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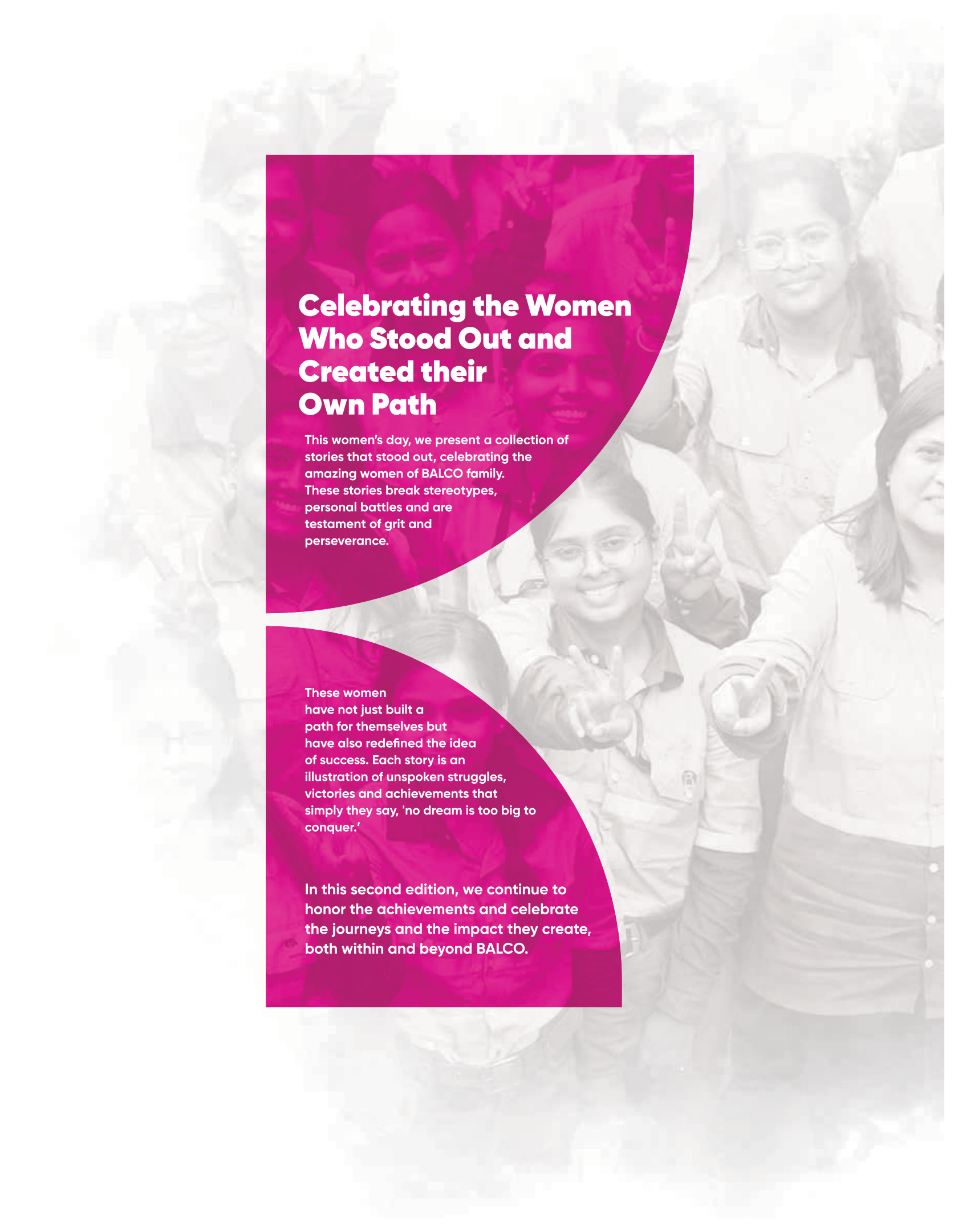
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Breaking Barriers with
Reverence & New Possibilities



International
WOMEN'S DAY
Edition 2



Celebrating the Women Who Stood Out and Created their Own Path

This women's day, we present a collection of stories that stood out, celebrating the amazing women of BALCO family. These stories break stereotypes, personal battles and are testament of grit and perseverance.

These women have not just built a path for themselves but have also redefined the idea of success. Each story is an illustration of unspoken struggles, victories and achievements that simply they say, 'no dream is too big to conquer.'

In this second edition, we continue to honor the achievements and celebrate the journeys and the impact they create, both within and beyond BALCO.



Dear Women,

This International Women's Day, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge each one of you at BALCO and across our communities who step forward every day with quiet determination and visible strength. I see you on our shop floors, in potlines, in mines, in control rooms, and in the field, contributing with resolve that steadily reshapes what leadership and excellence look like in our industry.

I am happy to share the progress in advancing women's leadership across our operations. Women crane pilots are setting benchmarks in operational excellence, while women leaders are steering key verticals with competence and accountability. As we progress towards 1 MTPA, the first metal tapping of the new smelter was successfully executed by women employees. Additionally, leadership and deputy roles across several verticals are now held by women, strengthened through focused Women Leadership Development Programs. Moreover, beam-raising across all three potlines and PTM operations are now entirely women-led. These are not isolated achievements; they are signals of a larger transformation underway.

Equally inspiring is the change we witness in our communities. Through our development initiatives, women are emerging as entrepreneurs, progressive farmers, and skilled professionals. They are not merely beneficiaries; they are partners in progress, contributing to local economies and shaping future aspirations. From being confined to traditional roles to confidently representing themselves at national platforms and exhibitions, your journey reflects courage, persistence, and self-belief.

As equal contributors to our growth, you have a defining role in building a more sustainable and responsible future for all. As we celebrate this day, I urge you to continue to challenge conventional thinking, set new benchmarks, and demonstrate what is possible when intent meets sustained action.

With deep respect and gratitude, I wish you all great success.

Mr. Rajesh Kumar

CEO & Director, Vedanta BALCO



Meet

Arpita Roy

Head – Quality Assurance & Process Control,
Vedanta BALCO

Arpita's journey is one of the responsibilities and determination shaped by the trust of her family. As a single child to her parents, she stood strong as a pillar for her mother as she battled Cancer.

She says, "Believe in your caliber when life tests you the most, trust yourself and life will give you the strength to move forward and grow!"

Born into a simple family of West Bengal, Arpita dreamt of pursuing engineering, she studied power engineering at National Power Training Institute. In 2009, she joined Vedanta's Lanjigarh alumina refinery as a Graduate Engineering Trainee (GET) being the only woman in power operations. That day her dream came alive.

As her journey progressed, she navigated diverse roles across power engineering, procurement, maintenance, outsourcing, and leadership development. Today, as Head of Quality Assurance and Process Control, she says there is a lot more that I wish to achieve!

What started as her father's wish to see his daughter financially independent now fuels her ambition to soar higher. As a mother of two, she supports her parents and in-laws while balancing work and motherhood gracefully.

When her mother's health demanded her presence, she took 3 months off work to care for her with her husband right beside her supporting every call she made. After a long battle with cancer, she lost her mother, a loss that deeply affected her. Yet, in the midst of grief, she chose resilience. Determined to keep moving forward, she returned to work with renewed focus and willingly took on additional responsibilities.

With a smile, she recalls how both her parents always stood tall beside her. From leaving Physics Honours to pursue Power Engineering, they trusted her judgement and encouraged her to follow her aspirations. Their belief gave her the confidence to take bold steps and continue moving forward.



Meet

Ankita Chouhan

Dy. CEO – Power, Vedanta BALCO



“How is electricity made?” That was the question that always bugged little Ankita. Curious to explore what goes behind a manufacturing plant, she remembers how during her train journey from Delhi to Etawah, a NTPC Power Plant always fascinated her; making her curious to understand what goes behind these huge power plant setups.

Committed to finding these answers, she soon realized that Fashion Designing had only been a passing interest and that her true inclination lay in engineering. She began her professional journey with Hindalco, where she spent 11 years working in the power plant. The role required her to work closely with on-ground operations, gaining practical exposure to the functioning of a power plant.

During this time, she developed a strong understanding of how a power plant is established and how its systems come together, from the placement of chimneys to maintaining the right pressure levels and managing several technical parameters essential for smooth operations. The complexity and scale of these processes intrigued her, and the challenges of working in such an environment continually motivated her to deepen her expertise and grow further in the field.

Eventually, Ankita got married in 2018 and started her family. However, life soon presented its own set of challenges. Choosing strength and independence, she decided to move forward with her little daughter and take charge of building a new path for herself. She chose to raise her four-year-old daughter independently.

She says, “Every challenge shapes you not just as a leader, but as a stronger individual and an even stronger mother. I had to stand up for myself and my child.” as she started rebuilding her life with an even stronger purpose.

Ankita's story reflects courage and self-belief. She later joined BALCO, carrying with her not only professional experience but also the determination to rise again. From joining as a Manager to becoming Dy. CEO – Power, the exposure to strategy, execution, and leadership helped shape her entrepreneurial mindset as she rebuilt her independence as a single parent.

Today, Ankita not only supports herself but also stands strong for her parents, continuing her journey with resilience and purpose.



Meet

Vidya Pandey

Senior Assistant – Library, Vedanta BALCO

Born in 1967, Vidya was merely 17 when she got married. But her happy married life dawned soon with her husband's passing. Her husband was supportive, but the young 26-years-old Vidya had no one beside her. Her siblings supported her for a while, but eventually the circumstances were such that she decided to take charge.

She joined BALCO in her husband's position. She recalls, "At that time, education was only till 11th grade; later 12th grade was introduced. I completed my 12th after joining." She started learning the roles and responsibilities that the job required. She took full charge of herself with the earnings she received.

Determined to keep learning, she pushed her limits and continued her education. She pursued a Bachelor's in Arts and a Bachelor of Library Science. She even took a computer course to keep up with the digital revolution. Her will to learn never stopped. According to her, education forms the foundation for growth and opportunity in every person's life.

As savings grew and financial struggles eased, she adopted a child and supported him. Her son is now 24 and works as a programmer at a reputed firm in Raipur. Vidhya made that possible. While building a life for herself, she also supports her sister's family, helping her kids with education.

Today, nearing retirement, Vidya feels happy that she has empowered not only herself but also her sister, while raising her child to stand strong. As the first female breadwinner in her family, she has led a wave of independence, inspiring many women around her.



Meet

Bhawani Rathiya

Forklift Operator – Paron Material,
HANI (Business Partner)



Quietly working in the smelters of BALCO, Bhawani can be spotted easily with her bright and chirpy smile that lights up the entire shift.

Handling forklift operations like a pro, with steady hands and fierce focus, she's always full of hope, ready to take on more responsibilities and rise higher.

Born into a simple Chhattisgarhi family, Bhawani was assigned male at birth, but deep down she always felt something was off. The world around her felt alien and mismatched, constantly pulling her heart.

She knew her truth, she was a trans woman, yet fear kept her from speaking openly. She faced constant bullying, and the weight of that eventually broke her spirit. Overwhelmed by the experience, she left college, choosing to step away from an environment that no longer felt safe.

She eventually moved to Garima Grah, where she learned new skills and gradually rebuilt her confidence. It was there that she also found companionship, in a simple gardening workshop at the hostel. It brought her closer to the person who later became her husband. The two got married in 2021.

A year later, she joined BALCO, determined to build a stable future. With discipline and hope, she began saving every penny towards the gender-affirming surgery she aspired to undergo.

In 2024, with BALCO's support, her dream finally became a reality. After undergoing three challenging surgeries, she felt aligned with who she truly was. Her first breast implant procedure had failed, which was a difficult setback, but she faced it with determination and chose to continue her journey.

At last, she felt alive, comfortable in her own identity. Her long fight for self-acceptance had come full circle. Today, she stands tall as a confident young woman, ready to face any obstacle that comes her way.



Meet

Santoshi

Housekeeping Staff,
Catalyst Service Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Born in the district of Janjgir, Santoshi was born into a humble family. Her parents married her at a very early age, but fate was harsh on her. A bond that should have flourished on mutual respect and trust turned into a difficult chapter in her life.

She endured constant humiliation at home and was often blamed even for speaking to other men. Many times, she felt the urge to leave, but the thought of her children held her back, as she was completely dependent on her husband. Over time, the emotional strain became overwhelming, pushing her to one of the lowest points in her life.

Yet, her story did not end there. During that difficult phase, she suffered a severe accident that left her with a fractured spine and months of painful bed-rest. With little support from her husband and brother, it was her sister who stood firmly by her side during recovery.

As she slowly recovered, she found odd jobs to sustain her life. Her proficiency in Hindi came to her rescue, she started baby sitting children for modest wages. "The kids fueled a new purpose in my life, I remember laughing with them after ages" she said with shining eyes.

Eventually a few families joined hands and supported her financially, helping her secure employment. Recalling those difficult days Santoshi says, "I used to get Rs. 5000 then. It wasn't enough, but it helped me survive. I continued taking up different roles, which helped me through rough days and supported me in moving forward."

Today she lives happily with her son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter. She continues to work with quiet determination, supporting her family and carrying forward a life rebuilt through hope and will to keep moving ahead.



Meet

Nutan Srivastava

Facility Manager, Catalyst Service Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
(Business Partner)



Born in Bihar, Nutan was always a bright young girl with quiet dreams and simple aspirations. Among those dreams was a wish to become a teacher.

Life moved forward steadily after her marriage, her husband was associated with BALCO through Catalyst Service Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Nutan had tucked her ambitions into a quiet corner of her heart and she was focused on building her family. But destiny had different plans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she lost her husband unexpectedly, and her world changed overnight. She was left to raise her little ones, a son and a daughter, on her own.

Grief pushed her back to her hometown. Yet somewhere beneath the pain, her spirit refused to give up. Instead of surrendering her circumstances, she chose movement over stillness.

What once felt like a distant dream of becoming a teacher, later became her strength to rebuild her life. She pursued her B.Ed., attended online classes, joined a school nearby and began taking tuition classes, not just to earn, but to stay occupied.

What started small, soon grew. Her dedication and sincerity drew over 15 students eager to learn from her. Teaching became a therapy that instilled strength and purpose.

Then came an unexpected turning point. An old friend of her husband reached out and shared an opportunity at BALCO. Nutan saw it as a chance to regain stability and independence. She joined as a Store Incharge, stepping confidently into a new professional chapter. With resilience and commitment, she later earned a promotion to the role of Facility Manager.

Today, Nutan stands strong, supporting her children, managing responsibilities with dignity, and shining once again. Her journey is not just about survival; it is about rising, rebuilding, and proving that even in the face of unimaginable loss, resilience can light the way forward.



Meet

Sreejana Ghosh

DCO – Spares & Consumables, Commodities,
Vedanta BALCO

Born into a Bengali family, Sreejana grew up as a single child, deeply inspired by her Nanu to pursue engineering. While many around her chose conventional paths, she chose to step into a world unfamiliar to her family, manufacturing. Determined and focused, she pursued Ceramic Technology Engineering from the Government College of Engineering & Ceramic Technology, securing an impressive third rank.

Coming from a finance-oriented family background, manufacturing was an entirely new terrain, but Sreejana embraced it with confidence. When she joined Vedanta BALCO, she worked diligently on the bake oven shopfloor, proving time and again that there is no role too tough for her.

She kept her pace and ached towards the commercial segment of the plant. She was also recognized as a 10% Club Winner under Jombay's 1000 Women Leaders Program, 2025. Sreejana also represented Vedanta BALCO internationally in Quality Circles.

She recalls a defining moment during the global alumina import crisis, when supply chains came to a standstill. "We underwent an import crisis, alumina supply was on hold across the globe. I was part of the team that worked on procuring raw materials and redistributing the supply chain. We mapped the supply chain end to end, spoke to multiple suppliers, and uncovered new leads, including several distressed vessels with unused capacity. By quickly securing these options, we stabilized the operations. Overcoming that crisis remains a special accomplishment for the entire team," she shares with pride.

For Sreejana, challenges are not roadblocks but stepping stones. With determination and strong ambition, she now sets her sights on becoming the youngest Chief Commercial Officer in the manufacturing industry.



Meet

Shalini Yadav

Head Football Coach, Khel Academy
(Sport Academy Supported by BALCO)



Shalini Yadav discovered her love for sports at an early age. It was her father's dream to see his daughter represent the country. What began as his wish slowly became her only ambition.

Shalini first stepped into the world of Karate, learning discipline and strength through every move. As life progressed and she changed schools, her interests began to evolve. What started as casually watching football matches from a distance gradually turned into curiosity, and soon into passion. Over time, football took centre stage in her life, shaping her focus and determination on the field.

Under the guidance of her coach, who soon became her mentor, Shalini trained relentlessly. Early mornings, rigorous drills, and a sharp focus shaped her into a formidable player. She went on to represent the country in 18 National Championships, playing in midfield and defence, and earned national-level recognition for her performance that cemented her place in the sport.

Today, Shalini stands tall as a football referee, having attended the FIFA MA Seminar six times, a reflection of both her technical expertise and credibility in the field. Recalling her journey, she says, "I say this with pride that I have played tournaments in every state of India. Each match has taught me something new and shaped me into who I am today."

Her contribution, however, extends far beyond her own career. When she stepped into the role of Head Coach, she guided the team with patience and belief in her players. Under her leadership, the Chhattisgarh team qualified for the Senior Women's National Championship after a gap of 24 years.

Determined to create pathways for others, she established her football academy in Raipur in 2017. The academy today mentors over 75 young athletes of which, 20 girls are playing national level tournaments.

Through structured coaching, rigorous practice, and constant mentorship, Shalini ensures her students learn more than just the game. She blends empathy with discipline, shaping confident individuals alongside skilled players. To many aspiring athletes, she is not just a coach, but a mentor who helps them believe that their dreams are very much achievable.



Meet

Anupa

BALCO's CSR Beneficiary, Bhoramdev Vidhyapeeth

From Kawardha to BSF, Anupa's journey is of firsts in Manjholi village of Kawardha, dreams usually stay within boundaries. Fields, homes, familiar roads, life moves in circles. But Anupa always wanted her journey to move forward.

She comes from a farming family where opportunities were limited, and competitive exams felt like a distant dream. Government jobs were discussed in conversations but rarely imagined for girls. Still, Anupa carried a fire within her. She did not say much, but she knew she wanted to wear the uniform one day.

Preparing for the SSC GD exam was not simple. Coming from a rural background, she had limited resources and lacked exposure. Every challenge stood in her way. There were moments when the syllabus felt endless and the competition felt overwhelming. But she kept showing up for herself.

When she joined the BALCO Connect – Bhoramdev Vidyapeeth Coaching Program, things slowly began to change. For the first time, she had access to structured preparation, proper study material, and mentors who believed she could do it. The dream no longer felt distant. Days turned into months of disciplined study and physical training. Doubts came, but she did not allow them to settle. She reminded herself of her goal and focused even harder.

And then it happened.

Anupa cleared the SSC GD examination and secured her selection in the Border Security Force. From the small village of Kawardha to the BSF, she became the first girl from her village to crack a government examination.

Today, when she stands in uniform, she does not just represent herself, she represents every rural girl who was told to limit her dreams. Her journey is different, because she chose not to let her background decide her future.



Meet

Aruna Singh

Lead Design & Documentation,
Growth Projects, Vedanta BALCO



Aruna wished to be a police officer but over time, that dream changed a little. Aruna grew up and pursued M.Sc. in chemistry and later joined BALCO, beginning her professional journey in the Quality Assurance Laboratory.

She spent 13 years in the laboratory, working closely in a close-knit team of female colleagues. Those years built her technical foundation and confidence. During this time, she got married in Korba and gradually balanced her professional and personal life. She is now a proud mother of two, a six-year-old daughter and a one-year-old son.

Life's real turning point came after her second baby. During her second pregnancy, she faced a sudden departmental transfer from QA Lab to Projects. Everything felt new, added responsibilities, new processes, and a completely different work environment. Managing pregnancy, motherhood, and a new department at the same time was stressful. But her colleagues and management made it easy.

They trusted her abilities and helped her adapt smoothly to the new role. After completing her six-month maternity leave, when she rejoined, she felt welcomed and valued. "When I returned after my maternity leave, nothing felt different, in fact, I felt stronger and more confident than before." said Aruna.

That phase taught me an important lesson that change does not always mean difficulty; sometimes it becomes the reason for growth. The experience of pregnancy, the departmental shift, and the support she received during that time together molded her professionally as well as personally.

Today, Aruna looks back at that period with gratitude, as it was not just a challenging phase, but a chapter that made her stronger.



Meet

Kamleshwari Salam

BALCO's CSR Beneficiary, Vedanta Skill School

Life was never easy for Kamleshwari. She lost her parents at a very young age. Growing up in Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh, she was raised by her uncle and aunt. The family's income was limited but responsibilities were far too many. In those difficult times, the only person she felt closest to was her brother.

Kamleshwari studied until class 12. Her guardians often reminded her of the value of education, believing that it was the only path to standing on one's own feet.

She always enjoyed science and dreamed of pursuing studies in STEM. She always hoped to work in a tech-based company. However, financial constraints became a major barrier. She had to discontinue her education. So, to support her family she began working in agricultural fields.

Yet, the dream stayed alive within her.

One day, she came across a WhatsApp message about Vedanta Skill School. Without hesitation, she called and enrolled in the Mobile Phone Hardware Repair Technician course. During the training, she remained dedicated and learned patiently. She explored the different mobile components, circuits, fault detection, and repair at the component level. Though everything was new for her, she stayed consistent. Gradually, her confidence began to grow, and she felt herself moving closer to the life she once imagined.

After successfully completing the training, Kamleshwari secured placement at TATA Electronics as an Operator with an annual CTC of Rs. 2,16,000 along with PF and ESIC benefits.

Today, she is independent and supports her family, proving how the right opportunity can help reignite dreams that once seemed out of reach.



Meet

Kamla Bhagat

BALCO's CSR Beneficiary - Mor Jal Mor Maati



Kamla a 35-year-old, lives in Bela village in Korba district. For years, her world revolved around just 2 acres of land, the only source of food and income for her family. Farming on such limited land meant constant uncertainty. One bad season could disrupt everything. Managing household expenses, children's needs, and daily meals often became a struggle.

There were days when Kamla would mentally calculate and recalculate expenses, wondering how long the situation could continue. She knew that depending only on traditional farming was not enough to sustain her family. The land was small, but her responsibilities were not.

In 2018–19, when the project 'Mor Jal Mor Maati' extended its support to her village, Kamla saw a ray of hope. She decided to try mushroom farming. There was hesitation, but there was also hope.

With patience and dedication, she learned the process and carefully followed every step. When she earned Rs. 12,000 from her first mushroom yield, she felt different. For the first time, she felt that her family's future could change.

Today, Kamla has built multiple sources of income. Her journey reflects how determination and the right opportunity can transform lives, even when resources are limited.

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