

GDCTECH 2025

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN IN DIECASTING FRATERNITY

Date: 5th December 2025 | Venue: The Orchid Hotel, Balewadi, Pune
Organized by: GDCTECH Forum | Part of: GDC Tech Mega Event 2025

GUEST OF HONOUR



The Women Empowerment Programme held on 5th December 2025 marked a significant milestone in the diecasting industry's journey toward inclusivity and professional development. Hosted at The Orchid Hotel, Pune, as part of the GDCTECH Mega Event, the initiative brought together women engineers, industry leaders, and changemakers to foster dialogue, share experiences, and chart a collaborative roadmap for the future. Around twenty-six students were present to glean insights into the fascinating field of die casting and the role women are playing in it.

Inauguration – Motivational Talk by Guest of Honour

The programme commenced with an inspiring inauguration session featuring **Guest of honour Lila Poonawalla**, Chairperson of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, and motivational speaker Sheetal Arjunwadkar, Techpanacea Private Limited. The inauguration session was opened by a small speech from the Anil Kulkarni and a welcome by Mr. R. T. Kulkarni. This was followed by the ceremonial lighting of

the lamp. Lila Poonawalla's address was extremely powerful and charismatic. Having risen from the ranks as an apprentice at Alfa Laval to their managing director, she emphasized on the attitudes that assisted her rise in the company and in the other organizations which she worked in.

Sheetal Arjunwadkar talked about the evolving role of women in manufacturing and the importance of cultivating organizational cultures that support and sustain female participation in diecasting. Incidentally, she had been motivated by Lila Poonawalla's lecture where she had related an incident about taking up any work assigned to one and doing it so well that your superiors notice it and assign you relevant and challenging jobs. The GDC Tech executive committee attended this inaugural session after which they left.



CHIEF GUEST



Glimpses of Address By

Mr. Sarika Joshi

Founder - Invalue Analytics

(Present virtually due to travel issues)

Good morning, everyone.

I regret not being able to join you in person at The Orchid Hotel, Balewadi, due to unforeseen travel issues, but I am honoured to connect with you virtually. My heartfelt thanks to Mr. Kulkarni for his vision in founding GDCTECH FORUM and to the organizing team for bringing together this landmark Aluminium

Diecasting Exhibition & Conference, GDCTECH 2025.

I stand before you—albeit virtually—with immense gratitude and a heart full of joy. It is a privilege to share this platform with Mrs. Lila Poonawalla. Her journey as one of India's first female mechanical engineers and later CEO of a multinational company is extraordinary, and her foundation's work in empowering underprivileged girls reflects the very spirit of resilience and women supporting women.

Reflecting on my own career, I recall standing on a die casting shop floor as a young engineer, wondering if I belonged. I learned that the real question is not "Do I belong?" but "What value can I bring?"

And that shift in perspective changed everything for me. That guided me through my studies at The Ohio State University, my work at Ryobi Die Casting in the USA, and later leadership roles in India. Each challenge became a teacher, each colleague a mentor, and every project an opportunity to grow.

My professional journey—from pioneering Statistical Process Control to leading supplier improvement programs—taught me that success is not only about technical excellence but also about people, partnerships, and purpose. Through Invalue Analytics, I continue to learn and share, because growth stops when learning stops.

But here's something they don't teach you in engineering school: Technical excellence alone won't fulfill you. You need purpose. At the end of each day, I ask: "Am I better than yesterday? Have I added value to someone's life?" True fulfillment lies in giving—whether through effort, mentorship, expertise, or empathy. These acts build what I call an emotional bank account of trust and goodwill. Yet giving must be balanced with self-worth; we must celebrate our contributions to avoid resentment.

I want to express my gratitude to my husband, Mr Vivek Joshi, Director and CEO of Sundaram Clayton Ltd—my rock, my strongest supporter, my partner in every sense. My two daughters who cheer me on every single day and remind me why I do what I do. My mother and mother-in-law, who encouraged me, supported me through every challenge, and taught me that a woman can have both ambition and family. I would also thank mentors who believed in me even when I doubted myself.

To the women engineers and professionals here: you are pioneers in a demanding, male-dominated industry. Die casting and manufacturing are challenging, but they are also fields of extraordinary innovation where India's future is being built. Dream big, trust your abilities, speak up, and lead without waiting for permission.

My appeal to you is simple:

- Commit to lifelong learning.
- Define your purpose and let it guide you.
- Build networks of collaboration and support.
- Reflect daily on your growth.
- Give generously, but honour yourself in the process.

As Maya Angelou said, "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them." Challenges will come, but remember this gathering of brilliant women and know you are capable of extraordinary things.

I look forward to the insights from today's sessions and to the collaborative roadmap we will create together. Thank you to the GDCTECH team, to Mrs. Poonawalla for championing empowerment, and to all of you for your courage to be here. Dream big, work hard, stay curious, give generously, and above all, believe in yourself. The future of die casting—and of Indian manufacturing—is in your capable hands.

Following the inaugural session, attendees engaged in informal networking over tea, setting the tone for collaborative exchanges throughout the day.

Motivational lectures by Kavita Kaushik and Vrinda Walimbe

After the tea session, participants had the opportunity to hear two more motivational speakers, Kavita Kaushik who is currently spearheading strategic quality initiatives at Cummins India and Vrinda Walimbe, a psychologist. Kavita Kaushik stressed on the importance of communication, overcoming failures, and dedication to one's company. She also mentioned that her first job at Alfa Laval had materialized after she wrote to Lila Poonawalla who was then a director of Alfa Laval. Vrinda Walimbe gave the audience a reality check on expectations of the society from women and advised them to take care of themselves first. Both the speakers stressed on attention to self-care and being motivated throughout.



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Panel Discussion – Insights from Industry Leaders

The panel discussion brought forward strategic insights from seasoned professionals including Manisha Kannur (ACE Designers Ltd.), Sarika Mahashabde (APT Pneumatics Pvt. Ltd.), Nidhi Shah (Voxeljet India Pvt. Ltd.), and Bhagyashree Mhaske (CIE Aluminium Casting India Ltd.). The dialogue revolved around leadership, innovation, and the evolving dynamics of finance, operations, and talent development in the diecasting sector. Very well conducted by Mugdha Akolkar, the panelists gave examples from their own journeys and forays into various fields. They encouraged women to work as fairly and equally as men if they wanted equality. They also mentioned that equity is different from equality and everyone should be made aware of the difference between the two. All the panelists had something different and enlightening to offer and the audience had many questions for all of them.



Experience Sharing – Voices from the Field

This segment featured candid reflections from women engineers actively contributing to the industry. Mrs. Leena Velankar from Velankar Chemicals, Priyanka Sangle from Dana and Anamika Singh from Victory Precision spoke about their roles and experiences. Their stories highlighted both the challenges and triumphs of navigating technical roles, underscoring the value of mentorship, resilience, and peer support.

Closing Session – Reflections and Next Steps

Mrs. Manjoo Phadke, founder & CEO of SkillArbor Consultancy was the chief guest for the valedictory function. Mr. Aniruddha Inamdar introduced her. An excellent and witty speaker, Mrs. Manjoo delighted the audience with her stories and examples of tremendous hard work and motivation. She encouraged the delegates to follow their dreams as far as they could. The day concluded with a reflective wrap-up, reiterating the programme's core message: empowerment through opportunity, visibility, and community. Organizers emphasized the importance of sustained efforts and invited participants to remain engaged through GDCTECH's ongoing initiatives. Kruttika Apshankar-Kher, Chairman of the Women In Die-Casting committee gave the vote of thanks. The feedback from the participants was overwhelming with many of them reporting that they were extremely motivated and moved by the discussions that took place.

CHIEF GUEST - VALEDICTORY FUNCTION



Students' Feedback - Students mentioned that they got a very interesting glimpse into the world of die-casting.



Organised by



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