

Press Release

Four Top Social Innovators make it to the final round of the 16th Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India Award 2025

Noida, June 26, 2025 The Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, in partnership with the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship (sister organisation of The World Economic Forum) are proud to announce the finalists of the 16th edition of the 'Social Entrepreneur of the Year' India Award 2025. This award recognises and celebrates the outstanding contributions of social innovators in India who have transformed lives and communities through their exceptional socio-business initiatives.

The selected Finalists and their organisations are:

1. **Kalpana Sankar, Hand in Hand India and Belstar Microfinance, Tamil Nadu**
www.hihindia.org
2. **Piyush Tewari, SaveLIFE Foundation, New Delhi**
www.savelifefoundation.org
3. **Nagakarthik MP, Sauramandala Foundation, Meghalaya**
www.sauramandala.org
4. **Sumita Ghose, Rangсутra Crafts India, New Delhi**
www.rangsutura.com

The Final Winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year India Award will be selected by a distinguished jury comprising industry leaders from diverse sectors. **The winner will be announced on August 8, 2025, in a ceremony in New Delhi**, where distinguished global leaders and representatives from various sectors will gather to celebrate the spirit of social entrepreneurship.

The selection process of shortlisting the finalists was based on set of criteria such as the organisation's orientation towards addressing social inequalities, exclusion and marginalisation; the uniqueness of the social model or initiative; and the ability to create sustainable, systemic-level changes. The Jubilant Bhartia Foundation also conducted background research, personal and team interactions, impact assessment, expert reviews and reference checks to select the four high-impact social innovators as finalists.

The winner of the SEOY India Award 2025 will join a group of social innovators selected from across the globe associated with the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, a leading global platform that has accelerated outstanding models of social innovation since 1998. The Winner and Finalists of the SEOY India Award 2025 will also have the opportunity to apply for the Hindustan Times Fellowship for the Stanford Seed Transformation program.

The SEOY India Award 2025, received 172 applications this year, with around 60% of them being first-time applicants, reflecting the reach of the platform to newer organisations. The top five sectors in applications were Education, Healthcare, Livelihood, Agriculture and Clean Technology.

In 2010, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation came together to promote social innovation in India through the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India Award, and have since recognised and supported the growing field of social innovation in India. Over the last decade, it has established itself as one of the most reputable awards for social entrepreneurs.

Through their humanitarian approaches, the shortlisted finalists have exhibited steadfast commitment towards addressing some of India's most pressing social challenges. Their contributions range from:

- a) Poverty alleviation through a holistic, integrated approach with a thrust on empowering women through Self-Help Groups, eliminating child labour by providing education and creating sustainable livelihoods
- b) Improving road safety and emergency medical care to reduce road crash fatalities through policy advocacy, technology-driven interventions, capacity building of police and emergency responders and public awareness campaigns
- c) Accelerating social and economic change in India's most remote and underserved communities through collaborative, scalable solutions like solar-powered public health initiatives, rural entrepreneurship via fellowships and apiculture, etc
- d) Building sustainable livelihoods for rural artisans—especially women—by organising them into cooperatives and producer clusters, providing access to global markets, offering design support, skill training, working capital, quality control and fair wages

Meet the finalists:



Kalpana Sankar

Hand in Hand India and Belstar Microfinance
hihindia.org

Year Established: 2004

Sector: Rural development and Poverty Alleviation

About: Dr. Kalpana Sankar, a nuclear physicist turned visionary social entrepreneur, is the Managing Director of Belstar Microfinance Ltd. and Co-founder & Chairperson of Hand in Hand India. With a mission to dismantle systemic poverty and empower rural women, Dr. Sankar has transformed the lives of over 10 million women through sustainable employment and enterprise development. Her pioneering five-pillar model addresses multidimensional poverty by integrating financial inclusion, education, healthcare, sanitation and livelihood creation. Under her leadership, Hand in Hand India has mobilised 5.75 million women into self-help groups, disbursed over ₹34,000 crore in microfinance and generated 10.57 million jobs. The organisation has transitioned 373,040 children from labour to school, trained over 9,000 Green Friends in waste management and revived 45,115 hectares for organic farming. With global experience at IFAD, UNOPS, and UNDP, Dr. Sankar's influence spans continents. Her accolades include the Nari Shakti Puraskar and the Princess Sabeeka Global Award for Women's Empowerment by the Kingdom of Bahrain and UN Women. Through a robust volunteer network of 50,000+ and 1,000+ trainers, her work has indirectly impacted more than 20 million lives. As a SEOY India 2025 Finalist, Dr. Sankar exemplifies the power of science, compassion, and community in reshaping India's development narrative.



Piyush Tewari

SaveLIFE Foundation
savelifefoundation.org

Year Established: 2008

Sector: Public Health

About: Piyush Tewari, a Harvard graduate and former private equity professional, founded the SaveLIFE Foundation (SLF) after a personal tragedy revealed the deadly consequences of bystander inaction. He established the SaveLIFE Foundation in 2008 to combat India's silent epidemic of road crash deaths. Driven by the loss of his 16-year-old cousin and the systemic fear that prevents lifesaving intervention, he left the corporate

world to pioneer a movement to reform road safety and trauma care. Under his leadership, SLF championed India's first Good Samaritan Law and developed the Zero-Fatality Solutions (ZFS) programme, a data-driven model that has reduced crash deaths by up to 67% on some of India's deadliest roads. SLF's holistic approach spanning safer road design, stronger enforcement, trauma response, and community engagement has transformed corridors of risk into zones of resilience. With every ₹1 invested unlocking up to ₹350 in public funding, SLF has catalysed systemic change at scale. Vulnerable road users, pedestrians, two-wheeler riders, and low-income commuters are now safer, and families are spared from economic and emotional devastation. Through policy reform, frontline action and institutional partnerships, SLF has embedded road safety into public systems, making it a right, not a privilege. As a SEOY India 2025 Finalist, SaveLIFE Foundation exemplifies how personal loss can fuel national transformation and save countless lives.



Nagakarthik MP

Sauramandala Foundation

sauramandala.org

Year Established: 2018

Sector: Digital Governance and Poverty Alleviation

About: Raised in a middle-class Indian family, Nagakarthik MP was driven by a deep awareness of inequity and a desire to bridge the persistent gap between policy design and ground realities. Leaving behind a corporate career, they immersed themselves in the Himalayan belt. They went on to find the Sauramandala Foundation, which, through its approach—the Centre for Accelerated Development (CFAD)—focuses on co-creating effective, community-led policies for regions and people often left behind. The foundation's work addresses systemic inefficiencies in India's Northeast, where nearly 42% of rural schools lack electricity and 65% of the youth miss out on vocational training. Through a three-pillar strategy—ground-level insight, co-created pilots, and scale support—it empowers communities to shape their own futures by centring local voices in empathetic policy design. The foundation has supported 450+ rural entrepreneurs, engaged 10,000 youth through experiential learning, and powered 350+ health centres with clean energy. Its participatory research model involves 300+ grassroots stakeholders, ensuring hyper-local needs inform every intervention. With 12+ strategic partners and a growing ecosystem of government officials, NGOs and volunteers, Sauramandala is institutionalising community-led innovation in public policy. As an SEOY India 2025 Finalist, the foundation exemplifies how empathy, evidence, and equity

converge to create scalable, inclusive development—ensuring that every rupee spent and every policy enacted truly serves those it intends to uplift.



Sumita Ghose

Rangсутra Crafts India
rangсутra.com

Year Established: 2006

Sector: Women Empowerment and Livelihood

About: Sumita Ghose of Rangсутra turned grief born out of personal loss and a transformative Fulbright experience in Conflict Transformation into purpose by bridging the widening gap between rural artisans and urban markets. After the tragic loss of her husband, social activist Sanjoy Ghose, she envisioned Rangсутra as a platform to empower India's marginalised craft communities, especially women, through dignified, equitable work. Over the past 18 years, Rangсутra has connected over 8,000 artisans, 70% of whom are women, to global markets, transforming them from workers into proud shareholders. By combining traditional skills with modern design, quality training and collective ownership, Rangсутra ensures artisans are not just producers but co-creators of value. The organisation's workshops on design, quality and enterprise management foster creativity, sustainability and self-reliance. In a world where the global handicraft market is booming, Rangсутra ensures India's rural artisans receive their fair share. With indirect benefits reaching over 50,000 people, Rangсутra is not just preserving heritage - it's rewriting the narrative of rural livelihoods. As a SEOY India 2025 Finalist, Rangсутra exemplifies how empathy, resilience and inclusive enterprise can transform trauma into empowerment and inequality into opportunity-crafting not just textiles, but a more just and beautiful world.

About Us

In partnership with the World Economic Forum, the **Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship** is the foremost global community of pioneering social innovators driving systemic change. It was co-founded by Klaus Schwab, Founder of the World Economic Forum, and Hilde Schwab, Co-Founder and Chairperson of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. Since 1998, the Schwab Foundation has supported the world's leading social innovators to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. The Schwab Foundation provides unparalleled platforms regionally and globally to highlight and advance leading models of sustainable social innovation.

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Jubilant Bhartia Foundation (JBF), established in 2007, is the not-for-profit organisation of the Jubilant Bhartia Group. It focuses on conceptualising and implementing the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (CSR) for the Group. The Jubilant Bhartia Foundation's activities include various community development work, healthcare programs, cultural and sports events, environmental preservation initiatives, vocational training, women empowerment, educational activities, and promotion of Social Entrepreneurship.

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For media queries, please contact:

Vivek Prakash

Jubilant Bhartia Foundation

Ph: +91 120 436 1804; 9810674758

E-mail: vivek.prakash@jubl.com