Great and sustainable institutions are built on the foundations of Vision, Values and Teamwork. The FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) which celebrates 30 years since its founding, represents truly one such institution. FLO is today the only chamber of its kind in India which represents women in all spheres. We have over 3,500 members in 10 chapters across the country. Together with Young FLO with 4 chapters and about 750 members, we are an outstanding institution, one which we all are very proud of.

We owe our eminent position to the vision of our founders, and the 29 women who have led this chamber in the past, and who devoted their time and energy to building it year by year. They nurtured and led FLO and made it what it is today. Sadly though, some of our leaders have passed on, and we respectfully pay our tribute to them.

‘FICCI FLO: Commemorating 30 Years’, attempts to capture FLO’s riveting journey since our founding. We recognise the contribution of our past presidents, in their own words, or in the words of their family members, we also learn about their experiences as presidents, and their feelings and thoughts today.

This commemorative volume also attempts to capture the myriad activities of the different FLO chapters and profiles of the leaders in the respective regions. We get a sense of how closely knit the world is through our international affiliations, and what young India is thinking through the glimpses of Young FLO. We also learn how members have tried to give back to society through the work FLO has done at the grassroot levels in each chapter.

In this 30th year, FLO has taken on a pressing issue, with utmost priority, that is, to ‘Create a Climate of Respect: Keeping Women Safe’. We have signed a pledge to take concrete steps towards achieving this goal, and we hope to take this forward in the coming years. Another initiative we have undertaken is to recognise some of India’s unsung women entrepreneurs who have struggled and achieved success against all odds, and have become role models and inspire others.

I consider it a privilege to have been able to lead FLO in its 30th year.

Sincerely,

Malvika Rai
President, FICCI Ladies Organisation
FLO – THE NEW DIRECTION

FICCI Ladies Organisation under its various dynamic leaders and members has grown from strength to strength, worthy of the values and principles with which it began at its inception. 30 years of its existence have been action packed, fruitful and, invariably, exciting.

The prime objective of the Organisation was to empower women of India to transform their lives by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to organise meaningful businesses, and launch ventures in the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Since members’ business growth and satisfaction were our prime objective, over the years many valued entrepreneurs and multi-taskers took up this mission. All those involved were deeply committed to these objectives, and worked towards their efficient realisation whole-heartedly.

Since almost half the Indian population is women, utilising their skills and talents have improved the economic condition of the nation and bridged the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Moreover, it has helped create a better society not only for us, but also for the coming generations. Yes, FLO has always looked ahead.

In 1983, there was a shortage of structured organisation, hence FLO was widely welcomed. Those days, FLO was the only business and management promotional women-based organisation in India and, therefore, there was not much of a competition or contention. FLO, within no time, built up a competence-based strategic management system. The system helped activate traditional strategy analysis within the holistic views of the organisation.

Fortunately, everybody was on the same page, for we understood each others’ need and emotion; therefore, our passion played a larger role in how our organisation communicated within itself, and with the outside world. The consequences of the state of our emotions and feelings, behavioral and attitudinal, had substantial significance in the growth of FLO. Our positive emotions helped members obtain favourable outcomes, achievements and accomplishments. In all, higher quality social context.

The commitment of FLO for entrepreneurship and professional development of women has become irrevocable for us. Understandably, entrepreneurship is an inborn quality, but in early 1990s the participation of women in industry was stagnant. The role of traditional and household industries had declined rapidly, though the household industries provided bigger sources of self-employment to women, stiff competition from various factors questioned their existence. That is no longer the case. Today, FLO is more firmly established in its role as an organisation dedicated to the promotion of entrepreneurship and professional growth amongst women through better awareness, education and training curricula. Women today are more organised, and ready to take advantage of the radical developments taking place around us. We can proudly proclaim that we have prepared our members and womenfolk through a variety of professional activities.
FLO’s commitment to its social obligations has been reflected through many projects in incredible experience of women learning together; ‘I have to say I’m overloaded’.

Aspiring women entrepreneurs by conducting programmes for all. The agenda of such activities has covered all segments of society, freeing them from social inequality and one can also be an Entrepreneur? with this view, FLO has acted like an incubator for the kind of responses that we have received from our members who started their ventures from the FLO platform need to be mentioned there: ‘I am indebted to FLO’, ‘The incredible experience of women learning together’, ‘I have to say I’m overloaded’.

Today, when we reminiscence, we find that it was not only that the members have benefited from FLO activities; we have also been enriched by those programmes. So much valuable information has been shared, distributed, lovingly packed into easy to train and retain information equations.

It is so heartening to see that more women are engaged in self-employment. More and more are educated and commanding high-paying salaries. But we will never be satisfied with the ‘numbers’ we have. Women have indeed come a long way since Independence; but we still have far to go.

We are grateful to some of our members for their constant encouragement that gave direction to women that they could be anything if they worked hard enough. We also admired the leadership of those who worked tirelessly to make their dreams into reality. The kind of responses that we have received from our members who started their ventures from the FLO platform need to be mentioned here: ‘I am indebted to FLO’, ‘The incredible experience of women learning together’, ‘I have to say I’m overloaded’.

There is no denying that the agenda and various events organised by all the Presidents in their tenure during the last thirty years has added value to the organisation.

FLO has since grown to be a truly global and highly respected professional organisation, built on an understanding of the composite relationship between business activities and members participation, a focus on finding workable solutions, and an ability to mobilise action.

We have to go a long way in accomplishing our desired goals and objectives. We will continue in our endeavour to encourage women to develop their full potential through education and awareness. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition that societies which encourage women to grow intellectually, emotionally and economically, prosper exponentially.

We are aware of the fact that there is still work left to be done. The women of India are still marginalised, and require constant attention and awareness. Socio-economic issues, implementation of equal rights, education and so on are some of the greatest challenges facing our generation. We are not just looking back, but actively moving forward and working towards the future.

We are dedicating this book to all Past Presidents, Members of the Governing Body, Members of Chapters and their Chairpersons, Members of YFLO and all those who have supported us in our endeavours, and encouraged us to continue to operate for FLO for all these years.

With warm regards,
Abha Dalmia
Signing of pledge - Creating a Climate of Respect – Keeping Women Safe
19 December 2013.

WE HEREBY PLEDGE

to ourselves

to each other

And

all together

to create a society where respect for women and their well-being are paramount at homes, workplaces and public spaces;
to be active citizens in our political process to secure the rightful needs and interests of women;
to raise our voices when we see injustices being perpetrated against women;
to advocate for women who experience abuse and violence, and support policies to hold accountable people who commit such actions;
to strive to increase the number of women in positions of leadership at workplaces and other institutions;
to raise our children with the firm belief that their possibilities are not limited by their gender but they will be recognized for their character and contributions;
to promote the education of women and girls because this is the key to economic security, stability and freedom of thought and expression;
to honor the diversity of women; respecting each other’s faith choices, ethnicities, customs, beliefs, characteristics, and qualities;
to value women’s health because the physical, social and emotional well-being of women is essential;
to protect girl children and the unborn girl child because life is sacrosanct.

With all this,
We pledge to foster a nation where the advancement of women and girl children will be a national priority and where their contributions will be nurtured and recognized in India and across the world.

Matrika Rai
Shaheen抽查
Mamnoon Saris
Raj Bhart

Ms. Shaila Anandabrahmanan

Supported by
Indu Jain is the Chairperson of The Times Group. Since the time she took over, she has infused new energy into India’s largest media house. The group publishes newspapers including The Times of India, The Economic Times and Navbharat Times, and many more in regional languages. In addition, the group enjoys a dominant presence in magazines, events, radio, the Internet and television.

A facet of Indu Jain is her sincere commitment to several spiritual and charitable causes, and she constantly draws from her deep well of spiritual understanding. She is acclaimed internationally and had addressed the United Nations at the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, in 2000, where she stressed the need for oneness among faiths, and went on to chair the main session of the conference.

Mrs. Jain’s continuous championing of women’s causes is well known; she actively supports women’s rights, women’s uplift and the encouragement of women entrepreneurship. This thought of hers led to the creation of FICCI FLO of which she is the Founder Member. In the year 2000 she founded, and now heads, The Times Foundation, which has garnered international acclaim for its, often pioneering, activities. The foundation forges multi-stakeholder partnerships and acts as a point of convergence for government agencies, NGOs, corporate sector, multilateral agencies and individuals for inclusive and equitable socio-economic development. It is a platform that engages in critical national imperatives, to sensitise people about issues, enhance public awareness and facilitate meaningful dialogues.

It was a dream come true when FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) was born in 1983 and an honour and privilege for me to be one of the founder members. It was created to voice the concerns of women entrepreneurs, businesswomen and women professionals.

In the beginning, most of my time was spent in the essential spadework and grind that goes into the setting up of an organisation. Along with our family responsibilities, these additional roles were demanding for all of us. I remained steadfast and focused as our mission and goals were well-defined. We poured all our energies into garnering the support and cooperation of the members and well-wishers who believed in FLO, as the organisation’s success depended on it. We were equipped to turn our vision into a reality. Now when I look back, I realise we have been able to build a competent system wherein members learn and encourage others, explore ideas, evaluate performances and future needs, challenge assumptions, give and receive feedback, and share what is learnt. It is an open system, with independent and nurtured access and linkages.

FLO has grown from strength to strength. It gives me immense satisfaction to realise we have been able to provide as much value as possible to our members. We have bonded, created a community and nurtured a sense of oneness. And, today, it is in the afterglow of those moments we spent together that I cherish.

‘All our societies are the poorer if they fail to tap the full potential of half their population, and do not remove the obstacles which so often prevent women from rising to leadership positions in political systems and elsewhere.’

Shobhana Bhartia
At 26th Annual Session on Inclusion of Women in India’s Political Economy, 21 April 2010, New Delhi
A Woman of Her Own

My stint as President of FLO during 1985-1986 was an important landmark in my career. The task was challenging. Until the mid-nineties the concept of women entrepreneurship was uncommon, and the role of women was generally confined to domestic and social assignments. Gradually, with the spread of education and greater consciousness the younger generation started looking for wider areas of entrepreneurship. It was precisely to provide an organised platform to this concept that FLO was established in 1983.

We selected ‘India in the 20th Century’ as the theme, and we organised lecture series and group discussions with luminaries like Mino Masani, Dr. Karan Singh, Prof. MGK Manon and Shriddath S. Ramphal. We organised visits to well-established industrial units and training programmes and instituted several awards. The highlight of my tenure was a visit of FLO delegation, along with the FICCI delegation, to the then USSR and the erstwhile East Germany.

Coming from a business family, trading in tea, electricals and chemicals and manufacturing engineering components, business acumen is innate in me. I supervise ‘Pitambari’, a saree boutique, and I am actively involved in several social projects. It was a privilege to preside over FLO, and to be able to participate in the pioneering activities of this great institution.

In Search of Excellence

‘Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go’, was Manju Bharatram’s mantra in life. As president, FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), as a member of the governing body and during all the other engagements, she worked and lived by this philosophy. In the capacity of President of FLO, she helped organise lectures, workshops and seminars for the development of women entrepreneurs.

Manju Bharatram was an educationist at heart. Her work as Founder-Chairperson of the Managing Committee and Member of the Board of Trustees, The Shri Ram School; Chairperson, SRF Vidyalaya, Manali, Chandigarh; former President of the Managing Committee of the School for the Blind, Delhi; Founder, Chairperson of Managing Committee of The Shri Ram School, Aravali-DLF City, Gurgaon; and Founder-Member of Pratham Delhi, Education Initiative, Trust Board, reflects that. As Chairperson Shriram Educare, she enriched school education by providing relevant competencies.

As Member Trustee of SRF Foundation, she was deeply involved in social work. She was trustee of the Board of Blind Relief Association, New Delhi; and later became Member of Executive Body, and then Honorary General Secretary. A genuine concern to preserve our cultural heritage led her to be the Vice-President, Craft Council of India and to found its Delhi Chapter in 1982, and Honorary General Secretary, Delhi Crafts Council.

To recognise her tireless work, the Padma Shri was conferred on her in 2013. Other accolades bestowed on her include Priyadarshini Award 1989, President’s Award (CII) 2003 and FLO Award in Recognition of ‘Exemplary Leadership’ 2004.

As told by Vasvi Bharatram (daughter-in-law)

Dare to Dream

From a Marwari family from Rajasthan settled in Calcutta which moved to Madras for business purposes, I graduated with distinction in History from Madras University. After an early marriage I relocated to Delhi and busied myself with bringing up four lovely daughters. It was only after my youngest daughter got married that I got involved with the FLO because they aspire to empower women to lead dignified, creative lives on their own terms.

I consider it my good fortune to be the sixth president of FLO, and I put aside my family life for one year and devoted all my time to FLO. My husband and youngest daughter extended full cooperation in this endeavour.

The highlight of my tenure was to organise a well-received tour for American senators’ wives on the Palace on Wheels, and visits to Agra and Kashmir, and Mumbai. With the help of the Indian ambassador to America, we could create a pro-India lobby in the House of Democrats of the American Senate.

I also gained a lot on the personal front during my tenure. I met some exceptionally gifted people leading unassuming lives in unexpected places. It was a humbling experience.

The Sky is the Limit

Shobhana Bhartia is the Chairperson and Editorial Director of HT Media. She has spearheaded the company’s long-term vision and strategy. Shobhana Bhartia is in charge of formulating and directing the editorial policies of the company, and has more than 25 years of experience in the newspaper industry.

A graduate from Calcutta University, she was conferred the Padma Shri Award by the Government of India in 2005. She has received several other awards, including the Outstanding Business Woman of the Year (2001) by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Global Leader for Tomorrow (1996) by the World Economic Forum, Davos, and the National Press India Award (1992). She has been on the board of Indian Airlines Limited, and on the North Regional Board of the Reserve Bank of India.

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Pursuing our dreams is the most powerful path to success. My dream is to empower women to be entrepreneurs, a rare phenomenon, especially in the field of export. We held 6 orientation programmes for exporters in Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. All this effort brought success, and FLO saw profit. Looking at the accomplishment of these programmes, we replicated these courses in the other chapters.

In addition, I led a ladies delegation to Greece and Egypt and identified areas for trade and economic cooperation. To promote our agenda of women entrepreneurship, we coordinated with wives of US senators to study Indian conditions.

On the personal front, I have been an active participant of the Kiwani Club, an organisation working for the upliftment of the underprivileged. My work at our Old Age Home, in Goa, also gives me immense satisfaction.

Through Ruchika Art Gallery, in Goa, I pursue my passion for art. The gallery provides a platform to lesser known artists to showcase their work, as well as helps them in displaying their work, nationally and internationally.

Memories of good times
Memories of trying times
Memories of those late nights
Memories of our commitment
Reminiscing about my thirty-year association with FLO brings them all back. The excitement of an organisation of this stature being formed; working with Indu Jain, the first president; the powerful delegations that took us to the remotest corners of the world. When I took over as President, China had just opened its doors to the world. So I decided to take a delegation there. We were very well-received by the Chinese: an all-women’s delegation was a novelty for them! FLO continued to grow as an institution of empowerment for women by women, with each president adding to it in her own unique way. My feelings for FLO are described best in these lines from an Oriya poem:

What are you? I think you are
Pure movement, and nothing but movement.
Sometimes, it is true, I see you draped in a saree
But oftener, you are a disembodied impatience
An invisible ship voyaging with a hurricane’s speed
Across an invisible ocean throughout the day
Throughout the night
With a cargo of activity
And I know that I always exist, on the shaded banks of a fountain
Somewhere within you.

A Step in the Right Direction
I became the President of FLO in the late eighties. With out of the box ideas and hard work, we tried to achieve certain goals. The first thing we did was to encourage women to be entrepreneurs, a rare phenomenon, especially in the field of export. We held 6 orientation programmes for exporters in Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. All this effort brought success, and FLO saw profit. Looking at the accomplishment of these programmes, we replicated these courses in the other chapters.

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Leading by Example
Pursuing our dreams is the most powerful path to success. My dream is to empower women to nurture and fortify themselves with skills and self-confidence, to turn their ‘can’ts into cans and dreams into plans’. I took my dream forward as FLO president. We focussed on imparting entrepreneurial training to women and facilitated in helping them set up independent units, and thereby become economically self-reliant.

Similarly, at the Kiwanis Ladies Club, I continued the effort to socially uplift the underprivileged. Fund raising for Delhi Commonwealth Women Organisation also took up my time, and here we helped to improve the lives of the poor and disadvantaged in Delhi and surrounding areas. As the institute’s president, I derived immense satisfaction by working with the Delhi Foundation for Draf Women. My efforts to garner benefits for women, and to rehabilitate them bore fruit at this institute too. Similarly, I worked at Quota International, which is a beacon of hope for the abandoned and destitute women in Faridabad, Haryana. During my tenure as their President, we expanded the organisation’s scope of work.

On the personal front, Ikkabana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, has been my all-consuming passion. I have been the grandmaster of Ikkabana for the last thirty years, and have been teaching and training students in the craft. I have been the Vice-President of the Segatsu Centre in Delhi.

I firmly believe that only empowerment of a woman leads to her emancipation – a liberation from centuries of societal and familial circumscriptions. I take pride in saying that I was the first President of FLO, from outside Delhi, and was instrumental in setting up the first three outstation chapters – Chennai, Hyderabad, and Coimbatore.

We promoted entrepreneurship and managerial excellence among women and acted as a catalyst for their social and economic development through various seminars, conferences and workshops. For the first time, we held an exhibition of products of women entrepreneurs in Delhi under the FLO aegis. A visit of the FLO delegates to the US and Germany materialised during my tenure, and this helped us visualise business possibilities outside India. To strengthen FLO, I organised an inter-state meet – the first of its kind, and an entrepreneurship development programme.

At present, I am the President of Andhra Chamber of Commerce, the first woman to hold the post in the chamber’s 86 years of existence. I am also the President of Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, World Telugu Federation and I was the first chairperson of SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC) from India during the period 2007-10.

VL Indira Dutt is the Joint Managing Director of The KCP Limited, known for its ethics and social commitment.

NIRMALA JAIN 1989-1990

SHUBHRA GUPTA 1991-1992

INDU RANI PUNJ 1990-1991

VL INDIRA DUTT 1992-1993
**Thought Leader**

Building block by block is what I believe in. As a past president of the FICCI Ladies Organisation, I worked on this belief. I led trade delegations to Israel and Cyprus to extend our business boundaries. Through numerous seminars and workshops we enhanced the scope of FLO work.

Challenging my own boundaries, I have been the Vice-Chairperson of the SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC), and I am currently on the executive committee of SCWEC.

Born into a business family, and graduated in Education (Honors) from Loreto College, CALCUTTA, I work at KPL International Limited and contributed to the strategic decision-making of the company. KPL International Limited is engaged in international business, specializing in sourcing, marketing, supply chain facilitation and distribution of chemicals, polymers, paper, equipment and allied products. I also anchor the CSR activities of Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Limited, and I am a Founder-Trustee of Sambhava Foundation, which was established in the year 2008 with the objective to empower girls and women through education and vocational skills.

**Ahead of Her Times**

Mrs. Beena Khaitan, was President of the FICCI Ladies’ Organisation from 1994 to 1995. In her foreword to the 12th Annual Session of the FLO she wrote: ‘We have endeavoured to empower women with the necessary skills and knowledge so that they will eventually not only actively participate in the decision-making process on women’s issues, but will also endeavour to join the mainstream of national economic development as equals.’

Whenever industrialist GD Birla would meet her he would say, ‘Here is a woman the Marwari community can be proud to call one’s own.’ She greatly admired Nelson Mandela, and felt fortunate to have met him when she led a FLO delegation to South Africa in 1995. As a member of another FLO delegation, she met international leaders like Margaret Thatcher, and Hillary Clinton. She also had occasion to interact with Indian leaders like Mammoohan Singh, and Sonia Gandhi.

Mrs Khaitan graduated in History, when only a few women were fortunate to receive proper education. She started an independent business at a time when women, after marriage, were expected only to take care of the home. She established a boutique, called Rajeshwari, in the 1960s, and also traded in steel. After the sudden demise of her husband in 1993, she stepped in to play her part in the family business. Finally, on moving to England in the late 1990s, she re-launched herself as an entrepreneur, as a purveyor of ‘wellness products’.

As told by Sujata Khaitan (daughter-in-law)

**A Torchbearer**

In 1995-96, I was made the President of FICCI Ladies Organisation. As I lay great emphasis on fortifying women financially and legally, I represented FLO in various ministries and authored several papers for economic uplift and empowerment of women as well as on legal reforms and inheritance rights.

After graduating, I worked with AIIMS in the family-planning department. As I like to challenge myself, I started a garment export factory in Uttar Pradesh, a state-of-the-art company, employing over 2000 workers – mostly women. Besides running a medical unit for riot victims, or setting up an occupational therapy unit in a Deshire Home, or working with mentally and physically challenged children, I have also been involved in charitable work. I was nominated for the Executive Committee of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry) and I was a Special Member of Medium & Small Scale Industry Sub-Committee. Also, I was nominated for the Executive Committee of PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Currently, I am a visiting professor at Aravalli Institute of Management Studies, Jodhpur.

Owing to a spiritual bent of mind, I enjoy writing in magazines and journals on different subjects. I also edit a magazine, Sai Kripa. The Mahila Shishomani Award and International Award for Business Excellence are accolades that recognised my work, and I feel it has been a meaningful and worthwhile journey.

**Undaunted**

I felt immensely honoured when I was elected as President of the FICCI Ladies Organisation in 1996. As President, my focus was to equip women entrepreneurs with skills to succeed. We achieved our objective of ‘Empowerment through Education’ by organising entrepreneurial development programs structured at three levels – the grass roots level, the middle level and the advanced level, which resulted in work excellence and economic independence, and thus helped the participants gain respect and honour in society.

During my tenure as President, FLO brought out a landmark publication, A Business of Her Own – 50 Women in Enterprise in India, a first of its kind book published in India as a tribute to the indefatigable entrepreneurial spirit of the Indian woman.

My journey in the entrepreneurial field started with the setting up of Upasana Engineering in 1984, to manufacture spokes, nipples and other ancillaries for the automobile market. Upasana Finance was started in 1985 for serving customers with different financial instruments like hire-purchase, and lease.

My interest in crafts made me play a prominent role in the activities of the Crafts Council of India for over 35 years. I was elected President of World Crafts Council in 2008. During the 4-year term, my focus was on advocacy, getting the younger generation sensitised to crafts, and getting crafts and craftpersons recognised as an integral part of society. Abushan in New Delhi, and ‘Kailaam’ in Chennai, were the two landmark events organised during this period.

**A Thought Leader**

DR. MANJU V MEHTA
1995-1996

**Undaunted**

USHA KRISHNA
1996-1997
At the Fore

My aim during my tenure as FLO President was to increase environmental awareness. I took up a project for a clean and green environment, involving school students, and at the same time educating them about the importance of a sustainable environment.

I led the first FLO Trade delegation to Pakistan in 1998, and presented a paper on ‘Women Entrepreneurs in the SAARC Region’.

I set up the first beekeeping and honey-processing unit in the organised sector in Punjab. It was set up as a medium-scale industry in a joint venture with the Punjab Government. I experimented and launched single-source honeys from different flower sources for the first time in the Indian market. We were also first to export honey to the quality-conscious markets of USA and Germany. I studied the health food markets in Europe in bee products, researched and developed a whole range of honey-based Ayurvedic and herbal products as supplements, tonics, and skin and hair-care products under the brand name Honeysticks.

It gave me great pleasure when my work was recognised, and the Punjab government gave me a Praman Patra, in 1988, for excellence in the development of beekeeping in India and a Praman Patra, in 1998, for increasing the production of honey in Punjab, and for pioneering the export of honey from India.

Leading Change for a New Generation

As President FLO my slogan was, ‘Think Global, Act Local’. At the grass-roots level, unemployed youth, in two separate month-long residential programmes, acquired skills to become car mechanics and masons. Weak-link entrepreneurship development programmes for crafts persons were held at craft pockets where issues such as banking, rural marketing, design development, and product diversification were addressed. The highlight of my term was sharing the stage with renowned personalities when I was invited to speak at the fiftieth anniversary of Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Business Women’s Club.

In my personal capacity, I bring my design experience to the family business. Imparting education with a difference through study tours and workshop-performances for young persons, are my annual programmes. Having worked in the craft space for thirty-five years, I am passionate about contemprosing the richness of Indian handicraft. Through my foundation, we provide vocational training to unemployed youth as a means of livelihood.

A study bug prompted me to go back to school, and I have recently completed a year-long Diploma in History of Art from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. This opened up opportunities to curate exhibitions that connect our history to our living traditions. These shows were held both overseas and in India. I have also co-published books, travel documents, and presented papers at various fora.

Anjana Somany is Head of Design and Development, Schablonia India Ltd.

Life-work Balance is All

For as long as I can remember, I have been drawn to economics or the beauty of an architectural line. But it is when my passion for work-life balance inspires others, that I find my true medium.

In 1994 I took up the position of Chair, Ladies Business Forum in Kolkata. My aim was to organise programmes for professionals and entrepreneurs on generic business interests. In 1997, I started a journey with FLO-Calcutta, with 20 members and a goal to set up a professional organisation. For women interested in developing business skills, we provided guidance to the right forums of entrepreneurship. Our leadership development programmes sought to give them the maximum opportunity to excel. In 1998-2000, I was given the role of Vice-President in FLO. The next year, I took over as FLO President. My tenure gave me an extraordinary opportunity to polish my organisational skills, and to reach out to leaders from all around the country, from all walks of life. The aim was to create a platform for professional leadership. The awareness programmes we organised ranged from the first budget discussion for FLO members, awareness models for mutual funds, venture capital, stock market operations, to discussions on domestic violence and the human genome.

I have always loved people and I have always loved working. I try to use my skill sets to maximise both, whether in my management consultancy and stock broking firm, or in the governing body of FLO. And, I love the fact that I am a strong woman role model for my two sons.

Follow Your Passion

It was not only an experience of a lifetime, but an honour for me to be the President of FLO during the year 2001-2002. We held programmes where we invited women achievers to discuss their journeys and contributions to society. Such interactions motivated and ignited a creative, spiritual and entrepreneurial spirit in our members and society at large.

The canvas that FLO provided was fairly large. It provided a platform to meet the topmost business icons, as well as activists working at the grass-root level. We organised sessions where we exchanged ideas with artists like Anjolie Ela Menon and Satish Gujral, filmstars like Shabana Azmi, and poet, Javed Akhtar. We also held discussions with leading politicians such as Murli Manohar Joshi, the former education minister, and Arun Jaitley, the erstwhile law minister. We felicitated important business executives, social workers and even spiritual heads like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. We travelled within India and outside extensively to explore business possibilities.

I still get misty-eyed when I recollect one of the incidents during a session on ‘How to start an export-import business’ in Jaipur. A lady emerged from the crowd and touched my colleague’s and my feet. She told us she was running a successful export business, which she started after attending one of our previous sessions. Our hearts surged with pride—FLO’s work was bearing fruit.
Personal Growth Through Work

The strength and progress of any country lies in the productivity of every individual, especially a woman. The greater the challenges, the more inner resources one discovers within. I did, too. My selection as FLO President was a crowning glory to my work in Chennai. Extending the scope of FLO, a vibrant Mumbai Chapter was initiated. I also travelled, meeting women in other chapters to understand their needs. Organising events on education, politics, law, health, finance, media and entertainment was exciting and an eye-opener. Heading FLO taught me to be a leader, and a team player.

On a lighter note, I was the only woman to attend FICCI Committee Meetings, since for that year, there were no women heading any FICCI committees. The experience has contributed to my personal and professional growth. During the year, we organised a unique one-day seminar on ‘Women, Cinema and Society’, in which several luminaries from the film and television industry participated. Another notable event was a panel discussion on Health Care in collaboration with Apollo Hospitals, and another one on Finance sponsored by HDFC. Through the year, many meetings were organised on political issues, with leaders from national parties. Several workshops were also conducted to train women, including one on ‘How to Start an Export Business’, and another on ‘Gems and Jewelry’.

The ‘people’ skills, and the intuitive abilities I acquired along the way have helped me tremendously in my current field of work as an independent practitioner of hypnotherapy, counseling and Reiki.

Vasudhaive Kutumbakam (‘The whole world is my family’)

My mother, Chandra Garodia, was associated with FLO since its inception in 1984. She was an active worker in the social field, and held positions at the national level in Inner Wheel. She had many friends from all walks of life, and was greatly loved.

I give below certain lessons I learnt from her, and am still trying to internalise:

- She was never intimidated by any person or task, and was a firm believer in the ability of anybody to do anything they set their minds to.
- She did not take any responsibility lightly, and always did a thorough job of anything she took up.
- Though from a conservative background, she encouraged her daughters to achieve in all fields. She never let them feel that they were ‘women’, with only womanly roles to play.
- She treated people from all walks of life with respect, and valued their time and dignity. Each person was an individual, and not a ‘contact’, or a ‘service-provider’.
- Other people’s problems were not trivial: she gave a lot of time and thought to any advice asked for.
- She was outspoken and truthful. She would not keep quiet if wrong was being done in her presence.
- Helping people was a part of her daily life.
- She was extremely fair in her dealings. There was no favouritism even for her nearest and dearest when they were in the wrong, vis-a-vis even a stranger.
- She approached anything new with the joy of a child.

As told by Archana Garodia Gupta (Daughter)

NAMITA GAUTAM
2004-2005

Learning to Lead and Leading to Serve

It is said that ‘The mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions’. In my personal trajectory, the new idea that expanded my consciousness forever, was FLO. From a diffident - one, who walked in with a sincere wish to serve society, to a confident - one, who is moving on, with a desire to make a difference in the lives of women, I owe my steady emergence as a leader to my learning at FLO.

In my travels with many delegations, I have had the most enlightening experiences, while meeting heads of states, influential leaders and bright entrepreneurs. I absorbed the cultural variances across the world and began to feel like an engaged global citizen. As my awareness broadened, I developed a holistic and higher perspective on life.

Each one of us has a palette of inner qualities – of perseverance, positive spirit, pursuit of excellence and ardent engagement with society - each incarnating a beautiful blend of love and leadership. Throw away all doubts in your abilities. Reach out for your dreams, and realise the greater woman that lives inside your heart.

I urge all the new members to carry forward the mission of FLO, and to shape the next 30 years with the best they have to offer. FLO has withstood the test of time, and I am sure it will make its space felt in the larger society as a stronghold for the empowered women.

SUREKHA KOTHARI
2002-2003

Wired to Win

Associated with FICCI Ladies Organisation since 1991, I served the organisation in various capacities, and became the President in 2004-05. During my tenure, FLO celebrated its 20 years of empowerment. A series of initiatives were organised to commemorate the year. We began by felicitating the 20 Past Presidents of FLO in a grand nostalgic ceremony. A short film was made, wherein they shared their experiences as FLO Presidents. Young FLO, a platform for young women to learn and to empower themselves, was started.

Realising the need of the hour, we gave a complete image makeover to FLO, and provided it with a corporate identity. We brought together all its members across the country with a quarterly newsletter, Empower Times. The grand finale of this celebration was the felicitation of 20 women leaders of Delhi from various fields by FLO.

I work as a whole-time Director with Sleepwell Group of Companies involved in home comfort products sector. To give due impetus to the corporate social responsibilities of the company, we have set up a separate division, ‘Sleepwell Foundation’, of which I am the Managing Trustee. My strong conviction to work towards ‘Empowerment of Women’ has led our company to adopt the Jijabai Industrial Training Institute for Women, Delhi. I am the Chairperson of its managing committee. This involvement gives me a lot of satisfaction, as it seems like a very natural progression from, ‘Advocacy of Women Empowerment at FLO’ to ‘Action at Grassroot level at the ITI’.

CHANDRA GARODIA
2003-2004

Managing Trustee. My strong conviction to work towards ‘Empowerment of women’ has led our company to adopt the Jijabai Industrial Training Institute for women, Delhi. I am the associated with FICCI Ladies Organisation since 1991, I served the organisation in various capacities, and became the President in 2004-05. During my tenure, FLO celebrated its 20 years of empowerment. A series of initiatives were organised to commemorate the year. We began by felicitating the 20 Past Presidents of FLO in a grand nostalgic ceremony. A short film was made, wherein they shared their experiences as FLO Presidents. Young FLO, a platform for young women to learn and to empower themselves, was started.

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As told by Archana Garodia Gupta (Daughter)

USHA AGARWAL
2005-2006
With the belief of taking up every conflict, every experience, and to learn from it, I took up the mantle of President of FLO. Recognising the challenges and the opportunities in the shifting paradigm for women in the 21st century, we widened the existing horizons of FLO with the launch of the sixth Chapter of FLO in Jaipur.

In my tenure, we also continued to pioneer programmes in business training, skill enhancement and entrepreneurial development, and we worked significantly to facilitate linkages amongst women across borders, and to connect local to global markets by creating a worldwide network of women leaders and mentors.

In the 21st CACC1 (Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce & Industry) Conference in Taipei, Taiwan, an exclusive women entrepreneurs’ council, CWEC (CACC1 Women Entrepreneurs Council) was formed. It was an honour for me to serve as its chairperson. Another highlight of my term was the inception of IWECC (International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge), a joint initiative of Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and FICCI Ladies Organisation, and supported by US Department of State. At CACC1-CWEC, along with Chambers of Awarded countries, it was also my privilege to chair the IWECC India Forum from 2007 to 2012.

Throughout this stimulating journey at FLO, I had the chance to explore new avenues and gain the experience of a lifetime.

Life is a gift – live it! The dictum with which I have worked and lived all my life. From academics to cable television, construction to advertising, my areas of work have been truly diverse.

After post-graduating from Delhi School of Economics, I began to teach at Delhi University, but changed gears, when HUDCO took me on board as their consultant. After moving to Mumbai, I pioneered cable television by setting up one of the two cable TV systems which began operating in 1986, much before the cable TV boom. Today, having moved on from business interests in advertising, I am working in another pioneering enterprise that harvests seaweed to create emulsifiers and plant nutrients in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

As the Founder-Chairperson, I established the Bombay Chapter in 2002 and the Chapter in the Northeast in 2007. I took over as President of FLO in April 2007 simultaneously becoming member of FICCI National Executive and FICCI Western Region Council. From 2004, I was nominated to SCWEC (SAARC Women Entrepreneurs Chamber).

I have participated in numerous local and international programmes: Fortune Global Summit, World Islamic Economic Forum, and Vital Voices. I have been involved in the pioneering work done by FLO in areas of domestic entrepreneurship and female footloose. Personally, I enjoy reading, and travel to eclectic places. I have been to Tibet, Afghanistan, Burma, Croatia and Uzbekistan. There is so much more to do and see, and as I said in the beginning... life is short, live it.

Kiran Gera, Aqua Agri Green Tech Director

KAVITHA DUTT 2009-2010

I held the post of President at FLO from 2009 to 2010. During my tenure, I widened the horizons of FLO by adding the Ahmedabad chapter. The chapter was inaugurated by Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat.

A firm believer in education for girls, I consider it essential to give appropriate emphasis to educating the girl child to help her become self-reliant, and infuse in her a sense of self-confidence. To take this thought and the FLO initiative forward, students of Jijabai Industrial Training Institute for Women, Delhi, were enrolled in a long-term programme. They were taught soft skills to augment their curriculum.

As part of FLO’s objectives to empower rural women, I arranged a programme to train the Rural Women on Livelihood spread over a period of 3 months covering more than 500 rural women who were trained in 10 different trades. All the 500 trainees are now gainfully employed, and are financially independent.

Another major initiative I was fortunate we could initiate was a training programme for inmates of Special Prison for Women, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, and Tihar Jail, New Delhi. The inmates were provided training in Italian lace-making, a step towards self-reliance. The agency that arranged training for the inmates of these two prisons are now procuring the products from these inmates.

Kavitha D. Chitturi is Executive Director, The KCP Limited.
This Century Belongs to Women

Awareness Empowers' was my theme for 2010-2011. As FLO President, I focused on membership development, team building and recognising the achievements of FLO members. FLO members were given 'Excellence Awards', and almost 500 members were added during 2010-2011. Under the Constitution, women have equal rights, and these rights are backed by enforceable laws. However, unless we have knowledge about these rights, social justice will remain a dream. All 10 events were organised keeping this in mind.

I signed a MOU with 'Women Corporate Directors' USA. FLO members now have the opportunity to network and be mentored for corporate board appointments. FLO delegations to East Europe and Myanmar, which included interactions with women ambassadors provided a great opportunity for members to network and share experiences with the international community.

2010 marked the year of the Commonwealth Games. FICCI FLO felicitated the ‘Golden Girls’ at a glittering ceremony. It was my pleasure to welcome dignitaries including Sheila Dixit, MS Gill, Sharmila Tagore, Sonal Mansingh, Dusharan Das and Swami Nikhilanandaji to FLO. I believe that women are the backbone of corporate funding; the 'Women Philanthropists Awards' were given at the AGM.

During my tenure, the FLO brochure, two handbooks on women-related policies, and a booklet on 'How to start business in Delhi' were also published.

Ranjan Agarwal is the founder partner of Vaish & Associates, Chartered Accountants. She chairs WCD India, and is a member of audit committees and advisory boards to many non-profit organisations. She was awarded the Indira Gandhi Pradeshi Award for professional excellence.

Step up to Progress

My motto as a FICCI FLO President was to ‘Unleash the Entrepreneur Within’. And we worked towards it the year round, by organising a variety of programmes. Expanding the scope of work, I launched the 10th chapter at Bangalore, and witnessed establishing of the foundation of the 9th chapter at Ludhiana.

A feather in my cap remains the charter of collaboration that was signed with the Ministry of Women & Child Development – National Mission for Empowerment of Women on Women as Catalyst and Partners in Progress: Strengthening Capacities through Innovative Approaches.

A first in the history of FLO. Per us at FLO it was our duty to raise our voices against increasing incidents of violence and atrocities against women. A FICCI FLO Task Force was set up to recommend measures to ensure safety.

During my tenure as the Chairperson of the Coimbatore chapter, I tried to involve women at the grassroots, middle and senior levels and organised training programmes. My vision translated into reality when we adopted Anupatti village, where we provided skills for women to work in the textile industries in our region. More than 3,000 rural women were covered through breast cancer awareness programmes and health camps, besides projects to improve sanitation, environment, health and water.

Kavitha Varadaraj is the Managing Director of Primero Intimates.

Woman of Substance

As President of FICCI FLO, I had an exciting year – well-lived, well-spent. I worked for the integration of women into mainstream development processes. Women are a critical mass that will transform politics, improve governance and ensure inclusive development.

The 9th Chapter of FICCI FLO at Ludhiana was conceptualised during my tenure and was formally launched on 22 May, 2012.

I worked towards the upliftment of the visually challenged, an issue close to my heart. As Vice-President of the National Association for the Blind (NAB) my objective was to empower these women with skills so that they lead their lives with dignity. We felicitated three incredible women who, in spite of their challenges, have contributed to the economic, cultural and social welfare of the community.

As Proprietor of Alert Card Company (ACC), I developed micro-processing of Medical Data Alert Cards. ACC provides people with health profiles in hand. These wallet-sized cards are ready references in case of medical emergencies. I have led several organisations with distinction; President-Delhi Management Association; Director on the Board of State Bank of Patiala; SME Advisor to Small Industries Development Bank of India, etc.

My work was recognised when I received the Best Women Entrepreneur Award at the 1st International Conference of Women Entrepreneurs in New Delhi; Best Women Entrepreneur Award of the Rotary Club of Delhi Midtown; Mahila Shiromani Award presented by the Shiromani Institute for Economic Upliftment and Social Justice. These awards motivated me to continue my efforts towards empowering women.

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“Women must not only have equal rights, capabilities and access to resources and opportunities, but they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices.”

Najma Heptulla
At 22nd Annual Session on Growth, Development, and Opportunity through Women Empowerment in Rural India
25 April 2007, New Delhi
A Life Force

When FLO was first established in Delhi in 1983, it seemed an appropriate venture in tune with the capital city’s ethos. To this expanse of great historical, cultural, philosophical and political upheavals – quite unparalleled among capital cities of nations – was added an institution that stood for progress of a very different kind. The kind completely apt today.

Delhi has had many incarnations. Archeological evidence found near the Old Fort links it to the Indus Valley civilisation. There is evidence of continuous habitation since at least the 6th century BC. The city is believed to be the site of Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas in the Indian epic Mahabharata. The earliest architectural relics date back to the Maurya period (c. 300 BC); in 1966, an inscription of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (273–236 BC) was discovered near Srinivaspuri.

Archaeological relics of eight major cities have been discovered here. The first city of Delhi is visible in the ruins of Qila-i-Rai Pithora. The Tomars established their capital under the sovereignty of Anangpal I in AD 731 and called it Lal Kot. The second city came up during the Khalji Dynasty under the rule of Ala-ud-Din Khalji, in AD 1311. The city is extant, traceable only through the ruins in the Hauz Khas and Siri Fort areas. Tughlaqabad was the third, built under the patronage of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlaq.

Then came the Mughals. Humayun, son of Babur, established the fifth city of Delhi in AD 1533; he called it Dinpanah or the ‘Refuge of the Faithful’; when Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan king, displaced Humayun briefly, he changed the name to Shergarh. The present Old Fort was the citadel of the Mughal city to which Sher Shah added Qila-i-Kuhna Masjid and Sher Mandal. Shah Jahan, a prolific builder, constructed the sixth city on the river Yamuna when he shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi in AD 1648; he called it Shahjahanabad.

Then came the British. When they decided to shift their capital from Kolkata, they selected the region around Raisina Hill to build the new Imperial capital. This was the seventh city, called New Delhi, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Prominent buildings of that period are the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament House, North
Block, South Block, India Gate, Connaught Place and other government buildings. In 1993, Delhi, a Union Territory, was given partial statehood according to Seventh Schedule of the Constitution in which Delhi is defined as National Capital Territory of India or NCT of Delhi. Delhi today has its own Legislative Assembly, Lieutenant Governor, Council of Ministers and Chief Minister.

The national capital celebrates events of national importance with much fanfare. On Independence Day, 15 August, the Prime Minister addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort. The Republic Day Parade, held on 26 January each year, is a large cultural and military parade showcasing India’s military strength and cultural diversity.

Another aspect has been instrumental in providing Delhi its own vocabulary, its individuality. After India’s partition, as Delhi became home to refugees, new localities were developed and allocated to accommodate the population influx. Later, other parts were added, for bureaucrats, traders or even builders. People continued to pour into Delhi, making it a potpourri of cultures.

A melting pot of traditional and cosmopolitan styles, Delhi is dotted with numerous museums, historic forts and monuments, libraries, auditoriums, botanical gardens, and places of worship. Complementing this are the ever-changing urban commercial and leisure centres, like the contemporary art galleries, cinema multiplexes, and other sports venues, and restaurants serving a variety of Indian and world cuisines.

Delhi has a remarkably composite culture: a festival that symbolises such propinquity is the Phool Walon Ki Sair, held in September. Flowers and fans embroidered with flowers are offered at the shrine of 13th century Sufi saint Khwaja Baktiyar Kaki, and the Yogmaya temple. Home to many writers and poets, past and present, Delhi today lays strong claim to being India’s new cultural capital, offering art fairs, book fairs and music festivals ranging from rock to Indian classical, jazz, metal and World Music.

Since it was the centre of the Mughal empire, Mughlai cuisine is extremely popular here. Delhi is also famous for its street food, from kebabs to innumerable variety of chaats. The Gali Paranthe Wali, a street in Chandni Chowk, has been dedicated to food eateries since the 1970s.

Delhi has hosted many major international sporting events, including the first and the ninth Asian Games, the 2010 Hockey World Cup, the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the 2011 Cricket World Cup. The very new Formula-1 track has added another feather in Delhi’s cap.

But Delhi isn’t only the power capital of India. According to an economic survey conducted in 2000-2001, Delhi’s GDP was INR 478 billion, with a per capita income of INR 38,860. The annual economic growth rate has been 9.9 per cent.

Delhi has always been the marketplace for northern India, and has promoted industries like textiles, handlooms, arts and crafts. Delhi also happens to be a critical trade route between Punjab and the Gangetic Plains, which makes it an important trade centre and manufacturing hub. Growth in Delhi’s economy can also be attributed to the fact that several new industries have evolved over the years and contributed to its growth, including jewellery export, embroidery, silver, textiles, apparel, corporate houses, ITs, BPOs, ITES and many others. The service sector is an important part of Delhi’s economy, is the city’s largest employer. Delhi’s economy also derives some of its sustenance from agricultural lands and dairy production on the outskirts of Delhi.
Ritu Dalmia, the owner of Diva, an Italian restaurant, is not a trained chef but she whips up a giant storm in the kitchen. Ritu believes cooking is an art, guided by a natural sense of taste and talent. She also runs a café at the Italian Culture Centre, Delhi, and owns five restaurants as part of the Diva chain of restaurants, as well as a catering business. Host of two popular cookery shows, Italian Khana, and Travelling Diva, Ritu has authored two cookbooks by the same name.

Delhi’s economy also needs to derive its success and progress from women power. ‘Women can be powerful drivers of economic development, improving lives for individuals, families and communities,’ said Candace Browning, head of global research at Bank of America, Merrill Lynch and a Global Ambassador in India. ‘There is a strong correlation between gender equality and a country’s GDP per capita as well as its level of competitiveness. Ultimately, empowering women results in a more efficient use of a country’s human capital.’

To garner this woman power, 8 enterprising business women set up FICCI FLO in Delhi. Indu Jain, first President of FICCI FLO has spelt out the ambition of FLO succinctly in her Foreword to the First Annual report. She says, ‘The major objectives of this organisation are to provide better opportunity for women to explore their own potential and utilise that potential to contribute in the areas of business and society in general... The idea was that each member should find an avenue to suit her taste, inclination and abilities. The organisation should also serve as an apex coordinating agency, which would bring together the various institutions that are working for specific aspects of the problems of women.’

FLO, at the same time, realises women are gaining power in traditionally male fields. Also, in family-run companies, women are not just cashing dividend cheques, they are now running operations. FLO aims to empower them and to help prepare women to play a central role in driving progress and social change across sectors.

In the 30 years of its existence, FLO has spread its wings across India to establish ten chapters in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ludhiana, Jaipur, Coimbatore, the Northeast, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, and its member strength has grown to more than 3,200. In 2004, FLO instituted Young FLO for its members who are younger than 39 years. Today, YFLO is making its presence felt in 4 states: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Hyderabad.

A business consultancy cell is run from the headquarters for women entrepreneurs, extending help in setting up units, and in running them. Various CSR initiatives have been undertaken to promote the girl child and empower women. One of the recent noteworthy works that Delhi FLO undertook is: ITI Jija Bai Institute in Delhi, where more than 500 girls have been trained for personality development with English-speaking skills. It is only one effort among many in which FLO is actively involved, to create a new cultured and sensible generation of modern women who can prove their worth, ability and leadership qualities in the Indian landscape. FLO has even run courses on ‘art appreciation’ and ‘creative writing’ as well as workshops to enhance entrepreneurial skills, so that the sensibility of the new generation is enriched with art, literature, philosophy along with business and professional acumen. It is an emotional contribution of FLO to the women of Delhi, to help them sail in different streams.
The launch of FLO’s Chennai Chapter in 1997 was a milestone in the history of FLO. It was the first chapter instituted outside of Delhi, and signified FLO’s coming of age, and a readiness to launch chapters beyond the headquarters that could steer their own development, even as they were aligned with FLO’s common vision. Several programmes had already been conducted in Chennai by FLO National Presidents, Indira Dutt (1992-1993) and Usha Krishna (1996-1997) and the momentum they generated, led to the chapter’s creation.

Chennai (shortened form of Chenniapattanam, the name of the town that grew around Fort St George), called Madras till 1996, is the capital city of the state of Tamil Nadu and is the fourth largest city in India. The city’s history dates from the 2nd century AD. In 1639, the British created a settlement called Fort St George, which grew into a moderately large town the British called Madras (after Madraspattinam, a fishing village north of Fort St George). From a crucial staging post for the fledgling East India Company, the British began, from Madras, its imperialistic march across a fragmented country. Madras however, began to lose its centrality in the coloniser’s scheme of things, upon expansion into east and north India.

But Chennai grew, and grew into a trenchant sceptic of the British Empire. Chennai is the birthplace of the idea of political opposition to empire, which concretised as the Indian National Congress. The idea was conceived in a meeting of 17 Indian and British members of the Theosophical Society, after a convention held in the city on December 1884. During the first 50 years of the Indian National Congress, the city played host to its conventions seven times, in 1887, 1894, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1914 and 1927, becoming one of the strong bases for the movement for independence. More recently, after independence, Chennai has given birth to powerful regional political parties, whom the Centre can ignore only at its peril.

The march of time notwithstanding, Chennai – once fondly called the Queen of the Coromandel – remains a spacious and gracious city. These qualities are most apparent in the way the city sets store by its culture. In 1930, for the first time in India, Madras University introduced a course in music, as part of the Bachelor of
Arts curriculum. The Madras Music Season, initiated by the Madras Music Academy in 1927, is held every year in December. Artists from, and around the city, render a celebration of traditional Carnatic music. Chennai is also known for Bharatnatyam, a classical dance that originated in Tamil Nadu and is the country’s oldest dance form. Kalakshetra, situated on the beach south of the city, is an important cultural centre for Bharatnatyam. Five Bharatnatyam dancers from Chennai performed at the India Campaign during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, UK.

The vibrant heritage of Chennai includes the 4-day celebration of Pongal in January. It is a harvest festival of Thanksgiving. Sugarcane, turmeric, sheaves of paddy, newly prepared jaggery, vegetables and pulses are offered to the Sun god. The ritual also includes worshipping of the earth and the cow.

In addition, Chennai is a movie-making powerhouse. It hosts major movie studios, including AVM studio, India’s oldest surviving studio. People here love their movies, as is evident from the presence of 120 cinema screens, as of 2012, in the city. The film industry has contributed three chief ministers of Tamil Nadu – M.G. Ramachandran, M. Karunanidhi and J. Jayalalithaa.

Today, Chennai’s economy has a broad industrial base in the automobile, computer, technology, hardware manufacturing and healthcare sectors. As of 2012, the city is India’s second largest exporter of information technology (IT), and business process outsourcing (BPO) services. A major part of India’s automobile industry is based in and around the city, earning it the moniker ‘Detroit of India’. The city is a hub of a very productive state: Tamil Nadu, which has the largest number of engineering colleges. Anna University is the largest engineering university in the world. Biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, chemical industries, and electronic goods are other prominent manufacturing activities. Tamil Nadu

Pongal, a 4-day harvest festival, marks the sun’s six-month long journey northwards (Uttarayana). Some of the rituals performed during the celebration include preparation of rice (Sadhu Pongal), chanting of prayers, and offering of vegetables, sugar cane and spices to the gods.

also boasts of a lady Chief Minister, J. Jayalalithaa, who is currently serving her third term in office. Tamil Nadu has achieved a high degree of progress in gender-related indicators on literacy, health, employment, through introduction of several successful gender-related programmes.

In 1983, a separate corporation was established for the development of women, TNCDW, with a view to empowering rural women. Since July 2006, this corporation has been brought under the administrative control of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department in order to bring better coordination in implementing schemes meant for self-help groups (SHGs). These SHGs, exceed three lakhs, and help cover 50 lakh rural women in Tamil Nadu, ensuring their self-reliance.

FLO Chennai is very much in tandem with such developments. It has initiated programmes at different levels. At the executive level, several workshops/sessions have been conducted on finance, international marketing, stock markets, gems and jewellery, fashion and trends and one-on-one meetings are held with visiting business delegations. FLO Chennai has had talks by luminaries like Rajstree Birta, Swati Piramal, Shikha Sharma, Mans Shankar Iyer, and others. At the mid-level, computer training, factory visits, management skills and EDPs, export/import promotion have been done.

At the grassroot level, over the years, several programmes have been conducted on varying issues, some of which are:
- A one-year programme with events, counselling and competition on sanitation, recycling and environment protection in 5 corporation schools.
- Driving lessons for underprivileged women and, upon course completion, a valid license and employment.
Multi-cuisine cooking classes to provide for the huge supply gap in the burgeoning restaurant landscape of Chennai.

Embroidery, zardozi and tailoring workshops have been conducted in and around Chennai city, which have helped a large number of women to find a new livelihood, and supplement the family income.

In 2012, it was decided that FLO Chennai will be identified with one single project. A pledge was taken to support and sponsor the training of under-privileged women as nurse aids for a minimum of three years. A grand fund raiser was organised by the then chairperson Srikantha Jhaver to fund the same, and also to set up a corpus to continue to support the cause in the years to come.

The Chennai chapter commemorated its 10th anniversary under the aegis of [then] chairperson Shobana Reddy, by hosting the FLO inter-state meet, along with a 2-day heritage visit to Palathur, the Chettinad heartland of culture and flavours. It was also the occasion when 10 past chairpersons were felicitated.
Coimbatore, also called Kovai, is the third largest city and urban settlement in Tamil Nadu. It is a major industrial, commercial and educational hub of Tamil Nadu, and is often referred to as the ‘Manchester of South India’. The city has the Nilgiris in the north, and the Annamalai mountains in the south. The Palakkad gap in the Western Ghats, to the east of the city, is a wind tunnel that has a moderating influence on the climate here.

Coimbatore, what we know of it today, was settled relatively late vis-à-vis the rest of Tamil Nadu, and it was also sparsely populated until recently. Prior to the 2nd century AD Coimbatore existed as a small tribal village capital called Kongunad until it was brought under Chola control in the 2nd or 3rd century AD by Karikal, the first of the early Cholas. Among its other great rulers were the Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Pandyas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara kings. When Kongunad fell to the British along with the rest of the state, its name was changed to Coimbatore, and it is by this name that it is known today, except in Tamil, in which it is called Kovai.

Under the British, Coimbatore district was enlarged and encompassed the present districts of Erode, Karur, Tirupur in Tamil Nadu, and part of present-day Karnataka. Coimbatore is an industrial city which saw a population boom in the 20th century and grew rapidly in the first couple of decades after Independence.

Coimbatore is the largest cotton yarn manufacturing centre in India. In addition, the largest textile machinery manufacturer in India, Lakshmi Machine Works, is based here. Coimbatore has a large ancillary support system for the textile industry. Although the first spinning mill, Coimbatore Spinning & Weaving Mills, was started in 1888, it was in the 1930s that the industry took off, due to the Pykara hydroelectric project in the Nilgiris.

Coimbatore has many leading engineering companies, including the largest compressor manufacturer in India, Elgi Equipments, and the largest pump manufacturer in India – CRI Pumps. As the largest manufacturer of pumps and motors in India, Coimbatore accounts for a whopping 60 per cent of Indian output.
It has an even larger share in the nation-wide manufacture of wet grinders, besides being one of the largest foundry clusters in India, and a nerve-centre for valve manufacturing. The result has been a strong economy, and a reputation of being one of the greatest industrial cities in South India.

Although the Coimbatore economy is heavily dependent on textile manufacturing and light engineering, the economy is diverse enough to accommodate the largest poultry company in India, Suguna Poultry; one of the largest jewellery manufacturers in India, Emerald Jewel Industry; a large diamond-cutting company, Dimexon Diamonds, the largest manufacturer of tread rubber in India, Elgi Rubber Company; and two of the largest sugar companies in South India – Bannari Amman Sugars, and Sakthi Sugars.

In the 1930s, Coimbatore was a prominent movie-making hub. Today, it is a prominent motorsports centre in India. Narain Karthikeyan, India’s first Formula 1 driver, hails from here, indeed, India’s best rally drivers have been from Coimbatore. One of the most prominent rallies in India, The Mill and Monsoon Rally, is held here. It has one of two Formula 3 racing tracks in India, and has hosted several national open-wheel racing competitions. The Coimbatore Golf Club is currently frequented by the Professional Golf Tour of India.

To continue this march to progress for women, the FICCI Coimbatore organisation’s Coimbatore chapter commenced its maiden journey on 14th November 1992 with L. Nagaswara, the then chief executive of Sri Ramakrishna Mills as chairperson. Rama Vijayakumar, a FLO Coimbatore member, as well as the sister of Indira Dutt, the then President of FLO (1992-1993) and managing director of the KCP Ltd, was influential in the launching of this chapter.

Sugar Baroness RAJSHREE PATHY

Rajshri Pathy is the Chairperson and Managing Director of Rajshree Sugars and Chemicals Limited. She was the first woman President of the Indian Sugar Mills Association (2004-2005). She currently serves on the Board of the National Institute for Fashion Technology, and the India Design Council, and is a Member of the World Economic Forum’s Global Growth Companies. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. She was nominated as a ‘Global Leader for Tomorrow’ at the World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland, and as an Eisenhower Fellow. She was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2013 in the field of Trade and Industry. She is the Founder of The India Design Forum, the first International design platform that facilitates cross-cultural design thinking and application.

Delivering Happiness VANITHA RANGARAJ

Sharanalayam is a charitable not-for-profit organisation recognised by the government of Tamil Nadu, India founded by Vanitha Rangaraj, affectionately called Thaiaamma. Sharanalayam, a recognised orphanage takes care of more than 220 orphaned, disabled, mentally challenged, abandoned and HIV positive children and adults. Sharanalayam runs five centres: Dhaya for abandoned and orphaned children, Jyothi, for the abandoned mentally challenged, Jeevan, for the HIV positive; Sweehar, an adoption agency and Akshaya Pathiram to feed the elderly underprivileged near Sharanalayam. Plans are afoot for a mental health research centre.

The primary activities of FLO Coimbatore have been to organise learning programmes for its members including industrial visits, emancipation of the girl child through education, livelihood enhancement for impoverished girls, and breast cancer/cervix cancer screening and awareness programmes.

FLO’s flagship annual event has been the presenting of awards to women achievers from diverse fields such as the performing arts, business, education and other professional endeavours.

FLO Coimbatore has grown from strength to strength. FLO’s aim is to increase its footprint and engagement with the local community, with a view to its social activities becoming more entrenched.
FLO’s Kolkata chapter was inaugurated in 1997. It has over 380 plus members today, who embody and keep alive the FLO vision of being an effective tool in emancipating women. When the chapter began, 12 years ago, under the leadership of Renuka Shah, another dimension was added to a city of many shapes. Or avatars?

In 1690, on the eastern bank of the river Hooghly, Job Charnock, an administrator in British East India Company, founded a settlement. Calcutta grew rapidly from settlement, through trading outpost to a large conurbation. In 1772, it became the capital city of British India, the hub of English colonial activity in India and, by the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the gateway to the British Empire in Asia; the ‘Jewel in the Crown’.

But that designation is misleading, even a trifle patronising. For nineteenth-century Calcutta – now a big, bustling urban centre – was also the Renaissance city. In the interstices of colonialism, there emerged a call for socio-cultural reform, led by the city’s educated, enlightened middle-class, its ‘bhadralok’. This movement, commonly referred as the Bengal Renaissance, sparked a flame of resistance to colonial rule, making Calcutta the cyonurse of the Indian Independence movement. As impatience with colonial rule grew, the British administration was compelled to move the capital to New Delhi in 1911.

The tumultuous times of the Bengal Renaissance also laid the foundation for the city to emerge as the intellectual and cultural capital of the nation. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth century Calcutta nourished writers, painters, musicians, actors and filmmakers, not to mention thinkers and scientists. The Bengal Renaissance is said to have begun with Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1775-1833) and continued until the death of Rabindranath Tagore in 1941.

In the decades following India’s independence, Calcutta experienced a steady economic decline due to a steep increase in population and a rise in militant trade-unionism, backed by left-wing parties, which led to frequent strikes. From the 1960s to the late 1990s, factories shut down and businesses relocated. The
1971 Indo-Pakistan war, that led to the formation of Bangladesh, saw the city swamped by refugees, further challenging its infrastructure. This was during the Left Front governance by a coalition of left-wing parties dominated by the Communist Party of India. But that designation, too, is misleading, and definitely patronising. For Calcutta – or Kolkata, as the city was renamed in 2001 – is a multicultural, cosmopolitan space. Germans and Armenians live here too, together with people of Chinese, Sinhalese, and Tibetan origin. Indeed, in spite of its many contradictions and some catastrophic disasters (the Great Famine) during the twentieth century, the city somehow managed to regenerate itself. The migrant Marwari community, or the trading community from Rajasthan, has contributed significantly to the city’s economy.

The city’s culture, which can be mapped through its expressive traditions and social mores, is dramatic and rich. One tradition most typical to Kolkata is the para culture, or neighbourhood culture, where elders or youngsters gather for a adda, or a chat. Another Kolkata obsession is football, with clubs such as Mohun Bagan and East Bengal headquartered here.

Rabindra Sangeet has had a very strong influence on Bengali culture. Written and composed by Rabindranath Tagore, these songs are regarded as cultural treasures in West Bengal. Rabindra Sangeet has evolved into a distinctive school of music. Songs created by Kazi Nazrul Islam are known as Nazrulgeeti. Nazrul Islam was poet, musician and revolutionary whose poetic works espoused an intense spiritual rebellion against fascism and oppression. A hub of performing arts as well, it not only has its own form of drama called the ‘Jatra’, but its film industry called Tollywood, and its associate stars also have their place in the industry called Tollywood, and its associate stars also have their place in the

Kolkata’s heart. The city has bred world-acclaimed directors like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, and also Rituparno Ghosh and Aparna Sen.

Kolkata will be remembered as the birthplace of Rabindranath Tagore and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, or for being the workplace of Mother Teresa, whose benevolent and selfless service towards humanity has breathed new life in thousands of deprived people.

Whether it is maestros like Ali Akbar Khan or painters like Nandalal Bose and Ganesh Pyne, all are associated with the city. Flashes of lost vestiges of the ‘babu culture’ of the nineteenth century can still be seen in homes and Park Street. This included wealthy locals, mostly zamindars, bureaucrats and professionals, who embraced English liberalism, yet remained shadowed by conservatism. A reaction to this culture was the Bengali Renaissance movement.

The city gets into a frenzy of festivities during Durga Puja. Thousands go pandal-hopping in and around the city, and the streets are abuzz with food, lights, gaiety and mirth. Kolkata is better known to the rest of India for its legendary sweets like ‘rosogulla’, ‘mishit doi’ and ‘sandesh’. ‘Puchka’ with tamarind water, or a snack of roll or chop on the way back from office, is a must. Food in Kolkata has a variety of influences: Chinese, Mughal, European, Anglo-Indian. Though a typical multi-course Bengali meal is incomplete without fish and mashi.

The city’s fortunes have also improved after the Indian economy was liberalised in the 1990s, and changes in economic policy were enacted by the West Bengal state government. It is ranked third among South Asian cities, after Mumbai and
Delhi. With its huge economy and relatively inexpensive living, it has become one of the world’s major centres of business. Employers view Calcutta as the favourite to become India’s next Silicon Valley. An example is the recent development there of ‘e-government’ systems. ‘Asia’s astonishing new high-tech center: Calcutta on a roll,’ writes Hong Kong’s Far Eastern Economic Review.

This is the context FLO’s Kolkata chapter operates in. Contemporary Kolkata is an opportunity, especially for societal development through empowering women. A significant effort by FLO has been to initiate a CSR project on ‘Skill Upgradation and Gainful Employment of Rural Clusters – Learn and Earn Initiatives’ at Shantiniketan. In another initiative, Foundation for MSME clusters (FMC) conducted the training programme for artisans from the Shantiniketan Kantha Embroidery cluster.

Kolkata Chapter Chairpersons:

- Ruchika Gupta 2013-2013
- Shruti Sarar 2011-2012
- Monisha Kapuria 2010-2011
- Saima Makarji 2009-2010
- Rajpurni Saran 2008-2009
- Leena Raynal 2007-2008
- Sangita Tod 2006-2007
- Shanta Pratima Jalan 2005-2006
- Ishita Agrawal 2003-2004
- Ritu Agrawal 2001-2003
- Sunita Jindal 2000-2001
- Sonal Jindal 1998-1999
- Usha Agarwal 1997-1998

In 1985, Lovey Kapur took her baking – the backyard business to a real business. Today, Kookie Jar, or KJ, is an icon of Kolkata. From a single-shop humble beginning to a total of four shops, one restaurant and a café, KJ has achieved stupendous success in such a short span of time. Lovey’s special ingredient is not the best Belgian chocolate she uses, it’s the passion. And, of course, hard work… dollops of it!

Sweet Success
LOVEY KAPUR

Dakshineswar Kali Temple, on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River, is devoted to Bhavatarini, another form of Kali. The temple is also associated with Ramakrishna, a mystic of 19th Century Bengal.
Initially founded by Anjana Somany, FLO’s Hyderabad chapter began in right earnest in 2001, under the able guidance of Shanti Reddy. Yet another facet was added to a historic city’s march towards modernity.

Hyderabad (which means ‘city of Nizams’) was established in 1591 by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. It remained under the rule of the Qutb Shahi dynasty until 1687, when Mughal emperor Aurangzeb conquered the region and the city became part of the Mughal empire’s Deccan province. In 1724 Asif Jah I, a Mughal viceroy, declared sovereignty, and formed the Asif Jahl dynasty, also known as the Nizams of Hyderabad who ruled the state for more than two centuries, in a subsidiary alliance with the British Raj. The city remained the princely state’s capital from 1769 to 1948, when the Nizam signed an Instrument of Accession with the Indian Union at the conclusion of Operation Polo. The 1956 States Reorganisation Act created the modern state of Andhra Pradesh, with Hyderabad as its capital.

The historic city Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah established on the southern side of the Musi river forms the ‘Old City’, while the ‘New City’ comprises the urbanised area on the northern bank. The two are connected by many bridges, of which Purana Pul is the oldest. Hyderabad is twinned with neighbouring Secunderabad, from which it is separated by the Hussain Sagar lake. Hyderabad is a perfect blend of modernisation and rich, ancient charm and grandeur. The Nizams were considered to be one of the wealthiest rulers, a fact aptly reflected in the city’s grandeur. One of the four most important cities of southern India today, it boasts of a rich and cosmopolitan lifestyle. With the onset of the great economic reforms in the country during the last decade of the twentieth century, Hyderabad became one of the leading Information Technology hubs of the country. The city has a vibrant tourism industry, for the old city boasts of architectural marvels like forts, palaces and museums. The new city, too, has its distinctive architecture: shopping malls, parks, science centres.

Situated at the crossroads of North and South India, Hyderabad has a unique culture. As the former capital of the largest and richest princely state, and with the patronage of the Nizams, Hyderabad has rich traditions in art, literature, architecture and cuisine. The Golconda and Hyderabad styles are branches of...
As the countdown begins for Eid, shopping in this historic city reaches a feverish pitch. The Old City does not sleep anymore, and the month-long festivities reach a climax. The illuminated centuries-old markets around the historic Charminar, with ghazal nights, qawwalis and mushairas, typical of the city. A food fest, and a Deccan Festival, held in February every year. There are cultural programmes of the region in the 18th century. Kalamkari, a hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, is special to the city. Hyderabad cuisine is sumptuous, and the city’s name is synonymous with a way of making Biryani that is unique to it. Some of the places of interest include Chowmahalla Palace, Charminar and Golconda fort.

Deccani painting. A metalware handicraft known as Bidriware was popularised in the region in the 18th century. Kalamkari, a hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, is special to the city. Hyderabad cuisine is sumptuous, and the city’s name is synonymous with a way of making Biryani that is unique to it. Some of the places of interest include Chowmahalla Palace, Charminar and Golconda fort.

The climax. The illuminated centuries-old markets around the historic Charminar, with ghazal nights, qawwalis and mushairas, typical of the city. A food fest, and a Deccan Festival, held in February every year. There are cultural programmes of the region in the 18th century. Kalamkari, a hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, is special to the city. Hyderabad cuisine is sumptuous, and the city’s name is synonymous with a way of making Biryani that is unique to it. Some of the places of interest include Chowmahalla Palace, Charminar and Golconda fort.

As the countdown begins for Eid, shopping in this historic city reaches a feverish pitch. The Old City does not sleep anymore, and the month-long festivities reach a climax. The illuminated centuries-old markets around the historic Charminar, with ghazal nights, qawwalis and mushairas, typical of the city. A food fest, and a pearl and bangle fair helps one savour the local specialities. Indeed, Hyderabad is also known as the ‘City of Pearls’ for its trade. Until the eighteenth century, the city was the only global trading centre for large diamonds as well. The Laad Bazaar, and nearby markets, have shops that sell pearls, diamonds, and other traditional wares and cultural antiques.

Shanta Sinha, a Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Hyderabad Central University, is a leading anti-child labour activist. She is the Ramon Magsaysay award winner, 2003 for Community Leadership, and is the founder of the MFI Foundation. She was appointed the chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Her immense contributions in the area of child development are well recognised globally. She has played a pivotal role in universalising elementary education. At present, she is working in close association with government teachers, NGOs, women’s groups, local bodies and youth associations and is focusing her attention on the development of girl child and children, who are engaged in the industries as bonded labourers.

Industrialisation in Hyderabad began under the Nizams in the late 19th century. From the 1950s to the 1970s, Indian enterprises were established in the city, such as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, the National Mineral Development Corporation, Bharat Electronics, Electronics Corporation of India Limited, the Defence Research and Development Organisation, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, the Andhra Bank and the State Bank of Hyderabad. Since the 1990s, the growth of information technology (IT), IT-enabled services, insurance and financial institutions has expanded the service sector, and these primary economic activities have boosted the ancillary sectors of trade and commerce, transport, storage, communication, real estate and retail. Hyderabad is a global IT centre, and is also known as Cyberabad (Cyber City). It has emerged as a global hub for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. It is also home to the Telugu film industry and a major centre for higher education and research, with 13 universities and business schools. The development of HITEC City, a township with extensive technological infrastructure, prompted multinational companies to establish facilities in Hyderabad.

This is the context in which the FLO Hyderabad chapter came into being, to continue the process of progress that, by tapping the immense potential of women. Starting with 56 members, a majority of whom were entrepreneurs, membership has grown by leaps and bounds. Members today range from entrepreneurs to professionals and home-makers, all of whom benefit from networking, workshops and most importantly, from national and global-level speakers.

In 2006, YFLO was launched under Namita Gautam, National president. Heena Srivastava, FLO chairperson 2005-2006, initiated the launch with 120 members. In 2011-2012, Hyderabad hosted its second interstate meet under the chairmanship of Pinky Reddy. The first one was hosted here in 2004-2005, under Lata Reddy. For the last six years, the chapter has been coming out with a quarterly self-funding newsletter, Connect, and has a very strong CSR initiative: ‘Educate the Girl Child’.
Spirit in Action

DR SUNITHA KRISHNAN

Dr Sunitha Krishnan has committed her life to protect and uplift women. She is the chief functionary and co-founder of Prajwala, an institution that assists trafficked women and girls in finding shelter. The organisation also helps pay for the education of five-thousand children infected with HIV/AIDS in Hyderabad. Prajwala’s second-generation prevention programme operates in 17 transition centres, and has served thousands of children of prostituted mothers. Dr Krishnan, and her staff, train survivors in carpentry, welding, printing, masonry and housekeeping. A mental health professional, Dr Krishnan has done extensive research, and is essentially a field practitioner. For her efforts she has been awarded Stree Shakhti Puraskar (national award), Perdita Huston Human Rights Award, and the World of Children Award.

Hyderabad Chairpersons

- Rekha Reddy 2012-2013
- Priya Reddy 2011-2012
- Chandana Chakrabati 2010-2011
- Ajita Yogesh 2009-2010
- Saritha Reddy 2008-2009
- Venu Laxmi 2007-2008
- Menaka Reddy 2006-2007
- Himma Shrivasat 2005-2006
- Lata Reddy 2004-2005
- Malathy Y Reddy 2003-2004
- Himma Shrivasat 2002-2003
- Saritha Reddy 2001-2002
- Rekha Reddy 2000-2001
- Lata Reddy 1999-2000
- Rekha Reddy 1996-1997
- Chandana Chakrabati 1995-1996
- Ajita Yogesh 1994-1995
- Rekha Reddy 1993-1994
- Chandana Chakrabati 1992-1993

A fascinating combination of old and new: A Hyderabad bride in full regalia.

© Ronicka Kandhari

© Rajkumar Kandukuri

Facing page: Laad Bazaar in Old Hyderabad is popular for bangles, semi-precious stones, pearls, jewellery, silks, brocades, and perfumes.

Kalamkari paintings, bidriware, silks, and perfumes.

Jyotika Anagopa Chairperson: 2013-2014
When the FLO Bombay chapter was inaugurated in 2002, a city was re-claimed all over again. Now, women can equally say, in their own unique way: Amchi Mumbai!

Mumbai was called Bombay for much of the last four-hundred years. The name is said to be derived from the Portuguese phrase, ‘bom bahia’, meaning ‘good bay’. It is also ascribed to the local goddess, Mumba (ai means mother in Marathi). The name of the city was changed to Mumbai by an act of Parliament in 1995.

Mumbai, overlooking the Arabian Sea, has a deep natural harbour, and a long history of entrepreneur-driven commerce. It is the wealthiest city in India. Indeed, its GDP is higher than any city in West, Central or South Asia. Small wonder, then, that it was named an ‘alpha world city’ in 2009.

Behind such nomenclatures lies a tale of seven islands. For centuries, the islands were populated by fishing communities under the control of various kingdoms. They were ceded to the Portuguese and, after 1682, ‘gifted’ to a fledgling British East India Company. The Hornby Vellard project, started in the mid-18th century, reshaped Mumbai. The area between the islands was reclaimed from the sea, and when completed in 1845, Bombay stood transformed into a major seaport. The 19th century saw immense economic and educational development. During the early 20th century, it became a strong base for the freedom movement. In 1947, the city was incorporated into Bombay State. In 1940, following the Samyukta Maharashtra movement of self-determination, the state of Maharashtra was created. The jewel in its crown? Its capital, Bombay.

Though once dominated by the cotton textile industry, Mumbai’s economic base is now diversified. Textiles still remain important, but the city’s industries include petrochemicals, automobile manufacturing, metals, electronics, engineering and food processing. It is home to some of India’s largest and wealthiest industrial conglomerates. It is also the base for some of India’s premier scientific and nuclear institutes. More specialised economic activities are diamond cutting, computers, and, of course, movie-making.
Mumbai is the financial capital of India: it hosts the primary stock exchange of the country: Bombay Stock Exchange. Moreover, it is the city of dreams.

One word that completely captures what Mumbai is, ‘films’. In sheer numbers, Mumbai, or ‘Bollywood’, produces more movies than any other city in the world, including Hollywood. The Marathi film and television industry also has deep roots here. The city thrives in its film studios: Film City in Goregaon, RK Studios in Chembur, Shashadhar Mukherjee’s Filmalaya, and V Shantaram’s Rajkamal Studios. Mumbai is also a drama powerhouse. Prithvi Theatre at Juhu, Dinanath Nalavargiya at Vile Parle, Shannukhananda Hall at Matunga, Prabhadanak Thackeray Theatre at Raig Sharda at Bandra, and the theatres at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Nariman Point, are always packed to capacity.

Migrants have also brought their own tastes in cuisine, music, art and literature. To tempt the palate, Mumbai has its unique street food which includes, dabeli, panipuri and bhelpuri. Irani cafés are a part of this cosmopolitan heritage.

It is a rich heritage. Marathi koli songs, the original music of the city, are still extant in its earliest form and have inspired remixes, too. Bollywood music is legion, but Indi-pop, Indian classical music and Western pop music, too, have fans here. The Bombay Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1962. It is the only Indian symphony orchestra that plays Western classical music on a regular basis. The Symphony Orchestra of India originated in 2006, and is based in Mumbai. It often performs at the National Centre for the Performing Arts. The rock/metal music industry, too, is active.

Festivals are observed by residents of all communities and religions. Diwali, Holi, Christmas, Navratri, Janmashtami, Good Friday, Id, Dussehra, Muharram,

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One word that completely captures what Mumbai is, ‘films’. In sheer numbers, Mumbai, or ‘Bollywood’, produces more movies than any other city in the world, including Hollywood. The Marathi film and television industry also has deep roots here. The city thrives in its film studios: Film City in Goregaon, RK Studios in Chembur, Shashadhar Mukherjee’s Filmalaya, and V Shantaram’s Rajkamal Studios. Mumbai is also a drama powerhouse. Prithvi Theatre at Juhu, Dinanath Nalavargiya at Vile Parle, Shannukhananda Hall at Matunga, Prabhadanak Thackeray Theatre at Raig Sharda at Bandra, and the theatres at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Nariman Point, are always packed to capacity.

Migrants have also brought their own tastes in cuisine, music, art and literature. To tempt the palate, Mumbai has its unique street food which includes, dabeli, panipuri and bhelpuri. Irani cafés are a part of this cosmopolitan heritage.

It is a rich heritage. Marathi koli songs, the original music of the city, are still extant in its earliest form and have inspired remixes, too. Bollywood music is legion, but Indi-pop, Indian classical music and Western pop music, too, have fans here. The Bombay Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1962. It is the only Indian symphony orchestra that plays Western classical music on a regular basis. The Symphony Orchestra of India originated in 2006, and is based in Mumbai. It often performs at the National Centre for the Performing Arts. The rock/metal music industry, too, is active.

Festivals are observed by residents of all communities and religions. Diwali, Holi, Christmas, Navratri, Janmashtami, Good Friday, Id, Dussehra, Muharram,
FLO Bombay’s grassroots entrepreneurial project, ‘Ghar Ki Roti’, provides employment to women, equipping them with job-oriented skills. A significant achievement for FLO Bombay has been its partnership with Johnson & Johnson, Tata Power and Janaki Devi Bajaj to provide sanitation facilities to 10 schools in the Mumbai-Pune belt. These schools had already been identified by mid-2013, six such complexes are already complete. FLO Bombay is not all about work. Its iconic programme ‘Phir Wahi Shaam’ blends work and play, and to date remains a big favourite. It has set trends, too, in having the very first nationally televised FLO Awards. The latest FLO venture, ‘Trends’ is also enjoying success: it is well-attended and has been, in the last two years, a major fund raiser.

FLO Bombay raises funds from corporate houses, garnering members, creating liaisons with educational institutions, resource people and senior members in the banking and insurance industry. It has also developed a unique relationship with the police, conducting health workshops across Mumbai, and seminars to help them manage their time more effectively.

Dr Firuza Parikh is Director of the Department of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics at Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, Mumbai. After training at Yale in reproductive medicine, Dr Parikh returned to India to set up and head the first in vitro fertilisation (IVF) centre in 1989. She has many firsts to her credit: South East Asia’s first ICSI baby; first pregnancy by LASER Assisted Hatching; set up the first PGD laboratory in India, and, pioneered the technique of Cumulus Aided Transfer (CAT) for the first time in the world.

Mumbai Chapter Chairpersons

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Facing page: Inimitable dabbawalas of Mumbai who have found a place for themselves in the Forbes magazine and material for a Harvard case study for their efficient and accurate tiffin delivery system.

Black-yellow cabs in front of the Victoria Terminus.
The Jaipur chapter of FLO is founded on a happy challenge: transforming the traditional work ethic of this enterprising city, and taking the city to an inclusive future.

Jaipur is the bustling capital city of Rajasthan, a business centre with all the trappings of a modern metropolis. However, it also has an old-world charm that makes it special to the world. The old Jaipur, painted in pink, will fill any visitor with admiration. A stunning backdrop of ancient forts including Nahargarh, Amber, Jaigarh and Moti Doongari are visible signs of the romance and chivalry of the city’s bygone era.

Arriving through a narrow pass in the hills, one is greeted with a view of the towering Amber fort-palace surrounded by hills. It surpasses every expectation of what a Rajput fort should be. The two rulers who built Amber were Man Singh, a leading general under Mughal emperors Akbar and Jahangir, and Jai Singh I, a military and diplomatic genius who brought the house of Amber to its apogee at the Mughal court. Ascending to the throne aged just 11, Jai Singh I was soon commanding a Mughal force for Jahangir, then fought all over the Mughal empire for Shah Jahan and finally backed the right side in the war of succession to become emperor Aurangzeb’s most prized Rajput commander.

Three rulers later, Jai Singh II, another child prodigy, came to the throne. He impressed the 71-year-old Aurangzeb who awarded him the title ‘Sawai’, meaning one-and-a-quarter. Jai Singh II, having proved his soldiering ability, turned to other passions – the arts and sciences. He studied the architecture of several European cities, and drew up plans to construct a large and well-planned city. He consulted his best mathematicians, astronomers and the Shilpa Shastra, an architectural treatise, before making a blueprint for a new city. The foundation stone of Jaipur was laid by him in 1727, and the eminent architect, Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, was asked to design the ‘Pink City’. Jaipur was the first planned city of India. The famous pink colour, symbolising ‘welcome’, came later when Ram Singh II received the Prince of Wales in 1876.

In Royal Splendour

The intricate and evolving facade of Hawa Mahal, or the Palace of the Winds, Jaipur’s most recognised building.

Jal Mahal in Man Sagar lake.

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After Independence, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and other Rajput princely states merged to form the state of Rajasthan. Jaipur was the natural choice for the capital. And even 273 years after it was founded, Jaipur has retained its old world charm: colourful bazaars, people sporting blood-red turbans, puppet sellers, and festivals and fairs.

Jaipur has much to offer: pageants and festivals, a wealth of handicrafts, a royal legacy of palaces, and more. Indeed, should the visitor simply choose to walk around the streets of the old city, she will not regret it. And then there is the sumptuous Rajasthani cuisine, a must-relish: Dal Batti Churma, Ghewar and mouth-watering dishes such as Gatte ki subji, Rajasthani curry, Mangori, Pakodi and Ker Sangari.

The elephant festival, held on the eve of Holi, has several interesting attractions, such as elephant polo. The festival begins with a procession of elaborately decorated and festooned elephants, camels, horses and folk dancers. While the Gangaur Fair is held all over Rajasthan, the idols of Issar and Gangaur, manifestations of Shiva and Parvati, are worshipped by women, particularly those who are unmarried and pray for a consort. Women take out a procession through the streets, carrying images of the divine couple. On the evening of 14 January each year, kites with lights in them, and fireworks brighten the skies on the day of the kite festival.

There is much opportunity here, too. The RBI has ranked Jaipur as the eleventh largest deposit centre and ninth largest credit centre, nationwide, as of June 2012. Jaipur district is a centre for both traditional and modern industries. It is famous all over Asia as a prime exporter of gold, diamond and stone jewellery. Also, Rajasthan is a leading investment destination in India. Pre-eminent in

India’s Youngest Sarpanch

CHHAWI RAJAWAT

Chhavi Rajawat has been sarpanch of Village Seda in District Tonk, Rajasthan since 2010. This MBA graduate ditched her corporate career with one of the country’s biggest telecom firms to become sarpanch, and has been working ever since to bring better water, solar power, paved roads, toilets and a bank to her ancestral village.

Rajawat received the Yuva Award in 2013; was announced a Young Global Leader by World Economic Forum in 2012; has been honored by Former President APJ Abdul Kalam in 2011 and in 2010, CNN gave her its Young Indian Leader award.

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quarrying and mining, the state is the second largest source of cement. It has rich salt deposits at Sambhar, copper mines at Khetri and zinc mines at Dariba and Zawar. In addition, since it is endowed with natural beauty and a great history, tourism is a flourishing business. A spin-off of tourism has been the growth of the handicrafts industry.

The Rajasthani work ethic comes mostly from successful family-run businesses, a conventional and traditional way of living, a high degree of social networking, and extended family bonhomie. Corporate or professional businesses are few and far between, and that has a bearing on the mindset needed to create an ecosystem for a successful woman entrepreneur or employee. The mindset in joint family structures prefers that women join the family business, and not at a very ambitious level, but only in a non-value driven, ‘supervisory’ role.

This mindset is what FLO’s Jaipur chapter strives to transform, through its work of empowering women.

Queen of Blue Pottery LEELA BORDIA

Leela Bordia gave a new lease of life to Jaipur’s Blue pottery, as well as transformed the lives of villagers of Kotjewar when she founded Neerja International in 1978. Begun with four craftsmen, Neerja now runs several blue pottery units that employ more than 500 craftsmen, thus also contributing towards social change through its work. Bordia has received numerous awards both at home and abroad for her work, and has held distinguished positions including the Executive of the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce, and the Federation of Handicrafts Association.

Jaipur Chapter Chairpersons

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Jaipur is an excellent place to shop for precious gemstones, silver jewelry, bangles, clothes, blue pottery, and textiles.

Spicy, lip-smacking street food of Jaipur.

A traditional Rajasthani thali comprises ker-sangri pickle, gatte ki sabzi and dal-bati-churma.

[Facing page] Jaipur is an excellent place to shop for precious gemstones, silver jewelry, bangles, clothes, blue pottery, and textiles.
Loktak lake in Manipur is the only floating park in the world.

For FLO Northeast, the motto is: ‘challenge, and challenge some more’.

Home to more than 260 ethnic tribes, and an equal number of dialects, the hugely diverse Northeast India comprises Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and the mountain state of Sikkim, but share similar political, social and economic contexts.

Here, spectacular vistas of hills and majestic mountains intermingle with picturesque, fertile valleys, through which run rivers such as the Brahmaputra and Barak. The landscape is intrinsically linked to the cultural, social and economic life of its inhabitants, and reflected in its vivid and vibrant tapestry of folk art, music, dance, textiles, handicrafts, and unique architecture.

The economic lifeline of the Northeast, the Brahmaputra, originates as the Tsangpo from Mount Kailash in Tibetan China, flows as the Siang in Arunachal, becomes the Brahmaputra in Assam, the only male river in India, before paradoxically becoming Meghna in Bangladesh. 57 tributaries join it in the North, and 33 in the South.

The states are heavily forested, and have abundant rainfall. Naturally rich, several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries exist here, of which Kaziranga and Manas are world-famous, not only for their scenic beauty but also for harbouring many endangered species of birds and animals, the most well-known being the rhinoceros.

Among numerous other protected wildlife parks, there is the unique Keibul Lamjao National Park in the heart of Manipur, home to the critically endangered ‘brow-antlered’ Sangai or ‘dancing deer’, and in which is found the largest freshwater floating lake in northeast India, the Loktak Lake. On the banks of this marshy lake, on whose floating vegetation the inhabitants eke out a living, is a place called Meirangi where Subhas Chandra Bose first hoisted the Indian Tricolour.
Mawsynram in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya is the rainiest place on Earth, and the waterfalls that dot the state are picturesque and awesome, the most famous being the Nohkalikai Falls. To negotiate the numerous streams and waterfalls that dot Meghalaya, generations of local people have intertwined the roots of the Ficus elastica (rubber) plant and made living root bridges out of them...an amazing natural wonder of the state of Meghalaya. One of these bridges is a double-decker bridge! The 780 caves found all over the state are also a delight to explore.

The ground-hugging Chinese Gentians, or Fall Gentians, suddenly bloom after a shower higher up near Sela Pass in Arunachal Pradesh. The delicate Siroy Lily is the State Flower of Manipur, found in Ukhrul District.

For the curious, a phenomena occurs August-October, every year, at a small village called Jatinga in the Dima Hasao District, the only hill district of Assam. Hundreds of birds plummet inexplicably to death, in certain weather conditions.

The classical dance form virtually synonymous with the Northeast is the Manipuri dance; but in 2000, the 500-year-old Sattriya Dances of Assam were also given recognition as the eighth classical dance form, by the Sangeet Natak Academy.
Master of the Game
PARBATI BARUA

Fearless and brave, Parbati Barua is the first female mahout in recent recorded history. After graduating in Political Science from Guwahati University, she was expected to lead a conventional life, pursuing academics. Instead, she became a crackshot at lassoing wild elephants, travelling with her team to any part of the country where the largest land animal is in distress or danger. She is a pachyderm expert, and her advice is often sought on elephant management policies and conservation activities. She was awarded the United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 Roll of Honour in 1989.

The most famous shrine for Tantrik Shaktism is the Kamakhya Temple situated on the Nilachal Hills, overlooking the Brahmaputra, where lakhs of devotees from all over the country converge during Ambubashi and Manasha Puja.

All over the Northeast, weaving is considered a sacred art, done mainly by women, so it is not surprising that the region is truly a treasure-trove of vibrantly coloured, intricately hand-spun, hand-woven textiles, having not only daily, functional value, but ceremonial and ritual significance as well. It is in Assam that the most beautiful golden ‘muga’ silk is produced, along with the more commonly known off-white pat silk, and the warm, thick ari silk which is also known as the Ahimsa silk, as the cocoons are not killed during its production.

Along with tea, bamboo is considered the ‘Green Gold’ of the Northeast, and is an integral part of their lives as it is fashioned into objects of both functional and aesthetic value.

Women in this region hold a high socio-economic status, and are not subject to the same degree of inequality or insecurity as in the rest of the country. There is a rare, natural independence about them. In Shillong, Meghalaya, the thriving Bara Bazar market, is controlled by women. In Imphal, Manipur the ‘Khairamband’ market is said to be the largest women-managed and controlled market economy in the world. Mary Kiem, the Olympic medal winning puglist is a fine example of how women of this region have overcome all odds and attained international fame.
Where man dares once, she has dared and done it not only twice, but thrice. Mountaineer Anshu Jamsenpa, mother of two, hailing from Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, is the first woman in the world to scale Mount Everest twice in one season in an incredible span of just 10 days. On 18 May 2013 Jamsepa repeated the feat as part of the first Northeast India Top of the World Mount Everest Expedition. She is keen to devote herself to the development of adventure sports and adventure tourism. Multi-talented Everest Anshu Jamsenpa, played the lead actress role in Crossing Bridges, a full-length art movie.

FLO Northeast has undertaken various programmes to upgrade the weaving skills of women in Nij Modar Tol, and to rescue trafficked women. Agarbatti making and bamboo handicrafts and leather-making skills were also imparted to villagers of Kuting Pahar. Processing of local food products into pickles, jams, wines was demonstrated to villagers in Byrnihat, and Nij Modar Tol. Weavers in Sualkuchi were helped by being provided with powered spectacles, to assist in overcoming poor eyesight, which hindered their work.

The Northeast inhabited as it is by a progressive, forward looking, friendly populace, is unique in that, despite having preserved its incredible natural beauty and immense biodiversity in an era of crass commercialisation and unabated destruction of natural habitats, is the least visited region in the entire country. It is a paradise waiting to be explored!

Northeast Chapter Chairpersons

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Women wearing bamboo hats and traditional clothes, working in a sprawling tea garden in Assam.
Pitching for women empowerment at a meet organised by FICCI FLO, Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, said, ‘Now, women are two steps ahead of men. We need to recognise the power of women. Boys want to marry women who are working, times are changing. It should not be only for financial interest, the mindset should also change.’ He was right. In Gujarat, entrepreneurship is almost a religion. This is the land where entrepreneurs have made their own fortunes with sheer hard work and dedication. The inherent spirit of adventure, and the huge appetite for risk have led the Gujaratis to phenomenal success in their businesses. FICCI FLO Ahmedabad aids that.

In 1487, the grandson of Ahmed Shah, Mahmud Begada, established the outer city wall, to protect Ahmedabad. Muzaffar II was the last Sultan of Ahmedabad. In 1573, the city was taken over by Mughal emperor Akbar. Under Mughal rule, Ahmedabad became the leading centre of textiles. Jehangir visited Ahmedabad in 1617, and Shahjahan spent a major part of his life here. In fact, he also constructed the Moti Shahi Mahal in Shahibaugh. In 1753, Maratha generals Raghunath Rao and Damaji Gaekwad began a power struggle that eventually led to the destruction of the city. The British East India Company came here in 1818. In 1824, a military cantonment was set up. A major development took place in 1864, when a railway line was laid that connected Ahmedabad with Bombay. These developments brought Ahmedabad into the map of leading centres of trade and manufacturing. In 1918, the citizens of Ahmedabad raised their voice for India’s independence. On 1 May, 1940, Ahmedabad became a state capital, the result of the creation of the two states of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

A large number of educational and research institutions were founded in the city in the 1960s. Famous among them is the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and National Institute of Design.

Ahmedabad still has its walled city, with its unique darwajas (gates). The Jama Masjid, the shaking minarets, the Sidi Saiyyed mosque, Rani Sipri Mosque, Sarkhej Reza, Hutheesingh Jain temple, Calico Museum, Adalaj Stepwell and the world famous Gandhi Ashram are interesting places to visit.
Ahmedabad is a green city, with beautiful gardens, the most famous being the centrally located Law Garden. The famous Kankaria lake and the Ahmedabad Zoo, pioneered by David Reuben, is now a great family visiting point for all. The man-made Vastrapur lake with its lovely amphitheatre hosts many a cultural programmes all year round. Ahmedabad’s unique feature is its numerous pols or self-contained neighbourhoods. These quaint honeycomb-like areas used to be inhabited by members of the same extended family, or those practicing the same trade. The narrow streets that criss-cross these miniature habitations culminated in squares with community wells and carved wooden chabutras, or a platform with a tower-like structure in the centre to feed pigeons. Pols are protected by gates, secret passages and cul-de-sacs.

Ahmedabad city is well-known for its diversified culture. People are very passionate about celebrating festive occasions such as Navratri, a nine-night festivity, or the kite-flying festival. Gujarat has successfully preserved its rich cultural traditions: the Raas and Garba, and the folk drama called Bhavai. Most art traditions trace their origin to the times of Lord Krishna. The Uttarakayan international kite festival is celebrated to observe the end of winter and to welcome the summer. On the day, people put aside all work and head to open fields or terraces; everyone flies a kite.

A famous annual festival of music SAPTAK, is very well attended with people coming from all over the country. Mrinalini and Mallika Sarabhai, the mother and daughter duo, are world famous for their classical dance, and so is Mrs. Kumudini Lakhia for Kathak. Aditi Mangaldas, a well-known danseuse is also an Amdavadvi.

Ahmedabad is a paradise for food lovers. The typical Gujarati thali consists of mouth-watering dishes. A sweet flavoured is prevalent in almost all food items. Ahmedabad is to savour the nashtas – fafdas, dhoklas, theplas.

Gujarat boasts of a wide variety of famous handicraft products. From needlework, tie and dye (Bandhan), beadwork to pottery, women actively indulge in selling many forms of handmade artistic products.

The city has grown immensely. In 2010, its GDP was estimated at $59 billion. The RBI has ranked Ahmedabad as the eighth-largest deposit centre, and seventh-largest credit centre nationwide, as of June 2012.

In the 19th century, the textile and garments industry received strong capital investment. On 30 May 1861, the first Indian textile mill, the Ahmedabad Spinning and Weaving Company Limited, was set up. Others followed: the Calico Mills, Bagicha Mills and, famously, Arvind Mills. By 1905, 33 such mills dotted the city. The textile industry further expanded rapidly, benefitting from the influence of Mahatma Gandhi’s Swadeshi movement, which promoted India-made goods. Ahmedabad is currently among India’s top producer of cotton garments, and cotton products. The city is also the largest supplier of denim cloth, and one of the largest exporters of gemstones and jewellery in India.

The automobile industry is also important to the city. Sanand, Ahmedabad, is shaping the biggest industrial development corporations of Gujarat. After Tata’s Nano factory was set up here, Ford and Suzuki plan to establish plants. Peugeot is also here.

Two of the biggest pharmaceutical companies of India, Zydus Cadila and Torrent Pharmaceuticals are based in the city. The Nirma group of industries, which runs detergent and chemical industrial units, has its corporate headquarters in the city.

Hina Shah began her career in 1976 in the plastic packaging industry. In 1986, she transformed her entrepreneurial experience into a development initiative and started the International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (ICED). ICED has provided entrepreneurship training in India and other developing countries by working at grass-roots level, providing capacity building training to women, rural youth and tribals of Gujarat. Shah has won numerous awards, including the Stree-Shakti Award for her contribution in the field of economic development of the country.

The Sabarmati Ashram, home of Mahatma Gandhi.
The city also houses the corporate headquarters of the Adani Group, a multinational trading and infrastructure development company. Other major Indian corporates here are: Rasna, Wagh Bakri, Intas Pharmaceuticals, Paras Pharmaceuticals.

In recent years, the Gujarat government has increased investment in the modernisation of the city’s infrastructure, providing for the construction of larger roads and improvements to water supply, electricity and communications. The information technology industry has developed significantly, too, with companies such as Tata Consultancy Services opening offices here. A NASSCOM survey, in 2002, on the ‘Super Nine Indian Destinations’ for IT-enabled services ranked Ahmedabad the fifth-most competitive city. The Ahmedabad Stock Exchange, located in the Ambavadi area of the city, is India’s second oldest. The role of some women entrepreneurs has been worth emulating. These are Jasuben’s Pizzas, the women of Amul India, women who cultivate seaweed, and women employed in the handicrafts sector. In short, FLO Ahmedabad has a great aim: ‘simply enhance this city’s entrepreneurial spirit’.

A graduate from MSU, Ahmedabad, Manini Shah in an advertising wizard. After honing her skills at India’s top advertising agencies, at the age of 25, she started Ochre Revival. Within a year, Shah was giving tough competition to the veterans and had big brand accounts under her belt. Since then, she has not looked back and the business has grown from strength to strength.

The click of dandiya sticks and bright ghagra cholis indicate 9-days of Navratri festivities and time to dance.

Fierce Fighter
MANINI SHAH

Amdavad Chapter Chairpersons:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Sajani Sutaria Dua</td>
<td>2012-2014</td>
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<td>Pooja Agarwal</td>
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(Amdavad Chapter Chairpersons)

Women making paper kites for days preceding Makar Sankranti or Uttarayan, on 14 January. Markets are stocked with kites of different colours and sizes for the kite-flying ritual.
The Ludhiana chapter of FLO is very new. It has been set up for a simple reason: to encourage women to flourish in an entrepreneur’s paradise.

From being a small village called Meer Hota in 1481, that later became Lodiana and now Ludhiana, this city has come a long way. Under the Yodhas from the first to the fourth century CE, it later came under the rule of Samudragupta. But the original Ludhianavis settled here much later, in the ninth century. These were the Rajputs from the south, followed by the Turks and the Afghans who took the Bet area of Sutlej on lease from Mohammad Gami. Later, the Sidhus, Gillis, Sandhus and the Grewals came from the jungles of Jagraon and camped here.

Ludhiana gets its name from the Lodhi Dynasty, which is believed to have founded the city in the year 1480. Sikandar Lodhi sent Yusaf and Nihang to stop the approaching Balochs. They crossed the river Sutlej, and after defeating the Khokhars of Doaba, established Sultanpur Lodhi. Nihang stayed back at village Meer Hota as the Naib. He was the one who changed the name of the village to Lodiana. Later, his grandson, Jalal Khan, built the Lodhi Fort here. His two sons Aloo Khan and Khijar Khan divided the area around the fort between themselves, but were dethroned by Iblubur who even demolished Nihang’s tomb. During Akbar’s reign, it was a tehsil along with Tihara, Hathur, Bhundri, Machiware, Payal and Doraha.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Ludhiana became an important British cantonment. Initially, in 1805, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had occupied Ludhiana. However, in 1809, the British decided to curb his advance eastwards and sent troops to confront him. Ranjit Singh was forced to sign the treaty of ‘perpetual friendship’ with the British, which confined his activities to the right bank of the Sutlej. British troops were permanently stationed in Ludhiana, and the cis-Sutlej states came under British protection.

The city was the site of a great battle during the first Sikh wars. It was also an important centre during the struggle for independence, and is associated with great freedom fighters such as Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Kartar Singh, Baba Santa Singh and Maulana Habibur Rehman.
The Punjabi spirit and the richness of its culture are exemplified in this city. The bhangra and gidda dances are performed at every celebration showcasing the city’s exuberance. Vibrant colours, beautiful phulkari, huge glasses of fresh milk and lassi are just a few starters. In Ludhiana, festivals such as Dussehra, Diwali, birth and death anniversaries of the gurus and saints are celebrated enthusiastically. The festival of Baisakhi, celebrated in the month of April, is of special significance because on this day in 1699 Guru Gobind Singh organised the Sikhs into Khalsa or ‘pure one’. In the countryside farmers start harvesting with great jubilation.

An important industrial town today, Ludhiana is the textile and light-engineering centre of India. Woollen garments, machine tools, dyes, cycle parts, mopeds, sewing machines and motor parts produced here are exported all over the world. The city accounts for 90 per cent of the country’s woollen hosiery industry.

It is true that Ludhiana today is famed for its hosiery, for being the world’s largest bicycle manufacturer, for its rich agricultural area, and for the Christian Medical College Hospital, the first school of medicine in Asia. But its true claim to fame is not its commercial enterprise. It is the diligence, hard work, generations of skill and a plethora of opportunities that buttresses the city’s reputation. The city today has reached a progressive threshold. Here, women are no longer considered just homemakers, but rather as multi-taskers, who can skillfully manage home, work and family.

The government, too, has planned to facilitate Small Scale Industries (SSI) and women entrepreneurship by enhancing the investment limits for certain items, and via provision of grants exclusively reserved for manufacture by such SSI. The Small Scale Service Institution, Ludhiana (SSSI) provides several services for new and up-coming entrepreneurs, thus increasing the scope of women in business and their skill enhancement. Some of the valuable SSSI programmes include ‘Entrepreneurship Development Programs’, ‘Specialized Training Programmes’, and ‘Intensive Motivational Campaigns’.

The inventive and creative motivation of the town is visible in various industrial activities. But every urge needs a direction and every woman with such an ambition needs sincere support.

That is precisely what FLO’s Ludhiana chapter aims to provide. FLO is instilling new hope, a fresh approach and a concrete platform for women wanting to learn more, do more. The level of exposure it offers, whether for networking, skill
development or just simply a musical evening, has given this town a perspective never seen before. The chapter provides members with opportunities to benefit from the array of programmes on diverse interests that are organised throughout the country.

To see women commit to FLO is in itself a step towards empowerment. FLO also shows the larger picture: the reality that a major proportion of Indian women dwell in rural areas, and they are the hope of future entrepreneurs, waiting to be understood, encouraged and their potential unleashed. The Ludhiana chapter proudly undertook a CSR project for such women, where they were taught paper-bag-making and quilting for commercial and industrial use. Progressive ideas, but also grappling with issues such as female foeticide and the increasing sex-ratio gap, Punjab always needed an organisation which could play a key role in uplifting and empowering women in society. With FLO, a path now exists where much bigger things will happen.
With a motto to ‘unleash the power within by leading with confidence and seizing opportunities through enabling and empowering’, FLO Bengaluru works with a diverse mix of members who are dynamic and receptive to growth opportunities. FLO Bengaluru plans to build itself into a vibrant chapter with a myriad of activities to suit a divergent mix of needs and resources.

The energy in Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) is palpable. At the turn of the new millennium, at the height of the city’s hi-tech boom, there was so much money, and so many people flowing into Bengaluru, it was as if the city was being built overnight. The climate is salubrious, the city’s reputation for green spaces is well-deserved, and the youthful energy and imagination (not to mention disposable income) of the ITocracy fuels a progressive scene – one of the best in India. In fact, FLO’s presence in such a fertile ground was inevitable!

According to the Gazetteer of India, ‘Bangalore’ is an anglicized version of ‘Bengaluru’, a Kannada term derived, in turn, from ‘bende kaalu uru’, meaning ‘the town of boiled beans’. It is said that King Ballala of the Hoysala dynasty once was lost in the jungle and was very tired and hungry. In the jungle, he came across an elderly poor woman, who offered him some boiled beans. As an expression of his gratitude towards the woman, the king named the place ‘bende kaalu oru’. Other historical evidence reveals ‘Bengaluru’ was recorded much before the reign of King Ballala. And in 2006, this is the name the city took for itself, part of the astounding make-over it was going through.

Kempe Gowda, the founder of Bangalore, played a very important role in shaping the city. A feudal lord and hunting enthusiast, with the help of King Achutaraya, he built a mud fort in Bangalore and within its walls founded the towns of Balepet, Cottonpet, and Chickpet. Later, his son had the four watchtowers erected on the boundaries of the city, visible even today.

In 1638, the Vijayanagara Empire fell to the Sultan of Bijapur, Mohammad Adil Shah. For the next sixty years, the city was under the rule of the sultans. Thereafter, Mughals took over the city. However, their rule did not last too long...
and in 1687, they sold the kingdom to King Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar of Mysore. He had another fort built in Bangalore, to the south of the one built by Kempe Gowda. Hyder Ali received Bangalore in the form of a jagir (land grant) in 1739, from Krishna Raja Wodeyar II. He converted the city into an army town. In 1779, when Tipu Sultan died, the British returned the kingdom to Krishna Raja Wodeyar III. However, they again took over in 1831, citing misrule. It was under British rule that Bangalore started developing into a modern city, with railways, and post and telegraph. The city was again given back to the Wodeyars in 1881. However, since the British commissioners were based in Bangalore, its development continued unabated.

After India gained independence in 1947, Bangalore became the capital of the state of Karnataka. As a city, Bangalore was industrialised fairly early on. Sir M Visvesvaraya, Diwan of Mysore state during the early 1900s, spurred this process with his belief in the maxim, ‘industrialise or perish’. Several technical and academic institutions, including the Indian Institute of Science, were subsequently established in Bangalore. Later, during the 1940s and 1950s, the city saw the establishment of several large public- and private-sector industries.

The introduction of information technology (IT) in Bangalore, somewhere around the year 2000, led to the development of the city as the IT capital of India. Today, it has become the hub of IT professionals in India. There are numerous other names given to Bangalore, like ‘India’s Silicon Valley’, ‘The Fashion Capital of India’, ‘The Pub City of India’. Today, Bangalore is home to more than 1,500 information technology (IT) firms, with several more in what are known as IT-enabled services, a sector that includes IT-dependent businesses and Internet Service Providers.

The city abounds in picturesque parks, gardens and other scenic spots. The extensive Cubbon Park, and the enchanting botanical gardens with the glass house of Laal Bagh, both situated in the middle of the metropolis, lend charm and grandeur to the city. Bangalore boasts of some of the oldest, and most beautiful, temples in the country. The Venkataraman Temple, is an unusual cave temple, designed so that the rays of the sun pass between the horns of the Nandi Bull placed outside, illuminating the image of Lord Shiva.

Bengaluru is a bustling new-age metropolis with a rich cultural heritage that is alive and vibrant even today. A city of festivals, it celebrates Karaga Shaktiotsava, which is also called Bengaluru Karaga, with vigour and enthusiasm that is inherently spelt binding. It is the soul of the Kannada film industry, which produces a minimum of eighty movies per year. It is a major centre of Indian classical dance and music. Innumerable recitals of classical dances and music are held. Credit goes to the Bengaluru Gayana Samaja for the promotion of classical culture here. In another field, Bengaluru is home to many cricket legends and to captains of the Indian team like Rahul Dravid, and Anil Kumble; cricket being the most popular sport in Bengaluru.

With the introduction of IT, Bengaluru has assumed an international character. IT professionals not only from the various parts of India, but also that of the world, now live here. Thousands of students come every year for undergraduate or postgraduate level studies. The city has become a melting pot of cultures.

Women entrepreneurship has been recognised as an important source of economic growth. Women entrepreneurs in the four southern states, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh account for over 50 per cent of all women-led small-scale industrial units in India. Women’s entrepreneurship can make a particularly strong contribution to the economic well-being of the family and
community, poverty reduction and women’s empowerment, thus contributing to the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, governments across the world as well as various developmental organisations are actively undertaking promotion of women entrepreneurs through various schemes, incentives and promotional measures.

This is the focus of FLO Bengaluru as well. Support is given to potential women clients, by motivating them to transform themselves from housewives into entrepreneurs. This is initiated by entrepreneurship development programmes. This could mean anything from guiding budding business women to making them understand the workings of a small business to providing information on marketing, management and technical up-gradation that constitute the sustenance programmes. And support is provided through networking with national and international agencies.
‘The new Indian woman has arrived and she is here to stay. She has found a voice and is speaking out. She is asking for her place in the sun without fear, and at all levels. This new Indian woman deserves more strength, and needs to be supported.’

Shabana Azmi
Speaking about Empowerment of Women on 11 September 2001 in New Delhi
Corporate social responsibility begins with you and with me as we seek to enhance the community we live in. As human beings and as communities we are sustained by nature’s resources and the support of people around us. We have a responsibility to give back to society at least some of what we receive. Our responsibility starts the moment we become aware as individuals of those that work alongside us and the environment around us. Corporate responsibility is an extension of individual social responsibility enhanced by corporate resources, be it material or human. It understands the cause and effect of each action and its impact on our community as a whole.

There are two very commonly used phrases in CSR talking points; they are quite relevant, and they are simple. They allow us to act as individuals if we choose to, and also to act as a group for a broader and more sustained impact and mutual benefit. The first is to think globally, and act locally. The second is to treat others as you would like to be treated, for the greater good.

We try to minimise the negative impact that our activities might have on the environment. This could be by conserving resources, and by reducing the carbon footprint of our activities. We must also have a commitment for safe management of the wastes that we generate in our institutions. In other words, we try to live by ‘Reduce, Reuse and Recycle’, a phrase I believe was made famous by the Body Shop in the UK, a global corporation in the seventies. Efficient management of resources in the factories, offices and in transportation with less water, energy usage and better waste management are all signs of care and concern for the environment, and the people around us.

At FLO, the FICCI Ladies Organisation, in the centre and state chapters of FLO, we have a commitment to society to give back to society through its CSR activities. FLO believes that sustainability through good stewardship of our land, water, energy resources and above all our people is the hallmark of a good CSR. FLO represents a cross section of successful corporate women executives from entrepreneurial families from across the nation.

During the silver jubilee year of FLO, several projects were taken up by the centre, and some of the state chapters. A nationwide tree plantation campaign was carried out. Over 75,000 saplings of trees were grown and planted. This is an ongoing project. An ‘adopt a village’ scheme was initiated to holistically uplift villages through guidance and advice on health, hygiene, education and skill development for women, and teenager girls.
In 2009, a programme was initiated to enhance the employability skills of 500 girls each year. This programme is now in its fourth year. Over 1,500 young girls have received training and skills-building in English, corporate grooming, interviewing and entrepreneurship in collaboration with Jijabai Industrial Training Institute for Women.

In Kolkata, Young FLO has participated in several collaborations to do with their CSR motto ‘Reduce, Reuse and Recycle’. These projects include organising a forum with the British deputy high commission to address women issues, and climate change. Young FLO has initiated a green mission statement to help raise awareness on how to practice a climate friendly lifestyle by adapting and creating a smaller carbon footprint in our daily lives, both at home and in the office. Young FLO is raising awareness and services by planting trees, the use of energy efficient products, and encourages reduction in carbon emissions both at home and corporate conservation.

The Chennai chapter of FLO has a successful long-term partnership with the Hans Seidel foundation to provide women with income-generating skills. They started with week/month long training in traditional feminine arts such as embroidery, tailoring, and culinary arts. They also added driving skills for women with the ultimate goal of creating small-scale employment and self-empowerment. Their latest collaboration is with the Women’s Indian Association to offer a nursing-aid training project for underprivileged girls. The program started this year with twenty girls, and will be funded for at least the next three years.

FLO Coimbatore has sponsored school fees and uniforms of children in Coimbatore. In collaboration with Avanashilingam JSS, they have also sponsored 30 rural women in vocational training for tailoring. In association with GKNM Hospital and Ramakrishna Hospital, Breast and Cervical cancer screening camps were held in different villages of Coimbatore. Also women’s Entrepreneurship Development Programmes to train women are conducted every year. Women from low income families are provided a free platform to display their products through the Women’s Entrepreneur Bazaar conducted by FLO Coimbatore.

FLO Northeast started an awareness drive on Tree Plantations, conducted health checkups for Cardiology and Diabetes and started self-defense tactics for girls in various educational institutions. They also distributed solar lamps to needy children who are good in studies.

Finally, the FLO Mumbai is continuing the themes of empowerment of women at the grass roots, middle and senior levels. Their projects include the grammen initiative for women called ‘ghar ki roti’ to offer urban women, in collaboration with Annapurna brand, employment opportunities. They are also conducting a sanitation project for the girl child that provides personal hygiene facilities in rural Maharashtra schools. They have formed collaborations for health clinics with the Mumbai police to help disadvantaged women, and finally an entrepreneurial hotline with several corporates. The Mumbai chapter has taken full advantage of Bollywood to help raise funds for their campaigns including the successful ‘phir wahi shaam’ now in its tenth year, and ‘trends’, a trade expo for the past two years.

In addition, FLO emphasises the importance of CSR values that empower women and the girl child by raising awareness, training and mentoring upcoming women entrepreneurs with self-empowerment. We hold forums where visiting experts can share their experiences in their field from the arts to the sciences and business ethics so current executives and young women can be inspired to enhance their skills.

Recent government suggestions to make CSR compulsory as a percentage of the turnover have generated a lot of interest. We at FLO are convinced that CSR is our moral responsibility, and there is no need for any coercion in this. We will do it notwithstanding any regulation in this area. We will change the status of women in our country through our CSR endeavours.

The change begins with you!

Anuradha Goel
‘There are lots of opportunities for women to pitch in, prove their competence, and learn a lot about governing and the political process – experience might be important, but what counts is the confidence to get involved in the first place.’

Margaret Alva
Sharing experiences by Women in Power, 7 May, 2012, New Delhi
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS
Flo Spreads its Wings

Flo has always been a leader, setting new goals, changing mindsets, always preparing and shaping the world for dynamic women. This has led to establishing relationships with international business organisations.

SCWEC

SCWEC (India) was formed on 16 February, 2007 under the chairperson, Indira Dutt. Subsequently Madhu Kanoria became the Vice-Chair. Currently, the Vice-Chairperson is Anuradha Goel with an executive committee consisting of Kavitha D Chitturi, Kusum Ansal, Namita Gautam, Neeta Boochra, Raj Kumari Saharia, Rajyalakshmi Rao, Anuja Narain, Neena Malhotra and Madhu Kanoria. Malvika Rai, FLO President and Manju Kalra, Executive Director are ex-officio members. Indira Dutt is adviser to the board. The present SCWEC Chairperson, Pramila Rajiwal is from Nepal.

A high point of SCWEC was the high point of the tenure when the SCWEC was formally organised in November 2006 during the 40th anniversary of CACCI in Taipei.

Since the inception of SCWEC, a number of workshops, round-table conferences, seminars, training programmes, and annual events have been held in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. These networking programmes have helped to identifying best practices to employ for regional projects.

SCWEC is committed to the development of woman entrepreneurship by increasing business opportunities, building markets, job creation as well as strategic networking and growing woman-run enterprises into mainstream business.

As a step towards SAARC inter-country trade, a 'Made by SCWEC' label has been designed for selected items to be marketed by SAARC countries. Specific designated outlets for sale of these products are proposed in each country.

SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC)

SCWEC was started on 29 March, 2001 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with the objective of developing and promoting women entrepreneurs in the South Asian region. It is an effective platform to strengthen extra-regional development of women’s entrepreneurship for economic development. It helps to exchange information on entrepreneurial skills, thus building trade links among the women of the SAARC region.

SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC) Vice-Chairperson: Anuradha Goel

SCWEC was also made a member of TIAM which carries out activities to empower women on a global basis.

Today all nations acknowledge that the largest growing economic force in the world isn’t China or India...it is women! The earning power of women globally

Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC)

Chairperson: Mukta Nandini Jain
Established: 2006
Headquarter: Taipei

The CWEC is one of the Product & Service Councils of CACCI-Confederation of Asia – Pacific Chamber of Commerce & Industry. CACCI is a regional, non-governmental business-led organisation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of more than 3 million business enterprises in Asia, and the Western-Pacific Region. CWEC was formally organised in November 2006 during the 40th anniversary of CACCI in Taipei. The objective of CACCI-CWEC is to provide a forum for women of the CACCI member countries to network, explore and promote business ventures among its members, and work for the growth and development of women in the region through cooperation and interaction.

The member countries of CACCI are Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Russia, Georgia, Iran, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

Business organisations and chambers, national and international, are an important agent in the process of women’s empowerment. Women’s business associations and organisations are steadily increasing, and are a vital link to the economic decision-making process as they are a part of the national, political and economic agenda.

Working towards the common goal of women empowerment, FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) and CWEC play the role of catalyst in promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence in women through capacity building, skill upgradation, policy advocacy, industry round-tables, business delegations and thought leadership. With this objective in mind, FICCI Ladies Organisation was invited to Chair the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC).

The Asia-Pacific Region provides a friendly environment for women’s active participation. The region has tremendous growth opportunities. The affiliation between CWEC and FLO aims to create new opportunities, for interaction between women of different countries, to explore new avenues for cross-cultural business exchanges through networking, creating a common market platform, skill enhancement, and capacity-building through sharing of best practices in the region.

Today all nations acknowledge that the largest growing economic force in the world isn’t China or India...it is women! The earning power of women globally
is expected to reach 18 trillion US dollars by just 2014. The role, impact and influence of women in the global economy is being highlighted in every business forum, and CACCI-CWEC is constantly ensuring that the role of women is not undermined or overlooked anymore.

International Women’s Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC)
Chairperson: Usha Agarwala (Newly appointed by PPC for 2012-14)
Immm. Past Chairperson and Adviser: Mukta Nandini Jain
Date: February 2007
Headquarters: New York

IWEC Awards is a combined and collaborative initiative of Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce & FICCI Ladies Organisation. It is supported by US Department of State, the CACCI-CWEC (Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chamber of Commerce & Industry) along with some chambers of trade in some countries. Starting with just 3 women awardees from India IWEC Awards have been bestowed upon 23 women, from regions and countries across 5 continents like Australia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, and Turkey.

Women like Preeti Sharma, Director (Marketing) Pragati Software Pvt. Ltd.; Sunita Shekhawat: Midas Designer Jewellery; Nalini Sharma, CEO Nalini Sarves; Deepika Jindal, Managing Director Aestetic Creations Pvt. Ltd; Vidy Singhania, Proprietor Ms. Vidyh; Deepali Goenka, Director Weyspun India Ltd; Anita Lal, Creative Head, Good Earth Company; Mira Kulkarni, Managing Director, Mountain Valley Springs India Pvt Ltd.; Manjula Reddy, Executive Director, The Country Club India Ltd.; Kanchan Naikawadi, Director, Indus Health Plus Pvt. Ltd.; Sujata Sarwagi, Proprietor-Sujata Weaves and Print; and Kiran Sharma, Director ITE Group, from India have been recognised for their work and received awards.

These women, with their counterparts in other countries, are working to create a sustainable model for a dynamic and participative partnership, where men and women are equal partners of wealth creation, to ensure a socially conscious, responsible and empathetic community of nation builders.

India-Sweden Women Entrepreneurs Exchange Program
Chairperson: Anuradha Goel
Date: 2009
Headquarter: New Delhi

FLO, in collaboration with Nyföretagar Centrum, Sweden (Entrepreneur Centre, Sweden) has brought together a Businesswomen Entrepreneur Exchange Program between Sweden and India, wherein business women from FLO-India go to Stockholm and Swedish business women visit New Delhi. During these visits, business-to-business meetings are held.

The aim of the project is to foster business, cultural and educational exchange between FLO members from India, and professional/business women from Sweden. Out of eight FLO members who went to Sweden, three are actively interacting with Sweden in business and educational exchange. The Swedish women have also formed collaborations in India. A further such exchange of FLO members is expected next year.

WCD (Women Corporate Directors)
Chairperson: Ranjana Agarwal
Date: 16 March 2011
Headquarters: New York

WCD is the only global community of women corporate directors, comprising of more than 2000 members serving on over 3500 boards in 54 chapters around the world, which is committed to spreading the message of diversity and helping members secure board, and advisory board positions.

WCD was formed, and is managed by Susan Stautberg, the CEO of PartnerCom Corporation. In India, it is headed by Ranjana Agarwal, Founder of Vaish & Associates, Chartered Accountants. WCD global partners are the IFIC, Marriott, KPMG and Heidrick and Struggles. WCD partnered with FICCI FLO in 2010-11 during the tenure of past President, Ranjana Agarwal.

The main objective of the affiliation is to provide a networking and mentoring platform to prospective women board members. As a member of WCD, women get an opportunity to be invited on national and international boards, and access information on global trends and changing board requirements.

The vision to see women from India as trailblazers continues and FLO takes pride that the initiatives undertaken have been recognised, and this effort will continue.

Gästrikland
NyföretagarCentrum
Av företagare - För blivande företagare
‘Women are the carriers of culture. They bring up the next generation with sensitivity to values and with a sense of continuity of an ethos. They are observant and see things with the inner eye. They make powerful protagonists in poetry, literature and films. Spiritually, their surrender is from within and total and more realised.’

Muzaffar Ali
1 February 2014
Young FICCI Ladies Organisation, (the women’s wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), YFLO is a platform where we evaluate the benefits of equality and the full inclusion of women as drivers of development, and to come up with relevant initiatives. Our discussion with the leaders of the new generation have helped us to weave a picture of Young India, with hopes and vision for the Indian democracy. A focus on camaraderie, integrity, respect and alignment make up the core principles for us at YFLO, with emphasis on ‘What do we do?’, ‘For whom do we do it?’ and ‘How do we excel?’ This system fosters the natural process of a spontaneous, self-motivated, self-education learning environment.

The opportunities are immense; the ability to tap them and mould a great future is within reach. ‘We are like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. We are all unique, and have our own special place in the puzzle of the universe. Without each of us, the puzzle is incomplete.’ Albert Einstein said, ‘Imagination is more powerful than knowledge.’ I believe this is true in many respects, because while knowledge allows you to see things as they are, imagination allows you to see things as they could be. I firmly subscribe to the adage that, ‘no coherent vision of the future can exist without an affirmation of the past’. Knowing that we stand on the shoulders of those brave and distinguished women that went before, and that they have spearheaded significant changes here in our august organisation; it is extremely empowering for all of us, and especially for me, to recognise that much of what we take for granted today has been made possible by them. Our task now is to continue to take it to another level.

Whether we are conscious of it or not, young women are an essential and integral part of the empowering process. Getting them to further advance the movement, requires us to communicate expectations, and to take guidance and direction to meet those expectations. Our abilities are grounded in our joint confidence, values, ethics, responsibility and accountability. Listening to our young women, getting them involved and assisting them in accomplishing their goals and objectives will also help advance and enhance our organisation. It is critical for me to be available, have a clear sense of direction, to speak up, keep quiet, and most importantly reach out to others, both to give and receive help, to have goals and objectives, and to work consistently towards them. YFLO with the collective contribution of FLO is working towards the realisation of the common goals.

I quote Albert Schweitzer, ‘in everyone’s life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit’.

Garima Jain
YFLO Chairperson – Delhi

GARIMA JAIN
YFLO Chairperson – Delhi
THE CHANGING FACE OF WOMEN TODAY – YFLO HYDERABAD

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times, through the low points of the medieval period with inhuman practices like Sati etc, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been quite eventful.

In modern India, women now participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service, science and technology, etc. The Constitution of India guarantees all Indian women equality, no discrimination by the State, equality of opportunity, and equal pay for equal work. Feminist activism in India gained momentum in the late 1970s. Female activists have united over issues such as female infanticide, gender bias, women’s health, and women’s literacy.

The growth in confidence due to education, exposure, awareness and opportunities has greatly influenced the changes in a woman’s life. All these changes have led to women donning more and more hats, and fulfilling multiple roles. The biggest and most obvious change in women of today is the growing need to be independent and productive outside their home environment. The need for challenges and the desire to see tangible result for their efforts, has become an inherent trait for the woman of today.

The way a woman spends her time now is very different from what her counterparts in similar roles did a generation ago. She invests a larger percentage of her time in her friends, recreation, personal growth and grooming. Earlier the decision maker was not dominantly a woman. She always wielded her soft power silently. The scenario today is quite different. She can give inputs in every decision, beginning from the ideal insurance policy that suits the family best, to choosing a good school for the kids, to a healthy family diet plan, to family vacations with complicated itineraries – the list is endless.

Contrary to common perception, a large percentage of women in India work. In Hyderabad, women have been part of the workforce even when it wasn’t the norm. This can be attributed to many encouraging factors like the absence of purdah, equal rights, and access to education for both sexes etc. The current socio-economic conditions of growth and urbanisation have given women multiple avenues to realise their dreams. Be it a small home-run business or an establishment that provides employment to other women – there are several such opportunities that women are seizing as they move forward with their special set of skills. In the olden days women blamed their social set-up of having to manage home and kids for the lack of a career. Now they have discovered ways to work that same set-up, to their advantage. They have identified and taken up vocations that allow them to work during their lean hours in a given day. This entire set-up works at multiple levels to better their lives. It helps them improve their quality of life, and at a social level they are considered earning members, because of which a status of equality is easier to establish.

In the 1990’s, sweeping changes in the industry brought about a big change in the city’s working landscape. Hyderabad became a centre for the Pharmaceutical Industry, and was being called the ‘Genome Capital’ of the country. This led to women entering the workforce in previously male-dominated industries too. The IT boom has transformed the city and its workforce, with a large part of it being women, who work in the IT industry. The ‘Geek Goddesses’, as they are called, are as coveted in and demand or even more than their male counterparts. They enjoy parity with their male counterparts in terms of wages and roles. That said, the innate quality of multi-tasking inherent to women doesn’t let them be just that either. Quite a few of these divas additionally are doing their own thing in areas ranging from Food, Photography, Jewellery Designing, Fashion Designing to Holistic healing, etc.

The urban Indian women in general are educated and very well-read. They move with the times and are very adaptable. Most of the young ladies are upwardly mobile with a great fashion sense. They love to network and socialise. They are fitness conscious. Major cities have many enthusiasts/women clubs which get together on the basis of a common hobby or interest, like fitness (yoga or Zumba), books, travel etc – the whole concept of women taking time to look and feel good holistically is a brilliant reflection of how urban women in India treat themselves. To balance so many roles while smoothing the many creases that each role throws in their way, is no mean feat.

Most young women these days possess an amazing combination of sound business sense, with family values. As such they gain a lot from being part of organisations such as YFLO who cater to young business women. They are an asset to the organisation and vice-versa. Some of the goals that are met with being a part of business organisations like YFLO, are networking with a wide variety of like-minded young women with whom they can share similar insights and experiences. They get to participate in guest lectures by some of India’s leading representatives of Business & Industry. For women who have a mind of their own, supported by a city that promises safety to a large extent and opportunity for dreams to be realised – women in Hyderabad have come a long way – while they spread their wings to fly and achieve what they yearn for – there is more to come from them, and more for us to see.

To sum it up ‘Safe, Smart and Sure’ could be the tagline for ‘Women in India’.

Ashita Nawalgariah
YFIO Chairperson - Hyderabad
Shradhna Aggarwal, Kolkata

Shradhna Aggarwal is the founder and owner of the Tiara Group. Tiara group launched Tiara Jewels in 2001, a successful brand of diamond jewellery. In a short span of 4 years, the group diversified successfully into garments and interior design.

Besides having business acumen, Shradhna is a lady of many talents – an artist who has held many solo exhibitions, an avid tennis player, and a spiritual therapist. She is also active in community outreach programmes, being associated with Outreach, and All Bengal Women’s Association.

Vandana Aggarwal, Ahmedabad

Aumne of the prestigious School of Planning and Architecture, Vandana started her career as an architect working on affordable housing and researching on mud architecture. Restless in her artistic pursuits, she experimented successfully with painting in different mediums. Not satisfied, she translated many books to Braille, and created audiocassettes for a talking library for the blind.

For the past 18 years she has been associated as a Trustee, Mentor and designer with Manav Sadhna, Gramshree and Grassroots, an NGO in Ahmedabad. She designs, trains and assists in manufacturing products made by women and children.

Dr Chytra V Anand, Bangalore

Chytra is an internationally renowned Cosmetic Dermatologist, and a sought after speaker on the International Lecture circuit. Trained in the UK and the US, Chytra’s dream was to start a chain of world standard skin and laser clinics in India. She is the founder and CEO of Kosmoderma Clinics and Medi spas. In 2007, she founded the International Academy of Aesthetic Medicine to train doctors in the field of Cosmetic Dermatology.

She has ensured that education is affordable to all, and accessible to the underprivileged girls and students from rural areas. All admissions are strictly on merit.

Shalini Biswajit, Chennai

Shalini Biswajit is a painter and sculptor, and also director of Forum Arts Gallery. At Forum, Shalini delivers a holistic art experience – art exhibitions, art consultations, art education and art therapy. Shalini has exhibited widely in India and abroad. Her paintings and sculptures can be seen at public collections, and also in top galleries and private collections in London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore.

Unemployed and underprivileged girls and students from rural areas.

Vanea Dass, Delhi

Vanea Dass is the doyen of Japanese culture in India. She has been a pioneer in exposing Indians and helping them appreciate various aspects of Japanese culture like ikbana, origami, bonsai, and doll making in India. Having lived in Japan, she has studied extensively the Ikenobo, Ohara and Sogetsu Schools of Ikebana. She has been teaching and propagating the art of Ikebana since the early sixties. She has been visiting, teaching and giving demonstrations and conducting workshops in India and abroad, which have been very well received.

Rehane Yavar Dhala, Chennai

Rehane’s designs have put Chennai on the fashion map. In 1996, Femina awarded her the prestigious ‘Designer of the Year’ award. In 1999, she opened her flagship store ‘Rehane’ in Chennai. In 1999, she added another feather to her cap when she was chosen to lend her design innovations in the field of surface ornamentations and avant garde embroidery to a niche market of international buying houses. A believer that fashion should be accessible to all, her Prép-À-Porter collection retails in stores like Westside and Lifestyle. Rehane’s collections which are synonymous with a blend of Indian heritage and European haute couture, now retail in high fashion stores across the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, USA and India.

Alka Batra, Jaipur

Alka is the founder of Augis Jobs Pvt Ltd, an HR Solutions and Placement firm, famous for finding the right person for the right job. Augis is also engaged in corporate training, immigrations, campus placements and custom HR services. Recipient of many prestigious awards like Best Shri Sethi Ratna, Youth Icon Of Rajasthan and listed as one of the most significant personalities in Rajasthan by India Today. Alka’s real passion lies in badminton. She has represented the State of Rajasthan in six nationals and is the Joint Secretary, Jaipur Badminton Association and a member for events of the Rajasthan Badminton Association.

Rajni Bector, Ludhiana

Rajni Bector needs no introduction. Her company Cremica has become a household name in India, competing with multinationals. Working against all odds, she started making ice-creams and baking cakes as a hobby. Today, the Ludhiana-based Cremica group sales are over Rs 650 crores, and it is valued at over Rs 700 crores.

Rajni is a strong social activist committed to social causes like women’s empowerment, rural development, and generation of employment opportunities for the backward and unemployed. She has employed and trained 1,500 women to achieve independence, and worked with children with special needs and destitute women.

Sudevi Bector, Delhi

In 1995, Sudevi launched Kangpur’s first Finishing and Hobby School – The Image Workshop on the lines of a Swiss Finishing School, but tuned to Indian sensibilities. In 2005, she moved to Delhi and set up The Image Workshop successfully. With creativity in abundance, a chance request from a friend gave her exposure to the world of packaging. A small beginning has now become the country’s biggest brand in trousseau packing – ‘Magnificence’. Working in a highly unorganised market, she trained uneducated women, and created vendors from a pool of crafts persons that she identified. This in turn has created livelihoods.

Dr Madhu Chitkara, Chandigarh

Madhu Chitkara is the co-founder of Chitkara Educational Trust. She first established Chitkara Institute of Engineering and Technology (CIET) in Punjab, affiliated to the Punjab University. Success with CIET gave her confidence to start professional colleges in other disciplines such as architecture, pharmacy, management, healthcare, hospitality management, journalism, mass communication and education. Today the Trust has two Universities and an International school under its wings, due to her vision, dedication, skill and hard work.

She has ensured that education is affordable to all, and accessible to the underprivileged girls and students from rural areas. All admissions are strictly on merit.

Veena Dass, Delhi

Veena Dass is the doyen of Japanese culture in India. She has been a pioneer in exposing Indians and helping them appreciate various aspects of Japanese culture like ikbana, origami, bonsai, and doll making in India. Having lived in Japan, she has studied extensively the Ikenobo, Ohara and Sogetsu Schools of Ikebana. She has been teaching and propagating the art of Ikebana since the early sixties. She has been visiting, teaching and giving demonstrations and conducting workshops in India and abroad, which have been very well received.

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Women’s Entrepreneurial Spirit: A Celebration

Felicitation of 30 Outstanding Achievers of FICCI FLO in Delhi on 20 December 2013.
Nisha Jain Grover, Jaipur
Nisha has been working for the last 15 years to help children with learning disorders in Jaipur. She has promoted Vatsalya Legacy, now a team of 23 educators working with almost 21 schools in Jaipur, and 10 schools in other cities to train teachers to educate special children. To date, she has trained 6400 teachers of various schools and counseled almost 10,000 parents and students. Her students today are successful musicians, teachers, businessmen and artists.

Tanushree Hazarika, Guwahati
A business management graduate from Boston University, Tanushree has worked previously in MNCS like Fidelity, and Morgan Stanley in the US. At the age of 23, she launched Eclectic Northeast, now the most popular English magazine of the region, which focuses on issues concerning the Northeast. It has a current readership of 3.1 lakhs in India and abroad. She has also brought global thought-leaders such as Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel laureate, and Lord Meghnad Desai as speakers to the Northeast.

Mridula Jain, Ludhiana
Mridula Jain started Shingora shawls in 1987 with eight handlooms. The exports and sales of the company grew from Rs. 8 lacs to almost Rs 70 crores today. She was a pioneer in shawl exports from India, and had the very important reservation act for shawl manufacturing in the handloom sector amended, so that shawls could also be woven on Power Looms and Electronic Looms, which enhanced shawl exports from India. She is currently a member of the Steering Committee of Handloom and Handicraft Sector for 12th Five Year Plan in the Planning Commission.

Dr Gunjan Jain, Jaipur
Dr Gunjan Jain started her career in the field of infertility in 1990, a hitherto unknown and upcoming super-specialty field in gynaecology. She trained in USA and Germany and she became the first female infertility expert to open her own IVF centre in northern India – Jain Fertility & Mother Care Hospital at Jaipur. She has helped more than 10,000 couples so far. She was awarded the ‘Maiyya Gandhi Award’ by the Prime Minister in 1999 for her work in the field of infertility and IVF.

Leena Kajriwal, Kolkata
Leena Kajriwal, Photographer and Installation Artist, specialises in Books, History and Human stories. Her seminal work, Calcutta: Repossessing the City was one of the best selling book in 2007. She has also contributed to other books and publications. Her works have been exhibited internationally in cities like Berlin and Tehran. They have also been published in leading magazines across the globe. An active participant in the NGO Apne Aap working against trafficking, she uses her photographs as a tool to champion the cause.

Kulsum Malik, Jaipur
Kulsum Malik spent her childhood in deprived circumstances, but is today the owner of a chain of 12 beauty parlours and beauty training institutes in Jaipur, created by her business acumen, and sheer hard work. She also owns a Herbal Cosmetics Factory. The owner and director of Kaya Kalp Herbal Ltd, Kulsum is not just a beautician and teacher, but also a messiah for scores of young girls from under-privileged backgrounds who learnt the means to earn a respectable livelihood from her. She trains poor girls, and deaf and dumb girls for free, to set them up in a good career.

Snehal Mantri, Bengaluru
Snehal Mantri, a rare woman in the field of real estate dominated by men, has been leading the marketing at Mantri Developers. In just 14 years, Mantri Developers has delivered over 6,000 homes, and built over 10 million square feet. She is also instrumental in setting up the Indus Community School in Bangalore, for children from BPL families. The school has many facilities like cricket and soccer grounds, an amphitheatre, and every student from grade 1 onwards is given a laptop.

Harjinder Kaur, Delhi
In the 1990s, when no one had thought that IT could bridge the gap between citizens and the government, Harjinder Kaur made it possible through her project ‘Twins in Andhra Pradesh’. In 2008, when the project was showcased to President Bill Clinton on his visit to India, he said ‘I wonder if this could be replicated in the US’. She is MD and CEO of Comvision [India] Pvt. Ltd., an e-governance company, and MD and CEO of Comvision Q Free Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., a tolling and intelligent transport solutions company.

Nina Gill, Delhi
Nina Gill sells high fashion accessories and garments worldwide under her own label ‘Nina Gill’ with companies incorporated in Paris and India. She has been associated with garment exports since 1974. With large scale factories in Noida and Gurgaon, she has been a pioneer in introducing embroideries from India to couture houses such as Gianni Versace, Giorgio Armani, Yves St Laurent and many others. Ms Gill is highly determined to remain a socially-conscious employer.

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Deepmala Mohan, Delhi
Deepmala Mohan is a renowned Sufi and folk music singer. Trained in Hindustani Classical music, she has given numerous performances in India and abroad and also performed for many charitable and social organisations. She has worked hard at reviving the dying form of folk music in the interiors of India. Deepmala is a member of various Government Boards like the Indian Film Censor Board, and has received several prestigious awards for her outstanding talent.

J Mohanasundari, Coimbatore
J. Mohanasundari is the Managing Director of Sharp Electrodes Pvt Ltd and proprietor of Kayjay Sharp Trendys, companies manufacturing welding electrodes and mini monobloc pumps. Taking over the business after the sudden demise of her husband, she surrounded the many obstacles she had to face to make the business successful. Both companies are ISO 9001:2008 accredited companies and export nearly 90% of their production. Her companies have received many awards for their performance and high quality, both in India and abroad.

Ratha Parthasarathy, Chennai
Ratha Parthasarathy is a crafts activist, and as member and then Vice-President of Crafts Council of India for 6 years, she was actively involved in reviving languishing crafts, funding and raising in the education of artisans’ children. She adopted her family’s village Thandalam, poverty stricken and arid, and turned it around by training the village women, and providing them a platform to make and sell food products like idli powder, etc. Today, its annual turnover is a whopping 64 lakhs. Dilapidated temples have been restored, the school has been rebuilt, and total sanitation provided in the village. Ratha, with her huge efforts has made Thandalam into a Model village with street lights, water pumps and cement roads, and given a new life to the villagers they could not otherwise have aspired to.

Jahnabi Phookan, Guwahati
Jahnabi Phookan converted what could have been a disadvantage into an advantage – by starting travel companies and promoting eco-tourism, river cruises and hospitality in the virgin area of the Northeast. Her Companies, Jungle Travels India and Assam Bengal Navigation Company, are now internationally recognised, and have won many awards. Lonely Planet Awards positioned her Company’s Diphlu River Lodge second to Oberoi’s Vanya Villas. Jahnabi brought Fabindia into Assam. She has promoted the local handicrafts of the region by providing the artisans a platform for their products under her brand name Konyak and also opened a store for wooden furniture under the name ‘The Home Treasury’. Besides the travel companies, she together with her business partner and team, manages five stores in two towns of Assam.

Geetha Premkumar, Chennai
23 years ago, in 1995, Geetha set up her own manufacturing unit of power electronic products. A known expert in her field and as 1st generation woman entrepreneur, she has received many awards for her work, both in India and abroad. She is also on the external faculty of many schools and colleges and has been invited as a speaker for numerous conferences. She is actively connected with social work promoting woman empowerment and education of the girl child. She is a well known Counsellor for women related issues, has organised TV programs, written a book on ‘Entrepreneurship and Financial Planning for women, and many articles on vital social issues.

Rajyalakshmi Rao, Delhi
Inspired by Ralph Nader, a well-known Consumer Activist in the US, Rajyalakshmi chose the unconventional path of championing consumer rights in India, at a time when there was little awareness of this field. She is the only person to have served in all three tiers of the consumer forum—the district forum, the state forum and the national forum and delivered many landmark judgments that have shaped the jurisprudence of consumer protection laws in the country. Her book, ‘Consumer is King’ has been translated into 12 regional languages. She is an active member of many chambers of commerce and NGOs, and travelled to Kargil after the war, and Cuddalore after the tsunami to help affected families. Currently, Rajyalakshmi has been appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to a six-member committee to give a report on consumer services in banks.

K. Sri lakshmi Mohan Rao, Chennai
Sri lakshmi is a skilled handicrafts teacher and active social worker. She has set up innumerable centres, and trained girls and women in handicraft, especially as a means of livelihood. She has set up centres in her own capacity as entrepreneur, for private school and P O D Ortho dept. Sri lakshmi has held many leading positions in NGOs and institutions, and has won awards for her work.

Ratna D. Reddy, Hyderabad
Having found her niche in education, Ratna specialised in child education and founded CHIREC – Children’s Recreation Centre. Starting with a summer camp which proved to be a resounding success, she went on to establish a Higher Secondary school which has changed the face of education in Hyderabad. A day boarding school with latest facilities, it has a fleet of 77 buses which speaks volumes for its size and popularity. Other than her above achievements Ratna has also started a Students Exchange Program, and set up Finishing Schools under the name ‘Chrysalis’.

Lipika Sud, Delhi
Lipika has been practicing Interior Design for the past two decades. She undertakes large projects like hotels and showrooms, and with her Companies Lipika Sud Interiors Pvt Ltd and Art ‘n’ Aura, she has designed several prestigious projects in India and abroad. She is on the visiting faculty for several educational institutions, and has been on the jury for major national and international design awards. Currently she is President of the Guild of Designers and Artists. Lipika has won many awards for her excellent work in interior design. As a social entrepreneur, she has extensively and diligently worked towards the upliftment and revival of the arts and crafts of India and aims to keep the rich cultural heritage of this country alive through education and knowledge.

Minali Thakkar, Mumbai
Minali studied fine arts at the Sir JJ School of Arts, and is a Fine Arts Consultant. Her firm, ‘Art Approach’ is an art consultancy offering a full range of art consulting services to her clients; ranging from sculptures, paintings to mixed media. Her passion lies in creating designs and sculptures using different types of materials, including recycled material. Taking art out of galleries, she has created Art Installations at public places to connect people, and create awareness on various social issues. Recently she depicted a waterfall using plastic bottles to bring awareness over their misuse, and at the Rub-Expo she used rubber products for creating designs. Minali has won many awards for her work.
FLO INTERSTATE MEET IN DELHI 2013

TOGETHER WE CAN
FLO with the trend

'Take fresh initiatives for empowerment of women'

Times News Network

Delhi: Noted lyricist-restaurant owner Javed Akhtar advocated that the uniforms civil code should be broadened to cover not only women but also gender discrimination between men and women.

Addressing past presidents of the FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) on Wednesday, the Nobel laureate said, "Until there is elimination against women, the uniform code is incomplete."

FLO launches Jaipur chapter

Ashita Ramachandran

NEEMRANA, Feb. 1: The FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) yesterday established its Jaipur chapter, the first in north India. "We will use this opportunity to conduct programmes with infotainment to extend all support for women conferences and events," said president of Jaipur chapter, Mr. Akhtar

Celebrating the power of ‘shakti’

For women only

The release of a special postal cover & album to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of FLO

November 10, 2008

New Delhi

FICCI honors 20 women leaders

New Delhi: Anjali Bhagwat, the owner of Anjali Bhagwat and Associates, who is also the FLO president, was the first to receive the Silver Jubilee token in recognition of her unstinting services to the FLO. She was followed by Queen Ropakshmi, the FLO president of the Indian women's group, who received the token in recognition of her contributions to the FLO.

A salute to achievers

For women only

Women who have distinguished themselves in various fields were felicitated by the FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) to celebrate its 20th anniversary. The function was held at the FLO headquarters in New Delhi.

The awards were presented by FLO president Anjali Bhagwat, who said, "We are proud to recognize the achievements of these outstanding women, who have set an example for all of us to emulate."
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Core Team:
Malvika Rai (FLO President 2013-2014)
Deepika Jindal and Ritu Vadehra (Governing Body Members)
Nandita Bhardwaj (Editor)
Suhani Arora Sen (Designer)

FICCI LADIES ORGANISATION (FLO) would like to thank and acknowledge the Past Presidents, Chapter Chairpersons and their teams, the FLO secretariat and many other FLO members for providing the necessary information and research that made this book a reality.

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For the Northeast Chapter photos:

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