



**COMMUNITY
BUSINESS
NETWORK**

2025 Community Business Network Conference (India)

Intersectionality at Work: Centering Community Voices in Workplace Inclusion

10:00am - 5:00pm (UTC+05:30)

|

Thu 18 Sep 2025

Conference Agenda

This event is powered by

Lenovo

Intersectionality at Work: Centering Community Voices in Workplace Inclusion

In today's rapidly evolving workplace landscape, organisations in India are striving to embrace the complexities of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) through an intersectional lens. This conference brings together thought leaders, practitioners and changemakers to explore how organisations in India can embed DE&I into their cultures at every level.

In-person Attendance

Lenovo Office

3rd Floor, Roach Icon building, Outer Ring Rd,
Doddanekundi, Mahadevapura, Bengaluru,
Karnataka 560037
(2 seats per company)

Virtual Attendance

Zoom

Link to be shared shortly.
(Unlimited no. of virtual spaces)

Event Programme

Time Session Title and Descriptions

09:00AM **Registrations & Networking**

10:15AM **Opening Remarks by Community Business**

10:20AM **Welcome Keynote by Lenovo**

10:30AM **Keynote Address:
Creating Safe Spaces for Employee Voice and Advocacy**

Speaker: **Natasha Shirazi, Dell**

This keynote explores how organisations can build trust and psychological safety for employees. It highlights barriers faced by marginalised voices and strategies for meaningful advocacy. Discover how safe spaces can move from one-off efforts to lasting cultural change.

10:50AM **Tea break**

11:00AM **Lightening Talk and Workshop
Redefining Inclusion – Marginalised Voices as Policy Architects**

This workshop highlights the power of lived expertise in shaping workplace inclusion. Through grassroots insights and roundtable dialogue, participants will examine blind spots in current DE&I approaches.

We will explore how authentic partnerships can transform policies into meaningful, community-driven change.

12:30PM **Community Partner Booth Visit & Lunch Break**

Event Programme

Time Session Title and Descriptions

02:00PM

Panel Discussion**Beyond the Workplace: Driving Inclusion Through Tech and Innovation**

This panel explores how companies are embedding inclusion into products, platforms, and community initiatives. We will hear examples of accessible design, digital equity, and purpose-driven innovation in the Indian context. Discover how cross-functional teams are extending inclusion beyond workplace policies to shape impact at scale.

03:00PM

Research Preview:**Understanding Social Mobility in India**

Our research on social mobility in India reveals significant challenges, including entrenched income inequality, limited access to quality education, and the persistent impact of caste and networks. This session will overview the definition of social mobility and give a brief overview of our findings.

03:30PM

Experiential Session:**Weaving Our Portrait**

Inclusion isn't just a conversation – it's a shared experience. This guided, participatory art session invites attendees to explore themes of identity, intersectionality, and community through creative expression. Rooted in lived experience, the session uses art as a tool to reflect, connect, and co-create.

04:30PM

Closing Remarks & Networking

Event Speakers

Keynote Address:

Creating Safe Spaces for Employee Voice and Advocacy



Natasha Shirazi

Culture, Diversity & Inclusion Lead
Dell Technologies

In her career spanning 28 years, for the last 16 years, Natasha has worked at Dell in various roles across organizations (Customer Experience, Sales Operations, Supply Chain and L&D). She currently works in the Culture, Diversity & Inclusion organization as the CD&I Regional Consultant for APJ&GC to implement Dell's priorities around D&I.

She is a "Be the Change" Facilitator and certified trainer for #IamRemarkable.

She is a motivated self-starter who is passionate about solving life's challenges. She believes in 'Paying it Forward'.

Lightening Talk and Workshop:

Redefining Inclusion – Marginalised Voices as Policy Architects



Shivaram Deshpande

Head of Operations
Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled

Mr. Shivaram Deshpande is an accomplished professional with extensive experience for over 29 years in leadership and technology and has managed disability and social sector programmes across Asia and Europe. His expertise in strategy, program management, grassroots development ranges across Inclusive education, assistive technology, health, startup ecosystem, community development, Livelihood, Quality Care, Health, Advocacy, violence against women with disabilities. Mr. Deshpande has a Master's degree in Sociology, Post-graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management and an agro-based in-service training in Institute of Rural Management Anand. He is currently serving as the Head of Operations, Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled – a three time national award winning Bengaluru based NGO with presence across India in 18 cities, including all metro cities.



Sudhanshu Lalad

Advocacy Manager
The Humsafar Trust

Sudhanshu Lalad identifies as a young out and proud gay man. Born and raised in Aurangabad, a small town in Central Maharashtra, he grew up with limited access to LGBTQ+ support systems and representation. In 2015, he moved to Mumbai to pursue higher education and, more importantly, to find a safe and inclusive space where he could embrace and express his identity freely. With an MBA in Social Entrepreneurship, Sudhanshu currently serves as the Advocacy Manager at The Humsafar Trust, Mumbai—India's oldest and most prominent LGBTQ+ organization. His responsibilities include leading advocacy campaigns, managing visibility efforts that amplify queer narratives, and supporting the Trust's crisis management services for individuals facing stigma, discrimination, or violence. He is also actively involved in building strategic collaborations with partners across civil society, corporates, and government agencies. In addition, he contributes to resource mobilization initiatives, helping secure funding and support for innovative programs that address the evolving needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

Event Speakers



Bianca Fernandes

IEC Manager & Policy Advocate
Hasiru Dala

Bianca has been with Hasiru Dala's livelihood vertical for the past 4 years, focusing on strengthening Dry Waste Collection Centres (DWCCs) and leading solid waste management awareness programs in collaboration with residents, students, BBMP officials, and partner organizations. Over the past two years, she has created extensive educational content on sustainable waste practices. In the last year, she has also taken on advocacy and policy work, actively promoting the inclusion of waste pickers in waste and climate-related policies as essential contributors to these systems.

Panel Discussion:

Beyond the Workplace: Driving Inclusion Through Tech and Innovation



Abole Valsangkar

Sr. Manager, Employee Experience,
DEI, *Allegis Global Solutions*

As a seasoned HR Leader with 15 years of global experience, she specializes in driving strategic initiatives across Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), Employee Experience and Corporate Communications. Abole is passionate about creating inclusive cultures, designing impactful employee engagement strategies and positioning organizations as employers of choice.

With education and professional experience spanning India and the United Kingdom and a career built within leading global organizations, her work has consistently focused on fostering accountability, enhancing belonging and delivering measurable impact - earning recognition and accolades for innovation and excellence. Her passion lies in Change Management initiatives shaping organizational culture using her deep understanding of cultural diversity and contemporary inclusion practices.

Fluent in English, German, Hindi, and Marathi, she brings a truly global perspective to leadership, communication, and cultural transformation.



Aruna Ganesh Ram

Co-Founder
Breath Beings

Aruna Ganesh Ram is an Artist, DEIB, Design & marketing practitioner, she curates learning experiences through various creative mediums - Theatre, Films, Illustrations, Games. She is among the very few women theatre Directors, who has self-produced and toured over 20 shows across India, Singapore and London.

Aruna realized the need for Arts in the space of Inclusion and developed her own trademark theatre shows and films to build an appetite for inclusion at workplaces. She has facilitated 500+ workshops in DEIB, with a focus on disrupting bias, and nurturing allyship.

She also has corporate experience with Daimler & Ashok Leyland and is a Marketing and Communications expert and has an overall experience of two decades.

She holds an MA in advanced Theatre Practice from The Royal Central School of Speech and drama, London. She has a master's in marketing communications and degree in Visual Communication.

Event Speakers



Chandrika Jain

Director, Brand Strategy & Content
Lenovo India

Chandrika Jain is the Director of Marketing at Lenovo India. In her current role, she leads the marketing function across the consumer, commercial, tablets, and solutions & services portfolios. She is also responsible for the overall corporate marketing strategy for Lenovo in India.

With an overall work experience of 22+ years, and predominantly in marketing, Chandrika has been with Lenovo for more than a decade and has worked in various marketing roles both globally and in India. She has worked at various advertising agencies and has worked for technology clients such as Dell, as well as clients in the consumer sector like Himalaya, Carbon (diamond jewelry), and Unilever. She has also worked with Population Services International (PSI) for a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded campaign to raise HIV awareness, and at ING bank.

In her past avatar her, she pioneered the first-ever global campaign, was the core team that designed the strategy and visual identity for Brand Lenovo. Drove the retail identity for the brand. That is today getting reflected across multiple markets world over, strengthening the brand.



Jennifer Manchikanti

Associate Director and
DEI Practitioner
EY Global Delivery Services

Jennifer brings over 20 year of experience across various talent functions, with the last decade focused on advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I). As an Associate Director for DE&I, EY Global Delivery Services (GDS), she leads the design and execution of a comprehensive firm-wide DE&I strategy with the organization's mission, values and business priorities.

A trusted thought leader and passionate DE&I practitioner, Jennifer leads with purpose – driving systemic change through inclusive policies, equitable practices and leadership accountability. Her work fosters awareness strengthens commitment and amplifies impact across the organization.



Prateek Madhav

Founder
AssisTech Foundation

Prateek is a Jaipur-born, NIT & IIM Calcutta-educated, corporate-digital-technology-leader turned happy-social-entrepreneur. His belief in technology making a significant impact in lives of people with disabilities, encouraged him to give up an 18-year-old career in IT industry to focus on promoting disability/ assistive technology start-ups through his venture AssisTech Foundation (ATF), www.atflabs.org

He is passionate about start-ups, marathon running and music, finding beauty and meaning in keeping life simple! ATF has impacted lives of 9.1 Lakh (910,000) people with disabilities through its portfolio of 54 assistive technology startups with 120+ assistive technology products & 50+ Patents.

Event Speakers



Priya Tikare
Director and Head HR,
Lenovo India

Priya Tikare is the Director and Head of HR at Lenovo India, overseeing all HR functions and serving as the Site HR Leader. With over 18 years of experience at Lenovo, she has held various leadership roles, demonstrating a strong commitment to aligning HR strategies with business goals and enhancing employee engagement.

Prior to her current role, Priya led HR for Lenovo's global support organization, managing talent across 58 countries. She also served as the Head of Talent Acquisition for Asia Pacific, focusing on talent acquisition in India, Central Asia Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand. Her career at Lenovo includes supporting global talent acquisition programs and leading HR for commercial, consumer, and functional teams.

Priya's career began with MetLife India, where she worked closely with the Sales Organization. She is passionate about building organizations, talent acquisition and development, employee experience, and data analytics. Priya was also part of Lenovo's key mergers and acquisitions. A strong advocate for diversity and inclusion, Priya actively promotes these values within Lenovo and is an enthusiast in bringing early careers to the organization.

Priya holds an MBA from Anna University and a Bachelor's in Computer Science from Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu. Based in Bangalore, she lives with her husband and two sons. Priya brings over 20 years of people management experience and has thrived in various leadership roles within Lenovo.

Research Preview: Understanding Social Mobility in India



Kopal Manglik
Social Impact Manager
Community Business

Kopal Manglik (she/her), Social Impact Manager at Community Business, is a passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, bringing a wealth of experience in supporting female and ethnic minority experiences, as well as addressing chronic mental health issues. With a Master's Degree in Social Organisational Psychology from Columbia University, she has previously served as a Teaching Assistant for Executive Programmes, where she delivered content to senior leaders. Currently, Kopal is part of the network team supporting the various initiatives. Her work also encompasses research-based consulting, speaking engagements, and training workshops. Additionally, Kopal is an active volunteer in her community and serves on the organising committee for TEDxTinHauWomen.

Experiential Session: Weaving Our Portraits



Sumit Pawar
Programme Associate
Community Business

Sumit Pawar, (he/him) as Programme Associate, focuses on unconscious biases within workplace settings while also addressing LGBTQ+ issues through training programmes. His extensive experience designing training materials equips him with practical tools necessary for engaging diverse audiences effectively. Currently leading India's representation within South Asia Youth & Queer Advocate Network, Sumit continues contributing toward creating inclusive environments where everyone feels valued regardless of their background or identity. He can develop and deliver trainings across multiple languages including English, Hindi and Gujarati.

Contact for Support

Contact Us

network@communitybusiness.org

Reach out to the Community Business Network team via the email id if you have any questions about the Conference programme, location or virtual support.