



# VIJAYALAKSHMI DAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD 2024

**Friday, 19th July**

**Roseate House, Aerocity, New Delhi**

SATYA MicroCapital Ltd. recently organized fourth edition of Vijayalakshmi Das Awards which felicitated women microentrepreneurs nestled across rural boundaries in the nation. The awards primarily felicitated the entrepreneurial landscape of India by witnessing a remarkable transformation, led by dynamic women who are breaking stereotypes and setting new benchmarks at in Roseate House, Aerocity, New Delhi.

Underlining the essence of Vijayalakshmi Das Entrepreneurship Awards, Vivek Tiwari, MD, CIO & CEO, SATYA MicroCapital beamed with pride as he addressed the Vijayalakshmi Das Entrepreneurship Awards for the fourth year running. He said, "It's an incredible honour to celebrate these women

microentrepreneurs. They're blazing a trail through society, and their success stories are a beacon to countless others.

Recognizing achievements of these women entrepreneurs isn't just about applause, but also about empowering the next upcoming generation. It is equally important for all of us to witness the challenges these women entrepreneurs overcome, the remarkable presence they have established, and the triumphs they have achieved. The positive change they bring to the lives of those around them is truly incredible. SATYA salutes their unwavering passion and dedication. Congratulations to all the winners. Alongside, I am also grateful to our esteemed Board of Directors, Lenders and all other guests who attended the event."

The ceremony was attended by our Guest of Honours – Pinki Kaushik Singh (2023 World Bowls Champion and Arjuna Awardee) & Dr. Neharika Yadav (UNESCO Brand Ambassador, TEDx Speaker & Dental Surgeon & Superbike Racer).



**Ms. Pinki Singh – 2023 World Bowls Champion and Arjuna Awardee**

Ms. Pinki was born in 1980 and is a star Indian lawn bowler. She's a multiple medal winner at the Asian Lawn Bowls Championships, including a recent gold medal in the fours at the 2023 competition. Her achievements were recognized with the prestigious Arjuna Award in December 2023.

**Dr. Neharika Yadav** — UNESCO Brand Ambassador, TEDx Speaker & Dental Surgeon & Superbike Racer



Dr Neharika Yadav is a Dental surgeon and Superbike racer and runs her private dental practice in Gurgaon. She has been racing at the Jk tyre national championship since 2015 as the only female racer on the grid in the 1000cc Superbike category amongst the top male racers of the country and is one of the fastest female racers in India. She is a Ducati factory racer, Tedx talk speaker and a UNESCO Brand ambassador.

### **Winners of Vijayalakshmi Das Entrepreneurship Awards 2024**

The categories of these prestigious awards are specifically curated to feature the outstanding leadership and achievements demonstrated by women entrepreneurs across the Indian microfinance sector. The year's Vijayalakshmi Das Entrepreneurship Awards recognized women leaders and entrepreneurs across various business categories like Manufacturing, Agri Production, Textile, Food, Hospitality and Sustainable Lifestyle Products.

Vijayalakshmi Das Entrepreneurship Awards 2024 were bagged by Ms. Ruma Devi - Leader of the Year (Ruma Devi – Handmade Products of India); Shailza Sood Das Gupta (Homestays of India), Nilanjana Das (ACT), Ritika (Craft Edge) in the Medium Enterprise Category; Razia Sheikh (Bastar Foods), Sadhana Dipak Deshmukh (Guru Soya Products), Manju (Manju's Bag Making Business) in Small Enterprise Category; Sukhwinder Kaur (Chatkara Punjabi Achaar), Anchala Aswal (Moksham Candle. Co) & Hema (Hema's Stitching & Designing) in Micro Enterprise Category.

**FINALISTS OF  
VIJAYALAKSHMI DAS  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD 2024**

An initiative by SATYA MicroCapital Ltd.

**LEADER OF THE YEAR**



**Ms. Ruma Devi**

**ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR  
- MEDIUM ENTERPRISE -**



**Ms. Shailza Sood  
Dasgupta**



**Ms. Nilanjana  
Das**



**Ms. Ritika**

**ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR  
- SMALL ENTERPRISE -**



**Ms. Razia Sheikh**



**Ms. Sadhana  
Dipak Deshmukh**



**Ms. Manju**

**ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR  
- MICRO ENTERPRISE -**



**Ms. Sukhvinder  
Kaur**



**Ms. Anchala  
Aswal**



**Ms. Hema**



**Ms. Ruma Devi**  
**Leader of the year – Winner**  
**Ruma Devi – Handmade Products of India**

Ms. Ruma Devi, a resilient woman from the small village of Barmer in Rajasthan, faced early challenges in life. Despite losing her mother at a young age and getting married at 17, Ms. Ruma's passion for embroidery remained a guiding force. In 2006, Ms. Ruma took a bold step by establishing a self-help group, persuading ten women from her village to join her. With each woman contributing Rs 100, they purchased materials like cloth, threads, and plastic wrappers to create cushions and bags. Ms. Ruma's skillful embroidery and the support of local customers fueled the growth of her production, marking the inception of her remarkable journey as an artisan.

Her determination caught the attention of Gramin Vikas Chetna Sansthan (GVCS) in 2008, leading to her appointment as the President of GVCS in 2010. In this role, Ms. Ruma faced challenges in motivating and empowering women artisans, challenging societal norms like the "Purdah" system that confined women to their homes.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Ruma Devi single-handedly united and advised thousands rural women in far spread scattered region of Thar Desert. She changed the perspective of rural women towards society, employment, education and towards raising their own girl child. She herself abandoned veil, fought with evil and rebelled the social fetters. For the first time, she drove rural women of villages out of their homes. She made her local language her strength and uplifted women from inferiority complex.



**Ms. Shailza Das Gupta**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Medium – Winner**  
**Homestays of India**

Ms. Shailza, hailing from a small town in Himachal Pradesh, embarked on a transformative journey after a successful corporate career at Google and McKinsey. Driven by a desire to make a meaningful impact, she dedicated herself to the cause of providing livelihood opportunities for women in rural areas. Faced with the tragic loss of her mother, Ms. Shailza's commitment to supporting her family fueled her journey.

During a year-long exploration of remote areas in India, Ms. Shailza identified family-run homestays lacking proper training and marketing support. Recognizing the high demand for authentic culture experiences provided by these homestays; she saw an opportunity to connect them with travelers globally. This realization led to the creation of Homestays of India, a platform that not only connects homestays with travelers but also focuses on creating livelihood opportunities for rural women.

Homestays of India, founded by Ms. Shailza, collaborates with more than 500 women in rural areas, providing training in homestay management and connecting them with the market through the website. The initiative empowers these women by leveraging their innate hospitality skills, enabling them to excel in tourism and generate income for their families. The emphasis on financial independence is evident in encouraging women to manage their accounts and finances.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Shailza's commitment to social impact, coupled with her innovative approach, showcases the potential for sustainable and inclusive development. Through Homestays of India, she has not only created a platform for cultural exchange but has also demonstrated the transformative power of empowering women and revitalizing rural economies. The initiative stands as a beacon of how individual dedication can lead to meaningful change, touching the lives of countless women and communities across India.



**Ms. Nilanjana Das**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Medium - 1st Runner Up**  
**Action Center for Transformation**

ACT, an initiative founded by Ms. Nilanjana Das, was born out of the vision to bring positive change through innovative ideas and community-driven initiatives. The inspiration struck when Ms. Nilanjana encountered numerous women in rural Gurugram desperately in need of a consistent source of income. Despite attempts to garner support from corporates for income generation programs, she discovered a reluctance to back such initiatives.

However, the corporates were willing to contribute paper waste, leading to the conceptualization of "Kaagaz Ke Pankh," a social enterprise that aimed to address both the issue of paper waste in urban areas and the lack of sustainable livelihood for rural women.

Since its inception, ACT has trained over 500 women across seven villages. The training goes beyond manufacturing upcycled paper products, encompassing aspects such as logistics management, quality control, and marketing. The overarching goal is to empower these women, fostering financial independence and self-sufficiency.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Nilanjana is actively involved in awareness initiatives on women's rights, health, and hygiene, targeting school children and developing entrepreneurship skills. Health camps, nutrition classes, and plantation drives are organized in the villages where ACT operates. The initiative extends beyond paper products, teaching waste composting techniques to enable the women to create their compost.



**Ms. Ritika**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Medium - 2nd Runner Up**  
**Craft Edge**

In the face of the pandemic-induced job losses in 2020, Ms. Ritika transformed her passion into a resilient business, navigating uncertainties and turning setbacks into valuable lessons. Beyond mere commerce, Ms. Ritika's business story has evolved into a mission for women's empowerment, collaborating with 22 artists and proving that human resilience can transform challenges into steppingstones.

Ms. Ritika's startup primarily revolves around the intricate art of Madhubani paintings and other artistic fields. However, her journey took an interesting turn post-lockdown when she ventured into manufacturing designer candles. The spark of her newfound venture ignited when her husband discovered the unique appeal of the candles, leading to an opportunity to set up a stall at Patna Women's College during Diwali. To their surprise, the candles sold out within a few hours, marking the successful inception of a new aspect of her business.

What sets Ms. Ritika's candles apart is their dual functionality – not only serving as a source of lighting but also doubling as decorative pieces for homes. Post-burning, these candles release a distinctive fragrance, adding an extra layer of appeal for customers. Today, Ritika's entrepreneurial journey has not only translated into substantial earnings through her art but has also become a source of employment for numerous individuals.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Ritika's story is a testament to the transformative power of passion and resilience. By diversifying her business and adapting to changing circumstances, she not only secured her financial well-being but also became a beacon of empowerment for others. The collaboration with artists and the success of her candles highlights the potential for creativity and determination to overcome challenges and create meaningful opportunities for both the entrepreneur and the community.



**Ms. Raziya Shaikh**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Small – Winner**  
**Bastar Food**

Ms. Razia Sheikh, the CEO of Bastar Foods, emerges as a beacon of change and empowerment in the region of Bastar, Chhattisgarh. Amidst the challenges of unemployment, deforestation and witnessing the Naxal activities around her, Ms. Razia found inspiration in a street vendor selling panipuri. After two years of dedicated effort, Bastar Foods was established with the aim of showcasing the goodness of local food to the world.

Leveraging the abundant herbs in Bastar capable of addressing health issues, particularly anemia, Ms. Razia set out to create a sustainable business model by tapping into the region's culinary heritage. A significant aspect of this transformation was the conversion of mahua, traditionally used in liquor manufacturing, into nutritional food items. This initiative gained international demand for Food grade Mahua.

Available both online and offline, Bastar Foods embodies the commitment to uplift Bastar's economy while preserving its rich cultural heritage. Ms. Razia Sheikh's journey exemplifies sustainable utilization of local resources for economic development.

**Social Intervention :** Partnering with over 500 farmers from Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh. Empowering 300 tribal women with training in their local dialects. Establishing eight food processing units in Naxal-affected areas of south Chhattisgarh. Introducing more than 22 new food items derived from tribal culture into the Indian market. Hosting over 100 students from various states for internships. Providing employment to six girls from villages trained in Food Technology.



**Ms. Sadhana Dipak Deshmukh**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Small - 1st Runner Up**  
**Guru Soya Products**

Ms. Sadhna Deshmukh's journey began amidst economic hardships in a marginalized background, where she faced challenges during her childhood. Instead of succumbing to these difficulties, Ms. Sadhna made a resolute decision to find solutions, recognizing the shared spirit of many individuals like her who lacked support and opportunities. Her mission was clear – to make a difference.

After completing her 12th-grade education, Ms. Sadhna relocated to Murud, Latur with her husband, seeking more space for his eclectic shop. In this new environment, Ms. Sadhna discovered women in the village undergoing entrepreneurship training to start their businesses. Intrigued, she enrolled herself in the 10-day training program offered by SSP. Specializing in the, Ms. Sadhna gained valuable knowledge during the program. Milk business, particularly soybeans.

Motivated by this newfound expertise, Ms. Sadhna and her husband initiated a home-based milk business using soybeans. Beyond generating income, they witnessed substantial improvements in their overall financial situation. Recognizing the transformative potential of entrepreneurship for women, Ms. Sadhna became a catalyst for change. Latur, their current residence, being a significant soybean-producing district in Maharashtra, faced challenges due to price volatility affecting soybean farmers. In response, Ms. Sadhna took it upon herself to contribute to the local economy by directly purchasing soybeans from farmers. Building a team of over 15 employees, she successfully established an entrepreneurial venture that not only addresses economic challenges but also empowers others to follow in her footsteps.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Sadhna Deshmukh's initiative serves as a beacon of empowerment, creating a positive ripple effect within the community. Through her dedication and entrepreneurial spirit, she not only transforms her own circumstances but also inspires others to embrace entrepreneurship, fostering economic resilience and self-reliance.



**Ms. Manju**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Small - 2nd Runner Up**  
**Manju Bag Making Business**

Ms. Manju, a woman characterized by unwavering determination and resilience, resides in Khatauli, Uttar Pradesh. Together with her supportive husband, she has been the driving force behind their family's bag manufacturing business for the past 18 years, serving as their primary source of income. Ms Manju's journey into the intricacies of bag making began after her marriage, learning from her husband, who became her mentor and guide. Over the last eight years, she has translated her acquired knowledge into practical skills, actively managing the business.

Despite their dedication, financial constraints hindered the expansion of their business to a larger scale. The need for expensive machinery to increase bag production presented a significant hurdle. In discussions with fellow villagers, Ms. Manju discovered SATYA, a source of gratitude that transformed the trajectory of their business. In 2022, Ms. Manju boldly took a loan of Rs. 45,000 from SATYA, a move that proved pivotal in acquiring the essential machinery. This step allowed them to diversify their product range, manufacturing various types of bags, including school bags and travel bags, all from the comfort of their home. The once-constrained business has now blossomed into a thriving venture, yielding a stable monthly income ranging from 40,000 to 50,000 rupees. After that Ms. Manju has again taken the loan from SATYA of INR 70,500.

As the business flourished, Ms. Manju and her husband expanded their team, employing two individuals and providing them with a monthly salary of 9,000 rupees each. Witnessing the positive growth, their aspirations have expanded as well. They now envision leasing a building for business expansion, not only promising further growth for their enterprise but also offering employment opportunities to more individuals in their community. The journey from financial constraints to stable entrepreneurship exemplifies the transformative impact of SATYA in empowering individuals and fostering local economic development.



**Ms. Sukhvinder Kaur**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Micro – Winner**  
**Chatkara Punjabi Achaar**

In 2004, Ms. Sukhvinder faced an unexpected life-altering event when she encountered a disability. Unwilling to be defined by her circumstances, Ms. Sukhvinder harnessed her passion for cooking and, specifically, her skill in crafting delicious pickles, to chart a new course for herself. Operating from the confines of her home, Ms. Sukhvinder embarked on a resilient journey to establish her own pickle business.

Determined and guided by an unwavering spirit, Ms. Sukhvinder dedicated herself to perfecting her pickle recipes. Through persistent trial and error, she honed her skills, crafting each batch with meticulous care and precision. As word spread about her delectable pickles, a devoted customer base emerged, drawn to the flavors that bore the mark of Ms. Sukhvinder's dedication. Fueling her desire for growth, Ms. Sukhvinder tirelessly explored avenues to expand her business. Investing in marketing efforts, she utilized social media platforms and local markets to showcase her products and broaden her customer base. With each jar sold, Ms. Sukhvinder's confidence surged, propelling her to pursue even greater opportunities.

As her business flourished, Ms. Sukhvinder remained humble, never losing sight of the challenges she had overcome. Becoming an inspiration in her community, she exemplified how resilience and passion can triumph over adversity. Today, Ms. Sukhvinder's pickle business stands as a testament to her unyielding determination and entrepreneurial spirit. With an eye on new horizons, she continues to dream big, determined to create a legacy that will inspire generations to come.



**Ms. Anchala Aswal**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Micro - 1st Runner Up**  
**Moksham Candle. Co.**

Ms. Anchala Aswal, a woman entrepreneur from Dehradun, Uttarakhand, had an exceptional entrepreneurial journey, starting from scratch. After escaping an abusive marriage, she found herself raising her two-year-old son alone. Despite having worked in various private sectors, the breakdown of her marriage led to people mistreating and disrespecting her. As a single mother, she faced numerous challenges both at home and in the workplace, which is why she quit her job.

To ensure a stable future for herself and her son, Ms. Anchala started making candles at home on a small scale, gradually turning her childhood hobby into a professional venture. She created an Instagram page to sell the products, all of which were indeed liked by viewers. Gradually, she started receiving decent demand from customers. As her skills and reputation grew, she started receiving larger orders. With time, she opened an exclusive shop in Dehradun.

Ms. Anchala organized candle-making workshops, providing raw materials to participants' homes. Over time, she expanded her business, gradually growing it to a larger scale. Ms. Anchala now runs a Decorative and Aromatic jar candle business under the brand name "MOKSHAM" Candle Co. In addition to candle making, she also collaborates with hardworking and talented women and girls from Uttarakhand's villages who are skilled in handcrafting different products from jute, bamboo, and other local materials. She procures the jute and bamboo items with them and further sells them in the Dehradun market.

**Social Intervention:** She is passionate about women's social issues, having been a victim herself. She organizes workshops and, along with teaching girls to make candles, always educates them about women's health and hygiene, especially during menstruation, and about safe sex. In the future, she plans to open a warehouse and create more employment opportunities specifically for women and girls.



**Ms. Hema**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year – Micro - 2nd Runner Up**  
**Hema Stitching & Designing**

Ms. Hema, an enterprising individual hailing from Hathras Junction, Uttar Pradesh, has navigated a remarkable journey toward success. Armed with a B.Sc degree and an ITI course, she encountered challenges securing a stable job within her state. Undeterred by external limitations, Ms Hema chose the path of self-employment, seizing control of her destiny.

Ms. Hema's venture commenced with a self-guided exploration of clothing design through YouTube tutorials. Initially practicing on her own garments, she diligently refined her sewing skills, gradually gaining proficiency and confidence. Her talent became the talk of her village, leading to requests from neighbors for her sewing expertise. Recognizing the demand for her craft, Hema saw an opportunity to transform her passion into a thriving business.

Establishing a home-based tailoring enterprise, Ms. Hema adopted a pricing strategy that aligned with market rates, emphasizing affordability and quality. This commitment garnered her a dedicated customer base. Beyond business success, Ms. Hema extended her entrepreneurial spirit to empower other women in her village, offering free tailoring lessons.

**Social Intervention :** Ms. Hema's vision extends beyond her current accomplishments. With aspirations of expanding her enterprise, she aims to create employment opportunities for women facing financial struggles. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, she envisions cultivating a community of empowered women, fostering economic independence in her village. Ms. Hema exemplifies resilience, creativity, and a commitment to uplifting those around her.

## Panel Discussion – Changing Face of Women Entrepreneurship in India



### **Ms. Sairee Chahal**

**Founder – SHEROES : community platform for women, offering support, resources & opportunities**

Sairee Chahal is a serial entrepreneur, mom, angel investor, evangelist for #womensinternet and a board member. She currently runs SHEROES – an online ecosystem for women, offering support, entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, content and community at [www.shero.es.com](http://www.shero.es.com) and the SHEROES App and Mahila Money – a community neobank for women. Sairee serves on the board of Milaan Foundation, Paytm Payments Bank and US-based Women in Cloud.



### **Dr. Madhumita Puri**

**Clinical Psychologist – Founder - Society for Child Development**

Madhumita has more than 30 years of experience in the disability sector as a Clinical Psychologist in the Genetics Unit of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (New Delhi) and later as an entrepreneur. She acquired a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Delhi after which she founded the Society for Child Development in 1992. Madhumita brings her triple advantage of the on-ground experience of traditional service delivery models in hospitals and non-profits, academic research.



### **Ms. Aditi Maheshwari Goyal**

**CEO - Vani Prakashan Group – National Achievers Award**

Aditi Maheshwari Goyal heads the Department of Copyrights and Translation at Vani Prakashan and is the Managing Trustee at Vani Foundation. She teaches Publishing and Editing at the University of Delhi. She is on the advisory panel of Jaipur BookMark. She is the Festival Director of Hindi Mahotsav and Secretariat Manager of Vani Foundation Distinguished Translator Award.



### **Ms. Anoushka Jain**

**Founder Enroute Indian History**

Anoushka Jain is the founder of heritage & research organization Enroute Indian History started in 2019. The company was born amidst pandemic but has managed to create a niche following for its curated research on art, history and heritage. The women led organization is working tirelessly with educational institutions, and museums to bridge the gap between heritage and popular understanding by masses.



### **Ms. Tanya Singhal**

**Founder – Mynzo Carbon Renewable Energy Leader**

Tanya Singhal is an industry expert in the climate technology and renewable energy sector with over 18 years of experience. Her entrepreneurial voyage took flight when she founded SolarArise, a solar asset management vehicle responsible for developing over half a GW of solar projects across 7 states in India with deployment of over 2000 Rs Cr of capital. Her leadership and influence extended beyond business operations as she collaborated with government and industry stakeholders to shape India's renewable energy policies through close collaboration with the Ministry of Renewable Energy. After 8 years of leading SolarArise, Tanya successfully sold the firm to an InVit listed on the London Stock Exchange.