

COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge

The Shri Shakti Challenge is a MyGov initiative, in collaboration with UN Women. It is a part of the Government's campaign 'COVID-19 Solution Challenge' and aims at promoting and encouraging women entrepreneurs and awarding women-led startups

The Shri Shakti Challenge 2020 was launched in April and a total prize of Rs.22,50,000 was committed by UN Women, under their program WeEmpower Asia, which is supported by European Union.

This article will discuss in detail the objectives and significance of this project, along with the eligibility terms, jury, and the entire shortlisting process. Questions based on this topic are important for the General Studies III of [IAS Exam](#).

About Shri Shakti Challenge 2020

Given below are the key facts about the Shri Shakti Challenge launched by MyGov:

- A COVID-19 Solution Challenge had been launched by the Government of India towards the beginning of 2020 to encourage Startups, Entrepreneurs and Individuals for introducing technology solutions that could strengthen the fight against Corona
- The Shri Shakti Challenge is part of this same initiative and was supported by UN Women
- This comes under the Ministry of Electronics and IT
- A total of 1265 entries were received from across the nation for this challenge
- This challenge was launched on the Innovative platform of MyGov website and only application from women-led startups were invited, who had issues faced by larger number of women
- The Shri Shakti Challenge brought many women to the fore-front of Indian entrepreneurship and gave them a platform to share their expertise and knowledge to curb the situation of COVID-19 in the country

Shri Shakti Challenge - Eligibility Criteria

Certain specific eligibility criteria and terms and conditions were announced by the organising committees regarding participation in the challenge. Discussed below are the same:

- Individuals or Startups that comply with the definition of startup as notified by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) vide order, were only eligible to apply
- Legitimate rights and patents must be provided by the participants for the product to be developed under the COVID-19 Solution Challenge
- Participants must be citizens of India
- Only the Organisations registered in India will be eligible to apply for the competition
- Women Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurs with solutions impacting a large number of women will be eligible for the Prizes sponsored by the UN Women.
- In case there is a tie in scores, startups led by women will be given preference

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Shortlisting Procedure for Shri Shakti Challenge

After receiving all the 1265 entries, thorough examination of each participant's entry was done and 25 entrepreneurs were selected to showcase their initiative in front of the Jury. After analysing the relevance and purpose of each, finally 11 entrepreneurs were selected.

These 11 startups were given some time to develop the solutions and based on their performance and result, the final winners were announced based on the following two stages.

First Stage: Ideation Stage

At this stage, entrepreneurs had been shortlisted based on the following parameters:

- Innovation
- Usability
- Relevance to the subject matter
- Impact on society i.e. how helpful is the solution in combating the current crisis

Second Stage: POC Stage

POC or Proof of Concept was the second stage. Based on the POC, the solutions submitted will again be evaluated on the following parameters:

- Replicability
- Scalability
- Ease of deployment/roll-out
- Potential risks involved in implementation of the solution

Jury and Prize for the Challenge

Jury for the Challenge

The Jury for the Shri Shakti Challenge 2020 comprised five members:

1. Debjani Ghosh, President NASSCOM
2. Rohini Srivathsa, National Technology Officer (CTO) Microsoft India
3. Dr R Ramanan, MD Atal Innovation Mission
4. Nishtha Satyam, Dy Country representative
5. UN Women India and Abhishek Singh, CEO MyGov

Prize for the Winners

- All the 11 shortlisted entrepreneurs were given Rs.75,00 each to further develop their ideas for the final round
- The top three winners were awarded a prize money of Rs.5 lakhs each
- The three entries who won 'Promising Solutions' were given Rs. 2 lakhs each

List of COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge Winners

After much deliberation, the list of COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge was declared on November 3, 2020, where apart from awarding the top three, a special award was given to three other Promising Solutions.

Top 3 Winners of Shri Shakti Challenge 2020

1. Resada Lifesciences Private Limited

- Dr P Gayatri Hela is the founder of this Bengaluru-based company
- It designs and develops home and agricultural-based products using plant extracts instead of synthetic chemicals
- For this challenge Dr P Gayatri Hela submitted her innovative product which is a non-alcoholic hand sanitizer that is relevant not only for COVID- 19 but also for other infections
- The idea of developing the product came to her mind in 2017, while battling the SARS pandemic

2. iHeal HealthTech Private Limited

- Founded by Romita Ghosh, a cancer survivor
- It is a Shimla-based healthcare startup that has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID and has been providing PPE kits to hospitals
- A Made in India UV sterilizer box has also been introduced by her, which is save for re-using masks and PPEs and can help reduce the expenses on these products

3. Thanmatra Innovations Private Limited

- Dr Anjana Ramkumar and Dr Anushka Ashokan are the product manager and co-founder of this Kerala-based startup
- Their innovative solution of an antimicrobial solution that could be sprayed into handkerchiefs or dupattas for making them safe to be used as Face Masks attracted the jury
- Their innovation is simple and scalable and can help convert any piece of cloth to antiviral mask within minutes by a simple process of spraying and drying with their unique formulation

Startups Identified as 'Promising Solutions'

1. Seragen BioTherapeutics Private Limited

- Vasanthi Palanivel, is the CEO & Co-Founder of their startup
- She has developed a plasma solution to treat respiratory distress due to COVID-19, considering the fact that lungs were the most infected organ during this pandemic

2. Empathy Design Labs

- Shivi Kapil is the Co-Founder of this Bengaluru-based company, whose main focus is healthcare
- She worked to find a solution for pregnant women who could not get daily assistance due to high risk of infection and designed Kriya, a wearable device for daily monitoring of pregnancy
- The IoT-embedded product provides alerts and suggestions to expecting parents for timely action

3. STREAM Minds

- An ed-tech company whose Founder and Co-Founder are a mother-daughter duo, Jaya Parashar and Ankita Parashar
- They have designed 'Dobot', a fully automated robot which acts as an in-house delivery assistant to make hospitals and healthcare clinics safe from the risks of COVID19

Such initiative by the Government brings in opportunities for the rising entrepreneurs of the country and encourages them to bring in innovative and new ideas for the betterment of the country and its citizens.

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