

Poonam Kathuria has over 17 years of experience in a leadership role working for gender equality, women's empowerment and leadership. Her skills range from project design and management to situation analysis, action research and capacity development. At the age of 32, she initiated the Society for Women's Action and Training Initiatives – **SWATI**, an organization working at state and national levels on violence against women, adolescent and women's health, right to information and governance. A holistic and cross-sector approach to addressing development challenges has been central to her work.

She is the **Founder and Director of SWATI**, a feminist advocacy, education and research organization in Gujarat. Her recent publications include *From Being Shelters to Becoming Homes*, a study of women's shelters in Gujarat, and she is the editor of the forthcoming collection *From a Feminist Lens - Women's Voices, Modes of Campaigning and Non-Violent Ways of Resistance* to be published by Zubaan. She was the **Dame Nita Barrow Distinguished Visitor (2014)** at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She completed an **Education Fellowship in Social Work Management, MA in Economics (1983)** and **BA in Economics and Political Science (1981)** from Gujarat University.

Her work includes extensive research and publications on intimate partner violence, shelter homes, dowry violence, domestic violence law, male perceptions of violence, women-led justice systems and governance. She has presented at international conferences, including the Wellesley Centers for Women Conference in Boston. She has contributed to strengthening grassroots responses such as **Women's Nyaya Samitis** and played a key role in developing gender-responsive governance tools and handbooks.

Her professional experience includes **Founder and Director, SWATI (1994–present)**; **Training Coordinator, Janvikas (1990–1993)**; **Program Officer, Centre for Environment Education (1987–1990)**; and **Program Associate, VIKSAT (1985–1987)**. She has led major capacity-building and programme assessment initiatives with organizations across India and South Asia, working with communities, institutions, and government bodies.