



Ministry of Electronics &amp; IT



## 6 women led startups win COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge organized by MyGov in Collaboration with UN Women

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**in**Six women led startups have won COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge organized by MyGov in collaboration with UN Women. With an objective to encourage and involve women led startups to come up with innovative solutions that can help in the fight against COVID19 or solve problems that impact a large number of women, MyGov in collaboration with UN Women, launched the COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge in April 2020.

This was a unique challenge hosted on the Innovate platform of MyGov that called for applications from women led startups as well as startups who have solutions that address issues faced by a larger number of women.

The Challenge was implemented in two stages: Ideation stage and Proof of Concept (PoC) Stage.

The challenge received an overwhelming response with a total of 1265 entries, from across the nation.

After thorough screening, 25 startups were shortlisted for presentations to the Jury which included Debjani Ghosh, President NASSCOM, Rohini Srivathsa, National Technology Officer (CTO) Microsoft India, Dr R Ramanan, MD Atal Innovation Mission, Nishtha Satyam, Dy Country representative, UN Women India and Abhishek Singh, CEO MyGov.

All 25 selected startups presented their solutions to the Jury which evaluated the solutions proposed by the startups on the parameters that included innovation, usability, relevance and impact of their idea on the society and after thorough review 11 finalists were chosen for the next stage. All the 11 selected startups were provided a prize money of INR 75000 each to further develop their ideas.

Mentorship sessions were organized to enable graduation of the ideas into Proof of Concepts that can be scaled up. These sessions were topics that included Business Modelling, Financial Modelling, Legal Certifications, Digital Marketing, Product Design, Art of making Pitch and were conducted with the support of NASSCOM, Industry Experts, and the Atal Incubation Centre at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.

After giving time to the 11 Startups to develop the solutions, the final presentations were again made to the Jury on 27th Oct 2020. The quality of the solutions presented was excellent and the Jury had a tough time evaluating them. After intense discussions and deliberations, the Jury selected top 3 entries as winners, and in view of the high quality of solutions presented decided to recognize 3 additional entries as 'Promising Solutions'. In addition to the earlier announced reward of Rs 5 lakhs for the top 3 winners, UN Women was generous enough to agree to reward Rs 2 lakhs each to the 3 startups chosen for their promising solutions.

Top 3 winners are as follows:



1. Dr P Gayatri Hela is the founder of Bengaluru-based Resada Lifesciences Private Limited that designs and develops home and agricultural-based products using plant extracts instead of synthetic chemicals. As per Gayatri, germs and other bacteria/viruses become resistant to chemicals over time, whereas nature always has a way of fighting back against these organisms. For Shri Shakti Challenge, Gayatri submitted her innovative product which is a non-alcoholic hand sanitizer that is relevant not only for COVID-19 but also for other infections. The idea had come to her in 2017, when she was battling the SARS pandemic with her one-year old daughter.
2. Romita Ghosh, a cancer survivor, is the founder of Shimla-based iHeal HealthTech Private Limited which is a healthcare start-up that has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID and has been providing PPE kits to hospitals. Romita has also built a Made in India UV sterilization box for safe reuse of PPEs and masks that can help reduce costs for hospitals and other service providers.
3. Dr Anjana Ramkumar and Dr Anushka Ashokan are the product manager and co-founder of Kerala based Thanmatra Innovations Private Limited have come up with the innovative solution of an anti-microbial solution that could be sprayed into handkerchiefs or dupattas for making them safe to be used as Face Masks. This also made it easier to protect kids. Their innovation is simple and scalable and can help convert any piece of cloth to anti-viral mask within minutes by a simple process of spraying and drying with their unique formulation.


Top 3 Startups identified as 'Promising Solutions' are:

1. Vasanthi Palanivel, is the CEO & Co-Founder of Bengaluru-based Seragen BioTherapeutics Private Limited. As a scientist and researcher, she studied the symptoms and impacts of the virus and realized that the lungs were one of the worst infected organs in COVID and she has developed a plasma solution to treat respiratory distress due to COVID-19.
2. Shivi Kapil is the cofounder of Bengaluru-based Empathy Design Lab that focuses on healthcare, and took the pandemic as an opportunity to design solutions for pregnant women who could not go to the hospital due to risk of infection. She has designed Kriya, a wearable device for daily monitoring of pregnancy. The IoT-embedded product provides alerts and suggestions to expecting parents for timely action.
3. Jaya Parashar and Ankita Parashar – a mother daughter duo are the founder and co-founder of STREAM Minds, an ed-tech company that works on promoting Science, Technology, Reading/Writing, Arts, and Mathematics education among school children across India. They have designed 'Dobot', a fully automated robot which acts as an in-house delivery assistant to make hospitals and healthcare clinics safe from the risks of COVID-19.

MyGov congratulated the winners of Shri Shakti Challenge and hope that the solutions developed by them mature into full-blown products, and can scale up into robust solutions that help in our fight against COVID-19; and of course also help address challenges facing women. All the winners and the participants of Shri Shakti Challenge are true testimony to the talent pool that exists in India and this challenge will go a long way in promoting women entrepreneurship in India.

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