BUSINESS & YOUTH STARTING TOGETHER

BHARATIYA YUVA SHAKTI TRUST

FROM VISION TO VALUE

Grampreneurs® Shaping India's Economy



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FROM VISION TO VALUE

Grampreneurs® Shaping India's Economy



Quotes from Dignitaries

I laud BYST for unveiling a unique programme - Mentoring India®, which aims to create a pool of mentors by training and hand holding officials in Financial, Private and Public Institutions to support entrepreneurs in underserved communities.

Venkaiah Naidu

A dynamic and robust entrepreneurial eco-system is an asset to every economy; specifically innovation-led entrepreneurship has significant potential to stimulate industrial growth. I am happy that BYST is doing that.

Pranab Mukherjee

I was enormously proud to be present at the BYST 10th anniversary celebrations with the Prime Minister of India at the Parliament House. I also had launched BYST 17 years back modeled upon my Youth Business Trust in the United Kingdom entirely as a result of a conversation I had with Lakshmi during her father's state visits to the UK. I am happy to be here on the 25th Anniversary and wish BYST all the best!

HRH, The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles (now King Charles III)

BYST is a new pattern, not only for satisfying our economic wants but satisfying our social, psychological and cultural wants too.

K R Narayanan

Preface

From Vision to Value: Grampreneurs® Shaping India's Economy



At 65%, India's population of youth under 35 years is one of the highest in the world. This 'demographic dividend' holds aspirations of a bright future, of which decent livelihoods form a key part. But India's youth are no longer content with survival - they aspire to lead through innovation and make India a global benchmark for inclusive entrepreneurship.

While unicorns capture headlines, it is essential to highlight the significance of promoting mass entrepreneurship in addressing India's unemployment crisis, especially in light of its youthful demography. Therefore, it is exceedingly important for the country to implement well structured programmes that address three key challenges of India's young micro-entrepreneurs - lack of access to capital; lack of mentoring; and lack of training to tap new customers and new markets.

Over the past three decades, Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) has played a pioneering role entrepreneurship development across the nation. The organization has enabled hundreds of thousands of young Grampreneurs to take the strings of their lives in their own hands; triumph over life's adversities and live their dreams. BYST's success has been underpinned by mentors drawn from Indian industry at large and SMEs, be it in cities, small towns or rural areas.

BYST's journey, ever since I founded the non-profit organisation for nurturing the entrepreneurial dreams of underprivileged youth, has been an exciting and satisfying one! The beginnings lie in a meeting with HRH Prince Charles, (now King Charles III) in 1991, when I accompanied my father, the then President of India Shri R Venkataraman, to London. Inspired by HRH and The Prince's Trust, BYST was established in 1992, the first of its kind outside UK.

The initial response from Indian industry leaders was very encouraging. The legendary industrialist, Mr. JRD Tata, himself a champion of mentoring, was so inspired by the idea that he agreed to serve as BYST's Founding Chairman at the age of 86! He set the tone for BYST from the very beginning. His vision was clear: to create lasting value through excellence. He wanted us to nurture the dreams of the disadvantaged – with seriousness, respect, and high standards. His firm belief was (in his own words), "The future belongs to the young. We must not only trust them with responsibility but must thrust it upon them whilst they are still young, full of energy, zest, hope and even illusions."

Embodying these values, BYST nurtured many such as Haja Funyamin (a street vendor to a flight caterer), Arun Awatade (a victim of drought to an inventor of water conservation products) and Basanti Rana (a life afflicted by polio to mentoring dozens of underprivileged girls to earn their livelihoods from stitching garments). BYST mentors were always available to them throughout their journey to ensure growth and sustainability of their ventures.

Rooted in India's guru-shishya paramapara, BYST mentors provide one-on-one guidance and reach rural clusters through innovative mobile mentor clinics, often travelling miles and sacrificing weekends to support Grampreneurs. Many mentor-entrepreneur pairs have continued their relationship for over two decades, far beyond the mandated 2 years. A stellar example is that of J. Ravi of Chennai who was one of our first Grampreneurs starting in 1995. Over 30 years, Ravi's industrial tools business has grown multi-fold, even as his mentor, now an octogenarian, continues to guide and advise Ravi and his son to grow the business.

To celebrate such unsung heroes, the JRD Tata Awards were instituted as a tribute to their outstanding entrepreneurial spirit and the voluntary mentors who guide them. The award takes a unique multi dimensional approach when nurturing excellence in Grampreneurs. While financial sustainability and job creation is at the core, other dimensions such as innovation and social contribution play an important role.

I invite you to read the 25 stories in this booklet, which are a celebration of resilience, innovation, and the power of mentorship. Each one reflects how India's youth are redefining success - not just for themselves, but for their communities and the nation.

BYST's flagship programme Mentoring India®, which has created a cadre of 20,000 mentors at every touch point where an entrepreneur currently interacts, is poised for exponential growth. BYST's vision is to expand this cadre to 200,000 mentors to guide 1 million Grampreneurs® across 700 districts, thereby creating 50 million employment opportunities over the next five years. BYST's footprint has spread far and wide to 70 countries across continents.

Let us pledge to join hands to tell stories of these dynamic Grampreneurs and their life changing mentors. We will do all we can because together we can make a difference.

As JRD Tata said, "If we touch one life, it has the potential to transform the lives of a billion people".

Lakshmi V. Venkatesan
Founding and Managing Trustee
Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust

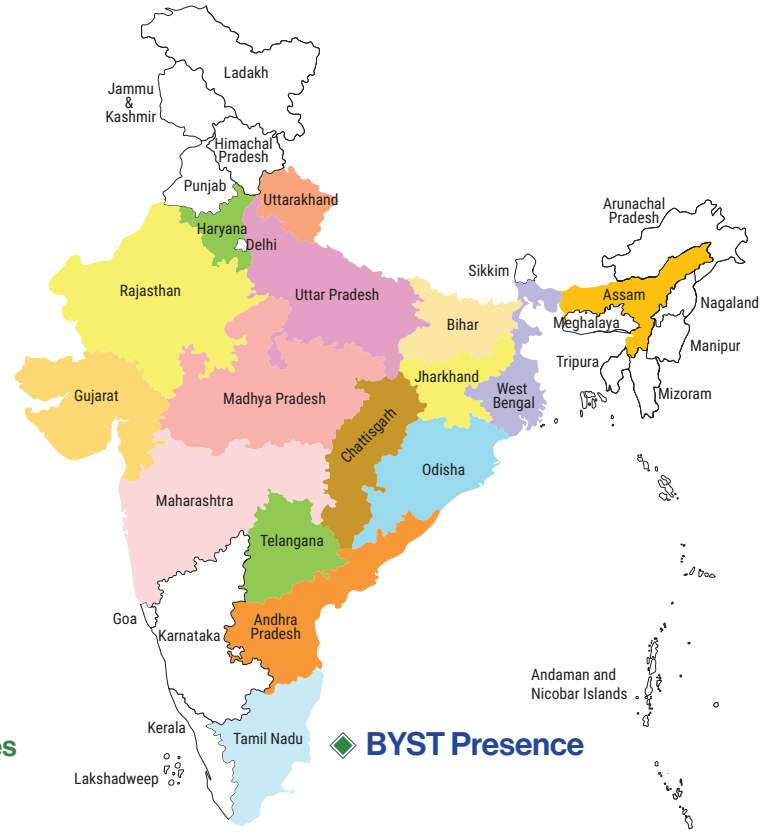
New Delhi
July 29, 2025

BYST Reach & Impact

States

- Andhra Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- Haryana
- Gujarat
- Jharkhand
- Maharashtra
- Odisha
- Rajasthan
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Uttarakhand
- Uttar Pradesh
- West Bengal

Footprint In 16 States



BYST Presence

Aspirational Districts

- Begusarai (Bihar)
- Rayagada (Odisha)
- Kalahandi (Odisha)
- Koraput (Odisha)
- Bahrajch (UP)
- Osmanabad (MH)
- Virudhunagar (TN)
- Baran (RJ)
- Ranchi (JH)
- Ramgarh (JH)
- Chatra(JH)
- LQhardaga(J H)
- Kagaz Nagar(TG)
- Barpeta(AS)
- Goalpara(AS)

48 Districts Covered

Employment Generated
5.25 Lakhs

Wealth Created
Rs. 4,700 Cr

Transformed Lives of 50,000 Entrepreneurs

Outreached & Counselled
Nearly 22 Lakhs

Youth Trained
1.23 Lakhs

Mentors Trained &
Accredited Nearly 20,000

Loans Facilitated
Rs. 800 Cr

Awards Won
(National & International) 103

About BYST

Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) is a not-for-profit organization that assists disadvantaged Indian youth in transforming business ideas into viable enterprises under the guidance of a mentor. Inspired by HRH The Prince of Wales and founded in 1992, BYST was the first organization to replicate The Prince's Trust's youth entrepreneurship support model globally outside the UK.

BYST supports underprivileged young entrepreneurs by supplementing financing based on a requirement assessment conducted by mentor selectors – INR 5 lakhs being the current average, with an upper limit of INR 50 lakhs. In addition to financial support, entrepreneurs receive handholding across business related services, including training, business plan development, monitoring, mentoring, and networking. They are nurtured until they become self-sufficient and capable of contributing to society through both wealth and employment creation.

Partners

BYST strongly believe that mentoring is the key to unlocking and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among India's underserved communities, particularly women and SC/ST youth in Rural and Aspirational Districts. Inspired by India's revered Guru-Shishya tradition, BYST's flagship Mentoring India® programme has attracted volunteer mentors from diverse sectors. Going forward, BYST aspires to build a pool of 2 lakh mentors to guide 10 lakh Grampreneurs® across 700 districts, thereby creating 5 crore employment opportunities over the next five years. BYST aims to expand nationwide to all 720 districts, fostering a mentoring culture to catalyze thriving entrepreneurship, creating jobs, wealth, and happiness.

Please visit **https://byst.org.in/** for more details.

Mentoring India Institutional Partners

In the Words of Mr JRD Tata

"The future belongs to the young. We must not only trust them with responsibility but must thrust it upon them whilst they are still young and full of energy, zest, hope and even illusions. However heart-breaking it may be to ourselves, we must make way for the new generations even when we feel we are still in our prime.



"What is exceptional about BYST is the fact that even a little bit of advice-technical, marketing and basic management from a business advisor/mentor will go a long way towards helping young people get a start in their business and in their lives.





About the Awards



Instituted in 1995, the JRD Tata Awards are a tribute to the outstanding entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated by BYST supported youth and the voluntary mentors who guide them. The awards aim to:

- Celebrate excellence and success among BYST supported entrepreneurs across India
- Motivate and inspire emerging youth to dream bigger
- Recognise the selfless dedication of BYST mentors

The award categories include:

- **Entrepreneur of the Year**
- **Runner up - Entrepreneur of the Year**
- **Lifetime Achievement**
- **Woman Entrepreneur of the Year**

Winners receive a Certificate of Recognition and a cash prize, along with public appreciation by an eminent jury comprising leading national personalities.

The Awards Jury



Dr. Anantha Nageswaran was appointed as the 18th Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India in January 2022. He holds degrees in Commerce, Management, and Finance from American College, IIM Ahmedabad, and University of Massachusetts Amherst. With over 17 years in global banking, he has also held academic roles at IFMR, SMU, and Krea University. A prolific writer and economist, he has authored books and contributed to Mint for 15 years. His CEA term was extended to March 2027, reflecting his key role in India's projected 6.3~6.8% GDP growth in FY 2025–26.

Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran
Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India

Dr. Ashok Khosla is the Founder and Chair of Development Alternatives Group, promoting sustainable development through social equity, environmental quality, and economic efficiency. He leads policy and strategy, focusing on environmental management and sustainable development in India and globally. He also heads Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA) and People First, both based in New Delhi.

Dr. Ashok Khosla
Founder and Chairman, Development Alternatives Group





Dr. Anandalingam is the Ralph J. Tyser Professor at the University of Maryland and former Dean at Maryland and Imperial College Business School. Educated at Cambridge and Harvard, he has led global academic initiatives and held key roles at top institutions. A prolific scholar, he has published extensively and serves on advisory boards of IIM Bangalore, Zhejiang University, and others.

Dr. G."Anand"Anandalingam
Professor, University of Maryland

Mr. Anand Deshpande is the Founder, Chairman & MD of Persistent Systems, a global IT services firm known for innovation in digital transformation. He holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Indiana University and a B.Tech. from IIT Kharagpur. A respected tech leader, he is influential in India's startup and technology ecosystem.

Mr. Anand Deshpande
CMD, Persistent Systems Ltd & Founder Trustee, deAsra Foundation





Mr. R Dinesh is the Executive Chairman and Founder of TVS Supply Chain Solutions, a global logistics leader in 25+ countries. He served as CII President in 2023–24 and is renowned for advancing innovation and digitization in supply chain management. A key voice in India's logistics industry, he champions operational excellence.

Mr. R. Dinesh
Founder, TVS Supply Chain Solutions

Mr. Sashidhar Jagdishan is the MD & CEO of HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, leading its landmark merger with HDFC Ltd. A Chartered Accountant with a Master's in Economics, he has shaped the bank's financial strategy and digital growth. He is known for driving inclusive banking and transformation initiatives.

Mr. Sashidhar Jagdishan
MD & CEO, HDFC Bank





Ms. Jennifer Jordansaifi, a humanitarian-turned-diplomat, served as Assistant Private Secretary to King Charles III (2018–2023), helping launch the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI). As SMI CEO since 2023, she champions private sector diplomacy to drive global sustainability. Under her leadership, SMI unites 250+ CEOs to embed nature, people, and planet into value creation.

Ms. Jennifer Jordan - Saifi
CEO, Sustainable Markets Initiative

Mr. Raj Chengappa is Group Editorial Director (Publishing) at India Today Group, overseeing leading publications like India Today, Business Today, and Reader's Digest. With over four decades of experience, he is an award-winning journalist and author. He is renowned for his expertise in politics, foreign affairs, environment, and defence.

Mr. Raj Chengappa
Group Editorial Director, India Today Group





Ms. Shobhaa De is a bestselling author and former journalist known for novels like Socialite Evenings and Starry Nights, exploring urban life and relationships. A prominent columnist and cultural critic, she offers sharp insights on politics, society, and women's issues. Her bold voice has made her a significant figure in Indian media and literature.

Ms. Shobhaa De
Indian Novelist, Columnist, and Social Commentator

Ms. Shereen Bhan has been Managing Editor at CNBCTV18 since 2013, with over 20 years in business and policy journalism. She previously anchored flagship shows like India Business Hour and Young Turks. An award-winning journalist, she has received honors including FICCI Woman of the Year and Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

Ms. Shereen Bhan
Managing Editor, CNBC-TV18





Mr. Shreekant Somany, Chairman & MD of Somany Ceramics, has led the brand to prominence in India and abroad. Since joining in 1970, he pioneered innovations like the patented 'VC SHIELD' glaze, earning the Corporate Technical Achievement Award from the American Ceramic Society. He also holds key industry leadership roles and is a passionate photographer and artist.

Mr. Shreekant Somany
Chairman & MD, Somany Ceramics Ltd.

Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee is Director General of CII with 35+ years leading policy and industry initiatives. He chairs bilateral CEO Forums and was the first Executive Director of the National Foundation for Corporate Governance. Under his leadership, CII represents 300,000+ enterprises and fosters global partnerships in 133 countries.

Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)



JRD Tata Awards 2025 Nominees

From Rejection to Resilience



Amruta Mangle

Amruta Mangle's entrepreneurial journey began not in a laboratory, but with a rejection. Despite a master's degree in organic chemistry her first job was in quality control at a local dairy paying just INR 10,000 per month. Disheartened, but not discouraged despite her financial hardships, Amruta told herself, "If I can't get a job, I will create one for myself."

In a country where fewer than 30% of STEM professionals are women, Amruta carved a unique space for herself in science and Indian manufacturing. With no family business background to lean on, she went on to become Pune's only local manufacturer of industrial adhesives and tapes.

Her journey took shape in 2016 after she married a likeminded partner. Together, they explored several ventures, CCTV installations, retail, e-commerce, all of which though not successful brought valuable lessons. It was while researching Pune's packaging industry that Amruta found that every month the city consumed over 160 tonnes of packaging adhesives, yet lacked even one local manufacturer. Most firms sourced their adhesives from Daman or Gujarat.

In 2018, Amruta and her husband established Hindavi Solutions under the brand name Beestofix. They operated from a small rented space, and to fund the business, Amruta sold her jewellery and mortgaged family land. She developed the chemical formulations herself, relying on her academic background, and began testing the product in local markets. Her formulations not only matched but often outperformed established national brands.

Despite technical success, scaling the business without capital proved difficult. Things took a turn when Bank of Maharashtra while declining her a loan due to lack of collateral, referred her to BYST. This referral became the turning point of her entrepreneurial journey.

With BYST's support, Amruta secured a loan of INR 20 lakh and was matched with her mentor, Mr. Kiran Nawathe, a veteran design engineer and management expert. Under his guidance, Amruta learnt to control credit cycles, minimize overheads, and improve after-sales service. He urged her to focus on innovation and make values based decisions, a philosophy that resonated deeply with her.

Speaking about the mentorship journey, Mr. Nawathe says, "Mentoring Mrs. Amruta Mangale has been an immensely fulfilling experience. She is a rare combination of determination, humility, and clarity of purpose. Despite challenges, she remained focused on her goals and consistently made values based decisions. Her dedication towards empowering others, especially through employment and educational support, reflects her deep rooted commitment to inclusive growth. As a mentor, I am proud of her journey and the impact she continues to create."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when logistics came to a halt, Amruta pivoted her strategy under

her mentor's advice. She began targeting local packaging businesses, used digital outreach, and retained her team without cutting salaries, in fact, she offered increments. Her leadership during crisis was guided by values drawn from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, lead with honour and treat people like family.

In November 2020, Amruta was conferred the Youth Business International's Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. She was chosen from amongst 1000 entrepreneurs from 54 countries, a milestone that brought global recognition to her work.

Under her leadership, Hindavi Solutions has supplied adhesives to major Indian conglomerates, including a high pressure project for the Tata Group. Her team scaled production rapidly and met stringent deadlines, learning to manage both scale and speed.

Today, the company manufactures over 300 tonnes of adhesives every month, along with 1500 kilograms of printing ink and 5000 kilograms of pigment. The company provides direct employment to 33 people and supports over 130 indirectly. Recent expansions include adhesives for woodworking and mattresses. From INR 5 crore in FY 2021, Hindavi's revenue grew to INR 11 crore in FY 2022–23.

Pursuing her passion to innovate, Amruta recently led her team to develop an adhesive formulation with unmatched properties, now undergoing testing before filing for intellectual property rights. Once patented, it could provide Hindavi a 20 year competitive edge.

Amruta ensures medical insurance and ESIC coverage for all employees, still uncommon in the MSME sector. Several of her former team members have started their own ventures with her encouragement, reflecting her commitment to inclusive growth.

Looking ahead, she has plans for backward integration by 2026, manufacturing components currently outsourced, to improve margins and enhance quality control. She also leads the women's wing of the Marathwada Industrial Suppliers' Association and is designing a training programme for over 200 women on topics such as legal literacy, health awareness, and banking basics.

Amruta lives modestly with her family, choosing to reinvest in her business. She remains active in Rotary Club initiatives, tree plantation drives, and social welfare causes. Her long-term dream is to return to her roots and start a dairy farm, an aspiration shaped by her early education.

Through quiet grit, scientific thinking, and values driven leadership, backed by BYST and strong mentorship, Amruta Mangle has redefined what's possible for women in STEM and first generation entrepreneurs in India. Hindavi Solutions is not just a business; it is a symbol of resilience, innovation, and purpose.





Machined by Grit



Deepti Korde

Growing up in Chhattisgarh, Deepti Korde witnessed her father juggle a government job and multiple side businesses, from selling milk and running a general store to raising poultry, to support the family. Her mother stitched clothes quietly adding to her father's efforts. Their struggles instilled in Deepti a deep sense of resourcefulness and a never give up attitude, which later defined her entrepreneurial path.

Though her family owned ancestral land in Akola, Maharashtra, her father sold it to fund his daughters' marriages. Watching her family give up their safety net further deepened Deepti's determination to build something meaningful on her own.

To ease her family's financial burden, Deepti decided to stay at home while pursuing her B.Tech in Dairy Technology on a scholarship. After graduation, while she interned in Pune and worked in quality control at an ice cream factory in Bhopal she was introduced to shopfloor operations and scheduling. Later, she studied MBA from ICFAI followed by a short stint in the institution's Research Division, learning about intellectual property and patent systems.

In 2007 Deepti married Amit Korde, a mechanical engineer trained in tooling from the Indo-German Tool Room, which marked the beginning of her entry into the tools industry. Over five years, through conversations with Amit, she developed a strong understanding of the precision tools sector. Her husband, Mr. Amit, inspired her to start the business. In 2012, they moved to Aurangabad (now Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar) for Amit's new job. Observing the industry's potential, Deepti began dreaming of becoming an entrepreneur.

In 2016, Deepti registered Rajdeo & Ko, formalising her husband's small side business. She raised INR 5 lakh from her mother-in-law, husband, and the sale of her wedding jewellery to stock and distribute precision cutting tools by partnering with Korean tool manufacturer YG1.

Recognising the need for working capital, she reached out to the Bajaj Auto–BYST Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme in 2017. BYST assigned her a mentor, Mr. Dilip Bhope, a retired bank manager, who helped her draft a strong project report and apply for funding. As a result, State Bank of India sanctioned her a term loan of INR 20 lakh and a working capital limit of INR 42 lakh. These funds allowed her to hire staff, invest in stock, and expand outreach, marking a major turning point in her entrepreneurial journey.

Despite entering a highly competitive and technically demanding sector with thin margins and payment delays of up to 150 days, Deepti persisted. Before the pandemic, Rajdeo & Ko, achieved an annual turnover of INR 2 to 2.5 crore. During COVID-19, despite the challenges, she scaled the business to INR 2.8 to 3 crore through disciplined inventory planning and customer trust. Throughout this journey, BYST's mentoring and training webinars played a crucial role, especially in marketing and financial management.

During the pandemic, Deepti also faced a personal crisis when her husband contracted a severe form of COVID-19 requiring multiple hospitalisations and surgeries. While managing his treatment across Aurangabad and Hyderabad, Deepti kept the business running, availing an INR 5 lakh ECLGS loan to ensure continuity.

With consistent mentoring from BYST, she kept building her capabilities. She engaged with YG1's technical team, attended industry training, and deepened her product expertise. Her grit paid off. By FY 2023–24, she achieved a turnover of INR 3.12 crore, with FY 2024–25 projected at INR 3.33 crore.

Today, Rajdeo & Ko employs four full time staff and several indirect workers. Deepti ensures all direct employees receive medical insurance and ESIC coverage, a rare practice in the MSME sector. Some of her team members, inspired by her leadership, have gone on to become entrepreneurs themselves, something Deepti finds deeply fulfilling.

Looking ahead, she plans to backward integrate into manufacturing by 2026. Producing key components inhouse will improve margins and give better control over quality and delivery timelines.

Beyond business, Deepti holds leadership positions in industry forums, currently heading the women's wing of the Marathwada Industrial Suppliers' Association. She is designing a training programme for 200 to 225 women to promote health awareness, legal literacy, banking knowledge, and confidence building. She participates in tree plantation drives, supports cancer patients, and donates to a school for blind girls.

She remains active in Rotary Club events and is deeply rooted in spirituality. Her long term dream is to return to her roots and establish a dairy farm, the same aspiration that once influenced her educational path.

From a childhood in a household where even education was a luxury to leading a multi crore business in a male dominated industry, Deepti Korde's journey is a powerful example of grit and purpose. With unwavering determination, hands on mentoring from BYST, and her own values of service, she has turned her vision into reality, creating jobs, empowering others, and giving back to her community.





Designing A New Path



G. Sampath

In 1989, when G. Sampath started his entrepreneurial journey with just INR 10,000 and a basic drawing kit, he was not aiming for grand success. He only sought freedom from having to report to anyone and the ability to build something on his own terms. Armed with a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, he chose the modest but purposeful route of offering mechanical design services to local firms in Tamil Nadu.

In those early years, design work meant drawing by hand using pencils, rulers, T-squares, and endless hours at the drafting table. He had no staff, no office, and no capital investment, but what Sampath did have was discipline. He was precise in his work, consistent in his delivery, and driven to learn. Every time he earned a little, he reinvested part of it either in better tools or in renting out a computer. Eventually, he taught himself AutoCAD and slowly transitioned to digital design. He also trained a few young assistants, not just in software but in thinking like engineers with logic, structure, and develop a solution oriented mindset.

Progress came steadily, but growth was limited until the year 2000 when Sampath was introduced to Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust. Through BYST, he received a loan of INR 50,000 which enabled him to buy his first two computers. This marked a critical turning point. BYST not only opened the doors to banking finance but also connected him to mentors and training programmes that helped bring structure to his entrepreneurial instincts. For the first time, Sampath was able to think long term and scale with confidence.

With this foundation, Sampath built Shimi Designs And Consulting Engineers Pvt. Ltd. that steadily grew in capability and scope. Today, Shimi Designs offers comprehensive design and detailing services across mechanical, civil, architectural, and MEP domains. Among his core clients are major engineering consultancies and infrastructure contractors. A 17 year relationship with Engineers India Limited is proof of Shimi Designs technical reliability. His teams are often stationed onsite for clients such as Indian Oil Corporation and TIPSI, offering both design and field support.

What began as a one man venture is now a strong team of engineers, supervisors, and drafters delivering high quality output under strict timelines. The firm operates over 120 computer systems, is proficient in more than 40 software platforms including AutoCAD, SolidWorks, Inventor, Revit, SP3D, and Tekla, and serves clients from multiple locations across Tamil Nadu and beyond.

But Shimi Designs is just one part of Sampath's journey. Recognising the industry's gaps in manpower services, he established SDCE Facilities Management and Safequad Security Services. These companies now provide skilled and unskilled workers to a wide range of industries. Across his group of companies, Sampath now provides direct and indirect employment to over 900 people.

Sampath has continued his early habit of reinvesting earnings into building capabilities and capacity. He maintains a lean lifestyle, drawing only a fixed salary from his company, and ensures that personal and business finances remain separate. His approach was tested during the pandemic when many businesses faced disruptions. Sampath's companies continued operating even though projects slowed down, He did not delay salaries and did not let even one worker go, reflecing the financial discipline he had practiced for decades.

From modest beginnings, Sampath's group recorded a combined turnover of INR 17 crore in the financial year 2023 to 2024, with net profits of around INR 52 lakhs. With a robust project pipeline and new clients in place, the group is targeting a turnover of INR 55 crore and profits of more than INR 10 Crore in the next financial year. He also has an ODI limit of INR 3.75 crore with Bank of Baroda, and his operations are expanding internationally to Kuwait, Singapore and the UAE, where his teams are now deployed in infrastructure and energy projects.

Even as he expands globally, Sampath continues to invest in people. He has partnered with the Tamil Nadu Government's Naan Mudhalvan programme and local Industrial Training Institutes to train young people in drafting, design, and soft skills. Many current team leaders started as trainees under his mentorship. Sampath personally conducts sessions on ethics, time management, communication, and documentation. As a supporter of entrepreneurship, he quietly helps others with small loans, business advice, and mentorship. For him, impact requires intent, not attention.

His values deeply influence his professional conduct. A spiritual follower of Vallalar, Sampath believes in quiet service. He runs a free community kitchen serving 350 people for 10 days each month, supporting the elderly, daily wage workers, and sanitation staff. He also supports education for underprivileged children and contributes to the upkeep of local temples.

Looking ahead, Sampath plans to evolve Shimi Designs into a full EPC company. His next steps include setting up a manufacturing unit for mechanical components and offering erection and commissioning services to deliver turnkey solutions. He is also putting a formal group structure in place, digitising internal systems, and ensuring long term sustainability.

G. Sampath's journey from a solitary draftsman to becoming the founder of a group of companies serving clients across India and beyond is a story of vision, values, and perseverance. With critical support from BYST at a key juncture, he was able to move from survival to sustainable success. His legacy lies not just in the companies he has built, but in the opportunities he continues to create for others to grow.





From Dream to Legacy



J. Ravi

Several decades ago, when J. Ravi left his small village in Tamil Nadu, he carried with him a dream and the vision of a better future. Armed with an SSLC and an indomitable spirit, he overcame poverty to begin his career at MNC Ltd., where he rose to the post of Foreman. Known for his machine building expertise and work ethics, Ravi continued to dream of starting something of his own despite his success in the company.

That dream took shape in 1994, when he withdrew INR 50,000 from his provident fund to start Reliance Diamond Tools. From humble beginnings, Ravi built a company now known globally across automotive, aerospace, and optics industries for high precision synthetic and natural diamond tools.

Though confident in engineering, Ravi lacked exposure to marketing, finance, and strategic business development. Things changed for him when he connected with BYST. The guidance by BYST assigned mentor Mr. SK, a seasoned professional from TELCO and Ashok Leyland, became a turning point in his life.

Their relationship extended beyond business. Ravi turned to Mr. SK for guidance not only on tooling and capital decisions but also on hiring, branding, and even shaping his children's future. Together, they navigated cash flow challenges, vendor relationships, and defined a long term vision. With BYST's support and his mentor's wisdom, Ravi built his first diamond cutting machine, which is still in use.

One of Reliance's first major clients was Rane Engine Valves Ltd., a relationship that lasted nearly 20 years. Over time, Reliance began servicing OEMs such as Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, Hyundai, Maruti Suzuki, and international giants like ZF, expanding to 13 Indian cities and exporting to over 20 countries.

In 2004, Ravi's son Venkataraman Ravi joined the company full time after earning a degree in mechanical engineering. He had watched his father sacrifice and sell key machines to fund his education and chose the family business over campus placements. He propelled the company into a new growth phase. Early on, Ravi realized that while their tools were technically superior, they were being white labeled and sold under other brand names. Determined to build Reliance as a brand, he hired a sales team and began marketing directly.

Venkat, who inherited his father's passion for machine building, tackled a critical raw material challenge: the volatility of natural diamond supply and pricing. With his father's experience and Mr. SK's mentorship, Venkat led the company's shift to synthetic diamond tools that are more cost effective, scalable, and consistent. Launched in the mid-2000s, it made Reliance the first in Chennai to pivot in this direction. Not only that, when imports from Europe were unaffordable, Reliance built their own machines. Over time, they invested INR 40 crore in precision equipment.

In 2010, Venkat launched Tool Management Services (TMS), a groundbreaking model where Reliance manages the entire tool lifecycle within client premises from forecasting and design to refurbishing and reissuance. This shift relieved clients of operational burdens and helped reduce costs. For example, ZF saved INR 8 crore, earning Reliance a global award from ZF's CEO.

Reliance's customer first approach goes far beyond SLAs. During the COVID-19 lockdown, operations continued uninterrupted. Employees walked up to 14 km a day to keep the factory running, and tools were delivered in vegetable trucks when commercial vehicles were halted. Customers recognized and celebrated this resilience.

With consistent encouragement from Mr. SK, Ravi embraced social inclusion. He hired differently abled employees, two of whom stayed for over 20 years. Today, inclusivity is core to Reliance's culture. Venkat has built a 150 person team, including freshers trained in house, long time employees promoted to leadership positions, and people from diverse backgrounds. The company also adopted SAP, Azure, CATIA, Pro E, and ANSYS for operations and tool design.

Currently, Reliance Diamond Tools has a turnover of INR 38 crore, built with minimal external borrowing. Machines costing INR 5~10 crore require careful planning, but the Ravi-Venkat duo stays undeterred. Mr. SK, now in his 80s, remains a trusted guide, as involved as he was in the 1990s.

Ravi's journey has earned recognition including the JRD Tata Award for Entrepreneurship, a fitting tribute to someone who built a globally respected company brick by brick, with BYST's support and guidance of a dedicated mentor.

Today, even though Venkat has taken the reins, Ravi still walks the shopfloor six days a week. Under Venkat's leadership, the company has expanded into global markets, becoming a shining example of Indian entrepreneurship rooted in purpose and powered by mentoring.





Powering Villages, Empowering Lives



Mayur Hiwarkar

Over a decade ago, a young electronics engineer from Aurangabad was deeply moved by rural hardships while volunteering with the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram. Mayur Hiwarkar, founder of Urja Saur Electronics, witnessed the struggles of village life because of lack of access to electricity. He saw sugarcane reapers working in darkness, children unable to study after sunset, and women doing chores in unsafe conditions. These experiences sparked a mission: to bring affordable, reliable solar power to underserved communities.

Despite having no capital or business background, Mayur declined campus placements and chose the road less travelled. When his job search failed, his resolve deepened. He thought, "If I, as an engineer, am struggling for a job, what about others?" He decided to become a job creator instead of a job seeker.

In 2012, with INR 3 lakh from family and support from friends who offered materials on credit, he launched his first product called 'Sunpower', a portable, solar powered light. Though basic and unpatented, it met a critical need. Priced at INR 500 to 600, he sold it directly, bypassing retailers to keep it affordable. When retailers rejected it due to lack of brand value, he turned that into an opportunity to improve access.

But quality of input material was a challenge. Batteries sourced from the Mumbai mobile market often failed. Instead of accepting flaws, Mayur dug deeper. He discovered that adding a simple INR 1 capacitor prevented overcharging, which was a common issue in many solar products. His engineering ingenuity and customer focus stood out. Demand grew organically, both from individuals and eventually from retailers.

His journey scaled up through practical innovations. A bank manager once asked him to install a solar lamp at the branch later requesting for four as one did not meet their need. Mayur responded by designing a larger model that could charge multiple lamps and mobiles. When faced with a reverse current issue, he solved it using a low cost diode solution, reinforcing his reputation for simple and reliable innovations.

Despite growing demand, Mayur couldn't scale as documentation and banking systems were unfamiliar and intimidating. That changed when he met BYST through a Saturday Club, where Mr. Kaustubh, an electrical engineer, was a fellow member. Soon, he became Mayur's mentor. With technical insight and business acumen, Mr Kaustubh guided Mayur to formalize his business, improve systems, and build confidence in banking.

From 2012 to 2017, Mayur grew slowly using reinvested profits. With BYST's help, he secured his first loan of INR 1 lakh, and gradually expanded his working capital line to INR 1 crore. Even today, he operates debt free, without term loans, maintaining strong relations with his bank.

In 2017, Mayur ventured into solar water heaters. Though the business grew, he found limitations with thermal systems. By 2021, he pivoted to solar PV, focusing on rooftop installations for homes and small industries. His company now offers complete solar solutions, from rooftop panels to AC and DC distribution boxes. He insists on sourcing high quality components like Havells MCBs to ensure safety and performance. His systems now range from 3kW to 1000kW, sold directly across Maharashtra.

Urja Saur Electronics reported INR 3.25 crore in revenue and INR 9 lakh profit in FY 2023. In FY 2024, revenue rose to INR 11 crore, with profits reaching INR 24 lakh.

But Mayur's impact goes beyond numbers. He has helped over 200 individuals become entrepreneurs, including 30 former employees. Transparent and generous, he openly shares knowledge. "If someone wants to start something, I'd rather help them do it right so they can become job creators too," he says.

Giving back is part of his philosophy. He donates INR 50,000 to 1 lakh monthly to causes such as medicine supplies for an Ashram's dispensary and water purifiers for Ramakrishna Mission in Kolkata.

From a 10x10 ft room, Mayur now operates from a 1 acre industrial plot with a 2500 sq. ft. manufacturing shed and space for R&D. His ambitions have grown. He is now developing a solar farming model that installs panels above crops to enable dual land use for both power generation and agriculture.

His mentor, Kaustubh, remains a key part of this journey. "Mayur always had the technical depth," he says. "All he needed was capital and the right support."

Mayur's story is proof of what is possible when engineering meets empathy, and mentorship meets mission. With BYST's backing and his mentor's guidance, he transformed a rural problem into a renewable revolution. He has brought light, livelihood, and leadership to villages across Maharashtra.





From Borrowed Beginnings to Global Business



Panchamirtham Elumalai

Today, Panchamirtham stands at the helm of a thriving enterprise, manufacturing precision components, employing over 35 people, and poised to cross INR 5 crore in turnover. Her journey, from a small village in Tamil Nadu to exports across Europe and North America, is testimony to her deep commitment to creating something meaningful.

Born in a village in Chengalpattu district, Panchamirtham grew up in an environment where opportunities for women were limited, and ambitions often stayed hidden. After marriage, she moved to Chennai and influenced by her husband's work in the field she found interest in tools and dies. This lit in her a spark for manufacturing these.

In 2005, with just INR 50,000 borrowed from a private lender, she and her husband launched their journey from a 150 sq. ft. job work unit. For seven years, they operated without owning machinery, relying instead on customer provided tools. They compensated by delivering reliability and precision. Every rupee earned was reinvested, and every waking hour spent learning and building. Though not formally trained in engineering, Panchamirtham took charge, managing suppliers, ensuring deliveries, and leading the growing team.

In 2011, they invested INR 6 lakh of their savings to register a private limited company, marking the birth of Indo Tools & Dies India Pvt. Ltd. This move also marked Panchamirtham's shift from a small scale operator to an entrepreneur. Around this time, she connected with BYST, which gave her access not only to funding but to critical mentorship.

Her BYST assigned mentor, Mr. Kunjidhapatham, an experienced engineer, helped transform her mindset, from reactive problem solving to proactive planning. With his guidance, she began understanding customer pipelines, capital cycles, machinery upgrades, and long term strategies. His advice encouraged her to invest in formal processes, new technologies, and prepare for export opportunities.

Through BYST, Indo Tools secured a working capital loan of INR 10 lakh from Bank of Baroda, followed by term loans of INR 25 lakh and INR 15 lakh to buy new machines. These became the turning points of her journey. The term loans helped shift from outsourced job work to owning their production process, boosting quality, timelines, and control. The working capital loan gave them the much needed liquidity to stabilize and scale.

While expanding, Panchamirtham remained focused on building a values led organization. Understanding the pressures working women face, she instituted a six hour workday, especially for women workers. But she also ensured accountability by setting targets, tracking output, and tying incentives to performance. This led to higher retention, better productivity, and a strong people first culture.

In 2009, Indo Tools secured ISO 9001 certification, a rare achievement for a micro unit ibn those years. It sent a strong signal to customers about their commitment to quality. Over time, she invested INR 75 lakh in CNC machines, laser welding and marking systems, and advanced measurement tools, further earning client trust.

Their son joined the company in 2020 after studying Tool and Die Making at NTTF, Bangalore. He brought fresh energy, automation, and tech savvy approaches. With this evolution, Indo Tools began attracting complex outsourcing work and export opportunities through export houses. After just five years, the company earns 40% of revenue from exports, with clients such as AVO Carbon India, Grindwell Norton, and Z-Werk.

Yet, this journey hasn't been without challenges. When Panchamirtham's husband was injured on the shopfloor, it became a turning point for workplace safety. She institutionalized safety protocols, not as compliance, but as a value. Employees received PPE, and the company adopted a policy to cover medical expenses for any workplace injury.

In 2023, the industry wide shift from BS4 to BS6 emission standards rendered many of their parts obsolete, leading to a drop in turnover from INR 3.88 crore to INR 2.32 crore. Rather than panic, she saw it as a strategic pause, focusing on adapting designs, validating new parts, and training staff. Soon, the business was back on a growth path.

In 2025, the company is preparing to hire 20 more people, explore medical and dental component manufacturing, and diversify into commercial laundry services. Her leadership is grounded not only in strategy but in empathy.

Over the years, she has mentored over a dozen engineers, offered internships, and helped women build technical and professional confidence. Many of her team members, once hesitant and untrained, now operate machines, manage production schedules, and thrive under her mentorship.

In a male dominated sector, Panchamirtham, once seen only as a homemaker, has carved her own path. With BYST's support in mentoring and finance, and with her family by her side, she transformed a borrowed beginning into a global business rooted in purpose.





From Rhythm to Resilience



Sandeep Dabhade

As a young tabla player performing at cultural events in Pune to make ends meet, Sandeep Dabhade could never have imagined that the rhythm of his hands would one day give way to the hum of packaging machines. Born to a small farming family in rural Jalna, Maharashtra, Sandeep grew up in a modest home where music and hardship coexisted. His father barely earned INR 1~1.5 lakh annually, and Sandeep completed his early education in a village school.

Despite financial constraints, he pursued his passion for music. Moving to Pune for higher studies, he completed 7 years of tabla training and earned an MA in music. “There were days when even two meals were a luxury. Sometimes I had to survive on pav and chutney,” he recalls.

After finishing his studies in 2013, driven by financial needs, Sandeep took a job at a packaging company in Waluj MIDC, Aurangabad. Over the next three and a half years, he handled operations, marketing, accounts, and logistics, absorbing valuable industry lessons and growing as a professional.

Even as he worked and grew, he was haunted by the memory of peers in college who had struggled to find jobs fuelling his desire to become a job creator. In January 2019, with just a few lakhs raised by mortgaging family gold and personal savings, he launched EcoPack Industries. He rented a 3500 sq. ft. unit and started by trading packaging materials. A few months later, he purchased a second hand machine to begin manufacturing.

Capital remained a challenge, with clients delaying payments by 30~60 days while expenses were immediate. Just before the pandemic, in early 2020, Sandeep chanced upon BYST at an exhibition. Taking a leap of faith, he reached out to them and what began as a whim became a turning point.

BYST responded swiftly, facilitating a working capital loan of INR 11 lakh and assigning a mentor, Mr. Milind Pohnerkar. This support came just in time, as COVID-19 hit shortly after. Orders paused and payments stopped, yet with his mentor’s guidance, Sandeep retained his five member team, paid salaries on time, and absorbed overheads personally.

Rather than wait, he adapted by focusing on pharmaceutical and food clients that remained active during the lockdown. His breakthrough came with Food & Inns Ltd., a Nashik based supplier to Hindustan Unilever. Through persistence, quality assurance, and rigorous documentation, he gained their trust as well as consistent orders.

Mr. Pohnerkar’s mentorship helped Sandeep evolve from a hands on operator to a strategic business leader. He implemented Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), began preparing for ISO certification, and introduced structured planning and team management.

By Financial Year 2024–25, EcoPack Industries was operating two units (one owned, one rented) with over 45 employees, nearly half of them women. He ensures that staff receive 8 days of training before tasks are assigned, and are supported by ITI trained technicians and supervisors. Ten machines run across two 12 hour shifts serving clients in Chakan, Nanded, Nashik, Pune, Solapur, and Waluj. EcoPack's packaging is used across pharma, food, electronics, and automotive sectors.

While scaling remained a priority, Sandeep also prioritized people and infrastructure. He believes in acting before risks escalate. His premises are covered by fire insurance, and his employees receive Mediclaim and corporate insurance. He once paid a worker's hospital bills and continued his salary during recovery.

In 2024, he launched a new venture on his farmland for processing sugarcane into chemical-free jaggery, producing 500-600 kg daily for local sale. A US based entrepreneur has shown interest in buying this product, prompting Sandeep to refine production and packaging to meet global standards.

Looking ahead, his vision remains rooted in his beginnings. He plans to establish an agro-processing hub in Jalna. "Farmers here grow great soybean, custard apple, and sweet lime, but they lack processing facilities," he says. He wants to offer end-to-end solutions: processing at the source, increasing shelf life through packaging, and giving farmers better market access.

This integration of farming, processing, and packaging isn't just a diversification strategy; it is a mission to uplift his village. He has never distanced himself from his roots. Many of his workers come from disadvantaged backgrounds. He treats them with dignity, trains women in technical roles, and ensures a safe, respectful work environment.

From tabla beats to tetra packs, rural hardship to industrial growth, Sandeep Dabhade's story is one of resilience, responsibility, and quiet transformation. And through it all, BYST has stood beside him, not just as a funder, but as a partner in belief.





Confidence Cultivated



Sarika Patil

Sarika Patil grew up in a small village near Islampur, Maharashtra, where she never imagined becoming an entrepreneur. Like many women in her community, she thought her life would revolve around family and home. But life had different plans. Over the last two decades since her marriage in 2006, she and her husband have built a business that serves thousands of farmers in the region.

After completing her BA in Economics from Sangli, Sarika pursued computer training in Excel and Tally. Her husband, Vikas Patil, had completed school and joined his father's modest agri-business. With an entrepreneurial spark, Vikas expanded the family venture by adding pumps and PVC pipes for irrigation.

When Supreme Industries approached him with a dealership opportunity, provided he opened a shop in a more commercial location, Vikas took the risk. His dealership in a rented space in Islampur, 20 km from his village, grew steadily, crossing INR 1 crore in turnover and earning Vikas an award from Supreme.

Though Sarika was a homemaker, her father-in-law encouraged her to join the business. She began with handling basic accounting and payment follow ups and also managed HR tasks. Though small, these responsibilities laid the groundwork for a much larger role in the years to come.

As the business expanded, so did Sarika's involvement. Over time, her confidence began to grow as she understood backend operations, stock movement, and customer service. While Vikas focused on marketing and supplier networks, Sarika built systems to support the growing enterprise.

In 2016, when they were offered another dealership that required working capital. Bank of India's Islampur branch suggested they attend BYST's business training. BYST assigned Sarika Dr. Vijay Sancheti as a mentor after she completed the course. He brought clarity and structure to their vision. With BYST's support, they secured a cash credit limit of INR 9.49 lakh, which gave them the financial strength to launch Vikas Agro Mall under Sarika's name.

The Agro Mall marked a leap, from a dealership to a full scale agricultural retail center. Built on a 40,000 sq. ft. plot on Sangli Road, the mall now stocks everything from sickles and tractors to irrigation systems, electric motors, pipes, plumbing materials, farm tools, and heavy machinery. Over the years, they have partnered with brands like Farmtrac and are in talks with Mahindra and John Deere for indirect distribution. From 15,000 SKUs, they aim to increase their offerings to 20,000 SKUs.

However, their journey has not been without its setbacks. An accountant once embezzled INR 25 lakh, almost half their working capital; he never deposited these customer payments.

The responded by working quietly sourcing materials from over 50 vendors, managing cash flows tightly, and recouping the loss in just six months. Sarika says what gave them strength was the belief that if they built it once, they could do it again. They received another emotional setback during the critical time when she suddenly lost her father-in-law while they were planning the Agro Mall expansion.

A real estate agent's advice helped them turn things around. He suggested purchasing land using margin money and mortgaging it to raise funds for construction. This led to a loan of INR 50~60 lakh and the successful launch of their new mall.

With Dr. Sancheti's guidance, they restructured their business into four departments, each managed by trained staff while Sarika and Vikas managed procurement, finance, and strategy. The drip irrigation division alone grew from INR 25 lakh to over INR 1 crore in revenue.

Sarika and Vikas believe in "relationships beyond business." They treat employees as partners, distributing 40% of profits within departments and retaining 60%. Sarika's team speaks of her as family, one employee recalled her providing a INR 2 lakh loan during COVID and supporting the education of 10 underprivileged students, including his son.

They offer farmers not only products at fair prices, but also guidance on subsidies and government paperwork. "Our customer is our god," says Sarika. "We owe our success to them."

Their banker, Mr. Naresh Kumar, calls them model customers, transparent and visionary. Dr. Sancheti praises their clarity and discipline. Vendors like Mr. Pradeep Paithane credit Vikas Agro Mall for helping them gain market share in the region. Customers echo the same, valuing the support and service. Sarika's commitment to community is reflected in them planting over 300 trees in Sangli and their work with schools to promote environmental awareness.

From 2 to 25 full time employees, and plans to grow to 50, their initial INR 50,000 investment has grown into assets worth over INR 2 crore. After reinvesting funds from low margin company into a higher margin retail venture their profitability is boosted by 15% despite lower top line revenue. Now, they aim to automate all departments and expand through franchise models within six months or end of FY 2025-26.

Sarika Patil's journey, powered by BYST's training and mentoring, has built not only a thriving enterprise, but also a deeply impactful community.





Stitching a Thriving Future



Seema Agarwal

In 2007, Seema Agarwal moved to Hyderabad after marriage armed with a finance degree, a promising academic career, and a quiet determination to do something meaningful. But she lacked family permission to pursue her dreams. Her conservative Marwari family had expected her to quit working even before marriage to focus on her home. She complied, but she never gave up on finding ways to stay intellectually active and maintain her self-worth.

Seema began freelance writing for ICFAI University, developing case studies that were published internationally. While raising two children and managing household responsibilities, she contributed to parenting platforms and academic portals. Her entrepreneurial spirit, rooted in her business family background, never left her. She had the instinct, and eventually, she created the opportunity.

In 2016, Seema and her husband, then working at IBM, began to seriously explore business ideas. Her sister-in-law, an interior designer, introduced them to the rising demand for custom soft furnishings such as curtains, blinds, awnings, and mosquito meshes. Spotting a gap in the Hyderabad market for quality furnishing providers, the couple decided to start a business in 2018. Though they lacked capital, a team, and prior experience, what they did have was resolve to make it work.

Their first major project came from IIIT Hyderabad - an INR 40 lakh order. With no resources in place, they borrowed INR 7 lakh via credit cards, sourced materials, hired contract workers, and successfully delivered on time. That single project established their credibility and opened doors to more residential and institutional orders.

Working under the banner of Choice Decors, they have significantly expanded in just seven years. Their offerings now include motorised blinds, rooftop shading systems, and double glass unit (DGU) blinds. Their client base includes homeowners, corporates, and builders across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Clients approach them with needs such as sunlight control, privacy, and insulation, and the husband-wife team co designs solutions.

From a first year revenue of INR 78 lakhs, they reached a provisional turnover of INR 3.78 crore in FY 2025 and are targeting INR 5 crore for FY 2026. With a team of 12 and over 130 indirect beneficiaries, they are now preparing to launch a 3000 sq. ft. integrated experience centre that will merge production, customer interface, and training. Currently, they work from two rented facilities comprising a workshop and a display centre.

Growth has not come easy to them with human resources being their biggest hurdle. Jobs like cutting, drilling, and stitching are labor intensive, and retaining talent is tough. Seema has tackled this challenge by creating a unique workplace

culture where she personally trains each team member, offering flexible hours, and hiring women and differently abled individuals. Her mantra: “Hire for attitude; skills can be taught.”

In 2019, Seema joined BYST through a referral and secured her first formal funding which was an INR 14.28 lakh loan. Until then, the venture had been entirely self funded. The loan enabled them to upgrade machinery, hire staff, and take on larger orders.

She was also paired with mentor Ms. Neela Maitra, a BYST expert who guided her on pricing, credit cycles, and scaling. The mentorship helped Seema step into a leadership role, gain confidence to speak at events, and publicly share her journey. While her husband handles finances and backend operations, Seema leads client relationships, vendor partnerships, innovation, and quality assurance. And, she does all this while raising two teenagers and staying engaged in their education.

Her team is now exploring sustainable designs given that soft furnishings generate significant waste through synthetic blends, fabric samples, and overproduction. Seema’s business is working on reducing its carbon footprint by developing eco-conscious blinds and curtains. They are researching alternatives to PVC-based materials and strategies to minimize sample waste.

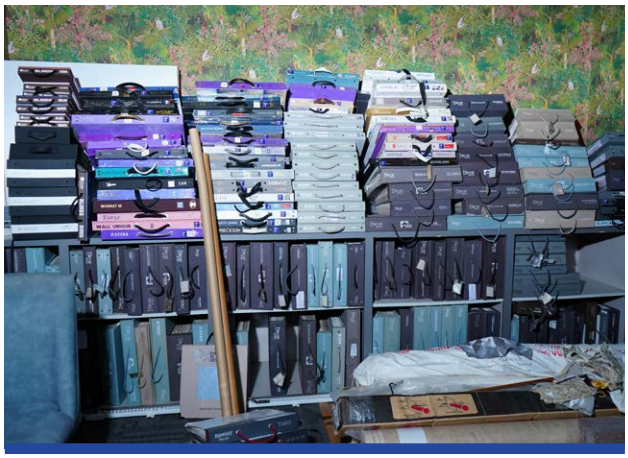
Seema envisions an ambitious yet grounded future: a dedicated training academy for women and technicians in soft furnishings, a flagship customer experience centre, and expansion into tier 2 and 3 cities via channel partners. She’s also exploring export opportunities to neighbouring countries.

She has not only carved out a meaningful career for herself, but created livelihoods for many.

Alongside all this, Seema remains committed to academics. A qualified lecturer in Telangana, she recently cleared the Ph.D. entrance exam.

Her entrepreneurial journey is a quiet rebellion against the societal limitations she once accepted. From being told not to work to leading a multi crore enterprise, mentoring others, and parenting with purpose, Seema has built a life defined by ambition, persistence, and values. In a world that celebrates loud victories, hers is a story of thoughtful leadership.





Engineering a Future, One Panel at a Time



Shekhar Sangwikar

In 2013, Shekhar Sangwikar turned down job offers from Cognizant and JP Morgan after earning his Electrical Engineering degree from Sardar Patel College of Engineering, Mumbai. Unlike most of his peers, he returned to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (then Aurangabad), choosing a career in Indian manufacturing over multinational corporates. Ever since childhood, he had dreamt of building something of his own.

He briefly joined his father's safety consulting and industrial firm, who encouraged him to pursue higher studies. Shekhar completed a Master's in Technology Management from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in just 12 months. However, his plans to gain US work experience were cut short when his mother tragically passed away in a road accident. This moment of loss solidified his resolve to build something meaningful in his own country. When he returned home, he once again declined offers from Deloitte and JP Morgan.

While exploring business ideas, Shekhar noticed a gap in the domestic market for insulated panels used in hospitals, cleanrooms, and industrial buildings. Most of these were imported. Determined to establish a homegrown brand, he set up a small unit in 2016 with a personal loan from his father. However, incorrect machinery investments created setbacks. Undeterred, Shekhar adapted the machines to service hospital orders and kept going.

His biggest hurdle came in the form of funding, when his efforts to secure bank funding failed for over a year. With the family property still in his late mother's name, Shekhar had no collateral to offer banks.

In 2017, after Shekhar came across a BYST standee at a local event, he decided to connect with them. Within days, BYST mentors visited his unit. One of them, Mr. Milind Kelkar, a respected industrialist, saw Shekhar's potential and supported his application. Thanks to BYST's intervention, Canara Bank sanctioned a collateral free loan of INR 50 lakh within 60 days, a turning point in his journey.

With this support, Think Lean Prefab Systems Pvt. Ltd. was registered in May 2019. Under Mr. Kelkar's mentorship, Shekhar formalised operations and adopted a long term thinking approach, inspired by 'The Toyota Way'. He built his company with a 200 year vision focused on systems, sustainability, and ethics.

Shekhar personally handles marketing, finance, and product development. He trained himself in finance, learned tools like Tally, and consulted experts like Rachana Ranade. Committed to 100% transparent and accounted business practices, he appointed a Chartered Accountant, introduced quarterly financial reviews with his mentor and CA, and implemented an ERP system to manage workflows across departments.

In 2024, he hired a Chief Operating Officer, a professional with experience of working with Kirloskar, despite resistance from many. This hire was a reinforcement of his belief in building for the future. By FY 2025, Think Lean recorded a turnover of INR 18 crore with a 75% repeat order rate and has set a target of INR 50 crore by FY 2027.

His leadership is rooted in QCD principles i.e. Quality, Cost, and Delivery. The company has SOPs for all departments, a formal leave policy, POSH compliance, and employee training systems. Each of his 35 full time staff undergoes 52 hours of annual training time. Most are engineers in their 20s, many of whom started as freshers and now lead departments. He also employs 35 contract workers and 10 apprentices, with plans to improve gender diversity to 50%.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Think Lean stood by its workers and subcontractors. Even as operations stalled, salaries were paid in full. With just 10 team members, they built six COVID testing labs across India, including in Aurangabad, Kerala, and Visakhapatnam.

With expansion on the mind, Shekhar launched a Mumbai sales office with plans to replicate the model in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Indore, and Pune. With two product lines, insulated panels and steel doors, Think Lean serves clients across the pharmaceuticals, healthcare, cold storage, and food processing industries. While a second plant is planned for FY 2027, along with a distribution network to deepen market reach, Shekhar is not rushing into exports. His priority is strengthening product, people, and processes first.

Shekhar pursues social causes close to his heart. Having lost his mother in a road accident, Shekhar plans to contribute to road safety awareness. Environment sustainability is equally important for him. Think Lean's panels reduce electricity consumption by up to 67%, helping lower India's carbon footprint.

Shekhar continues to meet his BYST mentor regularly and credits much of his success to his guidance. BYST not only provided timely funding but also introduced operational discipline, strategic foresight, and values based growth.

With a growing team, clear systems, and a vision built on integrity, Shekhar Sangvikar is proving that businesses in India have the potential to scale responsibly and sustainably.





Engineering India's Scientific Independence



Siddharth Salunke

In the early 2000s, when most bioscience laboratories in India relied heavily on imported equipment, Siddharth Sialunke saw both a gap and a mission. He believed India needed affordable, indigenous tools to drive research without compromising quality. This conviction became the foundation for his company, BioEra, a nationally recognized manufacturer of lab equipment, a training hub, and a platform for inclusive innovation.

Siddharth was raised in a middle class family, with a father who worked in a tool design shop, and a homemaker mother. Inspired by his father, Siddharth pursued a diploma in tool design and joined Siva Medical Limited, where he worked on the design of micropipettes. This is where he realized how dependent India was on foreign equipment for scientific research.

Determined to change this situation, Siddharth started developing his own micropipette with an investment of INR 25,000 from his personal savings. But technical challenges soon followed. That's when his first mentor, Dr. N. L. Shah, stepped in, to help him calibrate and refine the product to meet global standards and researchers' requirements.

Access to finance, however, proved more difficult than product design. When traditional banks declined his applications due to lack of collateral and experience, he approached BYST in 2004. BYST helped him get a loan of INR 50,000 and matched Siddharth with mentors who later shaped both his business and his leadership approach.

He used the loan to buy a calibrating scale and set up a small manufacturing unit in a 500 sq. ft. rented flat. This is how BioEra was born!

Siddharth's other mentor, Mr. Sunil Malkani, helped him navigate patent filings and regulatory approvals, crucial to a sector dependent on precision and credibility. These mentors, along with BYST's network, helped him combine technical excellence with structured business thinking.

By 2009, Siddharth secured a term loan of INR 10 lakh and a cash credit line of INR 5 lakh from Bank of Baroda with BYST's support. That same year, BioEra became a private limited company. The new capital enabled him to move out of his small flat to a 40,000 sq ft space and establish a dedicated R&D and manufacturing facility in Pune.

Today, BioEra offers over 500 products in its catalogue, serving educational institutions, research labs, and healthcare centers across India. The company posted a turnover of INR 11.9 crore for FY 2022–23, targeting INR 20 crore by FY 2025–26.

But Siddharth's mission goes beyond profit. More than 50% of BioEra's 90 employees are women. The company also runs a training programme that upskills over 1500 students annually, especially from rural and underprivileged backgrounds. Many of them now lead departments and mentor newcomers.

BioEra rose to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Siddharth's team developed a patented RT-PCR testing kit with a novel VLTM protocol that neutralized the virus at the point of sample collection, reducing the risks of cross contamination. This innovation was adopted by ICMR-approved labs such as Apollo and SRL. BioEra also became the first company globally to secure a biological patent for a COVID-19 transport medium.

Beyond diagnostics, Siddharth has used BioEra as a launchpad for social innovation. One such initiative is a preservative free food storage solution that keeps food fresh at room temperature for up to a year. A proposal worth INR 20 crore is currently in the final approval stages with the Maharashtra Government under a public-private partnership model.

Another innovation is a line of preservative free handmade chapatis targeting Indian consumers in the U.S., made using a roller technique that mimics the hand rolled texture. He has also piloted an organic gutka unit with a 50 member rural team trained inhouse. Almost 70% of the team comprises of women from local communities .

Siddharth's vision now is to go global. He recently signed a USD 2.5 million agreement to build a biosciences lab at the University of Nairobi. This regional diagnostics and training hub in East Africa marks BioEra's international expansion. While the university managed the funding, Siddharth's team led the planning and execution.

Despite his success, Siddharth remains closely involved with BYST, not just as a former beneficiary, but as a mentor. He now serves as Chairperson of BYST's High-Flyer Club, regularly hosting educational visits, mentoring emerging entrepreneurs, and sharing lessons from his own journey.

BioEra has received in house R&D recognition from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and won BYST's Business Excellence Award in a ceremony attended by King Charles III (then HRH Prince Charles) and India's former Vice President.

For Siddharth, the journey is not just about manufacturing instruments but building an ecosystem of innovation, inclusion, and integrity. From a single room setup and a modest INR 50,000 loan to a global scientific brand, Siddharth Salunke has proven that Indian ingenuity can lead the world, ethically, inclusively, and indigenously.





Entrepreneurial Torchbearers Mentored to Rise, Built to Inspire

Sowing Hope, Mulching Change



Arun Awatade

Arun Awatade grew up in a drought prone village in Maharashtra's Sholapur district, where poverty and migration were a way of life. His parents moved to Pune in search of livelihood, taking up odd jobs while encouraging Arun and his siblings to study. Witnessing the struggles of landless labourers, Arun developed a deep resolve to improve farmers' lives.

After completing his education, Arun worked part time, but remained focused on identifying ways to address farmer distress, water scarcity, and unemployment. His research led him to mulching, a technique that conserves moisture, improves soil health, and reduces pesticide use. With INR 40,000 saved from taking tutions over two years, he launched his business in 2010 using scrap machinery. He was joined by his childhood friend Ganesh in this venture, however they struggled.

A chance sighting of a BYST poster at a bus stop in 2012 changed everything for him. Arun approached BYST, who facilitated a loan of INR 2 lakhs and assigned him a mentor, Mr. Subhash Shejwal. With renewed support, Arun launched Iris Polymers, initially producing mulching films.

The company has since expanded to over 23 products, including drip irrigation systems, silage films, and weed mats. Iris's specialty mulching sheets (silver black, yellow black, red black, etc.) help retain 60-70% soil moisture and reduce pesticide and labour costs, directly improving farmer income. His solutions align with national goals, further supported by government subsidies of up to 50% on mulching sheets.

The road, however, has not been easy for him. In 2016, Arun faced a near bankruptcy with debts of over INR 4.5 crore. With banks turning him away due to a low CIBIL score, his mentor advised him to secure funding from dealers and distributors, a strategy that helped him bounce back. By 2019, the company was debt free.

Even during COVID-19, Arun retained all employees. By FY 2023–24, Iris recorded a turnover of INR 34 crores, employing 265 people, and exporting to 12 countries. Arun conducts farmer training programmes and has started recycling used mulching sheets, ensuring sustainability. He also mentors rural youth through apprenticeships and skill training.

Now operating as Iris Group, Arun aims to launch an NGO and an IPO by 2028. Awarded the YBI Social Entrepreneur Award and BYST's JRD Tata Award, Arun's journey reflects how mentorship, innovation, and purpose can transform adversity into impact.



Cooking Up a Healthier Tomorrow



Asha V M

Asha V M's entrepreneurial journey began with a desire to make healthy, oil less cooking affordable for Indian households. While working for a German company that sold high end cookware, she was inspired by the value such products could bring to Indian kitchens and she envisioned a "Make in India to Make India Healthy" mission.

Spending her early years in a financially stable home, Asha's life changed in the 10th grade when her father's business collapsed and he fell ill. To support her family, she took up jobs while attending evening college. After earning her BBA, she began her career in the jewellery division of the same German company that sold the cookware. She also began selling their cookware on the side which exposed her to the market potential. Limited accessibility to these products due to high cost made her decide to develop an affordable Indian alternative.

She partnered with Mr Ravi Kumar Reddy, a seasoned industry professional, and co-founded Recall Ancient Solutions in Hyderabad. Together, they developed 'Nutricook', cookware that enables oil-less and water-less cooking. However, they faced challenges like sourcing materials, availability of skilled labor, and most critically, funding. After being rejected by 11 banks for lack of collateral, Asha reached out to BYST.

After undergoing BYST's online training, receiving business planning support, and guidance on government schemes, Asha refined her proposal. Though initially sceptical about the product, the bank official was convinced after he tested it in his own kitchen and SBI sanctioned her an INR 20 lakh loan.

Asha was also matched with BYST mentor Mr. Dhanraj Tirumala, MD of Trisha Technologies, who helped her streamline operations, build SOPs, manage teams, and scale marketing. Under his guidance, Nutricook secured its largest order worth INR 65 lakh.

Despite personal and professional setbacks, including her business partner losing his son and a temporary pause in business, Asha bounced back. She's now exploring exports to Dubai, adapting product design to suit global markets. She's also expanding through white label partnerships and aiming for INR 5 crore in sales.

Nutricook now offers 15 SKUs, employs 45 people, and recorded a turnover of INR 80 lakh in FY 2022–23. Asha has received multiple awards and appeared on Shark Tank India where she chose independence over quick funding.

More than cookware, Nutricook is Asha's platform to empower 6000 women through nutrition, health, and financial independence, made possible by resilience, vision, and BYST's mentorship.



From Balance Sheets to Machine Tools



Ashwani Gaur

Growing up in Faridabad, Ashwani watched his father, a die maker, shape metal with precision. As the eldest sibling, he took on responsibilities early in life while he pursued a B.Com from Nehru College, followed by a diploma in Financial Accounts and Auditing from Pune. He began working in accounts and audits to support his family but felt drawn toward building something lasting.

He launched a consulting firm offering income tax filing and GST services, building a loyal client base of over 50 individuals and small businesses. Despite success, Ashwani felt unfulfilled and wanted to create something more tangible, an enterprise that could run independently and generate employment.

A walk with his father sparked the idea of starting a manufacturing unit that combined his business acumen with his father's technical skills. In 2022, they founded A.P. Machine Tools in Faridabad to make sheet metal dies, DVR boxes, sleeves for JCB excavators, and other components. Starting with one machine and no orders, Ashwani handled finance and operations while his father led production.

Soon, they hit a roadblock that of lack of working capital. The bank loan he applied for had a high interest rate and also fell short of his needs. At this point, a client, Mr. Pradeep Sharma, who had benefited from BYST, encouraged Ashwani to approach the BYST-Cisco Programme. With their support, he drafted a proposal and secured a loan of INR 15 lakhs from SBI in October 2023. This loan enabled him to buy raw material, improve infrastructure, and stabilize operations.

Crucially, BYST also assigned him a mentor, Mr. Pankaj Ahuja, a seasoned marketing and manufacturing expert. Mr. Ahuja guided Ashwani in cost optimization, cash flow management, market exploration, and product positioning. This mentoring, combined with marketing linkages to Mahindra & Mahindra, transformed his business outlook.

By FY 2023–24, A.P. Machine Tools reported INR 1 crore in turnover with a 9% profit margin. Ashwani now leads a five member team and plans to expand into manufacture of automotive components, aiming for INR 5 crore turnover in two years.

For Ashwani, BYST has been more than a funder - it has been a catalyst, mentor, and confidence builder. He remains actively engaged with the organization, participating in webinars and seeking guidance as he scales toward a sustainable, employment generating enterprise.



Stitching Strength, Threading Change



Basanti Rana

Born in Jaipur village in Odisha, Basanti Rana grew up facing severe hardships. Struck by polio at the age of 3, she lost mobility in her legs. Despite being ridiculed and receiving indifference to her situation, she insisted on attending school with the help of her father and brother. After completing Class 12, she had to give up studies due to the family's financial condition.

In 2004, Basanti married Tapan Kumar in an inter caste marriage, breaking social norms. Her husband ran a small printing press, and they lived in economic distress. With two children to raise and no stable income, Basanti revisited a childhood skill, tailoring, learned through a one year training programme in her village. She began stitching for neighbours, slowly earning small sums.

Though determined to grow her tailoring work into a business, progress was slow. The turning point came when she learnt about BYST through the gram panchayat. After attending an awareness session, she applied for support. In response, BYST helped her prepare a business plan, undergo training, and secure a loan to purchase a motorised sewing machine and raw materials, a critical step in formalising her work.

More valuable than the loan was the mentorship BYST provided. Paired with Mr. Ishan Husain and Mr. Laxmikant Chaupatnaik, a veteran of the garment industry, Basanti received guidance in marketing, production, and client outreach. On their advice, she approached brands such as JP Handlooms and Earthly Goods, securing bulk orders for garments.

Today, Basanti runs her own garment manufacturing unit, producing dresses, uniforms, and handloom items. She sources materials from Kolkata and local markets, completing production and packaging for nearby retailers. She now also trains young women, especially those from marginalised or physically challenged backgrounds, offering them skills for employment or self-reliance.

An active participant in BYST's ecosystem, she attends webinars, remains in touch with her mentors, and credits BYST for helping her build not just a business but a sense of identity beyond domestic roles. Basanti is also a trained swimmer and javelin thrower, with dreams of competing in the Paralympics in the near future. Her daughter is now in the third year of B.Tech, and her son is in college. Her husband has started his own finance company.

From overcoming disability to empowering others, Basanti's journey is not just about sewing clothes, it's about stitching dignity, threading resilience, and weaving change.



Forging a Safer Road Ahead



Charu Dev Bansal

In a country where two wheelers dominate and safety is often neglected, Charu Dev Bansal saw an opportunity to make a difference. Founder of OM Tech Science in Faridabad, he manufactures helmet components that help protect millions of riders.

Born in Nabha, Punjab, and raised in a business family, Charu Dev was the first in his family to take up a job, driven by his father's advice to explore the world. After earning a diploma from Thapar Institute and a B.Tech from Punjabi University, he began his career as a Graduate Engineer Trainee at Star Wire, Faridabad, earning INR 10,000. Over six years, since 2010, he rose to the level of Director, helping the company double its turnover from INR 400 to 800 crores. He then joined Studds Accessories, where he deepened his understanding of helmet quality and market dynamics.

In 2019, he took the entrepreneurial leap, starting OM Tech Science to manufacture helmet parts. But with limited finances, growth was difficult, until he was referred to BYST. With the support of his mentor Mr A.K. Gaur, and BYST's help he secured a loan of INR 10 lakhs from SBI to set up operations.

Soon after the COVID-19 posed a major setback, but Charu turned the crisis into an opportunity. Using his old Studds uniform and a borrowed pass, he entered Air India's office and pitched for PPE kits. When his samples were approved, he thought that he had to deliver 400 kits in a day's time. It was only 2 days later he discovered the order was for 4000 kits per day, ten times what he had rustled up in 2 days. He rose to the challenge, using his remaining Mudra loan funds and a COVID linked CGTMSE loan to scale up.

Today, OM Tech Science operates across five verticals including consultancy. His consultancy has helped multiple small helmet makers upgrade their quality and secure ISI certification, some even tripling their output with minimal investment.

With a team of 23 (60% women), Charu has built a people first workplace, offering flexible hours, 18 paid leaves, and INR 10 lakh insurance via IFFCO Tokio. His first employee still works with him.

Supplying to over 150 buyers including Hero MotoCorp and Java, Charu credits BYST's mentorship and support for making his journey possible. With INR 5 crore turnover and assets worth INR 2 crore, he now eyes national expansion, continuing to build a safer, smarter future on two wheels.



Built from the Ground Up



Hitender Punyane

Hitender Punyane's journey from repairing ACs in his father's workshop to running an INR 2.5 crore enterprise is a story of grit, resilience, and mentorship. Raised in a modest home, Hitendra's entrepreneurial spark was ignited when he came across AC panels, a new product in the early 2000s. With no collateral, his first bank loan request was rejected. Undeterred, he joined a programme at the MSME Institute in Okhla, where he attended a BYST awareness session. Though aware of the organization, it was not until later that he approached BYST, where Mr. Vibhaj and a panel of mentors helped him secure a loan from Bank of India.

Initially, Hitender assumed the loan would solve all his problems and distanced himself from BYST mentoring. Within months, his unit, SHN Enterprises, was in disarray, financially drained and scattered across ACs, water coolers, and kitchen equipment with no clear focus.

At a BYST chapter meeting, Hitender shared his struggles openly. Senior mentor Mr. A.K. Gaur stepped in, advising him to focus on his core skill, AC panels and generate income through maintenance. That clarity turned his business around.

Later, a visit to Japan exposed him to modular industrial furniture. Inspired, he shifted to designing precision shop floor furniture such as CNC tool stations, trolleys, and inspection tables using high grade materials. This innovation led to success.

By 2017, Hitender bought his own factory and employed 11 people. When COVID-19 disrupted operations, he adapted, offering discounts, re-entering maintenance, hiring for tele-calling and e-marketing. Through it all, BYST mentors offered practical and emotional support. "The change comes from mentoring," Hitender says. "Someone gives 40 years of their experience for free."

Today, SHN Enterprises serves major clients like Maruti, Honda, and Yamaha, with premium products priced up to INR 5 lakhs. One Honda order included custom stainless steel tables costing INR 5.5 lakhs each. These tables are designed to hold 6 tonne engines, products not available online and requiring detailed customer consultations.

In 2019, Hitender became a BYST mentor himself, guiding entrepreneurs such as Anwar Sultan and Charu Chaudhary. He also volunteers with RCT and MSME-DI, mentoring youth and speaking at entrepreneurship events.

Shortlisted globally for the YBI young Entrepreneur Award, Hitender won in the People's Choice category. His journey proves that success is not instant, but is built through persistence, learning, and the right guidance.



A Sustainable Spark



Jagadeesh Palraj

A casual observation at an organic store sparked Jagadeesh Palraj's entrepreneurial journey. He had seen customers often ask for native plants at a local store, revealing a demand for natural, eco-friendly products. With hands on experience in an organic product manufacturing company, Jagadeesh saw potential in developing biodegradable, plant based formulations. Inspired, in 2017, he launched M/s Jaga Enterprizes in Chengelpet, Tamil Nadu, offering handmade soaps and natural cleaning products under the brand 'Varna'.

Raised in a financially struggling family in Chengelpet, Jagadeesh completed his engineering degree and took up IT jobs to support his family, including funding his sister's marriage. His exposure to organic product development fuelled his dream of launching a sustainable business. He began researching plant based alternatives to chemical laden soaps and detergents, driven by a mission to provide affordable, effective, and environmentally safe solutions.

With limited funds, Jagadeesh launched 'Varna' with soaps made from ingredients such as goat milk and sandalwood. Despite technical knowledge, early growth was slow, until he connected with BYST in 2019. BYST provided counselling, business training, and helped him secure an INR 10 lakh loan from Indian Bank under the CGTMSC scheme, enabling him to scale production and formalise operations.

Even more valuable was the mentorship provided by Mr. Victor Joseph, assigned by BYST. With expertise in marketing and plastics, Mr. Joseph guided Jagadeesh on branding, digitisation, and business strategy. On his mentor's advice, Jagadeesh launched a website and improved digital visibility, steps that proved critical during the pandemic.

During COVID-19, Jagadeesh received an INR 25 lakh government order for sanitizers, to be delivered within 30 days. With the BYST mentor's support, he navigated licensing and banking hurdles and fulfilled the order successfully, boosting his operational confidence.

Post pandemic, he expanded into eco friendly detergents, dishwash liquids, and floor cleaners, using plant derived ingredients such as castor oil. He introduced low cost sachets priced at INR 5~10 for rural consumers and built a loyal customer base.

Today, he employs local women from marginalised communities, providing on-the-job training and supporting local organic stores. His products have been featured at the G20 Summit and events by IKEA and JK Papers.

Now clocking a turnover of INR 60 lakhs, Jagadeesh continues to innovate while staying rooted in sustainability and inclusion. As a BYST Young High- Flier, he sees BYST not just as a funder, but a lasting support system.



The Force Behind the Crown



Jenifer Y

Jenifer Y dreamed of becoming a doctor, but her father, a construction worker, could not afford medical education for her. Instead, she pursued a Diploma in Dental Technology from Saveetha Dental College, where she found her passion for dental design.

In 2007, Jenifer and her husband, also a dental technician, started Oscar Dental with financial help from her father. They purchased two machines on credit and repaid the loan in six months. In the early years, Jenifer crafted every dental product manually, but as orders increased, she realized she needed automation.

Her breakthrough came in 2014 when she connected with BYST, who matched her with her mentor Mr. Haribhaskaran and helped her secure a loan of INR 17 lakh from Indian Overseas Bank. Her mentor guided her in improving operations, accounts, and planning for contingencies.

In 2019, during COVID-19, she adopted an oral scanner to help patients overcome the fear of infection. This scanner captures digital impressions in just 10 minutes, enhancing speed, safety, and patient comfort. This shift marked the start of Oscar Dental's digital transformation.

By 2020, she had invested in imported machines, accelerating production. In 2023, she began producing aligners and embraced a 60:40 machine-to-manual work ratio, reducing turnaround time from 4 hours to just 45 minutes.

Oscar Dental now serves dental clinics across Tamil Nadu, offering affordable, ISO 13485:2016 certified solutions such as crowns, bridges, implants, and smile correction prosthetics. With a strong emphasis on quality, all processes from scanning to delivery are handled in house.

Jenifer leads a team of 28, including 12 women including individuals with disabilities. Her total machine investment exceeds INR 1.5 crore, and the business has reached an annual turnover of INR 2 crore with a 20~22% profit margin.

Committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, she uses eco friendly materials and has developed a training module to skill 100 school dropouts and persons with disabilities. Her transformation, from a shy graduate to a confident entrepreneur, has inspired not only her employees but also her daughters.

Jenifer won the JRD Tata Award in 2018 and now. Her unit serves 600 clinics and 1000 doctors and she aims to scale operations to an INR 5 crore turnover. With support from BYST and her own determination, she is shaping not just perfect smiles but a more inclusive, empowered future for dental care in India.



On a Millet Mission



Keerthana V

Keerthana V's journey into entrepreneurship began during her recovery from COVID-19. Her family put her on a traditional millet based diet, free of refined flour and sugar, which restored her health. Inspired, she launched 9nutz Millets in 2021 to make clean, millet based snacks accessible, especially to young people.

Starting from her 500 sq. ft. home kitchen in Kachiguda, Hyderabad, Keerthana gave away products for free to test the market. The positive feedback led her to formalise her venture. However, getting funding as a first time woman entrepreneur was difficult, until she discovered the BYST–HDFC Bank Parivartan Programme.

Through BYST, Keerthana received training, business guidance, and help in securing an INR 5.3 lakh loan from State Bank of India and a government subsidy of INR 1.3 lakh. Her BYST mentor helped shape her marketing plan, design packaging, and connect her with suppliers. She got her first breakthrough when BYST gave her a free stall at the Hi-Tech Expo, where she secured a large government order and expanded into three districts.

In 2024, Keerthana won the YBI Social Entrepreneurship Award in Nairobi. The recognition brought visibility. A subsequent interview on Suman TV led to a revenue sharing marketing partnership with the channel. Within weeks, she started receiving franchise enquiries and today, 9nutz has 10 franchises across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

To meet growing demand, she shifted to a 1200 sq. ft. unit in Suraram and now leads a team of 30 employees, including 20 women, many of whom are first time workers she trained herself. She also sources the ingredients from tribal women and SHGs, ensuring women's empowerment across the supply chain.

9nutz offers over 100 products including millet snacks, protein powders, cold pressed oil pickles, and spice blends. Orders now come from Bengaluru, Delhi, and even Kenya (INR 4–5 lakh every 2 months). Her FY 2023–24 turnover stood at INR 2 crore.

To support future growth, she is building a new website, preparing to list on Flipkart and Amazon, and exploring funding for two new production units. From next year, employees will receive Provident Fund and ESIC (Employees State Insurance Corporation) benefits.

Keerthana's mission is to build healthy habits among India's youth. With authenticity, resilience, and critical support from BYST, she is proving that purpose led businesses can thrive, scale and create opportunities for many others.



Bottling a Nourishing Vision



Dr. Neelima T

Dr. Neelima T's journey into entrepreneurship began during a health complication in her pregnancy. Advised bed rest and a modified diet, she discovered the healing properties of coconut water. As she recovered, her curiosity turned into conviction. With a BDS and MBA, she pivoted from dentistry to founding CocoTang in Hyderabad, a brand offering preservative free, dairy free coconut pulp shakes and mocktails.

As she explored coconut's nutritional benefits, Neelima learnt that tender coconut pulp contains monolaurin, an immune boosting compound also found in mother's milk. Her drinks became a healthy, plant based alternative for vegans and lactose intolerant individuals. After a successful pilot in 2014, she launched kiosks and a walk in store in Pragathi Nagar, followed by cloud kitchens and an online store.

Despite early interest in her product, she faced hurdles including landlord disputes, limited funding and challenges arising out of lack of business background. That's when BYST stepped in providing her training, business planning support, and facilitating a loan of INR 5.84 lakhs in 2016. More importantly, BYST assigned Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta, MD, Rockwell Industries, as her mentor.

With his expertise in refrigeration, Mr. Gupta helped Neelima select the right equipment and build a cold chain infrastructure. He also encouraged her to participate in trade expos and stay focused.

Together with her husband Chaitanya, Neelima worked closely with CFTRI, NIN, and the Coconut Development Board to refine formulations and extend shelf life without preservatives. CocoTang now offers seasonal detox drinks, vegan ice creams, and is piloting a low glycemic nectar for chemotherapy patients.

One of her proudest achievements is installing a vending machine at Basavatarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital after a three month review. Today, CocoTang serves gyms, hotels, health conscious customers, and exports to Australia, with an UAE expansion underway.

The company employs 12 full time staff and over 60 persons indirectly, focusing on women from underprivileged backgrounds, training them for manufacturing and offering exam fees and wedding bonuses. All packaging is recyclable, and 5% of profits go to community causes.

In FY 2023–24, CocoTang clocked in INR 85 lakhs of revenues. As Neelima prepares to scale across India, her mission remains clear: to offer food "the way nature intended it" - clean, nutritious, and without artificial processing.



Strengthening India's Industrial Capabilities



Pankaj Ahuja

Pankaj Ahuja, a mechanical engineer from Faridabad, left a well paying job in 2007 to pursue his entrepreneurial dreams. With no savings and a growing family, he started JM Tools with an INR 4.15 lakh loan from Indian Bank, co-signed by his uncle. The early years were tough, profits were elusive and survival was uncertain.

In 2015, a turning point came when Indian Bank introduced Pankaj to BYST, with whose support, he secured an additional loan of INR 20 lakh loan. He was paired with his mentor Mr. Harish Mittal, who guided him in professionalising operations and planning for growth.

With renewed focus, Pankaj expanded from two CNC machines to five. JM Tools began delivering complex, custom engineered components to Mahindra Defence, Escorts, Jupiter Wagons, and Daifuku India. Today, his work includes gun mounting assemblies for bulletproof vehicles, railway brake components for Sona Comstar, and customised parts for Maruti's conveyor systems.

Over time his business has grown from a 40 sq. yard unit to a 150 sq. yard facility spread over three floors. Despite major setbacks, COVID-19 disruptions and a fire in 2023 that destroyed an entire floor, Pankaj rebuilt quickly. Later he has insured all aspects of the business, prioritised safety upgrades, and made JM Tools future ready. In FY 2022–23, the company recorded a turnover of INR 2.5 crore, with a target of INR 4.2 crore for FY 2024–25. He now employs 42 people directly and supports 50 more indirectly.

Pankaj runs his business with integrity. All employees receive ESI and PF benefits. When one worker's husband was diagnosed with cancer, ESI covered full treatment, strengthening his belief in responsible entrepreneurship.

His bond with BYST has come full circle. From a mentee, he is now a mentor, guiding entrepreneurs such as Ashwani Gaur, who formalised his operations and crossed a turnover of INR 2 crore, and Pardeep Yadav, now running a successful spice business. Mentoring, for Pankaj, is a way of giving back.

Looking ahead, he plans to launch a "Made in India" indigenous product integrating electronics, software, and mechanics. A B2C digital model and sustainability driven machinery are also in the pipeline.

Rooted in spiritual practices such as Reiki and Vastu, Pankaj balances inner clarity with industrial innovation. His story reflects how resilience, mentorship, and purpose can build lasting impact, slowly but steadily.



Spicing Up Possibilities



Pardeep Yadav

Before becoming a successful spice entrepreneur, Pardeep Yadav worked a series of odd jobs, selling momos, knocking door to door, and taking up anything to support his lower middle class farming family in Tajnagar, Gurugram. Between 2006 and 2015, he explored eight different occupations without much success.

Everything changed when one day he walked into a spice shop looking for a job and was told he could sell his own spices. With no savings, he pawned his wife's gold chain for INR 5,000, bought stock, and made a profit of INR 1,200 on his very first day. Encouraged, he began developing his own spice mixes but initially faced quality complaints.

His turning point came when he connected with BYST. Through BYST, Pardeep learned about grinder technologies and temperature control. The organisation also facilitated key business opportunities, including his first bulk order from the BSF Mess in Gurugram. In 2017, BYST helped him secure a loan of INR 14 lakh from Indian Bank, followed by another loan of INR 5 lakh in 2018. Over the next one year he received mentoring, and business training, and also repaid both loans, building a strong credit profile.

This led to a larger INR 60 lakh funding (INR 30 lakh term loan + INR 30 lakh cash credit) that gave his business financial stability.

His brand "Krini" grew rapidly, revenues jumped from INR 20 lakh in FY 2017–18 to INR 1 crore in 2018–19. He built a network of 90 distributors across five states and began sourcing spices from across India, eventually shifting to direct procurement from 15 farmers in Gurugram to support local agriculture.

Post-COVID, facing shrinking margins in general spices, Pardeep pivoted to asafoetida (hing), which now accounts for 95% of his revenue. Sold under third party labels, it offers better margins (20%) and less competition. His operations employ 22 people, including 5 women, with six more women from self help groups working on packaging.

Pardeep's mentor, Mr. Suraj Saluja, guided him on producing high quality, unadulterated products, maintaining pricing, improving digital outreach, and building financial credibility. With BYST's support, he implemented compliance standards, proper packaging, and labelling.

In FY 2022–23, he recorded a turnover of INR 4.19 crores. Now selling online via Flipkart, he aims to supply 5–10% of India's spice businesses and scale operations 10~15x.

From an INR 5,000 investment to crores in revenue, Pardeep's journey shows how determination and right mentorship can transform lives.



Harvesting Ideas, Cultivating Futures



Yogesh Gawande

Yogesh Gawande's journey from student innovator to founder of Niyo Farmtech reflects practical, purpose driven thinking that is reshaping India's agricultural landscape. While studying mechanical engineering, he built a prototype of a safer, wheeled spray pump that won him an award. This early success caught the attention of BYST, which identified his entrepreneurial potential and offered mentorship and financial support.

Through the Bajaj Auto-BYST Youth Entrepreneur Development Programme, Yogesh secured a loan of INR 5 lakhs from Bank of Baroda. This helped him transition from prototype to production, launching Niyo Innovative Solutions, later incorporated as Niyo Farmtech Pvt. Ltd. His redesigned sprayer eliminated the need for users to carry it on the back, improving their comfort and safety.

Over 12,000 farmers across 14 states have used the sprayer. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was adopted by sanitation workers to spray disinfectants, extending its impact beyond agriculture.

Focused on small and marginal farmers, Yogesh developed a range of compact, affordable sprayers including manual, battery operated, and diesel powered versions. His flagship, the Neo Bahubali Sprayer, is a self propelled, multi purpose machine for sowing, de-weeding, spraying, and soil preparation. He is also piloting a micro entrepreneur model that will allow users to rent machines locally, generating a monthly income of up to INR 30,000.

By FY 2023–24, Niyo Farmtech recorded a turnover of over INR 2 crores, supporting around 100 people. Yogesh is digitising operations to boost productivity and access government schemes. His selection for the YBI Bootcamp in London in June 2024 and participation in the India Agritech Incubation Network facilitated (IAIN) by Social Alpha and the Gates Foundation further validated his work.

Under IAIN, he worked with women farmers in UP and Odisha. A demo of his sprayer at Pusa Krishi Incubator, Delhi was witnessed by Mr. Bill Gates, generating visibility and future growth potential. Niyo Farmtech has delivered products to Russia and Zambia and is in talks with buyers in Kenya, Nigeria, and The Dominican Republic.

Yogesh now aims to scale operations from 8000 to 20,000 sq. ft. and raise INR 5 crore to meet rising demand. Despite challenges, his 18 member team continues to innovate and serve farmers.

His mission is to transform the lives of 10 lakh farmers with his sprayers, and innovative ideas- all sparked and sustained with the critical BYST support.



BYST in the Media

How a Farmer's Son Built a Rs 2.2 Crore Agritech Startup Making Affordable, Low-Maintenance Sprayers for Farmers

Yogesh Gawande, an agritech entrepreneur from rural Maharashtra, founded Niyo Farmtech, earning Rs 2.2 crore annually through pesticide sprayer sales, spares, and rentals—supporting farmers growing crops like cotton and soyabean with low-maintenance, field-tested solutions.

Riya Verma Updated 22 April, 2025 2:06 PM IST



Navigating the Digital Landscape: How Micro Enterprises Can Thrive in Online Marketplaces

Digital marketplaces offer immense growth opportunities for micro-enterprises by expanding reach, reducing costs, and increasing brand visibility, though challenges like high seller commissions and digital literacy remain. The Union Budget FY25 should focus on financial aid, infrastructure, and training to empower these small businesses in the digital economy.

Written by **Guest**

July 22, 2024 18:00 IST



Today, artisans from Kashmir Valley can sell their products throughout the world without moving out of their State. (Photo: Freepik)

By- Lakshmi Venkataraman Venkatesan

SONU M KOTHARI



HOPE FROM THE HIVES

MY son had a weak immune system and would frequently fall sick. On consulting an Ayurvedic physician, we were advised to give him raw honey to help boost his immunity" begins Sridevi R. This personal quest led her to start Ecomom Natural & Herbal Traders in November 2017 through which she provides pure honey across India by ensuring the farmers use safe practices during procurement.

Eight years later, she bagged the Award for Eminent Woman Achiever–2025 in the eco-friendly business sector for her journey that combines sustainability, grassroots innovation, and women's empowerment. The award was presented by the governor of Tamil Nadu, RN Ravi, in March. "It was an unforgettable moment and a very important recognition in my entrepreneurial journey. I come from a humble background, and being felicitated by the governor at Raj Bhavan still feels like a dream," she shares.

This award was a validation for Sridevi that she is on the right path, doing something meaningful in society. But this journey to success was initially filled with roadblocks. Finding authentic raw honey was a major challenge, though she comes from Mettupalayam. After one month of probing, her father was able to connect with the tribal community there and source pure honey. "After regular consumption, we saw a visible improvement in my son's health. That inspired me to start Ecomom Honey, with a mission to make pure honey accessible to people from all spheres of life," she says.

A mission-driven mother

Sridevi wanted to fill this market gap and envisioned a sustainable and ethical sourcing model together with the tribal community. But, it was a challenge to convince the communities of this opportunity. "It required consistent communication with them. I shared my personal journey and the vision and values behind the brand — transparency and fair compensation. I assured them that this business would have mutual benefits," she notes.

A brand that started as 15 families involved in the honey procurement, packaging and earning a percentage of profits, now works directly with over 50 tribal families today. This partnership has created steady income for many families. "With monthly income from the brand's sales, the financial status of the families has improved. The children are studying, and the adults are also using smartphones," she states.

The tribals have a traditional harvesting method where honey bees are not harmed. Herbs are used to make the bees go away from the hive and procure honey from the top of the frame. Since the farmers are native tribes, they are not afraid of such harvesting processes. But Sridevi ensures their safety by providing them with gloves and other necessary equipment.

The sourcing season is from December to April. But it can go on until June if there are summer rains. Farmers go into the forest to check if the beehives are ready to harvest. If ready, they go during the night-time for procurement. Sridevi says, "Nighttime harvesting is sometimes preferred for hives located high in trees or in precarious positions, as bees are less likely to sting at night."



Once procured, the farmers squeeze it and convert it into honey. All this process happens transparently, and are also videographed to be posted on social media platforms. This move has benefited the business to expand across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and a few cities in north India.

Towards growth

The support increased to a large extent when she connected with Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST). "They helped me in various ways, from finances to mentoring. It was the organisation that nominated me for the award. The award has increased our visibility and has instilled trust to everything the brand stands for," she says.

Now, Ecomom's goal has expanded. "Our primary goal is to expand the brand's presence across India. We aim to make high-quality and pure raw honey accessible to every household. In the long run, we envision building Ecomom into a trusted wellness brand," she says

The business is looking for eco-friendly products from farmers. Similar to honey, if there is a product that is pure and transparent, Sridevi wishes to invest in that.

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ओडिसा के गरीब दलित परिवार की बेटी और 3 स्कूल की उम्र में पोलियो से ग्रस्त वसंती रापा का एक छोटा परिधान व्यवसाय शुरू करने का सपना शुरू से ही कठिनाइयों से भरा रहा। संघर्षों के बीच हाई स्कूल और सिलाई का व्यावसायिक कोर्स पूरा करने के बाद जब उन्होंने अपना व्यवसाय शुरू करने की कोशिश की तो किसी भी बैंक ने उन्हें वित्तीय साक्षरता, व्यावसायिक नेटवर्क की कमी और कमजोर आर्थिक पृष्ठभूमि का हवाला देते हुए ऋण नहीं दिया। बाद में वसंती को एक गैर-सरकारी अनुसार केवल 12.6 प्रतिशत दलित महिला उद्यमी ही पारंपरिक वित्तीय संस्थानों से ऋण प्राप्त कर पाती हैं और 68 प्रतिशत को खुद की बाजार तक पहुंच बनाने में भेदभावपूर्ण प्रथाओं और आर्थिक बहिष्कार का सामना करना पड़ता है।

सरकारी नीतियां और योजनाएं अक्सर सूक्ष्म और लघु उद्यमों की समस्याओं का समाधान नहीं ढूंढ पाती। हालांकि अनुसूचित जाति उद्यम पूंजी निधि योजना वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान करने का प्रयास करती है। इसके


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