

## **Abhinav Sinha**

### **Senior Insights Analyst, LinkedIn**

Abhinav Sinha is an accomplished data and product analytics professional with more than eight years of experience in driving business growth through data-driven insights. He is currently serving as Senior Insights Analyst at LinkedIn, where he applies his expertise in data storytelling, product analytics, and business intelligence to support strategic decision-making and enhance customer satisfaction. His work focuses on transforming complex datasets into actionable insights that shape business outcomes and optimize product performance.

Before joining LinkedIn in 2022, Abhinav gained diverse experience across several leading organizations. At Kaseya, he worked as a Senior Business Analyst in Product Analytics, leading projects in data modeling, customer behavior analysis, and business optimization. Prior to that, he specialized in People Analytics at OYO and Idexcel, where he focused on HR analytics, workforce optimization, and the integration of data-driven approaches in human capital management. His early career included a leadership role at Bhilwara Infotechnology Ltd, where he developed his analytical and problem-solving skills while managing data projects and client engagements.

Abhinav's academic foundation is rooted in technology and artificial intelligence. He earned a Bachelor of Technology degree in Computer Science from APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University in 2012. Further strengthening his expertise, he pursued advanced studies in Artificial Intelligence, completing a Diploma of Education in AI from the International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore, in 2024. His strong academic background combined with his professional experience has enabled him to seamlessly bridge technical expertise with business strategy.

With deep skills in Python, Alteryx, analytics strategy, and advanced Excel-based problem solving, Abhinav brings a unique combination of technical proficiency and strategic vision. He is particularly passionate about data storytelling—using data not just for reporting, but for crafting narratives that influence and guide business leaders.

## **Abhishek Gupta**

### *Chief Operating Officer, YuWaah, UNICEF*

Abhishek Gupta is the Chief Operating Officer of YuWaah (Generation Unlimited India), an initiative by UNICEF aimed at equipping young people with the skills, opportunities, and agency to thrive in the future workforce. His career spans over a decade, during which he has worked with national and international organisations focused on youth development, education, and social impact. Before his role at UNICEF, he held leadership positions in the development sector where he designed and implemented programs promoting vocational training, entrepreneurship, and employability for marginalised youth.

At YuWaah, Abhishek leads operational strategies that scale collaborative efforts across government, private sector, and civil society, aiming to create inclusive and sustainable ecosystems for youth skills and employment. His leadership is characterised by innovation, partnership-building, and data-driven decision-making. He holds advanced qualifications in development studies and management. Abhishek is a sought-after speaker and thought leader on youth employment, skill-building, and social innovation, frequently contributing to policy dialogues and industry forums.

### **Ameesha Prabhu**

#### **Co-Founder & CEO, TRRAIN (Trust for Retailers & Retail Associates of India)**

Ameesha Prabhu is the Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of TRRAIN, a public charitable trust established with the vision of empowering people through retail. Since its inception in 2011, she has been at the helm of the organization, shaping its strategy, building partnerships, and driving large-scale initiatives that have transformed lives across India. Under her leadership, TRRAIN has launched pioneering livelihood programs such as *Pankh*, which provides skilling and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and *TRRAINHer*, a program focused on equipping women with skills to enter the retail and allied sectors. She has also been instrumental in initiatives like the TRRAIN Retail Awards for Customer Service Excellence and Retail Employees' Day, which have brought dignity and recognition to millions of frontline retail workers.

With over 28 years of rich experience in the Indian retail sector, Ameesha brings a holistic understanding of retail operations across diverse formats including lifestyle, department, specialty, value retail, and brands. Her career spans leadership roles at some of India's most prominent retail organizations. As General Manager at Aditya Birla Retail, she oversaw category management, sourcing, and financial planning for hypermarkets and supermarkets. At Tesco Hindustan Wholesaling, she played a key role in merchandise planning, international sourcing, and trade promotions. Prior to that, she served as Head of Buying & Merchandising at Crossword Bookstores, where she introduced direct imports and curated a dynamic product mix across categories. She began her career at Shoppers Stop, where she managed ethnic wear,

lingerie, and jewelry categories, building strong expertise in buying, merchandising, and vendor development.

Ameesha's expertise lies not only in retail business strategy and category management but also in implementing large-scale livelihood programs, managing CSR grants, and building sustainable partnerships with industry leaders. She is deeply committed to fostering inclusive growth and has dedicated the past decade to creating pathways for women and persons with disabilities to access dignified work opportunities.

Through her vision, execution, and passion for social impact, Ameesha Prabhu has become a leading voice in retail-led empowerment in India, bridging the gap between business excellence and social responsibility.

### **Ameya Vanjari**

*Chief Operating Officer, Tata STRIVE*

Ameya Vanjari is the Chief Operating Officer of Tata STRIVE, the skill development initiative of the Tata Group, where he has been instrumental since the organisation's inception. With over 25 years of experience within the Tata ecosystem—spanning roles in consulting, technology, and operations—Ameya has shaped Tata STRIVE's trajectory from its early days. He served as Head of Technology and Innovation and later as Head of Operations, Partnerships & Technology. Tata STRIVE has expanded its reach dramatically—growing from its first centre in 2016 to over 114 active centres across 19 states, positively impacting nearly 1 million beneficiaries.

He has also catalysed talent development initiatives through collaborations with Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), expanding hospitality training across regions like Tripura and Assam, empowering tribal youth and children of police personnel with pathways to employment. At the “AHVAAN: A Call to Action” conference, Ameya addressed the importance of convergence and partnerships for building sustainable aftercare ecosystems for youth leaving childcare institutions. Ameya holds a degree in Electronics Engineering from V.J.T.I, Mumbai, and has completed a General Management program at the Iacocca Institute, Lehigh University, USA.

### **Anand Sharma**

Partner – Government & Public Services, KPMG India

Anand Sharma is a seasoned professional with over two decades of experience in government advisory, start-up ecosystem development, and business management. As Partner at KPMG India, he leads the Government and Public Services practice in the region, driving key projects funded by the World Bank and other international agencies, while also heading the Clients and Markets function.

Prior to this, he served as General Manager at Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), where he led the State's start-up support initiatives, including incubation, mentoring, and early-stage funding, and was part of the empowered committee for the revival of sick industrial units. He also worked on strategic initiatives such as establishing an ESDM hub and conceptualising a green fund.

Earlier, Anand was Director and Country Head at Sherston Software India, where he transformed the subsidiary into a profitable centre delivering over 110 educational content projects in collaboration with global organisations like BBC and HarperCollins.

A Chartered Accountant and an alumnus of the University of Kerala, Anand brings deep expertise in public sector transformation, financial planning, and technology-driven development.

## **Ankit Sanjay Shah**

### ***CEO & Co-Founder, HRH Next Service Limited***

Ankit Sanjay Shah is a dynamic entrepreneur and business leader, currently serving as the CEO and Co-Founder of HRH Next Service Limited, a forward-thinking company dedicated to delivering innovative solutions in human resources, skill development, and workforce transformation. Ankit's vision centres on empowering organisations and individuals to navigate the rapidly changing world of work through technology-driven talent management and learning solutions. With a background in business management and technology, Ankit developed expertise in HR consulting, digital transformation, and strategic leadership.

As CEO, Ankit leads HRH Next's efforts to design and implement comprehensive HR and learning platforms that integrate cutting-edge technology with practical workforce solutions. Ankit is passionate about bridging the skill gap and enabling lifelong learning, actively collaborating with industry leaders, educational institutions, and government bodies to create scalable skill development programs. He frequently speaks at industry fora and conferences on topics like digital HR, talent management, and the future of work.

## **Ashish Kulkarni**

*Chairman, FICCI Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics Forum & MCCIA Animation & Gaming Committee*

Ashish Kulkarni is an industry veteran in the fields of animation, visual effects (VFX), gaming, and comics. He is the Chairman of the FICCI Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics Forum, as well as the MCCIA Animation & Gaming Committee. Ashish has been a driving force behind the growth and global recognition of India's animation and gaming industries. Ashish's leadership extends to promoting talent development, nurturing startups, and strengthening industry-academia partnerships. Under his stewardship, the forums have launched programs aimed at enhancing employability and future-proofing skills in emerging digital creative technologies.

He is widely respected for his contributions to the creative technology sector. He frequently participates in national and international forums, sharing insights on trends, challenges, and opportunities within animation, VFX, gaming, and digital storytelling. Ashish holds advanced qualifications in media and technology management and is committed to elevating India's position as a global hub for creative digital content and technology innovation.

## **Aubrey Aloysius**

*Co-Founder, [LorraineMusic.ai](https://lorraine-music.ai)*

Aubrey Aloysius is an innovator in the field of music technology, serving as the Co-Founder of LorraineMusic.ai. This cutting-edge platform leverages artificial intelligence to revolutionise music creation, production, and distribution. With a passion for blending technology and creativity, Aubrey is driving the future of digital music experiences. Aubrey has a strong foundation in music and technology, combining expertise in sound engineering, software development, and AI-driven creative tools. He co-founded LorraineMusic.ai to empower artists, producers, and music enthusiasts with intelligent tools that simplify and enhance the creative process.

Under Aubrey's leadership, LorraineMusic.ai has developed innovative solutions that enable personalised music composition, smart production assistance, and interactive music engagement, making advanced music technology accessible to a broader audience. The platform's unique

approach has garnered attention for fostering new forms of musical expression and collaboration. Committed to nurturing talent and fostering innovation, Aubrey actively engages with the music and tech communities, supporting initiatives that promote digital literacy, creative skills, and entrepreneurship.

## **Balaji Baradhazhvar**

### **CEO & Co-Founder, Crystal Delta**

Balaji Baradhazhvar is the CEO and Co-Founder of Crystal Delta, a global EdTech and AI innovation company headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. Since co-founding the company in 2015, he has been driving its mission to empower organisations to thrive in the digital age through innovative technology solutions, transformative digital ecosystems, and advanced learning platforms. With over three decades of experience in technology, education, and digital transformation, he brings together AI, data, and learning science to scale skills development and workforce readiness globally.

At Crystal Delta, Balaji has led the creation of SoaringEd, Inc., a dedicated education technology arm, and spearheaded the development of SkillsMax.Ai, an advanced AI-driven platform designed to assess and coach learners in communication, coding, aptitude, and job readiness. His leadership is defined by a strong commitment to solving complex challenges, streamlining processes, and delivering sustainable digital value to clients across industries and geographies.

Before establishing Crystal Delta, Balaji held senior leadership roles across global technology enterprises. He served as Technical Director – Enterprise Solutions at Marlabs Inc. (USA), where he focused on enterprise-scale digital solutions, and as Program Architect at IBM in Melbourne, driving large-scale transformation projects. At National Australia Bank, he was Lead Solution Architect, playing a pivotal role in strengthening digital infrastructure. Earlier, he worked as Supervising Consultant and Lead Solution Architect at Object Consulting, and as Lead Solution Architect at Telstra, contributing to complex enterprise and telecom solutions.

His career journey also includes roles such as Development Manager at Viator, Solution Architect at Virtusa, and nearly five years at BT North America (Concert) as Development Team Leader, where he gained extensive international exposure. He began his professional path as a Senior Software Engineer with Computer Resources International India Pvt Ltd., followed by a tenure as Senior Programmer Analyst at Master Informatix Systems Inc. (USA).

Through this diverse global experience—spanning India, the US, UK, Singapore, and Australia—Balaji has built deep expertise in enterprise architecture, software development, strategic planning, education technology, and cross-functional leadership. His vision continues to shape next-generation technology platforms that bridge critical skill gaps and prepare learners and organisations for the future of work.

## **Chaitanya Chinchlikar**

### **Vice President & Chief Technology Officer, Whistling Woods International**

Chaitanya Chinchlikar is a seasoned professional with over two decades of experience in the Film, Media, and Entertainment industry. Currently, he serves as the Vice President and Chief Technology Officer at Whistling Woods International (WWI), India's premier Film & Creative Arts institute. In this capacity, he also heads the Emerging Media department, focusing on integrating cutting-edge technologies into the curriculum and infrastructure of the institution. His leadership has been instrumental in mainstreaming media and entertainment education in India, particularly in high school, graduate, and post-graduate education sectors.

Under his guidance, WWI has established partnerships with global Media and Entertainment Technology companies, leading to the creation of multiple Research & Development labs on campus. These collaborations have facilitated the development of workflows and curricula around emerging technologies such as Virtual Production, Cinematic VR, Artificial Intelligence, and cloud computing. This initiative has significantly contributed to raising the qualitative and technical standards of the Indian Film Entertainment industry.

Chaitanya's contributions to the field have been widely recognized. In 2024, he was awarded the SMPTE Excellence in Education Medal for his outstanding efforts in integrating new and unique educational programs that teach the technologies of motion pictures, television, and other imaging sciences, including emerging media technology. Additionally, he was honored with the Pioneer of the Visual Effects Industry Award at the VFX and More Summit & Awards, acknowledging his significant impact on the visual effects industry.

In a historic achievement, Chaitanya became the first Indian educator to be invited to join the prestigious Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) under its Production and Technology Branch. This recognition underscores India's growing influence in cinematic arts and technology education on the global stage.

Beyond his role at WWI, Chaitanya serves on several public policy and innovation bodies, including India's Media & Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) and the AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming & Comics) Task Force established by the Government of India to draft the national policy for the AVGC industry. He is also a member of the Board of Governors of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE). An active speaker at global seminars and conferences, he has written extensively in Indian and global media outlets, focusing on education and technology in the filmed entertainment industry.

## **Dilip Chenoy**

### **Chairman, Bharat Web3 Association**

Dilip Chenoy is a distinguished leader in the fields of industry development, skill enhancement, and emerging technologies, currently serving as the Chairman of the Bharat Web3 Association. With a career spanning over three decades, he has held pivotal roles across diverse sectors, including automotive, skills development, and trade organizations, driving strategic initiatives, public-private partnerships, and institutional growth.

Previously, Mr. Chenoy served as Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), where he played a key role in promoting industry advocacy, policy dialogue, and international trade relations. He has also been the Managing Director and CEO of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), where he built a robust ecosystem for skill development in India, facilitated the creation of Sector Skill Councils, and championed scalable, sustainable skill development institutions.

His leadership experience extends to the automotive industry as Director General of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and as a member of the Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles (OICA), where he contributed to global automotive policy and advocacy. Additionally, he served as Deputy Director General at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), strengthening industrial growth initiatives over an 18-year tenure.

Mr. Chenoy has also contributed to higher education governance, serving as Chairman of the Board of Management at Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology. His career reflects a strong commitment to bridging industry, government, and academia, fostering innovation, sustainable growth, and the development of future-ready talent in India.



# **Dipanwita Chakraborty**

## **Head of Human Resources – Kerala & Sri Lanka, RR Donnelley**

Dipanwita Chakraborty is a seasoned Human Resources leader and a Coach with over two decades of experience in building talent ecosystems that enable growth, employability, and empowerment. While working with global organizations, she managed diverse workforces driving initiatives in talent development, organizational transformation, and leadership building. Passionate about bridging the gap between skills and industry needs, Dipanwita has been at the forefront of designing innovative interventions that prepare individuals for the future of work. At the Skill Kerala Global Summit, she brings her insights on how industries can collaborate with academia and government to create sustainable career pathways, especially for women.

## **Dr. Asok Kumar A**

### **Consultant, Electric Vehicle Consortium, Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC)**

**Former Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering Trivandrum**

Dr. Asok Kumar A is an accomplished academician and researcher in the field of Electrical Engineering with specialized expertise in Electric Vehicles, Control Systems, and Electrical Drives. He received his Ph.D. in 2019 from the University of Kerala, and over the course of his career, he has made significant contributions to both academia and applied research, particularly in emerging areas of energy-efficient electrical systems and sustainable mobility solutions.

He has served as a Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the College of Engineering Trivandrum (CET), where he guided students and collaborated on projects that bridged theoretical knowledge with practical applications. Currently, he is associated with the Electric Vehicle Consortium at K-DISC as a Consultant, playing a key role in promoting innovation, research, and adoption of electric vehicle technologies in Kerala.

Dr. Asok Kumar has an impressive body of scholarly work, with more than five international journal publications in the last five years, and numerous papers presented at both national and international conferences. His research has been widely recognized in IEEE platforms, with papers presented in countries such as Thailand, France, Sri Lanka, and the United States. His

work spans critical domains such as fault-tolerant control of reusable launch vehicles, sliding mode control strategies for UAVs and missiles, optimization of electric drives, power factor correction techniques, and microgrid innovations for sustainable energy.

At the national level, he has presented extensively at the National Conference on Technological Trends (NCTT) organized by CET, covering diverse research areas from launch vehicle dynamics to renewable energy applications in electrical drives. His international publications include impactful contributions like energy-efficient drive systems for domestic and agricultural applications, robust control of flexible launch vehicles, UAV dynamics, and microgrid innovation in Kerala's public infrastructure. Notably, his recent work titled "*Green Grid Kerala: Empowering Government Buildings Through Microgrid Innovation*" was presented at the prestigious 50th Annual Conference of IEEE Industrial Electronics Society (IECON 2024) in Chicago.

Beyond publications, Dr. Asok Kumar has been actively engaged in mentoring and guiding students, promoting applied research in sustainable energy systems and electric mobility, and contributing to Kerala's mission to build a green and innovative technology ecosystem. His work reflects a blend of academic rigor and real-world application, making him a vital contributor to India's transition toward smart energy and electric vehicle adoption.

## **Dr. Madhuri Dubey**

### ***Founder-Director, National Skills Network (NSN)***

Dr. Madhuri Dubey is an experienced educator, researcher, and leader in vocational education and skills policy, with over 23 years of work spanning corporate, academic, and development sectors. She holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies, Education Policy & Implementation, and has built her career on designing effective curricula, e-learning frameworks, and digital learning solutions. Driven by her belief in real-world impact, Dr. Dubey founded the National Skills Network (NSN) as a platform to amplify positive stories and innovations in the Indian skilling landscape. Since its inception, NSN has become a vital community hub, bringing together stakeholders—from government training bodies and vocational institutions to industry and educators—to share insights, successes, and lessons learned across the National Skill Development initiatives.

As a thought leader and practitioner, she has authored the book *Effective E-Learning: Design, Development and Delivery* (2011), contextualising global digital pedagogy for Indian needs. She regularly facilitates workshops on skilling policy, vocational education reform, and digital readiness—most recently during NEP 2020 workshops and the G20-themed “Digital Adda – Stairs to Skill” events. Her work has been recognised with accolades such as the Skill Leadership Award by Foresight Society in 2020, honouring her significant contributions to skilling communications and awareness building.

## **Dr. Satya Chakravarthy**

**Founder, CEO & CTO – The ePlane Company**

**Professor, Aerospace Engineering – IIT Madras**

Dr. Satya Chakravarthy is a distinguished aerospace engineer and deep-tech entrepreneur, renowned for his pioneering work in urban air mobility and propulsion systems. He is the Founder, CEO, and CTO of **The ePlane Company**, an innovative startup based in Chennai, India, focused on developing all-electric, zero-emission air taxis designed for vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL). Established in 2019 and incubated at IIT Madras, The ePlane Company aims to revolutionize urban transportation by providing efficient and sustainable aerial mobility solutions.

In addition to his entrepreneurial endeavors, Dr. Satya Chakravarthy is a Professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering at IIT Madras. He holds a B.Tech in Aerospace Engineering from IIT Madras, and both an M.S. and Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, USA. Since joining IIT Madras in 1997, he has been a faculty member and currently heads the National Centre for Combustion Research & Development (NCCRD), one of the world's largest combustion research centers. He also leads the DRDO Centre for Propulsion Technology at IIT Madras, supported by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Dr. Satya Chakravarthy's contributions extend beyond academia and entrepreneurship. He is a co-founder of several innovative startups, including Agnikul Cosmos, Aerostrovilos Energy, Avishkaar Hyperloop, and GalaxEye, each aiming to redefine the aerospace ecosystem in India.

His work spans various aspects of propulsion and combustion, focusing on gas turbine, rocket engines, and electric aircraft technologies.

Recognized for his impactful work, Dr. Satya Chakravarthy was honored as the 'Startup Enabler of the Year' at TiECON Chennai 2022. He has delivered TEDx talks and lectures on platforms like NPTEL, sharing his expertise on combustion and electric aircraft propulsion.

Dr. Satya Chakravarthy's vision and leadership continue to inspire advancements in aerospace technology and urban mobility, positioning India at the forefront of the global aerospace industry.

### **Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil**

#### **Honourable Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development, Government of Karnataka**

Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil is a prominent Indian politician and medical professional serving as the Honourable Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development in the Government of Karnataka. He represents the Sedam constituency in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and has been a member of the Indian National Congress (INC). Dr. Patil was appointed to the cabinet in May 2023 under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's administration.

Born on April 20, 1967, in Udagi, Karnataka, Dr. Patil pursued a career in medicine, earning a master's degree in dermatology. He has been elected to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly multiple times, with his most recent election in 2023. Prior to his political career, he practiced as a medical professional.

In his current role, Dr. Patil is responsible for overseeing medical education and skill development initiatives in Karnataka. He has been actively involved in expanding medical education infrastructure in the state, including efforts to increase the number of MBBS and postgraduate medical seats. Additionally, he has emphasized the importance of vocational and skill-based education to align with global industrial trends and enhance employability among the youth.

Dr. Patil's leadership continues to influence the development of Karnataka's healthcare and education sectors, aiming to provide quality education and skill development opportunities to the state's residents.

## **Dr. Srinivasa Rao Pulijala**

### ***CEO, Apollo Medskills Limited***

Dr. Srinivasa Rao Pulijala is the Chief Executive Officer of Apollo MedSkills Limited, the skilling arm of Apollo Hospitals Group. A dental surgeon by training with an MBA in Hospital and Health Systems Management and a Ph.D. in Public Health, Dr. Pulijala has dedicated his career to bridging the gap between academic education and industry needs. Under his leadership, Apollo MedSkills has trained over 150,000 youth across India, offering cutting-edge programs in paramedical sciences, emergency care, telehealth, and hospital operations. His vision has helped position Apollo MedSkills as a Centre of Excellence for both the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and various state governments, driving innovation and scalability in vocational healthcare training. Dr. Pulijala is a strong advocate for technology-enabled learning and public-private partnerships, having led several blended learning initiatives that leverage VR, AR, and simulation-based training. He has collaborated with international organisations such as USAID, World Bank, and UNDP to deliver projects focused on capacity building, women's health, and rural healthcare skilling. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he mobilised large-scale skilling and upskilling programs for frontline healthcare workers.

A speaker at national and global forums on healthcare skilling, employability, and the future of work, Dr. Pulijala also contributes to public policy dialogues, advising on workforce readiness, education reform, and health systems strengthening. His work has earned accolades across the healthcare and skills sectors, establishing him as a thought leader who seamlessly blends clinical insight, strategic leadership, and social impact. With an unwavering commitment to empowering India's youth and strengthening healthcare delivery, Dr. Srinivasa Rao Pulijala continues to lead Apollo MedSkills in building a competent, compassionate, and future-ready health workforce for India and beyond.

## **E. Rajiv**

### **Executive Director, International Automobile Centre of Excellence (iACE)**

E. Rajiv is a seasoned professional in the Indian automotive and retail industry, with over two decades of leadership experience across manufacturing, sales, after-sales, retail, and skilling. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the International Automobile Centre of Excellence (iACE), a joint venture between the Government of Gujarat and Maruti Suzuki India Limited, where he has been spearheading initiatives since January 2021. At iACE, he plays a pivotal role

in shaping the skilling ecosystem for the automotive and manufacturing sectors, while also mentoring start-ups and building strong industry-academia linkages in alignment with India's new education and skill frameworks.

In his role, Rajiv is responsible for formulating and executing long-term strategies to strengthen iACE's position as a premier centre of excellence. His work involves developing branding strategies, managing stakeholders across government, industry, and academia, guiding start-up ecosystems, and ensuring affiliations with national bodies such as NCVET. His vision is to create a sustainable talent pipeline that meets the evolving needs of the automotive industry and contributes to nation-building through skilling and innovation.

Before joining iACE, Rajiv held several senior leadership roles across India's automotive sector. At the Mahindra Group, he served as Head of Strategy – After Sales, where he managed non-spares businesses (like extended warranties and roadside assistance), led digital and brand strategy, and oversaw new business initiatives. He also worked as Deputy General Manager of Sales and Head of After-Sales/Customer Care for Mahindra in Delhi/NCR, where he successfully managed large-scale dealer networks and after-sales operations.

Earlier, Rajiv contributed to the Eicher Trucks and Buses division of VE Commercial Vehicles as Senior Manager – Retail Support, where he strengthened dealer business processes and launched new revenue streams. He was also part of the core founding team at Carnation Auto, a multi-brand retail start-up, where he played a central role in strategy, planning, and business growth.

Rajiv began his career with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, where he spent over seven years in key roles including Regional Service Manager and Assistant Manager in Production and Quality. At Maruti, he was instrumental in customer relationship management, channel expansion, training, and quality initiatives. He also worked at Reliance Retail, where he helped design and launch the automotive vertical across multiple formats and successfully executed the AutoZone pilot projects.

Throughout his career, Rajiv has been recognized for his ability to blend strategic vision with operational execution, consistently delivering growth, strengthening customer satisfaction, and building sustainable business models. His expertise spans automotive retail, after-sales service, quality management, channel development, training and skilling, and start-up consulting.

### **Girish Desai – Vice President, People Operations GBS, Novo Nordisk**

Girish Desai is an experienced global business leader with more than 18 years of expertise spanning people operations, quality management, IT, and project leadership. He currently serves as Vice President of People Operations at Novo Nordisk Global Business Services (GBS), where he has been

driving large-scale people-centric strategies since December 2022. In this role, he oversees people operations across the global business services organization, focusing on employee experience, workforce transformation, and operational excellence.

Girish's career at Novo Nordisk spans over 13 years, during which he has held several leadership positions of increasing responsibility. He began as an Advanced Business Analyst in Corporate IT (2012–2015) before moving into Quality Management System Support. He later became Associate Director of Corporate Quality and then Director of Novo Nordisk Quality India, where he played a key role in strengthening compliance frameworks and driving quality culture across the organization. His leadership journey continued as Head of Quality in Novo Nordisk GBS and Senior Director, culminating in his current vice-presidential role.

Before joining Novo Nordisk, Girish worked at Mphasis for over five years as a Project Management Lead, overseeing delivery and operations, and at HP as a Technical Support Engineer, where he gained early experience in IT system management and customer support.

Throughout his career, Girish has demonstrated strong business acumen, a talent for change management, and a people-first approach to leadership. His expertise lies in building sustainable systems, driving organizational transformation, and aligning global teams to common strategic objectives.

## **Gopal Devanahalli**

### ***President – Skilling, Wadhvani Foundation***

Gopal Devanahalli is the President of Skilling at the Wadhvani Foundation, where he oversees the global strategy for large-scale workforce development and job creation through high-impact skilling programs. With over 30 years of leadership experience, his career spans across IT services, software products, BPO, healthcare, education, telecom, and consumer industries, uniquely positioning him to lead cross-sectoral skilling initiatives in rapidly evolving job markets. Before joining Wadhvani, Gopal served as Group President – Strategy & Business Development at Manipal Education & Medical Group, where he played a key role in shaping digital transformation efforts and new investment strategies. He has also held CEO roles at MeritTrac and Manipal Education Americas, contributing to business scaling, digital strategy implementation, and operational excellence. Earlier in his career, he held senior leadership

positions at Infosys and Kotak, furthering his expertise in technology-enabled business transformation.

At Wadhvani Foundation, Gopal leads the skilling vertical globally, steering the creation and deployment of virtual skilling platforms designed to address barriers to employability and inclusion. His leadership bridges technology, pedagogy, and industry needs to deliver scalable skilling pathways. Gopal holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Management from IIM Calcutta and an M.Sc. (Tech) in Computer Science from BITS Pilani, complemented by the Harvard Business School Corporate Director Certificate. This blend of deep technical knowledge, strategic business acumen, and governance credentials enables him to lead effectively at the intersection of policy, education, and enterprise. As President – Skilling, Gopal is driving Wadhvani Foundation's mission to transform how the world learns and works, through AI-driven upskilling, virtual training models, and public-private partnerships.

## **Harish Nachnani**

### **National Sales Manager – Didactic, Festo India Pvt. Ltd.**

Harish Nachnani is an accomplished professional with over 20 years of experience in industrial automation and technical education. Currently serving as the National Sales Manager – Didactic at Festo India Pvt. Ltd., he has been instrumental in leading the company's efforts to enhance vocational training and skill development across India.

In his role, Mr. Nachnani has spearheaded initiatives to establish partnerships with educational institutions and government bodies, aiming to bridge the skill gap in India's manufacturing and industrial sectors. For instance, he has been involved in collaborations with institutions like Baba Farid Group of Institutions (BFGI) to develop modular production stations, providing students with hands-on experience in real-time industry problems and assignments.

Additionally, Mr. Nachnani has represented Festo India at various industry events, such as the Global Skills Summit 2023 organized by FICCI, where he discussed the importance of skill development in the engineering sector. His efforts align with Festo's commitment to bridging the skill gap in India's manufacturing and industrial sectors.

## **Kanta Singh**



### ***Deputy Country Representative (a.i.), UN Women India***

Kanta Singh is a highly accomplished development professional with over 25 years of experience in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusive development. As the Deputy Country Representative (a.i.) at UN Women India, she leads national efforts to strengthen women's participation in leadership, decision-making, and economic growth, while supporting governments, civil society, and private sector partners to build gender-responsive ecosystems. Kanta has designed and managed large-scale programs addressing women's economic empowerment, social protection, and workplace inclusion. Earlier, she worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India, where she spearheaded initiatives that improved access to justice, livelihoods, and education for women and marginalised communities across India.

Kanta has collaborated with global and national organisations such as WomenPowerConnect, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), Women in Sustainable Enterprises (WISE), and SheThePeople, driving forward public-private partnerships to promote wage parity, safer workplaces, and women's leadership in formal and informal sectors. Her work has consistently focused on advancing gender-sensitive policies, workplace equity, and inclusive skilling frameworks. Holding a Master's degree in Rural Sociology, Kanta is also a Chevening Gurukul Fellow and a former national-level volleyball athlete, combining academic rigour with a spirit of determination and leadership.

### **Kumaresh Pattabiraman**

#### ***Country Manager & Product Head, LinkedIn India***

Kumaresh Pattabiraman leads as Country Manager and Product Head at LinkedIn India, the platform's second-largest and fastest-growing market with over 135 million users—a key role he stepped into in August 2024. Under his leadership, LinkedIn is transforming from a job platform into a vibrant professional community that emphasises learning, networking, and knowledge sharing. With over 15 years of product and engineering experience, Kumaresh has been instrumental in shaping LinkedIn's global offerings before taking on his current role. His portfolio includes senior leadership on flagship products like Feed, Search, Profile Video, Career Breaks, and innovations in Generative AI—all designed to enhance member engagement and discovery.

Kumaresh began his professional journey in engineering roles at Google and Microsoft (Bing) before joining LinkedIn as a Group Product Manager. He rose to Senior Director roles on Search, Feed, and AI products, responsible for redesigning our user experience and implementing strategic features that improved engagement for over 100 million weekly users. Kumaresh holds a BTech in Computer Science from College of Engineering, Guindy, and an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a skilled chess player with a peak bullet rating of 2660. In his current role, he champions innovation and growth by emphasising India's leadership in AI talent, noting that members here use AI skills three times more frequently than the global average, positioning the country as a frontrunner in the future of work and digital economy.

## **Lohit Bhatia**

### **President – Workforce Management, Quess Corp Ltd & President, Indian Staffing Federation**

Mr. Lohit Bhatia is a dynamic business leader heading the Workforce Management division at Quess Corp Ltd, where he oversees a vast portfolio encompassing general staffing, IT staffing and recruitment, digital compliance, training and skill development, and logistics across India, Singapore, the APAC region, and the Middle East. Since joining Quess in 2011 as General Manager of Sales for the staffing business, he has played an instrumental role in scaling operations, leading the business to grow its associate base more than twentyfold—from 13,000 to 65,000—before assuming the CEO role for Staffing, and subsequently stepping into his current, broader leadership capacity.

Under his leadership, Quess has evolved from a start-up into one of India's most successful firms, executing a landmark IPO in 2016 and becoming the nation's largest private-sector employer, with over 385,000 employees by the end of 2019. Beyond his corporate responsibilities, Lohit plays a leading industry role as President of the Indian Staffing Federation (ISF), a key forum representing over 100 staffing companies. He has served on ISF's Executive Board since 2018 and was re-elected for a further two-year term beginning April 2024, reflecting his influential presence in shaping policy and practice within India's rapidly evolving staffing sector.

With a rich experience spanning over two decades across sectors such as textiles, auto components, and services, he started his career by leading a major auto-component export unit at Noida SEZ and later held leadership roles in recruitment and commercial operations at firms like Laurent and Benon Management Consultants and ClearPlus. A graduate in Economics from the University of Delhi, he also holds an MBA in Marketing and Sales from Apeejay School of Management, supplemented by a computer systems diploma from NIIT—underscoring a strong foundation in both business and technology.

Mr. Lohit Bhatia is a respected industry voice, having spoken at global forums including the ASU GSV Conference in San Diego and UNICEF's Yuwaah launch in New Delhi. Recognized for his strategic leadership, he has played a pivotal role in engaging with government bodies such as the GST Council and other regulatory forums on behalf of the staffing industry.

## **Meera Shenoy**

### ***Founder & CEO, Youth4Jobs***

Meera Shenoy established Youth4Jobs—a trailblazer in market-linked skilling and employment solutions for India's rural, tribal, and differently-abled youth. Before founding Youth4Jobs in 2012, she made significant contributions as the Executive Director of the Employment Generation & Marketing Mission (EGMM)—India's first state-run jobs initiative—training over 220,000 rural youth with a 70% placement rate. She has since shaped large-scale public policies, serving as a Senior Advisor on Skilling & Employment with UNDP, and supporting the Prime Minister's Advisor on Skilling as Chair of the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA). Her global impact also includes work as a World Bank specialist on poverty-alleviation programs across South Asia.

Youth4Jobs, under her leadership, has grown into one of India's most impactful organisations in this domain, operating across 28 states and 8 Union Territories, with thousands of individuals with disabilities trained and placed in mainstream employment. Meera has innovated initiatives like "SwarajAbility", a first-of-its-kind inclusive AI job platform for persons with disabilities. She won the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2017) presented by the President of India, the NCPEDP-Shell Helen Keller Award, and recognition as a 2014 Social Entrepreneur of the Year finalist by WEF India. Her work has also been featured in global forums like TEDx Berkeley.

## **Mona Gupta – Chief Executive Officer, Home Management & Care Givers Sector Skill Council**

Ms. Mona Gupta brings over three decades of experience spanning government, international organizations, and industry associations, specializing in areas such as public policy, economic and social development, education, livelihoods, skill development, sustainability, entrepreneurship, branding, and gender equality. Her extensive career reflects a steadfast commitment to inclusive development and capacity building across diverse sectors.

In her current role as CEO of HMCSSC—a Section 8 nonprofit operating under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and NSDC—Ms. Gupta drives the mission to professionalize and formalize the caregiving and domestic work sector, one of India's largest informal employment segments. Under her leadership, HMCSSC works to bridge critical skills gaps in roles ranging from caregiving to housekeeping and domestic support, aiming to dignify the work done by predominantly female workers and enhance their employability and livelihoods.

Ms. Gupta played a key role in organizing the first industry stakeholder meeting in July 2022, bringing together government representatives, entrepreneurs, and sector leaders to address challenges such as employability, entrepreneurial pathways, and international migration opportunities within the caregiving sector.

She has also shared her insights on sector formalization efforts, elaborating on initiatives such as national certification, accreditation, apprenticeship, technology integration, career counseling, and placement mechanisms—all aimed at uplifting domestic workers into skilled, recognized professionals.

## **Moses Chowdari Gorrepati**

### **Executive Director & Trustee, EnAble India**

Moses Chowdari Gorrepati is the Executive Director and Trustee of EnAble India, a pioneering non-profit organization dedicated to enabling the economic independence and dignity of persons with disabilities across India. With over 14 years of committed experience in the disability and inclusion landscape, he has been instrumental in developing livelihood initiatives, creating inclusive workplaces, and scaling digital literacy platforms for persons with disabilities.

At EnAble India, Moses champions the principle of focusing on “ability rather than disability.” Under his leadership, the organization has impacted more than two lakh individuals and families, opening up job opportunities across more than 22 sectors and 19 types of disabilities. He spearheads mission-driven campaigns such as “See a Million” (visual impairment), “Hear a Million” (hearing impairment), “Rise a Million” (cerebral palsy), and “Mission 1000” (intellectual and severe disabilities), fostering collective solutions for inclusion.

Moses has tirelessly worked on sensitization programs for employers, helping them build confidence in hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. Notably, he has developed adaptive workplace solutions—ranging from inclusive leadership workshops to peer sensitization and handholding during onboarding—that have led organizations to not only hire but often return to employ more persons with disabilities.

His efforts have earned him national recognition, including the revered NCPEDP-Mindtree Helen Keller Award and the Sarojini Trilok Nath National Award.

Beyond organizational leadership, Moses personally embodies the transformative power of technology. As a visually impaired individual, he uses accessible tools like Apple's Magnifier and Voice Assistant features to lead an independent and empowered life—becoming, in his words, the primary breadwinner of his family by managing daily tasks with autonomy.

Moses's journey underscores how inclusive work environments, thoughtful policy design, and empathetic leadership can unlock the potential of persons with disabilities.

## **Muraleedharan**

### **Assistant Manager, Royal Enfield**

Muraleedharan is a passionate Mechanical Engineer with more than seven years of experience in product design, development, and manufacturing. His expertise spans across mechanical product design, cost analysis, vendor development, and streamlining manufacturing processes to enhance efficiency and quality. With a strong problem-solving mindset, he has been consistently recognized for his ability to deliver innovative engineering solutions within challenging timelines.

Currently, Muraleedharan serves as Assistant Manager at Royal Enfield (since April 2024), where he plays a key role in Production Part Approval Processes (PPAP), project planning, and

supplier engagement. His contributions have been acknowledged with the prestigious RE Trailblazer Award, reflecting his excellence in driving projects that align with the brand's commitment to quality and performance.

Before joining Royal Enfield, he worked with Bonfiglioli (Jan 2023 – Apr 2024) as an Engineer, where he strengthened his skills in automotive systems, supplier negotiations, and project execution. He was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for his significant contributions during this tenure.

Earlier, as a Design and Development Engineer at NIDEC FIR (Aug 2021 – Feb 2023), Muraleedharan specialized in the design of new products, ensuring customer satisfaction through innovative solutions and efficient complaint resolution. His role demanded high adaptability and value-added engineering, which he successfully demonstrated.

His professional journey began at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Sep 2016 – Jul 2021), where he spent nearly five years as a Design Engineer. There, he focused on the design and development of gear-cutting tools and broaches, gaining deep technical expertise in design for manufacturing and industrial product development.

Throughout his career, Muraleedharan has combined technical acumen with practical manufacturing insights, enabling him to contribute effectively to both product innovation and operational excellence. His strong communication skills, leadership qualities, and collaborative approach have made him a key asset in every organization he has served.

## **Nagaraja N M IAS**

*Managing Director, Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC)*

Nagaraja N M IAS is the Managing Director of the Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC). He plays a pivotal role in shaping and implementing Karnataka's strategic initiatives to empower youth and enhance employability across the state. Nagaraja joined the Indian Administrative Service with a commitment to transforming governance and promoting inclusive growth. Over the years, he has held various key administrative roles across sectors such as education, rural development, and social welfare, building a strong foundation in policy formulation and program implementation.

Under Nagaraja's leadership, KSDC has introduced innovative training models, partnerships with the private sector and educational institutions, and initiatives that focus on digital skills, entrepreneurship, and vocational training. Nagaraja's vision is centred on creating sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill enhancement, particularly for marginalised communities and youth from rural areas. He emphasises data-driven decision-making and continuous monitoring to ensure the quality and impact of training programs. He participates in national forums on skill development and employment, sharing best practices and fostering partnerships to strengthen workforce capabilities.

## **Neeti Sharma**

### ***CEO TeamLease Digital***

Neeti Sharma is the CEO of TeamLease Digital, the technology and specialised staffing division of TeamLease Services. With over 30 years of experience spanning the corporate, government, and education sectors, she has been at the forefront of building sustainable talent ecosystems that bridge the gap between education and employment in India. Since assuming the CEO role in March 2024, Neeti has led TeamLease Digital into a new phase of growth and impact. Under her leadership, the organisation has partnered with over 50 Global Capability Centres (GCCs), expanded its footprint into tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and registered a remarkable 30% year-on-year growth in digital tech placements in FY2023. Her strategic focus on decentralising opportunities and enhancing talent accessibility is reshaping how companies engage with India's vast workforce potential.

A passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Neeti has championed multiple initiatives that promote workforce parity. TeamLease Digital's recent reports, under her stewardship, highlight meaningful progress in female representation in technology roles and advocate for gender pay equity. Neeti co-founded TeamLease EdTech and played a foundational role in establishing TeamLease Skills University, India's first university dedicated to skills-based education. Her mission has consistently centred on making India future-ready through scalable and outcome-driven models of skilling, upskilling, and digital literacy. She was named one of HolonIQ's Top 200 Women Founders in EdTech.

## **Omjiwan Gupta**

### ***Education Leader – India & South Asia, Adobe***

Omjiwan Gupta plays a pivotal role at Adobe, spearheading the company's educational strategy and outreach across South Asia. He works with educational institutions and governmental bodies to integrate Adobe's technology and programs like the Adobe Creative Technology Academy (ACTA) into academic curricula, preparing students for creative industry roles and digital literacy. Gupta is involved with Adobe's ACTA initiative, a strategic program that establishes Centres of Excellence in South Indian educational institutions. These centres provide students with access to Adobe's creative suite—tools like Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Dreamweaver—alongside certification via the Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) pathway, enhancing their employability.

Gupta advocates for enhancing the digital teaching capabilities of educators. He highlights gaps in digital training among Indian educators. He underscores that Adobe is bridging this through offerings such as structured online teacher training, educational resources, webinars, and lesson plans via tools like Microsoft Teams and Adobe's education platform. While Omjiwan's specific career trajectory, academic credentials, and prior roles at Adobe are not publicly detailed, his presence at major forums and industry events underscores his influence in shaping education strategy across the region. His guidance helps institutions align with global, student-centred learning frameworks.

## **Osama Manzar**

### ***Founder & Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)***

Osama Manzar is a digital inclusion advocate, social entrepreneur, and thought leader who has dedicated his career to bridging the digital divide in India and across the Global South. He is the Founder and Director of the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), which combats information poverty and promotes equitable access to technology. With over 25 years of experience in media, technology, and development, Osama has designed and led some of India's most influential digital inclusion programs. These include the National Digital Literacy Mission, Common Service Centres, PM-WANI, and Wireless for Communities, all of which have helped democratize access to knowledge, public services, and economic opportunity. His efforts have empowered marginalised groups like rural women and youth through innovations like the Sochnapreneur (information entrepreneur) model.

Osama is a Senior Ashoka Fellow, a British Chevening Scholar, and a U.S. State Department IVLP Fellow. He has advised multiple international coalitions and policy forums, including the



Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), Global Network Initiative (GNI), Association for Progressive Communications (APC), and the World Summit Awards. He has visited over 10,000 villages, engaging directly with communities to drive bottom-up, localised digital transformation. Osama has authored books such as *Internet Economy of India* and *NetChakra*, and writes a regular column for Mint. His writing explores the intersection of technology, development, and equity, and advocates for policies that ensure technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion.

### **Parveen Hafeez – Managing Director, Sunrise Hospitals**

Ms. Parveen Hafeez is a visionary entrepreneur and the Managing Director of Sunrise Hospital, a multi-specialty healthcare network headquartered in Kochi, Kerala. Her journey began over two decades ago, rooted in her family's business background and a strong drive to build a meaningful enterprise. Sunrise Hospital was founded in 2005 in Kakkanad and has since grown into a reputable tertiary care center, renowned for its excellence in laparoscopic and minimally invasive surgeries.

Parveen initially built her career alongside the Medlace Group of Companies, which included Medlace and Medlace Disposables, before founding Sunrise. Her leadership extends beyond healthcare—she is also the Managing Partner at iWARE Solutions, a software development company that specializes in hospital management and printing systems for clients in India and the Middle East.

Under her stewardship, Sunrise Hospital has expanded significantly and today operates multiple branches across Kerala, New Delhi, Maharashtra, and the Middle East. The hospital employs over 2,000 professionals and is recognized for its systematic operational framework, patient-first philosophy, and expansion into wellness, cosmetic care, and medical tourism services.

Ms. Hafeez is also a pioneer in preventive healthcare education, advocating that wellness starts at home and in schools. She drives community outreach through educational programs, medical camps, and professional development seminars aimed at promoting holistic healthcare awareness.

A stalwart in women's leadership, Parveen has been honored with prestigious recognitions such as the *Lions Women Icon Award* (2011), *Best Women Entrepreneur Award* by Dhanam magazine (2013), *Business Woman of the Year* by Unique Times (2015), and *Business Icon of the Year* by

Calicut University's School of Business (2015). In 2013, she was among the three Indian businesswomen selected for the Fortune 500 & U.S. State Department's Women Leaders Mentoring Programme, where she worked with the Vice President of Johnson & Johnson in New York.

Parveen deeply values the synergy of work and family. Married to Dr. Hafeez Rahman—Chairman of Sunrise Hospital and a renowned laparoscopic surgeon—they share a vision of building a network of 20 hospitals in 20 years. Their three daughters also play an integral role in the journey.

### **Pete Draper**

*Visual Effects Artist & Co-Founder, Makuta VFX (now SVP Customer Production at Ryff)*

Pete Draper is a computer graphics and visual effects (VFX) expert with over 25 years of experience. A key figure in cinematic VFX, he co-founded Hyderabad-based Makuta VFX in 2009. He led its rise to prominence as a multi-award-winning studio known for its artistic excellence and technical precision. Originally from the UK, Pete brought extensive global industry expertise to India, significantly influencing its VFX ecosystem. He served multiple roles—Lead Artist, Head of Media, and Director of Visual Effects—delivering impactful results on major film projects. At Makuta, Pete drove the visual spectacle behind many iconic Indian films like *Baahubali: The Beginning* and *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion*, *Eega (Makkhi)*, *Magadheera*, *Ghajini*, *Endhiran (Robot)*, *2.0*, *Kaala* and *RRR*.

Pete has authored technical books like *Deconstructing the Elements with 3ds Max*, contributed to trade magazines, and led VFX workshops globally. For nearly a decade, he served as an external examiner for design institutions in the UK and was a long-time Alpha/Beta tester for Autodesk. Makuta was also among India's first studios to use LiDAR scanning in film production, thanks to innovations under his guidance. In 2022, Pete transitioned to a new role as SVP Customer Production at Ryff, marking the next chapter of his dynamic career in advanced visual technology leadership. Pete Draper's journey exemplifies how global expertise, creative rigour, and technological innovation can elevate an entire industry. His work continues to inspire next-generation artists and change how stories are visually told on the global stage.

## **Prashasti Rastogi**

*Senior Director, Education & Government, Coursera*

Prashasti Rastogi is a distinguished leader in the fields of education, technology, and public policy, currently serving as the Senior Director of Education & Government for Coursera in India. With over 16 years of experience across higher education, publishing, and digital learning, she plays a pivotal role in advising academic institutions and government bodies on harnessing online learning for large-scale skill development and digital transformation. At Coursera, Prashasti leads initiatives that help shape the future of learning in India. She collaborates with ministries, universities, and public sector organisations to scale access to high-quality global education and future-ready skills. Her leadership has enabled impactful partnerships across APAC, Europe, and the U.S., and she has been instrumental in positioning Coursera as a strategic partner in India's national skilling and education reform agendas.

Before joining Coursera, Prashasti held senior roles at Wiley India and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) South Asia, where she drove innovation in academic publishing, international education, and institutional capacity building. Prashasti holds a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology from Delhi University and an MBA from the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), Delhi. Prashasti is widely regarded as a thought leader in AI-powered learning, micro-credentials, and employability-oriented education. She is a frequent speaker at global and national forums like the ASU + GSV Summit and actively discusses upskilling, digital inclusion, and the role of online platforms in democratising access to education in India.

## **Pundi Sriram**

*Chief Product Officer, The Hindu*

Pundi Sriram is a seasoned digital product leader and innovator, currently serving as the Chief Product Officer at The Hindu, one of India's most respected and widely read newspapers. With a strong background in digital media, product management, and technology, he spearheads the transformation of traditional media into engaging, user-centric digital experiences. Sriram has played a pivotal role in driving digital innovation for media organisations, focusing on audience growth, subscription strategies, and seamless content delivery across multiple platforms.

At The Hindu, he leads the product team responsible for developing and optimising the digital platforms that serve millions of readers globally. Under his leadership, the organisation has enhanced its digital footprint by adopting innovative technologies, improving user experience, and integrating data-driven strategies to increase engagement and revenue. Earlier, Pundi Sriram held key positions in leading digital media and technology companies where he launched and scaled several digital products.

## **Ranjan Choudhary**

### **Honorary Member, WorldSkills International**

Ranjan Choudhary is a seasoned professional with extensive experience in skill development, vocational education, and international training initiatives. He has held senior roles in both the private sector and at the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), where he led private sector-driven development approaches for short-term TVET programs, impact investments, CSR initiatives, and international skill competitions. Known for his expertise in public policy development, Ranjan has a proven track record of building partnerships with diverse stakeholders and fostering innovation in workforce development.

At NSDC, he served in multiple leadership roles, including Sr. Head of WorldSkills India, where he was responsible for identifying, training, and preparing competitors and experts to represent India in international skill competitions. His tenure included managing complex stakeholder ecosystems and ensuring India's participation in events like WorldSkills 2019, where India competed in 43 trades and achieved a commendable global ranking.

Ranjan has also contributed significantly to TCS iON's vocational education vertical, where he was involved in program planning, team onboarding, partner identification, and product development. Earlier in his career, he managed end-to-end operations for international training and certification programs at Modi EduCare / Modi Healthcare Placement, ensuring smooth logistics, licensure, and placement processes for learners pursuing UK and US certifications.

Since 2020, Ranjan has been recognized as an Honorary Member of WorldSkills International, reflecting his leadership and global contributions to skills development. He holds an MBA in Marketing from the Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi, and a BA (Honors) in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, complementing his strong foundation in strategy, business development, and program management.

## **Rashmita Panda**

*Director, Directorate of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (DSDE) & Chief Executive Officer, Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA)*

Rashmita Panda is a dynamic and accomplished leader in the field of skill development and entrepreneurship, currently serving as the Director of the Directorate of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (DSDE) and CEO of the Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA). Rashmita plays a vital role in shaping Odisha's skill ecosystem and driving transformative initiatives. Her career encompasses extensive experience in public administration, program management, and policy formulation, with a special focus on vocational training, entrepreneurship promotion, and inclusive development.

As Director of DSDE and CEO of OSDA, Rashmita leads efforts to build capacity, enhance employability, and encourage innovation among Odisha's youth. Under her leadership, OSDA has fostered strategic partnerships with industry, academia, and government agencies to create a robust framework for skill training, certification, and job placement. Her vision centres on creating equitable opportunities for marginalised communities and bridging skill gaps through technology-enabled learning and entrepreneurship support. Rashmita advocates for continuous upskilling and lifelong learning as critical drivers of economic resilience.

## **Rohit Aradhya**

**Vice President & Managing Director, Barracuda India**

Rohit Aradhya is an accomplished technology leader with over 25 years of experience in cybersecurity, product engineering, and organizational transformation. He currently serves as Vice President & Managing Director at Barracuda Networks India, a role he has held since December 2021. Based in Bengaluru, he drives the company's engineering strategy and growth in the cybersecurity space, overseeing the development of innovative solutions across on-premises and SaaS platforms.

Rohit's career reflects deep expertise in building centers of technical excellence, leading large cross-geographical teams, and scaling organizations through strategic planning, change management, and strong business acumen. At Barracuda, his focus is on modernizing core security offerings, strengthening product innovation, and fostering a culture of collaboration and talent development.

He is equally passionate about technology and people leadership, with a keen ability to recognize, mentor, and nurture talent.

Before joining Barracuda, Rohit spent more than 14 years at Cisco in various leadership roles. As Director of Engineering, he spearheaded multiple product lines, particularly in cloud and network security. His tenure included roles as Senior Engineering Manager and Engineering Manager, where he played a pivotal role in product innovation and scaling engineering teams.

Earlier, he worked at Motorola Mobility for nearly nine years in roles spanning Engineering Manager, Technical Leader, and Senior Software Engineer, contributing to networking and communication technologies. His career began at Intoto Inc., later acquired by Freescale Semiconductor, where he served as a Software Engineer working on embedded network security products.

Rohit holds a Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science from Karnatak University (1993–1997). Over the years, he has earned a reputation as a visionary leader in the cybersecurity industry, balancing technical excellence with strategic foresight.

## **Rukmini S**

### **(Founder, Data For India)**

Ms. Rukmini S is one of India's foremost data journalists and authors, with over a decade of experience at the intersection of data, storytelling, and policy. She is the Founder & Director of *Data For India*, a platform dedicated to making data accessible, insightful, and actionable for policymakers, researchers, and the wider public.

She is the author of the widely acclaimed book *“Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us About Modern India”* (Westland, 2021), which won the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award (Non-Fiction) in 2022. The book, drawing on her years of field reporting and data journalism, explores critical questions about Indian society through the lens of evidence, while highlighting the gaps in available data.

Previously, Ms. Rukmini served as National Data Editor at *The Hindu*, Editor – Data & Innovation at HuffPost India, and later worked as an Independent Data Journalist crafting

in-depth narratives using statistics and social science research. She also founded Datarivu, where she collaborated with think tanks and non-media organizations to communicate evidence-based stories.

Her work has consistently bridged the gap between complex datasets and public understanding, making her a leading voice in data-driven journalism in India. She holds a Master's degree in Development Economics and International Development from SOAS, University of London, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Communications Media from Sophia Polytechnic, Mumbai.

Through her writing, research, and public engagement, Ms. Rukmini continues to champion data transparency, accountability, and literacy, shaping conversations on governance, development, and democracy in India.

## **Saba Karim**

### ***India Head – Public Sector & Large Enterprise Staffing, LinkedIn Talent Solutions***

Saba Karim spearheads the Public Sector and Large Enterprise Staffing vertical for LinkedIn in India. She plays a pivotal role in enabling government bodies, public sector undertakings, and higher education institutions to leverage LinkedIn's talent insights and strategic workforce intelligence. Earlier, Saba led the Regional Sales Head for Search and Staffing in India, where she honed expertise in enterprise marketing, customer relationships, and talent acquisition strategy. Before joining LinkedIn, she contributed to high-growth roles at LogMeIn, Vu Technologies, Radio Mirchi, and HyperCity, building strong customer relationships and driving business expansion.

Saba had led "Women at LinkedIn," an employee resource group, and now heads LinkedIn's "Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIBs)" initiative in India. Saba regularly shares her thought leadership at prestigious forums. In 2023, she delivered the keynote "Special Address on Future of Skilling" at the ET Government's "Transforming Odisha" event. She was also a featured speaker at the GCC Workplace Awards 2024, discussing "All in on AI: India and the World—Powering Transformation of Talent and Skills Globally".

## **Sabina Dewan**

*President and Executive Director, JustJobs Network*

Sabina Dewan is the President and Executive Director of JustJobs Network, a global think tank dedicated to promoting inclusive, sustainable, and quality employment. With a strong commitment to equitable economic development, Sabina leads efforts to bridge the gap between job creation and decent work worldwide. Sabina's career spans across research, advocacy, and policy advisory roles focused on labour markets, employment policies, and sustainable development. Before founding JustJobs Network, she contributed to prominent organisations working on social impact and labour rights, leveraging her expertise to influence global and national agendas on employment.

Under Sabina's leadership, JustJobs Network has become a key voice in shaping policies that promote decent work, skills development, and social protection. The organisation collaborates with governments, international agencies, academia, and civil society to generate evidence-based research and practical solutions addressing unemployment, underemployment, and job quality. Sabina is widely recognised for her thought leadership on the future of work, labour market transitions, and inclusive growth.

## **Sai Adwaith Krishnamurthy**

*Centre Head – EY Pune & EY GDS Technology Risk Leader*

Sai Adwaith Krishnamurthy leads the EY Pune delivery centre as its Centre Head and simultaneously serves as the Global Delivery Services (GDS) Technology Risk Leader for EY. Based in Pune, he brings over 26 years of leadership experience in technology risk, compliance, assurance, and consulting, with a specific focus on shaping secure and scalable offshore delivery models. He heads a geographically diverse global team of over 1,400 Technology Risk professionals, supporting EY's operations across India, the Philippines, Poland, Spain (Malaga), and Mexico. His leadership has driven robust governance frameworks, SOX compliance, internal controls, and program assurance protocols across client engagements.

An Associate Chartered Accountant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Sai combines domain acumen with deep technical insight. He is respected as a trusted advisor who helps organisations navigate complex cybersecurity, regulatory, and operational challenges as part of their digital transformation journeys. In his dual capacity, Sai plays a pivotal role in ensuring that EY's delivery centres uphold the highest standards of risk management, operational



excellence, and regulatory compliance—all while setting the stage for future-ready growth and client-centred innovation.

## **Samina Bano**

*Founder and CEO, Rightwalk Foundation*

Samina Bano is a passionate social entrepreneur and the Founder and CEO of Rightwalk Foundation, an organisation committed to empowering marginalised communities through education, skill development, and advocacy. With a focus on social inclusion and women's empowerment, Samina has been a catalyst for transformative change in underserved regions. Samina's career is marked by her deep commitment to grassroots development, gender equality, and community engagement. She has spearheaded numerous programs aimed at enhancing livelihood opportunities, improving access to education, and promoting social justice for vulnerable populations.

Under Samina's leadership, Rightwalk Foundation has successfully implemented skill training initiatives, awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy projects that address critical social challenges. The foundation emphasises holistic development, combining vocational training with life skills and leadership development to create a sustainable impact. Samina actively collaborates with government agencies, NGOs, and corporate partners to scale innovative solutions and create enabling environments for social change. Her work has been recognised for its community-centred approach and measurable outcomes in poverty alleviation and empowerment.

## **Sandeep Girotra**

**Executive Director & Chief Human Resource Officer.**

Sandeep was born in New Delhi, India and completed his Bachelors in Commerce from Delhi University and Masters in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (T.I.S.S), Mumbai, India.

He started his career in 1992 and over the last almost 24 years has worked across Indian and Multinational companies like SIEL, Dupont, General Electric, Ranbaxy, HSBC, Davita and Xylem. His work has taken him across industries and geographies, having lived in Japan, Korea, Middle East

and Singapore. He has held leadership positions in General Electric, where he worked for 13 years, MENA Regional HR Leader for HSBC at Dubai and with Ranbaxy as the Global Head of Human Resources. Till recently, Sandeep was the HR Head for Emerging Markets, for Xylem Incorporation, based in Singapore. He is now the CHRO for DCM Shriram, based in India.

Sandeep has led HR change agenda through many of his roles, setting up people strategy for growth and building organization and people DNA for business Success. During his international stints, was involved in HR strategy, business reorganization, including Mergers and Acquisitions, Talent and Growth. In the current role, he is focused on setting up the right organizational eco system to propel business growth in the region.

### **Sanjay Awasthi**

*Head of Office, IOM India (International Organization for Migration, UN Migration)*

Mr. Sanjay Awasthi is a seasoned development and humanitarian professional with nearly three decades of experience across Asia and Africa. Currently serving as the Head of Office for IOM India, he leads the organization's efforts in promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration in alignment with the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). His initiatives are guided by partnerships with the Ministry of External Affairs and other key stakeholders.

Throughout his career, Mr. Sanjay Awasthi has tackled diverse challenges—from agriculture and food security to health, nutrition, HIV, and peacebuilding—primarily through capacity building of communities and local organizations. Prior to his current role, he served as Country Director for VSO in Ghana and for Oxfam in South Sudan and Malawi, and led humanitarian programs in Ethiopia and Sudan focused on WASH, camp management, and drought response. He also spearheaded CARE International's tsunami response program in Southern India.

Under his leadership, IOM India launched landmark initiatives such as the FAO–IOM joint programme—supported by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund—to strengthen the resilience of migrant and vulnerable households in Odisha and Telangana, recognizing the deep intersections between migration, agriculture, and climate change.

Mr. Sanjay has also overseen transformative programs like PRAYAS (“Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals”), designed to streamline safe and legal migration pathways for Indian students and workers. This initiative builds bridges between central and state-level governance systems and raises awareness about legal migration routes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr.Sanjay co-led the study “Leaving No One Behind”, which highlighted migrant vulnerabilities and prioritized their access to healthcare and vaccination—underscoring his commitment to inclusive policy planning.

He has actively promoted skills-based migration governance by organizing pilot training programs with stakeholders—including NSDC, academic leaders, and recruitment agencies—aimed at preparing India’s workforce for global job markets.

Mr.Sanjay Awasthi has also championed migrant-centered multimedia tools such as MIGApp for pre-departure and post-arrival support, and conducted media roundtables on safe migration communication strategies to reinforce transparency and public awareness.

## **Saurabh Garg**

***Co-founder & Chief Business Officer, [NoBroker.com](https://www.nobroker.com)***

Saurabh Garg is the Co-founder and Chief Business Officer of NoBroker.com, one of India’s largest and most successful proptech platforms revolutionising the way people buy, sell, and rent real estate. With a bold vision to eliminate brokerage fees and make property transactions seamless and cost-effective, Saurabh has been instrumental in building NoBroker into a trusted, technology-driven marketplace serving over 25 million customers across India. As the business architect behind NoBroker’s rapid growth, Saurabh has led the development of the platform’s customer acquisition strategies, monetisation models, and market expansion efforts, helping the company secure its position as a unicorn in the Indian startup ecosystem. His work has consistently focused on using technology, data, and user-centric design to simplify real estate transactions and deliver exceptional customer value.

A graduate of IIT Bombay and IIM Ahmedabad, Saurabh brings a rare combination of engineering precision and strategic business thinking. Before founding NoBroker, he worked with multinational organisations such as Hindustan Unilever and Cognizant, gaining valuable experience in operations, business consulting, and product development. He is a regular speaker at technology, entrepreneurship, and real estate innovation forums, where he shares his perspectives on how startups can leverage technology to solve everyday problems and create real impact. Saurabh’s entrepreneurial journey with NoBroker has reshaped India’s real estate

landscape by challenging traditional brokerage models and empowering consumers with transparent, self-service solutions.

## **Shivaam Sharma**

***Founder & CEO, Trans Neuron Technologies Pvt. Ltd.***

Shivaam Sharma is an accomplished technologist and social entrepreneur, serving as the Founder and CEO of Trans Neuron Technologies, a company dedicated to empowering autism and special-needs communities through innovative digital tools and AI-driven interventions. Under his leadership, Trans Neuron has launched transformative products—such as personalised learning apps and assistive communication platforms—that support educators, therapists, and families in delivering effective, customised care to individuals with developmental challenges. With a strong foundation in software engineering and inclusive design, Shivaam led Trans Neuron from a grassroots initiative into a growing social enterprise. He oversees the company’s strategic direction, product roadmap, and partnerships with NGOs, schools, rehabilitation centres, and healthcare providers.

Beyond product development, Shivaam is known for his commitment to scale, research, and capacity building. He has forged collaborations with academic institutions and experts in special education to validate his company’s tools, integrate outcome measurement strategies, and introduce frameworks that enhance the effectiveness of digital interventions. His leadership has helped Trans Neuron pioneer accessible teletherapy and blended-learning models tailored for special-needs learners across India. An advocate for technology-driven social impact, Shivaam is actively engaged in forums focused on assistive tech, inclusive education, and healthcare innovation. He regularly contributes insights on how AI and digital tools can address critical gaps in counselling, therapy, and inclusive schooling.

## **Shri. Major Shashank Tripathi**

**Protector of Emigrants, Trivandrum, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India**

Shri. Major Shashank Tripathi is an accomplished professional with a rich and diverse background, spanning the corporate sector, the Indian Armed Forces, and government service. With over 17 years of experience, he brings a unique blend of expertise in supply chain management, human resources, finance, contract management, and migration governance.

He began his career with Genpact, where he worked for more than six years as Assistant Manager in Accounts Payable and Financial Management. During this period, he successfully executed a Green Belt Project titled 'Discount Capture', which resulted in significant cost savings for the organization. His corporate journey gave him deep exposure to vendor management, sourcing, audits, contract execution, customer relations, and risk management, and equipped him with strong foundations in enterprise platforms like SAP and Oracle.

In 2013, he joined the Indian Armed Forces (Army Ordnance Corps), where he served with distinction for over eleven years. In this capacity, he handled a wide spectrum of responsibilities in supply chain management, logistics, inventory management, contract and post-contract operations, and vendor relations. As a seasoned officer, he was entrusted with human resource development for nearly 15,000 troops and their families, overseeing aspects ranging from welfare management to housing and infrastructure development. His experience also extended to technical construction projects, where he managed works from inception to post-completion compliance. He has completed advanced training, including the Senior Ammunition Technical Officer Course, and holds a Master's degree in Munition Technology as well as an MBA in Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

In December 2024, he assumed the role of Protector of Emigrants, Trivandrum under the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. In this capacity, Major Tripathi is responsible for ensuring the welfare and safety of Indian nationals migrating abroad for employment. His role involves issuing emigration clearances, verifying employment contracts, registering foreign employers, conducting inspections and investigations to prevent exploitation, and extending guidance to migrant workers. He actively collaborates with foreign governments, employers, and recruitment agencies to promote safe, transparent, and legal migration pathways while safeguarding Indian workers' rights.

With his combined exposure to the corporate sector, the armed forces, and the government, Major Tripathi is widely regarded as a versatile leader with strong expertise in governance, supply chain efficiency, workforce welfare, and international migration management. His contributions highlight a rare balance of operational excellence, strategic foresight, and people-centric leadership.

**Shri Surinder Bhagat IFS**

## **Joint Secretary & Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India**

Shri Surinder Bhagat is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 2007 batch, currently serving as the Joint Secretary in the Overseas Employment & Protectorate General of Emigrants (OE & PGE) division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India. In this capacity, he also holds the position of Protector General of Emigrants, overseeing the welfare and regulation of Indian emigrants working abroad.

In his role, Shri Bhagat is instrumental in formulating policies and implementing programs aimed at ensuring safe, ethical, and transparent overseas employment opportunities for Indian citizens. He actively engages with various stakeholders, including state governments, recruitment agencies, and international organizations, to address challenges related to migrant labor and to promote the welfare of Indian workers abroad.

Shri Bhagat's contributions extend to international forums and policy discussions, where he represents India's interests in global labor mobility and migration governance. His leadership in the OE & PGE division reflects the government's commitment to safeguarding the rights and interests of Indian emigrants worldwide.

## **Siddharth Verma**

### **Founder & Executive Director, BrainSTEM Limited**

Siddharth Verma is the Founder and Executive Director of **BrainSTEM Limited**, an education and innovation enterprise based in Victoria, Australia. Since its inception in 2016, BrainSTEM has worked to reimagine STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education by connecting students with mentors from academia, research institutions, and industry. Through a structured mentorship model, the organization provides high school students with opportunities to work on real-world research projects, fostering problem-solving skills, innovation, and scientific thinking at an early age.

With a career spanning education, entrepreneurship, and technology, Siddharth has positioned BrainSTEM as a platform that empowers young learners to think critically and creatively. The initiative has successfully brought together students from across the globe with world-class mentors, creating an ecosystem where learning extends beyond classrooms into applied science

and innovation. His vision is to democratize access to high-quality STEM education and inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators.

In addition to his work with BrainSTEM, Siddharth serves as an Ambassador at ScienceWorks Museum in Melbourne, one of Australia's leading science centers, where he advocates for hands-on, experiential science learning. He is also the Co-Founder of Peak15 HealthTech, a venture focused on developing technology-driven solutions in healthcare, showcasing his ability to bridge the gap between science, technology, and societal needs.

Siddharth's professional journey reflects a deep commitment to education and innovation. His efforts have contributed to building collaborative models where students, researchers, and industry leaders come together to address real-world challenges. By combining entrepreneurship with a passion for science outreach, he continues to influence how STEM education is perceived and delivered globally.

Through BrainSTEM and his other initiatives, Siddharth Verma exemplifies how visionary leadership can inspire curiosity, create opportunities, and prepare young minds for a future shaped by science and technology.

## **Somya Bajaj**

***Economist, World Bank and CPDC***

Somya Bajaj is an accomplished Economist with the World Bank Group and the Centre for Policy Design and Competitiveness (CPDC), specialising in human capital development, skills policy, and labour market economics. Her work focuses on advancing education-to-employment pathways, improving workforce readiness, and driving policy reforms that align education systems with dynamic labour market needs. At the World Bank, Somya contributes to the design and execution of projects aimed at enhancing employability, reducing skills mismatches, and strengthening vocational and technical education systems in developing countries.

Through her role at CPDC, Somya works at the intersection of policy research, program design, and capacity building, focusing on creating scalable solutions to address the challenges of unemployment, skills gaps, and gender disparities in the labour market. She has collaborated on cross-sectoral initiatives that integrate digital skills, green jobs, and future-of-work considerations into national and regional development plans. Somya's analytical expertise is complemented by her contributions to impact evaluations, labour market diagnostics, and

evidence-based policy reports that inform decision-making in the public sector. She is also deeply engaged in promoting inclusive economic policies that expand opportunities for women, disadvantaged youth, and marginalised communities.

## **Sonia Prashar**

### ***Secretary General, Federation of European Business in India (FEBI)***

Sonia Prashar is a distinguished leader in international trade and policy, currently serving as Secretary General of the Federation of European Business in India (FEBI). In this role, she promotes sustainable and mutually beneficial trade relations between Europe and India, working with business leaders, governments, and development partners to facilitate strategic investments and economic partnerships. With extensive experience in trade diplomacy, public policy, and institutional strengthening, Sonia leads FEBI's efforts to shape a predictable and competitive investment environment. She coordinates high-level dialogues, industry roundtables, and advocacy campaigns on issues such as regulatory reform, market access, green economy frameworks, and corporate ESG standards.

Before taking up her leadership position at FEBI, Sonia contributed to trade and investment initiatives across multiple European delegations and economic missions, where she worked with agencies, corporate networks, and policy experts on enhancing cooperation in sectors like manufacturing, renewable energy, digital services, and skills development. A seasoned advocate for public-private collaboration, Sonia has been instrumental in building stakeholder coalitions that support business innovation, vocational training partnerships, and sustainable growth ecosystems—helping to strengthen both Indian and European value chains.

## **Sonia Swaroop Choksi**

### ***Founder & CEO, Match My Talent***

Ms. Sonia Swaroop Choksi is the Founder & CEO of Match My Talent, India's first technology-enabled search platform designed specifically for performing artists, producers, event managers, and media professionals. Built to democratize access to opportunities in the arts and entertainment sector, the platform spans over 35 Indian states. It reaches 66 countries across nine performance genres, while actively serving both novice and established artists. Sonia draws on her rich background as a documentary filmmaker and researcher in non-fiction cinema, with



more than 17 years of experience. She co-created Match My Talent, a digital ecosystem tailored for discovery, growth, and privacy for performing artists.

The platform emphasises personalised artist growth: offering profile setup guidance, rigorous verification, 100% digitisation, holistic search tools, and community networking, allowing artists to connect with stakeholders across entertainment without reliance on intermediaries. This two-way search engine approach uniquely enables producers and casting agents to discover the exact artist they need through data-driven matching. Sonia's work has also embraced innovation in inclusive cultural engagement. She spearheaded The Maitri Project, a virtual cultural platform showcasing diverse performers via online festivals. She expanded into initiatives like the Malhaar Virtual Video Festival, drawing global submissions to narrate lockdown-era stories

## **Sougata Roy Choudhury – Executive Director, CII**

Sougata Roy Choudhury is the Executive Director at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Gurugram, a position he has held since January 2019. In this role, he drives initiatives to enhance industry competitiveness, fosters public-private partnerships, and promotes sustainable growth strategies across multiple sectors in India. He plays a pivotal role in bridging industry and government, facilitating policy advocacy, and creating platforms for knowledge sharing and innovation.

With over 15 years of professional experience, Sougata brings a wealth of expertise in business development, strategy, and international market facilitation. Prior to his current role, he served as Director at CII and as a Senior Business Adviser at Larive International, where he guided European companies in entering the Indian market. His work involved comprehensive research on market opportunities, strategy formulation, partner and acquisition searches, and supporting the operational commencement of businesses in India.

Sougata is known for his ability to develop and implement high-impact projects that foster collaboration between domestic and international enterprises. He is actively involved in advising companies on market entry strategies, business expansion, and partnerships that align with India's industrial and economic priorities. His educational foundation from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, complements his extensive professional experience, making him a sought-after leader in industry engagement and strategic business development.

## **Srinath Ravichandran**

### *Founder, AgniKul Cosmos*

Srinath Ravichandran is an innovative entrepreneur and aerospace engineer, best known as the Founder of AgniKul Cosmos, a pioneering Indian space-tech startup focused on developing small satellite launch vehicles with cutting-edge technology. His vision is to revolutionise space access by making it more affordable, reliable, and customizable, thereby contributing to the democratisation of space. Srinath's career began with a strong foundation in aerospace engineering and research. He has been instrumental in building AgniKul Cosmos from the ground up, leading efforts in design, development, and testing of the company's unique rocket engines and launch systems.

Under Srinath's guidance, AgniKul Cosmos became the first Indian startup to receive permission from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch a private rocket, marking a significant milestone in India's space industry. He is a visionary in leveraging technology innovation, advanced manufacturing techniques, and entrepreneurial agility to transform space launch services. Srinath is widely recognised for his technical expertise, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to fostering a vibrant space ecosystem in India. He regularly speaks at national and international forums on space technology, startups, and innovation.

### **Subbaraman Balasubramanyan**

#### *Senior Vice President, HCL Technologies Ltd*

Subbaraman Balasubramanyan is a seasoned technology leader and business strategist, currently serving as Senior Vice President at HCL Technologies Ltd, one of India's leading global IT services companies. With over three decades of experience in the technology and IT-enabled services industry, he has played a pivotal role in delivering large-scale digital transformation programs for clients across multiple geographies and sectors. At HCL Technologies, Subbaraman drives strategic growth initiatives, client engagement, and service innovation, with a focus on creating scalable, future-ready solutions in areas such as cloud computing, digital engineering, enterprise transformation, and emerging technologies. His leadership has been instrumental in building long-term partnerships with Fortune 500 companies and expanding HCL's global delivery capabilities.

Subbaraman is known for his strong expertise in managing complex global operations, leading high-performance teams, and architecting digital solutions that align with business priorities. His

approach combines deep technology knowledge with customer-centric thinking, enabling organisations to achieve efficiency, agility, and competitive advantage in rapidly evolving markets. Throughout his career, he has successfully worked across diverse domains including banking and financial services, manufacturing, life sciences, and telecom, consistently delivering transformational outcomes that integrate technology with core business objectives. A respected leader within HCL, Subbaraman has also been actively involved in mentoring emerging leaders and fostering talent development, contributing to HCL's people-first culture. He is an advocate for continuous learning, cross-functional collaboration, and leveraging technology to solve real-world problems.

### **Subroto Bagchi**

*Co-founder, Mindtree & Chairman, Odisha Skill Development Authority*

Subroto Bagchi is an entrepreneurial luminary and author, best known as a co-founder of Mindtree in 1999, where he began as Chief Operating Officer before becoming Vice-Chairman, Chairman, and later serving as a key figure through the company's IPO and growth into a billion-dollar global IT services firm. He took on the role of Chairman of the Odisha Skill Development Authority with the rank of a Cabinet Minister—symbolically accepting just ₹1 per annum—demonstrating a commitment to public service over personal gain. Bagchi and his wife pledged ₹340 crores toward a world-class cancer hospital and palliative care unit in Bhubaneswar. In 2024, he further donated ₹55 crores to establish the Bagchi School of Public Health at Ahmedabad University.

As an accomplished writer, Bagchi authored several best-sellers like *The High-Performance Entrepreneur*, *Go Kiss the World*, and *The Professional*. His work, praised for its inspiration and wisdom, has led to him recognition as India's top-selling business author. Additionally, he currently serves as Chief Advisor, Institutional Capacity Building, to the Government of Odisha, driving transformative change across civil service training institutions with a vision for the state's centenary year of 2036.

### **Sudhakar Gudipati**

*Vice President – CSR at Bajaj Auto Ltd*

Sudhakar Gudipati is the Vice President of CSR at Bajaj Auto. He leads the company's flagship skill development initiative BEST (Bajaj Engineering Skills Training), a transformative program

designed to bridge the gap between engineering education and industry needs. Delivered in partnership with top-tier institutions like Banasthali Vidyapith, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), Symbiosis, and BIT Wardha, the BEST program provides hands-on, industry-aligned training to economically disadvantaged graduate and diploma engineers. Sudhakar is also at the forefront of the 'Bajaj Beyond' initiative, a ₹5,000 crore commitment by the Bajaj Group to skill two crores Indians over the next five years. This program seeks to build sustainable livelihoods through high-impact skilling, technology-enabled learning ecosystems, and scalable partnerships across the education and employment value chain.

Renowned for his strategic approach, Sudhakar specialises in forging strong university-industry partnerships, operationalising advanced skilling labs, and designing impact-driven CSR frameworks. His work has enabled the creation of infrastructure and ecosystems that not only enhance technical competencies but also foster personal growth and social empowerment, particularly among youth from underserved backgrounds. His leadership reflects a deep belief in the transformative power of education, skills, and community engagement. Through his vision and execution, Bajaj Auto's CSR efforts have become a model for how the private sector can drive systemic change, empower individuals, and contribute meaningfully to India's development goals.

## **Sumit Bhatia**

### **Chief People Strategist, Author & People Leader – Marsh McLennan**

Mr. Sumit Bhatia is an accomplished people strategist and leadership expert with over two decades of experience spanning human resources, organizational transformation, and business strategy. He currently serves as **People Leader, Global Service Delivery at Mercer, Marsh McLennan**, where he oversees strategic HR initiatives for a workforce of more than 4,300 employees across 10 countries. In this role, he advises executive leadership on talent management, succession planning, and organizational design, while driving digital HR transformation through AI-powered solutions and workforce analytics. His vision of a skill-first workforce continues to shape the company's readiness for the future of work.

Before joining Marsh McLennan, Mr. Bhatia held pivotal leadership positions at **SE2 India**, where he served as Head of Human Resources and later as Designated Partner. He was part of

the core team that set up the organization from scratch, overseeing infrastructure, onboarding, and rebadging of over 500 employees, while aligning HR strategy with global business goals. His leadership was central to building SE2 into a best-in-class workplace, where he also spearheaded global HR business partner teams, workplace management, and communications.

Earlier, he spent nearly 14 years with **Accenture and Avanade**, where he honed his expertise in global learning, leadership development, and technology-driven HR innovation. He managed multi-million-dollar learning budgets, created global HR shared services models, and delivered complex ERP and RPA projects that transformed business outcomes. His work at Avanade was recognized internationally when the company secured a place in *Training Top 125*, underscoring his impact in learning and development.

Mr. Bhatia began his career as a software engineer with Birlasoft and later worked with the Royal Bank of Scotland as a certified system analyst. His early career laid the foundation for his unique blend of technical expertise and people-centric leadership. Over the years, he has earned multiple certifications in HR, mentoring, and AI for HR, and contributes actively to professional communities such as **APMP India** and the **Cherie Blair Foundation for Women** as a mentor.

A thought leader and author, Mr. Bhatia is widely recognized for his insights on leadership, workplace transformation, and employee engagement. His career reflects a deep commitment to building inclusive, future-ready organizations that balance business growth with employee well-being.

## **Sunil Dahiya**

### ***Executive Vice President – Skilling, Wadhwani Foundation***

Sunil Dahiya leads the Wadhwani Foundation's skilling initiatives across India and Southeast Asia, with a distinguished career spanning over 25 years in global skill development and vocational training. He holds an honours degree in Economics from Delhi University, and played a pivotal role at NIIT, where he co-founded the digital-skilling venture StackRoute and spearheaded their B2C digital transformation program. Under his leadership at Wadhwani, Sunil has overseen the upskilling of more than 6 million learners worldwide, including over 5 million in India. He champions AI-driven tools such as MyTutor, MyMentor, and MyInterviewCoach, which deliver real-time learning feedback and personalised career guidance—prioritising accessibility for underserved communities through scalable digital platforms.

Sunil advocates for integrating AI and mixed-reality training (VR/MR) solutions into the skills ecosystem, pushing for remote-friendly and adaptive learning methods that address both urban and rural learners. He emphasises that employing AI aligns training modules with employer demands—melding technology and pedagogy to bridge fundamental skill gaps and improve employability outcomes. His foresight extends to the broader future-of-work paradigm, reflecting on trends such as the “great resignation,” gig economy, and hybrid careers. Sunil empowers learners to pursue passion-driven employment and financial independence, while guiding them to build core competencies like critical thinking, adaptability, and digital fluency.

## **Sushmit Chakraborty**

### **Manager, South Asia, Industry Engagement, Deakin University**

Mr. Sushmit Chakraborty is a seasoned business development and regional engagement professional with over 15 years of experience driving growth and strategic initiatives across multiple sectors, including healthcare, construction, and EdTech. Currently, he serves as Manager – South Asia, Industry Engagement at Deakin University, where he focuses on building partnerships, fostering corporate relations, and supporting regional development across India and neighboring markets.

Prior to joining Deakin, Mr. Chakraborty held key leadership roles in prominent organizations. At Medlife.com, he served as State Business Manager for Corporate Relations and Manager – Business Development, leading corporate partnerships, channel management, and strategic growth initiatives across India. His international experience includes serving as Senior Executive – Business Development at BK Gulf LLC in Dubai, where he oversaw business expansion for a leading MEP contractor in the UAE, and as Energy Consultant at Ecojoules Ltd in the United Kingdom, where he focused on energy and environmental solutions.

Mr. Chakraborty holds a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Energy and Environmental Engineering from The University of Sheffield, UK, and a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) in Biotechnology from Amity University, India. Recognized for his expertise in strategy, brand building, and stakeholder engagement, he is adept at delivering scalable solutions and fostering long-term partnerships in dynamic, cross-cultural environments.

With a proven track record in business development, corporate relations, and regional growth strategy, Mr. Chakraborty continues to drive impactful initiatives that connect industry, academia, and communities across South Asia and beyond.

## **Tanesh Arora**

### **Vice President – Candidate Services, foundit (formerly Monster APAC & ME)**

Tanesh Arora serves as the Vice President of Candidate Services at **foundit**, a prominent jobs and talent platform under the Ques Group, operating across the APAC and Middle East regions. Appointed to this leadership role in late 2024, he is responsible for refining the end-to-end candidate experience, elevating operational excellence, and enhancing the platform's service capabilities for job seekers.

With over two decades of experience across sales, marketing, and strategic partnerships, Tanesh brings a strong track record in scaling consumer-centric businesses. Before assuming his current position, he served as General Manager at foundit, where he successfully expanded the platform's consumer business. His earlier leadership roles span across notable organizations such as ISDC Global, Airtel, Tata Teleservices, and Evalueserve, where he consistently delivered on growth and service innovation across both B2C and B2B segments.

Tanesh's career also includes roles in distribution and channel management within the telecommunications sector—he held positions such as National Distribution Head at Airtel under Maxis and Deputy General Manager for Data and Devices at Globacom. These roles underpin his deep expertise in managing complex distribution networks and driving product reach.

Holding a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing from M.D. University (graduated in 2000), Tanesh combines strong academic grounding with hands-on leadership in talent solutions and market strategy .

In his current role, Tanesh Arora continues to shape the candidate experience ecosystem at foundit, blending strategic insight with extensive industry knowledge to strengthen the platform's impact and accessibility for job seekers across diverse markets.

## **Vinay Swarup Mehrotra**

***Professor, Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), NCERT***

Vinay Swarup Mehrotra is an academic and expert in vocational education and skill development. Currently serving as a Professor at the Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), under the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), he plays a pivotal role in shaping India's vocational education policies and training programs. With over two decades of experience in education and skill development, Professor Mehrotra has contributed extensively to curriculum design, teacher training, and research aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of vocational education across India.

At PSSCIVE, Professor Mehrotra oversees innovative initiatives that aim to align vocational education with industry demands, ensuring employability and entrepreneurship among youth. He actively collaborates with government bodies, educational institutions, and industry partners to promote skill development at national and regional levels. Professor Mehrotra holds advanced degrees in education and vocational training, with a focus on pedagogy and skill empowerment. He has authored and contributed to multiple research papers, policy documents, and training manuals that have influenced vocational education frameworks.