

# Gritty rural women who are rewriting rules of entrepreneurship and social change

On Int'l Day of Rural Women, meet resilient achievers who have overcome immense social and economic challenges

Prayagraj: In rural India's tradition-bound, male-dominated social structures, many tenacious women are rewriting the rules of gender justice. With their resourcefulness and grit, they are not only creating behavioural change but also blazing a trail for other women to follow. Their stories tell us of the vast untapped potential of rural women who, with the right guidance and support, can rise above a multitude of challenges and drive social change.

An overview of women who are transforming narratives with their work in areas like social justice and reproductive health.

**Annu Kumari, Nawada:** Annu Kumari, from Anawad in the Rajauli subdivision of Nawada district, Bihar, exemplifies the power of intentionality in a socially backward milieu. Expected to get married at 20, she valiantly resisted social and familial pressure. Guided by her mentor Sheela Devi from Kishori Samooah, a program run by Population Foundation of India, Annu defied societal norms to become a youth champion. She initiated

dialogue around menstrual hygiene, nutrition, and reproductive health and advocated against child marriages. She also redirected funds meant for her dowry towards her education and, inspired by a traffic police officer, eventually decided to join the Bihar Police Training Academy, which was around 300km from her village. Today, she has successfully shifted social biases around daughters in her community and has emerged as a role model for young girls.

**Sania Kumari, Darbhanga:** Sania Kumari, a 12th-grade student from a small village in the Darbhanga district of Bihar, has emerged as a dedicated youth champion, proving that even young individuals can engender meaningful change. As a torchbearer of grassroots efforts, she has successfully helped bridge knowledge gaps in communities where talking about menstruation remains a taboo and girls are expected to keep their period-related challenges to themselves. Her journey began in 2017 when she joined an adolescent group

and learned about menstruation. She quickly became an active advocate, working to reduce stigma and misinformation around menstrual health. By 2020,



her efforts earned her the title of youth champion, and she became the leader of the Ekta Kishori Samuh (a group under a Population Foundation of India program that has built the capacities of over 10,000 youth to raise awareness about Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health, ARSH). She also created a sanitary pad bank to give

adolescents easy access to pads. Her determination to drive positive change aligns with her ambition to pursue medicine, demonstrating the power of indi-

vidual commitment to community well-being. Sania's story inspires many girls from rural communities, showing that through disseminating accurate information, even a 17-year-old girl can develop a community-centred solution to address a pressing hygiene need.

**Anguri Vasuniya, Jhabua:** Anguri Vasuniya, from Choti Ghendi Village in

Petlawad, Jhabua hails from an impoverished family and studied only up to class 10th. She was then married off at the age of 18 and migrated to Gujarat with her husband, looking for work. Here they toiled as farm labourers for some time. In Petlawad, Anguri came in contact with Transform Rural India's Enterprise Facilitation Hub (Nari Adhikar Kendra). She also went through the Entrepreneurship Motivation Training (EMT) and sought assistance from the Nari Adhikar Kendra team to start a new business. Aided by Sampark, which facilitates loans for underserved women, she started a business with Rs 1.5 lakh, which she gathered from her savings and Rs 60,000 from Sampark. She purchased machinery and raw materials for a 'Rui Bati' unit and currently earns approximately Rs 18,000 per month. Her earnings have helped her to build a new house and she and her family are now living with dignity and enjoying financial stability.

**Bhuri Singad, Jabhua:** 39-year-old Bhuri Singad is from Gunawad Village in

Petlawad, Jhabua. Born in 1984 into a poor family, she couldn't attend school despite her desire to study. Due to a lack of irrigation facilities in their village, she and her husband Raju Singad worked as farm labourers in Gujarat. In March 2022, Bhuri learnt about an empowerment program run by Transform Rural India's Nari Adhikar Kendra and later attended a four-day Entrepreneurship Management Training (EMT) in Petlawad block. Learning about various business possibilities and available institutional support, Bhuri discussed her new insights with her husband and eventually decided to start a Dona Patal (leaf plate) manufacturing unit. Helped by the Nari Adhikar Kendra team, she received Rs 70,000 as well as technical assistance to launch the unit. She now earns around Rs 10,000 per month and even funds her children's education in Indore. After repaying the initial loan, she aims to expand her business with a loan of Rs 1-lakh which would potentially increase her monthly earnings to Rs 35,000.

**ASP Rajkumar Singh won two medals, one gold and one silver in open singles and open doubles event**  
**Constable Manoj Kumar won one gold medal in table tennis**

**DISTRICT CORRESPONDENT VAIBHAV PACHAURI**

Etah: 08 member team of Etah district participated in the 16th Inter-District Police Badminton and Table Tennis Competition of 10 districts held from 12th October to 14th October in Agra Zone, Agra. In which Additional Superintendent of Police District Etah Shri Rajkumar Singh won two medals, one gold and one silver total (02) in open singles and open doubles event and constable Manoj Kumar won one gold medal in table tennis. On this occasion, Rajkumar Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police, Etah, was honored with a medal by Additional Director General of Police, Agra Zone, Anupam Kulshrestha. The team was highly praised by Senior Superintendent of Police Shyam Narayan Singh.

## BJP leader Basant Lal Azad passes away

Prayagraj: District Convener of the former body cell of Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP leader Basant Lal Azad ji is suffering from hernia. Swaroop Rani has been admitted in the hospital for many days and his condition remains critical. District spokesperson Rajesh Ki Sherwani said that apart from this, Azad ji is the vice president of Patthar Chatti Ramlila Committee, Rath Yatra coordinator of Shri Jagannath Ji Mahotsav Committee and many religious and social persons of Prayagraj, are associated with institutions. Former councillor Basant Lal Azad ji, BJP leader and Rath Yatra coordinator of Shri Jagannath Ji Mahotsav Committee and Vice President of Shri Pathar Chatti Ramlila Committee, passed away. May God give place to the virtuous soul at his feet.

