



stories of strength

aloha







## THREADS OF HOPE

---

Mrs. Rajashree Birla, Chairperson;  
Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and  
Rural Development

Service to society is at the core of our values. The philosophy of caring and giving is threaded in the texture of our Group. Beyond business, we reach out to thousands of underprivileged. Resolute in our endeavours to enrich lives. Being engaged with the underprivileged people, and in our own humble way, trying to change their lives, has been and continues, to be a soul lifting experience.

It's beyond words. The change is palpable, and transformative. From despair, to hope. From servitude, to self-confidence. From a life of dependence, to a life of dignity, and self-esteem. "In fact, without community initiatives, our Group's journey would be incomplete, and our achievements, less rewarding", avers our Chairman, Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla.

A little aside. We have seen their work at close quarters in the villages and in the factories. Amazingly, ABFRL have made their business too a great pasture for doing good. Nearly 14,000 women stitch the famed ABFRL brands that most men and women don. And all the while the women are at the shop floor their little ones are lovingly nestled in their in-factory crèches.

So kudos to ABFRL's leadership team, led by Mr. Ashish Dikshit for their amazing community work. What is to be seen to be believed is their passion, their commitment, and their resoluteness to make a difference to those not as privileged as we all are.



## THE WAY FORWARD

---

Dr Pragnya Ram, Group Executive President;  
Group Head - CSR, Legacy Documentation & Archives,  
Aditya Birla Group

Being a force for good, is the vibrant undercurrent, streaming through our CSR engagements. A passion and a calling that courses through the veins of our teams at ABFRL. The entire fabric is stitched, with the threads of humanity, compassion and the joyful willingness to give. And as our icon and mentor, Mrs. Rajashree Birla cajoles us all "to think beyond yourself".

'Dhaage' is a delightful capture of ABFRL's CSR work. Like a prism, it refracts the multifaceted dimensions of our team's involvement in bettering lives. In the villages with a multitude of development programmes. Be it the model village. Be it champions who have emerged from the education projects, shining bright. Or teams that rose out of Kausalya. We have marched forward in changing the face of village after village. So proud of our close linkages with ABFRL.



## WEAVING STORIES

---

Ashish Dikshit, Managing Director,  
Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited

While deciding on the narration of these success stories, we went into the core of what makes us who we are as an organisation. At the end of each business day, we are just people trying our best to be there for the communities around us, continuing and supporting their endeavors. We are all just a part of a long spool of this thread.

Looking inwards, we found a perfect metaphor – Dhaage. Using the plural term, we explored the role of a single thread in strengthening a fabric. We can experiment all we want with weaving, patterns and colours, but what matters is the strength of a thread – multiples of them stick together to become cloth. It's the individuals that make up for the success of a project.



## VERSES OF CHANGE

---

Dr. Naresh Tyagi, Chief Sustainability Officer,  
Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited

When we set out to create Dhaage, we intended to highlight the stories of strength we have experienced in our fieldwork. These stories have innate humanness, and we wanted to bring them out on paper. To bring out the intangibles in these tales, we have included a set of Haikus in the narrative, threaded together with minimalistic illustrations.

Short-form poetry from Japan, haiku has three lines with a 5-7-5 syllable count. These lines don't rhyme and are majorly used to communicate the essence and intensity of worlds in simple, vivid and direct words.

This Coffee Table Book is an attempt to highlight the strength and determination of our communities. We hope these stories will find a place in your heart, just like they reside in ours.



# PLATING FUTURES

As a set of hands stack the freshly pressed plates, bangles jingle on one another. The Maa Batabhuasuni SHG team is gearing up to finish a new batch of packaged paper plates. Their handiwork would soon serve happiness to merrymakers in far away cities. And the women will earn their financial independence to fuel and nurture their desires to live on their own terms.

 **Ogalapada**  
**ODISHA**

bangled-hands stack plates  
one, and two, and three, and four -  
building a future





# FUELING DREAMS

Rubeena Bano's life was set for an ambitious curve when she cleared her 10th standard exams with flying colours. She kept going and repeated her feat in 12th and eventually became a graduate with dreams of pursuing one of the most coveted careers in the country. She wishes to become an IAS officer, fuelling her sisters to surpass her in ambition. Nothing makes her happier.

 **Channapatna**  
**KARNATAKA**

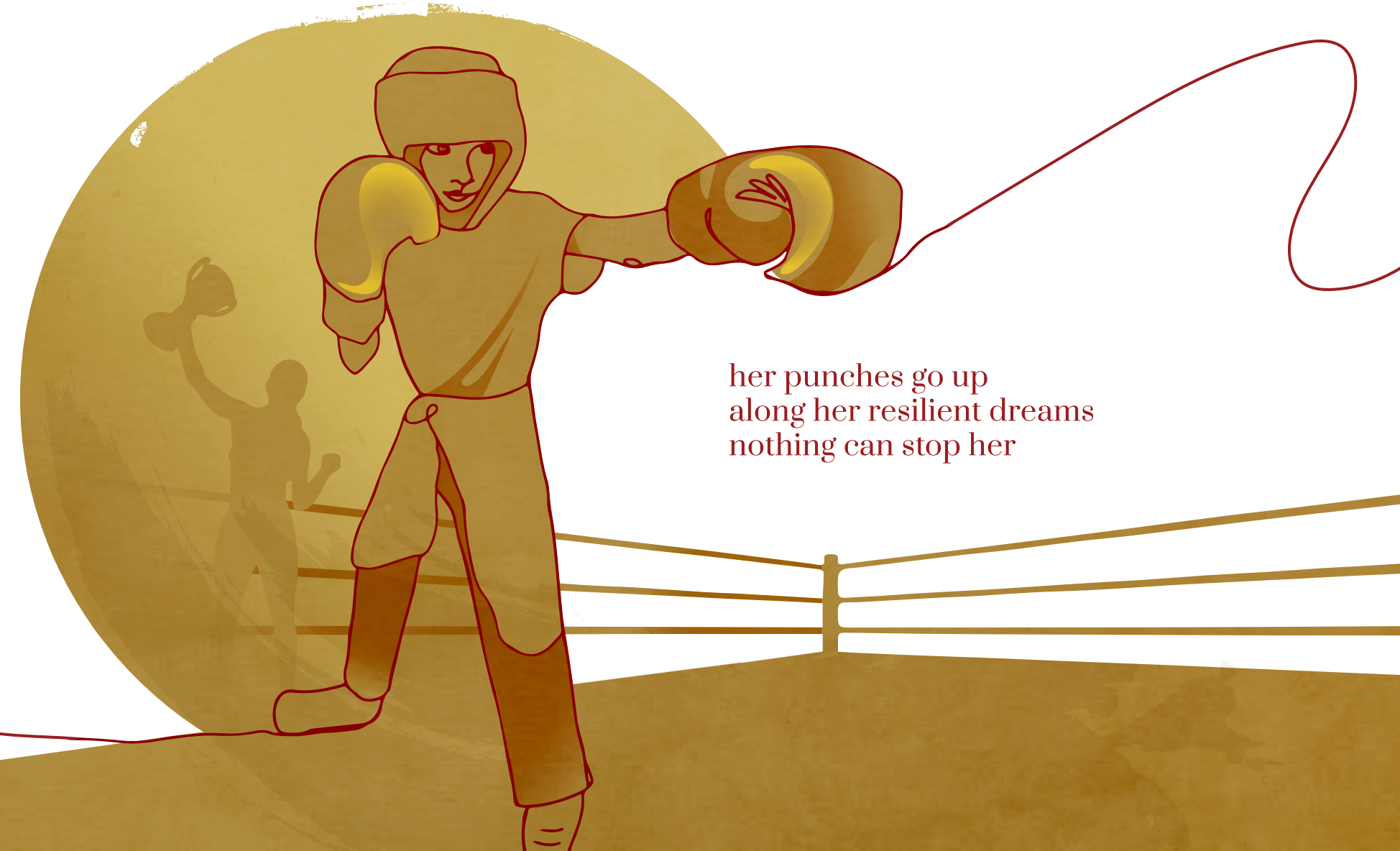
her desire fuels them  
all-consuming ambitions  
are now family



# BOXING HER WAY UP

Drupata's interest in martial arts blossomed when she joined the classes. Eventually, she found herself a place in the world of boxing, throwing punches along the way. She has won several awards for boxing at state and national levels. With her confidence growing manifold, there is no stopping her!

 Panvel  
**MAHARASHTRA**



her punches go up  
along her resilient dreams  
nothing can stop her

# RECHARGING LIFE

A three-acre land in Sollepura can yield a lot more, Bilavendran believed. But he was restricted due to a lack of water. Persevering to find better answers, he set out to dig a new pond on his farm. It serves as storage for rainwater and replenishes his existing defunct well. Bilavendran's success got him not just a better yield but also prompted farmers in nearby villages to look for such interventions for their fields.

 Sollepura  
TAMIL NADU

in his quest for yield  
he dug himself a pond, that  
gave his field new life





# UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

Janaki, a sixth-standard student, was elated to see her photo and painting in the school magazine. She was among the 1970 students from Panvel Municipal Schools who had come together to make it a mammoth success. They each contributed poems, articles, stories and paintings for the magazine. Crafting her piece for days, Janaki hopes to do something even more creative for the magazine next year.



Panvel

MAHARASHTRA


the painting captured  
essence of her hopes and dreams  
future will follow



# PAYING IT FORWARD

After years of toil and efforts, when Rakshita was ready to enter the job market, she decided to return to her roots. She started working as a warden at the same KGBV Residential School, where she had studied and learnt to dream as a teenager. Her days involve mentoring the next generation of women, fuelling her desire to be better each day.

 **Byrapattana**  
**KARNATAKA**



she builds them each day  
teaching how to dream like her  
paying it forward

# BROADENING HORIZONS

Sagaya Priyanka, 14, was awestruck when she started understanding the many wonders of a computer. The Village Information Centre in her village is her favourite place. She takes pride in having mastered all the shortcut keys and MS PowerPoint. These efforts are opening her possibilities to newer horizons, and she is eager to conquer them all.



**Sollepura**

**TAMIL NADU**

(1<sup>st</sup> Model Village under ABG – CSR guideline & Government of India – Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna)

click of a button  
opened a brand new window  
there's no stopping her





# BREAKING BARRIERS

Renuka spends most of her days in the Common Service Centre, her runway. Her daily to-do lists include facilitating people to have access to digital services and making several document copies for them. It's her way of making sure their flights always take off on time. Her entrepreneurial dream has brought her financial independence and the residents of her village several options on how to shape their lives



Rayasandra

KARNATAKA



on her feet all day  
her enthusiasm fuels them  
their digital dreams


# REACHING HEIGHTS

Starting his day early delivering newspapers, Ventakesh hopes to become a lawyer one day. His elder sister supports him with guidance and encouragement, nudging him to work hard to achieve his goal. Bagging a scholarship for being one of the best academic performers in his batch, he is all set to pursue law.

 **Bengaluru**  
**KARNATAKA**



cycling the city  
he believes, manifests  
being a lawyer



# DROPS OF LIFE

John Paul felt a wave of relief wash over him when his village got a Water ATM. He would no longer have to go the extra mile or spend excessive amounts to access safe drinking water. His neighbours in Sarakapalli, Balageri, Kalkeri, and Christupalayam also benefit from the water treatment plant in Sollepura.

 Sollepura  
TAMIL NADU

don't believe the lies  
who said water has no taste  
it's sweet as nectar





# HALF MILK, HALF DREAM

Nagaraju's entrepreneurial journey began with identifying a crucial gap in his village – they had no Dairy Farm. He let his dreams take wings and set out to bridge the supply gap with three cows and a shed. He and his family work together to supply milk to the nearby villages, opening up the worlds of many to newer possibilities, one glass at a time.

 Sollepura  
TAMIL NADU

he grew up with milk  
in goblets, in food, in treats  
now it shapes his fate



# HER FIRST STEPS

She was a little girl when she set her heart on not-so-little dreams. A first-generation learner in the family, nothing came easy to Bhanupriya. She had to put in double the effort to learn her lessons and improve her language skills. Never hesitating to give her endeavours all it took, she kept hustling through educational institutes, growing into the successful career woman she hoped to be.

 **Channapatna**  
**KARNATAKA**

her first tiny steps  
turned into their giant leaps  
shaping futures



# UNITED AGAINST COVID-19

In the thick of the crisis, it was the will of the people that shone through. It showed them a way out, driving them to keep going. Digital Champions helped people enrol in the MGNREGA scheme and secure their future against the might of the pandemic. Several Self-Help Groups stepped up to stitch face masks for distribution. A wave of awareness breezed through the villages, strengthening everyone's resolve to beat the mighty virus — which they did.













# AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would sincerely thank the following members without whom this Coffee Table Book would not have been possible. The guidance of our leadership team and the support of colleagues in factories and warehouses, made all the efforts fruitful.

## ABFRL CSR Team



SHUBHASISH  
CHAKRABORTY



PURUSHOTTAM  
RAO



MUNIRAJU  
C.



KEDAR  
KUMAR PATIL

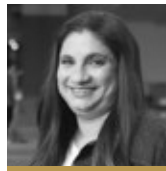


VISWANATHAN  
V.

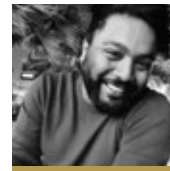


ARUN  
KUMAR

## ABFRL Corporate Communication Team



JANET  
AROLE



MERWYN  
FERNANDES

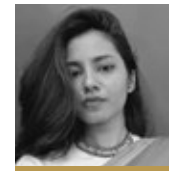
## Hat Media Content & Design Team



SUNCHIKA  
PANDEY



JAGRUTI  
VERMA



GARGI  
SANKPAL



SHIVANI  
UNNIKISHNAN