



# MMNA: CELEBRATING THE MAHESHWARI COMMUNITY

■ > Organisation > by: Vinay Agrawal



**MMNA is touching lives of US Maheshwaris through its host of initiatives. Its current President Abhilasha Rathi tells us more...**

Founded over three decades ago in 1983, MMNA (Maheshwari Mahasabha of North America) has now more than four thousand registered members in ten different chapters across North America. The organization strives to connect the USA Maheshwari community under one common roof through series of initiatives, philanthropic activities, cultural events and mega conventions.

And, its various initiatives have made a difference in their respective categories. For its current President Abhilasha Rathi, MMNA was always an integral part of life. Rathi



was introduced to MMNA in her childhood during her summer-time visits to her grandparent's home. She was encouraged to participate in its events and attend

the celebrations. "It was a memory, I cherished throughout the year," she says.

MMNA in a nutshell, represents the Maheshwari community and their culture. It organizes IMRC: International Maheshwari Rajasthani Convention every two years. IMRC is a highly anticipated event in MMNA calendar and serves as a meeting ground for people from different parts of the country.

Thanks to its generous donors, the organization is also actively involved in providing education support to the students in North America.





MMNA also has a matrimonial initiative led by its former President Parag Bajaj, NEC, Sakhi and RAYS. Their matrimonial initiative is quite active and boasts of countless successful stories.

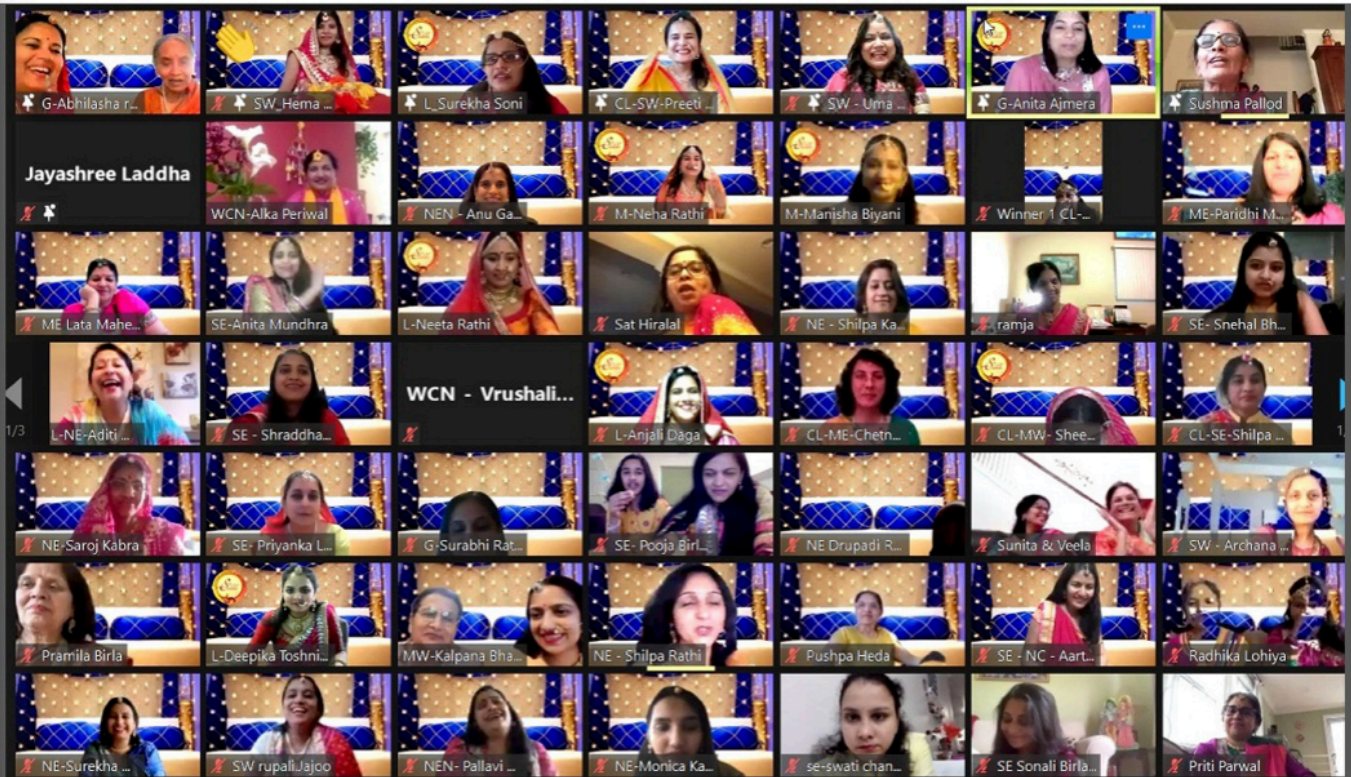
MMNA's Sakhi group is also strong. The group never misses any opportunity to make their fellow Sakhis at home. Thanks to the efforts of MMNA's former President Dr Seema Rathi and past Sakhi

Chairs, the Sakhi group today, is 1000 member strong, and enjoys a reputation of being regular at all MMNA events.

As MMNA's National President, Abhilasha works with a nine member National Executive Committee and the Chapter Presidents. At present, MMNA has nine initiatives - Matrimonial, Sakhi, RAYS (Youth Initiative), Education, Senior Citizens Support Group,

Seva (Philanthropy), BET (Business and Entrepreneurship Track), ProNet (Professional Network) and Operational/ Tech Support. Each initiative has an individual team. The leaders of its philanthropy (seva) initiative continue to work very hard to help those in need.

*"I am so grateful for many good friends I have made through MMNA."*



The ever  
enthusiastic  
volunteer  
squad  
of  
IMRC 2018



Speaking about her responsibilities, Abhilasha says, "My responsibility is to motivate the team and make necessary changes. I bring new ideas and provide the needed inputs for better outcome. I ensure that our conventions are successful. For that, I work closely with the host chapters."

Rathi also collaborates with MMNA's Chairman Ghanshyam Heda and the board of trustees to

ensure a smooth execution of all MMNA's activities. It is through power of such collaborations; MMNA was efficiently able to organize a Virtual Utsav in 2020 bringing diverse age groups together.

MMNA also revamped their website as part of their Vision 2020 program under the leadership of Vikas Bhutada. The current website sports a modern look and feel. The



newly designed website was one of the reasons behind the success of MMNA's Virtual Utsav. On it Abhilasha says, "The website has now new membership profiles. It increased the participation in Virtual Utsav."

Abhilasha feels that it's because of the collective efforts of former Presidents; MMNA has reached its current place. She adds, "Each one of them contributed in their own way. I am also amazed at the dedication of our volunteers who continue to provide their selfless services to raise this organization to new height every year."

*"MMNA's goal is to connect all the Maheshwaris living in the US."*



And, it's not all talk. This year, MMNA launched its ninth initiative 'Professional Networking Group (ProNet)' with its own team. The group is currently busy planning their first ever event. "It's a unique initiative that will support many professionals. The team will work closely with the business initiative," says Abhilasha.

*"Volunteers don't really have the time, but they have the heart."*

MMNA refused to slow down during the pandemic. In the matter of 6-8 weeks, it put together a Virtual Utsav in October 2020, spread across three weekends during Vijaya Dashami. During this time, MMNA also conducted various webinars including one on cryptocurrency. Their Sakhi team kept the members engaged via several ongoing events, and made all the festivals special and possible, via Zoom. Shares Abhilasha, "For Gangaur, we had over 200 participants. Everyone was dressed up in their traditional fineries."

MMNA's Youth and Sakhi team are involved in every event for its smooth execution. Its tech team too, closely works with its Chapter Presidents to ensure they have the needed knowledge. Last year, their Philanthropy (seva) team donated 5000\$ worth of feminine products to the shelters across North America. Apart from that, MMNA joined hands with Seva International for Covid relief work in India.

"Many of our members are still involved in such efforts through our various channels. We organized Bhajan Sandhya which made a big difference to alleviate people's worries," says Abhilasha. She adds, "I am so grateful for many good friends I have made through this platform. Every day, I am so proud



to be a part of such wonderful community. This is the beauty of MMNA."

Historically Maheshwaris across the globe have found success as professionals, doctors, teachers, engineers, politicians and are continuing to do so. Maheshwari

youth too are making a difference in their work and Maheshwari culture. As an MMNA member and its General Secretary for the last four years, Abhilasha knows this. She is also aware of what it takes for the leaders and volunteers to run the organization smoothly and to keep all the work initiatives

going successfully.

She says, "I want to encourage the youth involvement because it is the next generation who will continue the tradition. I also want to develop all the existing initiatives - digital included. As a President, I assure that the new team will shape the future of MMNA. I want to ensure that I stay connected with the past leaders, seek their guidance and learn from their valuable experiences."

Interestingly, her father-in-law is on the board of MMNA, and is often cornered by the people for his advice on various matters. Abhilasha who calls MMNA Parivar, a home away from home, concludes by saying, "What I see is that Maheshwaris have a made a difference outside India in their professional world; but they are still connected to their traditional roots. The community has so much talent. One fact I know for sure is that there are several Rathis in MMNA."

