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Karo Sambhav founder conferred Social Entrepreneur of Year award

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NEW DELHI: Pranshu Singhal was on Thursday announced as the winner of the 12th Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award for having founded Karo Sambhav, an organisation that works on improving recycling and waste management by helping a mostly informal workforce engaged in it have access to more formal mechanisms.

Awarded by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, the sister organisation of the World Economic Forum, and the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, a nonprofit of the Jubilant Bhartia Group, the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognises promising and successful entrepreneurs who can drive inclusive growth and excel in large-scale, high-impact models.

The principal scientific advisor to the Union government, professor K VijayRaghavan, was the chief guest at the event and spoke on the challenges and opportunities in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. "At the beginning of the pandemic, India was known as a vaccine producer but not a developer. But our academia and industry developed vaccines for Covid-19. The second wave of the pandemic was unprecedented, which required our facilities to be ramped up several folds. This was



A screenshot of the virtual award ceremony held on Thursday.

a big challenge but the government, NGOs, and research institutes all came together and worked towards all that was needed," he said.

Social entrepreneurs, he added, "play an important role in connecting the grass root level to their needs".

The view was echoed by Shyam S Bhartia, director of Jubilant Bhartia Foundation and chairman and founder of Jubilant Bhartia Group, who said the pandemic brought to the fore the role of social entrepreneurs as front-line workers. "They acted as implementation partners during this time," he said.

Singhal said the recognition will help raise awareness and the organisation's work on waste

management.

"We have solutions to create products, but no systems to take it back to their elemental form. Very little money is going into these systems. This award will really help us be a catalyst in this space. We are reaching the point of no return, we are today in the decade of action and change is unlikely if we act without collective push. We need a movement where organisations, enterprises, governments collaborate and co-create solutions," he said after receiving the award in a virtual ceremony.

Singhal said that one of the other four finalists, Dr Shuchin Bajaj -- who took affordable and quality health care to tier 2 and tier 3 cities in North India -- was

his inspiration to quit his job and become a social entrepreneur.

Among the finalists was Dr Aparna Hegde, a urogynecologist by training and the founder of Armman, which uses technology to help government health workers and NGOs provide pregnant women and mothers with critical information for their health. Another finalist was Seema Prem, CEO and co-founder of fintech company FIA Global, which serves 45 million customers through 30,000 outlets in inaccessible parts of the country.

Dr Shuchin Bajaj, the fourth finalist and founder of Ujala Cygnus Healthcare, has helped address the tertiary healthcare needs of the poorest families in India's tier-2 and-3 cities.

Hilde Schwab, co-founder and chairperson of Schwab foundation of social entrepreneurship, said that even though all participants could not win, they could tap into the networks of the World Economic Forum.

While concluding the session, Hari S Bhartia, the founder and co-chairman of Jubilant Bhartia Group, recounted how the Jubilant Group was able to start marketing Remdesivir in just three months after a conversation with the principal scientific adviser on how India needed to manufacture the anti-viral drug then thought to reduce hospitalisation in Covid-19 patients.