**Biography - Rashmi Bharti**

Rashmi has been working in the field of rural development for the past 30 years in India, in the states of Uttarakhand, Delhi and Orissa. She co-founded Avani, a voluntary organization, in the Central Himalayas in India, 22 years ago. She has worked in the field of alternative education, renewable energy, community health, natural resource management, strategic planning, fundraising and creation of sustainable livelihoods in remote rural areas.

She is the recipient of the IMC Ladies’ Wing Janki Devi Bajaj Award. She, together with her husband has also received the T N Khushoo award for Conservation and Livelihoods presented by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She has also received the Nari Shakti award by the Honorable President of India, Mr Ram Nath Kovind in March 2018.

In addition to Avani, she is also the founder and chairwoman of Kumaon Earthcraft Self Reliant Cooperative – and producer owned, sustainable rural enterprise that produces and markets handmade natural textiles and lifestyle products.

She has pioneered the cultivation and extraction of indigo pigment from three varieties of indigo in the Central Himalayas in India.  She has also innovated hundred percent beeswax crayons with natural plant based colorants.

Rashmi is also the Co- Founder and Director in Avani Bio Energy Pvt Ltd, a company which has innovated the production of electricity from pine needles.