



GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

CHANCELLOR'S INITIATIVES



AMRITA
VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM

DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY UNDER SECTION 3-OF UGC ACT-1956



“There is a man in the unconscious of a woman, and a woman in the unconscious of a man. This truth dawned in the meditation of the great saints and seers aeons ago. This is what the Ardhanārīśvara (God as half-male and half-female) concept in the Hindu faith signifies. When there are values, love is given the primary place. In such relationships, there is no separateness; there is only one. This is embodied in this Śiva-Śakti form Ardhanārīśvara. The principle of the ātmā (True Self) is the same in man and woman because the ātmā is non-dual. Thus, from a spiritual perspective, men and women are equal. They are two aspects of the one Self. Whether you are a woman or a man, your real humanity will come to light only when the feminine and masculine qualities within you are balanced.”

SRI MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI

Chancellor, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and
Founder, Mata Amritanandamayi Math



THE WORK BEGINS WITH AN **UNDERSTANDING** THAT WOMEN AND MEN ARE OF **EQUAL VALUE.**

Grounded in a vision of compassion and love for all, Amrita University's Chancellor, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, known as Amma, has spearheaded numerous initiatives for women's empowerment and gender equality. These efforts are carried out through the Mata Amritanandamayi Math and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham. Amma envisions that "like the two wings of a bird, women and men are of equal value. Without the two in perfect balance, humanity cannot progress."



OVERVIEW OF OUR CHANCELLOR'S INITIATIVES

In the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Mata Amritanandamayi Math, Amma's NGO, started a Self-Help Group program called AmritaSREE to help impoverished women whose family income from fishing had been disrupted by the disaster. Amma's conviction was that helping these women learn and practice trade skills would provide much-needed financial security for their families. Nearly 20 years later, Amma's NGO has helped more than 250,000+ such economically vulnerable women throughout India with vocational training, start-up capital, and marketing assistance, as well as access to microcredit loans from government-regulated banks and affordable insurance plans. The women use these assets to form Self-Help Groups (SHGs), share micro-savings accounts, and start their own home-based businesses.

13,500+ SHGs FORMED
250,000+ WOMEN PARTICIPANTS
\$14.2 MILLION IN SUPPORT FOR 2021 AND 2022
\$1,200 EACH TO WIDOWS OF FISHERMEN



AmritaSREE Annual Event, Alappuzha, Kerala, India



TRAINING WOMEN IN VOCATIONAL SKILLS, LIFE SKILLS, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Through the AmritaSREE program initiated after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, we realized how crucial skill training is for women's socio-economic empowerment, self-reliance and diversification of livelihoods. One of Amrita University's research centers, AMMACHI Labs, began designing skill training for women that incorporated technology, life skills and entrepreneurship. Notably, this was done in part through two projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). During COVID, Amma continued supporting the AmritaSREE program. In order to build resilience among the most affected communities, large-scale multiskilling programs were initiated throughout India—many in partnership with the Government of India and the World Bank—for 5,800+ women and transgender communities. The training program was also redesigned to strengthen the core of SHGs and help them improve their microfinancing activities and launch entrepreneurial initiatives according to local needs and the vocational skills they chose to learn.



Anjana Nautiyal



Jyotirmayee Sahoo



Piya Kapoor

Anjana Nautiyal faced many challenges before joining our training programs. With little support from her husband, she struggled to keep her family safe and healthy. Desperate to care for her children, she found no help from government programs. Determined to change her situation, Anjana joined a computer training program. In 2013, she was hired by AMMACHI Labs and trained as a facilitator for the Women's Empowerment project, boosting her confidence and leadership in her village. After a legal awareness workshop, she became a Paralegal Volunteer (PLV), receiving training in October 2017 at the DLSA court. Anjana began conducting legal awareness programs with the local judge and visiting government offices, inspiring more women to seek assistance. She now supports applicants for government pensions and helps women facing domestic violence and harassment. The women in her village trust Anjana and confide in her, finding a safe space to share their problems for the first time.

Jyotirmayee Sahoo, 46, from Brahmaniapal village in Odisha, is a model of resilience. She inspired her community by excelling in mushroom training and securing a Rs. 6 lakh loan with a subsidy from the Horticulture Department to set up a mushroom production unit. This now earns her Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 monthly. Her achievements were recognized by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, leading to an invitation to the Republic Day event in New Delhi. There, she met Honorable Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and shared her inspiring journey. Jyotirmayee remains active with our organization, motivating women to pursue training and entrepreneurship. Her family, now entirely involved in mushroom cultivation, finds this venture more rewarding than previous occupations. Her unit, with high-rise platforms, electronic cutters, and proper sheds, exemplifies her hard work. As an Anganwadi worker, Jyotirmayee's story highlights how determination drives change.

Piya Kapoor's journey as a trans woman is marked by determination and strength. Despite facing severe challenges, including repeated abuse and discrimination, she completed her education through Delhi University's open learning program. Piya always dreamed of being a fashion designer. She joined the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in 2006 but had to leave due to discrimination. She later took a corporate job but faced many issues. In 2011, she joined a community-based organization focused on HIV/AIDS programs, dedicating 13 years of service. Her turning point came with Amrita Vidya Peetham's Sankalp program, where she completed a tailoring course. This reignited her passion for fashion design and gave her the confidence to open her own fashion center. Piya credits her success to the support from Amma.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

2021 and 2022 Women Transforming India Awards by Niti Aayog, the premier policy think-tank of the Government of India for the Saukhyam project

2020 Best Paper Award IEEE Region 10 Humanitarian Technology Conference 2020 (IEEE R10 HTC 2020)

2019 Member of PAC (Program Advisory Committee), Ernst Strungmann Forum

2019 IEOM Woman in Industry and Academia Award

2019 Women Empowerment Forum

2019 50 Education Innovative Leaders

2019 Bhoomika Award for her invaluable contribution to society

2019 First prize for IEEE RO-MAN's Social Impremiere robotics competition. The 28th IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication – RO-MAN 2019

2019 'Pepe Social Robot to promote Handwashin' featured in IEEE Spectrum (International Colab Project with Glasgow University)

2018 Member of Jan Shikshan Sansthans (JSS) Committee on revamping and restructuring of JSSs in MSDE

2018 Review Editor in Virtual Environments, part of the journal(s) Frontiers in ICT and Robotics and Artificial Intelligence

2018 Featured in IEEE Spectrum wrt Water carrying Robots in Rural Areas (International Colab Project with Glasgow University)

2018 Martha Farrell Foundation Finalist (AMMACHI Labs Finalist)

2017 AMMACHI Labs featured in the UNESCO-UNEVOC Promising Practices. The UNESCO-UNEVOC Promising Practices database presents inspiring initiatives tackling key-themes in TVET, such as Gender equality, Youth employment, Greening, ICT in TVET and more. Each promising practice has been compiled by UNESCO-UNEVOC

2017 Martha Farrell Foundation Finalist (AMMACHI Labs Finalist)

2017 Best Paper Award ICICICT 2017

2016 UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment first in India

2016 Best Poster Award, RAHA 2016

2016 Featured in NITI Aayog Newsletter (MOVE Project)

2015 Best Paper Award ICSD 2015

2015 Facebook Internet.org Innovations Award (MYSANGHAM Portal)

2015 WE Project featured in QS WOWNEWS Quarterly Newsletter 2015 (Women Empowerment- Sanitation and Rural Toilet building in Indian Rural Villages)

2014 Technical Lead for National Consortium on Vocational Education, MHRD, Govt. of India

2014 WE Project featured in UNDEF Newsletter 2014 (UNDEF Funded Empowerment of Women through Innovative Vocational Skill Training 2012-2014)

2014 WE Project featured in QS WOWNEWS Quarterly Newsletter 2014 (UNDEF Funded Empowerment of Women through Innovative Vocational Skill Training 2012-2014)

2013 Computer Society of India, IT Excellence Appreciation Award for its technology innovations aimed at women empowerment through the Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education (SAVE) project

2013 Power to Empower Award CII & National Skills Development Corporation Recipient of award for the best idea on Skill Development in Southern India. (Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education (SAVE) project)

2012 VET Expert consultative status with National Literacy Mission Authority, MHRD, Govt. of India (Ammachi labs)

2012 Elected as Secretary to the Southern region -National Knowledge Functional Hub Initiative of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, India

2012 Top 10 Young Social Innovators of India Action for India Forum Invited to speak at the Action India Forum 2012 held at IIT, Delhi

2011 Speaker at the TEDx Amrita 2011, offered a glimpse of the "Clean India Campaign", a worldwide movement spearheaded by the global charity 'Embracing the World'.

2010 E-India Award E-India, Govt. of India Recipient of award in the digital literacy category for the SAVE project being titled as most innovative project

Amrita's philosophy is unique. We believe the aim and objective of any truly comprehensive and sustainable project should not only be knowledge and skill acquisition, but also the betterment of society and human flourishing. To achieve this, we turn to the timeless principles of Sanatana Dharma: SATYAM, SHIVAM, SUNDARUM

SATYAM: To train in knowledge that is scientific and skills that are technical for livelihoods and gainful employment. Training includes vocational skills, digital literacy and finance, e-markets and communication, entrepreneurship and business skills.

SHIVAM: To build back a better life not just for the trainees, but for all. Taking ownership and leadership for positive change—to give back to society and bring auspiciousness everywhere.

SUNDARAM: To cultivate beauty, focusing on quality and aesthetics. The beneficiaries learn to unleash their creativity and bring joy to themselves and those around them.

Vocational courses include training for these positions and skills:

- Carpenter
- Plumber (general)
- Rural Toilet Builder
- Self-Employed Tailor
- General Duty Assistant
- Domestic Data Entry Operator
- Mushroom Grower
- Beauty Therapist
- Organic Grower
- Seaweed Cultivator
- Beekeeper
- Fabric Painting
- Artificial Jewelry Making
- Backyard Composting
- Soap Making
- 2-Wheeler Repair and Maintenance
- Hand Embroidery

TRAINING PROVIDED IN 23 STATES

316,200+ WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

13,314 WOMEN PROVIDED WITH COMPUTERIZED VOCATIONAL TRAINING

5,800 WOMEN AND TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS TRAINED SINCE COVID

10,971 COMMUNITY-ORGANIZED EVENTS



Beekeeping



Tailoring



Seaweed Cultivation

IMPROVING WOMEN’S HEALTH WITH ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND TOILETS

Despite significant advances, sanitation in India remains catastrophically poor, with an estimated 560 million people (half the population) living without access to a toilet. The resulting health and social problems, especially for women and girls, have far-reaching effects and is globally recognized as a priority issue.

One of Amrita’s Research Center AMMACHI Labs’ first pilots studies in 2011 was in training a small group of women to become India’s first assistant plumbers, who have since become full-time employed plumbers. Their great success, especially in the context of the sanitation problem, inspired a new women’s empowerment initiative called WE: Sanitation. In this project, women in rural communities are trained in basic masonry and plumbing so that they can build and maintain their own toilets, and then become leaders of sanitation development in their villages. The goal is to help the villages achieve “Open Defecation Free” status by the government. By training women to build their own toilets, a collaborative dynamic emerges that can engage entire communities in the movement towards total sanitation. The SHG members personally received their village certificate from the Honorable President of India, Sri Ram Nath Kovind during a nationally publicized event.

33,802 COMMUNITY SANITATION THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION (CSDP) AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

2,114 CSDP OPEN DEFECATION FREE PLEDGE

1,750 WOMEN IN SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT (WATER AMBASSADORS)

DEPLOYMENT ACROSS **18 STATES** OF INDIA AND IN TANZANIA



“

Kanti has long suffered with roads that are full of filthy water, pathogens, and other waste. This led to near-epidemic levels of illness, especially during the rainy seasons. Renu, the Community Organizer for this village, took matters into her own hands after completing the WE Project LEE course on sanitation. She led the women’s group and filed an application with their local government to finally build a proper road. She faced much resistance to this project because some villagers feared any road repairs would encroach on their homes. However, she did not give up, and after months of hard work, she was successful, and the government is now building clean, safe roads throughout the village. There has been a significant decrease in illness, and she is now seen as a local leader.”

RENU,
Community-Organizer, Kanti, Bihar, India

“

My experience in Bhoi Sahi, Odisha was absolutely incredible. Working with a different culture, maneuvering through local dialects and working with multiple people was a learning experience. Moreover, AMMACHI Labs enabled me to pursue my passion for health and development by pairing me with an initiative to teach rural women to build and maintain their own toilets in order to end open defecation. My experience in the field in India encouraged me to pursue my Master’s in Development Practice in my home country to further my knowledge of sustainable initiatives.”

VIDYA NAIR
Honours B.A in Arts,
University of Ottawa, Pursuing Master’s of Development Practice University of Waterloo

UNESCO MENSTRUAL HEALTH EVENT

In June 2022, UNESCO India and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham launched a campaign to create awareness among women, especially young and school-going girls, about menstrual health and hygiene management. The event, hosted at Amrita Hospital in Faridabad, marked the launch of a national survey and gap analysis report and five teaching-learning modules by UNESCO India. The initiatives address the challenges related to menstrual health and hygiene management in relation to gender, disability, teachers and educators, young adults, and nutrition. The national launch in Delhi was followed by state launches in Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.



TRANSFORMING AND IMPROVING MENSTRUAL HEALTH FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Without access to proper sanitary products, girls may miss school and fall behind in their studies. Women often get infections that adversely affect their overall health and ability to conceive. Understanding this, Amma started the Saukhyam Reusable Pads project in 2017 to provide women and girls with a much better product for menstrual hygiene.

This cross-cutting initiative improves menstrual hygiene, reduces plastic waste, and empowers village women by providing them with a viable business venture in pad production. Saukhyam Reusable Pads are made available at subsidized prices in rural areas, along with sessions that provide menstrual education and hygiene awareness.

The team has produced awareness videos in seven Indian languages—Hindi, English, Malayalam, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, and Dogri. Another key environmental aspect is that Saukhyam uses banana fiber as the absorbent material. Unlike the material used for disposable sanitary napkins, this cellulose fiber comes from agricultural waste, thus saving our living forests.

1M REUSABLE PADS PRODUCED

A HUB-AND-SPOKE BUSINESS MODEL TO ENABLE
PRODUCTION IN VILLAGES

MENSTRUAL AWARENESS VIDEOS IN **7 INDIAN LANGUAGES**

WOMEN TRANSFORMING INDIA AWARD, 2022,
FOR SAUKHYAM REUSABLE PADS BY NITI AYOJ,
THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S PREMIER POLICY THINK-TANK

AMRITA HOSPITAL

In 2020, Amrita Hospital inaugurated a Center for Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare (Paripoorna) at Amrita Hospital, Kochi. The Center offers the best state-of-the-art comprehensive healthcare package for women, and works as a ‘one-stop’ clinic for all our female patients, enabling them to have a multidisciplinary consultation.

In Faridabad, Delhi NCR, Amrita Hospital’s Center For Mother and Child Care is committed to providing quality health care to women across all age groups and from all walks of life. The center provides a range of routine as well as specialized services in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The multidisciplinary team approach involves integration with specialists in maternal and fetal medicine, reproductive medicine, genetics, and other specialties to ensure comprehensive yet personalized care to every woman as per her needs at an affordable cost. Our focus is to encourage women to strive for a better quality of life through awareness, education, and preventive care.

Specialized women’s health clinics are crucial for providing comprehensive and tailored healthcare, addressing the unique needs of women throughout their lives along with a more private and supportive environment, encouraging open communication between patients and experts.



CONNECTING WOMEN TO BENEFICIAL GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Another way we empower women from rural communities, especially from a socio-cultural and political standpoint, is by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to access government schemes that can significantly benefit both individuals and the community at large. Many women in these areas are unaware of such programs, or lack the skills or self-confidence to navigate bureaucratic processes.

Through our training, we empower these women with the soft skills needed to communicate effectively and confidently engage with government officials. As a result, they become advocates for their communities, adept at discussing their needs and accessing government schemes that can bring about positive change. This not only enhances the women’s own well-being but also fosters community-wide development through the utilization of available resources and support systems





WOMAN LEADERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Our initiatives focus on empowering women in rural communities by providing them with comprehensive training programs that nurture their leadership skills. Through targeted skill development, including soft skills or life enrichment education, these women emerge as community leaders equipped to address local challenges. The impact goes beyond individual empowerment, as these leaders play a pivotal role in fostering positive change within their communities. Our experience has consistently shown that women, when empowered with leadership skills, tend to make choices that prioritize the well-being of the entire community. Their decisions often reflect a holistic perspective, considering social, economic, and environmental factors. By fostering a more inclusive and sustainable approach to community development, these women leaders contribute to creating resilient and environmentally conscious communities. This not only benefits the present generation but also lays the foundation for a more sustainable and harmonious future.



EMPOWERING WOMEN, SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT

Addressing the critical need for environmental preservation, our initiatives blend empowerment and ecological stewardship, leaving a lasting impact.

The Women in Sustaining the Environment (WISE) project, born from the aftermath of Kerala's 2018 floods, addressed critical clean water challenges while emphasizing the pivotal role of women in water resource management. In collaboration with Tel Aviv University, WISE empowered women as Water Ambassadors, equipping them with technologies to monitor water quality and maintain local drinking water supplies. In Odisha, we focused on sustainable agri-horti-forestry practices, uplifting and strengthening the independence and resilience of tribal communities, especially women, facing poverty and environmental hardships.

Our vocational courses include a special focus on the environment as well. Women are trained in beekeeping, seaweed cultivation, and sustainable upcycling through teaching women how to make clothes from recycled materials (Vastra Chakra).



As a mother, I was always worried about the health and well-being of my children. Before involvement in the water project, it was difficult to ensure that they had access to clean water all the time. Now, I feel relieved knowing that they can drink clean water anytime they want and the same goes for all the mothers in our community. It means a lot to us."

SHOBA



STITCHING SUCCESS – TAILORING WOMEN’S FUTURE

Since 2018, Amrita’s Center for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality has partnered with Glorka Wear, an ethical fashion company from Los Angeles founded by renowned designer Zhenya Glorka. This collaboration aims to offer women employment opportunities while teaching them valuable, employable skills. The project fosters a heart-to-heart connection, acknowledging their lives, sharing stories, and co-creating unique fashion pieces.

Each handcrafted item is a testament to the women’s dedication and growing expertise. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Glorka continued to place orders, which were fulfilled and shipped, showcasing the resilience and skill of these women. Villages like Juna Kattiwada in Madhya Pradesh and Shyamoli in Rajasthan have benefited immensely, with women producing high-quality Indian skirts, kurtas, and hand-sewn jackets.

Glorka’s hands-on approach and our support have not only provided fair wages but also boosted the women’s self-confidence and proficiency in tailoring. This initiative stands as a powerful example of nurturing self-reliant, strong, and successful women through skill development and heartfelt collaboration.

WOMEN AS CO-CREATORS OF TECHNOLOGY

Amrita envisions technology created by and for women. Our interdisciplinary team blends Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to address social vulnerabilities in rural communities, particularly for women.

We engage women in technology through initiatives like workshops for school girls, teaching 21st-century skills and IoT solutions. Supported by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, these workshops also cover social media safety, CSS, and HTML.

We break gender stereotypes by training women in traditionally male-dominated trades like plumbing, carpentry, and two-wheeler repair.

One remarkable initiative is ShaktiCon, a global cybersecurity conference organized by Amrita. With keynotes, training, contests, and workshops, it attracts 5,000+ participants from 70+ countries annually. ShaktiCon is dedicated to showcasing women’s talents in cybersecurity and creating an inclusive environment.





ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS

In 2021, Amrita's Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality started a unique program to build awareness and provide training on gender and mental health for India's Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and their families. Addressing challenges such as the impact of military service on family life and a high suicide rate, the program has played a crucial role in enhancing understanding of gender issues and fostering mental well-being.

CRPF personnel reported that the program has already yielded a multitude of positive results, aiding personnel in managing their thoughts, emotions, anger, stress, and various other issues. "The program's recognition by FICCI underscores its exceptional contributions to the welfare of CRPF personnel," CRPF leadership noted.

27,000 JAWANS TRAINED IN CRPF SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

8,000 JAWANS TRAINED IN CRPF SOUTH SECTOR

15,000 PERSONNEL OF THE TELANGANA STATE SPECIAL POLICE TRAINED

THE PROGRAM RECEIVED THE FICCI **SMART POLICING AWARD** IN 2022

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AFRICA

Amma's compassion and care extends beyond India. Under her guidance, we started a series of projects in Africa focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality.

In South Africa, AMMACHI Labs conducted a multi-dimensional scoping study to better understand the dynamics of skill development among unreached populations and the role ICT (Information and Communications Technology) plays.

In Rwanda, we conducted a collaborative training with the Integrated Polytechnic Regional College for youth in Kigali, Rwanda to pilot an ICT-enhanced motorcycle repair course. As the training wrapped up the students had started the process of forming a cooperative that would function as a motorcycle garage and school to train others interested in motorcycle repair. This became the first garage in Rwanda run by women mechanics.

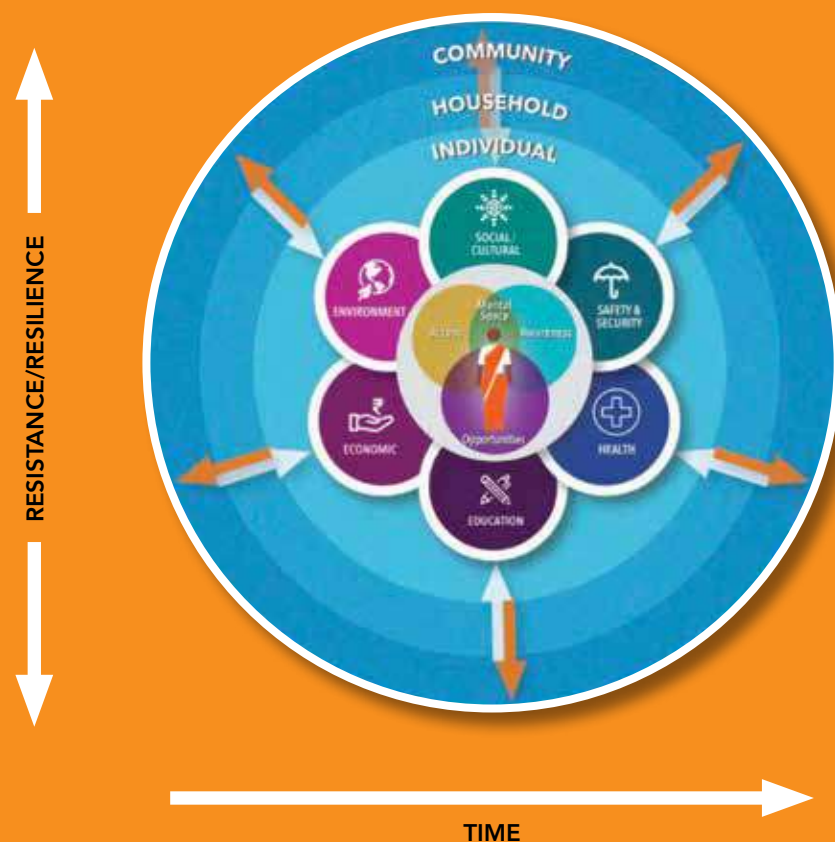
In Tanzania, we replicated the Women in Sustaining the Environment (WISE) project initiated in India, guiding women to successfully monitor and maintain local drinking water supplies in 4 wards of the Tanzania Moshi District and introduced innovative strategies to increase local capacity in water resource management through women's empowerment and skill training.



"AWESOME" FRAMEWORK

AWESOME (Advancing Women's Empowerment through Systems Model Expansion) is a solution model for delivering effective transformational change and durable interventional strategies towards the empowerment of women and strengthening gender equality in communities. The AWESOME framework addresses the mental space domain at its core, followed by awareness, access, and opportunities. It covers the six following dimensions:

- Economic Vitality
- Health and Sanitation
- Environmental Sustainability
- Education and Skill Development
- Society, Culture and Politics
- Safety and Security



GATHERING THE INSIGHTS AND AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Outreach and impact from January until July 2023 for the Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

604,519 participants, including

1,334 foreign participants

2,625 organizations participating in policy dialogues and events

73 countries represented

60 policy dialogues and side events

1,230 outreach activities

1,000+ policy recommendations gathered

64 best practices (udaharans) from civil society organizations published

Amrita's Chancellor was appointed as the Chair of Civil20 India 2023, and led the efforts of 16 thematic Working Groups, including one on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. From January to August 2023, our Working Group engaged with thousands of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, experts and academics from all over the world to gather policy recommendations and best practices to be presented to the G20 Leaders. The Working Group focused on the following thematic areas of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihoods, Education and Skill Development, Physical and Mental Health, Society and Culture, Safety and Security, Environment and Disaster Management, and Engaging Men and Boys.





CIVILC20 GENDER EQUALITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

On International Women's Day 2023, the "Million Lights Campaign" and "Gender Equality Pledge" were launched. Both of these campaigns were designed to foster women's empowerment and advocate for gender equality. The goal of the Million Lights Campaign was to acknowledge the change-makers that have contributed to gender equality by nominating individuals, organizations, or initiatives that have sparked a difference. Once nominated, they were represented as sparks of light on a global digital map, symbolic of their roles as beacons of change. The second campaign, the Gender Equality Pledge, was dedicated to encouraging support for women's empowerment and championing equal respect and opportunities for all women.

1.2 MILLION NOMINATIONS FOR THE MILLION LIGHTS CAMPAIGN

559.12K GENDER EQUALITY PLEDGES

2,000+ SCHOOLS IN DELHI PARTICIPATING

1,300+ SCHOOLS IN UTTAR PRADESH PARTICIPATING

APPOINTING WOMEN AS PRIESTS AND MONKS

Amma empowers women to make a wider impact on society by opening the door to them as spiritual leaders. The role of priests is traditionally held by men, and while there is precedence for women to be monks, it is not as popular among women, and is also far more available to men. A large number of women are committed to serving at many of Amma's institutions; and, just as importantly, many women have been inspired to follow a monastic discipline. At the Brahmasthanam Temples ("abodes of the Absolute") founded by Amma in India, women have been appointed as temple priests and invested with the responsibility to give spiritual discourses and even perform religious rituals in the inner sanctum of these temples.

Moreover, the priests and monks at these temples are not necessarily from the Brahmin (priestly) caste. Amma has thus not only helped people overcome the caste barrier, but also elevated the stature of women, transcending conventional religious thinking and reviving India's true spiritual heritage.



AT AMRITA UNIVERSITY, EMPOWERED WOMEN LEAD THE WAY.

At Amrita University, we take pride in our unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and gender diversity in the realm of education and research. This commitment is evident in a distinguished cohort of women scientists who are among the World’s Top 2% Scientists in their respective fields, as ranked by Stanford University’s prestigious ranking. Their invaluable contributions serve as a testament to the wealth of talent and expertise that women bring to the forefront of academic exploration. Beyond research excellence, Amrita’s commitment to gender equality can be seen in the presence of accomplished women in senior leadership roles across the university. We also encourage female students through specific measures such as scholarships, access and participation plans, and mentoring schemes.

Women in key leadership positions at Amrita:

- Chancellor
- Provost
- 5 Deans and Directors
- 2 Associate Deans and Executive Directors
- 7 Principals and Vice-Principals
- 2 UNESCO Chairs: Experiential Learning for Sustainable Innovation and Development, plus Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- 2 researchers included in Stanford University’s listing of World’s Top 2% Scientists



UNESCO CHAIR ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

In the fall of 2016, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and UNESCO inaugurated India’s first-ever Chair on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. The UNESCO Chair furthers goals of Amrita University and promotes international, inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities and collaborative work.

“Universities such as Amrita have a guiding and strategic role to play. This UNESCO Chair will be at the crossroads of research and action, with the ambition to develop toolkits focusing on vital areas and better mapping of vulnerabilities.”

Dr. Peter Wells,
Chief of Higher Education Section UNESCO

“This is certainly the first-ever UNESCO chair in this discipline. What is truly remarkable is the strategy, where it is proposed to map out vulnerabilities of women and girls at various levels and from different perspectives, and through research, study, training, and an exchange of best practices, to find the best possible solutions, replicable by others.”

Dr. Ruchira Kamboj,
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO, Paris CHAIR in 2017



THE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES AT AMRITA UNIVERSITY

Our work in Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality is done under the auspices of the School for Social and Behavioural Sciences, and is integrated into the school's degree programs and research centers:

- **Department of Social Sciences:**
 - Integrated Master of Social Work
 - Master of Social Work
- **Department of Cognitive Sciences and Psychology**
 - PG Certificate in Counseling Psychology (upcoming)
 - Master in Cognitive Sciences, Technology and Education (upcoming)
- **PhD programs:**
 - Social and Behavioural Sciences
 - Social Sciences and Technology
 - Cognitive Sciences and Technology

RESEARCH CENTERS

Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, AMMACHI Labs, UBARI (University of Buffalo Amrita Research Institute)

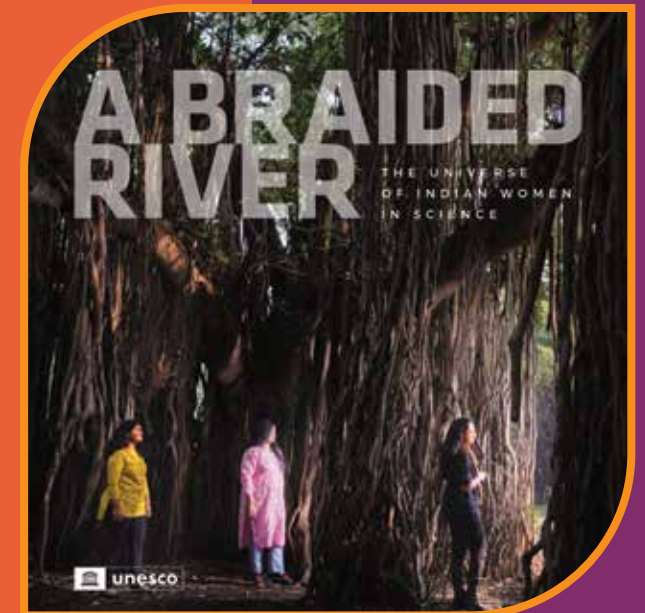
Development of a Gender Sensitization Curriculum: Our curriculum is designed to promote a deeper understanding of gender issues, challenge stereotypes, and create a more inclusive learning environment. By addressing the complexities of gender dynamics, we aim to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate diverse social landscapes with empathy and respect.



PUBLICATIONS

BRAIDED RIVER

For International Women's Day, 2022, UNESCO and Amrita launched the one-of-a-kind book called *"The Braided River: The Universe of Indian Women in Science"* that examines the barriers and challenges faced by women in science in the Indian context. The book showcases the fact that much of India's success in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) can be attributed to the passion and talent of its women scientists. It also provides actionable recommendations to promote and retain women in science education and careers.



PUBLICATION: TRANSFORMING MEN'TALITIES

Amrita and UNESCO produced a report entitled *"Transforming MENTalities and Promoting Gender Equality in India"*. This report draws from more than a decade of experience working in the gender equality field across India and offers a roadmap to stakeholders on how best to identify and transform the expressions of masculinity that impede gender equality and women's empowerment. It explains the need to engage and empower men and boys to critically evaluate national, regional and local norms of multiple masculinities and challenge negative gender stereotypes and behaviours.



WOMEN LEADERS AT AMRITA UNIVERSITY



Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi
Chancellor



Prof. Maneesha Vinodini Ramesh
Provost of Strategic Initiatives,
Research and Innovation



Prof. Jyothi SN
Associate Dean & HoS, School
of Engineering, Amritapuri



Prof. Prema Nedungadi
Associate Dean, School of
Computing, Amritapuri



Prof. Sabitha M.
Principal & HoS, School of
Pharmacy, Kochi



Prof. Bhavani R. Rao
Dean & HoS, Social &
Behavioural Sciences



Prof. Radhika N.
Department of Mechanical
Engineering, Coimbatore -
Stanford world top
2% scientists 2023



Prof. Geetha Kumar
Dean & HoS, Physical Sciences,
Amritapuri



Prof. Moly K.T.
Principal & HoS, College of
Nursing, Kochi



**Prof. Vidhya
Balasubramanian**
Principal & HoS, School of
Computing, Coimbatore



Prof. Lekha Viswanath
Principal & HoS, College of
Nursing, Delhi NCR



**Prof. Krishnasree
Achuthan**
Dean, PG Programs &
Online Programs



**Prof. Nava
Subramaniam**
Dean & HoS, School of
Business, Coimbatore



Ms. Salma Jetha
Director, Patents & IPs



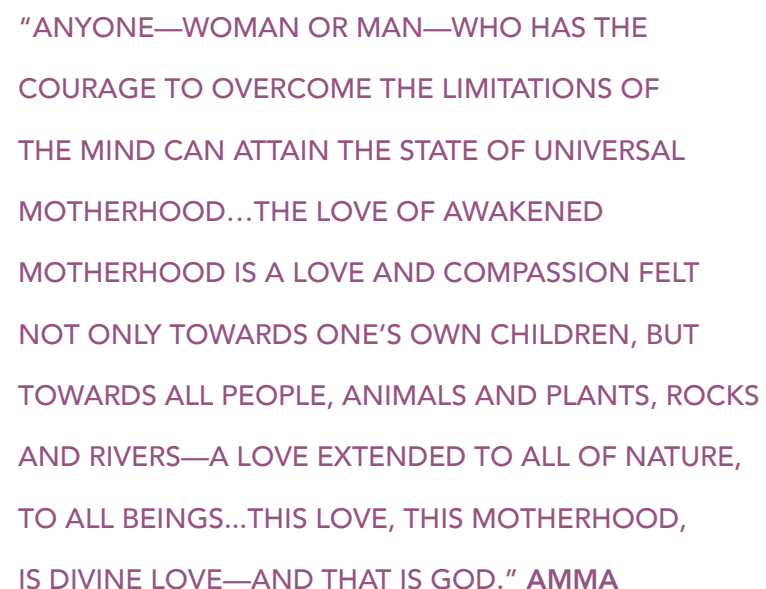
Dr. Jyothisha J. Nair
Vice principal & HoS, School of
Computing, Amritapuri



Dr. Dayana Das
Vice principal & HoS,
School of Arts Humanities &
Commerce, Amritapuri



Dr. Kalyani Suresh
Vice Principal & HoS,
School of Arts, Humanities
and Commerce, Coimbatore



THE IMPACT
RANKINGS 2023

Rank	SDG	Target
4 TH	QUALITY EDUCATION	32 lacs Learners 12,000+ Schools 54,000 Teachers Trained 4,500+ Colleges
3 RD	GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	\$94.7m of Charitable Medical Care 47 lacs Patients Received Free
6 TH	CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Rs.100 Crores Funding 5000 villages 10 lacs Beneficiaries Target
5 TH	GENDER EQUALITY	300,000+ Women Empowered 6,300+ Vocational Trained



UNESCO Chair on
Gender Equality and
Women Empowerment
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
India



Center for Women's
Empowerment &
Gender Equality

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES
CENTER FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT & GENDER EQUALITY**

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