

**ACM-W AMBASSADOR IN INDIA RECOGNIZED AS CHANGE AGENT
BY ANITA BORG INSITUTE**

Gayatri Buragohain to Receive Award at Grace Hopper Celebration

Gayatri Buragohain, [ACM-W Ambassador in India](#), founded Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT), a nonprofit organization, to empower women by enhancing their awareness, interest, and participation in technology. She also founded a start-up website development company, Joint Leap Technologies, in New Delhi, India. She agreed to be interviewed by ACM as she prepares to accept the [2010 ABI Change Agent Award](#) at the 2010 Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing (GHC), September 28 – October 2, in Atlanta, Georgia.

1. What does this recognition mean for you in your work with teenage girls at the Tech Education Center in New Delhi?

As I work with the teenage girls from slum areas to provide them with technical skills, my biggest challenge is how they will use these skills to earn a better living. I believe that jobs that employ these skills will empower these girls. I hope this recognition helps me gain access to people in organizations who will lead the way in providing these opportunities. I am hoping to develop corporate partnerships to provide human resources, new ideas, and additional support to scale up this project in many parts of the country.

2. How will this recognition affect the scope of your programs as they affect women involved in your Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) agenda?

This discussion on women and technology is very new in India. When I started this effort, I knew few people in the field, and had difficulty gaining access to them. I had to build up my network as well as my credibility and trust as a committed participant to this project. Recently, however, the pathways are slowly clearing, and I hope this recognition will expand my network to the people and organizations that are in a position to help implement our plans and aspirations for the future development of the tech center and related projects.

3. Where did the inspiration for your interest in helping women in technology develop?

From childhood, I witnessed discrimination and violence against women first hand. As an engineering student, I was more interested in women's issues on campus than my textbooks. After graduation, my focus continued on the cause of women and underrepresented communities

and in societal development. Working at a women's rights organization, I began to understand the plight of women in India and around the world. This insight led to the realization that technology has a significant role to play in helping women overcome these challenges. Once I learned about the debates and actions underway in western countries to address these challenges, I decided to help women enter the technology field, and to create broader awareness of the impact that women in technology can have on the larger society.

4. What other programs are you planning to extend your success in helping women in technology in your region of the world?

In 2008, our organization initiated an online directory of women engaged in technology, which we want to convert into a wider platform for women in the field. Our goal is to help women connect with each other to offer support through mentorship and counseling, and to extend this concept into an online and offline model reaching the remotest parts of the country.

5. Are you optimistic about the outlook for attracting more women to the tech field?

I am very, very optimistic. I believe women can succeed in this field if we awaken to our own potential. Until now, we have been conditioned to be caretakers, making sacrifices on behalf of society and tolerating injustice. If we can accept that we maintain equal abilities in mastering the discipline and practice of technology, and that we do not have unlimited tolerance, patience and love (as they say in India), I am convinced that women will achieve their goals.

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