

# Shaan Punjaban Dii

## Preface

She is clothed in STRENGTH,  
She is all about DIGNITY!  
She laughs and has no FEAR.  
She is no other than my  
mother, wife and my daughter.

‘Woman’ is an embodiment of Aditi, the mother of Gods; the celestial mother of every living being and existence. Since time immemorial, she has been glorified and worshipped in many forms. She is *Shakti* that created the universe and the one that destroys evil. Mata Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Radha... thousand other names she has. *Shakti* has always been fierce enough to let the world bow down to her. Without the mother, there won’t be life on this Earth. But, with the passage of time, man has tried to enslave her in ways we won’t be proud of. He’s ignorant of the power she has within.

There is hardly a morning when I scan through the daily newspaper, and don’t find a piece of horrifying news of a woman being at the receiving end of a crime and abuse. Such disgraceful acts against women make my heart weep in silence. ‘Women’, the one who bring life on this Earth, but we make their hearts bleed in agony every day.

It’s been 70 years’ post-independence, and still Punjabi women continue to feel the agony and burden of womanhood: deprived of not only the access to basic facilities, but even the very basic right to be born. Such strange rule of the society, where the mother is a woman who brings a new life, but her own existence in the form of a daughter is unwanted. The deeply ingrained patriarchal ethos limits and confines women to subordinate roles. Punjab has emerged as the most developed, but least gender sensitive region of India.

Economic prosperity isn’t always a sign of social progress. As per 2011 census, it is reported that among the districts in the country that have less than 900 girls per 1,000 boys, 34 districts are in Punjab and Haryana. In spite of all the hardships and subordination, women have risen and achieved what most men wouldn’t dream about. And the rising spirit of these true Punjabi women has inspired me to come up with *Shaan Punjaban Dii*.

Time and again women have worked their way up, against all odds, and set a benchmark. From Mata Khivi and Bibi Bhagbhari who devoted their lives to uplift the society hundreds of years ago, to Prakash Kaur at present. Mai Bhago and Bibi Sharan Kaur, the warriors who fought with men, I have tried to include women from different sections of the society.

These women set an example that a man wouldn’t dream of achieving. Mata Khivi, wife of Guru Angad Dev was the only woman mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib, for her selfless service

and initiating the system of *langar*. And Prakash Kaur, who took the responsibility of rescuing and raising, abandoned girls. Their courage and perseverance earned them respect and brought a significant change in the society. Their exceptional acts inspired us a lot, and this coffee table book.

After a lot of brain storming, we came to the conclusion to write on these 51 women achievers from the Punjab region of undivided India.

The women in this book are not defined as the prototype of a wife, mother or daughter. They are proud of their womanhood, and the fact that they are capable of making a difference in the male dominated world. The society certainly doesn't mark their actions as right or wrong, it's their undying willpower that drove them and broke all the barriers.

They shone through the challenges and followed their heart knowing what was right. These women challenged the conventions of the world, and showcased what a true spirit can do.

The great poet Rabindranath Tagore once said: "For we women are not the deities of the household fire, but the flame of the soul itself". They truly bring light into everyone's life with their different facets. Woman is glorious, irrespective of her role in our life. With the will power of steel and heart of gold, she is the eternal source of life.

*Shaan Punjabian Dii* is an ode to womanhood, encapsulating the lives of these noteworthy women achievers.

This book is contribution of Mr. Harkamal Singh from Chandigarh who has researched to identify these women contributors and BoostNet's team from Delhi. This compilation is a way to contribute to the society through the NGO, Roar 4 Change. As a contribution to the cause, 90% of the proceeds from the book go to Roar 4 Change for the 'Clean Water 4 Future' program.

**About Mr. Harkamal Singh:** A 48-year-old Indian, currently living in Chandigarh, Harkamal Singh was a few months old when his parents moved to Kolkata, West Bengal. That's where he spent 40 years of his life. He has been always interested in writing fiction, including short stories, plays and short novels – an inspiration he drew from bedtime stories and anecdotes his Grandfather and Grandmother used to narrate to him, when he was a child.

This coffee table book has come together with encouragements and efforts of Mr. Baljit Singh, Program Director of Roar 4 Change.

**About BoostNet:** BoostNet is a content agency that thrives on its exceptional pool of writers and editors. Started by Nidhi Mittal Bansal in 2011 after nine years as a journalist in mainstream Indian media, BoostNet was conceptualized with a mission to create a difference in the space of content, and make it easier for businesses and individuals to find credible writing talent. From servicing numerous Indian brands for their digital content, to helping individuals by putting their thoughts to written words, BoostNet takes pride in creating content that speaks volumes. This coffee table book helps Nidhi and her team put together stories of these inspirational Punjabi women, a task that's very close to their heart.

**About Roar 4 Change ([www.roar4change.org](http://www.roar4change.org)):** Roar 4 Change is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing change and increasing 'The Happiness Index' of all people by actively contributing to the socio-economic development of all communities worldwide. The 'Clean Water 4 Future' is a program under Roar 4 Water initiative to install water purifiers in Government and needy schools in India.