



NITI Aayog bestowed Educate Girls' founder, Safeena Husain with 'Women Transforming India' award

New Delhi, August 30, 2017: NITI Aayog, in partnership with the United Nations in India and MyGov, presented Ms. Safeena Husain with the 'Women Transforming India' award. Ms. Husain is the founder of Educate Girls, a non-profit organization that tackles gender inequality at the grass root level through India's education system. The award in its true sense celebrates women achievers, leaders and change makers from across the country.

Ms. Safeena Husain is one of the six recipients of the award this year. Awardees were bestowed with the honor at a ceremony that took place on August 29th, 2017 in New Delhi in presence of the Hon'ble Minister of Textiles, Smt. Smriti Irani. Several other dignitaries such as Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog, Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog, Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator, Pooja Thakur, Wing Commander, Indian Air Force were also present at the ceremony to salute the efforts and accomplishments of these inspiring change-makers.

The theme of the awards this year was "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030". India's premier policy think-tank, NITI Aayog recognizes the awardees as women in India's workforce who are 'breaking the glass ceiling' and affecting positive change in their communities to further the Government of India's mission of inclusive economic growth.

Ms. Safeena Husain's work through Educate Girls strongly aligns with the government's many core interventions, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. The award to Ms. Husain is a testimony to the fact that it's possible to innovatively tackle discrimination and violence against girls and women, through education and community mobilisation.

Elaborating her thoughts on the occasion, Ms. Husain said, "After spending 10 years working for development projects in Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, and South Africa, I returned to India to drive the agenda closest to my heart – that of girls' education. From the very outset, I had a strong personal motivation to make a change in India's education system primarily because I myself found my pathway through education. Throughout India, gender disparity remains a significant challenge. Nearly 2.9 million girls across the country are out of school and education is the most basic way to create equality between the sexes."

"Having aligned with the government on where the need was greatest, I with the help of a local team successfully conducted a 50-school test project in Rajasthan which led to Educate Girls being formally registered in 2007. Over the last 10 years, Educate Girls, with help from 11,000+ community volunteers, has helped enroll 2,00,000 out of school girls across 21,000 government schools in 14 districts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Educate Girls has also been effective in setting up and implementing the world's first Development Impact Bond (DIB) in Education in 166 schools in Bhilwara, Rajasthan. This DIB aims to become a 'proof of concept' for replication and scale-up in the education sector and beyond, she added."



The esteemed jury received nearly 3000 entries of exceptional girls and women across India who are breaking new ground by empowering themselves and others. The jury comprising of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, NITI Aayog Vice Chairman, Mr. Amitabh Kant, NITI Aayog CEO, Mr. Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in India, Ms. Nirupama Rao, Former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador, Ms. P.T. Usha, Indian Olympian and Ms. Pooja Thakur, Wing Commander, Indian Air Force identified 12 finalists.

Other awardees include Ms. Jamuna Tudu, Ms. Arunima Sinha, Ms. Subasini Mistry, Ms. Kamal Kumbhar and Ms. Laxmi Agarwal.

About Educate Girls: Founded in 2007, Educate Girls is a non-governmental organization that holistically tackles issues at the root of gender inequality in India's educational system. It partners with the government in boosting development in public schools through community ownership and ensures improved enrollment of girls and learning outcomes for all children. Educate Girls is an independently registered Section-8 Company in India, with a management and outreach office in Mumbai and operations in 14 districts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

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