

**Ela Ramesh Bhatt** born in 1933, Padmabhushan Ela R. Bhatt, a Gandhian, is widely recognized as one of the world's most remarkable pioneers and entrepreneurial forces in grassroots development. Known as the "gentle revolutionary," she has dedicated her life to improving the lives of India's poorest and most oppressed women workers. In 1972, she founded the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union with more than 1.3 million members now. She founded SEWA Cooperative Bank in 1974 which has an outreach of 3 million women now. She was a Member of the Indian Parliament Rajya sabha and subsequently a Member of the Indian Planning Commission. She founded and served as Chair for Women's World Banking, the International Alliance of Home-based Workers (HomeNet), Street Vendors (StreetNet) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing, Organizing (WIEGO). She also served as a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation for a decade. She has received several awards, including Padmashree, Padmabhushan, the Ramon Magsaysay Award and the Right Livelihood Award, George Meany-Lane Kirkland Labour Rights Award by AFL-CIO, US and Légion d'honneur by France, Madrid Creatividad Award, CGAE Human Rights Award by Spain, Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development as well as honorary doctorates from Harvard, Yale, Natal, McMaster, M.S. Baroda and other Universities. Member of the Council of The Elders brought together by Nelson Mandela (2007). Director, Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), (2011). She has authored "We Are Poor but So Many" book published by Oxford University Press, NY (2006).

## ELA RAMESH BHATT

- Address** : SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association),  
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Email : [bhattela@sewa.org](mailto:bhattela@sewa.org)
- Current Positions** : Member, National Innovation Foundation, Delhi, (2000—)  
Member, Board, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad (2004—)  
Member, The Elders, Johannesburg (2007—)  
Director, Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), (2011—)  
Trustee, Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad (2014—)
- Positions Held** : Junior Lawyer : Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, founded by Mahatma Gandhi (1955-70)  
Founder General Secretary, SEWA, (1972-1996)  
Founder Chair SEWA Cooperative Bank. (1974-1998)  
Founder Chair, Indian School of Microfinance for Women (2003-2011)  
Founding Trustee and Chair, Women's World Banking, New York (1980-2000)  
Member of Parliament (Rajyasabha), nominated by the President of India, (1983-1988)  
Member of the Planning Commission of India, (1989-1991).  
Chair, National Commission on Self-Employed Women (1984-1988).  
Founding, Chair, Friends of Women's World Banking, India (1981-2002).  
Member, Second National Commission on Labour. (2000-2002)  
Member, Board of Trustees, Rockefeller Foundation, New York (1991-2003).  
Member, Advisory Committee, Asia Society, New York (1991 - 2005)  
Founding Chair, HOMENET : International Network of Homebased Workers (1996-2005)  
Chair, WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment : Globalising Organising), Boston, (1997-2008).  
Founding Chair, 'Sa-Dhan', Association of Micro Finance Institutions of India - Delhi, (1998 - 2011)..  
Member, Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP), The World Bank, Washington, (1999-2005).  
Founding Chair, STREETNET : International Alliance of Street Vendors (2000-2005)  
Member, Board of Trustees, Enterprise Works Worldwide, Washington (2000-2005).  
World Commission on Urban Future, Berlin, (2001-2004).  
Member, Independent Commission on Poverty Alleviation, SAARC (South Asian Regional Cooperation) (2001-2003).  
Member, Governing Body, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, (1998- 2011).  
Authority, (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority), Hyderabad (2006 - 2010)  
Member, National Integration Council, Delhi (2009- 2014)
- Honours Conferred : India** : Susan B. Anthony Award for National Integration. India, 1982.  
Padmashree, Government of India. 1985.  
Padmabhushan. Government of India. 1986.  
Vishwa Gurjari, 1996.  
Yashvantrao Chavan Award for National Integration, 1999.  
Nagar Bhushan, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, 1998.  
FICCI's Millenium Life-time Achievement Award, Delhi, 2000.  
Diwaliben Mehta Award for Rural Upliftment, 2002.  
Dr. V. Krishnamurthy Award for Excellence, Centre for Organisation Development, Hyderabad, 2003.  
Economic Times Award, Businesswoman of the Year, 2003

Lal Bahadur Shastri Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Academics and Management, 2004.  
 Sahakar Ratna for leading cooperative movement in Gujarat, 2005.  
 LakshmiPat Singhania - IIML National Leadership Awards, 2004  
 The Sat Paul Mittal National Award for outstanding service to humanity, Nehru Sidhant Kender Trust, 2006  
 CNBC TV18 India Business Leader Award for Social Enterprise, 2006  
 Zee Astitva Awards for Lifetime Achievement, 2006  
 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Award, 2007  
 FLO Women Achievers Award for Excellence in the field of Social Activism. FICCI, 2008  
 The Lifetime Achievement Award of Excellence, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 2008.  
 Lifetime Achievement Award, Real Hero, CNN-IBN and Reliance Industries, 2009.  
 Construction Industry Development Council Vishwakarma Award for Achievement for Social Upliftment, 2009.  
 BMA Life Time Achievement Award for Social Entrepreneurship, Bombay Management Association, 2008-2009.  
 Bank of Baroda Sun Lifetime Achievement Award, 2009.  
 Microfinance India Lifetime Achievement Award, HSBC India, 2010  
 Vishwapratibha Award, Vishwa Gujarati Samaj, 2011  
 Public Service Excellence Award, AIMA, 2011.  
 Received Tamrapatra as Honorary Member of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2012  
 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, Government of India, 2011  
 India's 25 Greatest Global Living Legends Award by NDTV, Delhi, 2013  
 Life Time Achievement Award, Union Bank of India, 2014

**International :** Ramon Magsaysay Award for "Community Leadership". Manila, 1977.  
 Right Livelihood Award (The Alternate Nobel Prize) for "Changing the Human Environment". Stockholm, 1984.  
 Women in Creation Award. Alliance de Femme. Paris, 1990.  
 CARE Humanitarian Award. Washington D.C., 1994.  
 2000 Humanitarian Award, Inter Action, Washington, 2000.  
 Asia Society Award: Builder of Bridges between Asians and Americans, 2000.  
 Global Leadership for Lifetime Award by Women's Global Summit in Mexico, 2005  
 Women Together Award by Fundación Forum and Women Together, Madrid, 2006  
 Légion d'honneur by Government of France, 2006  
 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award by AFLCIO, Washington, 2005  
 Madrid Creatividad Award by Madrid World Centre for Creativity, 2006  
 Isabel Ferrer Award by Government of Valencia, 2007  
 William Benton Medal for Distinguished Public Service, University of Chicago, 2007  
 Gandhi Peace Prize, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, 2009.  
 CGAE Human Rights Award 2009, *Consejo General de la Abogacía Española*, Spain, 2009.  
 Niwano Peace Prize, Niwano Peace Foundation, Japan, 2010.  
 Entrepreneur for the World 2010 Award in the Social Entrepreneur, World Entrepreneurship Forum, Lyon, France.  
 The First Fairness Award, Global Fairness Initiative, Washington DC, USA, 2010.  
 'The Freedom from Want Medal', Roosevelt Institute, Netherlands, 2012

- Honorary Degrees** : Doctor of Letters, SNDT University, Bombay, India, 1991.  
Doctor of Humanities, Haverford College, USA, 1993.  
Doctor of Humanities, Temple University, USA. 1994.  
Doctor of Letters, MS University of Baroda, India, 1997.  
Doctor of Humanities, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada (1999).  
Doctor of Humane Letters, Harvard University, USA. 2001.  
Honorary Doctorate in Social Sciences, Yale University, USA, 2002.  
Honorary Doctorate in Social Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2003.  
Honorary Heroes of Health, Berkeley School of Health, University of California, USA 2003.  
Doctor of Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong, 2010  
Radcliffe Medal, Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, 2011.  
Doctor of Humane Letters, George Washington University, Washington Dc 2012  
Doctor Honoris Causa of the University, Universite libre de Bruxelles,(ULB) Brussels, 2012  
Doctor of Humane Letters, Smith College, Boston, 2014  
Doctor of Law, McMaster University, Toronto, Canada, June 2015
- Publications** : Gujarat ni Nari. 1975 (Gujarati).  
Profiles of Self-Employed Women. 1975.  
Grind of Work. 1989.  
Aapni Shramjivi Baheno. 1992 (Gujarati).  
Hum Savita. 1995 (Hindi).  
Doosri Azzadi (Gujarati and Hindi) National Book Trust, 1997.  
'Laari Yuddha' (Gujarati, Hindi), 2001.  
'We Are Poor But So Many' (English), Oxford University Press, 2006. Translated in Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Urdu and Spanish  
Idea of WORK, SEWA Academy, 2013  
Maari Beno Swaraj Levu Sahel Chhe, (Gujarati) 2013
- Education** : B.A., LI.B (Gujarat University),  
Int. Dip. in Labour and Cooperatives, Afro-Asian Institute of Labour and Cooperatives, Israel
- Family** : Husband : Late Prof. Ramesh M. Bhatt  
Children : Ami and Mihir  
Grandchildren : Arjun, Maya, Somnath and Rameshwar.
- Date of Birth** : September 7, 1933, Ahmedabad.