

Press Release

Three social innovators announced for the final round of The Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India Award 2024

In 2010, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation came together to promote social innovation in India through the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India Award 2024 and has since recognised and supported the growing field of social innovation in India. Over the last decade, it has established itself as one of the most reputable awards for social entrepreneurs.

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, are proud to announce the finalists of the 15th edition of the 'Social Entrepreneur of the Year' India Award 2024. This award recognises and celebrates the outstanding contributions of social innovators in India who have transformed lives and communities through their exceptional socio-business initiatives.

The selection process is based on various parameters such as the organisation's orientation towards addressing social inequalities, exclusion and marginalisation; the uniqueness of the social model or initiative, and the ability to create sustainable systemic-level changes. The Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation also conducted background research, personal and team interactions, impact assessment, expert reviews and reference checks to select the following three high-impact social innovators as finalists:

1. **Madhura Dasgupta Sinha, Aspire For Her, Mumbai**
madhuradgs@aspireforher.com
2. **Akshay Saxena, Avanti Fellows, New Delhi**
akshay@avantifellows.org
3. **Hunny Bhagchandani, Torchit, Ahmedabad**
hunny@mytorchit.com

The winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year India Award will be chosen by a distinguished jury comprised of diverse industry leaders. The award will be announced on September 10, 2024, in a ceremony in New Delhi, where distinguished global leaders and representatives from various sectors will gather to celebrate the spirit of social entrepreneurship.

As part of the award, the winner of the SEOY India Award 2024 will join the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship's community of social innovators, a leading global platform that has accelerated outstanding models of social innovation for over 25

years. The Winner and Finalists of the SEOY India Award 2024 will also have the opportunity to apply for the Hindustan Times Fellowship for the Stanford Seed Transformation program.

The SEOY India Award 2024 received 105-applications this year, with around 60% of them being first-time applicants, reflecting the reach of the platform to newer organisations. The top five sectors in applications were Education, Health, Disability, Inclusion, Environment (waste management) and Enterprise Development.

Through their humanitarian approaches, the shortlisted finalists have exhibited steadfast commitment towards addressing some of India's most pressing social challenges. Their contributions range from:

- a) Empowering women to enhance their skills, secure employment, and integrate into the workforce. Additionally, supporting returnee women who have previously left the workforce and are re-entering professional roles. Making entrepreneurship both aspirational and attainable for women contributes to a positive cycle of female participation in the economy.
- b) Building at-home learning models that improve math and science achievement in Grades, the Test Preparation program aims to create nationwide, state-sponsored schemes that identify high-potential students as early as 9th grade and support them with tutoring, mentorship and career guidance through high school.
- c) Development and deployment of innovative & affordable assistive technologies tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities break down barriers and empower individuals with disabilities to lead more independent, fulfilling lives.

Meet the finalists:



Madhura Dasgupta Sinha

Aspire For Her
aspireforher.com

Year Established: 2021

Sector: Women's Economic Empowerment

About: Aspire For Her Management & Consultancy Pvt Ltd (AFH) is dedicated to transforming the lives of over 1 million women and contributing \$5 billion to India's GDP by increasing women's workforce participation to 10 million by 2030. Their mission is to foster a generation of financially independent women by encouraging their entry and retention in the workforce through the strength of community and networks. The organisation employs an advocacy and networking strategy to harness the potential of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Their approach, termed E3=MC3, focuses on engaging women in Education, Employment, or Entrepreneurship. They also operate a Community-as-a-Service model, establishing over 15 communities that support women across various stages of life and careers—from schoolgirls and college students to professionals in IT, finance, sports, and aspiring entrepreneurs. For sustainable impact, AFH collaborates with more than 100 partners, including major global corporations as well as national and international agencies. In just a few years, AFH has built a community of around 550,000 women, supported by over 1,200 mentors. These women have participated in more than 20 cohorts, completed over 100 courses, and invested over 50,000 learning hours in their development. They have also accessed over 10,000 job opportunities, with more than 1,000 securing placements.



Akshay Saxena

Avanti Fellows
www.avantifellows.org

Year Established: 2010

Sector: Education

About: Avanti Fellows operates India's largest free program aimed at helping economically disadvantaged students pursue technical careers. They partner with nine major government school systems to provide intensive tutoring for over 30,000 students annually. Their initiatives have also offered free materials, assessments, and test preparation support to more than 1.5 million students. Their NEEV program specifically targets 16 million students currently in Grades 9 and 10 in government schools across India. This program is focused on developing at-home learning models to enhance Math and Science achievement in these grades, with the goal of increasing the

number of government school students who choose Science in Grade 11 and pursue STEM careers. Over the past eight years, Avanti has collaborated with the Haryana government to implement state-run interventions, both in school and at home, aimed at boosting Math and Science performance among high school students. Additionally, Avanti Fellows stands out as the only organisation to have successfully developed high-scale at-home learning programs in partnership with state governments. They are also unique in their commitment to influencing state spending and policy on test preparation. Since its inception, Avanti's intensive after-school programs have reached over 75,000 students, and their curriculum, online content, and assessments have been utilised by more than 5 million students.



Hunny Bhagchandani

TorchIt

www.mytorchit.com

Year Established: 2016

Sector: Disability, Inclusive Education, Healthcare

About: TorchIt tackles the significant challenges faced by over a billion people globally living with disabilities. These challenges encompass various aspects of life, such as limited independence, educational opportunities, employment prospects, and societal inclusion. The scarcity of affordable and accessible assistive solutions exacerbates these issues. TorchIt aims to overcome these barriers through innovative and cost-effective assistive technologies, educational and skill-building programmes, and community outreach efforts. TorchIt's suite of smart assistive devices, including Saarthi Smart Mobility aids and Jyoti AI Glasses, addresses the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, their educational and skill-building aids and kits support individuals in achieving their goals and enhancing their capabilities for greater societal participation. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by this demographic, TorchIt enables individuals with disabilities to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. Since its inception, TorchIt has directly impacted over 300,000 individuals with disabilities and reached an additional 900,000 indirectly across more than 40 countries. The organisation's assistive aids have significantly improved independence, accessibility, and overall quality of life for these individuals.



About Us

In partnership with the World Economic Forum, the **Schwab Foundation** is the foremost global community of pioneering social innovators driving systemic change. It was co-founded by Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum, and Hilde Schwab, Co-Founder and Chairperson, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. For more than 25 years, the Schwab Foundation has supported the world's leading social innovators to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. The Schwab Foundation provides unparalleled platforms at the regional and global, to highlight and advance leading models of sustainable social innovation.

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Jubilant Bhartia Foundation (JBF), established in 2007, is the not-for-profit organisation of the Jubilant Bhartia Group. It focuses on conceptualising and implementing the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (CSR) for the Group. The Jubilant Bhartia Foundation's activities include various community development work, healthcare programs, cultural and sports events, environmental preservation initiatives, vocational training, women empowerment, educational activities, and promotion of Social Entrepreneurship.

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