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5.3.4 Does your university as a body encourage applications by women in subjects where they are underrepresented?

[This law aspirant from UPES is a human rights activist, social entrepreneur and author](https://blog.upes.ac.in/this-law-aspirant-from-upes-is-a-human-rights-activist-social-entrepreneur-and-author/)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/this-law-aspirant-from-upes-is-a-human-rights-activist-social-entrepreneur-and-author/> [1]

EKTA KASHYAP · MAY 13, 2021

Anushka, a 4th-year law student at UPES, is a true embodiment of 'Shakti'. Overcoming her personal struggles, she has founded an organisation called 'Naari' to end period-poverty, written books and research papers on women-centric issues, received praise from the New Zealand Prime Minister for her work and is now serving as the President of the West Bengal Human Rights Council



The plight of rural Indian women fighting the deeply entrenched stigma of menstruation has been well documented.

Over the years, several voices in various forms have amplified the conversation on the financial incapacity of women in some parts of the world to afford menstrual products. One such young leader is UPES student Anushka, who is studying B.A. LL.B. with specialisation in Energy Laws. She is using her education and advocacy skills to create awareness on women-centric issues by engaging communities in discussions and assisting women in every way possible.

"I want to work towards ending all kinds of discrimination and abuse inflicted upon women," Anushka says.

There is an energy and eloquence in the way she speaks, which makes a profound impression. One wonders how an undergraduate student became so impassioned about the cause of women empowerment.

"There was a triggering moment when I felt that I had to stand up not only for myself but all the girls and women out there," she says recalling a traumatic incident of her life. "I was in an abusive relationship. This person pushed me to the brink of breakdown. I flew back to my hometown in Jamshedpur. With the support of my father, I pulled myself together. I went to the National University, Singapore, and presented my paper titled 'Criminalising of Marital Rape in India: A Distant Dream' for which I received the 'Young Researcher Scholarship Award'. I also wrote a book on the same topic, which got published in 16 languages across the world."

Not only did Anushka come out of this disturbing episode, but she also found the strength to help other victims of abuse. "I started speaking about it on various platforms such as 'We, The Young India', 'Logical Indian', and several newspapers. Soon after, I got flooded with messages from victims, who started sharing their experiences with me. They felt inspired to break the silence, and I



"There was a triggering moment in my life when I felt that I had to stand up not only for myself but all the girls and women out there. I want to work towards ending all kinds of discrimination and abuse inflicted upon women."

realised that I was not alone in this journey. Since then, I became determined to work towards this cause and began reaching out to more and more victims," recounts Anushka.

"During this process, I came across another startling realisation – the problem of period poverty in India. Many women use cloth repeatedly after washing it during their menstrual cycle. I knew that it could lead to infection. I had to do something about it. Hence, 'Naari' was formed to create awareness

about menstrual health and hygiene in rural areas, provide sanitary napkins to the underprivileged women as well as expedite the responsiveness towards this concern in urban India.”

Anushka co-founded this organisation with her friend Sanghamitra. She says, “We started with 15 women. Today, we have distributed sanitary napkins to more than 7000 women across rural India. The funding has been done using my friend’s savings as well as the royalty that came out of the two books that I had written.”

However, sensitising people on a stigmatised subject such as menstruation was not an easy task. Anushka says, “Even in urban middle-class families, women and men feel uncomfortable talking about menstruation openly. Fortunately, I was brought up in a family where it was not a taboo topic. I used to gather women in rural areas and make them understand the consequences of using cloth instead of a sanitary napkin. Initially, they were hesitant but soon they opened up. Earlier we had to go door-to-door distributing the sanitary napkins; now they voluntarily come to us.”

Anushka also serves as the President of the West Bengal Human Rights Council, under the Women’s Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where she deals with cases of human rights violation of women and children. “We create awareness, provide pro bono legal help, and conduct seminars and webinars at all levels. We try to provide women with all kinds of assistance – medical, psychological, and physiological. I go and meet them if the situation allows, or talk to them over a phone call.”

Ask her about her most memorable experiences during this journey and she chirps, “There have been many. The first one was when my debut book ‘Because Being Together is Enough’ was released by Padma Shri Premlata Agarwal. She is the first Indian woman to scale the Seven Summits, the seven highest mountain peaks of the world. During the release, when she came on the stage, she said something, which I can never forget. She said, “When Anushka came to my office, I asked her why you are inviting a mountaineer to release your book and she told me that I was an inspiration for her. Today, after listening to her, the way she sees the world, her perception, Anushka has become my inspiration.”

“I remember how my parents had swelled with pride that day,” she recounts joyfully.

“The second was when I got the opportunity to go to the National University, Singapore, on a full scholarship. Among the sea of participants who had completed their PhDs and Masters, I was given the ‘Young Researcher’s Scholarship Award’. It was a proud moment for me.”

Apart from that, Anushka feels grateful for leading a council of human rights that has over 30 members, including interns and volunteers. However, the memory that tops the list is the day she received a letter from the New Zealand Prime Minister Ms. Jacinda Ardern.

“The Prime Minister had responded to a set of questions that I had asked her on issues that women leaders face, and how she deals with them. I had written a long email to her, and surprisingly, she had addressed every single point in the message. She praised me for the work that I have been doing for the women in the country. That was a big boost to my confidence. I admire her, and I wish that I could become a part of what she is; that’s the kind of feminism I crave for and want in my country. The way she handles her personal life, her kids, and her professional life, an entire country, is inspirational.”

How does she plan to amplify her movement? “I want to end period poverty through my organisation ‘Naari’. The situation exists on a large scale, so it will certainly take time. I am working towards empowering more and more women each day so that they can take a stand for themselves,

understand the importance of being financially independent and do not bear any violence, discrimination, or abuse in any field, be it personal or professional. That's something close to my heart and that is also one of the reasons why I am studying law."

[NASA's prestigious NPWEE Summer 2023 program](https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1677172906546065408)

<https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1677172906546065408> [2]

Mahima Gupta is poised to achieve greatness as she secures a coveted spot in NASA's prestigious NPWEE Summer 2023 program.



[Interning at ISRO](https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1646423629058416641)

<https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1646423629058416641> [3]

Pursuing your goals and not giving up until they come true is what being a part of the #UniversityOfTomorrow is about. And that's what Ishika Punhani did by interning at ISRO.

#UPES #SchoolOfComputer #Ambitious #ISRO



Tanvi Bhalla

<https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1641849404029009931> [4]

Tanvi Bhalla from UPES #SchoolOfLaw has published a manuscript and written a book while studying to be a lawyer at #UPES. Being passionate about what you do is what it takes to be from the #UniversityOfTomorrow.



UPES Shakti footprints at Google, California

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-shakti-footprints-at-google-california/> [5]

PRADEEP JAGWAN · SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

UPES alumna Prakshi Rastogi, who did her post-graduation from Georgia Tech University, is working as a Silicon Engineer at Google in Mountain View, California

A childlike quality still pops up in Prakshi when she talks about her college life at UPES five years back. Prakshi Rastogi is an alumna of UPES, Class of 2011-2015, B.Tech. Electronics Engineering. Presently, she works as a Silicon Engineer at Google in Mountain View, California.



When asked about the practical aspects of living in a faraway country, Prakshi talks about the difficulties she faced. “I knew living alone in a faraway country would be difficult but that was the price to be paid to achieve my dreams.”

Prakshi attributes her relentless spirit to her mother. She says, “My inspiration of dreaming big and achieving it has always been my mother, who pushed me to aim high and never give up on my dreams. In the world that we live in, it is rare to have parents who are supportive of all your dreams and I am lucky enough to have them. They have always taught me that sky is the limit.”

Studying circuits was an interest for her ever since she was a little girl. Prakshi admits that all her childhood, she was intrigued by circuit design and its intricacies of how millions of transistors were integrated into one small chip. “The interest,” she adds, “widened when I pursued Very Large-Scale Integration (VLSI) courses at UPES. I would spend hours reading about VLSI and searching colleges that specialize in it. As a result of that, I came across a few colleges in the United States that offered specialization in VLSI.”



She knew she had to pursue her Masters in the field of VLSI. But pursuing masters from a foreign university has its own difficulties, Prakshi admits. “My target was difficult,” she informs, “as these were the top tier colleges and needed a good GRE score. With motivation from my professors and parents, I prepared for GRE and successfully got into Georgia Tech, which was my dream college. My parents and professors were elated about it.”

Prakshi vividly recalls her experience during her college days at UPES. She says, “When I look back at the four years I spent at UPES, there is nothing I want to change about it. The whole experience gave me a solid career foundation for where I am today in my life. A big thanks to the amazing faculty members at UPES who shaped my career in the best possible way. Furthermore, the summer internship program gave me the industry exposure I needed at that time.”

[This bureaucrat makes UPES proud!](https://blog.upes.ac.in/this-bureaucrat-makes-upes-proud/)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/this-bureaucrat-makes-upes-proud/> [6]

PRADEEP JAGWAN · AUGUST 28, 2020

Margan Sinha, alumna of B. Tech Electronics Engineering, class of 2013, today serves as Senior Deputy Collector at Jehanabad, Bihar

Margan Sinha, class of 2009-2013, B. Tech Electronics Engineering, is currently serving as Senior Deputy Collector at Jehanabad, Bihar. Hers is a story of true grit and tenacity. Making it to the top of the bureaucracy in India is never an easy dream to nurture. “But hard work never goes unpaid,” quips Margan.



Reminiscing about her experience at the university, Margan recalls the time when her other classmates were working on themselves and getting prepped for campus placements. “I was preparing,” she adds, “without any backup plan or job experience just after graduation. I was under tremendous peer pressure as others were doing pretty well in their lives and I was still struggling. There were moments of frustration and even the impulse to quit the preparation.”

Besides the challenges on the professional front, her personal life, too, had its own share of difficulties. Margan explains, “During the process of preparation, my father got transferred and my mother was also facing health issues. So I had to balance the responsibility along with the preparation.”

Margan Sinha, class of 2009-2013, B. Tech Electronics Engineering, is currently serving as Senior Deputy Collector at Jehanabad, Bihar

She secured rank 159 in Bihar Public Service Commission 60-62nd exam.



Despite all the success, she is modest enough to concede that she did not expect to crack any of the examinations in one go as she was an average student. . Says she, “I was not amongst those few who crack such competitive exams in one go. I faced failures, nothing was working out. One exam cycle is a pretty long one, lasting minimum for a year and failure in one attempt is a loss of a year of hard work, and career progression.”

But one thing she had in ample measure was perseverance and positivity. She credits her success to strong family support that never let her quit and kept motivating her. “Along with it my own belief,” she adds, “that one day I will surely crack it, and even if by any chance I am not able to clear it, I will do something for the masses, was my sole motivation that kept me going.”

Margan says, “The course I pursued at UPES helped me immensely in the preparation of science and technology section which constitutes a major chunk of the syllabus and gave me an easy edge over the other aspirants. UPES also provided me with ample opportunities for overall personality development, in the form of extra-curricular activities, personality development sessions, professional communication classes and a focus on practical, rather than just theoretical sessions.”

Margan believes that the seeds of one’s career are well sown in the college, and it stands true for her as she began preparing for Civil Services during her college days. She proudly says, “My alma mater has been a major pillar of strength and confidence building. It has helped me inculcate the values and

qualities expected of an administrator. UPES provided me with a conducive environment, an atmosphere to grow, learn, lead and become what I am today. For all aspirants and my present UPES fellows who wish to become an administrator, I would like to dedicate my favorite quote: Winners never quit and quitters never win.”

India’s Missile Woman Interacts with Students

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/indias-missile-woman-interacts-with-students/> [7]

BY A CORRESPONDENT · MARCH 8, 2020



Distinguished Scientist and Director General-DRDO Dr. Tessy Thomas visited UPES recently for National Space Convention 2020

Uttarakhand witnessed its second National Space Convention, Renaissance 2.0 in collaboration with Uttarakhand Science Education and Research Centre (USERC), Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) of United Nations and SPACE INDIA,organised by Infinity Space Club, the Department of Aerospace Engineering, UPES. The inter-university national-level space convention took place in UPES, Dehradun, with the support of its media partner, World of Science, and sponsors, CADD and Rocketeer India.

Among the dignitaries present at the event were Shri Kusum Lata Sharma, Director of Ministry of Civil Aviation, Mr. Tarun Sharma from Space India, Delhi, Mr. V.M. Chamola, Ex-Director, Human Resource at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), and Dr. Durgesh Pant, whois among the earliest adopters and pioneers of Computer Science and Information Technology and is currently the Director of Uttarakhand Science Education and Research Centre (USERC).

Missile Woman speaks on leadership skills

The audience was captivated when Dr. Tessy Thomas, the Missile Woman of India, stepped on the podium to give her remarks. Sheis currently the Distinguished Scientist and Director General at Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). Dr. Tessy was the Project Director for AGNI-4, becoming the first woman in India to lead a missile project in the country. She presented the young minds with a presentation on Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, an introduction about the ongoing ISRO projects and development on missilesand lastly, India’s Aerospace industry’s progress on a global level.

Speaking about the qualities that make a good leader, Dr. Thomas said: “A leader should take his subordinates along and not just dominate them. He or she should be ready for every challenge and try and protect their team like their own family. A leader should be well-prepared for tackling any situation. He should know the plus points of his subordinates and focus on them to get the best out of them!”

This interaction was followed by flagship and non-flagship events such as Endeavour (treasure hunt), Destinesia (space quiz), Astrometrica (workshop) and webinar session with NASA scientist, Marcos Pena, the man behind the Artemis mission.

National Space Convention

Renaissance, the National Space Convention, was a brainchild of the students of Infinity Space Club.

UPES Aerospace Engineering Department

This department has, over the years, promoted various teams, clubs and students to partake in various activities that promote the research and development of Space systems. UPES, Team Astral under the department of Aerospace Engineering has over the years secured top ranks on the global scale and also making India proud by securing the first rank at the CanSat competition organized by the American Astronautical Society which tests the electronic and mechanical systems of a canister sized satellite with weight and size constraints. Another team of the same department, Team Agastya makes breakthrough in the Aeronautical domain by partaking in the world’s best aero design challenge organized by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. There are also other teams like team Odyssey and team Tesseract which are setting benchmarks in the Singapore Space Challenge and winning the Lockheed Martin Roll on Roll off Challenge. Apart from these UPES also encourages students pursuing research in the field of space sciences and clubs like Infinity Space Club and Aeroclub that promotes the education of this science.



Renaissance, the National Space Convention, was a brainchild of the students of Infinity Space Club. The idea of conducting a one-of-its-kind national space convention for the first time in 2018 was nurtured and nourished by the continuous support from the UPES Administration: Dr. Kamal Bansal, Dean of Academic Development and Innovation and School of Engineering, Dr. S.J. Chopra, the Chancellor of UPES, Department of Aerospace Engineering, which has been a constant pillar of strength for Infinity Space Club, especially Dr. Sudhir Joshi, Head of Department and Faculty Mentors, Mr. Zozimus Labana and Mr. Vipin Kumar.

[Creating a level-playing field in education](https://blog.upes.ac.in/creating-a-level-playing-field-in-education/)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/creating-a-level-playing-field-in-education/> [8]

[BY A CORRESPONDENT](#) · JULY 17, 2020



Women's empowerment has been at the core of all our efforts at UPES. We are proud to be associated with scores of women achievers – our alumni, faculty and even our current students

Women are severely underrepresented in the boardroom and STEM fields. In India, women comprise only 25% of academic faculties, and only 11% of R&D institutions. This inequality is evident even in the rates of graduation. The discrepancy is so pronounced that not only has this been studied by academic, it has also found its way into pop culture: mostly from a position of mirth. However, this is a sign of a deep rot in our [STEM education eco-system and needs to be addressed](#).

One of the many reasons this is happening because there is a systemic bias against women that often begins in the family. A large part of the problem is that women aren't invested in as much as men. In families, because of patriarchal thinking, the boy's career is of higher importance than a girl's. In fact, investment in the future of women and girls could add billions to India's GDP.

A critical aspect of ensuring inclusiveness in our universities is reducing the barriers of entry for women. Given that gender investment gap is significantly high in India, this could be done by incentivising more women to join universities. Financial aid programs and scholarships can go a long way in reducing these systemic challenges. It can encourage more women to be a part of the growth story.

Setting aside the macro level perspective, on an individual level too, this measure can lead to significant gains. In the modern world, it is not just someone's skill that determines success. It is also confidence. Imagine being in a situation where you find it much harder to convince their parents to invest in your education than your brother. Because many girls are also raised in a way that denies them the right to ambition, the institutional and structural barriers are often enough to break her confidence.

Moreover, the lack of representation of women in STEM fields and upper management acts in cyclical ways. A lot of women feel the lack of strong female role models who can tell them how to navigate the often complex social dynamics in academia and R&D, leading to many women dropping out of the program, convinced that this wasn't for them or that they would never make it to the top. Positive role models and mentors also help in dissipating the passive aggressive energy that many women have reported in male-dominated professions.

At UPES, we take this problem extremely seriously. That is evident in the fact that we have declared the year [2020 as the Year of Women Empowerment](#). In light of this, we designed our initiative Shakti to address many of these concerns. To begin with, as part of Shakti, we are providing a 25% scholarship on tuition fees for the entire course duration to all women. To add to this, we also provide skill-development sessions, leadership development sessions, industry exposure, and close mentorship to

women, to ensure that in addition to skills and drive, women also build confidence and have the tools they need to climb up the corporate ladders.



The idea of Shakti is to create an environment that is conducive to the development of women's capacity to shatter the glass ceiling

We also understand that it is not only the women who need to be prepared for an uphill battle. It is also society that needs transformation. To lead this process, we're also conducting gender sensitization workshops with our students and faculty. The [idea of Shakti is to create an environment](#) that is conducive to the development of women's capacity to shatter the glass ceiling. This is how we aim to combat the inequality in education and the upper echelons of management and research, and create a more equal society. To find out more about Shakti, visit upesforshakti.upes.org.

[Project Vikalp](#)

<https://www.upes.ac.in/social-impact/project-vikalp> [9]

Rural Women Technology Park has been involved in empowerment activities for the women of neighbouring villages surrounding the university campus since 2015. The project supports initiatives related to recycled paper products; ICT-assisted art and craft design; and identification and cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plant species. Additionally, these budding entrepreneurs receive assistance from experts on the campus for the marketing of their products.

[Project Payal](#)

<https://www.upes.ac.in/social-impact/project-payal> [10]

Providing education for girls is, arguably, one of the best development investments an organization can make. And that is precisely what Project Payal has set out to achieve. Supporting underprivileged meritorious girls from neighbouring villages, the project makes sure there is an overall development in their personality.

[How a UPES student transcended all barriers in her quest for learning](#)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/how-a-upes-student-transcended-all-barriers-in-her-quest-for-learning/> [11]

PREETI ANEJA · JULY 9, 2020

An avid traveller, a school level badminton champion and a dreamer, Shruti Srivastava bagged the prestigious IGIDR summer internship in July 2019 and went for an exchange program to the University of Alberta, Canada, in the same year



In today's highly competitive world, knowledge is the key to success. Your success depends upon how much you know and how well you can apply your learnings in real-life situations. Shruti Srivastava, an alumna of the UPES School of Business, shares her journey of unforgettable experiences, learning and change.

How did you bag the prestigious internship at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research?

I deem it as an honour to have gotten the opportunity to intern at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai. It is an advanced research institute established and fully funded by the Reserve Bank of India for researching development issues from a multi-disciplinary point of view.

A student's success depends on many variables – his or her efforts are crucial but other factors like a supportive family, professors and friends as well as resources also play an important role. I hail from Sitapur, a small town in Uttar Pradesh, and it was entirely my father's encouragement and support that motivated me to chase my dreams with full rigour. He gave me the mantra of hard work and positive thinking.

After my graduation in Mathematics, I decided to pursue UPES School of Business because not many universities offer this specialized program.

Several analytical subjects are part of the course, which helped me understand the practicality of this domain. Through continuous guidance by the accomplished professors, distinguished guest interactions and discussions with my peers, I developed an active interest in data-driven analytical work and its usage in business problems.

As a Student Placement Representative (SPR), while searching for internship opportunities for my classmates, I came across IGIDR internships. I applied for it with the help of my mentors and owing to my strong understanding of various econometric software and a strong analytical background, I got selected.

I deem it as an honour to have gotten the opportunity to intern at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai

Summer@IGIDR – Visiting Students Program

How was your experience at IGIDR?

The experience at IGIDR was incredible in terms of learning and gaining a new outlook towards life. Only ten students get selected every year for two months to work on projects with the most sought-after subject matter experts in IGIDR.



Owing to my high pointers, I got the opportunity to study at the University of Alberta, Canada, in September 2019 as part of the Student Exchange Program of UPES

During my internship, I made a report on 'Energy Consumption and Energy Intensity trends of the Economy using Logarithmic Mean Divisia Index Method' deploying 12-year data. My understanding of the subject increased 10 folds in two months. Resultantly, my research capabilities improved. The exhaustive mathematical approach as well as applying that approach on datasets made my mind more analytical.

Because of my high pointers, I got the opportunity to study at the University of Alberta, Canada, in September 2019 as part of the Student Exchange Program of UPES. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There was at least one project or presentation deadline every week. We were offered separate hours for meeting the faculty to get our doubts cleared. The classroom sessions were interactive and based on real-world problems.

Everything was going well, however, unfortunately, I lost my father when I was on the verge of completing my exchange program. It devastated me completely, but I gathered myself with the help of my family, friends and mentors and went on to crack the job interview at Saigal SeaTrade, Mumbai and got placed successfully.

The internship at the University of Alberta made me realize my hidden potential and strengths. I learned that there is a solution to every problem in this world.

What is your message for the alma mater and the generation next?

I owe my success to the experiences I had at the UPES School of Business – I was the SPR of my class, member of the 'Urjaa' team, participated in research and was supported by the faculty members. I would suggest all my juniors to explore all possible fields and figure out their interests. Remember to be passionate, determined and diligent in whatever you do; an appropriate reward will follow.

[UPES student's research paper published](https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-students-research-paper-published/)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-students-research-paper-published/> [12]

PRADEEP JAGWAN · MAY 8, 2020

Currently pursuing her B. Tech in Computer Science, Anukruti Mathur was recently in the news for her research paper titled 'Implementation of Technology-Enabled Education in Teaching and Learning: A Study'

Anukruti Mathur, a student of Cloud Computing and Virtualization Technology (CCVT) from School of Computer Science, UPES, has published her research paper in the Journal of Xidian University, a public research university in Xi'an, China. The paper titled 'Implementation of Technology-Enabled Education in Teaching and Learning: A Study' has been published in the fifth edition of 2020 of the Journal of Xidian University.



Anukruti did her research for this paper under the guidance of Dr. Naveen Tiwari and Dr. Gopal Dutt. Says Anukruti, “For the purpose of this study, survey was conducted amongst educators of different schools and colleges. Respondents gave details of the implementation and success of the use of computers and internet in schools in all districts of Uttarakhand.”

An elated Anukruti informs that she has been an avid researcher in college. “I am the Department Editor,” she adds, “for XRDS magazine printed and published from New York. Research has always interested me and I wish to pursue it in future as well.”

Sharing insights from her experience, Anukruti says, “My journey till now at UPES has been nothing short of amazing. The exposure and opportunities each one of us here get, paves our way towards holistic development. Labs embedded with latest equipments and technologies, various activities held throughout the course and the newly-added Coursera and HitbullsEye tie-ups give us a clear understanding of what lies ahead, thus making us industry ready.” She further adds, “I would sincerely express my deep sense of gratitude towards the management and teachers at UPES for integrating content vertically and horizontally, thus bringing out the best in me.”

Meet the women scientists who are leading the battle against COVID-19

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/meet-the-women-scientists-who-are-leading-the-battle-against-covid-19/>

[13]

EKTA KASHYAP · MAY 6, 2020

As countries, including India, reel under the Coronavirus pandemic, several women scientists are powering through with their uncompromising attitude to help rebuild the nation and the world

The Indian mythology and folklore are replete with accounts of legendary women, armed with swords, bows and arrows, fighting in wars and eventually emerging as winners. Women were warriors then; women are warriors now. Today, they are fighting an unseen enemy – a virus that has taken scores of lives across the world. Their weapons have changed, too. But what hasn't changed is their exceptional resilience and determination to win every battle with courage and conviction.

The world is facing a crisis like no other. In such trying times, it is the frontline workers who are risking their lives to ensure that others stay safe; it is our medical researchers who are working at record speed to develop a vaccine and effective treatments. We bring you such six women scientists who are going above and beyond their call of duty to make sure that the nation and the world come out of this pandemic, healthy and safe.

Dr. Priya Abraham

On January 30, 2020, the first case of Novel Coronavirus was confirmed in India by the National Institute of Virology (NIV) based in Pune. It is affiliated to the nation's apex health research body, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and initially, was the only centre that was testing samples for Covid-19.



Leading the charge of this organisation at this crucial juncture is its director, Dr. Priya Abraham. Not only did she make a momentous medical breakthrough by isolating the deadly Coronavirus, but she, along with her team, has also been the guiding force of all the government and private labs that are testing the Coronavirus samples.

The NIV has succeeded in reducing the testing time of Covid-19 samples to just four hours a sample from 12-14 hours, a significant feat that will increase the number of testing.

Sanghamitra Pati and Jyotirmayi Turuk

As the number of cases spike in different states, the women of Odisha – nurses, Anganwadi workers, healthcare workers and sanitation workers – have set an example of leading the battle against the pandemic.

The foremost medical institutes that are responsible for COVID-19 testing in the state are also being led by women. Scientist Sanghamitra Pati is heading the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), the key COVID-19 testing centre at Bhubaneswar, which is a regional institution of ICMR. Pati, together with her team scientist Jyotirmayee Turuk, is involved in aggressive testing to detect as many cases as possible.

Minal Dhakave Bhosale

On March 26, Mylabs Discovery, a molecular biology firm based in Pune, successfully delivered its first batch of the first-ever Made in India Coronavirus testing kit. This kit gave results in just two-and-a-half hours as compared to the imported ones, which take six-seven hours for the same. Moreover, the Mylabs testing kit was priced at INR 1,200, which is a quarter of the cost of the imported testing kits.

This breakthrough was made possible because of the relentless efforts of Mylab's research and development chief, Minal Dhakave Bhosale. Notably, she delivered the working kit for evaluation by NIV on March 18, just a day before delivering her daughter.

Dr. Renu Swarup

In the quest for the treatment of the deadly infection, researchers are racing against time to find an antidote of Coronavirus. Dr. Renu Swarup, secretary, department of biotechnology under the science ministry, is one of them. She is also the chairperson of the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), which serves as a bridge between research laboratories and industry.

Dr. Nivedita Gupta

Virologist, Dr Nivedita Gupta, who is a senior scientist at ICMR, is currently designing the treatment and testing protocols for the country. She had played a key role in setting up a viral and diagnostic network for ICMR.

These achievements have put women front and centre in the medical arena. There is only one word to aptly describe these women of courage – inspiring.

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Menstrual hygiene product by UPES students gets special mention at National Design Awards

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/menstrual-hygiene-product-by-upes-students-gets-special-mention-at-national-design-awards/> [14]

EKTA KASHYAP · JULY 5, 2022



Vendo, developed by UPES School of Design students Bhasha Maheswari, Siddhi Deshpande and Shruti Bamb, won the ‘Special Mention Award in Product Design’ at the MIT-WPU National Design Awards 2022

According to the National Family Health Survey (2015-16), there are around 355 million menstruating women and girls in India. However, women across the country experience significant barriers to a comfortable and dignified experience with menstrual hygiene management.

They face issues in first accessing, and then discarding the used pads in public washrooms. And for the cleaning staff who handle them later, it is a nightmare. Once discarded, one sanitary pad takes up to 500 – 800 years to decompose. Given that an average woman uses 12 sanitary napkins every cycle – which accounts for approximately 15,000 pads or more during her life – the number of pads landing in the landfill worldwide is unfathomable.

To address this complex problem, three [UPES School of Design](#) students – Bhasha Maheswari, Siddhi Deshpande and Shruti Bamb – developed Vendo, a public sanitary solution for women.

Vendo – Sanitary napkin vending and incinerator machine

Vendo helps in managing hygiene in public washrooms with ease in a sustainable, accessible and eco-friendly manner. It is a combination of a sanitary napkin vending machine and an incinerator. The incinerator helps with the easy disposal of soiled napkins and the vending section helps provide access to sanitary napkins 24*7. The machine runs with a token of INR 5 with three different pad size options.



“The intent was to create a product with massive social and environmental impact. That is when we realised the need to create a product that helps in managing female hygiene,” says Bhasha, a fourth-year B.Des. (Industrial and [Product Design](#)) student.

Shruti, who is also pursuing Industrial and Product Design, says that the thought of “literally leaving a lot of crap for the future generations to come” made her think about a sustainable way to discard sanitary waste. “We saw an opportunity in a pad-burning incinerator. That was the beginning of Vendo,” she says.

Elaborating how Vendo can help curb the mounting menstrual waste, Siddhi says, “Burning of sanitary napkins is better than disposing them in the garbage. But not many people are aware of this method. The product that we designed has a vending machine and an incinerator for the sanitary napkins with better display and control. We want this product to be installed in public washrooms, mall washrooms and other public spaces.”

Given that several products in the market provide similar services, what differentiates Vendo from the competition? “The highlight of Vendo is that it is a combination of a vending machine and incinerator. And its user-centred design adds to the greater purpose. The form and ease-of-use of the product make it convenient for the users. Additionally, Vendo incinerates pads at the right temperature, which most of the incinerators in the market do not do. Features like storage, battery backup and easy-to-use control panel also make it stand out,” says Bhasha.

It is their innovative approach to solving a gigantic problem that got the trio the ‘Special Mention Award in Product Design’ for Vendo at the MIT-WPU National Design Awards 2022.

Talking about the achievement, Shruti says, “As designers, we are asked to [design systems and experiences](#) in an increasingly complex environment. For the MIT-WPU National Design Award 2022, the theme was ‘Design for the Society’. With the ability to shape values and expectations, designers have an obligation to use their skills to improve lives, create opportunities, and bring people together. The idea I had with my two other group members, Siddhi Deshpande and Bhasha Maheshwari, helps shape society and increases awareness around the need for the product.”

UPES Professor conferred with ‘Leading Women Researcher Award’

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-professor-conferred-with-leading-women-researcher-award/> [15]

[EKTA KASHYAP](#) · MARCH 23, 2022

Dr. Neelu Jyothi Ahuja, Professor at School of Computer Science, was bestowed with the ‘Leading Women Researcher Award-2022’ by Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology (UCOST)

Research is the key to unlocking knowledge, and higher education thrives on research. Faculty and students at UPES have made remarkable discoveries with their expertise, hard work, dedication, and persistence, further strengthening the academic prowess of the institution. Their efforts have been recognised by academia and governments alike.



Dr. Neelu Jyothi Ahuja, Professor and Head-Department of Systemics at [UPES School of Computer Science](#), is one such active researcher and a dominant figure in her field. She has been conferred with the 'Leading Women Researcher Award-2022' from Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology (UCOST).

In 2010, Dr. Ahuja was awarded her Doctorate for the development of a prototype rule-based expert system for seismic data interpretation. From 2010 to 2017, she headed the Research Centre-Computing Research Institute, spearheading intra-disciplinary research and coordinating research activities. Dr. Ahuja was also among the 25 women leaders who were awarded the [Second Himalayan Nari Shakti Samman-2020](#) under the aegis of Uttarakhand State Law Commission and Uttarakhand Human Rights Protection Centre.

She has successfully delivered several government-sponsored projects in research worth INR 2 crore, under various domains ranging from Artificial Intelligence applications such as Intelligent Tutoring Systems to technology interventions for learning disabled children.

Talking about the value of research and the importance of upskilling as an academician, Dr. Ahuja says, "Gaps in knowledge can only be filled with research. From a personal point of view, it has always been stimulating, intensely engaging, and rewarding; rewarding in terms of personal satisfaction. As an academician, I am a strong believer in constantly upskilling, updating, and enriching. Only then, does it add value to the classroom and the life of students, as well as fellow team members."

Indeed, such scholars enhance the learning experience of students. Ardent researchers and academicians, who believe in sharing and spreading knowledge, support students towards their growth and accomplishments. Dr. Ahuja, talking about the efforts at UPES to prepare future decision-makers, says, "Encouraging students to discover their potential and excel is the way to work for us. Scaffolding them to go beyond the boundaries of a classroom and show their talent at various universities and institutes of repute, has led to them bringing over many laurels to UPES, including the field of research. Whether, it is grabbing coveted titles, prizes, placements, or highly acclaimed recognitions, students have done it all."

She emphasises that at UPES, students get the opportunity to learn from the best. "Developing students as ethically strong, environmentally conscious, well-rounded professionals, and placing them as leaders of tomorrow, has been a norm to take forward always. Noteworthy to mention, is that some of the very high salary packages have been achieved by students of the Cyber Security and Forensics program. Bringing some of the best academic learning experiences, industry alliances, training and certifications, real-time exposure, projects, and mentoring for the students, provides them with the necessary head start," Dr. Ahuja adds.