

WICCI RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL



**WOMEN'S INDIAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**
www.wicci.in

Council Vision & Mission

Vision Statement:

To have a positive impact on Rural Tourism in India by fostering networks for collaborations and capacity building.

Mission Statement:

To promote and advance Rural Tourism in the country through skill development initiatives, business networking, and recommendations to relevant authorities.

*Welcoming
Council Members to
WICCI*

*President, Vice President
and Nominated Council
Members*

PRIYA ANAND

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Priya Anand is a Bangalore-based Development Consultant who has spent over 20 years in assessing ground-level development work to maximize benefits accrued to the community. This includes understanding impact to the community as well as capacity of the organizations and making specific recommendations to both participating NGOs and funding agencies.

She loves writing poetry, short fiction, and travel articles, and has been published in Deccan Herald, Spark Magazine, and The Bangalore Review, among others. She has completed eight treks in the Himalayas and has a trekking blog www.thesilvertrekker.com. All her writings can be found on her website: www.smallxchanges.org.



GOPI BAHL

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Gopi Bahl is a senior leader working with a leading financial institution heading multiple teams managing Banking and Financial Services in India for almost a decade. She is a Computer Science Engineer from BIT Mesra and has 19 years of rich experience in the world of both consultancy and captives. She has worked across the globe in different cultures and has been instrumental in setting up various tech, business teams and functions from scratch. Before joining Macquarie, Gopi has worked for TCS and RBS. Gopi is also a strong D&I advocate and works passionately to make the world of technology a fairer and more equitable place for women. As a vocal PRIDE supporter, Gopi has had an active role in hiring and reverse mentoring from diverse communities. In addition, Gopi spends her personal time mentoring and readying students from disadvantaged backgrounds for international education.



DISHARI BERA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Dishari Bera is an aspiring PhD scholar, and a working woman who runs her own business. She has experience in teaching economically disadvantaged students, and still does the same consistently. She has qualified UGC-NET LS & UGC-NET JRF twice, and has credible academic acumen as evident from her graduation and post-graduation evaluations. A strong believer in the power of hard work and social equitability in every walk of life, she constantly engages with her students in assisting them with educational as well as effective mental health techniques. She enjoys reading poetry and has a knack for painting. She is also an active member of a few unorganised, local women's groups that strive for financial independence of women and their increased participation in every sphere of life.



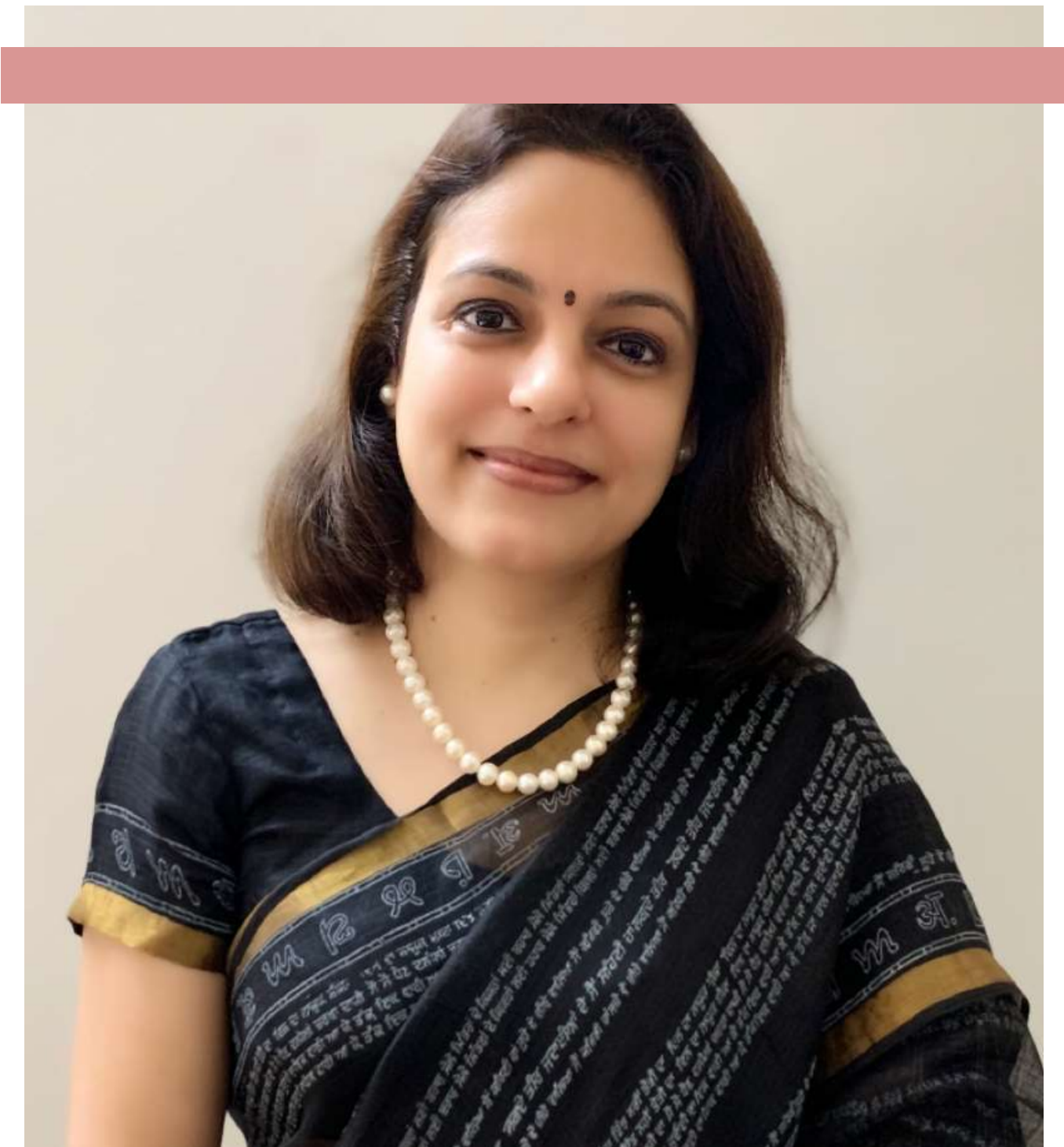
CHANCHAL SONIA BHANDARI

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

A former Vice President in a private sector bank with 18 years of experience, Chanchal has worked in diverse functional areas within a bank. Being posted to various cities across the country gave her exposure to different cultures and mindsets and helped her fulfil customers' financial goals by developing and offering customised banking solutions.

In 2018, she started an e-commerce venture, AINOS, which curates exclusive handmade products for kids and homes. The company focusses on upskilling women and empowering them.

Chanchal is an MBA in Marketing, with a PG Diploma in Treasury and Forex Management, and is a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers.



MALAYA CHATTERJEE

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

A former Principal-in-charge of Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, under Ministry of Tourism, GOI, Mrs. Malaya Chatterjee was awarded the ILO Fellowship for undergoing “Executive Housekeeping Program” conducted by Cornell University in 1987.

She has also been the Director of Pailan School of International Studies, affiliated to West Bengal University of Technology.

She has received the Lifetime Education Achievement Award in 2006, the Bharatiya Shiksha Ratan Award in 2007, and the Pride of India Award in 2009, among many others.



NAVYA SIMRAN CHHABRA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Navya Simran Chhabra is a final year student at Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi. Previously, she has interned with Teach For India, where her experiences gave her insights into the deep education crisis that plagues the country. At World Wide Fund For Nature, she was responsible for organising exhibitions for the little ones to spread awareness about the loss of flora and fauna diversity that besets the world. Busting the taboos and myths associated with Menstruation in the Mandawali and Rangpuri Pahri Communities of Delhi, as a part of Project Crimson has been a soul satisfying experience for her.

Her next endeavour is working for the One District One Product Programme at Invest India under the Ministry of Commerce.

Navya holds Art, Culture and Travel extremely close to her heart. She is the Cultural Secretary of The Fine Arts Association of her college, which is the organising body for the 3 day Annual Cultural Fest - Nexus.



SARBANI DAS

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

The Founder and Chairperson of Gandhi Gurukul Group of Education, Sarbani has 18 years of experience in the Hotel and Education industries. With a vision to develop a Technical & Management University, Sarbani is now entering the health sector in West Bengal with Sarbani Hospitality and Health Care Services Pvt. Ltd.

She is the recipient of Royal National Leadership Award, 2018, and Zee 24 Ghanta Education Excellence in Innovative Courses, 2020, among others. Sarbani's ventures have affiliations with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology (MAKAUT), Bharat Sevak Samaj, Andhra Pradesh Nursing Council, NIESBUD, GOI, etc. She is an active member of several chambers of commerce like ICC, FHRAI, et al.

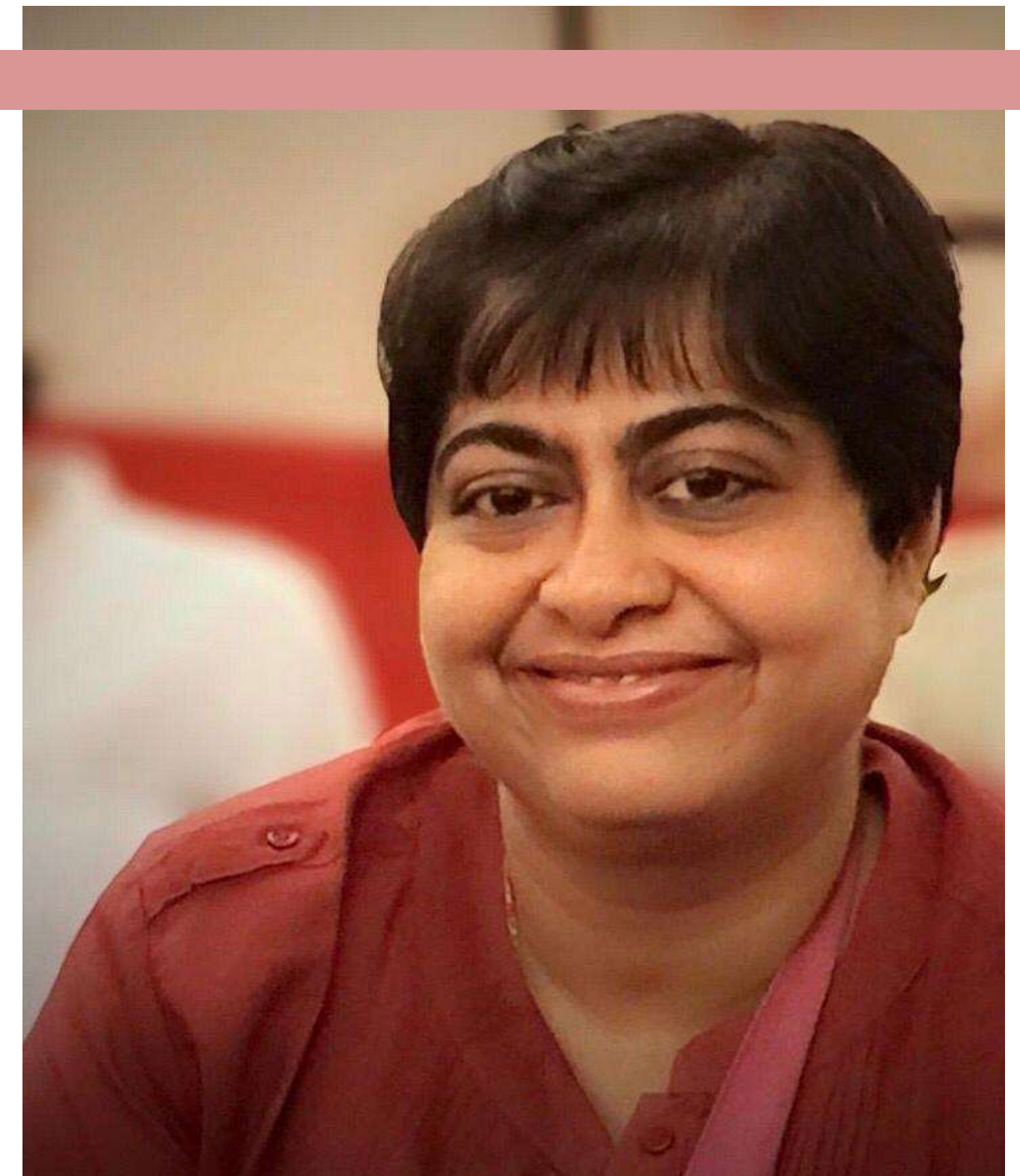


RACHANAA DHANDHANIA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

An alumna of Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata, Rachanaa formed Admakers 25 years ago. Admakers has one of the most advanced infrastructural facilities in the areas of printing and promotions in Kolkata and is also involved in Event Management and Corporate & International Entertainment. Her experience and expertise have led her to be invited as a Visiting/Guest Lecturer to reputed professional institutes and colleges across India.

Rachanaa is passionate about social, developmental and relief activities in and around Kolkata. She is also actively involved in various cultural events and has travelled the world for her work as a professional anchor.



MUBARAKKA LOKHANDWALA GHADIYALI

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Mubarakka has successfully proven her track record in several industries such as Travel, Real Estate, and Medical Tourism. The first from Asia and the youngest ever person to have been awarded the LCGI Award from City & Guilds UK, she is the Chief Promoter and on the Board of Directors of One World Business Group. She has been the Chair of Trustees of Blue Sky Villages UK, and has been an active member of the Lions Club on the international level. She runs an online portal, www.getinvestment.com, which helps women in rural areas to get support for their home-based cottage and small scale industries.

Also a pilot and an international lawyer, Mubarakka is the author of the series Hello Wowman. She is also the Chief Trustee of Saheli India.



SHARADA GHOSH

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Sharada Ghosh is a Hospitality Industry expert with over 30 years of experience. She is presently heading the prestigious Institute of Hotel Management, Bhubaneswar, which is one among the 21 Central IHMs, under the Ministry of Tourism, GOI. An alumna of IHM Kolkata, she has made her alma mater take pride in her contributions towards Hospitality Education.

Sharada is also involved in many government projects and surveys. She is also the CEO of The Incubation Centre at IHM Bhubaneswar, recognized and approved by Startup Odisha.

Being a member of The Indian Society for Training & Development, Sharada is also a freelance trainer. She is an active member of the Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar and has started Rotaract Clubs in all the institutions she has led.



NITALIE GHOSHAL

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Nitalie started her professional journey in 2000 as Front Office Manager at The Park Bangalore. Subsequently, she took up Program Management responsibilities for Center of Entrepreneurship at ISB, Hyderabad, before moving to Netherlands, where she helped with Fundraising activities for Marcus Evans and ran her own company helping top MBA schools attract international students. Since 2012, she has been an active volunteer at GEMS School, Dubai, helping the international community of over 200 nationalities come together.

Nitalie is part of a women's travel group exploring lesser-known destinations, and her passion for travelling has taken her to 46 countries over the last 15 years and helped her pick up 7 different languages.



DR. SHEEBA HAMID

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Sheeba Hamid is a Professor, Coordinator, and Training and Placement Officer of the Master's Programme in Tourism at Aligarh Muslim University. The author of five books and thirty five research papers on various aspects of Tourism, Sheeba is a keen researcher and is presently guiding a Ph.D. thesis on Rural Tourism in India. She is a skilled academia-industry event manager besides being actively involved in University Administration.

She has delivered more than 80 invited talks in various events across India. She is member of several Editorial Boards of Journals, Research Committees, Selection Committees, Boards of Studies and Conference Advisory Committees in Tourism and a Counsellor for Tourism Programmes at IGNOU.

She is also Joint Secretary of National Executive Committee of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress. She has awards and honours to her credit too, is a keen traveller, is a connoisseur of literature, culture, arts, cuisine and costumes. Recently she has featured among the 100 Muslim Women of Uttar Pradesh in the, Achieving Academic Excellence segment by RBTC - Rising Beyond the Ceiling, an initiative to Shine a Spotlight on Indian Muslim Women: Their Leadership and Contributions in Independent India.



SHABNAM JANA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

A seasoned professional in the field of Hospitality Operations & Training, Shabnam Jana has 30+ years of work experience. With a master's degree in Tourism Management from IGNOU and a diploma in Hotel Management from IHMCTAN Kolkata, she has worked with numerous reputed hotels in senior positions.

Her passion for teaching drove her to give up her corporate jobs to devote more time to Hospitality education. She has taught at IIAS, IAM, IIHM, and Assembly of God Church, where she rose to the position of a Director. She has also helped set up a Hotel Management Institute in Goa. Shabnam works with rural communities in Darjeeling and Purulia districts to develop and empower them through Sustainable Tourism.



SHILPI KHANNA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

With over two decades of experience as a Hospitality professional in luxury and business hotels, Shilpi currently works as the Director of Rooms at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar. A graduate from IHM Kolkata, she has worked with hotel chains like ITC and The Oberoi Group before joining the Marriott family.

An all-India Hotel Management topper, the highlight of her career has been winning the Hotelier India Award twice, Executive Housekeeper of the Year in 2016, and Director of Rooms for the Year, for the luxury segment, in 2018. Shilpi has also been conferred with titles such as Most Promising Housekeeping Leader of the Year, Western Region, by Indian Professional Housekeepers Association (IPHA) and Most Admired Executive Housekeeper of the Year by National Awards for Excellence in the Hotel Industry.



NISHA KHOT

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Nisha Khot, based in Mumbai, runs a family-owned B&B at Nagaon, near Alibaug, Maharashtra. She quit a 20-year-long career in media and publishing to live a semi-retired life with her little daughter. Her foray into hospitality, a set-up she now remotely handles from Mumbai, was a leap of faith, and not an easy one. However, it provided her with the time and mind space to focus on a fulfilling relationship with herself, as well as an insight into an exciting and growing industry.

Alongside running the B&B, Nisha edits coffee table books, works on brand copy and has a keen interest in helping bring technology to the rural sector.



CAPTAIN DOLLY KUSHWAHA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Captain Dolly Kushwaha is an Army veteran and entrepreneur with a stint in the Reserve Bank of India.

Having spent 10 years in the Army and 8 years in RBI, she voluntarily parted ways with her 9-to-5 job to follow her passion for travel. This led to her setting up De Opulence, a boutique travel company which was featured in India Today's travel magazine.

De Opulence has been steadily increasing its focus on creating sustainability in tourism with an emphasis on Ecology Tourism and Rural Tourism.



DR. REKHA MAITRA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Dr. Rekha is a Freelancer in the field of Hospitality and Tourism Teaching. She is employed as an Adjunct Faculty with Jai Hind College, Mumbai. She conducts online sessions for students of B.Voc in (Travel and Tourism Management).

She has worked with leading colleges of Hotel Management in Delhi and NCR for 18 years. She was felicitated with a certificate of appreciation for 10 years of service with MREI on 1st January 2020. She conducted Webinars for Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, Gurugram IISM Ranchi, Deewan Institute of Hotel Management, Meerut as an Expert.

She has made 19 publications in Journals, Books, Magazines. She was the recipient of the Indian Hospitality Congress Award, i.e., Aspiring Researcher of Tourism and Hospitality 2014 Award. She is a Life Member of Indian Hospitality Congress, Indian tourism Hospitality Congress and Professional Housekeeping Association in the Individual category.

She is on the Editorial Board of ARC (International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality (IJRTH) and Asian Mirror International Journal of research. She rendered services to Tata Mc Graw Hill Publications, Oxford Publications, and Sage Publications as a Book Reviewer.



DIVYA MEHTA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Having worked in administration, marketing and sales since college, Divya is currently working as the Social Media Manager for Juggernaut Books. As an avid reader, she also runs her own book club which works towards inculcating a reading habit in young children. She has worked as a coordinator for a comedy company, a writer for a Bollywood magazine, developed websites and written content for creative writing institutes and a marketing freelancer as well.



SONALI SONI PAL

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Sonali Soni Pal is a visionary with experience in building sustainable relationships for implementing social change through collaboration and market linkages for social enterprises and philanthropic community for non-farm livelihoods in rural and urban slum communities. She is passionate for developing and promoting crafts and artisan communities. A Masters in Design from NIFT (Delhi) and a Graduate in Sociology Hons – with 20 years of experience in Design-Training-Business, working in areas of strategic tie-ups in Handlooms, Handicrafts and Social Development Sector, she has extensively worked with textile weaver cluster and contributed in capacity building, product development and scalability. She has held Principal positions with SEWA Bharat, Access Development Services, Development Alternatives and is a Technical & Design advisor with NGOs & Cluster groups. Currently, she is working as Senior Manager at FDRVC, a Joint Venture Between Ministry of Rural Development & TATA Trust, and has excellent skills in sourcing handicraft products and scouting clusters for development and creating successful impact stories. She also supports her husband's social enterprise, where the primary goal is to create livelihood opportunities for women artisans from rural communities through market linkages and trainings and also work towards sustainability solutions.



ASEEMA PANDA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

With a master's degree in Botany from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and a Hotel Management diploma from IHM Bhubaneswar, Aseema Panda has worked with prestigious organizations like The Oberoi (now Trident) Bhubaneswar and Fariyas Resort Lonavala. She has taught in IHM Gwalior, IHM Bangalore, and Frankfinn Air Hostess Academy, apart from teaching in numerous Airforce, Army and other reputed schools. As a lady wife representing the Indian Air Force, she has lived in Tel Aviv and Moscow, and visited countries like Singapore, Jordan, and Nepal. Currently, she heads Swosti Institute of Management and Social Studies, Bhubaneswar, as its Principal.



SOMALI PANDA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Somali is a senior government official with the Information & Cultural Affairs Department of West Bengal, presently in charge of the state publication division. She is also a musician and vocalist, performing globally. Since 2007, she has been giving lecture-demonstrations on human migration, and the migration of music with them. She founded the cross-border neoclassical duo band INDUS (indusband.com), to translate this thought into performances. (To know more, please visit somalipanda.wordpress.com.)

During the pandemic, she has worked extensively with international forums, national and international academic institutions in the sphere of migration, to address psychological and social issues related to migration, ethnicity, folk culture, and the anonymity of marginal people.



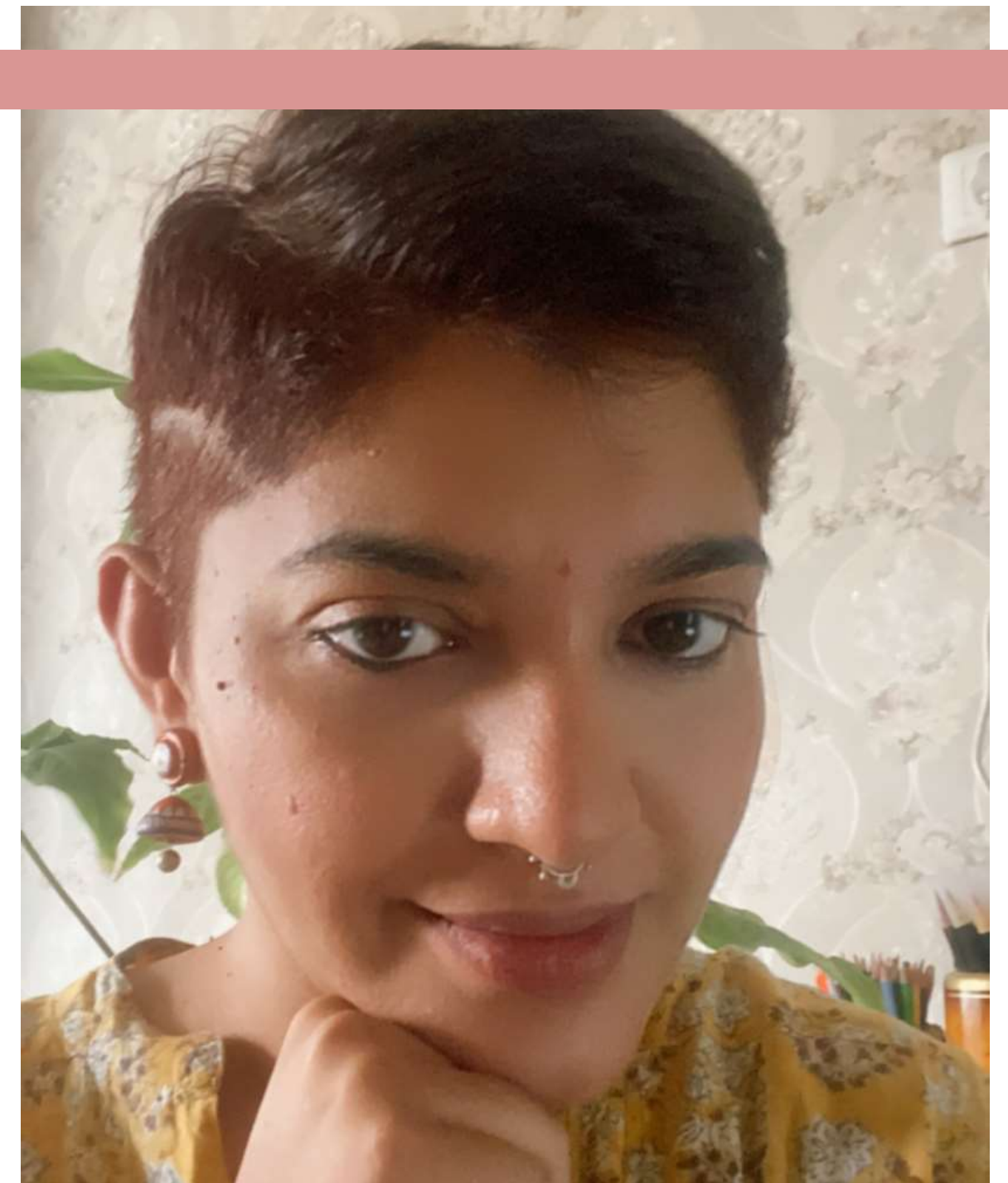
KAVYA SAXENA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

After working for 13 years with brands like Indian Oil, Tree Of Life Hotels, and Vajor at senior positions, Kavya decided to pack up her entire household in a container and chart out a 6-month road trip, backed by Mahindra, to cover rural communities and crafts. As of July 2021, the journey, completely self-funded, is in its eighth month.

Kavya works with artisans at the grassroots level to revive old techniques that are dying out because of low demand. Currently, she is also a craft consultant to two luxury brands in India.

You can follow Kavya's journey on Instagram: [@crazyfeetkavya](#)



LAKSHMI SHARATH

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Lakshmi Sharath is a storyteller but she wears many hats as a writer, blogger and a digital content creator. An avid traveller, Lakshmi quit her media career of 15 years and now is a digital media and content consultant. Storytelling is her forte and she believes that people make places. Travel is a way of life and the journey is the destination for her. She is more interested in stories of people, artists and artisans, heritage and culture. You will find her wherever there is a story to be told to the world. She blogs at www.lakshmisharath.com, and her newsletter can be subscribed at lakshmisharath.substack.com.



DHARNA SHUKLA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Dharna Shukla holds 22 years of experience in hospitality operations and academia. She has worked in India and abroad with chains like The Park, The Taj, and Coral Hotels. She has also taught Hospitality and Tourism Management at IHM Lucknow, Christ University Bangalore, and was the founding faculty and program leader of Amity University Dubai. Working as a consultant with Aptech, Dharna has reviewed Hospitality and Tourism modules at their corporate level. She has been the convener and a successful webinar host for International Delhi Public School Society. Her Ph.D. thesis on Sustainable Management of Tourism has been submitted and accepted at Banasthali University, Rajasthan.

Dharna has authored research papers on Rural Tourism and Sustainable Tourism, and her work was included as a chapter in a book published by Jamia Millia Islamia.



SNIGDA SUDA

MEMBER, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Snigda is the Director of ExperiencesDotWorld a.k.a. EDW, which she founded in 2019 to curate bespoke itineraries for corporate clients as well as leisure travellers. She has worked with companies like AMEX, EXL, LDC, Baxter, Genpact, Cargill, McCain, Cushman & Wakefield, to name a few. She was a young leader at SITE (Society of Incentive Travel), and was sponsored to go to Las Vegas to represent the Indian Site Chapter and gain global exposure about the travel industry.

Having studied luxury brand management, she understands that opulence isn't only monetary or product-related but is primarily about the experience. She feels that Rural Tourism is the next branch of tourism which has a huge potential to grow and is still largely unexplored.



ANURADHA

VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Anuradha is a humanitarian professional with focus on capacity development related to disaster preparedness. She has more than 15 years of work experience in education, training, and adolescent counselling. Anuradha is one of the Co-founders and Program Manager at Doers, a humanitarian organization working towards sustainability and resilience in the Himalayan region of India. She leads the administration and management of training programs organized or facilitated by Doers, and is a Visiting Faculty at various state-level training institutions in Himachal Pradesh.



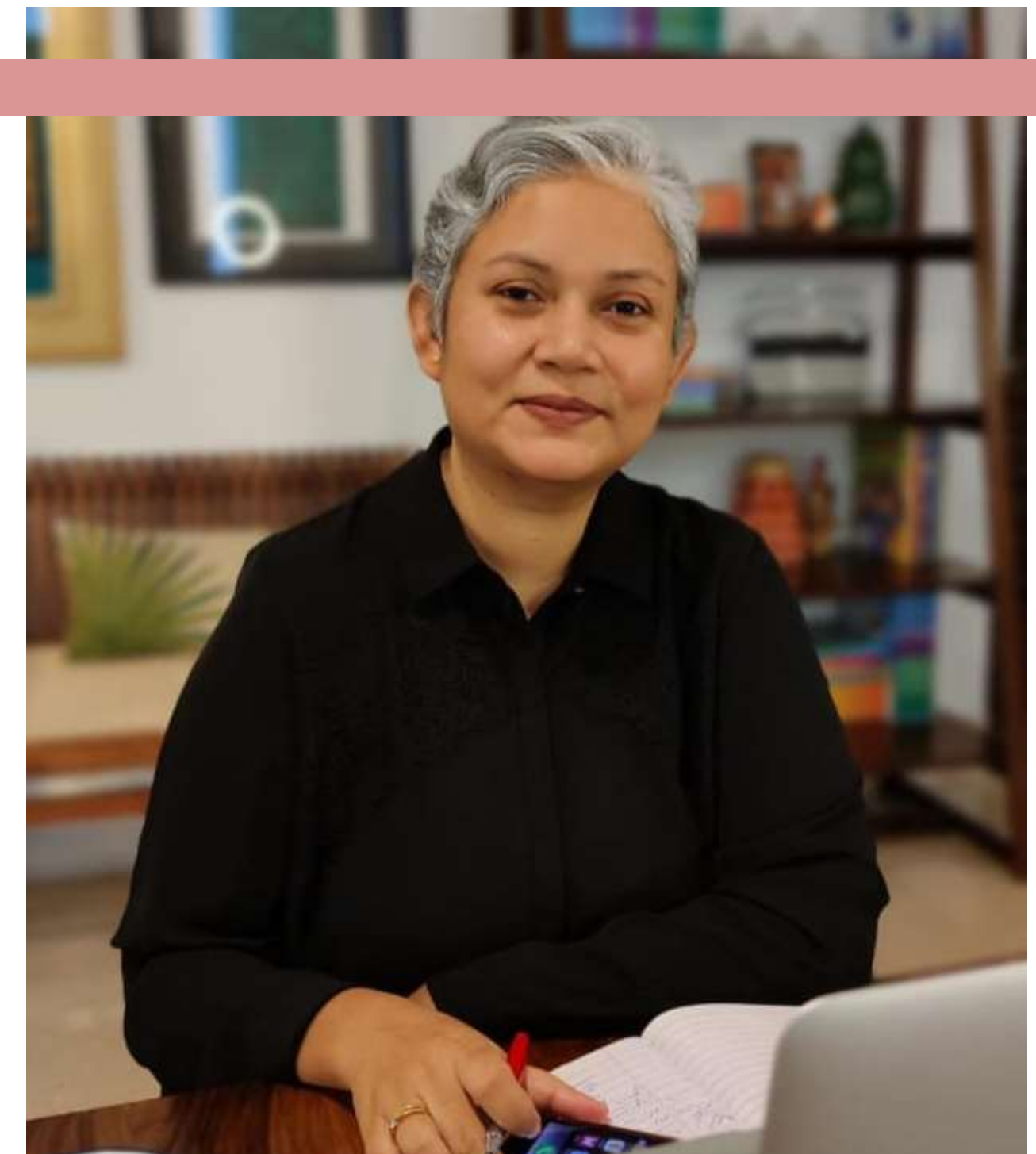
SAHANA AHMED

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL RURAL TOURISM COUNCIL OF WICCI

Sahana Ahmed is a novelist, short story writer, and poet. A graduate of Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata, she holds a master's degree in Tourism Management.

As the founder-director of Alpha Sierra Academy, Sahana has worked with leading institutions as a training consultant, including Reserve Bank of India, Utkal University, KIIT School of Management, and Army Wives Welfare Association.

Sahana is an alumna of University of East Anglia's Creative Writing India Workshop. Her writings have been published in The New York Times, The Pinch Journal, The Hindu BusinessLine, and Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine, among others. *Combat Skirts*, her debut novel, was published by Juggernaut Books.



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