



HER@IITD

VOICES. **VISION.** JOURNEY



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DISCLAIMER

The compilation has been curated by the Office of Alumni Relations and the Endowment Management Foundation based on a defined set of considerations. It includes alumnae who have received the Institute's Distinguished Alumni Awards and Gold Awards, as well as those recognised by reputed external organisations for their professional achievements.

The compilation also highlights individuals who have demonstrated notable leadership and impact across business, research, academia, civil services, philanthropy, the not-for-profit sector, and other meaningful areas, along with a select group of emerging contributors.

This compilation is intended for informational purposes and may not fully represent all alumnae whose achievements meet these criteria.

ABOUT THE COFFEE TABLE BOOK

When IIT Delhi opened its doors in 1961, few could have imagined the scale of transformation that would unfold over the decades - not just in science and technology, but in the people who shape them. In its early years, women at IIT Delhi were few in number, yet remarkable in resolve. They stepped into classrooms and laboratories where representation was limited, driven by curiosity, courage, and an unshakable belief in their potential.

Over time, these pioneering women became the foundation for change. They challenged conventions, inspired peers, and opened doors for the many who would follow. From the 1990s onward, as societal perspectives evolved and opportunities expanded, the number of women in IIT Delhi's UG's, PG's and doctorate programs began to grow steadily. Today, with over 3000 women students they are not just participants, they are innovators, leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs, and changemakers shaping industries and ideas across the world.

Her@IITD is a celebration of that journey. This coffee table book brings together stories that span generations of women who broke new ground in engineering and science, who built ventures from scratch, who advanced knowledge in academia, and who are mentoring the next wave of talent. Through photographs, narratives, and reflections, it captures how women from IIT Delhi have left an indelible mark across disciplines and geographies.

More than a chronicle of achievements, Her@IITD is a tribute to the spirit of possibility. It honours those who came before, applauds those who thrive today, and inspires those who will walk these corridors tomorrow. Together, their journeys form the story of an institution evolving with its times stronger, more inclusive, and ever more inspiring.

FOREWORD

Prof. Rangan Banerjee
Director, IIT Delhi.

I am delighted to introduce the Coffee Table Book showcasing the achievements of the alumnae of our Institute. In the early years women engineers and scientists were pioneers and faced several hurdles and challenges. The alumnae featured in this book are trailblazers and leaders who serve as a source of inspiration for future generations of IIT Delhi students. Our alumnae have distinguished themselves in academics, industry, healthcare, public service and social impact. This book is being unveiled at our first ever alumnae meet. We believe that our alumnae will help propel IIT Delhi towards a future with gender parity in our students, faculty and staff and enable the Institute to reach its goal of being the pride of all Indians.

MESSAGE

Prof. Nilanjan Senroy
Dean, Alumni Relations

This publication is a tribute to the inspiring women of IIT Delhi whose journeys continue to motivate. This initiative is more than just a collection of profiles; it is a reflection of the potential and impact of our alumnae, who continue to redefine what is possible across industries and communities.

The women featured here represent diverse journeys, from researchers and entrepreneurs to changemakers in public service and beyond. Their stories remind us that the value of an IIT Delhi education extends far beyond academics, it nurtures confidence, shapes vision, and builds leaders for society.

KIRAN BEDI

PH.D | 1993



Former Lieutenant
Governor of
Puducherry

**I WROTE ONE OF THE
EXAMS WITH A WIRELESS
ON, BECAUSE THERE WERE
RIOTS IN SOME PARTS OF
DELHI AND I HAD TO LEAVE
AT ANY MOMENT**

Kiran Bedi traced her journey back to her early years in Amritsar, where she began her career as a lecturer in Political Science at Khalsa College for Women. Teaching, she said, was her first love—second only to the uniform. Yet, even as she enjoyed the classroom, she was drawn to the outdoors and to a life that demanded action, accountability, and courage.

“I didn’t want a nine-to-five job,” she recalled, describing how she turned down the stability of academia for the uncertainty of the Indian Police Service. For her, the IPS represented a space where justice could be immediate and where one could bring about real, systemic change.

Her decision was met with scepticism. Many advised her to reconsider her first preference for the IPS, warning her of the challenges awaiting a woman in uniform. But Kiran remained steadfast. Her conviction caught the attention of the then Home Minister, K.C. Pant, who encouraged her to follow her calling. In 1972, she made history as India’s first woman IPS officer — a moment that would define a career devoted to fearless service. Over the decades, she would go on to tackle issues from drug abuse and prison reform to crimes against women, always with an unwavering sense of purpose.

Kiran credits much of her resilience to her upbringing. Her parents, both strong believers in education and hard work, were her earliest mentors. “That’s what gave me the courage to keep going.”

Her role as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry was, as she reflects, among the most exciting chapters of her service life. It required her to bring together leadership, management,

empathy, and risk-taking to drive change. Her style of governance was rooted in teamwork, loyalty, and the belief that administration must always remain people-centred.

Many of her decisions, she noted, were deeply guided by her understanding of the law — a strength she attributed to her legal education. Pursuing a law degree from Delhi University while serving as a police officer was not easy, but it transformed her confidence and clarity as an administrator. “I wrote one of the exams with a wireless on, because there were riots in some parts of Delhi and I had to leave at any moment”, she said.

Balancing her professional duties with family life was never simple. During her tenure as DIG in Mizoram, she continued her part-time PhD from IIT Delhi while managing the rigours of field service. She spoke about the costs that came with such choices — her daughter’s disrupted schooling and her father’s health struggles. “There was a cost I paid,” she reflected, “but there was also purpose.”

At IIT Delhi, Kiran found mentors who would shape her intellectual and professional journey. She remembers Professors Nadir and Anuradha Sharma with particular fondness for their guidance. The research and documentation skills she honed during her doctoral work turned her into a writer. Over the years, she has authored numerous books on policing, leadership, and governance, each grounded in lived experience.

When asked what advice she would offer to working women professionals, her response was clear: “Be clear about your priorities. Define your own balance between work and family, to remain self-reliant, and to never stop learning”.

PADMASREE WARRIOR

B.TECH | 1982



**THE IIT YEARS GAVE
ME EVERYTHING—
CONFIDENCE, LIFELONG
FRIENDSHIPS, AND
A BELIEF THAT NO
CHALLENGE IS TOO BIG**



Founder,
President and
CEO - Fable

When Padmasree speaks about her journey, one can see her deep sense of purpose that has shaped her career. Today, she serves on the boards of some of the world's most recognised companies—Spotify, Mahindra, Scribd—while also nurturing her entrepreneurial endeavours through ventures like her own startup, Fable, which was recently acquired by Scribd. Her roles span governance, strategy, and compliance—areas where her engineering roots and leadership acumen converge.

Padmasree began her professional journey at Motorola Corporation as an engineer in the semiconductor division. Her trajectory through the company was evident through her ability to navigate both technical and strategic domains as she eventually rose to become Motorola's Chief Technology Officer. She has witnessed the radical transformation of the semiconductor and mobile industries—from the early days of basic cell phones to the smartphone revolution. Later, her move to Cisco saw her take on multiple leadership roles, including Chief Technology Officer, Head of Enterprise Engineering, and Chief Technology and Strategy Officer, where she continued to drive innovation across global teams.

Her entrepreneurial chapter began with Fable, a social platform for book lovers designed to bring reading communities together online. Launched just before the COVID-19 pandemic, Fable quickly resonated with younger readers, growing to nearly three million users worldwide. The platform's success led to its merging with Scribd, which shared the common vision of making storytelling more social, accessible, and participatory.

Yet, when asked about what truly shaped her professional foundation, Padmasree circles back to her years at IIT Delhi. She recalls the friendships, intellectual challenges, and enduring lessons that continue to influence her work. "IIT taught me humility, confidence, and how to solve problems in any circumstance," she says. She also reflects on the value of community



and the importance of supporting others in technical fields—a principle she has carried throughout her global career.

Balancing her many roles has required discipline and clarity. Padmasree describes herself as methodical: she begins each day with a list of priorities and emphasises goal-setting as a cornerstone of her approach. "It's easy to get caught up in the pace of the tech industry," she notes. "But passion and fulfilment should guide what you do. That's what sustains you."

Padmasree speaks warmly about the legacy of IIT Delhi and her hope that it continues to foster the same spirit of excellence and collaboration that defined her own experience. "The IIT years gave me everything—confidence, lifelong friendships, and a belief that no challenge is too big," she reflects.

Today, whether she's shaping corporate strategy in the boardroom or mentoring the next generation of innovators, Padmasree's story remains one of reinvention and resilience—a journey from the lecture halls of IIT Delhi to the highest echelons of global technology leadership.

GARGI MAHESHWARI

DUAL DEGREE | 1994



Vice President
Biologics Development,
Global Pharmaceutical
Development & Supply Bristol
Myers Squibb



IN STEM, THE RATIOS WERE ALWAYS SKEWED—WOMEN WERE ALWAYS OUTNUMBERED. BUT IIT DELHI TAUGHT ME THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE—HOLD MY OWN IN MALE-DOMINATED SPACES, TOUGHEN UP, AND PUSH THROUGH

Gargi's spirited childhood in Mysore was filled with her basketball practice, theatre rehearsals, and her fascination with mathematics and biology. As she grew up, exploring the world of possibilities, a little nudge from her uncle, also a professor at IIT Delhi, set her on a path that would not just shape her education but her way of being.

At IIT Delhi, she stepped into an environment as intense as it was transformative. The institute, she recalls, was not merely about academics—it instilled resilience, confidence, and a problem-solving mindset. “What IIT Delhi gave me wasn't just knowledge. It changed me into a person with grit, someone who could plough through any situation—personal or professional,” she says. Starting with little idea of what biochemical engineering even was, Gargi went on to receive IIT Delhi's Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) in 2025.

Her scientific journey deepened with a PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While mentors encouraged her toward academia, Gargi sought a career with direct impact on human lives. The clarity came during a talk by a chemical engineer who described the early days of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Gargi realised that her training in biochemical engineering could be combined with industry to deliver therapies to patients.

That conviction took her to Merck, where she began scaling the production of vaccines, biologics, and life-saving therapies. Her proudest achievement has been leading the development of Keytruda, an immunotherapy drug that has transformed the treatment of skin cancer. Under her leadership, the drug went from concept to regulatory approval globally in under three years—an astonishingly fast timeline for such a complex project. Today, Keytruda is the largest-selling drug in history, with sales topping \$25 billion, and Gargi is Vice President of Biologics Science & Technology at Merck.

Yet behind the professional milestones lay a personal journey just as demanding. Like many women in leadership, Gargi had her moments of self-doubt. She credits both her workplace and her family for creating the support systems that helped her navigate such pressure.



RENU MALHOTRA

M.S (PHYSICS) | 1983



**REUNITING AFTER
SO MANY YEARS
HAS BEEN A JOYFUL
EXPERIENCE BRINGING
BACK MEMORIES AND
STRENGTHENING OLD
FRIENDSHIPS FROM
OUR IIT DAYS**



Louise Foucar Marshall
Science Research Professor
and Regents Professor of
Planetary Sciences - The
University of Arizona

An IIT Delhi Distinguished Alumna (2006), Renu Malhotra began her academic journey with an M.S. in Physics from IIT Delhi, followed by a PhD from Cornell University. Today, she is a Professor at the Department of Planetary Sciences and the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, University of Arizona, USA.

Renu's research explores how planetary orbits evolve and what they reveal about the past and future of planets and smaller bodies in the solar system. Her work has deepened our understanding of orbital dynamics and planetary interactions that shape the architecture of our solar system.

Taking an unconventional career path after her PhD, Renu chose to join the relatively small and lesser-known Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston as a staff scientist, rather than pursuing multiple postdoctoral positions or joining a major research institution. Despite concerns from her mentors, she valued the independence and freedom to pursue her own research, a decision that shaped her scientific career.

Reflecting on her time at IIT Delhi, Renu describes it as an institution of excellence that brought together highly motivated and capable people with shared interests and ambitions. The intellectually vibrant and collaborative environment, she says, instilled in her the confidence to take on challenges and explore difficult problems.

Over the years, Renu has also maintained close connections with her IIT classmates, including the six women in her batch of 200, with whom she has reconnected in recent years. "Reuniting after so many years has been a joyful experience," she says, "bringing back memories and strengthening old friendships from our IIT days."

Among her many honours, Renu was elected to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2015. She is also a recipient of the Harold Urey Prize from the American Astronomical Society for her outstanding contributions to understanding Pluto and the dynamics of the solar system.



RAMA GOVINDARAJAN

B.TECH | 1984



Senior Professor and Dean
Academic, International
Centre for Theoretical
Sciences, TIFR Bengaluru



**IIT DELHI GAVE ME
FREEDOM, CONFIDENCE,
AND A SENSE OF WHAT I
WAS CAPABLE OF**

Rama works in fluid dynamics — the study of how fluids flow, often with particles suspended in them. It's a field that touches everything from aircraft design to climate modeling.

Her academic path began at IIT Delhi, where she earned a B.Tech in chemical engineering. Like many of her peers, she initially considered a career in the corporate world. "But somewhere along the way, the allure of academic inquiry took hold," she says. That curiosity led her to pursue a PhD in aerospace engineering at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), where her focus began shifting toward the physics of fluids. Currently, she is a professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTS-TIFR).

Her postdoctoral journey took her to Caltech, a move that further strengthened her foundations in theoretical and applied physics. Over time, her work evolved to focus on particle-laden flows and how these influence real-world phenomena like cloud formation.

Rama's path has not been without its share of challenges — particularly as a woman in the male-dominated engineering landscape of the 1980s and 90s. She remembers being one of the very few women in her class at IIT Delhi and later at IISc. Yet, she was quick to add, "I was fortunate to have supportive peers and mentors, which made a big difference."

Some incidents, however, left a lasting impression. She recounts being denied entry to a factory during a student training program simply because she was a woman. "The plant manager refused to let me in," she recalls. "But I stood my ground and eventually, he changed his mind." Another job opportunity at a chemical company that was IIT Delhi for recruiting young minds was similarly closed off to her due to her gender. "I was asked if I could play the Veena in an interview that was supposed to hire engineers. It was frustrating, but I learned to persist."

Rama's most rewarding role today is that of a mentor. She speaks passionately about informal mentoring, particularly for young women pursuing careers in science. Through one-on-one conversations, panel discussions, and talks at



various institutions, she provides guidance and encouragement.

Her mentorship is not limited to women, though. She speaks with great pride about her students, many of whom are now faculty members at premier institutions like the IITs. "Their success feels like my own."

Her time at IIT Delhi remains foundational. Coming from an all-girls school, the transition to a co-educational environment was a culture shock, she admits. The challenges weren't just social — they were linguistic and cultural, too. "I had to adapt to different ways of thinking," she says. But the experience broadened her perspective and helped shape her identity as a scientist and educator.

"IIT Delhi gave me freedom, confidence, and a sense of what I was capable of," she reflects. "It made me who I am today."

AARTI GUPTA

B.TECH | 1985



Professor (Department of
Computer Science),
Princeton University, US



**INNOVATION THRIVES
ON A VIRTUOUS
CYCLE BETWEEN
FOUNDATIONAL
RESEARCH AND REAL-
WORLD APPLICATION**

Long before computer science became a standalone B.Tech programme at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Aarti had already found her calling in computing. Raised in a family that placed deep value on education and hard work, she was drawn to science from an early age. When she joined IIT Delhi as an electrical engineering student, formal computer science did not yet exist as a degree. But courses in algorithms and data structures opened a new world. She discovered she loved programming — a passion that led her from electrical engineering to computer engineering for her master's, and eventually to a PhD in computer science at Carnegie Mellon University, where she immersed herself in logic and automated reasoning.

Her career has bridged industry and academia in a seamless arc. At NEC Labs, she worked at the frontier of research while collaborating with product teams to translate theory into practice. The experience reinforced her belief that innovation thrives on a virtuous cycle between foundational research and real-world application. Later, at Princeton University, she found deeper fulfilment in mentoring students — from undergraduates to PhD scholars — and inspiring more young women to enter computing.

A leader in formal methods and programming languages, Aarti develops logic-based techniques to verify the safety, security, and reliability of complex software systems at scale. Her pioneering industry work and foundational research earned her recognition as an Association for Computing Machinery Fellow in 2017.

Through it all, IIT Delhi's pursuit of excellence has remained her compass--guiding not only her research, but her conviction that technological innovation must be pursued responsibly and ethically.



CHANDRA VENKATARAMAN

B.TECH | 1985



**HOW DO HUMAN
ACTIVITIES, TECHNOLOGY,
AND EMISSIONS INTERACT
WITH THE ATMOSPHERE TO
SHAPE CLIMATE SYSTEMS,
AIR QUALITY, AND HUMAN
WELL-BEING?**



Professor of
Chemical Engineering,
IIT Bombay

Prof. Chandra Venkataraman's journey in science began at IIT Delhi, where she earned her B.Tech in Chemical Engineering in 1985. This early foundation set her on a global academic path—first to the University of California, Los Angeles, for her PhD, and then to Stanford University for postdoctoral research. These experiences shaped her scientific outlook before her work brought her back to India, where she would emerge as one of the country's most influential voices on climate and air quality.

In recognition of her exceptional contributions to academia and research, Prof. Chandra was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award by IIT Delhi in 2024, one of the institute's highest honours celebrating alumni whose work has created enduring national and global impact.

She is currently the Shobha Dixit Chair Professor in Chemical Engineering and Climate Studies at IIT Bombay and is internationally recognised for her expertise in aerosol science. At the heart of her research lies a fundamental question: how do human activities, technology, and emissions interact with the atmosphere to shape climate systems, air quality, and human well-being?

Through pioneering research, Prof. Chandra uncovered critical links between pollution particles, atmospheric processes, and climate impacts.

Her work demonstrated how aerosols can suppress monsoon rainfall and intensify heat waves across India, reshaping scientific understanding of climate–pollution interactions. Importantly, she expanded the focus on air pollution beyond urban centres to include non-urban geographies, informal sectors, and the complex interplay between local and regional emission sources.

With over 150 widely cited publications, a book, and four patents, her scholarly work has helped define the field. She has also played a pivotal role in building institutions and collaborative networks for climate research, including as the Founding Convener of the Interdisciplinary Programme in Climate Studies at IIT Bombay and National Coordinator of the COALESCE network.

A committed mentor and advocate for equity in science, Prof. Chandra's students today contribute to academia, national laboratories, and industry worldwide. Her contributions have been recognised with some of India's highest scientific honours, including fellowships of all Indian National Academies, the Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship, and the PRL Vikram Sarabhai Award.



NANDINI TRIVEDI

M.S (PHYSICS) | 1981



Professor - Department of
Physics, Ohio State University



**MOVING BEYOND
CONVENTIONAL THEORIES,
HER RESEARCH UNCOVERED
UNEXPECTED PHYSICS IN
THE TRANSITION FROM
SUPERCONDUCTING TO
INSULATING STATES**

Nandini Trivedi's journey in physics began at IIT Delhi, where she earned her MS in Physics in 1981. Driven by a curiosity about how matter behaves at its most fundamental level, she went on to complete her PhD at Cornell University in 1986. After spending a decade as a professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, she joined The Ohio State University in 2004, where she is now a Professor in the Department of Physics and a leading figure in the field of quantum materials.

Her work has been widely recognised. She was named a Distinguished Scholar of The Ohio State University in 2019, elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2020, and earlier honoured as a Fellow of the American Physical Society in 2010.

At the core of Trivedi's research lies a central question in modern physics: how do electrons and atoms, governed by quantum mechanics, organise themselves to form new phases of matter? Her research has significantly advanced the theoretical understanding of quantum materials, including superconductor-insulator transitions, high-temperature superconductivity, ultracold atomic gases, and topological materials such as Weyl semimetals and quantum spin liquids.

A defining feature of her work is its methodological innovation. She combines advanced numerical techniques, particularly quantum Monte Carlo simulations, with analytical methods and works closely with experimental groups to bridge theory and observation.

Superconductors materials that conduct electricity without resistance due to the collective behaviour of paired electrons are central to technologies ranging from MRI magnets to quantum information processing. Moving beyond conventional theories that focus on metal-to-superconductor transitions, Trivedi's research revealed unexpected physics in systems that undergo a direct transition from a superconducting to an insulating state. Her predictions of novel insulating phases, distinctive spectroscopic signatures, and the nature of

this transition have since been experimentally validated.

Her work on quantum spin liquids is equally influential. These exotic phases remain magnetically disordered even at the lowest temperatures, yet exhibit long-range quantum entanglement, a key ingredient for topological qubits in quantum computing. Trivedi's research has predicted new spin liquid states and clarified their properties.

Through her pioneering contributions, Nandini Trivedi has reshaped the theoretical landscape of quantum materials, leaving a lasting impact on both fundamental physics and emerging quantum technologies.

PUNITA KUMAR SINHA

B.TECH | 1985



**MY IIT DELHI YEARS
WERE FORMATIVE. YOU
LEARN TO CREATE YOUR
OWN SPACE AND TO ASK
FOR WHAT YOU THINK
YOU DESERVE**



Independent Director



Punita has many firsts to her name. Her courage and conviction define every chapter of her life. Growing up, she didn't even know what IIT was, and engineering wasn't a path that girls typically travelled. Once Punita was there, her journey into a male-dominated world began, where she was often the only woman in the room.

In her first two years at IIT Delhi, Punita was the sole woman in a class of fifty. She experimented with everything that came her way, whether it was acting in college theatre groups or competing in sports. She bagged one award after another.

"My IIT Delhi years were formative", she says. "You learn to create your own space and to ask for what you think you deserve."

Her clarity of purpose and confidence to stand her ground would later serve her well in the equally male-dominated world of finance, which took her to Wall Street. When she graduated, she quickly discovered that many companies simply didn't hire women engineers. "Girls need not apply", a phrase that was casually tossed around in the field of engineering when she started. Her internship at Larsen & Toubro was eye-opening. She saw engineers who had spent years at the same desk, and realised that wasn't the career she wanted.

So she pivoted. Punita moved into

finance, earning a PhD from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and once again, one of the very few women and the only Indian in her cohort. "Being a minority at IIT Delhi gave me the ability to deal with situations, in my PhD program, on Wall Street or later in boardrooms," she says.

Punita became the first Indian woman to make partner at Blackstone, one of the world's leading investment firms, a milestone not just for her, but for Indian women in global finance.

She saw India's market grow from \$100 billion to nearly \$4 trillion. Punita was at the forefront of shaping India's rise in global markets. At a time when few on Wall Street took India seriously, she became one of the first foreign investors to back Indian companies. "When I started investing in India, nobody wanted to meet Indian companies," she remembers. Ratan Tata and Aditya Birla would visit her office, convincing her to sell their stories to American investors. She backed many such corporates back then, which today have transformed the Indian markets.

After returning to India, Punita served on the asset management boards of major companies like Infosys, JSW Steel, and Lupin, continuing her journey of leadership across the marketing industry.

RAMYA VENKATARAMAN

B.TECH | 1997



Founder and CEO - Centre
for Teacher Accreditation
(CENTA) Private Limited



**BACK THEN, THE ONLY IDEA
THAT CAME TO MIND WAS
STARTING A SCHOOL. THAT
DREAM STAYED WITH ME
THROUGH IIT AND IIM,
EVEN AS I CHOSE A MORE
CONVENTIONAL CAREER PATH**



For someone who has spent almost two decades at McKinsey & Company advising global clients in the manufacturing sector, Ramya's pivot to education might seem like a leap. But for her, the journey has always been about building systems and driving change.

"I was interested in education from my school days," she says. "Back then, the only idea that came to mind was starting a school. That dream stayed with me through IIT and IIM, even as I chose a more conventional career path."

With a B.Tech from IIT Delhi and an MBA from IIM Calcutta, Ramya joined McKinsey straight from campus. While she built a successful consulting career, her interest in education remained strong. She volunteered with the Akanksha Foundation, helped Pratham expand nationally, and mentored several education initiatives.

In 2008, she decided not to postpone her passion any longer. When she shared this with McKinsey, the firm encouraged her to channel that passion through its organisation. Between 2009 and 2014, Ramya led McKinsey's education practice in India, working with governments, investors, and NGOs. She helped set up large-scale initiatives such as Teach for India, Azim Premji University, and the National Skill Development Corporation.

These years shaped her understanding of the education ecosystem. "I realised that the real breakdown happens in the classroom — when

teachers are unable to translate ideas into learning experiences. And even when they are trained to do that, we never ask what's in it for the teacher."

That insight led to the creation of CENTA — the Centre for Teacher Accreditation, which Ramya founded in 2014. Today, CENTA has grown into the world's largest professional platform for teachers, serving over two million educators.

Through certification, training, and career advancement opportunities, CENTA aims to make teaching a profession where competence and performance are recognised and rewarded. "In every other field—medicine, law, engineering—we are comfortable rewarding excellence," she points out. "But in teaching, we still expect people to give endlessly without asking for anything in return. That mindset needs to change."

For Ramya, CENTA was never just about training teachers; it was about building an ecosystem that respects and empowers them.

The decision to build CENTA crystallised during a visit to IIT Delhi's Rendezvous in 2013. "A close friend and I were there for just a few hours, and something about being back on campus reminded me of that old IIT feeling. A belief that you can start from anywhere and build something new has been the foundation for everything I have done since."

MINI THOMAS

PH.D | 1991



**SUPPORT
SYSTEMS ARE
ESSENTIAL.
OPPORTUNITIES
DON'T OFTEN
COME TWICE**



Dean (Faculty of
Engineering and
Technology), Professor
(Department of Electrical
Engineering), Jamia Milia
Islamia University, Delhi

Mini currently chairs the National Education Policy (NEP) Apex Committee at Jamia, a role that demands both strategic vision and addressing diverse challenges of a large, multidisciplinary university.

Mini began her academic career at the Delhi College of Engineering, where she spent five formative years before joining Jamia Millia Islamia in 1995. Reflecting on her journey, she spoke fondly of the intellectual freedom and innovation that Jamia afforded her. Over the years, she not only contributed to the institution's growth but also completed a successful three-year tenure as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology.

In 2016, Mini made history by becoming the first woman director of NIT Tiruchirappalli, one of India's premier engineering institutions. Her tenure, which lasted until December 2021, was marked by significant administrative and cultural shifts.

At Jamia and later at NIT Trichy, Mini demonstrated an unwavering commitment to academic excellence and institutional development. She played a crucial role in setting up new laboratories, securing external funding, and launching the first MTech program at Jamia.

She acknowledged the rarity of women in leadership roles within technical and scientific institutions and societal and professional challenges that come with such positions. "Support systems are essential," she emphasised, urging women to seize opportunities even when the odds seem daunting. "Opportunities don't often come twice".

Her own path, she admitted, was not without self-doubt. She has been through struggles that many women face in balancing professional aspirations with family responsibilities. For her, the key was a strong support network, both at home and in the workplace. "Women must be willing to step out of their comfort zones," she said, reflecting on how risk-taking has been central to her success.



Choosing electrical engineering for her doctoral research was a natural continuation of her academic trajectory. After completing her undergraduate studies, Mini pursued her PhD at IIT Delhi, having first experienced the competitive academic environment at IIT Madras during her postgraduate studies.

Her PhD years were particularly challenging—she balanced her studies with newly married life and pregnancy. Yet, with the guidance and understanding of her supervisor, Professor C.S. Indulkar, she successfully navigated the demanding world of research. She credits him for his mentorship, patience, and encouragement during one of the most transformative periods of her life.

The years at IIT Delhi left an indelible mark on Mini's professional and personal philosophy. The institute's rigorous approach to research instilled in her a sense of discipline and precision that would guide her throughout her career. She recalled juggling her PhD work while caring for her newborn—an experience that taught her the power of perseverance. Mentorship, she reflected, played a pivotal role not only in her academic success but also in shaping her as a future mentor to others.

SWATI BASU

PH.D | 1983



**IT'S DEEPLY
SATISFYING TO
SEE YOUR WORK
MAKE A REAL
DIFFERENCE IN
PEOPLE'S LIVES**



Former Scientific Secretary,
Office of Principal Scientific
Adviser - Government of
India

For over three decades, Swati has been involved in shaping India's weather forecasting systems. From decoding atmospheric patterns to guiding science policies, her journey reflects both scientific rigour and a commitment to societal impact.

Until recently, as a scientific secretary in the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser Government of India, Swati played a pivotal role in science advice policy in consonance with the national need as well as global development. Evidence-based policy initiatives were undertaken with a vision to make India a knowledge-driven economy by bringing together diverse departments, setting research priorities, and fostering collaborations across institutions.

Before moving into science policy, Swati built her career as an atmospheric scientist at the Ministry of Earth Sciences, where she led major initiatives in weather prediction and climate modelling. She served as Director of the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), one of India's most important centres for weather forecasting. Swati worked to strengthen medium-range weather forecasting, predicting weather conditions up to weeks in advance, a timescale crucial for agriculture and disaster preparedness. She recalls, "This was the time when India received its first supercomputer for weather prediction. For the first time, Indian scientists could run global models and assimilate data from satellites and ground stations. This reshaped India's forecast accuracy". One of the most memorable moments in Swati's career was being the first Indian woman to travel up to 80° North in the Arctic in 2013. During this seven-day expedition aboard in an ice-class vessel, alongside scientists from various member nations, she witnessed first-hand the profound effects of climate change—the melting sea ice and the alarming thinning of the ice sheets.

Swati's path to atmospheric science began with a background in physics and a



curiosity about real-world problems. After her graduation, when she was looking for opportunities to work on real-world applications, IIT-Delhi had just inaugurated its Centre for Atmospheric Sciences. Swati was excited to begin her PhD at IIT Delhi and was the first one to study air pollution modelling. Her thesis deepened her interest in the applications of environmental science. Accurate forecasts, she notes, have far reaching impacts— from helping farmers plan crop cycles to supporting fishermen and protecting communities from floods and storms. "It's deeply satisfying to see your work make a real difference in people's lives," she says.

Swati credits this culture of intellectual curiosity and problem-solving mindset to IIT Delhi. Swati recalls that one of the most enriching aspects of her time at IIT was the academic openness and exposure it offered. Interaction with visiting international experts—a regular feature at IIT. Swati says their director, Professor M.P. Singh, encouraged students to personally meet and engage with renowned scientists from various institutions. Though intimidating at first, these discussions built her confidence, broadened her thinking, and shaped her scientific outlook.



UPASNA AGARWAL

PH.D | 2017



**NOW, I WRITE MY OWN
PROTOCOLS, DO MY OWN
STATISTICS, AND DESIGN
STUDIES INDEPENDENTLY.
THROUGH IIT, I LEARNED
TO THINK FOR MYSELF, AND
THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING**



Director - National Institute of
Tuberculosis and Respiratory
Diseases

For Upasna, medicine was never just a profession—it was a calling born from empathy. Physician in internal medicine, she began her career at the National Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases, where she first treated patients with TB and its many complications. When the government launched its national HIV programme in 2005, she was assigned to manage HIV patients—an assignment that soon became her life's purpose.

Confronted by the deep stigma faced by HIV patients, Upasna refused to turn away. She began documenting patient outcomes, building trust, and slowly transforming the way her colleagues saw HIV care.

Upasna is now the director of the National Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases, but her prominent achievement, she says, is ICTC/ART Centre, which began as a humble three-by-six-foot room.

"It was tiny," she recalls, "but my patients started coming. They felt cared for". Then came a turning point: an opportunity to write a grant to the Ministry of Health for a dedicated facility. The proposal was approved—a modest sum, but one that transformed everything. "I stood there and made the maps myself," she says. I stood there through the construction, and one fine day, we finally shifted into our own centre."

That centre, now a state-of-the-art HIV care facility, offers a compassionate, welcoming space for patients. "I wanted them to look forward to coming," she says softly. "To feel that this place belonged to them." It was a service that not only provided medical treatment but also restored dignity and hope to patients who had been abandoned by society.

Alongside her clinical work, Upasna leads pioneering research on HIV-TB co-infection. Her studies focus on early diagnosis in immunocompromised patients, drug resistance, and the use of artificial intelligence for chest X-ray analysis to aid diagnosis in remote areas.

A proud alumna of IIT Delhi, Upasna



describes her time there as a turning point in her understanding of research.

"The academic atmosphere I got at IIT Delhi helped me realise how organic research can be. You start with an idea, and by the end of your PhD, you might be in a completely different place. I learned what scientific thinking truly means."

Before IIT, she says, she was implementing other people's research protocols; afterwards, she began writing her own. "For the first time, I understood what research really is," she reflects. "Now, I write my own protocols, do my own statistics, and design studies independently. Through IIT, I learned to think for myself, and that changed everything".

Her journey, marked by personal loss and professional resilience, has also shaped her as a mentor and leader. After the death of her husband, she found strength in her work, her family, and her patients. "IIT Delhi taught me the value of perseverance, to put my head down, work hard, and stay focused no matter how tough the journey gets", she says. It instilled in me a sense of resilience and discipline, the ability to push through challenges and stay committed to my goals until I see them through.

ANJU GUPTA

B.TECH | 1993



Co Founder &
President - IvyCap Ventures



**I DIDN'T HAVE A CLEAR
ROADMAP AFTER B.TECH,
BUT I WAS CERTAIN
THAT I WASN'T GOING TO
FOLLOW THE USUAL PATHS
OF IAS OR AN MBA**

Anju's journey began with a B.Tech in civil engineering at IIT Delhi, a chapter in her personal and professional life that she remembers with undimmed excitement. For her, IIT Delhi was far more than classrooms and coursework—it was where she discovered lifelong friendships and learned the value of perseverance. The intensity of those years, she says, prepared her to step off the beaten path, equipping her with the discipline to take on challenges that would define her non-traditional career.

"I didn't have a clear roadmap after B.Tech, but I was certain that I wasn't going to follow the usual paths of IAS or an MBA," says Anju. So her next stop was Stanford University, where she pursued a PhD in earthquake engineering. Post her doctorate, she spent 15 years in the field of disaster risk management, developing financial models for some of the world's leading insurance companies.

Anju always wanted to contribute to IIT Delhi. After spending more than a decade in the US, when she came to India, her desire to "give back" to IIT turned into reality when she met Vikram Gupta, her batchmate from IIT Delhi, who is the Founder and Managing Partner at IvyCap, which is also instrumental in setting up IIT Delhi's endowment fund, first in the country. As she started working with IvyCap Ventures, Anju dedicated herself to empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs through an ecosystem where research, innovation, and entrepreneurship come together to power the country's most ambitious start-ups.

Anju was recently recognised by the prestigious Hurun's List of Women Leaders 2025 for value creation. For Anju, value creation in the startup ecosystem is about helping founders succeed, helping founders connect with corporates for successful collaborations, or enabling investors and

mentors to make a difference.

"If an entrepreneur secures funding, a startup engages successfully with the industry—it all counts as value. For me, it's about creating value wherever I can, for every player in the ecosystem—be it a founder, an alum, an investor, a corporate, or a mentor", she says.

For Anju, the lessons from IIT Delhi—hard work, independence, relationship-building, and learning from mistakes—remain the foundation of her professional and personal life. "IIT Delhi opens doors in more ways than you can imagine," she reflects, a sentiment that continues to guide her work in shaping India's startup ecosystem.



NISHA DHAWAN

PH.D | 2020



President & CEO
- EMpower - The Emerging
Markets Foundation



**IIT DELHI GAVE ME
THE TOOLS TO THINK
CRITICALLY, TO ENGAGE
WITH DATA RIGOROUSLY,
AND TO STAY GROUNDED IN
RESEARCH EVEN AS I LED
PROGRAMS ON THE GROUND**

From the trading floors of global finance to the grassroots of gender equity in India, Nisha Dhawan's journey is anything but conventional. Now the CEO of Empower, she reflects on her winding path.

Nisha comes from a family of immigrants. Her mother worked full-time, and her father shared the household responsibilities. From a young age, she witnessed what independence and gender equality looked like in practice, which she says shaped her in more ways than one. "I have always been drawn to questions of equity and justice", she says.

At McGill University, she found a language for things she had felt intuitively — especially around gender and politics. Her next stop at London School of Economics and Political Sciences helped her go deeper, but unsure of pursuing an academic career, she pivoted to finance.

In 2011, she quit her job and started teaching at Symbiosis, Pune, which rekindled her love for academia. Eventually, her experiences in women studies and politics, led to her role at Empower. Even then, she felt the pull towards research, which led her to apply for a PhD at IIT Delhi.

"Challenging yet rewarding", she says. "There was some initial skepticism. I didn't come from an engineering or tech background, after all, but I was fortunate to be mentored by Dr. Ravinder Kaur. Nisha says that balancing a full-time job, motherhood, and a PhD was no small feat, but the academic rigor and support at IIT Delhi carried her through.

"IIT Delhi gave me the tools to think critically, to engage with data rigorously, and to stay grounded in research even as I led programs on the ground", she adds. "The ecosystem, faculty and community was incredibly supportive, especially during my pregnancy. It's a space that gave me both the intellectual grounding and the confidence to lead with clarity", says Nisha. She admires that though IIT is a science institute, it has been able to attract and support the humanities and social sciences talent that the country has.

One of the most memorable moments in her journey at IIT Delhi came during a work in progress seminar in 2017. She was eight months pregnant. Halfway through the presentation, she had to sit down to continue. When she

walked out, she broke down—not out of joy, but from sheer overwhelm. She had just completed a major academic milestone, only three weeks before giving birth.

For her, that moment perfectly captured what IIT Delhi represented: an enabling ecosystem that supported her as a person, while never compromising on academic rigor. Her work had to meet the high standards expected of a PhD. But the community at IIT, she says, ensured she had the support she needed to succeed.

Nisha is now leading Empower from India, which is both symbolic and strategic. Nisha states that global development leadership doesn't have to sit in the Global North. At Empower she is committed to deepen its impact, especially in areas where gender norms continue to hold women back.



RANJEETA NANDA

B.TECH | 2000



- Founder and CEO, Park
Circle Technologies

- President, IIT Delhi
Endowment Fund (US)



**I GOT INVOLVED AFTER
RECONNECTING WITH
FACULTY AND ALUMNI
WHO WANTED TO
STRENGTHEN THE BOND
BETWEEN IIT DELHI AND
ITS GLOBAL COMMUNITY**



Driven by a passion for technology, impact and community, Ranjeeta leads across multiple fronts as President of the US nonprofit entity for the IIT Delhi Endowment Fund, Founder and CEO of Park Circle Technologies— a data engineering and AI solutioning company, Partner at ShortHills AI and mother to 2 boys.

Ranjeeta's journey began at IIT Delhi, where she pursued Textile Technology before transitioning to Computer Science during her master's program at Georgia Tech, followed by an Executive Master's in Tech Management at Columbia University. The shift, she says, was driven by curiosity and a desire to work at the intersection of systems and innovation.

Her early career took her through roles at Merkle, Microsoft, Nordstrom, and Audible, where she worked across software engineering, program management, and enterprise systems. At Microsoft, she recalls, "I grew from being an individual contributor to managing diverse teams. That experience shaped how I lead today."

After years in corporate tech, Ranjeeta decided to build something of her own. Balancing her career with family life, she launched Park Circle Technologies, focusing on AI and data-driven solutions for clients.

"Entrepreneurship teaches you resilience," she says. "We have had our share of highs and lows—losing contracts, adapting to changing

technologies—but every challenge came with a lesson."

As an entrepreneur in the age of rapid technological change, Ranjeeta is deeply immersed in the evolving world of AI. "You have to constantly learn," she says. "Every few months, there's a new model or platform. But that's what makes this space so exciting."

Looking back, Ranjeeta credits IIT Delhi for shaping her foundational mindset. "The engineering training taught me to think systematically, to lead, and to stay curious," she says. Her connection with the institute has come full circle through her role at the IIT Delhi Endowment Foundation, where she leads the US chapter.

"I got involved after reconnecting with faculty and alumni who wanted to strengthen the bond between IIT Delhi and its global community," she explains. Her work focuses on enabling alumni to contribute to the institute's growth and legacy. "It is about giving back to the place that gave me so much."

Ranjeeta's elder son recently spent time at IIT Delhi through an exchange program, an experience that reignited her personal connection to the campus.

As a working mother and entrepreneur, Ranjeeta acknowledges that balance is an ongoing process. "As an entrepreneur, I have more flexibility—though the responsibility is entirely mine." She values the growing network of women entrepreneurs and leaders within the IIT community. "It's wonderful to see more women coming together to support one another."

ARUNA SUBRAMANIAN

B.TECH | 1992



**SO WHEN
SCHLUMBERGER
CAME TO CAMPUS,
PROMISING TRAVEL,
ADVENTURE, AND THE
CHANCE TO SEE THE
WORLD. I JUST KNEW
THAT'S WHAT I WANTED**



Managing Director -
SABIC Ventures - The
Netherlands



Aruna's professional journey is a blend of technical expertise, global exposure, and leadership across industries. With over two decades in venture capital, she currently heads the corporate venturing arm of SABIC, a leading chemicals company based in Riyadh. Her role involves steering investments in areas critical to the future—energy transition, circular economy, and sustainable agriculture—through teams spread across China, the United States, Europe, and Saudi Arabia.

Aruna's career began far from the world of finance. After completing her engineering degree at IIT Delhi, she joined Schlumberger, one of the most demanding environments in the oil and gas sector. Working on offshore platforms in the North Sea and Indonesia, she was among the few women in such physically intense roles at the time. Her early years at Schlumberger included stints in field operations, as a training centre instructor, and in launching new products.

"When I graduated in 1992, especially as a female engineering graduate, the options were mostly office-based — engineering consultancies, or, if you were a civil engineer, then IAS. But I wanted to travel, to be independent and not do the conventional", says Aruna. "So when Schlumberger came to campus, promising travel, adventure, and the chance to see the world. I just knew that's what I wanted".

At Schlumberger, she was often pushed beyond her comfort zone, performing physically demanding tasks and working in remote offshore environments. These experiences built her resilience and gave her the confidence to navigate male-dominated industries with grace and tenacity.

After several years in the energy sector, Aruna pursued an MBA at the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland, a decision that proved pivotal. This experience was not just an academic exercise but a deep personal transformation. She recalls the strong focus on authentic leadership— one grounded in self-awareness and integrity.

Aruna's career has been marked by constant evolution. Post-MBA, Aruna transitioned into venture capital, beginning her journey with Shell's venture arm before taking on leadership roles at SABIC. Alongside these roles, she also ran her own consultancy, advising on innovation and investment strategy. Her move into finance was driven by the need for greater innovation and profitability in a rapidly evolving global innovation market.

Reflecting on her time at IIT Delhi, Aruna describes it as both demanding and formative. Being among the few female students in a rigorous engineering program presented unique challenges, but it also strengthened her determination and problem-solving skills. The environment encouraged intellectual curiosity, collaboration, and the drive to excel, traits that carried forward into her personal and professional life.

One of the most meaningful aspects of Aruna's IIT Delhi experience has been the lifelong friendships she built there. These bonds, forged through shared challenges and triumphs, remain a vital support system in her life. She fondly recalls organising theatre productions and fundraising for the Rendezvous festival, experiences that nurtured her creativity and leadership at an early stage.

VRINDA THAREJA

M.SC (PHYSICS) | 2009



Founder & CEO - CO₂toO₂ Inc.

When Vrinda Thareja founded CO₂to O₂ Inc. about a year ago, she set out to answer a bold question: What if industrial smokestacks could breathe oxygen? Her Bay Area-based climate-tech startup is developing nanophotonics-based plug-and-play devices that attach directly to industrial smokestacks and convert CO₂ emissions into oxygen at the point of release – a radically new approach that eliminates pipelines, transport, and the heavy infrastructure normally associated with industrial decarbonization. She is building this technology in close collaboration with multiple Stanford faculty and early industrial partners across the U.S., Europe, and India.

Vrinda's journey to founding her company began long before the startup itself. After completing her master's in physics at IIT Delhi, she moved to Stanford for a PhD in graphene optics and nanophotonics, diving deep into the science of light-matter interaction. While wrapping up her PhD, she was selected among a small cohort of students for Stanford Ignite, a program at the Graduate School of Business that brings scientists and engineers into the world of venture creation. Working with a team to develop a wearable device for the visually impaired and pitching the concept to venture capitalists gave her her first real taste of entrepreneurship,

blending technology and business for impact.

Yet she chose to first build inside world-class companies to learn how transformative ideas become real products. At Apple, she joined the Optical Sensing organization and led the launch of multiple generations of ambient light sensors across Mac portables. She also worked on early-stage health sensing prototypes, guiding a team that translated ambiguous and complex optical concepts into tangible hardware.

She later joined Corning, where she played a leading role in the commercialization of metasurfaces, a frontier nanophotonics technology. She led a team responsible for defining system optical metrics for Corning's smart windows product – establishing how users would perceive clarity, comfort, and visual quality – and worked with the augmented reality business division to shape waveguide optical combiner technology roadmaps, including technical engagements with global AR customers. Recognizing her leadership, Corning nominated her for its Women in Leadership program and selected her for a senior ten-member committee with Research Directors and Research Fellows tasked with defining performance metrics for its global R&D organization of roughly 3,000 employees.

Climate became the turning point she could no longer overlook. Each winter visit to Delhi made the crisis impossible to ignore, the stark contrast between California's blue skies and her hometown's smog-filled grey brought home the human cost of climate change. What had once felt theoretical became deeply personal, rooted in the lived reality of cities and communities.

Vrinda traces her courage and curiosity to her time at IIT Delhi, where questioning was encouraged and curiosity often led to discovery. She recalls how a spontaneous question she asked Professor V. K. Tripathi was transformed into a real research problem, an experience that captured IIT Delhi's spirit of inquiry. That mindset continues to guide her today, as she channels the same fearless curiosity into building CO₂to O₂ Inc., turning a question into a company with global promise.

POOJA GOYAL

B.TECH | 1996



Founding Chief Executive Officer - The Udaiti Foundation

After a distinguished 27-year career in the private sector spanning strategy consulting, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles at global technology firms, Pooja has dedicated herself to advancing women's participation in India's formal economy. Today, at the Udaiti Foundation, she is driving systemic change by tackling the deep-rooted structural barriers that limit women's economic empowerment.

About 51% of women graduate from colleges. But only 18% participate in the formal economy. We are sitting on this large talent pool which is not able to contribute because of systemic barriers – from inadequate infrastructure and restrictive policies to persistent societal expectations”, says

Pooja. “I started some of these patterns when my daughters were growing up. Many gender-related factors were affecting her career decisions right from the school”.

Her work at the Udaiti Foundation aims to dismantle these barriers and build supportive ecosystems that enable women to achieve financial independence. She believes that financial independence has a profound cascading effect, strengthening families, communities, and the broader economy.

Before transitioning to the social sector, Pooja spent about three decades building a versatile career across continents and industries. She began in strategy consulting, later taking on corporate roles at pioneering technology firms and later at Adobe.

After returning to India, Pooja's interest in her children's developing minds drew her to early learning and cognitive neuroscience, leading her to co-found Intellitots with a fellow IIT Delhi alum. Seeking impact at scale, she later built Avishkaar, a K-12 education venture that integrated technology and AI coding, setting up nearly 3,000 robotics labs across India and parts of Africa.

Initially convinced that merit alone mattered, Pooja's experiences in fundraising and mentoring revealed the subtle persistence of systemic bias. She came to view gender disparity as a structural flaw, realising that true meritocracy must be intentionally built by dismantling barriers to fair recognition of talent.

Pooja attributes much of her career to her formative years at IIT Delhi. “Being at a place like IIT completely transformed my life - it lifted me into a different orbit. That transformation touched my entire family in such a positive way. It showed me the power of education to change lives, and that belief inspired me to create Intellitots and later contribute to institutions like Plaksha and Ashoka University.”

She credits IIT with cultivating two key habits that have shaped her approach: first-principles thinking to break down complex problems, and the confidence to trust her analysis. Secondly, resilience comes from balance; nurturing professional, personal, and creative identities rather than losing yourself in only one dimension.

SWATI VASUDEVAN

B.TECH | 1996



Managing Director - The Khan Academy

Swati's career reads like a story of constant reinvention — one that has witnessed the depths of oil rigs, the boardrooms of global corporations, and the frontlines of India's online education revolution. Today, as the Managing Director of Khan Academy, she leads one of the most ambitious efforts to transform how millions of Indian students learn. Swati's professional journey began in the oil and gas sector, where she worked with Schlumberger after graduating from IIT Delhi. Her early years were spent on oil rigs across multiple countries in a gruelling yet transformative environment. "It was intense — night shifts, long hours, high-risk environment, and very little work-life balance," she recalls.

Eager to expand her horizons, Swati decided to pursue an MBA at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, seeking exposure to new industries and global perspectives. Post-MBA, she joined McKinsey & Company as a consultant, navigating a demanding role while caring for a newborn. "It taught me prioritisation, empathy, and the ability to stay calm under pressure," she says.

Her next move was to SYSCO Foods, a B2B service company, where she led strategic projects and discovered a love for business transformation. This was followed by Swati joining Sleep Number, a smaller consumer product company, to head strategy. There, she faced one of the toughest challenges of her career: sales were plummeting, and the company was on the brink of collapse. Swati's analysis uncovered a signal of a looming economic downturn well in advance that not only saved Sleep Number from bankruptcy, but positioned it to rebound quickly when the economy recovered. "It was one of the most satisfying experiences of my life", she says.

After years in the U.S., she made a switch from corporate leadership to the development sector. She worked with the UN and Safe Water Network, managing grassroots projects in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, often in extreme conditions and with uncertain funding. The experience of India's social landscape strengthened her commitment to impact-driven social work.

Her next chapter took her to Schneider Electric, followed by her most significant tenures at the Gates Foundation India Office. Under her leadership as the COO, it expanded to 27 programs with a \$1 billion portfolio, spanning public health, gender equity, financial inclusion, agriculture, and sanitation.

After her mother's passing, Swati took time to reset, contributing to the founding of the Indian School of Public Policy before joining Khan Academy. The move reflected both personal conviction and long-term vision. For her, education is the most powerful lever for change - one where even small improvements in learning outcomes can create generational impact and shape economic growth. Her journey is anchored in the resilience and analytical rigour she developed at IIT Delhi. The intense academic pressure, gender imbalance, and high expectations were challenging, but they sharpened her problem-solving skills and persistence. The collaborative culture, late-night problem sets, shared struggles, and lasting friendships built her confidence and prepared her to navigate male-dominated spaces and unfamiliar sectors with ease.

SURABHI YADAV

DUAL DEGREE | 2014



Founder and CEO - Sajhe Sapne

When Surabhi Yadav left her home in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh to study at IIT Delhi, she had no idea that the journey would one day circle back to the same question that had quietly shaped her childhood: How do we create opportunities for employment and agency for women in rural India?

“My parents always believed that education wasn’t just for personal success,” she recalls. “It was important to serve the villages they grew up in.” That belief became a quiet compass through every stage of her life, guiding her from the lecture halls of IIT Delhi to the far-flung corners of India, where she now works with women who have long been excluded from formal education and employment.

After completing her B.Tech & M.Tech Dual degree at IIT Delhi, Surabhi chose an unconventional path. She stayed back on campus for two more years, refusing to be part of the placements to figure out what “meaningful work” would look like for her. “I was clear that I wanted to contribute to the social sector,” she says. “I just didn’t know how.”

She credits her mentors, Prof. Ambuj Sagar and Prof. P.V.M. Rao, for helping her find direction. “I was lucky to have professors who taught me how to think critically, how to channel all that energy into something meaningful,” she says. “They didn’t just teach problem-solving, they taught problem framing—which is perhaps more powerful.”

Her curiosity and commitment led her to the University of California, Berkeley, where she deepened her understanding of complex social systems. “Berkeley gave my ideas a language,” she says.

Out of that exploration grew Sajhe Sapne, a nonprofit dedicated to helping young rural women build long-term, meaningful careers in the mainstream workforce, far beyond the limited roles traditionally available in villages.

Its flagship program is a 12–15 month “mini-MBA,” designed in simple Hindi and English, where women learn project management, coding, communication, and other professional skills. “We then connect them with employers who value unconventional talent,” Surabhi explains, “and who are open to hiring from non-traditional backgrounds.”

Looking back, Surabhi credits IIT Delhi not just for her education, but for shaping her spirit. “IIT gave me two big gifts — problem-solving skills and a community,” she says. “Even today, whenever we run a crowdfunding campaign, so many people from IIT Delhi, batchmates, professors, even distant acquaintances contribute. It always surprises me who’s watching and supporting this work.”

What she values most from her IIT years is the culture of exploration. “To me, having a supportive community and the confidence to explore is huge. Because if we don’t explore, who will?” she says. “Of course, the IIT name gives you credibility, but more importantly, it gives you the courage to take risks.”

DIVYA GUPTA

DUAL DEGREE | 2011



Principal Researcher
at Microsoft Research India

With a deep-rooted passion for problem-solving and mathematical rigor, Divya has carved a unique path in the world of cryptography and secure multi-party computation. Currently working at Microsoft Research, they bring together theoretical depth and practical implementation to advance the field of secure computing.

With a PhD in cryptography and security from UCLA, Divya has spent years developing protocols that form the foundation of secure digital interactions. Initially enrolled in a dual degree program at IIT Delhi, it was the early exposure to computer science courses that sparked Divya's fascination with the field. What drew her in was logical thinking and structured problem-solving.

She describes it as a foundational way of thinking, one that still underpins her current research. The rigor and challenges of those early courses helped shape her analytical mindset and fostered a lasting interest in computer science.

After completing their PhD, Divya was open to both academic and industrial research careers. Ultimately, she was drawn to the collaborative environment at Microsoft Research, which offered a contrast to the often solitary nature of academia.

At Microsoft, she found an ecosystem that encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration. She shared an example of a project that brought together cryptographers, programming languages experts, and systems researchers—all working toward the shared goal of making secure multi-party computation more practical and scalable. This kind of synergy, she believes, is where impactful research thrives.

Reflecting on her undergraduate years, Divya describes her time at IIT Delhi as some of the most formative of her life. IIT Delhi was both intense and intellectually stimulating, fostering not just technical skills but also personal growth. Surrounded by brilliant peers and immersed in a culture of academic excellence, she was constantly challenged and inspired. Those years laid the groundwork for her career, instilling the confidence and resilience needed for research and industry.

Like any researcher, Divya faced setbacks—one of the most memorable being the rejection of their first academic paper. She speaks candidly about the disappointment and self-doubt that followed but emphasises the critical role of a supportive advisor and lab environment in helping them bounce back.

One of the achievements she is most proud of is helping transform secure multi-party computation from a theoretical idea into a practical tool. Once seen as too slow or complex for real-world applications, her research team at Microsoft Research is the first one to develop such solutions. In a landmark project, their team collaborated with Stanford University and a lab in Delhi to test machine learning models on sensitive patient data without ever exposing the data itself. It was a perfect demonstration of cryptography enabling both privacy and utility.

According to her, crossing disciplinary boundaries doesn't just solve technical challenges—it also broadens one's thinking and leads to more widely applicable and impactful solutions.

She encourages young researchers to engage across fields and actively seek feedback, believing that diverse perspectives lead to breakthroughs that no single discipline could achieve alone.

DAKSHITA KHURANA

B.TECH | 2012



Associate Professor of Computer Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dakshita Khurana's academic journey reflects a rare blend of intellectual rigor and originality. She began at IIT Delhi, earning a B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering (Power) in 2012. Driven by curiosity about computation and security, she pursued a PhD in Computer Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, completing it in 2018.

Following her doctorate, Dakshita spent a year as a postdoctoral researcher at Microsoft, where she continued to work at the forefront of theoretical computer science. In 2019, she joined the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as an Assistant Professor, beginning her independent academic career at a leading global research university.

Her research lies at the heart of theoretical cryptography, a field that underpins privacy and security in the digital world. She has made foundational contributions to cryptographic protocols, particularly in privacy-preserving proof systems and techniques to prevent man-in-the-middle attacks. More recently, her work has extended to the foundations of quantum cryptography, addressing questions that will shape secure communication in the quantum era.

The depth and significance of her research have earned international recognition. Her work has been featured as a long plenary talk at the Quantum Information Processing conference and published by invitation in the SIAM Journal on Computing. She has also received top-paper awards at premier conferences such as STOC and FOCS, distinctions reserved for only the most influential contributions.

Dakshita's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and DARPA, along with research gifts from Visa Research, C3AI, and Jump ARCHES. In 2020, she was named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in Science. She has also been a Google Research Fellow at the Simons Institute, Berkeley.

Earlier in her career, her doctoral work was recognised with several honours, including the UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship, the UCLA Computer Science Outstanding Graduating PhD Award, and Graduate Student Research Awards from Symantec and Cisco.

TULIKA RAJ

B.TECH | 2002



Co-Founder & CEO
SunGreenH2 Pte Ltd

A month into sketching architecture plans and drafting designs, Tulika had a quiet revelation — architecture wasn't her calling. It was problem-solving that truly energised her, and engineering was where she belonged.

That realisation led her to electrical engineering at IIT Delhi, a place she credits not just with technical training but with shaping her resilience and perspective. "For me, IIT was never just about degrees," she reflects. "It was about learning how to identify the right problems and solve them."

Her first internship took her to the oil rigs of Andhra Pradesh, where she was often the youngest and sometimes the only woman engineer. Her career continued in challenging geographies – Kazakhstan, Norway, and beyond – each place offering a new frontier to explore.

The deeper she got into the commodities and energy sector, the more she craved a broader perspective. That drive led her to pursue an MBA at London Business School, a turning point that redirected her career toward alternative energy.

As she graduated, Tulika stepped into the clean technology space, holding leadership roles at Schlumberger, BP, Denham Capital, and Octopus Investments. But it was in founding SunGreenH2 that her vision found its focus.

SunGreenH2 is a venture-backed startup that aims to supercharge green hydrogen production through advanced electrolyzers. For Tulika, the mission is clear: "We want to make green hydrogen cheap enough to replace fossil fuels in heavy industries like steel, cement, and chemicals."

Her belief in decarbonization is practical, urgent, and deeply rooted in science.

"It's clear that decarbonization is not optional. Wherever we can electrify with renewables like wind and solar, we must. But there are sectors where direct electrification is not possible, and for those, alternative decarbonised solutions must be found."

SunGreenH2 is her answer to that challenge. "From day one," she says, "we have been on a pathway to use advanced materials-based components to make green hydrogen cheaper to compete directly with grey hydrogen."

There was a moment when some of the biggest players began pulling out of green energy — but Tulika didn't. She held her ground.

"The confidence came from years in the industry, but also from the engineering mindset I developed at IIT Delhi," she shares. "That problem-solving attitude, that persistence — it's what carried me through the wobbly moments."

Looking ahead, Tulika is eager to give back to the IIT community that shaped her. She believes in the power of alumni engagement, mentorship, and inspiration. "We need to continuously support and guide the next generation of engineers and entrepreneurs," she says, because the problems ahead are only getting bigger, and they will need bold solutions.

MONICA BHATIA

DUAL DEGREE | 2003



Founder & CEO - EQUII

Equii, Monica Bhatia's food-tech startup, began not in a lab or a boardroom, but in her kitchen. Her idea was deceptively simple but technically demanding: re-engineer flour so that it retained the taste and texture of bread, pasta, or roti, while packing in the protein that Indian diets sorely lack.

"Indian diets are among the cleanest in the world. Yet, we have high rates of metabolic and lifestyle diseases. The gap, I realised, was in protein". This realisation was the origin of Equii — a company built on the promise of making balanced, accessible, and enjoyable nutrition. This year, Monica marked four years of building Equii.

But long before Monica founded Equii, she was shaping her foundations at IIT Delhi, where she studied biotechnology. "IIT was where engineering came to life for me. It taught me to fearlessly plunge into something entirely new and build from scratch," she says.

IIT also gave her something beyond academics—the ability to thrive in diversity. Living and learning with diverse peers with different values and perspectives. "Often, I was the only woman engineer in the room. Experience at IIT gave me confidence at a time when role models for women in engineering or entrepreneurship were rare."

Although after B.Tech, Monica pursued a PhD in biochemistry, studying proteins and human physiology, her instinct was always to return to engineering. "If, after enabling and training myself, I couldn't choose my own path, what was the point? I didn't want to settle for something I didn't enjoy," she says.

Finally, she entered the industry, where she spent 15 years scaling sustainable products as part of what she calls the global "sustainability revolution". As the industry shifted from sustainable fuel to sustainable food, Monica began to see a deeper purpose. "With food, sustainability is only part of the puzzle. Nutrition and food security matter just as much. That spoke to me very deeply."

Combining her learnings from industry and engineering skills, she shaped and grew Equii. Soon after, recognition followed: Oprah Winfrey featured Equii bread on her Instagram, and Vinod Khosla, an IIT Delhi alumnus himself, not only endorsed but invested after tasting it.

For Monica, the throughline has always been her IIT training. "Each time I switched fields, from academics to engineering to entrepreneurship, I had to learn from scratch. IIT gave me the confidence to do that," she reflects. Monica Bhatia has built a career at the intersection of science, sustainability, and nutrition. For her, food is not just fuel—it is a way to close the gaps in health and equity across the world.

GAZAL KALRA

B.TECH | 2007



Co-founder - NUKK

Gazal's journey as an entrepreneur began with a simple but powerful belief — that India deserves high-performance, better-engineered products that are not only functional but intuitive, with strong sensory appeal. What started as an idea to elevate product quality soon transformed into a design-first approach to consumer goods, marrying deep engineering with human-centric thinking. The result was Nukk, a company born out of a desire to serve the needs of modern India with precision, purpose, and innovation.

Her entrepreneurial drive was shaped early on during her years at IIT Delhi, where a speech by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam left a lasting impression. IITians should not be job seekers but job creators — a call to action that Gazal took to heart. Motivated by this vision, she and her peers founded the Entrepreneurship Development Cell at IIT Delhi. Today, nearly two decades later, that initiative continues to thrive, having incubated numerous successful startups and fostering a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem on campus.

After completing her B.Tech, Gazal joined McKinsey, where she was exposed to a wide range of industries, from traditional businesses to high-impact social sector projects. The experience gave her a panoramic view of the challenges and opportunities in the Indian economy. Yet it was her growing interest in national development that led her to explore work in the government and nonprofit spaces. This shift in direction pushed her to pursue a degree in public policy, deepening her understanding of systemic issues and public challenges.

That academic and practical foundation eventually led to her co-founding Rivigo, a tech-logistics startup. Entering logistics — a space traditionally dominated by men — brought its own set of hurdles. Gazal speaks openly about the biases she encountered and the societal expectations she had to push past. But she also points to the unique strength that came from being a woman in this environment. Collaboration and persistence became her superpowers in building a business that challenged norms and redefined the logistics landscape.

Through all of it, Gazal credits IIT as a formative influence — not just for the technical knowledge, but for the values it instilled. The culture of humility, discipline, and lifelong learning, coupled with the guidance of professors and mentors, helped shape her into the leader she is today.

Inspiration, she says, has come from many sources — her parents, mentors, and most of all, from everyday people. It is the untold stories of resilience, grit, and perseverance that fuel her vision. For Gazal, entrepreneurship isn't just about innovation or scale; it is about impact, about bringing humanity into business, and about telling stories that often go unheard.

RUCHIRA SHUKLA

B.TECH | 1994



Founder and CEO - Green Marble VC

Ruchira Shukla, as the founder of Green Marble Ventures, leads one of India's few funds dedicated to backing climate innovations, focusing on engineering and science-led solutions that can scale globally. "Climate technologies, particularly products and components, are still concentrated in a few countries," she notes. "India has the capability and the opportunity — we should be building these products for India and for the world."

Under her leadership, Green Marble Ventures is being rebranded and re-envisioned to focus entirely on climate tech, investing in innovations that sit at the intersection of sustainability, technology, and scalability.

Before starting her own fund, Ruchira spent over a decade at the International Finance

Corporation, part of the World Bank Group, where she led technology investments across South Asia. Her career, however, spans even further — from investment banking at Lehman Brothers to private equity, management consulting, and startups. Each transition, she says, has been driven by the search for meaningful challenges and the quest for growth.

Though she built her career in finance and venture capital, Ruchira's foundation lies in chemical engineering from IIT Delhi. "Engineering gave me the foundational analytical approaches that last a life time," she reflects. "It trained me to use modular thinking to break down complex problems and find holistic, systemic solutions" That analytical rigour became the common thread running through her varied professional chapters — whether designing industrial equipment, building financial models, or evaluating climate innovations.

Her years at IIT Delhi were also formative in other, less obvious ways. As one of the few women in her class, Ruchira learned resilience early. The environment, though demanding, sharpened her sense of confidence and self-assurance. "IIT prepared me for the world," she says. "It taught me to hold my ground, to make my voice heard, and to be unafraid of being the minority in the room."

The collapse of Lehman Brothers was a moment of reckoning for many in finance, but for Ruchira, it became a test of conviction. "That was a defining day," she recalls. "I chose to stay because I believed in what I was doing — that tough times don't last, but the work you do driven by passion, commitment and conviction, does."

What drives her today is the joy of building — whether shaping industrial processes, mentoring founders, or backing investments for a climate-resilient future. Focused on helping Indian startups scale globally in climate and sustainability, she also speaks candidly about being her own role model. "There weren't many women in my space back then, so I often had to be my own role model." That perspective fuels her commitment to give back to young women at IIT. "Our stories matter," she says. "They tell young women that it's okay to be alone in the journeys you choose, and that grit and commitment can take you far." For her, IIT Delhi remains the foundation of that grit.

RUCHI KALRA

B.TECH | 2004



Co-founder of Oxyzo Financial Services and OfBusiness

that direction, leading her to consulting at McKinsey & Company, where she spent nearly a decade and rose to Partner in the Financial Services Practice working with banks and NBFCs deepened her sector expertise and seeded in her an entrepreneurial ambition. Working closely with operating businesses, she was drawn to the idea of owning and running a P&L rather than analysing one.

That intent crystallised in 2016, when she co-founded OfBusiness and later Oxyzo along with her partners. Despite initial rejections and scepticism, both ventures went on to achieve unicorn status, noted for profitability, capital efficiency, and a deep focus on solving real operational gaps for small and mid-sized businesses. The journey was marked with its own challenges, but she credits the team's unwavering commitment to the Company as the reason for success of the venture.

She resists singling out one defining professional milestone. Instead, she frames her career as a continuum of learning and ownership. She believes every opportunity is privilege and its an obligation to value it by being honest towards it.

Ruchi's journey from Chemical Engineering at IIT Delhi to being a co-founder of two unicorns is less a pivot and more a progression - driven by a problem-solver's instinct and a builder's appetite for scale.

Ruchi traces her professional foundations to the Institute's culture that balances rigour and warmth. She describes IIT as a place with extraordinary talent that inspires one to be the best version of oneself; instilling competitive spirit and at the same time humility in achievers and pride in each other's success.

She began her career at Evalueserve in business research, discovering early that engineering training translated naturally into solving business problems. Post that, an MBA at the Indian School of Business sharpened that

FATIMA JALID

PH.D | 2020



Assistant Professor - NIT Srinagar

Fatima stands at the intersection of education, sustainability, and research—a chemical engineer, teacher, and environmental researcher at NIT Srinagar. Her journey evolved organically, guided by a commitment to positive change through education and clean-energy innovation.

Her research addresses critical environmental challenges, from micro-kinetic models for hydrocarbon reforming to machine-learning approaches for carbon dioxide absorption and the reinvention of bio-lubricants.

Her academic path was non-linear, with the idea of a PhD and teaching taking shape during her engineering years. Balancing PhD research at IIT Delhi with teaching at NIT Srinagar demanded resilience and discipline, sustained by her family, peers, and her supervisor. Coming from a lineage of women scholars, she found intellectual freedom and belonging at IIT Delhi. While research defines her work, teaching remains her anchor—“My lab was more than a place of research—it was a space of camaraderie and growth.” Grateful for her mentors, Fatima believes in sharing stories that inspire future researchers, educators, and changemakers.

NEETU JINDAL

PH.D | 2018



Silicon SoC Architect - Intel Corporation

Neetu is a System-on-Chip (SoC) Architect at Intel, working at the intersection of engineering, research, and design thinking. At Intel, she focuses on microarchitecture research, designing and optimizing memory subsystems and caches, the often-invisible backbone of modern processors.

A holder of multiple patents, she thrives on turning complex ideas into impactful solutions.

Her foundation was shaped during her PhD at IIT Delhi, where research in computer architecture led to Tier-1 conference papers, journal publications, and TPC roles. Initially inclined toward academia, a pivotal internship at NXP Semiconductors revealed how closely industry mirrors research-driven innovation. “I realized the boundary between academia and industry was much thinner than I thought,” she reflects.

Since then, Neetu has championed industry-academia collaboration and earned the ‘Women Rising Star’ Award in semiconductors. She credits her mentors, especially her PhD supervisor and IIT Delhi’s collaborative culture for instilling a mindset rooted in curiosity, integrity, and meaningful work.

RISING STARS



HER@IITD is a dedicated forum created to celebrate, empower and connect the women of IIT Delhi. The initiative stems from a simple yet powerful idea: to bring together alumnae, faculty, students, and thought-leaders to reflect on the evolving journey of alumnae, showcase their achievements, and inspire future generations.

The HER@IITD event was held on 1st November 2025, bringing the community together for an afternoon of insights, conversations, and shared experiences. The gathering was graced by Dr. Kiran Bedi, a distinguished alumna of IIT Delhi and the first woman IPS officer of India, who joined as the Chief Guest. Her presence added immense significance to the event as she addressed the audience during the session led by Prof Rangan Banerjee, the Director of IIT Delhi and Prof Nilanjan Senroy, Dean of Alumni Relations.

A key highlight of the event was the panel discussion - IIT Delhi Through the Eyes of the Women, moderated by the first ever female Dean Academics - Prof Dhanya C T, featuring alumnae representing different eras, disciplines, and professional trajectories at IIT Delhi. Their diverse journeys offered a wide lens on how the institute has grown and how the role of women has transformed over the decades. HER@IITD stands as a positive step towards building a stronger, more inclusive community—one that recognises excellence and encourages continued engagement.







ALUMNI RELATIONS
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