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From Boardrooms to Rural Villages: Lata Gullapalli's Journey Redefining Success

How an Investment Banking Titan Transformed M&A Expertise into a Movement Empowering Rural Women Across Continents

When Gullapalli began her career three decades ago, specializing in mergers and acquisitions across South Asia, Russia, Europe and the U.K., few could have imagined her expertise would fuel one of the most innovative rural entrepreneurship programs in the developing world. Today, as Chairperson and Non-Executive Director on boards, including chairing an audit and risk committee as the founder and chairperson of The Savoir Faire Company, she embodies evolved capitalism: where professional excellence amplifies sustainable social purpose.

"I am working in both, for profit and not for profit sectors. I think one must run both organizations in the same way. In this age of impact, it is essential to give back to our roots, or whatever made us what we are," she explains. Her credentials with an MBA from INSEAD, include designing capital-raising products, leading IPOs, and advising on complex restructuring. Yet her unconventional application of this expertise marks her true distinction.

She has been running a multi award winning program for mentoring women entrepreneurs in multiple states in India and some other countries as well, teaching financial literacy and sustainable business models. As a Trustee of the Gandhi Ashram—the charity Kasturba and M K Gandhi established in 1932 running 300 schools across India, she is driving the move into a contemporary world with the best practices to achieve financial, economic, and social impact.

In an era where corporate success and social impact are often viewed as parallel tracks, Lata Gullapalli has spent thirty years proving they can converge—transforming investment banking mastery into sustainable impact spanning continents.

She has designed a course, "How to Think", which she teaches, very successfully to Senior Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Senior Bankers, via the MoF and Students in India and other countries, in the Middle East and the U.K.

Recognition validates her approach: Treasury Today's "Champion of Change EMEA" 2024, Oxford University Global Leader, Times Icon and Outlook Business featured leader, among others. She has been a guest on Forbes and ET-Now as well as other interviews and podcasts. Her award-winning fiction and non-fiction work reveal multidimensional excellence. The July 2025 Art for Hope exhibition she curated raised funds supporting Gandhian institutions, and rural women's entrepreneurship. This was a unique show that created a win-win for the charities, the donors and artists from all over India. The artist got



a platform directly with donors, the donors got amazing artworks for their donations, and the charities raised some funds.

"Women are superbly full of power in themselves. The need is to perhaps help to charge the battery or to guide them how to start or change gears in an impactful way," she observes, describing her philosophy with the precision of someone who has structured countless deals—applied to human potential instead of corporate valuations.

Her work expanding across countries working with Governments and other organisations where needed, demonstrates that India's story—chronicled by India Today over fifty years—isn't just about economic liberalization.

It's about leaders who understand that success creates responsibility, expertise enables leaders transferring their knowledge as best practices, and the highest return isn't measured in basis points but in lives transformed. From M&A specialist to social impact architect, she has proven that skills structuring billion-dollar deals can restructure entire communities—one village or organisation at a time.