



# RSB CULTURE: WHERE PEOPLE DRIVE CHANGE

## NIRMALA BEHERA, THE WOMAN BEHIND RSB GROUP'S PEOPLE-FIRST TRANSFORMATION

Shweta Singh | The CEO Magazine

**B**uilding a great company means building a great culture. And building a great culture means putting the growth, safety and opportunities of employees first. At RSB Group, this people-first approach is creating real opportunities, especially for women who are eager to make their mark and lead with confidence.

At the centre of this transformation at RSB Group is Nirmala Behera, Executive Director of Group HR. With over 20 years of experience, she's the driving force behind many of the initiatives that are helping RSB become not just a great company, but a place where people truly feel supported and empowered to grow.

### THE RSB GROUP JOURNEY

RSB Group's story began in 1973 with a shared dream of two brothers, R K Behera and S K Behera. With ₹2 lakh in capital and a small, dedicated team, they launched International Auto Products in Bihar (now Jharkhand). The early days were challenging, sustained by small maintenance jobs for Tata Steel and Uranium Corporation of India, until a major breakthrough came in 1978 with a contract from Tata Motors. This marked the beginning of a phase of extraordinary growth.

Through the 1990s, RSB diversified into manufacturing propeller shafts and gearboxes, expanded across India, and set up a dedicated gear facility in Pune at Tata Motors' invitation. Over the years, their footprint grew across the USA and Mexico, supported by both acquisitions and greenfield projects.

Today, RSB Group stands as a ₹3000+ crore global engineering company with 17 manufacturing plants. Headquartered in Pune, it comprises RSB Transmissions (I) Ltd., RSB Transmissions North America Inc., RSB Transmissions De Mexico, and I-Design Engineering Solutions Ltd., which drives product innovation and design. The Group serves leading OEMs like Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, John Deere, Fiat, Renault Nissan, and many more across the automotive and construction sectors.



**NIRMALA BEHERA**  
Executive Director of Group HR - RSB Group

RSB's operations are backed by a strong commitment to quality, sustainability, and future readiness, evident in their Deming and TPM awards, ESG initiatives, and investments in EV and hydrogen technologies. But beyond business, RSB is deeply rooted in care, for people and for progress. From their Ek Pahal program promoting women's empowerment to education and healthcare projects through the RSB Foundation, the Group continues to build not just machines, but meaningful impact.

### LEADING WITH PURPOSE

Behind every successful organisation is a leader who knows that people are the driving force behind performance, culture, and long-term growth. At RSB Group, that leader is Nirmala Behera, someone who brings not only strategic foresight but also deep empathy to the table. Her journey across diverse domains, from technology to human resources, has equipped her with the insight and agility to shape both strategy and culture.

With a Master's degree in Marketing from Indira Institute of Management and an Executive Diploma in HR from XLRI, Jamshedpur, Nirmala brings a rare combination of strategic thinking and emotional intelligence. Her career began in Information Technology and Quality Management, and she went on to lead RSB's Group IT division for over 12 years. In that role, she not only managed transformation projects



with operational excellence, a quality that has played a vital role in RSB Group's continued success. By nurturing a culture rooted in innovation and care, she has helped shape a workplace where performance thrives alongside people. With a deep commitment to organisational growth and employee well-being, she continues to shape the future of RSB Group itself.

### EK PAHAL: RSB'S COMMITMENT TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

At the heart of Nirmala Behera's leadership is a firm belief that

empowered women empower societies. This belief finds its expression in Ek Pahal, a flagship initiative at RSB Group that she leads with passion and purpose. Focused on women's socioeconomic empowerment, Ek Pahal goes and builds real pathways for growth, learning, safety, and independence.

The initiative stands on four powerful pillars, each thoughtfully designed and led by dedicated champions from within the organisation:

**Health & Hygiene:** Promoting awareness about menstrual health, personal well-being, and access to hygiene resources.

**Learning & Development:** Creating opportunities for skill-building that help women advance both professionally and personally.

**Safety:** Educating women on workplace and personal safety, ensuring they feel secure in every space they step into.

**Community Service:** Empowering women by recognising and nurturing their talents

With Ek Pahal, Nirmala has created a model that not only uplifts individual women but also strengthens the social fabric around them. Her approach is simple but deeply impactful: when women rise, everyone rises.

### NURTURING FUTURE LEADERS

For many aspiring professionals, especially women, Nirmala Behera represents what's possible when purpose meets perseverance. Her story is one of quiet determination, meaningful change, and leadership that uplifts rather than commands.

Through her work at RSB Group and her broader involvement in the professional community, she continues to lead by example. Not from a distance, but by walking alongside those she mentors, supports, and empowers. Because at the end of the day, leadership isn't just about shaping organisations. It's about lifting others along the way.

but also laid the groundwork for scalable systems that would support RSB's growing operations across geographies. This hands-on experience gave her a strong foundation in business operations, which she now carries into her HR leadership role.

### THE PEOPLE-FIRST TRANSFORMATION

Today, as Executive Director – Group HR, Nirmala leads with a people-first vision—one that's focused not just on hiring or training but on building a workplace where individuals feel seen, heard, and valued. Under her leadership, RSB has implemented progressive HR practices that have led the company to earn the prestigious "Great Place to Work" recognition. Her approach emphasises capability-building, culture shaping, and aligning people strategy with business outcomes.

Nirmala's contributions have been widely recognised by the industry. She has been honoured with the "HR Excellence Award" from ITP Group, the "Excellence in HR Leadership" award from the World HR Congress in Kuala Lumpur, and the "Maharashtra State Best Employer Brand Award". Her impactful contributions and insights into HR have been widely recognised and featured on respected platforms such as Human Capital, Business Manager, and People Matters, reflecting her influence as a thought leader.

Beyond her work within RSB, she has previously contributed to leadership and inclusion initiatives through her association with professional bodies like the CII – Indian Women Network (IWN). Currently, she serves on the Board of Members of the Lion's Club – Pune Chapter, Board of Governing Council (BoG) Member, International Institute of Management Studies, Pune and is also an active member of the core team of the Police Maitri Sangathan initiative. But ask her about what truly drives her, and she'll tell you it's about creating futures, especially for women, by making workplaces more supportive, ambitious, and fair. Her strength lies in seamlessly blending strategic HR initiatives

