



EdelGive Foundation announces the launch of 'The Influencers'

A platform of individuals that will influence and utilise their collective strengths for 'women empowerment' efforts in India

It was an eclectic group of [Influencers](#), [social development organisations](#) and leaders from the business fraternity at the launch of - 'The Influencers'. The platform brings together a group of influential people across different sectors, who care deeply about the issues of women and girls and want to exercise their influence to bring positive change in the ecosystem of women's rights in India. This has been curated by EdelGive Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Edelweiss group of companies which has strived to connect the corporate sector to development work being done at India's grassroots.

This group of like-minded individuals who have voluntarily come together include EdelGive CEO Vidya Shah; actor-director Nandita Das, one of India's renowned corporate lawyers Zia Mody, philanthropists Archana and Amit Chandra, cine-storytellers turned social change actors Svati and Satyajit Bhatkal, ADG, Women Power Line, UP Anju Gupta, Executive Vice-President, CDPQ India Anita George, Non-Executive Director, Allcargo Logistics Arathi Shetty, Managing Director of MegaDelta Capital Advisors, Bala Despande, Research Director, IDFC Institute, Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, Founder and CEO, Scroll Inc. Samir Patil, Founder and CEO, Savannah Wisdom, Shalni Arora, Managing Director, Borosil Glassworks Ltd. Shreevar Kheruka, Directors, Lucky Securities Sushmita and Ashish Kacholia and Director, Prasad Agents Vrinda Rajgarhia.

The various sessions hosted during the day showcased theories of change in social impact, brought alive by stellar practices that ranged from effective communication, coalescing individuals and intelligence, brilliant execution and a sense of faith in doing what it takes (however difficult or unconventional) to drive a change in status quo.

Sohini Bhattacharya of [Breakthrough India](#) spoke of the capabilities of everyone to influence change in their own respective capacities. She described how the organisation is enabling the growth of influential female changemakers within communities to change the narratives of violence against women and girls.

Ashif Shaikh of the NGO [Jan Sahas](#) that has launched a nationwide [Dignity March](#) to end sexual violence against women and children, emphasized on viewing survivors of sexual violence as leaders who are rallying together to ensure no other girl is exposed to the ordeal they underwent. “Not one of the 25000 voices who joined the March, spoke about their rights or their deprivation. Each one joined the March for a cause greater than their individual stories, to raise a collective voice against all forms of sexual exploitation of women and girls and holding Government and communities accountable to ensuring this,” he shared.

Satyajit Bhatkal, the CEO of [Paani Foundation](#) and best known for his tele-series *Satyamev Jayate*, spoke on the power of communication followed by action to shape mindsets while describing his journey in enabling a shift in mindsets through the, followed by Paani Foundation. “The villagers we work with to root out water woes through community-led models of water conservation are the real Influencers. They understand that the problems are theirs and therefore the solutions have to be driven by them as well,” he shared.

In *Different Strokes*, Sujata Khandekar of the NGO [CORO India](#), Nandita Das, Sushmita Kacholia and Amit Chandra, through a panel discussion discussed their personal journeys in influencing behavioural change through the circles of influence they steer and navigate. The panel highlighted how an individual’s gender justice and empowerment lens is usually shaped by his or her privileges. The impact exerted by patriarchy on both women in addition to men, the role of toxic masculinity in the importance of acknowledging that different women are different milestones in their empowerment journeys and the value of small mindset changes by showcasing a sensitivity towards demonstrating positive gender roles within one’s families.

The launch concluded with Vidya Shah, CEO, EdelGive Foundation, exhorting the Influencers to absorb, learn, participate, engage and influence; while the role of EdelGive will be to inform, amplify and galvanise action.

“The space of women empowerment is large, there are many approaches to solving this issue. We all have a circle of influence. Some small – restricted to our families and communities, some large – involving our organisations, our professions; and some huge – national or international. Whether large or small, its power cannot be underestimated. It behooves us therefore to be more thoughtful in word and deed, and hold ourselves to account when we act, support and perpetuate behaviours that prevent boys and girls, women and men from living as part of an egalitarian society,” she emphasized.