

20 YEARS OF SAMBHAV FOUNDATION

COMPANIONS IN THE JOURNEY



Why Roots Matter?

The image of the tree was chosen deliberately. It resists the temptation to centre growth in what is visible. Trees endure because of what lies beneath the soil: roots that spread slowly, invisibly, often without recognition, holding the ground long before there is shade or fruit.

This compendium is about those roots.

Over twenty years, Sambhav has become a visible institution. Programmes expanded, partnerships multiplied, and systems took form. That outward growth matters, but it does not explain endurance. Institutions last because of persistent continuity: people who stay through uncertainty, who absorb risk, who do the unglamorous work of keeping things going when outcomes remain unclear.

I have been associated with Sambhav Foundation since 2019. In these years, I have seen the organisation through the COVID period, through small crises and significant wins, through reflective and pensive phases as well as relentless days and nights of delivery. What stood out was not performance or

Padmini Ram

Founding Director
Urban Ethnographers



speed, but steadiness - a consistent willingness to remain accountable to people, even when conditions were difficult.

The idea for this compendium emerged from that recognition. Together, Gayathri Vasudevan and I reflected on how Sambhav's story could not be told only through programmes, founders, or milestones. It had to be told through relationships. This volume gathers some of those voices. It does not claim completeness. A full ledger would be too long, and inevitably, incomplete, in an organisation that has involved thousands of people over two decades.

This is an offering, one that will continue to be built through this year. As editor and compiler, my role has been to shape a space where these reflections can sit alongside one another, without hierarchy. Read together, they reveal the deeper architecture of Sambhav: a root system formed through trust, care, disagreement, learning, and persistence over time. As Sambhav marks twenty years, this compendium honours that architecture: the unseen work that made growth possible.

**BUILDING SAMBHAV:
TWENTY YEARS OF PEOPLE
AND PRACTICE**



Saugata Banerjee

Global Head of
Sustainable Programming
EssilorLuxottica

Our partnership with Sambhav Foundation was instrumental in enabling EssilorLuxottica to bring the Eye Mitra program to Karnataka and Odisha, with the full support of local governments. Focused on training underemployed and unemployed individuals to become primary vision care entrepreneurs within their own communities, the Eye Mitra program aims to bring vision care to areas where it does not currently exist.

This initiative found a shared vision between EssilorLuxottica and Sambhav Foundation - not only to strengthen primary eye care delivery, but also to demonstrate the resilience and commitment required to turn that vision into reality.

The journey was far from easy. From navigating operational complexities and on-the-ground challenges to securing government collaboration, Sambhav Foundation demonstrated wholehearted commitment and partnership throughout. Under the leadership of Dr. Gayathri Vasudevan, and with the dedication of the entire implementation team, challenges were met with perseverance, adaptability, and unwavering collaboration.

Together, we have empowered underserved communities across India by leveraging public-private partnerships to build local capacity, create sustainable livelihoods, and improve access to essential vision care services for those who need it most. The expansion in Karnataka and the launch in Odisha mark significant steps forward in our collective mission to make vision care more inclusive and accessible.

We extend our deepest appreciation to Sambhav Foundation for their partnership and tireless efforts. This achievement stands as a testament to what is possible when shared values, strong leadership, and committed teams come together to create lasting impact.



Shiv Kumar

Founding Director
Catalyst Group

Sambhav Foundation is a member and close ally of the Community Action Collab (CAC), wherein I serve as the Chief Integrator.

Sambhav has achieved significant milestones in skills, entrepreneurship, and health. It has consistently done so in collaboration with other stakeholders such as government, civil society, the private sector, and academia, thereby leveraging the best for the communities it serves.

Sambhav has consciously avoided slotting itself into classical domains before approaching the community; rather, it looks at holistic development within the existing ecosystem - an approach that firmly puts the horse before the cart.

Sambhav's role and agility during the COVID response have been extraordinary, seizing every opportunity to work at the intersection of communities, COVID, and livelihoods. A case in point is the Health Entrepreneur network it built at remarkable speed.

We at Catalyst have always been in awe of Gayathri Vasudevan's leadership and her contribution to Sambhav and the development sector. We are indeed very fortunate to have her leadership in CAC as a Governing Council member.



Suseela Chintala

CGM (Retd)
NABARD

My first interaction with Ms Gayathri Vasudevan, CIO of Sambhav Foundation, was in the year 2018. In fact, after a brief meeting with Acumen at the NABARD Head Office in Mumbai, where I learned about the Sambhav Foundation's interventions, I reached out to Ms Gayathri. It was the right organisation for NABARD to partner with, as it was pan-India and had rich experience in skilling.

Our first project was in the Mangalore district. It was Project Eye Mitra, an entrepreneurship programme providing basic eye screening services in rural areas. I had the opportunity to visit the project site as part of the appraisal of their proposal. I found the organisation to be very professional and meticulous in planning and execution.

Considering their role in skilling and women's empowerment, and their wide network, the relevance of Sambhav Foundation is only going to increase.

On the occasion of two decades of Sambhav Foundation, I congratulate Ms Gayathri Vasudevan and her able team for their noble work and extend my best wishes for their contribution towards Viksit Bharat.



Archana Sahay

ESG Global Head
LTIMindtree

I have known Sambhav across different phases of my professional journey, and what has stayed constant is the organisation's clarity of intention. Sambhav has never approached livelihoods as a narrow output. It has consistently recognised that skills, dignity, community, and aspiration are inseparable.

What sets Sambhav apart is its choice to work at scale, fully aware of what that entails. In India, very few organisations operate at this level because scale demands courage. It exposes weak systems, tests partnerships, and forces uncomfortable decisions.

Engaging a wicked problem like livelihoods at scale requires more than good intent; it requires institutional backbone, learning systems, and the willingness to stay the course when outcomes are uneven or slow. Sambhav has shown that courage repeatedly.

What has made this possible is leadership that remains close to the ground. I have seen the Sambhav leadership team stay deeply engaged with field realities. This grounded leadership is what gives Sambhav both credibility and resilience.

As Sambhav completes twenty years, it stands as an organisation that demonstrates how intention, courage, and strong systems can make scale responsible and meaningful. It has been a privilege to witness and walk alongside this journey.



Ram Kolavennu

CEO
FFE India Trust
Foundation For Excellence

My journey with Sambhav began in 2013 when I walked in as a volunteer and witnessed something that would quietly reshape my life. Dr. Gayathri was sitting with a small group of women from rural Karnataka, speaking gently yet firmly about the skills they needed to stand on their own feet.

The quiet determination in the room, the belief that change was possible, hooked me completely. That single moment pulled me into the development sector and, soon after, turned it into my full-time profession.

Over the past twelve years, Sambhav has been more than an organisation - it has given me deep purpose and meaning. The mission is evident in the transformed lives of thousands of women, men and communities it has touched across two decades, but for me, it is deeply personal.

Sambhav changed the trajectory of my own life, turning professional choices into a meaningful calling I feel grateful for every day.

As Sambhav completes twenty years, I congratulate everyone - colleagues, collaborators, donors, mentors, and partners - who have walked this path and helped create such a profound impact. I wish Sambhav continued success and even greater ripples of change in the years ahead.



Rajashree Ivaturi

Partner
Ipsos Strategy 3

Working with Sambhav Foundation was a profoundly humbling experience, taking me from corporate boardrooms into the rural hinterland where I witnessed firsthand how communities live far removed from urban privilege. There is a deep sense of satisfaction in knowing that even a small contribution of time, skill, or support can open a door for someone who has never had such a chance before.

Travelling to different regions also meant learning to adapt constantly - working with what is feasible on the ground, accepting that with so many variables, outcomes will not always look exactly like what was originally envisaged. Challenges varied from project to project, but a common thread was the need for a team that genuinely believes in the cause and is willing to stay the course together.

At the same time, this journey reinforced that even as a not-for-profit entity, there can be no compromise on the discipline of execution. The work demands the same rigour as a corporate - clear plans, ownership, timelines, and follow-through, with no shortcuts - while still leaving room to improvise and respond to the realities of the field.

Balancing this structure with flexibility, and passion with professionalism, has been one of the most important learnings of my association with Sambhav, and it has reshaped how I think about impact, responsibility and what meaningful work truly looks like.



Gurumoorthy Mathrubootham

Principal Program Manager
Juniper Networks

On this special occasion of Sambhav Foundation's 20th anniversary, we at Juniper Networks are proud to reflect on our meaningful partnership that began in 2019. Over the past six years, we have worked together to empower youth from marginalised communities in Karnataka through skilling initiatives that open doors to new opportunities.

Through this collaboration, we have successfully skilled over 1,400 young individuals, helping them build sustainable livelihoods and brighter futures. This journey has been marked by mutual respect, shared values, and a common vision of creating inclusive growth and social impact.

Our relationship with Sambhav Foundation has been truly fruitful and inspiring, and we look forward to continuing this partnership to make an even greater difference in the years ahead.



Asthaa Sarma

Senior Associate
Cognizant Foundation

My time with Sambhav has been shaped by many small moments rather than one defining event. What stayed with me was how the work was approached - with patience, care, and a real effort to listen before acting. In a field often driven by urgency, this way of working gently changed how I think about change.

There were phases when things felt uncertain and progress seemed slow. Those moments taught me the value of staying present and trusting the process.

Looking back, I realise Sambhav did not just influence the work I did; it influenced how I place myself within that work. That, perhaps, is its most lasting impact.



Anil Kumar Reddy D

General Manager
Magic Bus India Foundation

My journey with Sambhav began over twelve years ago, when I joined as a trainer - young, curious, and deeply eager to learn. What I did not anticipate then was how profoundly this organisation would shape not just my professional path, but also my way of thinking about people, systems, and purpose.

Over the years, I moved through multiple roles, learning to see the organisation from different vantage points, before exiting as Senior Manager – Operations. Each transition came with its own challenges, but Sambhav always trusted people to grow into responsibility, not just manage it.

I am deeply grateful to Balaji A Sarma, whose calm leadership and clarity helped me navigate complexity with confidence. I also owe much to our Trustee, Gayathri Vasudevan, whose unwavering belief in dignity, inclusion, and long-term impact continues to inspire how I approach work and leadership. Rajesh AR's guidance taught me the value of grounded decision-making and collaborative problem-solving.

Sambhav taught me that impact is not only about scale, but about consistency, integrity, and respect for the people we serve and work with. It shaped my belief that organisations grow best when they invest in people as whole individuals, not just roles.

As Sambhav completes twenty years, I look back with gratitude - for the trust, the lessons, the relationships, and the shared journey. I will always carry a part of Sambhav with me in how I work and lead.



Bharath

Operations Head, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

I joined Sambhav in 2014, when much of our work involved building livelihood centres in places that demanded patience, trust, and resilience. From remote towns to tribal and conflict-affected regions, the focus was always on reaching women and communities that were otherwise left out. Mobilising beneficiaries, setting up centres, and keeping commitments, often under difficult conditions taught me what it truly means to stay accountable on the ground.

Over the years, I worked across multiple livelihood projects with partners who trusted Sambhav to deliver with integrity. Each centre, each batch, came with its own challenges, but also the quiet satisfaction of seeing opportunity take root.

My transition to Saadhya marked a deeply personal shift. Working with children with disabilities was completely new to me. The early days were emotionally overwhelming, marked by limited space, growing needs, and children who required far more than what existing systems could offer. What gave me strength was the shared journey of the organisation and the belief that dignity and care must always come first.

Today, Saadhya stands as a space of inclusion, growth, and hope for children, families, and staff alike. Being part of this journey has shaped me deeply, and Sambhav continues to be a place where purpose meets perseverance.



Geetamma

Chef, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

I have been with Sambhav from the very beginning. When Saadhya started, we did not have many rules written down. But there was one thing that was always clear in my heart: no one should ever go back from Saadhya without food.

For me, cooking was never just a job. It was my way of caring. Every child who came to Saadhya, every staff member, every parent, every visitor - I felt they were all my own. Food was how I showed that they were welcome, safe, and cared for.

For the last twenty years, I have cooked and served at Saadhya. I have seen children grow, staff come and stay, families struggle and find hope. Through all these years, my work remained the same - to make sure everyone who came here was fed with warmth and love. Even today, I continue to do this with the same feeling.

Saadhya has given me much more than work. It has given me purpose and belonging. This place feels like my own home. The children feel like my own. When I cook for them, I feel I am contributing in my own small way to something meaningful.

I may not be a teacher or a therapist, but I believe food also heals. If my cooking has brought comfort, strength, or a sense of care to anyone who walked into Saadhya, then I feel my journey with Sambhav has been worthwhile.



Gowramma

Special Educator, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

I joined Sambhav Foundation, Saadhya Centre in 2008 as a support staff member. At that time, I did not imagine the journey that lay ahead of me. I came looking for work, but what I found was a place that slowly changed my life.

In the beginning, I supported wherever help was needed. On the job, I was trained, guided, and encouraged to learn. Sambhav believed in me even before I believed in myself. Step by step, I learned to work with children, to observe them, understand them, and support their needs. Over time, I was entrusted with greater responsibility.

Today, I look after Early Intervention. I have also worked across different segments of Saadhya, including vocational training. I have seen children take their first steps into learning, communication, and independence. Being part of their growth has taught me patience, empathy, and confidence not just in my work, but in myself.

Saadhya did not just give me skills. It gave me dignity. It made me realise that learning never stops, and that every role matters. I grew here as a worker, as a caregiver, and as a person.

For me, Sambhav Foundation, Saadhya Centre is not just a workplace. It is where I discovered my own strength and purpose. The children, the team, and the values of Sambhav have shaped who I am today. I am proud of the journey I have taken here, and grateful for the trust placed in me.

Being part of Sambhav for so many years has shown me that when someone is given opportunity, guidance, and respect, they can grow beyond what they once imagined.



Kalavathi

Teacher, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

I joined Sambhav in 2007, in the early years of Saadhya's journey. My work began at the centre in training rooms, in early intervention, and as part of assessment processes, working closely with children at the very start of their journeys. Those early years taught me patience, attentiveness, and the importance of getting the basics right, one child at a time.

Over time, my responsibilities grew, just as Saadhya did. Looking back now, I find myself entrusted with overseeing educators and working closely on Individualised Education Plans, ensuring that each child's learning, therapy, and progress are thoughtfully planned and carefully followed through. This growth was not sudden; it came through years of learning, support, and trust.

What has stayed constant through this journey is Sambhav's faith in its people. Even during uncertain times, including the difficult months of COVID, Sambhav stood by us ensuring salaries, offering reassurance, and reminding us that we were valued not just for our work, but as people. That support deepened what was already more than a professional relationship.

Saadhya and Sambhav have never felt like just a workplace. They have felt like a shared commitment to children, to families, and to one another. When I look around today and see so many colleagues who have spent ten, fifteen, even more years here, I realise that this continuity comes from an emotional bond built on trust, respect, and care. I remain deeply grateful to be part of this journey.



Mani NVS

Counsellor & In-house
Psychologist, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

My journey with Sambhav Foundation Saadhya Centre began not as a role, but as a calling. I first came to Saadhya as a volunteer, in the early years when the space was still finding its shape and rhythm. What I encountered here stayed with me, children whose needs went beyond textbooks, families carrying both hope and fear, and a team deeply committed to dignity and inclusion. Somewhere along the way, Sambhav became more than a place I volunteered at. It became a place I belonged to.

Over time, I formally took on the role of Counsellor, and today I oversee Saadhya academically, working closely with children, families, and educators. My work involves Individualised Education Plans (IEPs), family counselling, emotional support, and guiding the overall academic journey of our children. Each child's path is unique, and being trusted with that responsibility has been both humbling and transformative.

What Sambhav Foundation gave me was space to listen, to learn, and to grow. Here, counselling is not limited to sessions or formats. It is about walking alongside families through uncertainty, celebrating small milestones, and holding hope steady even on difficult days. The trust placed in me by parents, educators, and the organisation itself has shaped my professional journey in profound ways.

Saadhya Centre has taught me that education is not just about outcomes, but about understanding the whole child, their emotions, their abilities, their environment, and their family. Being part of this ecosystem has deepened my belief that inclusion must be intentional, compassionate, and continuous.

For me, Sambhav is not just an institution I work for. It is a space that believed in me from the beginning, allowed me to evolve, and gave meaning to the work I do every day. As Sambhav Foundation completes twenty years, I feel grateful to have grown alongside it, learning, contributing, and holding on to the values that brought us here in the first place.



Simran

Head, Saadhya School
Sambhav Foundation

I joined Sambhav in 2006, when the organisation was still taking shape and I was discovering my own sense of purpose. What I found was not a conventional workplace, but a space anchored in intent where people mattered deeply, and dignity was never negotiable.

My journey at Sambhav has been deeply connected with Saadhya. Working closely with children with disabilities, and with families who live each day balancing hope and exhaustion, reshaped how I understand impact. It taught me that progress is not always visible, that patience is a form of strength, and that being present day after day can matter more than any intervention. Here, small steps are real victories, and consistency itself becomes an act of care.

Saadhya, Sambhav's special education initiative, is a space for children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, where learning is shaped around each individual's abilities, pace, and dignity. More than a centre, it walks alongside families supporting them through education, therapy, life skills, and emotional care. Being part of Saadhya has been a constant reminder that inclusion is not an idea or a slogan, but a daily practice built quietly through trust, consistency, and care.

Sambhav placed its confidence in me early on by giving me responsibility, the room to learn, and support as I grew. That trust shaped who I am today. It taught me to listen more than speak, to approach challenges with patience and care, and to stay grounded while working with people, programmes, and systems.

Looking back, Sambhav has been far more than an organisation I worked for. Through Saadhya especially, it became a place where purpose is lived every day. It has been a long journey of learning, belonging, and shared purpose, and I remain deeply grateful to have walked this path with Sambhav.



Mayur Deshmukh

Deputy Manager,
Government Advisory, Policy
Advocacy, Corporate Affairs &
Social Responsibility
**SKF India, Southeast Asia &
Middle East**

At SKF, we believe that empowering youth is the cornerstone of building a stronger and more sustainable future. Our flagship CSR initiative, Youth Empowerment at SKF (YES), has been a shining example of this vision. For the past eight years, Sambhav Foundation has been our trusted partner in implementing this program, and together we have created a model that has touched countless lives and continues to inspire.

Through YES, we have witnessed young individuals gaining not only employable skills but also the confidence to shape their own destinies. Sambhav Foundation's dedication, expertise, and grassroots connect have been instrumental in making this program one of our most successful and impactful CSR models. Their commitment to quality training, holistic development, and long-term impact has ensured that the program delivers meaningful change year after year.

We are proud of this association and deeply value the partnership with Sambhav Foundation. Together, we remain committed to nurturing talent, fostering opportunities, and empowering the youth of India to build a brighter tomorrow.



Aditya Vardhan Joshi

CSR Head
Swarn Lata Motherson Trust

Long-lasting partnerships are built and strengthened over time by working together to identify opportunities and navigate challenges to achieve shared objectives. The association between Sambhav Foundation and Motherson Group, which began in 2017, has similarly been paving the way for something unique in the domain of Skill Development and Vocation-based Education.

Our organisations have worked together to train youth from less privileged backgrounds who, in turn, can contribute to a dynamically growing society. Sambhav Foundation's expertise in implementing skill-related training has helped us develop process-oriented excellence and scale up training efforts year after year.

This partnership has enabled the introduction of new training themes and skilling modules across India, reaching unemployed and economically challenged youth. By building both technical and non-technical skills in thousands of individuals, we have collectively helped create sustainable livelihoods.

Together, we continuously strive to create a positive impact by instilling long-term socio-economic value for marginalised communities, as a responsible corporate citizen with a grounded commitment and an ethical outlook.



Gururaja Budhya

Bengaluru Health Programme
Azim Premji Foundation

Our partnership with Sambhav Foundation goes back to the Covid pandemic days, when we partnered with the Sambhav team to facilitate patient navigation and bed allocation support in 30+ hospitals in Bangalore.

The Sambhav team was very committed and provided valuable support to the patients through helpdesks at the respective hospitals.

The team has a good understanding of the processes at the hospitals, has built excellent rapport with the hospital officials and have guided patients through consultation, investigation, admission and treatment.

The team consists of members from diverse backgrounds and fulfil the helpdesk role with compassion.

We are happy to be working together to provide referral patient support for multiple government referral hospitals today.



Nilanjana Mukherjee

Former Vice President Fundraising &
Corporate Partnerships
Sambhav Foundation

When I look back on my eleven years with Sambhav Foundation, what stands out most is not a single project or milestone, but the steady way Sambhav shaped who I became. Sambhav was never just a workplace for me. It felt like a family - one where I was trusted, challenged, and supported, often all at the same time.

I joined Sambhav at a stage when I was still finding my professional voice. Over the years, working across its thematic pillars of sustainable livelihood, education, environment, and health care, I learned how meaningful change is rarely dramatic or instant. It comes through continuous hard work and passion and showing up consistently for communities and for each other. Sambhav gave me the space to make mistakes, reflect, and grow, while also holding me to a standard of integrity and responsibility.

What I value deeply is how Sambhav recognised my contributions - not only in outcomes, but in intent and effort. That recognition built confidence and a sense of ownership in my work. I grew not just in skills and leadership, but as a person, learning empathy, resilience, and the importance of collective purpose.

Today, when I think about how I approach work and relationships, Sambhav is woven into that thinking. It shaped how I understand impact, teamwork, and what it means to belong to something larger than oneself.

I cannot talk about Sambhav and not mention Dr. Gayathri Vasudevan and Rajesh AR, the two visionary, passionate and selfless leaders who shaped Sambhav and made it what it is today.



Pushpa Nair

Director Marketing Communications
Good Business Lab

My time at Sambhav Foundation has been a defining chapter of my career and life. Being exposed to the realities of informal workers and marginalised communities, often invisible in mainstream narratives, changed how I see impact, work, and responsibility. It made clear to me that creating sustainable livelihoods is not just about employment, but about dignity, access, and agency.

I had the opportunity to build the Development Communications team and support Sambhav's mission in meaningful ways. A large part of this journey involved solving real, on-the-ground challenges - simplifying communication for our target groups, responding to their evolving needs, and creating communities that foster trust, learning, and belonging.

I had the privilege of working alongside Gayathri Vasudevan, who has made such a profound impact in scaling livelihood opportunities and empowering the lives of countless people. I learnt to be agile and solve problems on the go.

The work was never done in isolation. It included collaborating with incredible colleagues across functions, my exceptional team as well as partners, funders, and field teams who brought deep insight and commitment to the mission every single day. Working alongside such thoughtful and passionate people, and collaborating with brilliant minds, helped us achieve goals that once felt ambitious.

As Sambhav Foundation marks its 20th year, I wish the organisation continued success in the years ahead - strengthening skills, expanding access, and empowering workers to build more secure, dignified, and hopeful futures.



Varsha Pullera

Associate - CSR
Mercedes-Benz Research &
Development India

I joined Sambhav Foundation in 2020, at the peak of COVID, as a twenty-year-old intern trying to find my footing. A year later, when I became a Program Manager, the weight of knowing that my work shaped how Sambhav was perceived and by extension, how communities and beneficiaries were supported was huge. There was little room for error, and no space to treat the work lightly. Sambhav introduced me to the kind of work that demanded seriousness - not only in intent, but in execution - something I continue to bring to my work even now.

One instance that I still think about took place at a centre in Hyderabad, during what was otherwise a routine work assignment. As a group of young girls spoke animatedly about the salaries they hoped to earn when they would be starting out, my manager at the time, Balaji Sarma, asked them to guess how much I earned. When they began calling out large numbers, he told them that I had actually started my career at 20,000 - just as many of them would.

That statement, if not motivating, certainly made them pause and consider what was possible over time. In that moment, I realised how much I had grown alongside Sambhav, having once been like those girls with aspirations, and how unexpectedly I had become a reference point for possibility. It was a reminder that such opportunities are rare, carry responsibility, and must be upheld with gratitude.

Over five years, Sambhav shaped how I understood responsibility, interdependence, and my place within an ecosystem of colleagues, support functions, external stakeholders, and communities. I carry that grounding with me even today. Wherever I work, Sambhav remains close - not as a chapter I've wrapped up, but as a way of thinking I continue to return to.



Anita Gurumurthy

Executive Director
IT For Change

There is something special about sister organisations who share a chronological overlap. The shared memory of their journeys and milestones captures not just their own stories, but also the big canvas of an ecosystem, a city, a historical moment. Sambhav and IT for Change have travelled together on a time-scape that is overlapping. We have witnessed the coming of a new techno-social paradigm, grappled with what this means for people's life and livelihoods, and steered clear of hand-me-down solutions to meet emerging challenges.

IT for Change has looked to Sambhav to seek answers, to explore ideas together, to build solutions that are humane, to celebrate alternatives that are ahead-of-the-curve. In Sambhav's leadership we have seen a rare agility, the tenacity, courage, and openness to deliver on design that puts human dignity and resilience first.

In our recent collaboration to experiment with a platform model that delivers the benefits of a data-driven economy to women, Sambhav and IT for Change worked with an entirely different conception of gig work; one that meets women where they are. Through this initiative, we were able to learn from the depth and scale of Sambhav's interventions with young women from the margins. We were able to trace how women's self-esteem and efficacy to encounter digital tomorrows is being built by the Sambhav vision. The partnership was a testimony to the possibilities of a truly gender-transformative platform economics; one that affirmed for us a politics of hope.

We know that it is in the work of organisations like Sambhav that we will see the abstract and abiding values of equity and social justice take concrete and contemporary shape. We are ever-so-glad to have been your co-travelers and would love to accompany you in the next decade and beyond.



Rajeswari Dhar

CSR Head
SRM Foundation,
SRM Group

My years at Sambhav Foundation coincided with a phase of deep growth, questioning, and consolidation. What struck me most, and continues to stand out even today, is the stability of the institution. In a sector marked by constant churn, Sambhav has quietly held on to its people. Many colleagues I worked with years ago continue to be part of the organisation, carrying forward not just programmes, but values, memory, and intent. That continuity is not accidental. It is the result of trust, shared ownership, and a culture that allows people to grow without losing sight of why the work matters.

This stability extends beyond the organisation to its relationships with donors and partners. Sambhav has been able to hold long-term donor relationships over many years, not through spectacle or over-promising, but through consistency, transparency, and delivery. Donors stayed because the organisation stayed honest about what was working, what was not, and what needed to change.

Sambhav's strength also lies in the diversity of its work. From livelihoods and skilling to education, sustainability, and community-led initiatives, the portfolio has always been wide. Yet what makes Sambhav distinct is its critical engagement with every project. There was never a fear of asking where we went wrong. Mistakes were acknowledged, assumptions challenged, and course corrections made deliberately. Learning was embedded into practice, not treated as an afterthought.

Over time, I witnessed Sambhav expand its footprint across geographies, reaching communities across multiple states in India. Scale was pursued with responsibility and reflection.

Sambhav represents an organisation that has learned how to endure, adapt, and stay honest. That is no small achievement over twenty years.



Neha Khare

CSR Manager
Oracle

Through Oracle's long-standing partnership with Sambhav, what has remained consistently evident is the organisation's clarity on what meaningful impact requires. These programmes were never conceived as isolated interventions. Across financial and digital literacy, community health, school sanitation, women's livelihoods, and disability inclusion, the work has focused on strengthening the systems around people, not merely delivering services.

Oracle's engagement has been anchored in long-term intent, strong governance, and alignment with programmes that are designed for scale and sustainability. This approach has allowed the partnership to engage with complexity by design. Working with migrant communities to improve access to healthcare, strengthening ASHA and public health networks, enabling safer learning environments in government schools, and more recently partnering with Saadhya to deepen disability empowerment systems have all required patience, trust, and sustained commitment.

What has enabled this work is leadership that stays close to the ground. The Sambhav team has remained deeply engaged with field realities while navigating multi-year, multi-sector programmes. This grounded approach allows the organisation to balance scale with sensitivity, and ambition with accountability.

As the Oracle partnership has evolved across grant cycles, the work has moved beyond immediate outputs to create durable outcomes. The partnership demonstrates how shared intent and long-term commitment can translate into systems-level impact that endures well beyond the life of a grant.



Rajesh AR

Trustee
Sambhav Foundation

I came to Sambhav with a habit of asking uncomfortable questions about scale, cost structures, and execution risk. That habit has stayed over time. What has kept me engaged is not any single programme or outcome, but the organisation's capacity to learn without losing direction.

I have worked with Gayathri long enough to know that agreement is not our default setting. We argue often about pace, priorities, trade-offs, and the risks of getting comfortable. Those disagreements are a strength in Sambhav's story; they are part of its operating logic and an important safeguard against drift.

Sambhav was built through continuous negotiation between intent and execution. Gayathri brings a deep moral clarity about why the work must be done. I bring an instinct to question how it is done, at what cost, and with what long-term consequences. The organisation sits in that tension. It has learned to hold ambition without haste, and care without complacency.

From a trustee's governance lens, what distinguishes Sambhav is not scale or visibility, but endurance. It has stayed relevant across funding cycles, policy shifts, and internal growth phases without losing its ethical centre. Decisions are debated, sometimes fiercely, but anchored in shared values rather than personalities.

This kind of institutional discipline is far harder to build than any single intervention and far more valuable in the long run. Two decades on, Sambhav reflects an organisation strengthened by internal challenge, sustained by care, and accountable to its purpose every day.



Vignesh S

Graphic Designer
Ditto Insurance

I have worked with Sambhav Foundation for many years as a graphic designer. Through reports, presentations, and now this compendium, I had the opportunity to sit closely with stories of people, programmes, and lives that changed in real ways.

As a designer, you shape how something is seen, but rarely enter the story itself. You work with text, images, data - elements that arrive already formed. Your role is to give them clarity, structure, visual coherence. But the narratives themselves often remain at a distance, abstracted by the process of design. Working with Sambhav was different.

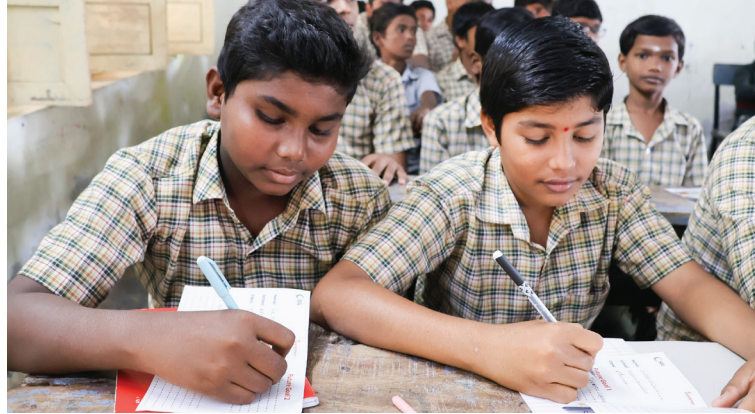
The materials I worked on carried the weight of lived experience: their effort, uncertainty, dignity, and persistence. These were not generic case studies or polished success stories. They were accounts of real people navigating systems that did not always make space for them seeking livelihoods, asserting rights, building capacity in contexts where support was scarce.

As I laid out these designs, I was constantly reminded that the work mattered - not because of its aesthetic, but because it represented people who trusted Sambhav, stayed with it, and built something larger than themselves. Design, in this context, became an act of responsibility. Every visual choice - how a photograph was framed, how a testimonial was placed, how data was presented - had to honor the integrity of what was being shared. It had to hold space for complexity, for progress that was incremental and hard-won, for outcomes that could not always be quantified.

I am grateful to have contributed, in my own way, to a journey that continues to create meaningful change. This compendium is not just a document of what has been achieved - it is a testament to the people who made it possible, and to the belief that change, however slow, is worth pursuing with integrity and commitment.









Dr. Gayathri Vasudevan

Chief Impact Officer
Sambhav Foundation

Building Sambhav

Building an organisation is not unlike building a house. You begin with an idea of what it should stand for, how it should be held up, what kind of shelter it should offer. Over time, the structure grows - sometimes as planned, often through improvisation - shaped by constraints, materials at hand, and the people who build alongside you.

Unlike a house, however, an organisation is built with people, and through people. These are individuals with whom you share not only work, but time and therefore, life. They work towards your vision, but they also reshape it. They challenge it, refine it, stretch it, and sometimes quietly correct it. Over time, they stop being colleagues or partners alone. They become something closer to family. Cousins, perhaps each bringing their own temperament, energy, commitment, and stubbornness. For all of that, I remain deeply grateful.

This compendium reflects some of those companions. It does not include everyone. There are few field staff represented here, and none of the candidates whose lives and labour are at the centre of our work. Yet every person included has played a role in helping us understand the wicked problem of ensuring decent livelihoods that Sambhav set out to address. They helped us see where our assumptions failed, where systems broke down, and where dignity had to be defended more carefully.

To a great extent, whatever success Sambhav has achieved belongs to them. The failures, however, remain mine. They sit with leadership, with the choices I made, and with the limits of what I could see at the time. This volume marks twenty years of shared effort, learning, disagreement, and care. It stands as a record of relationships that shaped an institution and, in many ways, shaped me.

20 YEARS

OF SAMBHAV FOUNDATION

COMPANIONS





COMPANIONS IN THE JOURNEY

