



## **Haryana Steelers Hails Girl Power, 25 Young Women Leaders Chosen as Match Mascots**

*~ The franchise collaborates with Sukarya's Gender Equality Program ~*

**14 February 2022:** The **Haryana Steelers** announced a collaboration with [Sukarya](#), a not-for-profit organization, to celebrate young women leaders and provide a platform for their voices. As part of this partnership, the JSW Sports-owned franchise selected 25 young girl leaders who will be the team's match mascots in the ongoing season of the Pro Kabaddi League. These young girls are role models for their communities, showing grit, determination, and standing up for their rights.

The association was initially announced on **National Girl Child Day (25 January) 2022**. As part of it, Haryana Steelers have been starting their matches by sharing the story of the Match Mascot of the day. These stories showcase how these girls fight their own battles and focus on the power of the adolescent girls of India.

Speaking on the initiative, **Divyanshu Singh, CEO of Haryana Steelers, said**, "We are honoured to collaborate with Sukarya for a cause that is very close to the entire team's heart. No society can flourish without the important voices and guidance of its women leaders. Through our collaboration, we aim to take a decisive step towards gender equality and representation to the young women who are shaping the future of Haryana".

**Sukarya** is a non profit organization focussing on maternal child health and nutrition, gender equality and empowering young girls, providing informal education to slum children. Over the last 23 years, they have served local communities in Haryana and benefitted over 5 million people in over 600 villages and 100 slums directly and indirectly. Sukarya's Gender Equality Program is designed to work with and for adolescent girls, to help them realize their power and rights, through education and guidance.

## **Haryana Steelers**

The Haryana Steelers are one of the newest chapters in the sporting revolution of Kabaddi in India. Owned by JSW Sports, the country's foremost sports firm that has mentored and supported India's finest athletes in the past decade, the Steelers are rooted at the ancient birthplace of kabaddi and a hotbed of talent, Haryana. The franchise stands for resilience, strength and tenacity. And given their promoters' stellar success across sports, the Steelers also aim to be athletes that shatter conventions and rewrite history.

### **About Shaista, Purnima and Priya**

Match Mascots include 19-year-old **Shaista**, who lives in a slum with her conservative family of 8. She has been a change agent in her community and is often referred to fondly as "period wali didi." When Sukarya launched a Gender Equality program in her slum a couple of years ago, it took a lot of convincing before Shaista's conservative parents finally agreed to let the shy young girl join. Within days, the girl's entire outlook changed, and the demure young woman became a passionate advocate for change. Today, her role as a Corona warrior, hygiene promoter, menstrual hygiene worker, and other social work is recognised across the community. Shaista's story is an example of how with the right amount of persuasion, the traditional centuries-old mindset can be broken.

**Purnima** a class 12 student, lives with her family in a slum where it is extremely difficult for girls to pursue their dreams because of the lack of opportunities and facilities. Earlier, she was extremely nervous and had low self-confidence. But all this changed when one day during a home-to-home service in her neighbourhood, the Sukarya Team met her. That meeting transformed her life, as was promised by the volunteers if she joined their 3-month program. After completing her training, she was selected as a lead girl, capable of not just talking to others confidently, but able to convince and persuade others to join the cause.

**Priya**, the woman leader chosen as one of the brand mascots, belongs to a low-income family where she was facing discrimination in almost every aspect of her life. But it never deterred her from her dreams. One day, Priya witnessed her neighbour getting sexually abused by a family member. Being a true warrior, she brought this issue up and also encouraged the parents to file a complaint against that culprit. Eventually, her efforts led to the culprit getting arrested. She is determined to achieve big things in life. She wants to join the Indian Army and contribute to the nation. Her positive approach towards life changed her family's perspective too. Her motto for life is '*Duniya wale hazar baat kahenge, par hume na rukna hai na jhukna hai*'.

**For additional information please contact**

[shipra.shukla@sukarya.org](mailto:shipra.shukla@sukarya.org) / [saachika@wordswork.in](mailto:saachika@wordswork.in)