

Ms. Dhiya Ann Mathew: A Dynamic Leader, Advocate, and Strategist

Dhiya Ann Mathew is a dynamic leader, advocate, and strategist with over a decade of engagement in the women's movement and rights-based development sector.

She has been with the YWCA movement for 12 years and since 2022, she has served as the National General Secretary of the YWCA of India, one of the youngest individuals globally to hold this position. In this capacity, she has provided visionary leadership to one of India's oldest women's organizations, representing its 95+ local association's members across the country.

Her diverse background equips her with a unique blend of financial expertise, strategic management capabilities, and gender-sensitive leadership. She holds an MBA in Human Resources and Marketing, a Post Graduate Diploma in Banking Operations, and is currently pursuing an MA in Gender and Development Studies. In addition, she has academic qualifications in Counseling and Development Studies and is certified in Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning.

As National General Secretary, Dhiya has been instrumental in strengthening the organizational visibility, accountability, and engagement of the YWCA of India. She has broadened the programmatic focus of the organization to include gender justice, climate justice, and youth empowerment especially young women leadership. She has been known to enhancing partnerships with government agencies, civil society actors, and international networks.

Her leadership has amplified advocacy efforts on critical issues such as ending child marriage, gender budgeting, community engagement and addressing violence against women, while also facilitating capacity-building initiatives that encourage the active participation of women and youth in governance and decision-making processes.

Beyond her leadership within the YWCA, Dhiya serves in multiple national and international advocacy and governance roles. She is a Trustee of the India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR) and an Advisory Board Member of the India Peace Centre, where interfaith dialogue and peace initiatives are promoted.

As a certified Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (PoSH) Expert, she serves on the Internal Complaints Committees of fourteen central ministries including the ministry of defence, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and several other organizations, ensuring workplace justice and equity.

She was also part of the national coalition to end child marriage in India, an initiative supported by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). She is a member of the RiseUp! Asia Pacific Co-Creation Team as well as the Evaluation Steering Committee, where she collaborates across eight countries to shape feminist movement-building and regional monitoring frameworks.

Her leadership is deeply rooted in grassroots experience, having worked extensively with persons with disabilities, tribal, youth and children in marginalized contexts. She has led counseling and development initiatives, promoted capacity building for vulnerable communities, and bridged local realities with national and global advocacy spaces.

Recognized for her youthful leadership and forward-looking vision, Dhiya embodies a unique combination of grassroots sensitivity and policy-level engagement. Her journey reflects an unwavering commitment to gender equality, children's rights, and inclusive societies, positioning her as a transformative leader in India and the Asia Pacific region.