

2017 Here for Good Awards Application - Faculty/Staff

- **Name of applicant(s) or nominee(s)***

Prof. Dr. Bhavna Chadha

Associate Professor Bela Gupta

- **Title or position of applicant(s) or nominee(s)***

Prof. Dr. Bhavna Chadha- Head Corporate Relations

Associate Professor Bela Gupta- Faculty and CC for UGFD

- **Name of nominator**

Pearl Academy

- **Age of the applicants**

Prof. Dr. Bhavna Chadha – 43 years

Associate Professor Bela Gupta – 44 years

- **University or institution of employment**

Pearl Academy

- **Office location**

A-21/13,Naraina Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi -110028

Please provide a brief description of the project or initiative. In this response, tell us what the inspiration for the project was and who it involves (both in carrying it out and as beneficiaries).*

Prelude: The wheel is the biggest symbol of industrial revolution. Mahatma Gandhi, hailed as ‘Father of the Nation’ brought about a revolution in the freedom movement of India through his spinning wheel – the Charkha. The wheel of a sewing machine is now set to bring a social and economic revolution amongst a section of India languishing in its prisons which the society knows as ‘prisoners’ and ‘criminals’. I, Bhavna Chadha and Bela Gupta from Pearl Academy saw them in a different light – these prisons as incubators of some of India’s greatest talent and the prisoners as India’s talented workforce.

“I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really. Get busy living or get busy dying”

Andy Dufrense, when he enters the prison in the popular movie Shawshank Redemption

Mira Raghav (name changed) is young, 24 year old from a small satellite town of Delhi NCR, currently serving a 7 year jail term.

Her crime - Attempted murder of her mother-in-law who abused her for dowry. Mira took this extreme under repeated demands of dowry harassment and now finds herself languishing under the thick walls of Jail No 6 of Asia's largest prison complex – Tihar.

“My husband has remarried and my father has passed away. By the time I get out of jail, I don't know where I will stay or what I will do”, says Mira.

There are thousands like Mira, where the future is very bleak. Listening to similar stories led to the birth of a 'Fashion Laboratory' at Jail No 6, Women's Prison, Tihar Jail.

It is easy to label these women as criminals but when both of us dwelt a little into their circumstances and what pushed them over the edge to commit these crimes, often stories of struggle and survival came to the fore. These stories became a guiding force for our endeavour to set up this lab where these women could get rid of this label of being a 'criminal' and live with dignity as mothers, daughter and most importantly, as women who can contribute to nation building by becoming a part of the workforce.

The one resource that is aplenty in a prison is time. This time, if given the right vocation would have not only led to a positive reform among the prisoners but also provided them hope to lead a life filled with self-worth and dignity. The fashion lab is a state of the art facility with the latest equipment with complete industrial standards of machinery, pattern tables and sewing machines. The inmates will be imparted training for basics in design and construction of women's garments.

Laying a strong foundation

It was in December 2015, when we got an opportunity to design the uniforms for Delhi Police which became the perfect pitch to showcase our design credentials and the commitment that we can bring on table in planning and executing these projects to their rightful completion.

A pitch for setting up this fashion laboratory in Tihar premises was received well, but also met with doubts and concerns over its impact and sustainability.

We took the challenge to counter the doubts to convince the jail authorities on how this project, if given a green signal, will change the lives of thousands of these women not just at Tihar, but also in other prisons around India.

Setting up the Pearl Team

5 members comprising two members from the academic team, led by me from Corporate Relations and Bela Gupta from the School of Fashion started the project.

Today, the team strength is 135 involving 15 faculty members and 120 students across the four streams of fashion, design, creative business and media & journalism to conduct workshops and do collaborative projects with the inmates. We are being ably supported by the marketing team to ensure sufficient and effective amplification across relevant media.

Getting the basics right

The project was designed with some important elements such as:

- Certification by Pearl Academy on completion of a three month module
- Industry – oriented curriculum
- Two level assessment
 - Proficiency Assessment by Pearl Academy to build professional credentials for the inmates
 - Character Certificate – issued by the prison authorities for better acceptance by industry

We also worked thoroughly on a sustainable business plan to convince the prison authorities on the possibilities of building scale and ensuring wider social and economic impact. We went a step ahead by building convergence between the fashion lab and other projects of Tihar such as weaving and Tiharhaat (the flagship store which sells products made by inmates).

Imparting Life Skills

To create avenues for self-employment and entrepreneurship and ensure that the inmates can lead independent businesses if required, Pearl Academy will also be conducting workshops imparting critical life skills for the inmates which will serve as quick refresher courses to set up small business units.

Building brand Tihar Fashion Lab

Brand Identity

The brand identity of the fashion lab – a thread on the sewing machine creating a world full of colour and possibilities is a visual both endearing and effective. While on one hand, it attracts an inmate to the colourful world of fashion and brings alive the possibilities therein, it also takes them away from the shadows of their hounding past. Motivational messages and quotes from well-known national and international leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King have also been put up as posters on the walls of the lab to act as constant suppliers of hope and encouragement to the inmates.

Additionally, Pearl Academy students, along with a few inmates, collaborated to paint the walls outside the lab to involve them in the process and make them feel an integral part of the team.

Choosing Influencers

The best strategy to build traction for this lab amongst masses would have been 'deflected glory' where spokespersons from different realms such as fashion, education and the government of India would have acted as 'influencers' to talk about the positive impact of this initiative. We identified three spokespersons from these streams, who came on the day of the inauguration to talk to the media about the same. Apart from the above, Pearl Academy, through its collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India, plans to build more such influencers and spokespersons for this initiative which will be strategically leveraged in the media to spread a positive word.

Launch of the Fashion Lab

8th February was a historic day for Pearl Academy. The brick and mortar structure of the fashion laboratory set up in Tihar came alive with a newfound hope for the inmates to learn and acquire new skills and look forward to a life outside prison. Mr Sudhir Yadav, Director General of Tihar Jail and our CEO – Professor Nandita Abraham jointly inaugurated the Fashion Laboratory on 8th Feb'2017. Extending their support to this unique initiative aimed at skilling and hence empowering women inmates, Mrs. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary Directorate of Training and Technical Education, Govt. of India and Mr. Abhishek Singh, District Magistrate, New Delhi graced the day with their presence and support. Also garnering support from the fashion industry who lauded Pearl Academy's efforts, Ms. Rina Dhaka, a renowned fashion designer of India came to the event, personally encouraging the inmates to make full use of the fashion laboratory.

While the launch saw the presence of senior leaders from Tihar, Pearl Academy and the Government of India, it was most important for us to make the inmates feel a part of this initiative. It was important for us to make the inmates see the possibilities of this coming alive.

This was done through a unique fashion show and a cultural show which saw the collaborative participation of Pearl Academy students, faculty as well as the inmates of Tihar.

Beneficiaries

Delhi Prisons: Tihar has always been in the news for not being any other prison but for being a reformation centre which relentlessly pursues to ensure rehabilitation and acceptance of inmates by teaching them critical skills required to live a dignified life outside prison. This initiative is a feather in their cap and one that is being looked at as a successful model for replication in other prisons.

Woman Inmates: "Educate a girl, empower a nation". This initiative has not only proved to be an incubator of the inmates' talent, equipping them with a new skill to get a new livelihood, but has also helped stop the perpetual vicious cycle of these inmates falling into the rut of criminal activities post

their release. It will help act as the perfect navigator in finding the right means of livelihood in a society where they might find themselves shunned and rejected owing to their past. It is an endeavour to empower them to step out in to a bright future from their dark past.

Society: A lot of women inside this prison are living with their children who are currently dependent on the jail authorities for their school fee and education needs. This program, with its unique placement assistance, aims at rehabilitating not just these women but their families by picking up jobs and supporting their children's education. Thus, it helps making the future of these children and the society at large, a bright one!

Nation Building: 'Skill India Mission' is an important program of Government of India under which, focussed initiatives are being taken to build India's workforce into a skilled workforce. While the government is running various schemes to skill India's poor and underprivileged, Tihar Fashion Laboratory has gone a step further by making this mission an 'inclusive' one by including these inmates who might not find themselves on any government agenda in the context of skill - building.

Education with a heart: Students and faculty members of Pearl Academy have set a remarkable example by not just putting together this facility at the jail but also by closely collaborating with the inmates for all the cultural performances put together at the inaugural event where the inmates danced and sang with them without any inhibitions or fear of being judged. We hope and believe that this will go a long way in inculcating acceptance and appreciation for these inmates in the hearts and minds of the young. Students selflessly came forward for this initiative and are keen to partner these inmates for putting together fashion shows or collections made by these inmates.

Please provide a brief description of the impact of the project or initiative. In this response, give a picture of what specific benefits the project brings to a group or community, citing statistics about number of people impacted, number of partnerships formed or number of volunteers involved, if possible.

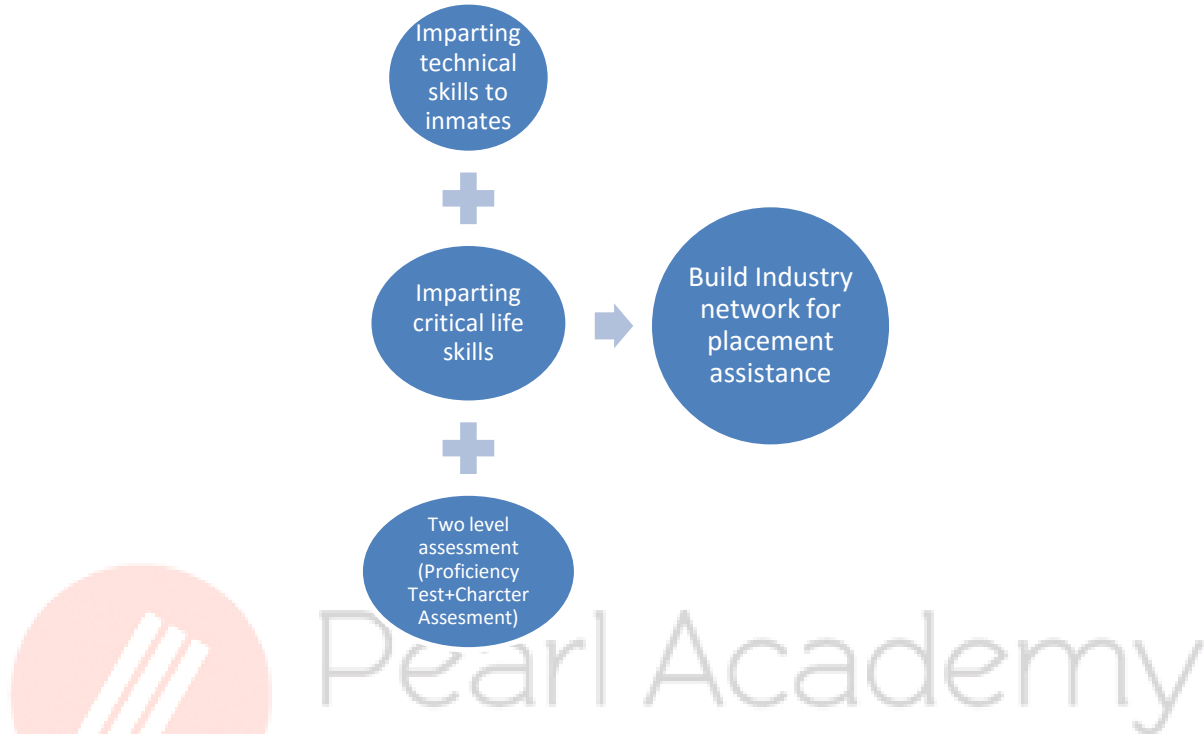
Statistics

According to a survey on Tihar Jail, conducted by the students of Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi in 2015, 'Most of these women come from economically backward sections of the society' and therefore a need gap of developing stronger skills in these women inmates was identified. The fashion lab aims at addressing this gap by providing industry-oriented skills which will prove to be fruitful in getting employment and hence, a dignified means of livelihood. Moreover, more than 44% of the women, when they are released from jails, get into a vicious circle of criminal activities such as prostitution and drug trafficking due to lack of any employment avenues.

The Fashion Lab @ Tihar: Current Mechanism

Pearl Academy has signed a 5 year agreement with Tihar Jail for this initiative. The impact model, divided in two stages, as envisaged, is appended below

GEN 1



Under this, the inmates will go through a three months certification program to acquire technical skills and critical life skills. They will then, undergo a two level assessment, as explained earlier and directed to opportunities for absorption in the industry. The average salary that a graduate of this program will draw is anything between Rs 10,000 – 15,000 per month.

GEN 2

Enrolment in an Up gradation Course

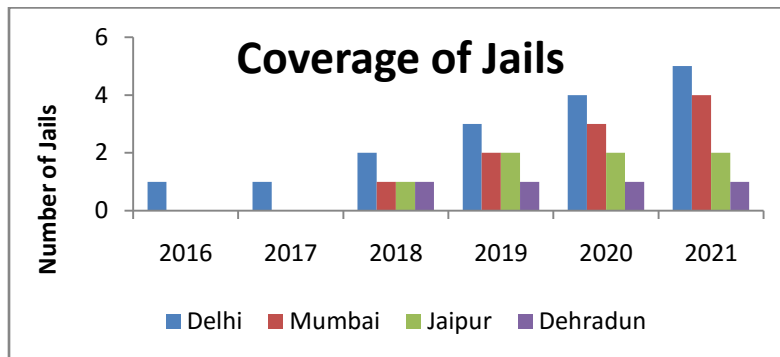
Pearl Academy runs weekend courses for adults which aim at building focussed and specialised skills for a certain professionals. 20% of graduates of GEN 1 can be enrolled in these courses at subsidised fees to build more skills and climb up the professional ladder. This program will take their salary from Rs 10,000 to Rs 25,000 per month.

Projections of Impact

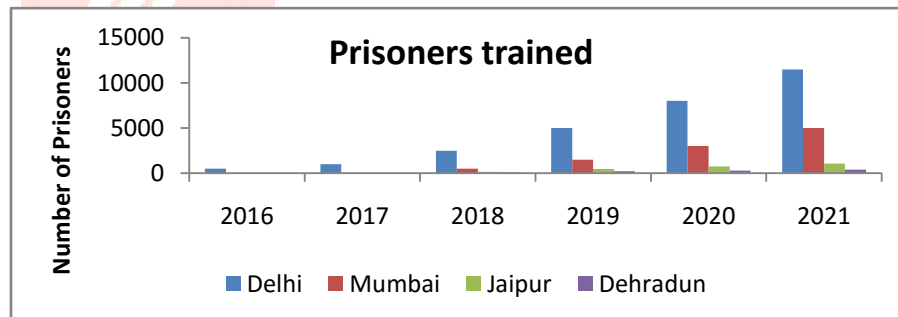
Economic Impact

1. The Hub and Spoke Model

Replicate the success of Tihar in Delhi in other prisons in the catchment area of our other campuses in Noida, Mumbai and Jaipur. Extending the 'Here for Good' spirit of this project to our other Laureate partner in India – University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) at Dehradun, we have also worked on a plan to set up a 'Wood Lab' and a 'Metal Lab', leveraging the skills that can be imparted by UPES. The plan on covering the prisons in these states is as follows:



Looking at the impact of this project in the next five years (2017-2021), our projection is that we would choose jails within the coverage area of the three campuses of Pearl Academy and Dehradun, where we would collaborate with UPES. Every year a new jail would be added along with the existing one that we are working on. Therefore by 2021 we would impart skills to prisoners of 12 jails in these 4 cities.



Beginning with training 500 prisoners, we would finally achieve a target of 17950 trained prisoners by the end of 2021

Building Sustainability through strategic collaborations

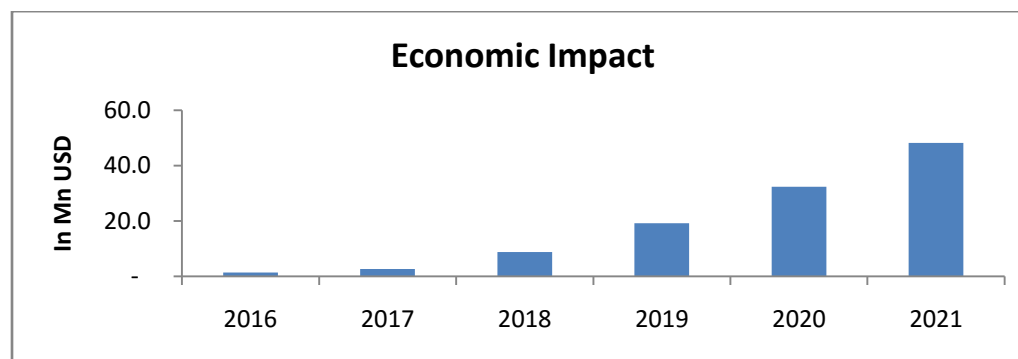
While the success of the Tihar initiative has given us immense confidence to replicate this at other prisons, we are also building strategic collaborations with corporates since we will need to incur a cost of Rs 1, 12,000 for each lab to provide them with sewing machines, pattern tables and other tools. This cost also includes the cost of training the facilitator for conducting these programs which can be borne by Pearl Academy. For the infrastructure, Bela and I are already in talks with India's leading sewing

machines manufacturer – Usha which is more than happy to sponsor the sewing machines for setting up these labs at other prisons.

Building the economy through industry participation

One of the most important and effort consuming legs of this project was ensuring industry acceptance of these inmates. Rina Dhakha, a renowned fashion designer came forward and announced during the inauguration that she will be happy to give employment to these inmates. This endorsement has helped us build a strong network of companies, export houses and private labels which are more than happy to become a part of this initiative. We have received a positive response to these inmates getting jobs at these places.

Additionally, our students' participation in this project has also helped us inculcate a sense of responsibility among them, towards these inmates. Since a lot of our students become entrepreneurs themselves, it further strengthens our plans to ensure economic rehabilitation of these women.



When hired by the industry, the minimum remuneration earned by a prisoner will be \$ 224 per month. This would help in creating an economic impact to the effect of 48.2 million US Dollars.

Changing the Dynamics of Prison Economy

The Indian prisons are overcrowded and have an occupancy ratio of close to 120%. With more inmates being added to jails every year, the expenditure on inmates is also rising. As per the data available with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the average annual expenditure on a prison inmate increased from Rs 19447 in 2010-11 to Rs 29538 in 2014-15. The initiative aims at bringing down this cost by almost 23% through its strategically designed certification program and the vital component of job assistance.

Straight from the Heart

Emotional Impact

The project is showing a very positive impact and within a month of being launched, has received a huge response from the inmates. "I am happy that I will get to learn stitching and embroidery. I plan to make clothes for my grandchildren and prove to them that their grandma is not a bad woman", says 58 year old Atinder Kaur, an inmate.

"I plan to open a small boutique or a shop where I will make semi stitched clothes for fat women since it is difficult for them to get their right sizes", says a beaming Neha.

Inmate Princess has a brilliant idea of stitching and making matching accessories along with the clothes to her customers.

Andy Dufrense's character, consoling his fellow inmate – Red, in the movie – Shawshank Redemption says – ***"Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies."***

In its own unique way, we have tried to establish the Fashion Laboratory at Tihar as an eternal source of supply of hope and we hope that it will, in years, become a symbol of our embodiment of 'here for good', an initiative that more than anything, bridged the gap between skills and dignity of life and a talented pool of women, who the society only calls 'criminals'!

Media Coverage: The launch of the program saw *unprecedented coverage by the media and was covered in all major channels and newspapers and got 16 million worth of earned media in print and television as well as social media*

Highlights

News Update			
Sr. No.	Portals	Headline	Link
1	Business Today	Tihar Jail will teach fashion designing to its women inmates	http://www.businesstoday.in/buzztop/buzztop-feature/tihar-jail-will-teach-fashion-designing-to-its-woman-inmates/story/246049.html
2	The Indian Express	This fashion academy brings new hope for Tihar Jail's women prisoners	http://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/fashion/pearl-fashion-academy-tihar-jail-women-prisoners-4515965/

3	AajTak	Tihar Jail sets up 'Fashion Laboratory' for women inmates	http://aajtak.intoday.in/story/fashion-show-in-tihar-jail-fashion-institute-to-help-women-prisoners-learn-art-of-fashion-1-911257.html
4	The Asian Age	Fashion enters Tihar	http://www.asianage.com/life/fashion/100217/fashion-enters-tihar.html
5	In Shorts	Tihar Jail sets up 'Fashion Laboratory' for women inmates	https://www.inshorts.com/news/tihar-jail-sets-up-fashion-laboratory-for-women-inmates-1486641944987



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