



VOLUME XIV  
MAY  
2025

CANARA BANK  
OFFICERS'  
ASSOCIATION



# SHE CAN

...SHINE THROUGH

## EDITORIAL

We are pleased to share yet another edition of She Can for the year 2025. We wish to empower women by elevating ourselves and by thriving in the platforms given by the CBOA.





**SHE CAN**  
...SHINE THROUGH

# FROM THE DESK OF GENERAL SECRETARY

As we observe Labour Day it's a day to honor the dignity of labor and the relentless spirit of our workforce. Known across our nation as Kamgar Din or Antarrashtriya Shramik Divas, this occasion holds particular significance for the invaluable contributions of Indian women.

India's Labour Day history is uniquely ours, beginning with the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan's first organized celebration in Madras (Chennai) in 1923, where the red flag of solidarity was first unfurled. This indigenous beginning set the stage for a movement that, while intertwined with our freedom struggle, has consistently championed the rights of all workers, including women.

Historically, Indian women have been the backbone of our economy, often in unseen roles in homes and fields, now increasingly visible in factories, services, and technology. Their fight for equal pay, maternity benefits, and safer workplaces has been crucial to the broader labour movement's successes.

Today, as India advances, the nature of work is evolving. This brings both opportunities and unique challenges for women, from ensuring fair representation in new sectors to addressing the persistent gender pay gap and informal work conditions. Labour Day calls on us to champion fundamental principles: fair wages, safe conditions, social security, and skill development for every woman, ensuring equitable participation and protection.

Let this Labour Day be our renewed commitment within CBOA to empower our women workforce. Let's recognize their vital contributions, ensuring they have the opportunities, safety, and dignity they deserve. The strength and well-being of our women shramiks are truly what drive India's prosperity.

## **K RAVI KUMAR**

General Secretary

## **CONTENTS**

**01 OPERATION SINDOOR - LEAD BY THE TRAILBLAZING  
COLONEL SOFIYA QURESHI & VYOMIKA SINGH**

**03 STATE FOCUS - KARNATAKA  
DR BHIMAVVA SHILLEKYATHARA**

**04 THE LEGAL FRONT  
THE ENDURING LEGACY OF THE AIR INDIA CASE**

**05 REDEFINING MASCULINITY  
UNROOTING PATRIARCHY**

**06 DID YOU KNOW?  
WHY WOMEN FEAR THEIR OWN ANGER**

**07 BLUE ORIGIN  
FIRST-ALL-FEMALE-CREW INTO THE SPACE**





## COLONEL SOFIYA QURESHI & WING COMMANDER VYOMIKA SINGH

### BREAKING BOUNDARIES. CROSSING THE BORDERS.

Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh led the briefing on Indian military strikes. The operation was named 'Sindoor'. Colonel Sofiya provided details and videos of the strikes. Wing Commander Vyomika Singh is a helicopter pilot with experience in challenging regions who has carried out evacuation missions.

The presence of two women officers -- Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh -- leading the official briefing on the Indian military strikes on terror targets in Pakistan is being seen as highly symbolic, representing strength and sacrifice, besides honouring the innocent women widowed in the Pahalgam attack.



**Colonel Sophia Qureshi** is a trailblazing officer in the Indian Army's Corps of Signals, known for her exceptional leadership, courage, and pioneering spirit. Born in 1981 in Vadodra, Gujarat, inspired by her father, who served in the Army, and her great-grandmother, who worked with Rani Lakshmi Bai she pursued her education in biochemistry, earning bachelor's and master's degrees from MS University.

Colonel Sophia Qureshi's achievements serve as an inspiration to women and young officers in the Indian Army, demonstrating that with determination and hard work, one can overcome challenges and achieve greatness. Her legacy continues to inspire global audiences, and her contributions to the Indian Army and peacekeeping missions are a testament to her dedication and excellence.

Colonel Sophia Qureshi played a pivotal role in Operation Sindoor, a military operation launched by India in response to the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 innocent lives. As a senior officer in the Indian Army's Corps of Signals, she was instrumental in managing critical military communications and ensuring seamless coordination during the operation.

**First Woman to Lead a Multinational Military Exercise:** Colonel Qureshi made history in 2016 by becoming the first woman officer to lead an Indian Army contingent in a multinational military exercise, "Exercise Force 18," held in Pune. She commanded a 40-member team, showcasing her leadership skills and the Indian Army's commitment to gender equality.

**United Nations Peacekeeping Missions:** Colonel Qureshi served in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Congo, monitoring ceasefires and supporting humanitarian efforts. Her dedication earned her a Commander Appreciation for her work in the UN mission.

**Operation Parakram:** She received a GOC-in-C commendation card for her outstanding service during Operation Parakram, demonstrating her bravery and commitment to duty.

**Flood Relief in North East India:** Colonel Qureshi also received a commendation card for her exceptional contributions during flood relief operations in North East India.

**Mentorship and Technological Innovations:** As a mentor at prestigious institutions like the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering, Colonel Qureshi has shaped future leaders and driven technological innovations in secure communications.

**Leading Press Briefings:** Colonel Qureshi briefed the media on the operation's success, presenting evidence of destroyed terrorist camps.

**Critical Military Communications:** She managed critical military communications, ensuring seamless coordination during the operation.



**Wing Commander Vyomika Singh** is a helicopter pilot and a first-generation military officer. She joined as a military pilot in 2019 and has flying experience with a variety of choppers like Cheetah and Chetak. She has served in challenging conditions in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East and is credited with carrying out precise, high-risk evacuation missions. She is also a keen mountaineer.

#### Career Highlights:

- Commissioned into the IAF in 2004.
- Awarded the elite "Master Greencard" rating, the highest honor for a military pilot.
- Led multiple rescue and relief operations, including a risky mission in Arunachal Pradesh in November 2020.
- Participated in an all-women tri-services expedition to Mt. Manirang (21,650 feet) in 2021.
- Briefed the media on Operation Sindoor, a retaliatory strike on terrorist camps after the Pahalgam terror attack.

#### Recognition and Awards:

- Received commendations from the Chief of Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief for her bravery and dedication.
- Her achievements have made her a role model for young women seeking to serve the nation.

#### Impact and Legacy:

- Her leadership and flying skills have been instrumental in saving lives during rescue operations.
- She represents a strong example of women's leadership and contributions in the Indian military.

Vyomika Singh was born in Lucknow. Her name "Vyomika" means "dweller in the sky" or "daughter of the sky", which matches her career as a pilot. She participated in the National Cadet Corps (NCC) during her school and college days.

Singh holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree from an undisclosed institution, completed his training at the Air Force Academy at Dundigal, Hyderabad, after which she was commissioned into the Indian Air Force (IAF).

## From Biochemistry and Engineering degrees to the Battle Field – Two Trailblazing Women Leading Operation Sindoor

In a historic first for India, two senior women officers, Lieutenant Colonel Sophia Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, led the operation Sindoor. The selection of Colonel Qureshi and Wing Commander Singh to lead the press conference is an indicator of the increasing presence of women in India's command. Their presence showed the active role women are now playing in India's defence leadership and the nation's support for gender equality and the value of women to national defence. Both the officers showcased the increasing leadership of women in India's armed forces, detailing the missions objectives and outcomes while highlighting India's strategic restraint and operations strength against cross-border terrorism.

They represented the Indian armed forces during the announcement of the tri-services strike, which targeted multiple terrorist camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. Two Trailblazing Women in the Armed Forces who proved that it was about skill, not gender and were proud to lead Indian army.

**Symbol of Unity:** Quereshi presence at the press conference, alongside Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, showcased the united face of the country, highlighting the operation's objective of delivering justice to the victims of terrorism. The leadership at the press conference was symbolic -- a clear message that India's fight against terror is being led by professionals, regardless of gender. The government's decision to put these two officers forward highlights how women are now playing key roles in security, strategy, and communication at the highest level.



**STATE**

**FOCUS**

**KARNATAKA**

## KANNADA PUPPETEER — DR BHIMAVVA SHILLEKYATHARA

**Born: 1929, in Koppal district, Karnataka**

Bhimavva Doddabalappa Shillekyathara is a 96-year-old puppeteer from Karnataka's Koppal district, who has been honored with the prestigious Padma Shri award for her contributions to the traditional art of Togalu Gombeyaata, a form of shadow puppetry. In a prestigious ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhawan she received India's fourth-highest civilian award, by President Droupadi Murmu, for her extraordinary contribution to the world of traditional leather show puppetry.

Draped in simplicity and tradition, Bhimavva Shillekyathara slowly walked through and bowed to PM Narendra Modi and the PM in admiration bowed back to her. The hall went silent and was broken by applause and a standing ovation while she was receiving her award.

### A lifelong attachment with strings and stories

For nearly 80 years, Bhimavva has mesmerized audiences with her mastery of shadow puppetry narrating epic tales like the Ramayana and Mahabharata through intricate shadow puppets.. Her craft blends mythology, music, and movement, offering entertainment and a deep, soulful connection to India's folk roots. Despite limited resources and fading public attention, she continued to travel, perform, and teach.

◆ **Contribution to Art:** Shillekyathara has dedicated her life to preserving and propagating Togalu Gombeyaata, ensuring its rich storytelling tradition lives on. She has also been actively involved in training younger generations to carry forward the legacy of this traditional art form.

◆ **Recognition:** Her tireless dedication to the preservation and promotion of Karnataka's cultural heritage earned her the Padma Shri award in 2025. Karnataka's Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, praised her as a worthy recipient, highlighting her devotion to keeping the art of puppetry alive.

◆ **Legacy:** Shillekyathara's work serves as an inspiration for future generations, and her recognition is a testament to her lifetime of service to the arts. She continues to be an active proponent of Togalu Gombeyaata, ensuring its cultural significance is preserved for years to come.

### What is Togalu Gombeyaata?

**Togalu Gombeyaata, meaning "a play of leather dolls" in Kannada, is a traditional shadow puppetry art from Karnataka. This performance style uses leather puppets to narrate mythological tales and folk stories.**

**Culturally significant and symbolically linked to fertility, it also shares deep historical and communal ties with Tholu Bommalata, the shadow puppetry tradition of the neighboring states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.**



# THE LEGAL FRONT

## SHE CAN & Her Rights The Enduring Legacy of the Air India Case

**In our ongoing pursuit of empowerment and equality within the workplace, it's crucial to understand the foundational legal principles that protect our rights. A landmark judgment that continues to inspire and guide us is the Supreme Court's decision in Air India Vs Nargesh Meerza [(1981) 4 SCC 335]. This case serves as a powerful testament to the constitutional guarantee of equality for women in employment.**

The crux of the Nargesh Meerza case lay in the discriminatory service regulations of Air India. These rules mandated the retirement of air hostesses upon reaching the age of 35, or if they married within the first four years of service, or upon their first pregnancy. These regulations, uniquely applicable to women, raised fundamental questions about fairness and gender equality.

(The Supreme Court, recognizing the inherent injustice, decisively struck down these clauses as arbitrary, unreasonable, and a direct violation of Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. Article 14 unequivocally states: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India." The court astutely observed that these regulations were rooted in outdated stereotypes, unfairly penalizing women for natural life events without any justifiable link to their professional capabilities. The ability of a woman to perform her duties as an air hostess, the court emphasized, was not diminished by marriage or motherhood.

At the time of this case, Air India's operations and employee service conditions were governed by The Air Corporations Act, 1953, under which these discriminatory service regulations were framed. However, the Supreme Court's judgment in Nargesh Meerza rendered these specific discriminatory rules invalid.

The significance of this case extends far beyond the airline industry. For us, as women professionals in the banking sector, Nargesh Meerza reinforces our fundamental right to equal treatment and protection against any discriminatory practices based on gender, marriage, pregnancy, or other such factors. While the specific nature of our roles differs from that of air hostesses, the underlying constitutional principle of equality remains universally applicable.

This landmark judgment empowers us to recognize and challenge any subtle or overt forms of gender bias that might exist in our professional lives. It reminds us that employment policies must be based on merit, qualifications, and the ability to perform the job, not on stereotypical assumptions about gender roles.



### Resolutions for Empowerment

Inspired by the spirit of the Nargesh Meerza judgment, let us, as members of the , resolve to:

**Enhance Awareness:** Organize workshops and discussions to further educate ourselves and our colleagues about our legal rights and the significance of landmark cases like Nargesh Meerza.

**Promote Inclusive Policies:** Actively engage in inclusive, equitable, and free from any form of gender discrimination.

**Support Each Other:** Create a supportive network where women feel empowered to voice concerns about discrimination and collectively work towards a fair and equitable work environment.

**Stay Informed:** Keep ourselves updated on the evolving legal landscape concerning women's rights and workplace equality.

**Advocate for Change:** Where necessary, collectively advocate for policy changes that further promote gender equality and inclusivity within the organization.

***Let the enduring legacy of the Nargesh Meerza case inspire us to be vigilant, proactive, and united in our pursuit of a truly equitable and empowering professional journey.***



# REDEFINING MASCULINITY UNROOTING PATRIARCHY



## THE ARCHER WHO DEFIED ALL ODDS Sheetal Devi and Coach Kuldeep Vedwan's Journey

The mastermind behind Sheetal's success is her dedicated coach, Kuldeep Vedwan, whose innovative approach and strong belief transformed a young girl's potential into Paralympic excellence. Vedwan's expertise goes far beyond traditional coaching, he became an inventor, engineer, and mentor all rolled into one. Recognizing that conventional methods wouldn't work for Sheetal's unique situation, he designed and created special leg prostheses specifically adapted for archery, demonstrating creativity and dedication to his athlete's success.

Coach Vedwan's journey with Sheetal began when army coaches recognized her "innate athleticism and confidence." When standard prosthetics proved ineffective, he refused to give up. Instead, Vedwan conducted extensive research, eventually discovering U.S. archer Matt Stutzman, who was born without arms and competed at the highest levels. This discovery became the breakthrough moment that shaped Sheetal's training methodology. His philosophy extends beyond technical training. He understood that developing Sheetal's mental strength was equally important for elite competition. Under his guidance, she not only mastered the complex technique of shooting with her legs but also developed the psychological toughness needed to perform under pressure at the Paralympic stage.

Sheetal's influence extends far beyond her competitive achievements. Paralympic medallist Sheetal Devi inspires 13-year-old girl without arms and legs, showing how her success is creating ripple effects in the para-archery community. Her story demonstrates that physical limitations need not define one's potential for greatness.

Army coaches saw her "innate athleticism and confidence", recognizing early on that she possessed the mental strength necessary for elite competition. This combination of natural ability and determination has made her a role model for athletes with disabilities worldwide. At just 17, Sheetal Devi has already achieved what many athletes dream of in their entire careers. Her Paralympic bronze medal is likely just the beginning of what promises to be an extraordinary career in para-archery. With the continued support and innovative coaching of Kuldeep Vedwan, and the inspiration drawn from pioneers like Matt Stutzman, this dynamic coach-athlete partnership continues to push the boundaries of what's possible in adaptive sports.

The success story of Sheetal Devi and Kuldeep Vedwan represents more than individual achievement – it showcases the transformative power of visionary coaching combined with determined athleticism. Together, they have not only changed archery but have also changed perceptions about what athletes with disabilities can achieve on the world's biggest stages, with Vedwan's innovative methods serving as a blueprint for future coaches in adaptive sports. Her journey from a young girl in Jammu and Kashmir to a Paralympic medallist serves as a powerful reminder that with determination, proper coaching, and innovative thinking, any barrier can be overcome. Sheetal Devi is not just changing archery; she's changing perceptions about what athletes with disabilities can achieve on the world's biggest stages. Sheetal Devi represents the very best of Paralympic sport – combining exceptional skill, determination, and the ability to inspire others to pursue their dreams regardless of physical challenges.

At just 17 years old, Sheetal Devi has redefined what's possible in the world of archery. Born without arms due to a rare condition called phocomelia, this rare athlete from Jammu and Kashmir has captured global attention with her extraordinary skills and determination, becoming India's youngest Paralympic medallist in archery.

Sheetal Devi and her partner Rakesh Kumar won the bronze medal in the mixed team compound open archery event at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, marking a historic moment for Indian para-archery. Sheetal became the first Indian woman to win an archery medal at the quadrennial showpiece as coach Kuldeep Vedwan rejoiced.

The achievement was even more significant considering she became the youngest athlete to compete in women's para archery at the 2024 Summer Paralympics. During the ranking rounds, she demonstrated impressive skill by surpassing the previous world record of 698 points with a score of 703.

What sets Sheetal apart is not just her medal winning performance but her incredible technique. She is one of four archers competing at the Paralympics without arms and is also the only woman among them. Sheetal Devi, who was born without arms and uses her legs to shoot, has mastered a technique that few can imagine, let alone execute at the highest level.

Her precision and control have earned international recognition, with her perfect bull's-eye at the Paralympics going viral, being described as "poetry in motion."



# Did You Know ???

## Why Women Fear Their Own Anger

**and how society benefits from this misdirection**

Anger is a natural human response to injustice, disrespect and unmet needs. Yet for women, it is an emotion often cloaked in fear and shame.

From a young age, women are taught to suppress their anger, to package it as sadness, anxiety or self-doubt --- anything but what it truly is. This fear of their own anger is not accidental. It is a carefully cultivated response that serves a larger societal purpose. By disconnecting women from their anger, society ensures their silence, compliance and continued disempowerment.

### **The conditioning of fear: Why women reject their anger?**

For centuries, women have been groomed to prioritize harmony over confrontation. The societal message is clear: a "good" woman is agreeable, nurturing and calm. Women are taught to fear that their anger will make them unlikeable, unlovable or even unsafe. This conditioning begins early. Girls who speak out or assert themselves are often reprimanded or dismissed as "bossy", "too much" or "dramatic".

### **How society benefits from women's fear of anger**

The suppression of women's anger is not merely about emotional control -- It is about power. Anger is a mobilizing force. It exposes inequities and demands change. When women suppress their anger, they are less likely to challenge the systems that oppress them. This benefits a society from women's fear of anger by maintaining status quo, driving economic control, redirecting blame, and overcompensating with emotional labour.

To dismantle the fear of anger, women must first recognize it as a source of power. Anger is not inherently destructive; it is clarifying, motivating and transformative. Women must unlearn the idea that anger is "ugly" or "irrational."

They should focus on the root cause of their anger and speak up and advocate for change or seek solidarity with others facing similar struggles. Call out the ways in which society pathologizes women's anger while celebrating men's. Women's anger is no less rational or justified than anyone else's. Society benefits from keeping women afraid of their anger because it keeps them quiet, compliant and disconnected from their power. But anger when embraced can be transformative. Society may fear what happens when women embrace their anger - but perhaps it should.

**After all, anger has always been the catalyst for change, and women's anger just might be the revolution we need.**



# BLUE ORIGIN

FIRST-ALL-FEMALE-CREW



## *Blue Origin's First All-Female Crew Successfully Completes Spaceflight*

On April 14, 2025, Blue Origin launched its first all-female crewed mission into space from its West Texas launch facility.

The six women are a part of NS-31, a commercial spaceflight mission which consists of a passenger capsule and a rocket

**Aisha Bowe**, a former NASA rocket scientist who founded the technological education program LINGO and serves as CEO of STEMBoard, an engineering firm

**Amanda Nguyen**, a well-known Asian American civil rights activist and bioastronautics research scientist who contributed to the final NASA shuttle mission, STS-136, and the U.S. space agency's Kepler satellite observatory, which searches for exoplanets

**Gayle King** is a television personality and journalist who is most recognized for co-hosting CBS Mornings

**Katy Perry**, The well-known pop musician and former "American Idol" host

**Kerianne Flynn**, a film producer well-known for her work on the 2018 documentary "This Changes Everything," which explored misogyny in Hollywood

**Lauren Sanchez**, the fiancée of Jeff Bezos and journalist who has won an Emmy Award

Blue Origin's New Shepard Rocket Completes 31st Mission To Space

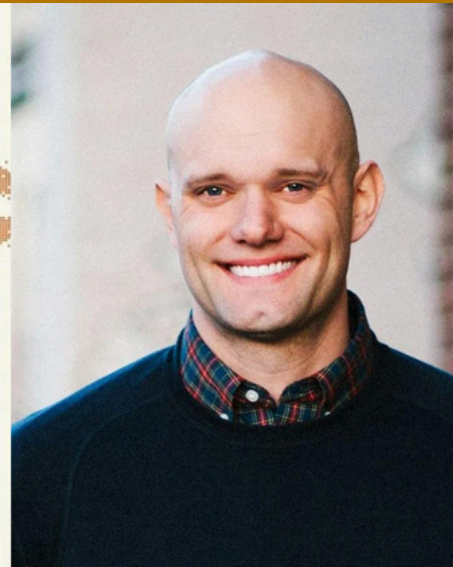
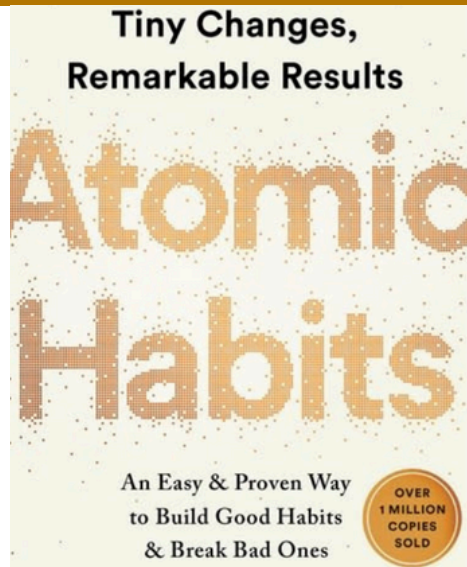
Blue Origin successfully completed its 11th human spaceflight for the New Shepard program. The astronaut crew included Aisha Bowe, Amanda Nguyễn, Gayle King, Katy Perry, Kerianne Flynn, and Lauren Sánchez, who brought the mission together.

Aboard the New Shepard rocket, they embarked on an approximately 11-minute suborbital flight, reaching over 62 miles (100 kilometers) above Earth's surface and crossing the Kármán line—the internationally recognized boundary of space. During the flight, the crew experienced weightlessness and observed Earth from space. Katy Perry even sang "What a Wonderful World" while in orbit.

The capsule safely returned to Earth, landing back in West Texas, where the crew was welcomed by family members, including Blue Origin founder Jeff Bezos. The mission aimed to inspire future generations and highlight the accessibility of space travel, with crew members expressing hope that their journey would encourage more women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Atomic has two meanings, very small or infinite energy source. And habit means the things that we repeat every day. Atomic Habits are those little habits that can make a big difference in your life. The book "Atomic Habits" by James Clear is about habits, in which by adopting the methods taught, you will be able to make good habits by making small changes in your everyday life.

Friends, when you exercise every day, you do not become healthy and fit in one day, but one day you become healthy. Similarly, when you eat fast food outside every day, you do not know that you are getting fat. But after a few days or a few months, when you look at your old photo, you know how eating that fast food every day has affected your health. So in this way, you understand how important good habits are, but to know how to adopt them, it is essential to understand that practices are like double-edged swords. If good happens, life becomes successful, and if bad happens, life is ruined.



Time widens the distance between defeat and victory. Good habits make time your friend, and bad habits make it your enemy. So in this way, habits play an essential part in deciding the direction of our life. You must have often heard this question, where do you see yourself in the coming five years? Or what do you want to be when you grow up? But very few people ask, what will you do in the coming 10 minutes to improve your life? And only people with such thinking are more successful in life.

## LESSONS LEARNT – Make yourself 1% better every day.

Here in this book, author had written all the information about habits and way to create a better habit like,

- ▶ How one's identity is formed by their habits.
- ▶ How good environment not motivation affects one's habits.
- ▶ How to do self balancing.
- ▶ How to make a habit of habits.
- ▶ How friends and family affect your habits.
- ▶ How to find the cause of bad habit and change them.
- ▶ How little efforts will give you maximum results.
- ▶ How to stick to good habits every day.
- ▶ Truth about one's talent.
- ▶ The rule of "Goldilocks."
- ▶ How to continue habit for a long time.



Atomic Habits by James Clear is a game-changing book that offers a practical, step-by-step guide for anyone looking to improve their daily routines and habits. As a reader, I found Clear's writing style engaging and easy to follow, with relatable examples and actionable advice throughout.

The book's core concept is that small, incremental changes can lead to significant long-term results. Clear emphasizes the importance of focusing on systems and processes instead of goals, which allows us to make continuous progress and develop better habits. His four-step framework – Cue, Craving, Response, and Reward – is particularly effective in helping identify and modify the triggers and patterns that drive our behavior.

# The Editorial Team



**Neha Aafreen**  
CC Member  
Hyderabad



**Farhana Begum**  
RC Member  
Hyderabad



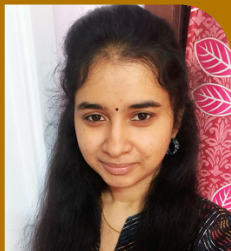
**Indumathi Thange H S**  
Women Representative  
Bangalore



**Santhoshima R**  
Activist  
Chennai



**Esampally Sahithya**  
RC Member  
Hyderabad



**Elkapally Divya**  
Activist  
Hyderabad



**Suchitra B**  
CC Member  
Bangalore



**Supraja K**  
CNT & CC Member  
Trivandrum



**Bandlamudi Sireesha**  
RC Member  
Vijayawada



**Kallam Aswini Pratyusha**  
RC Member  
Vijayawada



**Vrushali Ashok Mane**  
CC Member  
Pune



**Divya Ogirala**  
Activist  
Pune

**#SHE CAN**  
*...shine through*

