

Ela bhatt



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ela Bhatt Ela Ramesh Bhatt born on 7 September 1933 in the city of Ahmadabad in India. She is the founder of India's Self-Employed Women's Association (or SEWA). A lawyer by training, Dr. Bhatt is a respected leader of the international labour, cooperative, women, and micro-finance movements who has won several national and international awards. Ela Bhatt's childhood was spent in the city of Surat. Her father, Sumant Bhatt, had a successful law practice. Her mother, Vanalila Vyas, was active in the women's movement. Bhatt attended the Sarvajanik Girls High School in Surat from 1940 to 1948.

She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the M. T. B. College in Surat in 1952. Following graduation Ela entered the Sir L. A. Shah Law College in Ahmedabad. In 1954 she received her degree in law and a Gold Medal for her work on Hindu Law. She then taught English for a short time at Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University, better known as SNDT, in Mumbai. But in 1955 she joined the legal department of the Textile Labour Association (TLA) in Ahmedabad. In 1956, Ela Bhatt married Ramesh Bhatt, who is currently a faculty at the Gujarat Vidyapeeth University in Ahmadabad.

After working for some time with the Gujarat government, Ela was asked by the TLA to head it's women's wing in 1968. In this connection she went to Israel where she studied at the Afro-Asian Institute of Labor and Cooperatives in Tel Aviv for three months, receiving the International Diploma of Labor and Cooperatives in 1971. She was very much influenced by the fact that thousands of women related to textile worker worked

elsewhere to supplement the family income, but there were state laws protecting only the industrial workers and not these self-employed women.

So with the co-operation of Arvind Buch, the then president of TLA, Ela Bhatt undertook to organize these self-employed women into a union under the auspices of the Women's Wing of the TLA. Then in 1972 the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was established with Buch as president and she herself as the general-secretary. She was one of the founders of Women's World Banking in 1979 with Esther Ocloo and Michaela Walsh, and served as its chair from 1980 to 1998.

She currently serves as the Chair of the SEWA Cooperative Bank, of Home Net, of the International Alliance of Street Vendors and of WIEGO. She is also a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation. . She was granted an honorary Doctorate degree in Humane Letters by Harvard University in June 2001. Ela Bhatt was also awarded the civilian honour of Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1985, and the Padma Bhushan in 1986. She was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 1977 and the Right Livelihood Award in 1984.