagements with industry-leading smartphone manufacturers and top-tier technology companies.

Passionate about leading cross-disciplinary teams in developing transformative technology solutions. Track record of uniting strategic vision with multi-domain execution, successfully commercializing complex products from concept to market while fostering global collaboration across hardware, software, and systems engineering.



Mr Atul Bhaskar Choudhari
CTO, Tata Consulting Engineers Limited

Atul Choudhari is the Chief Technology Officer at Tata Consulting Engineers, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Sons. With over three decades of experience in engineering, technology strategy, and complex project delivery, he brings deep cross-sector expertise spanning Power, Hydrocarbons and Chemicals, Mining and Metals, Advanced Facilities, and Infrastructure.

As CTO, Atul is responsible for shaping the organisation's technology vision and guiding innovation across industrial and infrastructure ecosystems. His work focuses on the convergence of engineering excellence, sustainability, and emerging industrial technologies. He provides strategic direction on technology investments, capability development, and innovation initiatives that support long-term industrial growth. His areas of engagement include energy transition, green hydrogen and its derivatives, green steel, battery energy storage systems, grid modernisation, smart infrastructure, semiconductor facilities, data centres, and low-carbon industrial pathways. He also guides the adoption of advanced engineering platforms and artificial intelligence enabled design practices to improve productivity, safety, and lifecycle performance of projects

**Dr Sujata Seshadrinathan**

Director, IT and Process, Basiz Fund Services

Dr Sujata Seshadrinathan is Director – IT, Product & Process and Majority Shareholder in Basiz Fund Services, a Global Leader in Fund Administration. Basiz is India's only international fund administrator, globally ranked No1 in financial reporting service provider and No 22 in fund administration. Basiz holds a preferred partner status in financial reporting for global hedge funds, while administering USD 12.6 billion in assets servicing Private Equity, Venture Capital, Foundations, Family offices, Hedge Funds and PMS asset classes.

Dr Sujata holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from SP Jain School of Global Management, Singapore/India focussing on Blockchain adoption. Her educational qualifications as well as work experience make her a fine amalgamation of software, finance and accounting knowledge. She has over 20 years of experience in software design and development and fund administration services. As a much respected and awarded entrepreneur, Dr Sujata has lead companies that are invested into Fund services, Fund Tech and Legal Tech. Here she has developed automated technology solutions and products for accounting applications in fund administration and Legal Tech, for two of which she holds patents. Her career includes several projects for process engineering based on Six sigma architecture from inception to implementation, and has handled SSAE certifications for various functions in her organisations. Her research interests include technology adoption, blockchains and accounting information systems.

**Dr Jasdeep Kaur Dhanoa**

Dean & Professor, Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women

Prof. (Dr.) Jasdeep Kaur Dhanoa currently serves as the **Dean, Training & Placement and Alumni Affairs**. She has previously held key academic leadership roles, including **Dean, Academic Affairs (2020–2023)** and **Head, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering (2015–2018; 2024–2025)**.

As Principal Investigator, Prof. Dhanoa has successfully led two Government of India–sponsored projects: the **Special Manpower Development Programme (Chip to System Design)** funded by **MeitY** and **Vigyan Jyoti**, a pilot initiative launched in 2018 and supported by the Department of Science and Technology (**DST**) at IGDTUW.

She is currently a member of the **Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)** for the **Vigyan Jyoti Programme**, under the **WISE–KIRAN Division, DST, Government of India (2024–2027)**.

06 research scholars have been awarded Doctorate Degrees under her mentorship and 04 are pursuing research.

She is also an Executive Member of the WiBD India Chapter (**Women in Big Data**)—the Indian arm of the global Women in Big Data organization, a non-profit dedicated to advancing women’s participation in data science and technology. The chapter drives several flagship initiatives, including **Shakti** (mentorship), **Vidya** (education), **Saraswati** (skill development), **Gayatri** (career guidance), and **Lakshmi** (community building).

**Ms Bishakha Bhattacharya**

Global Head of Public Policy & Government Affairs, Wipro Limited

Bishakha Bhattacharya is a Global Head, Public Policy & Government Affairs at Wipro. Bhattacharya has been instrumental in shaping public policy and government affairs within the technology sector. Their expertise spans critical areas such as government interaction, policy articulation, and regulatory matters, particularly concerning the tech industry and emerging companies.

In their previous roles, Bhattacharya significantly contributed to Amazon's public policy initiatives, focusing on AWS and leading efforts across India, South Asia, and Asia. They also held a key position as a Public Sector Leader for Public Policy at Amazon, demonstrating a deep understanding of policy implications for government and public sector clients. Prior to Amazon, Bhattacharya was involved in Government and Regulatory Affairs at IBM, where they navigated complex policy landscapes within the software and technical consulting industry.

**Ms Ruchi Mathur**

Founder, Ignite Growth Solutions

Ruchi Mathur is the Founder & CEO of **Ignite Growth Solutions**, a Revenue Growth Advisory practice that partners with industrial, manufacturing, and technology-led SMEs to accelerate business growth through strategic advisory, AI-enabled go-to-market transformation, and commercial excellence.

Working closely with founders, CXOs, and leadership teams, she helps organizations bridge the gap between strategy and execution by building predictable revenue engines, strengthening market positioning, and enabling the practical adoption of AI and digital technologies to create measurable business outcomes.

Her advisory work is built on more than 25 years of leadership experience across Rockwell Automation, Schneider Electric, Siemens, and Havells, where she led cross-functional teams spanning Business, Marketing, Product Management, Commercial Strategy, Digital Transformation, and Customer Experience across India and global markets.

A passionate advocate for the transformative role of AI in industry, Ruchi believes that technology delivers its greatest impact when combined with inclusive leadership, customer-centric innovation, and business strategy. She regularly advises, speaks, and moderates conversations on AI, revenue growth, digital transformation, and the future of industrial enterprises, championing the role of women in shaping India's innovation ecosystem.

**Ms Shaveta W Jain**

Managing Director & Partner, Boston Consulting Group

Shaveta has extensive experience championing the digital transformation for financial services and manufacturing organizations across the technology domains: ERP implementations, Brilliant factory applications, infrastructure operations, high-performance computing, IT sourcing and cost center management. Her roles have been focused on laying out strong strategic directions, leading the execution of digital and organizational transformation journeys, building business partnerships, improving customer experience, defining and simplifying business processes, enabling operational efficiencies and leading successful talent strategy across various industrial verticals

**Dr Vandana Kalia**

Scientist-F/Director, Industrial Research & Development Program, DSIR, Ministry of Science and Technology

Dr. Vandana Kalia is a distinguished scientist and administrator with over 20 years of experience in advancing industrial research, innovation, and technology dissemination. As **Scientist F** at the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), she is dedicated to promoting indigenous technology development, industrial R&D, and public-private partnerships, thereby driving India's technological and socio-economic progress

Dr. Kalia's work focuses on promoting research activities through public-private partnerships and facilitating the creation and expansion of R&D infrastructure in the private sector, thereby enhancing its contribution to national R&D expenditure.

Currently, she plays a pivotal role in managing DSIR's **Access to Knowledge for Technology Development & Dissemination (A2K+) program**, which promotes inclusive innovation and ensures that science and technology contribute meaningfully to societal and economic growth. Dr. Kalia has made significant contributions to the empowerment of rural and peri-urban women through the establishment of Women Skill Satellite Centres under the TDUPW program, which provide access to technology infrastructure and enterprise value chains, enabling women to engage in sustainable entrepreneurial activities.

Her role extends to being department in-charge for **Central Electronics Limited (CEL)**, a Miniratna public sector enterprise under DSIR. Dr. Kalia oversees CEL's continuous efforts to harness R&D innovations in collaboration with national and international laboratories to develop indigenous and cost effective electronic products in solar, railways and defense sector.

Dr. Kalia's professional background includes leading new drug discovery programs at Daiichi-Sankyo India Pharma Ltd., with a focus on anti-infective research for addressing unmet medical needs. At Ranbaxy Research Laboratories, she contributed to establishing mechanisms to address antibacterial drug resistance, playing a critical role in international collaborative programs.

Her academic credentials include a Ph.D. in Life Sciences and over 17 publications in international journals. She actively serves on various **Scientific Advisory Committees**, contributing to policy and program development for science and innovation. She is regularly invited as a speaker, panelist and resource person in numerous events and conferences.

She is engaged in empowering women, startups, and micro-enterprises through technology-driven solutions and supports R&D led industry of the Country supporting their competitiveness.

**Dr Saundarya Rajesh**

Founder, AVTAR

Dr. Saundarya Rajesh is an award-winning social entrepreneur, acclaimed workplace culture strategist, and globally recognized expert in inclusive workplace design, workforce transition and ESG transformation. With over 25 years of experience, she has reimagined the world of work through the lens of ethics, empathy, and enterprise. As the Managing Director of Avtar Career Creators Limited, Managing Trustee of Avtar Human Capital Trust and Managing Director of Avtar ESG Services Pvt Ltd, she has led more than 1000 organizations to shape workplaces that are as human as they are high-performing.

Following her journey at Citibank responsible for setting up the Merchant Services division for the Credit Card business during its launch, Dr. Rajesh launched her entrepreneurial journey with Avtar Career Creators Limited, followed by ventures like Avtar Career Creators Limited, Avtar Human Capital Trust, and myAvtar.com—India's first career portal for underrepresented groups. Her landmark initiatives include Avtar I-WIN, a workforce transition project for people who have taken career breaks, Project Puthri (career pathing for adolescent girls), Project Nipuni (career empowerment for first-generation graduates), and Project MITR (male allyship through adolescent sensitization). Together, these projects have transformed the lives of over 200,000 individuals.

**Ms Smitha Rao**

Founder, Ojas

Born in business family, Smitha is an techno business entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience in driving business strategy, organizational growth and innovation. She has a proven track record of transforming businesses and leading high-performing teams.

- Founder of OjasQuest – Product Engineering Service company specialized in Industrial Automation and Fintech domain
- CII National Committee member of Robotics and Automation - 2025
- Lead for CII National subcommittee in IT/IoT Application in Robotics & Automation - 2025
- OPC Foundation accredited Expert (<https://opcfoundation.org/about/opc-foundation/experts/>)
- Held position of OPC Hub India Steering Committee member responsible for promoting OPC technology in India (2023 – 2025)
- Expertise and experience in Process Automation Industry in SCADA, MES, AMS, PLM, DCS, LIMS, PLC, Industrial Communication Technologies
- Contributed to various technical specifications
FDT OPC UA companion specification
PADIM specification
FDI Specification (IEC 62769-1:2023)
EDDL Specification
FDI Communication Device Specification
- Authored Book on OPC UA “Unlocking the power of OPC UA” (amazon.com)
- Authored multiple IEEE publications and white papers in Industrial communication technologies.
- Patent Holder (Application: 202341049388)
- Panelist and keynote speaker in various forums across the globe
- Sky Diver(2 times, once with my dad - 76 year old in Tokyo), Scooba Diver(4 times) and Biker(world’s 3rd highest pass in Ladakh -@khardungla at 17982ft altitude)
- Travelled to 41+ countries and got lifetime opportunity to work with Industry leaders across the globe.

**Dr Nagahanumaiah**

Director, Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI)

With over 28 years of dedicated service, Dr. Nagahanumaiah has emerged as a prominent figure in the realm of manufacturing research and leadership. His journey has encompassed two prestigious research institutions, namely CSIR-CMERI in Durgapur and CMTI in Bangalore. Throughout his illustrious career, he has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership skills while fostering a culture of innovation.

Educationally, Dr. Nagahanumaiah holds a Ph.D. from the renowned Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Masters in Tool Engineering from Indo-Danish Tool Room, Bangalore, and a Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering from Bangalore University. His research spans over areas including micro-nano scale manufacturing technologies, modular-reconfigurable machine tools, additive manufacturing, and tool design, rapid tooling for injection molding, cost modelling, manufacturing process selection, and manufacturability evaluation. He has left an indelible mark on the field of micro-nano systems engineering and manufacturing technology through his dedication and remarkable achievements.

**Ms Bhawna Kirpal Mittal**

CHRO and Head – Admin, CSR & Corporate Communication
Hero Future Energies

Bhawna Kirpal Mital is the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) and Head of Administration, CSR, and Corporate Communications at Hero Future Energies. An alumna of IIM Ahmedabad, she oversees people strategy across the company's global operations and has been recognized with the Global Woman Leadership Award

She is a prominent voice in the renewable energy sector, focusing on workplace culture, promoting diversity in green jobs, and driving corporate sustainability initiatives. Her professional background also includes prior HR leadership roles at companies such as Tractebel Engineering.

**Ms Leena Arora Kukreja**

Science and Technology Counsellor, Embassy of Switzerland in India

Leena Arora Kukreja is an accomplished leader in international science diplomacy, with over 18 years of experience shaping global collaborations in research, innovation, and education. She currently serves as Science & Technology Counsellor at the Embassy of Switzerland in New Delhi, where she leads strategic initiatives to strengthen Indo–Swiss partnerships in academia, R&D, and innovation ecosystems.

Her career has spanned senior advisory roles with three other governments—the Australian High Commission, the Embassy of Sweden, and the British High Commission—where she developed and managed flagship bilateral programs such as the Australia–India Strategic Research Fund, the Newton–Bhabha PhD Placements, and the Sweden–India Innovation Partnership. In these roles, she was at the forefront of fostering scientific exchange, policy dialogue, and academic mobility between India and global partners.

Previously, as Regional Managing Director for Coventry University Group’s India Hub, Leena spearheaded the launch of the institution’s sixth global hub in New Delhi, advancing institutional partnerships, transnational education opportunities, and research collaboration across South Asia.

Recognized among the PiE Top 50 Voices of 2025, she is celebrated for her thought leadership in international education and innovation. Further cementing her role as a science diplomacy leader, she represented India at the 2021 AAAS–TWAS Course on Science Diplomacy, a prestigious global platform convening emerging voices at the intersection of science, policy, and international cooperation.

**Ms. Anandi Iyer**

Director, Fraunhofer Office India

Member, India and Germany CEO Forum: A G2G Initiative Member, Vision Group, Government of Karnataka

Ms. Anandi Iyer is the Director & Head of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, India Office and Member, Vision Group on Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre of Excellence, Govt. of Karnataka. She was for several years also Special Advisor to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research Govt. of Germany (BMBF). She has been working in the field of collaborative Technology and Innovation in the Indo-European corridor for the last more than 20 years.

She is the recipient of the prestigious Order of Merit (Bundestverdienstkreuz am Bande), the highest civilian award accorded by the Federal Government of Germany, for outstanding contribution in the field of Science, Technology and Women Empowerment. She has recently been distinguished as one of the top 75 women in STEAM by the Indian Govt and the British High Commission to mark the 75 years of Indian Independence. She was the Chairperson for the G20 empower Working Group on Women in STEM. She has also recently received the Global Icon Award by TV9 Network and Government of Baden Württemberg.

She has been nominated by the Government of India to the India and Germany CEO Forum, a G2G Initiative. Ms. Iyer is a Founder / Initiator of the German Innovation Forum in India and also Board member on two leading automotive companies in India as well as the Indian Institute of Technology Ropar (AWADH). She has written several research papers on Innovation and Technology.

**Dr Kusumita Arora**

Director, Indo-German Science & Technology Centre (IGSTC)

Dr. Kusumita Arora has assumed charge as Director of IGSTC on 11 Sept 2025, on deputation from the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute. An alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, she completed a dual university PhD program from Osmania University, Hyderabad and Freie University, Berlin. She has 30+ years of experience in diverse aspects of geology and geophysics, right from exploration and shallow structures in the mining industry to research in Earth's geopotential fields, specializing in the behaviour of the geomagnetic field of the Earth, which affects all aspects of our technology based society. She has authored more than 100 peer reviewed publications, supervised several PhDs and post-docs and dozens of Masters dissertations. She is a Fellow of the Telangana Academy of Sciences, 2021 and recipient of the Women Scientist Award of the Geological Society of India, 2025. She is the Vice President of the International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy in 2023, a recognition of her services to the global geomagnetic community.

As a firm believer of growth and prosperity of human society based on cooperative advancements in science and technology, Dr. Arora is committed to harnessing know-hows and talents across India and Germany for cutting edge research leading to sustainable growth and balanced development for a better future.

**Dr Sandhya H**

Global Delivery Unit Head, Digital Manufacturing Services, L&T Technology Services

With over two decades of leadership experience across engineering, industrial automation, aerospace, AI, digital manufacturing, and enterprise transformation, Dr. Haridas brings deep expertise in building and scaling global engineering organizations. Prior to joining LTTS, she served as Business Unit Head – India, One Automation and Director – Delivery Operations at Schneider Electric, where she led strategic business growth, AI-enabled industrial automation, enterprise-scale delivery, and digital transformation initiatives. Earlier, she held leadership positions at Honeywell Technologies, Collins Aerospace (formerly UTC Aerospace Systems), and GE HealthCare, driving software engineering, AIoT, connected enterprise, aerospace engineering, and advanced manufacturing programs. She recently completed her Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), specializing in Responsible and Explainable Artificial Intelligence, with research focused on governance frameworks for AI adoption in safety-critical industries. Recognized in the CXO Lanes Power List 2026 among the Most Powerful IT Leaders in India, Dr. Haridas continues to champion responsible AI, intelligent automation, and engineering innovation to build resilient, sustainable, and future-ready manufacturing ecosystems.

**Prof Akshay Dvivedi**

Professor & Head, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Dr Akshay Dvivedi is Professor and Head in the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee, Uttarakhand. He had served as Dean, Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy at IIT Roorkee.

Before joining the esteemed institution of IIT Roorkee, Dr Dvivedi served as a Principal Scientist at Thermax Global, where he gained invaluable insights and experiences that have shaped my approach to research and development.

His primary research interests revolve around the development of hybrid micromachining techniques, particularly focusing on micro-fabrication with tough-to-machine materials for high-value manufacturing. Additionally, He is deeply involved in projects related to product development, medical devices, assistive devices, concurrent engineering, and quality management.

Throughout his career, he has authored over 150+ research papers published in reputed international journals and conference proceedings, along with contributing to 18 books/book chapters. Furthermore, he has filed 12 patents, out of which 5 have been granted. Many of his research articles have received best paper awards and editor's choice awards. One of his proudest achievements is the development of an innovative device creating tissue plane cleavage by hydro-dissection method for cleft palate surgery, which significantly reduces surgery time and complication rate. Additionally, he leads the team behind the creation of Prana-Vayu, IIT Roorkee's Low-Cost Portable Mechanical Ventilator, which has been instrumental, especially during the pandemic.

**Ms Smriti Sakhamuri**

Executive Director, HHV Advanced Technologies Pvt

Smriti Sakhamuri has been the Executive Director at HHV Advanced Technologies Pvt. Ltd. since 2024. Smriti holds a Bachelors in Mathematics from the University of Warwick and a Masters in Applied Economics from The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

At Hind High Vacuum Company Pvt. Ltd (HHV) her key area of focus is on business strategy and development for future growth. Established in 1965, HHV is a market leading optics, thin film and vacuum technology company with a track record for designing and building innovative equipment and solutions for our customers.

**Dr Sangita Garg**

Vice President and Head of R&D, IHFC (Technology Innovation Hub), IIT Delhi

She joined as Vice President and Head, driving Research and Development at IHFC (Technology Innovation Hub of IIT Delhi). She has over 30 years of work experience. Previously, she was the Academic Co-Innovation Collaborative Research Initiative leader (TCS COIN) at Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. In her career progression, she has played challenging roles in various capacities from shop floor management, IT systems development, design, architecture, to research and innovation. She has made profound contributions to the business in the areas of People Analytics, Learning and collaboration analytics, Business Intelligence, and Data Science. She has versatile experience in the areas of Data Strategy, transformation, Analytics, and modelling, working with diverse global and local customer bases across industries such as airline cargo, manufacturing, Investment banking, life sciences, and healthcare. She has travelled across geographies for customer presentations and due diligence.

She has authored white papers and conference papers in behavior analytics and big data technologies. She has been Keynote speakers at IEEE and Springer international conferences and forums. Her passion includes writing poetry, developing innovative products, data science and analytics, mentoring women associates, and helping less privileged children to aspire and realize their dreams.

**Dr. Hafsa Ahmad**

Scientist 'D', Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India

Dr Hafsa Ahmad holds a bachelors and masters degree in Pharmaceutical sciences. She won the prestigious Innovative Thesis Award for her M.Pharm dissertation sponsored by Troika Pharmaceuticals and MSME, GOI besides several other academic awards that she has to her credit. She earned her doctorate at CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute Lucknow. Her doctoral work largely dealt with formulation strategies for neuroprotection in experimental stroke and preclinical development of an anti-stroke lead for which she received the prestigious INSA medal for young scientists in health sciences.

She worked as a Principal Investigator on a SERB funded project at CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow on a post doctoral assignment. She has around 30 publications in peer reviewed journals of international repute, besides several patent applications to her credit. She has previously served at the National Biopharma Mission and at Mission Ind-CEPI; the Indian arm of Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, housed at BIRAC, GOI where she handled assignments of national importance. She was the officer-in-charge for facilitation for expeditious clinical trials and access for COVID vaccines like SPUTNIK V and ZyCOV-D. She has also served at the Health & Family Welfare vertical at NITI Aayog, GOI where she handled the Pharma, Med-Tech and Research & Innovation portfolios.

**Ms Pranati Kohli**

Head of Public Affairs, LOHUM

Pranati Kohli is the Head of Public Affairs at LOHUM, a major Indian clean tech and battery recycling company. Her work focuses on battery circularity, localized supply chains for EV batteries, and critical mineral ecosystems in India.

She represents LOHUM across prominent policy and energy forums, contributing to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) technical committees and speaking at events like ASSOCHAM's National Conferences and the RECEIC Global Symposium.

Prior to her role at LOHUM, her background included positions at BloombergNEF, focusing on power, climate, and supply chains.

**Ms Richa Daga**

Software Engineer and Wise India Leader, Cisco

Richa Daga is an award-winning embedded software engineer, global technology leader at **Cisco**, and an internationally recognized technical speaker. She serves as the **India Employee Resource Organization (ERO) Leader for Cisco WISE (Women in Science and Engineering)**, where she champions initiatives to advance women's leadership, technical excellence, and diversity in STEM. She is also a frequent speaker at leading global technology forums, including IEEE conferences and the Women in Tech Global Conference.

With expertise in **embedded systems, AI, optical networking, 5G, cybersecurity, and next-generation internet technologies**, Richa has contributed to the development of advanced networking solutions at Cisco and previously at Ciena. A best-selling author and thought leader, she is committed to fostering innovation, mentoring future technologists, and promoting an inclusive technology ecosystem.

**Dr Umesh Kumar Sharma**

Scientist – G and Head, Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN), Department of Science & Technology, GoI

Dr. Umesh Kumar Sharma is a **Scientist-G and Head** at the **Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India**, where he leads key initiatives focused on science and technology capacity building and promoting gender inclusion in STEM. He heads the flagship **Women in Science and Engineering–KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)** programme, which supports women's participation and career advancement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

He also heads the **Science & Technology Capacity Building (S&TCB) Division** and plays a key role in the **Vigyan Jyoti** programme, an initiative aimed at encouraging schoolgirls to pursue STEM education and careers. Through these initiatives, Dr. Sharma has been instrumental in strengthening India's scientific talent pipeline and advancing an inclusive and future-ready STEM ecosystem.

**Ms N Pramila Rao**

R&D-EV SysD&D, TVS Motor

Ms. N. Pramila Rao is a Senior Lead Engineer in the Research & Development – Electric Vehicle Systems Design & Development (R&D-EV SysD&D) division at TVS Motor Company. She is actively involved in the design and development of advanced electrical architectures and powertrain systems for next-generation electric vehicles, contributing to the company's innovation in sustainable mobility.

With expertise in electric vehicle technologies, electrical systems, and product development, Ms. Rao plays a key role in advancing cutting-edge EV solutions. Her work supports the development of efficient, reliable, and future-ready electric mobility technologies, strengthening India's transition towards sustainable transportation.

**Prof (Dr) Balvinder Shukla**

Vice Chancellor, Professor – Entrepreneurship, Leadership & IT
Amity University

Prof. (Dr.) Balvinder Shukla, an academican and administrator, is renowned for her multifaceted insights and exceptional leadership. She holds an M.Tech from IIT Kharagpur and a Ph.D. from Queen's University, U.K.

Dr. Shukla focuses on Entrepreneurship, Research, Internationalization, CSR, and Industry-Academia Collaborations. Her visionary leadership has elevated Amity University to new heights in knowledge creation, innovation, and industry engagement. As a key strategist, she has been instrumental in Amity's growth and rankings success.

Dr. Shukla's contributions have earned her numerous awards, including the Excellence in Entrepreneurship Development Award, Academic Leadership Award, Vice Chancellor of the Year Award, and Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2024, she received the National Distinguished Vice Chancellor Award from the Indian Institute of Ecology and Environment, the prestigious Sushma Swaraj Stree Shakti Samman Award. In 2025 Dr. Shukla, has been honored with the "Vice Chancellor of the Decade award" by Top Rankers Excellence Management Club and National Ethical Governance and Integrity Excellence Award by International Association of Educators for World Peace during the World Management Congress.

**Mr Subhomoy Bhattacharya**

Consulting Editor, Business Standard

Subhomoy Bhattacharjee is Professor of Practice and Director, Centre for Regulatory Governance, at the Law School of Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana (crg.jgu.edu.in). He teaches regulatory and economics issues. His recently published book is “Where Ships Come Calling: India’s Maritime Sector”, the country’s pioneering book on regulatory and investment policies for the Indian maritime sector. He is also Consulting Editor at the Business Standard newspaper (<https://www.business-standard.com/author/subhomoy-bhattacharjee>) (Twitter: @subhomoyb)

He writes on public policy, primarily finance, maritime, energy and geo strategic issues. Youtube channel On Point with Subhomoy Bhattacharjee His earlier book, “India’s Coal Story”, traces why since Independence, Indian business and government could not settle the rights on energy security, creating the murky politics of coal--& sketches the options for India's future energy security. He graduated from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, post graduation in Economics from Delhi School of Economics, working on his Doctorate. He was in Govt of India as part of the Indian Information Service