



4th CSR Conference: Capacity Building in the CSR Ecosystem

Speaker Bios for Session 2: Emerging Models of Education During COVID-19



Pranav Kothari is the Chief Executive Officer at Educational Initiatives (EI).

Pranav has been associated with EI for over a decade and has made significant contributions to the company through his involvement with EI's adaptive learning product, Mindspark, and as the head of HR, Gifted Student Education, and, most recently, EI's Large Scale Education Programme division.

Pranav spearheaded the deployment of Mindspark which is recognised as the only software-based EdTech tool to have demonstrated significant

learning impact as measured by independent third parties including J-PAL. He is a thought leader in the industry, having led teams that scaled high-quality student assessments, personalised adaptive learning, and impact evaluation services for governments, CSR funders, and philanthropic foundations.

Pranav is a TEDx speaker and an INK Fellow and has been named by The World Economic Forum's Schwab Foundation as the Corporate Social Intrapreneur of the Year in 2019.

Pranav studied Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology and MBA at Harvard Business School. Prior to EI, he worked at GTI Capital and the Boston Consulting Group in five countries.

Merlia Shaukath, Founder & CEO, Madhi Foundation

Merlia Shaukath is an alumna of Stella Maris College, London School of Economics and Political Science, and the University of Oxford. She comes with an experience of over a decade in the development sector with leadership roles in organisations like Teach For India and Athena Infonomics. Merlia believes that access to quality early childhood education is the greatest leveler against social inequity and is committed to working towards eliminating the Foundational Learning Crisis in India.



Madhi Foundation is the Chief Management Partner for the Tamil Nadu State Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Mission and is working towards ensuring universal foundational learning skills amongst children in Tamil Nadu state over the next 5 years. Madhi works with Samagra Shiksha, Tamil Nadu to implement the FLN Mission, reaching over 10 lakh children, 85,000 teachers and 45,000 administrators. Working towards the vision of putting foundational learning first, so every child can thrive, Madhi is poised to embark on large-scale

reforms in collaboration with government actors to transform classroom processes, teacher experiences, and policy making, all the while ensuring sustainability and scale.



Samar Bajaj

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

Samar is a Program Manager at the foundation and leads projects across education and livelihoods. She has extensive experience in researching & measuring consumer behavior in India and how these techniques apply to real-world social problems.

Before joining the foundation, Samar spent over 10 years as a consultant at The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Ernst & Young (EY). She studied Economics at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University and holds a Dual Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA) from the London School of Economics (LSE) and Sciences Po, Paris.

Rathish Balakrishnan is a Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Sattva Consulting. As part of his role, Rathish has extensive experience in conceptualising and implementing large-scale solutions that brings together leading foundations, corporations, civil society organisations and the government. He has extensive hands-on experience across a wide range of sectors across Education, Skill & Livelihoods, Women Empowerment, Migration and Child Rights.

Over the last ten years, Rathish has worked closely with leading non-profit leaders in enabling organisations in enabling orbit shifting change. Together with the non-profit leaders, Rathish has designed and helped implement long-term organisational strategies, operational effectiveness initiatives and rigorous governance structures that enable them to scale their impact. Rathish has contributed at both state and national level policy discussions across education and skill development. He is a published author and TEDx speaker. Prior to Sattva, Rathish worked across multi-national and international organisations across research, engineering, product management and corporate strategy divisions. He is a graduate from BITS Pilani.

