

HER SKILL HER FUTURE

Empowering 100,000 Widows in India



**WOMEN'S
COLLECTIVE FORUM**



FOUNDATION®



THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION
Caring for widows around the world



Her Skill, Her Future: Empowering 100,000 Widows in India

The Loomba foundation

For centuries, the struggles of widows have been a hidden calamity, overlooked and neglected by society. According to a University of Cambridge study, Not Leaving Widows Behind, 285 million widows worldwide face severe hardships, including poverty, illiteracy, disease, and social injustice. Alarmingly, 46 million live in India. The Loomba Foundation was established to break this silence, restore dignity, and create opportunities for widows everywhere.

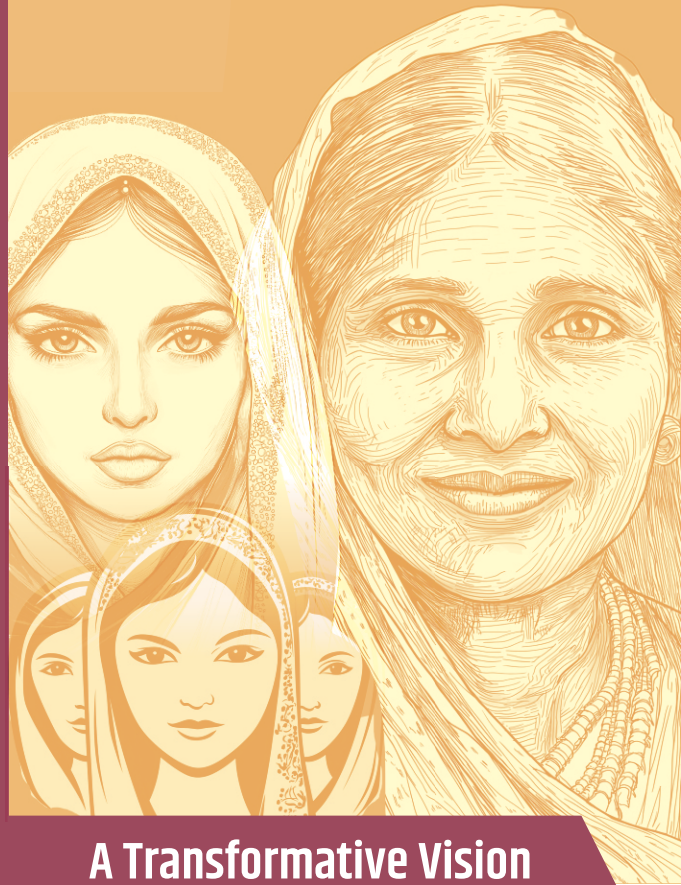
The inspiration behind this mission stems from the personal journey of Lord Rajinder Paul Loomba CBE, whose late mother, Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba, became a widow at the early age of 37. Lord Loomba, who was only 11 years old at the time, witnessed firsthand the suffering and discrimination his mother faced as a widow. Despite immense challenges, she single-handedly educated her seven children, including her daughters, laying the foundation for a legacy of compassion and change.

Officially launched in London in 1998 in the presence of The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP and Ms. Cherie Blair, the Loomba Foundation quickly garnered international recognition. In India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Prime Minister, inaugurated the Foundation at his residence in New Delhi in 1999, signaling its importance to the nation.

The flagship initiative of the Loomba Foundation was the launch of June 23rd as International Widows Day in 2005, a day of action to raise awareness about the plight of widows around the world. After a tireless campaign, the United Nations adopted June 23rd as International Widows Day through a declaration at the UN General Assembly in New York in 2010. This day holds particular significance, as Lord Loomba's mother became a widow on this day in Punjab, India in 1954.

UN Women has rightly recognized Lord Loomba as the first Founding Champion of the Circle of Widows' Rights in June 2013. Today, he is widely acknowledged as the Pioneer of Widows' Rights.

The Loomba Foundation is privileged to have received unwavering support from the UK's Royal Family, the governments of India and Britain, the United Nations, multinational corporations, philanthropists, and dignitaries from around the globe in its mission to empower widows worldwide.



A Transformative Vision

Aligning with Lord Loomba's vision, Ms. Smriti Zubin Irani, a staunch advocate for women's empowerment and the rights of widows, has joined the Loomba Foundation as its Vice President. Her leadership is poised to strengthen the foundation's efforts in India, ensuring its mission is pursued with precision, compassion, and measurable impact.

In her capacity as an Advisory Board Member of the Women's Collective Forum, Ms. Irani played a pivotal role in bringing the Forum and the Loomba Foundation together and facilitating their partnership with the CII Foundation. This collaboration spearheads Her Skill, Her Future: Empowering 100,000 Widows, a transformative initiative dedicated to fostering sustainable livelihoods for widows in India.

This initiative aims to equip 100,000 widows with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to achieve sustainable livelihoods. It is a commitment to fostering economic independence, social equity, and long-lasting transformation. Guided by the principle of "Not Leaving Widows Behind," the program aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 5: Gender Equality, and Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

The Need for Skilling

At the heart of Her Skill, Her Future lies the belief that skilling is empowerment. Skills are not merely tools for employment; they are pathways to self-reliance, enabling widows to educate their children and lead lives of dignity. By equipping widows with commercially relevant skills, this initiative opens doors to formal employment, entrepreneurship, and active economic participation.

The Role of CII Foundation in Transforming Lives

The CII Foundation, as the developmental arm of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), brings unparalleled strengths to this transformative initiative for widows. Representing a powerful network of industries and businesses across India, CII Foundation is uniquely positioned to align skilling efforts with market demands, ensuring that the training provided is not only relevant but also transformative.

Through its extensive network of industry leaders, policy influencers, and changemakers, the CII Foundation will ensure that widows trained under this program have access to real employment opportunities and entrepreneurial pathways. This includes creating job placement pipelines, fostering industry mentorship, and facilitating collaborations with enterprises to promote long-term economic inclusion for widows.

For widows, this initiative offers more than just training—it delivers life-changing opportunities to rebuild their futures. By addressing immediate livelihood needs and aligning skills development with industry trends, the program creates a sustainable foundation for widows to:

- Secure stable employment in high-demand sectors.
- Build entrepreneurial ventures with access to markets and resources.
- Establish financial independence and contribute to their families' well-being.

The CII Foundation's involvement amplifies the reach and impact of Her Skill, Her Future, ensuring that women across India are equipped to succeed in a rapidly evolving economy. With industry expertise at its core, this initiative guarantees that widows are not just skilled but empowered to thrive—economically, socially, and personally.

The Role of Women's Collective Forum in Her Skill, Her Future

In the Her Skill, Her Future initiative, the Women's Collective Forum (WCF) brings its expertise in bridging grassroots action with strategic program implementation to empower 100,000 women across India. WCF's focus on community engagement and impact-driven solutions will ensure that skilling programs are tailored to the unique challenges faced by widows, equipping them with sustainable livelihoods and pathways to independence.

By fostering inclusive growth and driving economic empowerment, WCF will ensure that this initiative not only transforms individual lives but also creates a ripple effect of positive change within families and communities, contributing to long-lasting societal progress.



The Road Ahead

As we come together to celebrate this momentous launch, we invite you to be part of this transformative journey. Through the collective efforts of the Loomba Foundation, the CII Foundation, and the Women's Collective Forum, we aim to create a future where every widow is empowered to rebuild her life and shape a brighter future for her children, embodying the true spirit of "Not Leaving Widows Behind".

**Your presence here
is more than an
acknowledgment of the
work accomplished-
it is a testament to
the belief that, together
as a society, we possess the
capacity to uplift, inspire,
and transform.**



CONNECT WITH US

- ✉ womenscollectiveforum@gmail.com
- ✉ ceo-ciifoundation@cii.in
- ✉ hemant@theloombafoundation.org