



Confederation of Indian Industry

Navigating turbulence, solving for tomorrow

Inspiring women in innovation

3rd edition (2025)



Table of contents

Methodology	04
Foreword by CII	05
Message from CII	06
Foreword by PwC	07
01. Indumathi K	09
02. C S Sai Sudha	11
03. Aditi Hazra Ganju	14
04. Anuradha Thakur	16
05. Rini Chordia	18
06. Ishita Jindal	20
07. Fathima Benazir J	22
08. Aprajita Kumari	25
09. Alka Mehta	27
10. Sahar Mansoor	29
11. Srishty Jain	31
12. Amrita Suhasini Suman	34
13. Neeta Trivedi	36
14. Monika	38
15. Ankita Sinha	40
16. Malini Parmar	43
17. Subramanian Sreepriya Kowshik	45
18. Manali Sharma	47
19. Nida Sahar Rafee	49
20. Sarita Ahlawat	52
21. Priyanka Gupta	54
22. Ritu Mathran	56
23. Divya M Teli	58
24. Chanchal Goyal	60

25. Mugdha Pradhan	62
26. Nidhi Samania	64
27. Saloni Anand	66
28. Vidhya Parshuramkar	68
29. Shaivee Malik	70
30. Kirty Datar	73
31. Arpana Kumari	76
32. Vidya TG	78
33. Saumya Rawat	81
34. Salomi Dabral	84
35. Shwaita Uniyal	86
36. Nidhi Gautam	88
37. Elizabeth Mukhedkar	90
38. Aparna Chavan	92
39. Disha Shah	95
40. Anita Kshetri	97
41. Himansha Singh	99
42. Vaishali Mithari	102
43. Iram Maimuna	104
44. Ann Alexia Anra	106
45. Rajashri Sai	108
46. Jaya Prabha	111
47. Neha Chauhan	113
48. Nidhi Tatia	116
49. Smridhi Seth	118
Conclusion	120
Acknowledgements	121

Methodology



*CII CIES: CII Centre of Excellence for innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Startups

Foreword by CII



Kris Gopalakrishnan

Chairman, CII CIES Advisory Board

Chairman, Axilor Ventures

CII has long been committed to building a collaborative environment that encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth. Through the CII CIES, we champion the advancement of dynamic entrepreneurial ventures, driving India's economic and social progress. A key priority within this vision is the empowerment and recognition of women entrepreneurs, whose leadership is crucial to a resilient innovation ecosystem.

I am excited to introduce 'Navigating turbulence, solving for tomorrow: Inspiring women in innovation'—a compendium that honours the extraordinary contributions of women founders who are driving industry transformation despite obstacles. This publication demonstrates their remarkable vision, strength, persistence, and relentless pursuit of innovation. Their journeys demonstrate the qualities of leadership, creativity, and strategic thinking which are crucial for meeting the intricate requirements of present and future markets.

At CII CIES, our commitment extends beyond recognition. We actively support women-led enterprises through mentorship, ecosystem-building strategies, and specific programmes to improve access to capital, networks, and market opportunities. This compendium amplifies the exceptional achievements of women founders and underscores the important role they play in India's startup and innovation landscape.

I congratulate all the women entrepreneurs featured in this edition. Their accomplishments inspire not only their contemporaries but also the next generation of innovators. Each profile reflects a bold spirit and a pioneering mindset—crucial for fostering development that is both enduring and equitable.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the esteemed assessors and the steering committee members. Their thorough assessment and judicious discernment have been decisive in selecting the top 49 women founders who exemplify excellence and impact in innovation.

As India stands at a critical moment in its economic development, the progress of women-led enterprises signifies both advancement and potential. It is therefore the duty of all stakeholders to foster a supportive environment that sustains the growth of diverse entrepreneurial talent. This compendium serves as a clarion appeal to collective action, recognising accomplishments while facilitating continued support for women innovators across the nation.

Message from CII



Rumjhum Chatterjee

Chairperson, CII Women in Innovation Steering Committee
Co-Founder and Managing Trustee, The Infravision Foundation
Chairperson, Feedback Foundation

It gives me immense pleasure to present the third edition of, *Navigating turbulence, solving for tomorrow: Inspiring women in innovation*,—a compendium that honours the foresight, aspiration, and transformative leadership of women entrepreneurs driving India's innovation landscape.

My association with the Women in Innovation Steering Committee has been a deeply gratifying one. As its chairperson, I've had the honour to observe the extraordinary paths of women who have transformed setbacks into stepping stones, created enterprises of impact, and played a significant role in India's economic and social advancement.

This compendium is a tribute—not only to individual accomplishment but also to collective resolve. Each story featured within embodies courage, vision, and integrity—qualities that still inspire us today. Together, they reflect the strategic imperative of embracing diversity as drivers of sustainable development and a more equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In an age characterised by transformation and accelerating pace of technological change, this compendium celebrates the unwavering determination that defines women leaders across sectors. These stories show how determination and creativity help people overcome structural barriers, mobilise change, and open pathways to shared prosperity.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the members of the Women in Innovation Steering Committee and the panel of assessors for their dedication, thoughtful evaluation, and contribution in recognising this year's most inspiring women entrepreneurs.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Kris Gopalakrishnan (Chairman, CII CIES Advisory Board), for his continued commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion. I also express my deep gratitude to Chandrajit Banerjee (Director General, CII), for his constant encouragement and support in driving this important initiative forward.

A special acknowledgment is due to N M P Jeyesh (Senior Director and Head, Startups) for his exemplary leadership as the anchor of this initiative, and to Priyanka Mukhija Mishra (Deputy Director, CII) for her continued commitment and perseverance in bringing this compendium to fruition. My gratitude also extends to our knowledge partner, PwC, for their expertise and partnership in presenting these inspiring stories of innovation and leadership.

I deeply value the relentless efforts of the CII CIES in building an inclusive ecosystem that nurtures women-led innovation and entrepreneurship across India.

To all aspiring women innovators and entrepreneurs engaging with this publication, I urge you to dream audaciously, show unwavering determination, and guide with confidence. We are witnessing a defining era for women's entrepreneurship—one that promises a more balanced, inclusive, and prosperous future.

Foreword by PwC



Arijit Chakraborti

Partner, Advisory
PwC India

We're living through times of massive transformation. Global megatrends, including climate change and technological advancements, are continuously converging and intersecting with one another.

A dynamic market also means rapid changes in the business landscape of Indian organisations. It creates new opportunities for them—entering new domains of growth by transcending traditional boundaries to meet the evolving needs of the business and society.

As a powerhouse of innovation, India will contribute to the momentum of global economic growth. Indian startups, particularly, are expected to be at the forefront of creating tangible value and disrupting the sector boundaries through their agility, creativity, and innovation. As per our research, about \$9.82 trillion of value pools are going to be created worldwide in the next ten years.¹

The role of women entrepreneurs in creating and capturing these value pools is going to be substantive. In addition to making India's progress more inclusive, it's going to change the country's role in the global economic order significantly.

We at PwC are proud to collaborate with CII in highlighting such women entrepreneurs in the market today. As we embark on the third edition of the 'Navigating turbulence, solving for tomorrow: Inspiring women in innovation' compendium, it is imperative to chronicle the remarkable journeys of these women. These stories are a testament to the core qualities of Indian women entrepreneurs—a growth mindset, determination, and resilience.

Collectively, the highlighted 49 entrepreneurs have obtained funds from a diverse set of sources, which indicates the versatility of the funding sources in India. An interesting thing to note is that 15 out of 49 of these startups have their origins in tier-2/tier-3 cities. Entrepreneurship and startup enterprises are no longer limited to metropolitan cities—this emphasises how tomorrow's India is going to lead the startup agenda.

We are thankful to all the women for sharing their stories with us. We hope these stories provide inspiration and help future entrepreneurs to innovate and become resilient in a dynamic business landscape.

1. <https://www.pwc.in/value-in-motion.html>



01

Indumathi K

SaiRa People Tech Solutions Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Indumathi of Saira has more than 25 years of industry experience in people development, business consulting, and personal branding. Indumathi was a techie at major tech companies such as HCLTech. She wanted to take a break from work due to pregnancy-related complications, and when she attempted to rejoin the workforce after two years, she faced an unexpected hurdle. Companies treated her as a fresher, and she struggled to land any suitable job for two years despite having nearly a decade of experience. Treated as an outsider and outdated by the same industry she had worked in earlier, Indumathi experienced an identity crisis. That is when she dropped her plans of rejoining the company and decided to start something on her own and became a leadership trainer. Around this time, she met a friend who was a professor at IIT Lucknow who told her how PWD candidates at IITs—despite being talented—were struggling to secure placements on par with their peers. At home she noticed people, especially men, struggling with finding an identity post-retirement. Thus began ‘Saira’, shaped by Indumathi’s personal experiences, with a mission to help and empower India’s underrepresented workforce to enter/re-enter workplace.

From conception to creation

Once she decided to do something in this space, Indumathi started extensive field research by discussing with leaders from various sectors, NGOs focused on PWD communities and women’s forums to understand the challenges. Founded in 2022, Saira’s team consists of eight employees from varying backgrounds and gender identities across the nation. As a team, they curated a database of 16,000 candidates and trained them to become industry ready. Saira also signed an MOU with the central government and partnerships at state levels (e.g. Gujarat), supported by grants from private institutions with DEI requirements, focused on PWD placements.

Navigating challenges

While there weren’t any major professional hurdles as a woman entrepreneur, she had her fair share of personal challenges of managing family expectations, extended family scepticism, and balancing work-life demands—particularly with caring for two children and balancing frequent travel. She says it is necessary to set boundaries and expectations with family members. In fact, she has noticed a positive shift in Indian society towards supporting women founders, echoed by her personal experience of attending a three-month professional MBA at IIM Bangalore under GS10KW initiative.

One of the key challenges is to create a PWD-friendly work environment such as wheelchair accessibility and sensitising corporate teams to work with PWD candidates. Saira’s efforts can be corroborated by the experiences of six acid-attack survivors, who were placed in their preferred jobs in 2024.



Be clear about your ideas, communicate effectively with immediate family to align expectations, and embrace the current supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem in India. Pursue entrepreneurship confidently—now is an especially good time for women-led ventures in India.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Saira is in plans to launch version 2.0 of their recruitment platform with enhanced functionalities for companies and accessibility for candidates. They are in process of extending their services to include the LGBTQ+ community which is highly underrepresented. The company is launching a comprehensive app ‘Saira Abilities’—a personalised assistant that will provide inclusive access to resources ranging from job opportunities to community events and daily motivational content, aiming for pan-India reach. The company intends to scale its model nationwide and potentially internationally in the next five years.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Website	https://www.sairajobs.com
Industries	SocialTech
Company size	2–10
Technologies	AI/ML, web platform
Business models	B2B
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond hiring, full DEI enablement: Saira conducts corporate sensitisation programmes, accessibility audits, and delivers DEI action plans as strategic DEI partners—not just recruiters. • Saira upskills candidates with interview readiness, soft skills, and digital fluency, ensuring they succeed, not just get placed. • Saira embraces the principle of WFA—work from anywhere, work for anyone. • Technologically, modular, scalable architecture supports rapid iteration and secure deployment. • Saira’s dedicated support team ensures personalised assistance for both businesses and candidates. • Deep grassroots integration: Partnering with various foundations to source talent from unconventional pipelines. • Proprietary Candidate Suitability Score at the core of the platform: Powered by AI/ML, it intelligently matches diverse candidates to roles, drastically reducing time-to-hire while curbing unconscious bias.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won the Social Impact Startup of the Year award, 2023 • Recognised as one of the top 6 HR startups by NHRD, 2024 • Received Star Startup award by Ramaiah Evolute • Recognised and funded as one of the top startups under Parivartan Initiative, 2025
Funding (₹)	<p>Other sources (in lakh): 21.5</p> <p>Institutional investor (in lakh): 30</p>

02

C S Sai Sudha

Bilvam Jaganmaata Herbals Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Sudha Chebrolu from Anand, Gujarat founded Bilvam Jaganmaata Herbals (Bilvam Herbals) in 2021. Sudha's background in health communication and personal experiences with terminal illnesses in her family helped her develop a mission that combines social impact, sustainability, and Ayurveda. Bilvam aims to provide cosmeceuticals and supplements made entirely of plants while maintaining ecological harmony and giving rural women respectable means of subsistence. The approach focuses on privileged education, trust-building, evidence generation, and D2C marketing. To guarantee quality and fair value at the source, it is also based on ethical sourcing—with products obtained directly from marginal and tribal farmers.

From conception to creation

Between 2019 and 2020, Sudha's trained under her spiritual mentor and had an extensive herb plantation in her backyard. These two factors catalysed the development of Bilvam's formulations. Non-viable formulations were discarded in early trials with friends and family, which concentrated on efficacy and sensory acceptance. A deliberate decision to scale impact pragmatically and align environmental stewardship with health outcomes led to the decision to operate as a for-profit business. A larger concept—a company that addresses health needs while preserving the environment through ethical sourcing—was inspired by an incident involving the cutting down of centuries-old trees. From hyperlocal networks, which at first consisted of campus security personnel who were also farmers, sourcing evolved into organised collaborations. Through institutional and social enterprise connections, such as incubation by a medicinal and aromatic plants research centre and the acquisition of Geographical Indication-tagged turmeric, Bilvam developed equitable, mutually agreed pricing for labour-intensive leaf collection.

The same intentionality was used in the evolution of go-to-market decisions. Following the development of a D2C website, Bilvam tested digital marketing campaigns before halting significant expenditures to prioritise regulatory clearances—AYUSH/FDCA for cosmeceuticals and FSSAI for nutraceuticals. The business shifted to education-led channels, especially podcasts, with the help of customer social media groups and organic social platform content, as exhibitions provided one-time sales but little patient follow-up.



Don't look back once you've made a decision. Never compromise, because no one will compromise on your behalf. We should have a clear picture on how we want to pursue our goal and then start walking the path.

Navigating challenges

Early challenges included price discovery, logistics, and sourcing dependability. It was challenging to benchmark prices with new and unfamiliar formulations. Bilvam solved this problem by working with suppliers to determine farmgate economics to guarantee win-win pricing. For instance, when a shipment of turmeric from Odisha took two months to arrive, exposing supply-chain fragility during the COVID era, Bilvam pinpointed the issue and pivoted accordingly. This led to a shift towards seasonal bulk procurement, better storage practices, and reliance on reliable transporters. With plans for small local processing units, the need for freshness in palash prompted training in local pre-processing to cut down on spoiling and transit time. Another barrier was regulatory ambiguity. Products that fell into the traditional Ayurvedic and synthetic categories required extensive research and two different pathways: AYUSH/FDCA for cosmeceuticals and FSSAI for supplements. The market-side feedback loop between clinicians and consumers, which is crucial for outcome-driven products, was diluted by traditional B2B distribution.

Future horizons

The future is evidence-based and phased. Over the next 12 to 18 months, Bilvam will increase its footprint in Andhra and Telangana, then move on to Maharashtra and build its expanding Delhi-NCR base. The main top-of-funnel engine is still podcasts, which are complemented by community WhatsApp groups and natural social media channels. Two products are undergoing clinical validation through an MOU with a medical institute close to Anand. Results are anticipated in six months and will support applications for export licences and preparations for entry into the US market.

In order to improve quality and yield, the company will continue to scale direct farmer partnerships, give producer groups control over early-stage processing, and invest in referral ecosystems and SEO to increase discoverability. The credibility of the women-led production team has been strengthened by national recognition, such as a 2021 mention from the prime minister; on the inside, they are being further empowered through literacy assistance, skills training, and a planned gold-savings benefit to create long-term security.

Bilvam’s fundamental goal—to become a reputable, scientifically supported Ayurvedic company that demonstrates how plant-based products can improve quantifiable health outcomes while restoring livelihoods and natural environments—has not changed. Sudha’s advice to would-be female business owners encapsulates the spirit of that goal: be clear about your commitment to your path, don’t compromise on essentials, and don’t take drastic measures without a plan. Bilvam’s next chapter will focus on community, evidence, and purpose, which will enable it to scale impact forest by forest, farmer by farmer, and patient by patient.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Anand, Gujarat
Website	https://www.bilvamherbals.com/
Industries	Health and wellness
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Ayurvedic formulations, AI-driven personalization
Business models	B2C, D2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patent-backed ayurvedic formulations: Unlike many herbal brands, Bilvam’s core products are backed by two granted patents and seven more in the pipeline, offering scientifically formulated, condition-specific therapeutics. Zero synthetic additives: Products are 100% plant-based, preservative-free, and follow traditional Ayurvedic principles, ensuring purity without compromise.

<p>USP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical, ecosystem-based sourcing: We work directly with 600+ tribal and marginal farmers, promoting wild-herb regeneration and forest-based livelihoods unlike others who rely on commercial mono-crop sourcing. • Tradition meets tech: Bilvam blends traditional manufacturing with modern formats (capsules, oils) and is planning to develop AI-driven personalisation and blockchain traceability—a rare combination in the Ayurvedic sector. • Recognised for social and ecological impact: Bilvam isn't just a brand; it's a movement for sustainable wellness recognised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and incubated at IIMB, MANAGE, and ICAR.
<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Mann ki Baat (September 2021) for our innovative plant -based herbal formulations • RKVY Raftaar Grant Recipient, INR20 lakh sanctioned under Ministry of Agriculture (two tranches received) • Incubated by leading national institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NSRCEL IIM Bangalore (Women Start-up Program) – MANAGE Hyderabad – Medi-Hub TBI ICAR, Anand • Patent achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two formulation patents granted – Seven additional patent applications filed
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 90 • Government grants (in lakh): 20

03

Aditi Hazra Ganju

Saathealth

Charting new paths

Aditi Hazra Ganju started her career with a solid background in biochemistry and global pharmaceutical research and compliance. She was inspired to explore digital solutions to influence health outcomes of consumers after realising that smartphone usage and online interactions were rising, even in India's impoverished areas. She envisioned leveraging mobile technology to create health awareness combined with incentives, creating a unique value proposition for health outcomes at scale.

Aditi has been instrumental in establishing Saathealth's approach to behavioural change that emphasises a deep understanding of user journeys, their cultural context, role models, and influences on craft storytelling narratives to influence target communities.

From conception to creation

Saathealth was conceived as a mobile-first health awareness platform which was deployed in the slums of Mumbai and Delhi, targeting children's health and nutrition. Partnerships with neighbourhood kirana stores created a conducive environment, and accessing content resulted in material rewards, encouraging behaviour change. More than 1,00,000 downloads and improved health outcomes demonstrated the pilot's success, facilitating growth in more general health topics and geographic regions. Over time, Saathealth has evolved into a phygital marketplace for health and financial resilience for India's missing middle. It instituted offering a comprehensive suite of services including health risk assessments, behaviour change content, and curated health and wellness solutions in multiple Indian languages. Through strategic integration of health financing products and bootstrapping with key investments, Saathealth has made it possible for users to manage health-related financial challenges by providing them with accessible solutions and knowledge.

Navigating challenges

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious obstacle and drove the business to almost shut down. However, the accelerated digital adoption and trust in virtual health services during this period helped in creating a pivotal opportunity for Saathealth. The group refocused their approach to fortify their digital platform and moved towards offering their behaviour change expertise as a service, with the goal of generating a steady income to sustain expansion. Throughout this phase, the company maintained a balance between social impact and business viability which became a key strategic consideration. Leveraging the pandemic-induced demand for digital health and with grant funding from impact-focused funders, Saathealth adapted quickly by expanding its core offerings and outreach methodology.

Future horizons

By partnering with social impact organisations like Dasra's Rebuild India Fund and Catalyst Group's Community Action Collaborative to foster community entrepreneurship models, Saathealth hopes to create an ecosystem for inclusive well-being in the future. The company is gradually expanding collaborations with suppliers to curate affordable insurance, women's health products, and telehealth services tailored to low-income communities, blue-collar workers, and trade union members.



As women, we are our own biggest critics. Listen to your inner voice, tap into your strength and capabilities, and believe in yourself. That's what's truly going to make a difference.

Technology evolution is central to the plan, along with ongoing integration of AI and multilingual support to broaden the reach. Additionally, Saathealth has launched an app which enables community entrepreneurs to get training, manage onboarding, and expand their impact. The company anticipates a change in consumer behaviour and believes that the emergence of a discerning middle class in developing India will drive a growing demand for high-quality preventive healthcare that includes physical, mental, and emotional wellness.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Mumbai, Maharashtra
Website	www.saathealth.com
Industries	Health and wellness, HealthTech, financial inclusion
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, mobile apps, web platform
Business models	B2B2C, B2C
USP	<p>Our consumer-centric, digital-first approach towards well-being differentiates Saathealth from other marketplaces in India that serve curative health needs and financial needs. Our five main differentiators are the focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable products • Local language, interactive awareness communication • The missing middle target group that offers cross-subsidisation opportunities • Combination of digital and community-based access • Addressing health and financial resilience needs.
Awards and accolades	<p>Saathealth has worked with partners like UNICEF, Johnson & Johnson, USAID, SCBF, UnitedWay Bengaluru, ACT Grants and Swiss Re Foundation to power behavioural change and access to care in underserved communities.</p> <p>In recognition of its pioneering approach, Saathealth has earned accolades from national and global institutions. It has been a part of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Health Authority’s Market Access Program • Google’s advisory for SDG startups • Galen Growth’s HealthTech cohort (2021) • Microsoft for Startups • IKP Knowledge Park’s DEEP program <p>The organisation has also won the PATH Primary Health Tech Challenge (2021), the George Institute’s Covid Care@Home Innovation Challenge, and was a finalist in the 5th Commonwealth Digital Health Awards. Saathealth’s work has been certified for social impact and measurement through Google’s Startups for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Saathealth’s original research work has been published in peer-reviewed journals and serves as a blueprint for organisations to conduct digital health interventions in underserved populations in India and beyond.</p>

04

Anuradha Thakur

Prian Energy LLP

Charting new paths

Squadron Leader Anuradha Thakur's multifaceted career spans service in the Indian Air Force, Indian Railways, and leadership roles in multinational corporations, cultivating a strong background in manufacturing and technology. While working with Russian aircraft fleets, she frequently witnessed India's dependence on imported components and technology, which limited the nation's self-reliance. Motivated to change this, she pursued advanced training at the National Institute of Solar Energy and transitioned into the renewable energy sector with a clear national objective: develop indigenous solutions that reduce import reliance and promote sustainable infrastructure. In 2018, Anuradha embarked on her entrepreneurial journey, founding Prian Energy—a company devoted to Make in India principles focused on solar power and EV charging technologies. Her vision is to align environmental stewardship with resilient, locally manufactured products.

From conception to creation

Prian Energy's flagship product is a fully indigenous EV charging station—designed, engineered, and manufactured in India down to the circuit level. Seeking to overcome the prevalent industry practice of assembling imported hardware, the company invested nearly three years collaborating with IIT experts and experienced engineers to develop its own advanced circuit design, filling a crucial national gap in electronics manufacturing. Their technology suite includes a charging management system with a remote dashboard for device oversight, payments, and control, along with a consumer app enabling seamless pay-and-charge experiences. Importantly, the stations integrate native solar power capability, allowing dual-mode charging that prioritises clean energy over fossil-fuel-based grids. To fund this capital-intensive R&D, Prian Energy initially established a solar engineering, procurement and construction business, channelling revenue into product development. This strategy ensured sustained innovation while maintaining design sovereignty and cost efficiency, complemented by 92% Indian content and locally made enclosures tailored for Indian conditions.

Navigating challenges

The path was marked by numerous systemic and personal hurdles. Financing the R&D-intensive venture demanded creative solutions—launching an EPC arm to underwrite product development proved key. Recruiting talent familiar with EV technology in a nascent ecosystem was challenging, as was earning customer trust when competing against established brands. As a woman founder and retired Air Force officer, Anuradha faced gender biases—including expectations to bring male partners to meetings—but overcame them through consistent delivery, sector credibility as a founding member of the All-India Renewable Energy Association, and the respect garnered from her defence background. Managing a demanding work-life balance required a disciplined 'two-shift' routine, with strong family support underpinning her ability to juggle entrepreneurship and parenting. Recognition—including selection by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as one of five startups out of 1,200, a keynote speaker at LBSNAA attended by 200+ IAS officers, and awards from prominent leaders—reinforced her resolve.



Building indigenous technology with resilience and support empowers India's sustainable future and reduces dependence on imports.

Future horizons

Looking forward, Anuradha envisions shifting market share from import-reliant leaders toward Prian Energy’s indigenous charging systems, fostering domestic technology growth. Expansion into rural India is central, where affordable, solar-integrated pay-and-charge stations can enable micro-entrepreneurship at homes and highway properties, with automated settlements encouraging participation. Additionally, the company aims to empower ITI-trained youth by creating skill-development paths for installations and repairs, catalysing rural employment. Anuradha’s advice to aspiring women entrepreneurs emphasises persistence beyond early setbacks and proactively building family support to maintain focus on building enduring businesses. Through innovation, resilience, and a commitment to domestic manufacturing, Prian Energy is poised to lead India’s clean energy and EV infrastructure revolution.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Pune, Maharashtra
Website	https://www.prianenergy.com
Industries	Clean technology, electric vehicles, energy, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Hardware, IoT, mobile app, SAAS, software
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2G
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First prize by India Accelerator in All Women Technology Startup • Incubated at NSRCEL, IIMB; InFed IIM Nagpur, Climate Collective, India Accelerator and Greener Sustainability • Twice selected in Top 100 Startup in Startup Week Event by MSINS; once received Top 24 Award and got a government work order worth ₹15 lakh • Presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and featured on DD News • Presented to other Government dignitaries and regional TV programmes • Winner of Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar Award on National Startup Day 2025
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 50

05

Rini Chordia

Belectriq Mobility Private Limited

Charting new paths

Rini Chordia's journey into entrepreneurship was a difficult one. However, owing to her background in engineering and extensive experience across global financial hubs such as Mumbai, Singapore, New York, and London, she was far from the stereotypical startup founder. Yet, it was her deep interest in energy and clean technology—honed through consulting and working with emerging energy companies—that led her to create a new path. Rini's vision was clear: develop and indigenise hardware technology for India's expanding EV ecosystem, an area neglected in favour of imported technology. On 8 March 2022, she launched Belectriq Mobility—a company driven by innovation, Indian-made technology, and a founder's grit.

From conception to creation

Belectriq Mobility's core mission was to develop EV chargers tailored for India's complex climate and power grid challenges. Unlike imported alternatives, Rini's products could endure India's heat, dust, and fluctuating power supply. Her company designed both slow chargers for two-wheelers and personal cars, and fast chargers for buses and four-wheelers—partnering with major industry players like Tata, Adani, and Indian Oil Corporation Limited. The startup is also a rare example of local power module and controller development within India's hardware sector. Despite the physical complexities of manufacturing hardware compared to software, Belectriq saw a remarkable 10x revenue growth within a year, increasing production and refining technology with a highly skilled R&D and validation team focused on real-world Indian conditions.

Navigating challenges

Leading a manufacturing venture in a male-dominated space came with its own hurdles. Rini candidly shares the challenge of commanding esteem from factory personnel and managing operations with only a handful of women in a 150-strong team. Maintaining work-life balance with two children was another test, which she overcame by building a trusted second layer of leadership both at work and home. The importance of a supporting home environment blended with a strong, reliable team at work formed the backbone of her success. The insights reflect her practical approach and resilience—continuously aligning her team and personal life to achieve high-quality, timely deliveries in a demanding industry.

Future horizons

Looking forward, Belectriq Mobility is expanding its R&D presence to Bengaluru and entering new segments like energy storage systems to support rural electrification and highways. Their pioneering net-zero charging stations integrate solar power and energy storage to enable self-sufficient charging without relying on grid power—a solution particularly impactful in off-grid areas of India. With an ongoing focus on innovation and sustainability, Rini envisions scaling Belectriq's technology both nationally and globally, contributing meaningfully to India's clean energy transition while inspiring more women to lead in tech and manufacturing sectors.



The key to managing a demanding startup and personal life is building a strong, trustworthy team—people who understand your vision and can execute flawlessly, so you don't have to be involved in every detail.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Website	https://belectriq.co/
Industries	Clean technology
Company size	51–200
Technologies	Energy storage
Business models	B2B
USP	<p>We are a full stack solution provider with a completely indigenous hardware and software stack for efficient grid-free, energy storage-based EV charging solutions. Our innovative technology offers the most energy efficient conversion solutions for EV charging in the market.</p> <p>We offer custom solutions as an OEM and ODM with an indigenous full technology stack. Our expertise in power electronics allows us to build better AC-DC conversion systems in charger, BESS while taking care of power quality in all our solutions. With two patents granted in the last year and many more in progress, we continue to dominate the market through technological innovation.</p>
Funding (₹)	Angel investors/VCS (in lakh): 4,200

06

Ishita Jindal

Webnyay

Charting new paths

Ishita Jindal, founder of Webnyay, has been a trailblazer in the space of legal tech, dedicated to revolutionising the legal landscape. After an illustrious career in product-centric roles, she made an unexpected turn towards entrepreneurship. Law ran in her family, but she was more interested in the dynamic interplay between technology and law. As Webnyay's Co-Founder and COO, Ishita drove forward with the vision of developing seamless online dispute resolution (ODR) and grievance redressal (GR) and later, AI-based legal tools.

From conception to creation

Coming from a family of lawyers, the nuances of justice were an intrinsic part of her upbringing. Her brother's exposure to corporate law outside India, along with the existing inefficiencies in the justice system, sparked the idea of ODR. Ishita's design expertise from NIFT fitted perfectly in crafting user-friendly interfaces, making Webnyay a useful innovation in a traditionally stagnant sector. Initially, it was deemed impractical amidst technological distrust within legal circles. However, the pandemic turned things around, emphasising the need for digitisation in the space. Webnyay was able to grab this opportunity, setting off on a path to digitised justice in an unprecedented time.

Navigating challenges

As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated industry, Ishita found herself facing veteran policymakers and distinguished figures and dealing with many hurdles. Convincing a deeply entrenched legal sector to embrace digital solutions required resilience and adaptability. Ishita assertively overcame all such roadblocks, convincing users accustomed to legacy systems to use her platform instead. The results showed in due time, building trust and acceptance for her platform.

Webnyay's embedding of AI in legal processes faced scrutiny over potential biases, prompting the installation of rigorous human-in-the-loop mechanisms to ensure fairness. Throughout these hurdles, Ishita persevered, laying a robust groundwork for future innovations in the legal tech space.

Future horizons

Peering into the future, Webnyay's trajectory embodies bold ambitions and promising horizons. Ishita aims to expand globally in the legal AI domain, envisioning her firm as a premier player in ODR worldwide. Strategically positioned to reduce the massive pendency in Indian courts, the firm aspires to transform the legal landscape by funnelling commercial disputes through its digital platform. Over the next decade, Ishita aspires to make Webnyay synonymous with effective and swift dispute resolution—not only within India but across international borders.



You're going to hear a hundred 'nos' to one 'yes'—but you need to find that one person who will say 'yes' to you.

Webnyay’s journey shows dynamic possibilities of legal tech innovations—where technology and justice converge to chart new paths towards a fairer and more accessible future. In this intricate tapestry, Ishita’s story encapsulates the essence of ingenuity in the face of enduring challenges. As Webnyay continues to evolve, it stands as a testament to the game-changing potential of technology in carving new paths for future endeavours in the legal sector.

In a nutshell

Website	https://www.webnyay.ai/
Industries	Enterprise SaaS, Legal Tech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, API, automation, GenAI, NLP/deep learning, SaaS
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2G
USP	<p>Led by lawyers, product strategists, and engineers, Webnyay’s team ensures solutions are both legally robust and scalable for enterprise adoption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory-first compliance • Multilingual and accessible • Cultural fit in dispute resolution • Enterprise-ready • AI for Indian legal practices
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR), Hyderabad and Gen AI legal tech startup, Webnyay.ai has collaborated to provide legal services to courts, tribunals, government departments and practising arbitrators across India. • Part of the first cohort of 26 innovative startups selected under NASSCOM’s GenAI foundry

07

Fathima Benazir J

Azooka Labs Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Azooka Labs Pvt Ltd was cofounded by Dr Fathima Benazir J and Alex D Paul. Fathima is a molecular biologist with more than 25 years of experience in the field of genomics, whereas Alex was previously a director of product management and marketing at Zoho. Azooka Labs was incubated in 2015 at IISc's Foundation for Science, Innovation and Development (FSID) under the mentorship of professors MRN Murthy, HS Savithri, and Dr CV Natraj. The firm aims to develop cost-efficient, indigenous molecular biology products, which can bind with the DNA and RNA of living organisms to enable fluorescence-based analysis. These products help quantify the concentrations of molecules of interest in samples, thereby simplifying analysis and diagnosis.

From conception to creation

During the initial phase of R&D, Azooka Labs developed *tinto rang*—a food grade and biologically safe DNA-binding dye. This dye can be used in RT-PCR tests to perform fluorescence-based analysis. Initially, there were compatibility issues related to devices, which were resolved by incorporating a synthetic mimic. This modification helped remove variations across batches.

Azooka played an active role in IISc's COVID response team. During multiple hospital visits, the firm experienced issues related to sample collection, transportation, cold chain, spillage, and false results. Azooka's team stepped into action immediately and developed two new products: RNA WRAPPr and mWRAPPr, from in-house buffers. These new products inactivated viruses, preserved nucleic acids at room temperature for greater than 30 days, and enabled storage up to 55°C for more than six months. As a result, Azooka was able to solve cold-chain requirements as well as reach out directly to consumers. The firm's phenomenal efforts resulted in analysis of 1,000,000 units with zero contamination in less than three months. This effort led the firm to win the Technology Development Board award during a national crisis.

Presently, customers from Assam, Manipur, and Jammu & Kashmir can ship samples at ambient temperature over 7–10 days without loss in integrity; shipment costs reduced by about 50–60%.

Navigating challenges

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, Azooka faced major hurdles while attempting to launch the molecular test based on the new dye (*tinto rang*). The lockdown meant that the team also lost access to its lab facilities. The team initially started development of its products in a home setup by using improvised sterilisation techniques. Later, they acquired a GMP-grade facility, ICMR approval within 15 days, and a CSR grant of ₹1 crore from IISc, which helped them start operations amid the pandemic.



A tectonic shift is reshaping healthcare. Genomics and microbiome insights are moving from labs to living rooms. At-home testing is booming on the back of India's D2C wave—while health and wellness clinics are now outpacing traditional diagnostics. The future of care is personal, preventive, and right at your doorstep—and Azooka is powering this revolution.

There is scepticism about the quality and efficacy of indigenous biomolecular products, as the ones from developed nations are perceived to be of higher quality and potency. As a result, adoption remains a challenge; however, post-trial retention numbers are promising. The firm focuses on institutional alliances with major healthcare providers and participation in deep tech/biotech awards to help build credibility. Funding remains the biggest constraint for Azooka as there seems to be limited funding options in the non-software deep tech space. It's because of financial constraints that the firm finds it hard to hire and retain top PhD talent. It took about seven years to develop market-ready products and obtain substantial inflows.

Future horizons

India is reliant on foreign companies and imported technology for patient sample collection, processing, and diagnostic tests on a daily basis. From hospitals to research labs, we are dependent on Thermo Fisher, Qiagen, BD Biosciences, and Danaher Corporation to run our basic diagnostics tests. Considering how this puts our healthcare systems in jeopardy due to increased reliance, the country needed to develop diagnostic products to reduce dependence. Azooka's mission is to develop the complete solution, a one-stop shop for everything genomics—sample collection, processing, and analysis. This is critical for India to practice its self-reliance mission—Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Currently, the firm has 350+ customers across segments, notable ones being Neuberger Diagnostics, Orange Health, AIIMS, and CDRI. It claims to be a leader in gut microbiome sample collection within the country and is expanding to skin, cervical microbiome kits. It is following a D2C outreach strategy where it is shipping to customers and letting them collect, return samples as per their convenience. On the technology front, Azooka is developing AI-powered platforms to expedite the analysis of genomic datasets. Azooka is making an entrance in the fields of veterinary/pet health, environmental and food safety testing, preventive health (wellness), and ancient DNA analysis. The firm is expanding globally with recent exports to Nepal, partner onboarding in the UAE, and pilot test runs in Canada. It is also collaborating with stakeholders based out of the US following the BIO International Convention at Boston.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka
Website	https://azooka.life/
Industries	BioTechnology, deep technology, health and wellness, HealthTech, life sciences
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Genomics
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C, D2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and manufactured in India for global performance • Cold-chain-free logistics save costs and expand reach • Safe, green alternatives to biohazardous reagents (global patents) • Comprehensive kit portfolio across all sample types • Strong customer support and warranty-backed shipments • Commitment to sustainability and science education

Awards and accolades

- 2015: Funded and incubated at SID, IISc (seed grant)
- 2017: IIGP - Top 10 Startups in India Social Impact
- Startup Stadium Finalist: Breakthrough Product Category: BIO US
- 2017: The only company from India
- 2018: Economic Times: Power of Ideas
- 2018: Bio Korea Marketing Exp Govt of Karnataka
- Top 5 startups in BioAsia 2019
- 2020: National Startup Award
- 2020: Honeywell CSR grant, SID
- 2020: Citi CSR grant through SID, IISc
- 2021: Deccan Herald Change Makers Award- Presented by C. N. Ashwath Narayan (Minister of Science and Technology of Karnataka)
- 2021: Nidhi Covid 2.0 grant
- 2021: Evolute Star Startup award- By Ramaiah Institute of Technology
- 2022: Technology Start-up Awards for development of indigenous technology with potential for commercialisation - Presented by Dr. Jitendra Singh (Ministry of Science and Technology)
- 2023: Nasscom league of 10 in Deeptech
- 2024: Women Entrepreneur Year - Women in Biotech by Golden Jubilee Biotech Park for Women

Funding (₹)

- Other sources (in lakh): 105
- Government grants (in lakh): 384.5

08

Aprajita Kumari

Fruvetech Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Dr Aprajita Kumari, CEO and co-founder of Fruvetech Pvt Ltd, has a PhD in plant biotechnology and extensive research experience in plant signalling and respiration. During her academic years, she was moved when she saw agricultural produce in Bihar perishing due to inadequate conditions during storage and transportation. This led Dr Kumari to begin her experiments in 2019, which led to the formal incorporation of Fruvetech in 2021. Fruvetech's goal is to improve the shelf life of agricultural harvest and empower farmers to earn a sustainable livelihood.

From conception to creation

One of the Fruvetech's key products is Fruvefresh and it comprised of sachet-based formulation composed of plant extracts and herbs. These sachets can be placed directly within corrugated boxes containing agricultural produce to extend their freshness. The formulation provides protection against fungal and bacterial attacks. A single sachet costing ₹ 6.5 is sufficient to preserve approximately 5 kg of produce, bringing cost per kilogram to about ₹ 1.3. During product trials, it was observed that the quality, taste, and texture of mangoes could be successfully preserved for 15–20 days. This was a significant improvement from the normal shelf life of 2–3 days for mangoes.

Another key product is a device Fruvetrans that can be placed in storage rooms to create a modified atmosphere that helps preserve agricultural produce in warehouses. This device has a refillable cartridge, air inlets/outlet, and a Peltier module for temperature control. These devices can operate up to 40°C and must be kept away from direct sunlight.

Fruvetech has also introduced specialty berry pads for sustaining the shelf life of berries. These allow blueberries to last up to 30–35 days at 4°C and strawberries for about a week when refrigerated.

The above-mentioned solutions have been tested on 45 varieties of agricultural produce so far, with a special focus on export-oriented vegetables. The main objective of the company is to reduce wastage and sustain quality of produce. It also empowers farmers to earn a fair price for their produce by giving them the flexibility to sell their products beyond traditional markets.

Navigating challenges

Dr Aprajita overcame several social and logistical barriers to collaborate with key stakeholders and raise awareness regarding her products. She frequently travels to remote rural areas within the country to run webinars for farmer producer organisations (FPOs) and conduct product demonstrations. Fruvetech has partnered with organisations—such as Reliance and Country Delight to test their product performance for cases where long-distance transportation is involved. To ensure risk-free adoption and smooth execution, Fruvetech performs on-site training during installations and provides proactive maintenance/support services.



The real struggle is acceptance.

Future horizons

Fruvtech is associated with a network of 8,000 farmers through FPOs and grower groups, which includes the Dragon Fruit Association hub of 500 farmers. There is a daily demand of 8,000–10,000 sachets from Delhi’s Azadpur Mandi. Reliance has leveraged the products to transport mangoes from Uttar Pradesh to Bengaluru. Guava farmers have been able to long-haul transport their produce from Maharashtra to Delhi.

Fruvtech is also focusing on developing partnerships with import–export companies and hypermarkets to fuel its growth story. It has actively engaged with Dubai’s market where there’s considerable potential for its products. For B2C market, the company is currently developing mechanisms to integrate its solutions within refrigerators belonging to large appliance brands.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	India
Website	http://www.fruvtech.com
Industries	Agriculture, AgriTech, biotechnology, deep technology, food and beverages, SocialTech, supply chain and logistics, sustainability and environment
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B, B2C, B2G
USP	Our solution is the first-of-its-kind smart release organic formula that can suppress ethylene and elicit defence responses. Our formula works on both climacteric and non-climacteric fruits.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Startup Award (2022) • UK-India Achiever Honours at UK Parliament • Winner of the C-CAMP Agritech Challenge • Indigram lab Agritech • Winner of the Tomato Grand Challenge held by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and AICTE • BASE Competition Winner by BioCyTIH Foundation, BITS Pilani • MSME Award of Excellence • IRMA Seed Cohort Winner • BIRAC SEED Grant • CITI Social Innovation grant • AWaDH Winner of iHUB, IIT Roper • SreePVF Award from Shri PVF Foundation • Top 50 HerStart
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sources (in lakh): 67 • Government grants (in lakh): 95 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 40 • Institutional investor (in lakh): 165

09

Alka Mehta

Payaid Payments Private Limited

Charting new paths

Hailing from a business family, Alka Mehta's inclination towards entrepreneurial pursuits was only natural. However, business acumen was not enough to pursue her goals. Alka had to break barriers to make her ambition a reality—the road to becoming the Founder and CEO of PayAid Payments Private Limited was full of challenges.

Alka became one of the few women from her traditional Marwari community to step into the largely male-dominated corporate sphere. Her prior experience of managing national and strategic accounts for payments at a reputed private bank emboldened her to drive a significant impact on the FinTech landscape.

From conception to creation

Alka's vision for PayAid was born during COVID-19 pandemic—an industry-defining period for many businesses. This exposed a critical limitation within payment systems that were already available—transaction failures due to server issues. As the pandemic pushed people to shift to online transactions, traditional financial entities revealed vulnerabilities such as prolonged server downtimes (a reputed private bank in India experienced one such incident in December 2020). This exposed a latent market need which encouraged Alka to turn an idea into a pioneering enterprise. 'PayAid Payments' was established as a sophisticated smart routing platform which aggregates transactions across multiple gateways to ensure a success rate of 93%.² Through discussions with numerous small and medium businesses (SMBs) and medium, small, and micro enterprises (MSMEs), PayAid identified that mid-sized online businesses were affected disproportionately by high transaction failure rates. The concept took shape by using APIs from various banks and aggregators, laying a robust foundation catering specifically to mid-size businesses.

Navigating challenges

PayAid's evolution from a concept to a successful enterprise was far from linear. Along the journey, Alka faced several challenges pertaining to cultural bias and funding, experienced by many women entrepreneurs in India. Despite repetitive rejections from VCs and questions about her capacity to lead, Alka was determined and focused on achieving her goals. Her resolve allowed PayAid to attain an edge by providing transparent, economical solutions and ensuring that the merchants receive prompt settlements.

Balancing her personal life with professional demands also tested Alka. Her philosophy on entrepreneurship was not about merely persisting through adversities but roaring through them and carving a unique path. That resonated throughout PayAid's trajectory, emphasising the importance of resourcefulness and building credible, supportive professional networks.



Never ever, ever give up.

2. <https://www.pwc.in/value-in-motion.html>

Future horizons

Alka envisions PayAid extending beyond the bounds of India in future, expanding into other South-East Asian markets lacking robust payment infrastructures. Driven by her philosophy that no technology company should rest on its laurels, she emphasises on continuous innovation, catering to client needs through market-driven solutions. That commitment is further evidenced by her plans—targeting tier-2 to tier-5 cities across India, acknowledging the untapped potential they represent. With aspirations of evolving the company both technologically and geographically, Alka wants to become a global player in FinTech innovation.

In her closing advice to aspiring entrepreneurs, Alka succinctly asserts the virtue of perseverance that has been integral to PayAid’s foundation. Through her journey, she offers both a template and an inspiration for new generations of entrepreneurs forging paths in the world of FinTech.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Hyderabad, Telangana
Website	https://payaidpayments.com
Industries	FinTech
Company size	2–10
Technologies	AI/ML, API, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	<p>Advantages of choosing PayAid Payments over other aggregators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible payment solution • Ability to calculate the best route across banks and Merchant Identification Numbers, optimising incoming and outgoing transactions in real time • Ability to track downtime/fluctuations in bank servers in real time
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startup Maharathi Fintech Government of India – 2025 • Digital Women Awards SheThePeople Winner – 2023 • Fintech Excellence under 40 – 2023 • Andhra Pradesh Government Fintech Challenge Winner – 2022 • Best Payments Startup of the year – 2021 • Indian Women Institutional League (IWIL) India Upcoming Fintech Startup • Indian Achievers Award 2021–22 for Promising Startup
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 55 • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 20 • Angel investors/VCS (in lakh): 88

10

Sahar Mansoor

Bare Necessities Zero Waste Solutions Pvt Ltd.

Charting new paths

Sahar Mansoor's journey is driven by passion for impactful work, shaped by her upbringing and extensive education in Los Angeles and Cambridge. Her experience in the middle of the Ebola epidemic in 2014 deepened her commitment to driving significant transformation outside of conventional roles.

Returning to India, Sahar first worked on rural solar energy projects before engaging with waste picker communities near Bengaluru's airport. Observing their hazardous conditions while handling plastic waste highlighted the associated social and environmental issues for Sahar. This inspired her to start Bare Necessities—a brand dedicated to fighting plastic pollution and uplifting marginalised women through toxin- and plastic-free products based on social equity.

From conception to creation

Bare Necessities adopts a sustainable design model using local, toxin-free ingredients, and eco-friendly packaging, which is designed such that it is reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Sahar developed waterless, concentrated sachets containing just 10% active ingredients, diluted at home in durable glass dispensers. This achieves up to a 90% reduction in plastic waste and carbon emissions, offering a practical route to an eco-friendly lifestyle.

The company serves both consumer and corporate clients—including Royal Enfield and IKEA—and is certified B Corp and PETA cruelty-free, ensuring zero waste across the supply chain. Bare Necessities' mission also focuses on empowering underserved women employed in manufacturing and warehousing, with access to training and healthcare. Since 2022, Bare Necessities has prevented over 23,000 single-use plastic bottles from landfills and educated 2.5 million people through a recognised sustainability school.

Navigating challenges

Sahar faced major challenges typical for female founders, with just 2% of global venture capital funding going to female-led startups. Building a new sustainable refillable product category in India further complicated fundraising and market acceptance.

Starting out, Sahar wore many hats and struggled to have a work-life balance. She credits her resilience to authentic relationships with family, peers, and her team. Support from ecosystem grants during COVID-19 helped stabilise supply chains and demand. She advises entrepreneurs to get all necessary help from the community, build authenticity, and keep learning.



It's so contradictory that us being clean results in pollution of the planet, so it just didn't make sense that every cleaning agent, personal or home care, comes packaged in plastic. All that adds to trash and pollutes our groundwater.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Bare Necessities aims to scale its refillable sachet and glass dispenser system, minimising plastic use and carbon emissions by cutting water shipment. India’s growing eco-conscious middle class, especially women, offers a promising market—60% of consumers are eager to pay more for sustainability.

With plans to divert 5,000 kg of plastic by 2030, Sahar encourages aspiring entrepreneurs, especially women, to gain experience, be bold, and leverage support networks. For her, Bare Necessities is more than a business—it’s a movement blending environment stewardship with social empowerment by creating lasting change.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Website	https://bare necessities.in
Industries	Digital commerce, FMCG, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C, D2C
Revenue stage	Post revenue
Revenue generated (in lakh) in the last financial year	400
Product stage	Growth/scaling
Does the startup hold any IP? Please choose an option	No
Number of IP held or filled?	We have filed patents for our waterless format of products. Bare Necessities has three trademarks in class 3, class 35 and class 41.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICE Aarohana Business Plan Competition (February 2021) • Meaningful Business 100 (August 2020) • Certified B Corp • PETA Certified • Member of Break Free from Plastic Collation (2000 and beyond) • Co-founders of the Global Count Us In Movement along with WWF, IKEA, etc. (2000 and beyond) • UNESCO Green Citizen Award (2021) • Cartier Young Leader Award (2022)
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sources (in lakh): 40 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 230

11

Srishty Jain

CoLLearn Sports

Charting new paths

The founder of CoLLearn Sports, Srishty Jain, is an inspiration in her own right in the entrepreneurial world—particularly for those charting new paths in the sports industry. She already had an impressive academic background prior to starting her company—including an MBA from Alliance University and another from the prestigious UCLA Anderson School of Management. In the initial stages, she worked with renowned firms in the demanding fields of frontend investment banking and corporate finance. However, it was her innate desire to create a meaningful impact beyond financial statements, which eventually led her into the world of entrepreneurship. This shift was profoundly influenced by her personal life and her close family members, especially her mother.

From conception to creation

Srishty embarked on a journey to fill a gap in the education sector, trying to find a non-traditional way to carry out the same. Finding herself at a crossroads between the finance sector—her area of expertise—and the sports sector—a world unknown to her at that point, she realised that the latter held untapped potential. Srishty discovered that many of the existing players overlooked sports management and related fields such as event management, athlete management and umpire training. Looking at the growing demand for trained professionals in the space, CoLLearn evolved to focus on delivering specialised programmes in sports education. Key partnerships with MNC's for Startups Accelerator and IIT Madras' 'Pravartak', bolstered the industry credibility of CoLLearn further.

Navigating challenges

Starting any business is challenging. Srishty, as a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated industry, had to overcome scepticism and break through multiple barriers to establish credibility. But instead of slowing down, she embraced the challenge of balancing both roles of being an entrepreneur as well as a new mother seamlessly.

She joined incubator programmes, such as the one offered by IIM Bangalore, which provided mentorship and vast networking opportunities, and the Google accelerator programme, which gave her and her firm credibility. These platforms helped strengthen CoLLearn's standing in the industry and gave it much-needed industry exposure. In addition, the firm's long list of accolades, such as the National Skill Development Corporation accreditation and national victories in entrepreneurial competitions, further emphasised its impact and credibility.

Future horizons

Under Srishty's leadership, CoLLearn has made significant strides, leaving a tangible impact on the sports education ecosystem. With numerous success stories and notable placements to its credit, CoLLearn has cemented its reputation in nurturing sports talent. Presently, the firm showcases robust financial performance, achieving consistent positive EBITDA and revenue targets, thereby presenting a successful business model fit for scaling.



The most important thing in life is resilience. Don't get bogged down and don't get carried away.

Looking ahead, Srishty envisions CoLLearn playing a pivotal role in preparing talent for India’s hosting of the 2036 Summer Olympics. Aligning with CoLLearn’s plans for global expansion into markets like the UAE, US, and Netherlands, she aims to broaden her firm’s reach further and set a global standard in sports education.

Srishty’s journey is full of valuable lessons, primarily: perseverance in face of adversity, the courage to pivot when necessary, and the importance of seeking support and mentorship. Her advice to future entrepreneurs, especially women stepping into male-dominated sectors, is to pursue one’s passions relentlessly while leveraging all networks and resources available.

Through her remarkable journey with CoLLearn, Srishty exemplifies how visionary leadership and persistent effort can transform challenges into opportunities, setting a new standard for success across the fields of education, technology, and sports.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka
Website	www.collearnsports.com
Industries	Education and skilling
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, AR-VR-MR
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C
USP	The firm focuses on providing tangible opportunities to work in the sports domain, in addition to providing advice and certifications. Its placement rate stands at 76% across courses, with its success stories being its USP. CoLLearn’s programmes are affordable, accessible, and high value for money.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First sports education company to get National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) accreditation under Ministry of Skilling and Employment, Government of India • National Winner of Startup Maharathi Competition under Startup Mahakumbh by the Central Government • Winner of Elevate 2024-25 – Karnataka Government Competition • Recognised as Promising Sports Startup by Shikar Dhawan’s Da-One Ventures • Launched a unique Sports Management Programme in association with IIT Madras’ Pravartak • Selected as Sports Education Partner by Infosys for training 3,000 students under SpringBoard (Pilot for 300 started) • Secured first place nationwide in Pitchbook Competition by Gujarat Sports Startup Conclave 2023 • Top Performer at IIMB’s NSRCEL Women Startup Program Cohort 4, 2024 (out of 4,000 startups) • Selected in Business Week 40under40 Education Powerlist 2024 • Top 20 Women Founded Startups – Google for Startups Women Founders Accelerator Program 2022

Awards and accolades

- Women Rising Star Award 2023 facilitated by Union Minister Smriti Irani
 - Proud collaboration with ARMY Sports Institute Pune
 - TIE Women Global Pitch Competition 2023 Chapter Level Winner – 2nd Runner Up
 - Represented Karnataka in G20 - DIA Summit 2023 Edtech Category
-

Funding (₹)

- Bootstrapped (in lakh): 30
- Other sources (in lakh): 10
- Government grants (in lakh): 30

12

Amrita Suhasini Suman

Amritattava Nutrition Pvt Ltd.

Charting new paths

In the ever-evolving landscape of entrepreneurship, Amritattava is an example of innovation-creating value where there is seemingly none. As the founder and director, Amrita pioneered her venture to address nutrition deficiencies of the nation's population through sustainable means. A synergy of purpose and innovation, she leveraged her expertise in the field of nutrition by creating a unique product out of cashew apple. Before Amrita unearthed its true potential, cashew apples were considered as waste.

Amritattava emerged from a desire to handle indigenous nutrition deficiencies without resorting to expensive or synthetic solutions that rely on foreign ingredients. Instead, it highlighted one of the local resources—i.e. the cashew apple, a byproduct of India's vibrant cashew nut industry—which had been grossly underutilised. By developing this indigenous resource into a nutrition powerhouse, Amrita sought to fill the gaps in dietary resources, particularly calcium deficiencies, that affect millions in India and beyond and silently afflict women and children at large.

From conception to creation

Amrita's path in making her vision a reality was not straightforward. She embarked on this journey bolstered by a grant from the Department of Biotechnology and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council under the Social Innovation Programme. However, her vision of transforming local, abundant, yet undervalued resources into nutrition supplements started to take shape as she spent some time in Odisha—where the problem of malnutrition was prevalent, a stark contrast to its rich agricultural landscape.

The core innovation at Amritattava Nutrition lies in its proprietary process technology, which uses Microwave technology to turn cashew apple into a nutrient-rich powder. This technology retains the fruit's natural bounty of calcium, vitamin C, potassium, and dietary fibre, creating a shelf-stable product that can integrate seamlessly into diverse dietary routines. This has not only addressed nutritional deficiencies but also created extra revenue streams for farmers, making a significant social and economic impact in farming communities. By eradicating waste of cashew apple, Amritattava has brought health and financial prosperity in harmony, while reaching new milestones as a firm.

Navigating challenges

As a woman in a largely male-dominated entrepreneurial ecosystem, Amrita had to build trust from the get-go, both within her team and among the communities she sought to uplift. She had to gain the confidence of local farmers—convincing them of the value inherent in a product they historically perceived as waste. Moreover, transforming a perishable fruit into a viable market product required overcoming technical hurdles tied to nutrient retention and shelf life. Owing to sophisticated research and development, her patented microwave drying technology was able to meet these challenges.



Be lazy but be productive. Love yourself but show up for tomorrow.

Future horizons

Amrita Suhasini sees a brighter future for Amritattava Nutrition. Eager to scale the business both domestically and internationally, she recognises the untapped potential across other geographies where similar nutritional challenges and potential exist. Her vision extends beyond food supplements—she envisions penetrating markets with plant-based wellness products in regions where plant-based diets are on the rise.

Amritattava also aims to explore related sectors such as cosmetics and animal nutrition, positioning its products as integral to a broader range of health and wellbeing applications. Amrita plans to bring change at the grassroots level through commitment to sustainability and innovation and a strong supply chain.

Through her leadership and vision, Amrita exemplifies the role of women in innovation and demonstrates that thoughtful entrepreneurship can bring about real, significant change. Her journey should inspire a generation of upcoming innovators to use business as a tool for both personal and societal growth, reminding us of all that one can indeed tread new paths to create impactful legacies.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
Website	https://www.amritattava.com/
Industries	Food and beverages
Company size	2–10
Technologies	NutriTech (Food processing and manufacturing)
Business models	B2B2C
USP	<p>What makes the solution truly unique is where it starts, what it solves, and who it serves. Most companies in the nutrition space rely on imported superfoods or synthetic supplements. Amritattava has taken a different route starting at the farm gate, working with an untapped local resource: the cashew apple. It’s a fruit that grows in abundance in India’s coastal belts but is almost entirely wasted because of its perishability.</p> <p>The firm offers a scalable, nutrient-retentive process that transforms this overlooked fruit into a functional, shelf-stable powder naturally rich in calcium (90% of RDA), potassium, five fold vitamin C, and more than 80% crude fibre. While others are focused on formulation and branding, this company is trying to solve the problem much earlier in the chain: by unlocking value where none existed.</p> <p>In addition to creating a product, it builds a circular model that benefits rural cashew farmers, tackles post-harvest waste, and brings affordable, food-based nutrition to everyday plates.</p> <p>In a space crowded with synthetic and imported solutions, this offering is homegrown, climate-smart, clean-label, and people-first.</p>
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected by IIM Udaipur’s Incubation Centre, where it received mentorship, business model support and early validation for its market approach. Part of TiE Vadodara’s Women Entrepreneurship Programme, which connected it to a network of founders, investors, and industry mentors.
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bootstrapped (in lakh): 15 Government grants (in lakh): 20

13

Neeta Trivedi

Inferigence Quotient

Charting new paths

Dr Neeta Trivedi, the founder of Inferigence Quotient Pvt Ltd, is a trailblazer in the rapidly advancing fields of deep technology, defence, and aerospace. With over 35 years of experience in various roles and sectors, including that of a scientist at DRDO, she cultivated a unique perspective that culminated in the establishment of her start-up, Inferigence Quotient Pvt Ltd—also known as ‘InferQ’. Her vision is centred on providing cutting-edge technologies that transform the capabilities of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in both military and civil domains.

From conception to creation

InferQ was born out of an existing gap in the UAV market, specifically in autonomous navigation capabilities. Recognising this need, Neeta set out to develop solutions that make UAVs smarter and more efficient. InferQ specialises in enabling autonomy and intelligent navigation, as well as intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities for UAVs.

The conception of InferQ was not merely a professional decision but a passion-driven journey inspired by the potential of deep technology to revolutionise modern defence strategies. Neeta leveraged her extensive network from her days at DRDO, engaging with academia and industry experts to gather a strong team of innovators. This collective expertise laid down the foundation for Chetas and 7Sense—two of InferQ’s flagship products. Chetas helps UAVs perceive their surroundings autonomously, while 7Sense is a platform that manages and analyses vast amounts of surveillance data efficiently. Both products are representative of InferQ’s and Neeta’s commitment to innovation and quality, promising advancements well ahead of their time.

Navigating challenges

Neeta faced multiple hurdles in obtaining the right talent and funding necessary to bring her vision to life. The deep tech field is risk-heavy and demands significant initial capital investments. But Neeta’s unwavering determination, coupled with substantial governmental support through various grants, facilitated InferQ’s progress. Winning several iDEX challenges was a testament to the capability and potential of InferQ’s innovations.

There was also the challenge of breaking the barriers of a male-dominated industry. Neeta found herself facing significant difficulty in launching a company as a woman in deep tech. Although she overcame them through sheer hard work and determination, she was upfront about the sacrifices she made along the way to achieve that—like having little to no work-life balance.



While the journey is steep and challenging, the view from the summit is worth every climb.

Future horizons

Neeta’s dreams for Infergence Quotient Pvt Ltd remain ambitious yet grounded. Her long-term goal is to establish InferQ’s products as indispensable components in every aircraft below the ‘Class A’ airspace—a space occupied by commercial airliners. She aims to refine InferQ’s product offerings across multiple variations to cater to small to mid-sized UAVs, broadening their market footprint both in India and abroad.

In the dynamic landscape of UAV technology, she envisions a future where InferQ not only bolsters domestic defences but also extends its innovative solutions globally. The company already has its sights set on expanding into markets in regions like Africa, while also hoping to address civilian applications.

Neeta has not only built a company but also paved the way for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly women in technology. Her advice—a reminder that while the path might be arduous, the view from the summit is well worth the climb—resonates with her own story of turning dreams into reality. With each milestone achieved, InferQ is not just advancing technology; it is crafting a new chapter of innovation, with a lot more to come.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka	
Website	https://www.inferq.com	
Industries	Aerospace and aviation, deep technology, defence, drones	
Company size	11–50	
Technologies	AI/ML, computer vision, NLP/deep learning, others	
Business models	B2B, B2G	
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chetas is a unified product—easy to install and reduced size, weight, power, cabling, connector requirements. Made in India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7Sense: A platform that manages and analyses vast amounts surveillance data—one of its kind in India. Outside countries do not share much information, and this product will also not be made available.
Awards and accolades	<p>Founder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woman of Excellence from Indian Achievers’ Forum Felicitation by Raksha Mantri as part of iDEX Def Connect for Women in Technology and Leadership 	<p>Company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winner of four iDEX challenges Winner of the Idea2PoC Elevate Grant from the Government of Karnataka Winner of the MeitY TIDE 2.0 Scaleup Grant Winner of the MeitY SAMRIDH Scheme DST NIDHI SSP Scheme STPI Chunauti Scheme STPI IMAGE Scheme Part of many prestigious cohorts
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bootstrapped (in lakh): 400 Other sources (in lakh): 115 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government grants (in lakh): 500 Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 40

14

Monika

F2DF

Charting new paths

Monika's plan initially had been like others in her community: grab a good job, move to a town, leave farming behind and never look back. But all of this changed when she saw her own community members in trouble. Before F2DF, Monika was teaching and working with self-help groups (SHGs) in her village. She noticed that the products made by the women in these SHGs were of high quality and despite significant demand in urban areas for such products, the profit received by the ground workers was very less. Although there were plenty of resources and technologies that could help farmers, there wasn't an effective way of communicating with them to the farmers. To fix this, Monika decided to help create a network of farmers without middlemen to facilitate communication and increase profits, which resulted in the inception of farmer to direct farmer (F2DF).

From conception to creation

The initial idea was that a farmer might have unused tools lying around which could be rented to another in need. This would ensure that the lender gets additional income and borrower incurs lower cost. Starting with renting and borrowing, they expanded to other avenues—farmer to direct farmer, factory to direct farmer, farmer to direct factory. While other firms focused on digital space, F2DF under Monika's guidance took a different approach. She realised that farmers did not trust online forums. So, instead of focusing on bringing farmers online, F2DF went to farmers where they were and organised local choupals (community gatherings) in villages. Monika started interacting with the local farmers and gaining their trust. Soon, the number of farmers selling and buying from choupals increased and large companies like tractor manufacturers, agrochemicals companies began to take notice. They eventually started a district-level kisan mela, with a wider audience of nearly 200–300 farmers. Such exposure resulted in more sponsorships, increased revenue, and most importantly, a larger customer base, further cementing their digital credibility among farming communities. Furthermore, F2DF has helped 5,000 farmers with soil testing which will help them choose fertilisers based on their needs. Monika also organises workshops on various farming and related practices like animal husbandry free of cost for women participants.

Navigating challenges

Execution her vision wasn't always a walk in the park. On the professional front, there were numerous challenges. As a woman entrepreneur, the initial challenge was building rapport with the women in villages who were not comfortable talking to outsiders. Monika started creating relationships with women by slowly breaking communication barriers. On the other hand, there were personal struggles such as taking care of kids and household expenses. Nevertheless, she persisted and now stands as a testament to grit.

Her profession as a start-up founder required her to attend meetings, often at distant places, which meant she had to be away from her kids. She ultimately found support in her extended family. "But it's all a necessary part of the process," says Monika with a smile.



Stay steadfast. The road will be tough, but persistence and continuous learning will carry you through. Believe in your vision, break barriers patiently, and empower those around you. That is how real change begins. And always remember women are no less than men.

Future horizons

Started in 2021, F2DF in 2025 has a network of 1 lakh farmers and plans to expand network to 5 million farmers through their platform and a projected revenue of INR 40 crore from current ₹2.27 crore. The current phase of F2DF is under progress. F2DF ultimately aims to empower rural India by connecting farmers and increasing their incomes.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Narwana, Haryana
Website	https://f2df.com/
Industries	Agriculture
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, mobile app, software, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C, B2G
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides phygital approach (online and offline) • Free sub-domain and webpage for all farmers to connect directly with potential clients • Offers input purchasing, output sale, crop advisory, and farmer training
Number of IP held or filed	Trademark no. 5410023, dated 14 April 2022
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screened in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in PM Kisan Samman Sammelan in 2022 • Featured in Shark Tank Season 4 • Crowned as the best rural startup by Lemon Idea
Revenue (FY 2024–25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ₹23.27 crore
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 100 • Government grants (in lakh): 25 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 50

15

Ankita Sinha

MiCoB Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

MiCoB Pvt Ltd was launched in 2018 by Ankita, along with co-founders Shashank and Rishabh, with a shared vision to redefine construction through innovation and technology. Ankita is a mechanical engineer with a PhD in thermal engineering at IIT Gandhinagar. MiCoB Pvt Ltd was launched out of IIT Gandhinagar's incubation centre with a focus on developing and commercialising 3D concrete printing technology. The COVID-19 crisis saw intense labour shortages and uncertainties in the timely delivery of ongoing construction projects which propelled the firm's initial growth. In 2021, the Army Design Bureau of the Indian Army approached the firm to construct bunkers across the borders under challenging geo-climatic conditions in a short span of time. The 3D-printed bunkers developed by MiCoB were tested at Pokhran using T-90 tank strikes from 600 ft. The test was a major success, as the bunker panels remained intact with only minimal damage to the surrounding soil areas. Today, the defence sector accounts for 70% of MiCoB's revenue.

From conception to creation

MiCoB uses a vertically integrated 3D Concrete Printing (3DCP) systems. The batching and mixing units are connected to the extrusion system mounted at the end-effectors of robotic motion control assemblies, thereby allowing the construction mix to be delivered to the nozzle of the printer. The printable mix is a combination of OPC 53 cement, sand, fly ash, and MiCoB's proprietary Shield 3D additive. The manufacturing can be done both off-site and on-site, based on the requirements and logistics involved. MiCoB leverages hollow wall structures to ensure default thermal and acoustic insulation within its developed structures. Its structures also allow for the integration of electrical wiring and plumbing, leading to reduced cycle time for construction projects. MiCoB has been able to save more than 20,000 tonnes of construction material through optimised designing.

MiCoB has been able to deliver over 500 bunkers to the Indian Army. Previously, such bunkers could be constructed in around 45 days, but with MiCoB's solution they can be constructed in less than seven days. In the hospitality space, MiCoB has been able to deliver 30 cottage units at Nagoa Beach, Diu, being operated by Fern Residency, with a cost deviation of less than 0.5% in less than five months (including the printing phase of less than two months).



In future, we are looking to become a deep tech company and a tech-enabling platform.

Navigating challenges

During the initial days, the team faced considerable challenges in optimising the 3D printing system as well as logistics. They revamped the structure of their printing system and pivoted to a plug-and-play approach. Instead of building a consolidated structure and transporting it via trucks, the company shifted its focus to printing and delivering only the key components, while building the core foundations on-site. For defence projects, on-site printing was no longer prioritised due to transport issues, security constraints and extended layer curing cycles. Acceptance of a novel technology was another challenge. To address this, MiCoB conducted pilots and furnished testing reports to key decision makers in the real estate industry. To meet increasing demand, delivery timelines, and improve working capital, the firm built partnerships with local contractor networks and subcontractors. This ensured that MiCoB’s team could focus on core 3D concrete printing work, while outsourcing mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and finishing work to contractors/subcontractors. The firm also aims to adopt a decentralised manufacturing model, where partners can purchase/lease the 3DCP equipment of MiCoB, source raw materials locally, and only procure the Shield3D additive from MiCoB. This approach would allow MiCoB to expand across the country without incurring major transportation costs.

Future horizons

MiCoB focuses on strengthening the manufacturing partner/franchise model to expand its presence. It is seeking alliances with leading real estate developers, cement and fly ash manufacturers for reliable and sustainable supply chain.

Apart from project execution, the firm also envisions to sell its Shield3D additive to other 3D concrete printing operators.

From an R&D perspective, the firm plans to continue validating materials stability (XRD), re-engineering pump systems suitable to concrete rheology, and incorporating the latest insulation mechanisms. MiCoB is aiming to expand into new sectors such as data centres, civil infrastructure in addition to existing defence and hospitality.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
Website	https://micob.in
Industries	Defence, infrastructure, real estate and construction, smart manufacturing
Company size	11–50
Technologies	3D printing
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2G
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Startup India Awards 2022 winner • Display of MiCoB’s Bunker at Bharat Shakti event of GOI • iDEX 2022 winner • Invited for interaction with President of India for ‘President with Startups’ event – 2024 • Received grants from Startup Gujarat, Nidhi Prayas-DST, MEITY-EIR, i-Hub, SSIP-SOIC • Recognised as Potential Future Construction Technology Provider in Global Housing Technology Conference, GHTC, New Delhi - 2019 • Won ASHA-GHTC Award – 2019 • Selected for technology demonstration at Army Technology Seminar ARTECH-19 of Indian Army

<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected amongst 10 Indian Startups for Indo-Swizz Academia-Industry Training (AIT) Program – 2018 • Selected amongst top 20 TIE Young Entrepreneurs (TYE-2019) globally • Selected under TOP 75 Startups by DST Amrit Mahotsav • Incubated earlier at IIT Gandhinagar Incubation Centre, IIEC • DPIIT-recognised startup
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government grants (in lakh): 40 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 918

16

Malini Parmar

Aaditi Stonesoup Solutions Private Limited

Charting new paths

Malini Parmar's journey is a powerful illustration of perseverance and bold career shifts. Trained as an engineer, she initially ventured into sales roles before pursuing an MBA, followed by working in leading IT firms. Despite success, she faced a persistent feeling of dissociation in tech sales without fully understanding the substance behind the products. Soon, Malini transitioned from corporate roles to meaningful social entrepreneurship, driven by a desire to impact groups directly. Her shift from technology and sales into sustainable waste management was fuelled by a realisation: the waste challenge, especially organic waste, required innovative solutions at the grassroots level. This realisation helped her launch her transformative venture, Aaditi Stonesoup Solutions.

From conception to creation

Starting as a volunteer focused on responsible waste generation in 2010, Malini's initiative grew organically into a nationwide movement. Key to this growth was her belief that people inherently want to do the right thing if given simple, easy-to-follow systems. By pioneering source segregation methods and collaborating hugely with local governments, residents, and SHGs, their model delivered substantive results. In Karnataka's Kanamangala Gram Panchayat, for example, women-led SHGs managed 72–88% of waste conversion locally, creating valuable employment opportunities and drastically reducing landfill-bound waste. The company's technology journey evolved too, from basic manual composters to IoT and AI-enabled smart composters—allowing remote monitoring, optimisation, and maintenance—enhancing effectiveness and downsizing labour.

Navigating challenges

Malini faced obstacles like any other founder. Furthermore, breaking gender biases in tech and corporate environments was a constant battle. She often faced discrimination, such as assumptions against women's mobility or reliability because of family responsibilities. Securing investment proved difficult too; social impact businesses receive less funding compared to high-return startups. Also, working with rural communities demanded curiousness to learn from traditional knowledge—and to think about urban waste management norms. Malini credits pausing ego and listening to grassroots insights for many of her breakthroughs. Despite the challenges, her company thrived by creating flexible, family-friendly work environments, drawing and retaining women talent, and encouraging diverse leadership.



People want to do the right thing—we just need to make it simple and easy for them. Technology may be complex, but the user experience has to be effortless.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Malini and Aaditi Stonesoup Solutions are on the cusp of a technology-driven revolution in waste reduction. Their upcoming innovations focus on smarter segregation tracking, AI-powered predictive analytics to pre-empt issues like odour, and automating tasks to preserve dignity in manual work. The vision extends beyond composting—aiming to eliminate waste entirely within communities by turning it into valuable resources locally, shrinking landfill dependence by up to 80%. Malini’s advice to young entrepreneurs is resolute: “Seek support, embrace humility, and just do it.” Aaditi presents a great example of how technology and social entrepreneurship can create sustainable impact, driving a future where waste is not just managed but eradicated.

In a nutshell

Headquarter	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Website	www.aaditi.co.in
Industries	Clean technology, real estate, and construction
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, IoT
Business models	B2B
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 women entrepreneurs invited by the president at Rashtrapati Bhawan - January 2024 • 75 women transforming India - NITI Aayog 2022 • UN Women Industry Disruptor 2021 • SEED low carbon award finalist 2019 • Social entrepreneur of the year 2021 by Namma Bengaluru Foundation • Incubated at NSRCEL WSP 4 IIMB and SIPIIMV2022 • Winner of Flipkart’s Going Beyond Limitations awards 2019
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 57 • Other sources (in lakh): 25

17

Subramanian Sreepriya Kowshik

Pinaka Innovation Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Sreepriya's trajectory into entrepreneurship was scaled by rigorous corporate training and a relentless focus on customers. In 1997, she was the first woman employee at a leading financial organisation in Coimbatore, mastering service quality in a Tier-2 environment that often-steered women towards 'safe' roles. While working, she completed an MBA in marketing, moved to ICICI for faster growth, and qualified across all CeMAP levels in the UK to specialise in mortgages. Back in India, she earned Six Sigma/Lean certifications and completed a Senior Management Programme at IIM Calcutta, then led field credit investigations across four states at GE Money. In Bengaluru, she grew a US mortgage default portfolio from about \$5 million annually to \$5 million monthly, scaled a team from 30 to 250, onboarded thousands of vendors, and co-developed a process platform. Urged by clients and colleagues, she launched Pro Logic Business Services—profitable from month one and crossing 200 employees within a year.

From conception to creation

A larger purpose emerged: build indigenous, privacy-first security hardware to replace keys and data-risky electronics. Founded in 2020, Pinaka Innovation is a Class-I Make in India company that develops deep tech anti-theft solutions combining IoT, biometric authentication, and integrated digital locking. The portfolio spans off-the-shelf digital furniture locks and safety lockers for homes, offices, hostels, hospitals, and hospitality businesses, plus customised IoT solutions for high-value problems—feeder panel protection for DISCOMs with tamper and leakage detection and alerts within six seconds; secure logistics and cash-in-transit systems backed by granted patents; and IoT-enabled delivery lockboxes to curb porch piracy. Pinaka also builds solutions for public asset protection and digital warehousing across EV corridors. Differentiation rests on a dual revenue model (devices plus high-margin custom solutions), indigenous manufacturing that cuts time-to-market by roughly 40% versus import-led rivals, and a privacy-first architecture that stores biometric templates on-device, encrypts communication, and keeps devices offline by default. The company operates in India's fast-growing \$2.7 billion electronic security market with regulatory tailwinds favouring Make in India and data localisation.



It's not going to be a dream run...it will test your perseverance. It will test your tenacity.

Navigating challenges

Manufacturing posed a steep learning curve—electronics, firmware, and mechanical design—against aesthetics set by imports. COVID-19 struck weeks after formation, stalling momentum and creating sunk costs while R&D matured. India’s hardware realities added friction: reliance on imported components, customs and e-way bill hurdles, and occasional operational delays and penalties. Field deployments demanded late travel and on-ground presence. Fundraising was challenging in capital-intensive hardware, intensified by market bias towards women-led manufacturing. Sreepriya responded by building strong teams, leaning on mentors, and maintaining unshakeable delivery focus. Despite headwinds, Pinaka launched flagship products, secured two patents, delivered pilots in electricity theft prevention and logistics security, and strengthened credibility via IIM Bangalore and BSE STEP incubation, with active NASSCOM and TiE engagement.

Future horizons

Pinaka will scale as a solutions-led indigenous security platform for assets, infrastructure, and supply chains. The roadmap includes expanded manufacturing and service coverage; deeper utility and smart-city deployments; launch and scale of secure delivery lockboxes; broader logistics and cash-in-transit offerings; digital warehousing and last-mile security across EV corridors; additional patents and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and allied certifications; and stronger domestic sourcing and supply resilience. Go-to-market will span enterprise and government sales, SI/OEM partnerships, public sector undertaking tenders leveraging Class-I local supplier status, and multichannel B2C distribution with localised installation and SLAs. The timing is compelling: rising demand for smart, connected yet privacy-first security. Pinaka is positioned to secure assets, deter theft, protect lives, and champion Make in India.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
Website	www.pinakainnovation.com
Industries	Deep technology, hardware, infrastructure, smart manufacturing
Company size	15–50
Technologies	Biometrics, hardware, IoT, others
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most promising Woman Business Leader award by a reputed Indian media conglomerate in 2021 • Distinguished Women Entrepreneur Award by National Foundation for Entrepreneurial Development • Visionary Woman Entrepreneur in Technology from Women Entrepreneur Development Organisation • GE India president’s award for tsunami relief efforts in 2004 • Served as the SME Council Head for Nasscom, Coimbatore • TiE Women Global Finalist for 2024 in International Pitch Competition • Featured in Shark Tank India Season 1 amongst 62,000 applicants, as part of an earlier organisation • Selected and graduated from Stanford Graduate Business School as part of the South Asia cohort of Stanford Seed Spark Programme

18

Manali Sharma

Bitvivid Solutions

Charting new paths

Manali Sharma, the founder of Bitvivid Solutions, leads a one-of-a-kind journey in the world of AI-driven video analytics, turning conventional surveillance systems into smart, proactive solutions. Beginning her career at the age of 17, Manali embraced a journey marked by diversified experiences in sales and marketing, including roles at a technology giant, a real estate venture, and even an entrepreneurial stint in Dubai. Her path shows the importance of constant learning and adaptability in shaping a successful entrepreneurial journey. But her journey goes beyond personal development: It aligns with a broader vision of transforming public safety and security through advanced AI solutions.

From conception to creation

Bitvivid Solutions was officially established in 2019 after a pilot project at the world-renowned Kumbh Mela in 2018. This project met with challenges as an outsourcing partnership failed to pan out as expected. Yet, this setback laid the foundation for Bitvivid's image as a formidable entity in the sector. With an in-house technical team, Manali, alongside her co-founder, took the leap to navigate this complex project independently, and they never looked back. Under her leadership, Bitvivid has grown into a powerhouse, leveraging AI and video analytics to enhance urban management and safety.

The core of Bitvivid is creating real-time, AI-powered video analytics solutions targeted to customised use cases, in sectors like smart cities, public safety, and traffic management. The firm has developed proprietary technology, including intelligent traffic management system and automatic number plate recognition, designed to create safer and smarter urban environments. The firm's recent foray into multi-lane free flow tolling systems is another significant milestone in its goal to revolutionise infrastructure management.

Navigating challenges

One of Bitvivid's main challenges was dealing with government projects. Sometimes those projects included complex payment terms that strained their company's financial agility. Manali believes that while having large aspirations for product development is commendable, aligning those with actual market demand can be a delicate balance of being visionary while staying pragmatic in terms what the market needs. Therefore, innovation must meet a defined demand or risk obsolescence.

The second notable challenge was being an entrepreneur in India, especially as a woman. This is where she emphasised the importance of self-motivation and perseverance. She categorised the work culture at Bitvivid as an asset, citing its agile and efficient operations, which have not only retained talent but have also resulted in growth through volatile and unpredictable times like the COVID-19 pandemic.



Take the risk. It's we who will change our country, and we must step out of our comfort zones.

Future horizons

Bitvivid’s and Manali’s vision remain robust, yet expansive. With a firm foot in safety and security solutions, Manali is optimistic about branching into complementary sectors like robotics—perhaps creating hardware solutions that will enhance their current software offerings.

Despite acknowledging that Bitvivid may not become comparable in scale to some of the bigger conglomerates in the country, Manali’s ambition to leave an impact on urban safety and surveillance in India is unwavering. Her leadership exemplifies what entrepreneurship is at its core—a willingness to take risks, embracing learning curves, and dedication towards an unfaltering effort to bring about revolutionary changes.

When asked about her advice to future women entrepreneurs, Manali highlighted the importance of going out of comfort zones and taking risks. For her, it’s about recognising the potential for growth and innovation within our nation and actively contributing to that. Through Bitvivid, Manali Sharma did not just build a company—she is charting a new course for intelligent urban living, fostering a safer, smarter future for up-and-coming generations.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
Website	https://bitvividolutions.com/
Industries	Big data, deep technology, IT infrastructure
Company size	11–50
Technologies	5G, AI/ML, analytics, API, automation, blockchain, cloud computing, computer vision, generative AI, IoT, NLP/deep learning, SaaS
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time detection and alerts • Custom AI models • Edge + cloud flexibility • Easy integration • Privacy-first design • Actionable intelligence, making safety smarter and faster
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner Innovation Challenge by Comviva • Recognised for cutting-edge application of AI in video analytics and surveillance technology Top Startup at Startup Mahakumbh 2024 • Selected among India’s most promising deep-tech startups for public safety and urban management • ASSOCHAM recognition for Emerging Tech in Smart Cities • Honoured by ASSOCHAM for impactful contributions to intelligent traffic and safety systems

19

Nida Sahar Rafee

Nife Apps Labs

Charting new paths

Nida Sahar's journey started in a family with a rich history of entrepreneurship, albeit in the unconventional industries of footwear and fruits. Despite having the option to contribute to her established family businesses, Nida chose a bold leap: entrepreneurship in technology, enabled by her foundation in information science engineering. Her determination to create a new legacy—and to exemplify what one woman can achieve in a traditionally male-dominated field, was the fuel behind Nife Labs. A decade later, she became a key figure in redefining how cloud and edge computing can be more accessible and optimised for businesses everywhere.

From conception to creation

Nida's journey reached a turning point during an empowering programme on women in entrepreneurship at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B). The insights provided her with business acumen, which would prove essential in running her business. Her early career can thereby be defined as a blend of experimentation and education, where she got a chance to dabble in diverse business ideas while progressively honing her technological expertise.

By 2017, she committed fully to her entrepreneurial calling, eventually founding Nife Labs. Here she unveiled Nife Deploy, a platform for AI-driven cloud infrastructure orchestration. Distinguished by its AI-native approach, it transcends traditional DevOps setups, epitomising streamlined integration across substantial environments from edge to cloud—powered by intelligent automation, thereby omitting the need for technically complex scripts and configurations.

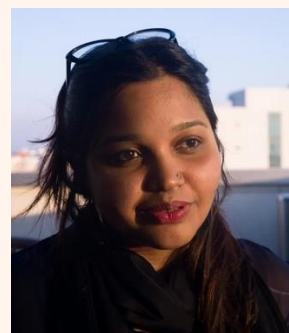
Within a few years, Nife Labs has thrived considerably, being recognised as one of the 'Top 50 Emerging Edge Companies' by a distinguished forum, drawing global attention.

Navigating challenges

Like any startup, Nife Labs faced hurdles during both its inception and scaling. The pandemic upended operations, forcing remote work and stalling fundraising rounds. However, Nida utilised this period to validate product needs and implemented smart pivots—such as expanding focus from edge exclusively to hybrid cloud systems.

Funding was another stumbling block, complicated by hesitant investors. Eventually, Nida broke new ground as investments started pouring in. The dynamics of business partnership were also not straightforward, pushing Nida to learn the ropes of sales and business development to ensure her firm's survival amidst a fluctuating environment.

Furthermore, sporadic technological disruptions such as unforeseen security breaches and COVID-induced absenteeism were some operational hurdles. However, these also fortified Nife's risk management and process efficiency.



To sustain longer, you'll need to learn to know yourself better.

Future horizons

Nife Labs looks at a future filled with innovations—while being grounded in its core vision and iterating continuously, keeping pace with an ever-evolving technological landscape. Telecom and traditionally non-technology-heavy industries looking for compliance and cloud optimisation services are potential avenues for expansion for Nife Labs. Furthermore, key sectors like healthcare and FinTech stand to benefit profoundly from her firm’s solutions. Moreover, the advent of GenAI and LLMs provide new playing fields for expanding product capabilities and ensuring operational optimisation. Embracing these technological leaps ensures that the firm continues to solidify its position as a linchpin in intelligent infrastructure orchestration. The road ahead remains promising, with prospects of raising further funding rounds to accelerate Nife’s self-sustaining growth.

Nida Sahar’s journey is an exemplary tale, resonating deeply within the tech community and beyond.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka
Website	https://nife.io
Industries	Deep technology, enterprise SaaS
Company size	2–10
Technologies	5G, cloud computing, PaaS, SaaS, software
Business models	B2B
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI-native orchestration: Uses reinforcement learning and live metrics to place and scale apps • Global grid-ready: Integrated across 500+ edge points of presence, telcos, and cloud zones out of the box • Zero DevOps setup: One-click deployment with no scripts or pipelines required • Marketplace abstraction: Developers can deploy and monetise apps without owning any infra <p>Nife isn’t a DevOps tool or a cloud provider—it’s a layer of intelligence between code and infrastructure, giving teams AWS-grade scale and edge-grade latency without complexity or lock-in.</p>
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected by STL Partners as one of the Top 50 Emerging Edge Companies (2025), Top 100 (2023, 2022) • Recognised globally as one of the most innovative startups shaping the future of edge computing and orchestration • Selected for NetApp Accelerator Cohort 8 • Chosen for a competitive enterprise accelerator supporting deep-tech infrastructure startups – Qualcomm’s QWEIN, Accenture’s Women in Entrepreneurship these can be mentioned) • Part of a programme supporting engineering-led SaaS and infra startups in scaling GTM and platform strategy • Invited as a speaker at Kubernetes Community Days (KCD) Bengaluru 2023 • Delivered a panel session on intelligent workload placement and AI-native infrastructure

Awards and accolades

- Featured by Womanliness as a Deep Tech Founder to Watch
 - Acknowledged for platform innovation and breaking barriers in infrastructure intelligence
 - Top 10 startups by IIMBs WSP
 - Top 7 Startups by KSUM WeGrow
-

Funding (₹)

- Bootstrapped (in lakh): 40
- Government grants (in lakh): 100
- Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 360

20

Sarita Ahlawat

BotLab Dynamics

Charting new paths

Dr Sarita Ahlawat embarked on her entrepreneurial journey after she completed her PhD and post-doctoral work and returned to India. During her initial academic years, she had observed how premier institutions in the country were dependent on foreign lab equipment even for basic purposes. When she returned to India, she met Tanmay, an engineering graduate from IIT Delhi. India's dependence on other countries for its defence needs was an area both Sarita and Tanmay wanted to address, which led to the creation of BotLab Dynamics. The firm is focused on bolstering India's position in global geopolitics through its 'Made in India' drones.

From conception to creation

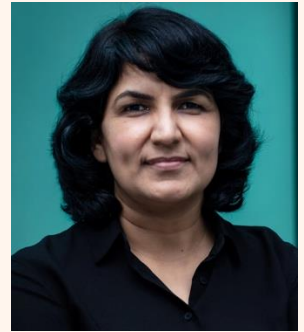
During the initial phase, the firm directed all its efforts towards the defence sector. In the initial models, they realised that imported drone components were often not designed for Indian conditions. Based on this, BotLab Dynamics began designing and manufacturing drone components indigenously. The team assembled a ten-drone swarm, which was displayed to the then Defence Minister of India and they received the Prime Minister's award. Since defence tech ideation, research, and production takes considerable time, resources, and investment, the firm made an entry into the promising drone light show business.

Navigating challenges

When BotLab Dynamics began its journey, there were considerable regulatory challenges. This narrowed down commercial opportunities; however, Dr Sarita agrees that the company now has much more clarity about regulations. Since funding was limited in the initial phase, the firm relied on components sourced from international markets, which failed in Indian conditions. Dr Sarita took the lead in writing grants to help bridge the funding gap. The firm had to enter the drone light show business to raise funds to develop drone components and propel its R&D activities. BotLab has now secured funding from the Ministry of Defence, Government of India which has helped it grow its team from nine to 250 members over the last five years. It has been challenging to manage new systems, cultivate talent, and enrich process throughput. Nonetheless, the team has been able to move leaps and bounds with its vision of ramping up India's defence arsenal through its Made in India drones.

Future horizons

BotLab Dynamics is expanding its portfolio of drones in the defence sector with enhanced target ranges and response mechanisms in jammed GPS environments. The firm is making swarm drones smarter and more coordinated. BotLab Dynamics is also expanding civilian and commercial use cases through development of a nano drone with an onboard camera. The drone light show business is being rapidly scaled as a proven, revenue-generating vertical. The firm is also focused on expanding its reach in international markets by pursuing multiple avenues of growth including defence technology, drone light shows, and drone component sales.



We are an Indian startup, with both manufacturing and design based in India.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://botlabdynamics.com/
Industries	Drones
Company size	201–500
Technologies	Drone
Business models	B2B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BotLab Dynamics’s key competitive advantage lies in complete in-house innovation and vertical integration. Most drone companies in entertainment import either critical hardware or software, whereas BotLab has developed a 100% indigenous system, from flight controllers to swarm algorithms. This results in reliability, cost control, and flexibility to undertake diverse projects. They are also the first in the country to bring indoor drone show service to India. • The company has a track record of demonstrable performance on an unparalleled scale. Few global players can synchronise 5,000+ drones; BotLab has already done it, setting multiple Guinness World Records. Its swarms operate in diverse topologies and climatic conditions, proving robustness beyond controlled environments. • BotLab is one of the rare startups bridging consumer, commercial, and defence sectors simultaneously. This multi-vertical strategy reduces dependency on any revenue stream and strengthens India’s self-reliance in drones.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Sarita, Founder of BotLab, demonstrates DLD’s potential to enhance national security to Prime Minister Modi at MeitY Startup Hub, 2022 • Tanmay Bunker, Founder of BotLab, named Swarm Sapien and honoured as one of India Today’s NEXT 100 Innovators, 2022 • BotLab’s team showcased Atri, India’s smallest surveillance Nano Drone, at DefConnect to the Defence Minister of India, 2024 • BotLab Team unveils their Nano Drone to Navy officials at Aero India that’s setting a new benchmark in military surveillance technology, 2025 • BotLab showcases Atri’s capabilities to Indian Defence officials at Swavlamban 2025 • BotLab secures the Innovation for Defence Excellence Grant, propelling advancements in Nano drone technology. • Dr. Sarita receives the prestigious Women in Civil Aviation Award for her contributions to the industry. • Anuj is honoured in the 2022 Hindustan Times City 30 Under 30 list for his innovative work in technology • 5x Guinness World Record Holders (Amaravati Drone Summit, 2024)

21

Priyanka Gupta

Rezovate Constructions Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

While reading about how a cab company stepped in to help citizens during the Chennai floods, Priyanka realised that in order to make an actual, on-ground impact, she could either be part of the government or become an entrepreneur. A spark of inspiration turned into full-fledged entrepreneurship, when she ventured into the field of construction and founded Rezovate Constructions soon after.

From there on, her journey has seen multiple ups and downs—from struggling to find clients for her innovative technology to working on nationally important projects like Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium (featured in National Geographic).

Having worked extensively in various parts of the country, Priyanka aims to scale Rezovate Constructions globally in the upcoming years.

From conception to creation

Rezovate focuses on specialised concrete as a category. The company aims to make construction more eco-friendly by introducing long-lasting and non-toxic options. It offers two main products with distinct industrial and commercial applications:

- **Odus flooring:** This is a nanotechnology-based solution that has helped companies like P&G, Unilever, Britannia to save millions of dollars. This chemical treatment gets absorbed by existing concrete floors to transform them into scratch-proof, dust-proof, easy-to-clean surfaces that last 6x longer than other traditional flooring options. Odus, being a completely VOC-free flooring option, also helps companies to get LEED credits. This technology is now being used by giants like L&T Construction for nationally important projects like Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium and IIT Hyderabad.
- **Terrazo:** The company has recently launched ready-to-use Terrazzo mixes for flooring in large and high-end commercial structures like malls, resorts, and airports. Terrazzo is also completely VOC-free, and uses Odus to last longer. Plans are underway to expand their manufacturing capacity and enter new markets, including the Middle East.

Priyanka highlighted the importance of client taking interviews with open-ended questions to understand their real challenges. She further adds that her first business 'Brick and Mortar Construction' failed just because she did not take client feedback with an open mind. In Rezovate, she started her journey with extensive interviews and pilot projects. She also stresses that it is important to classify customers and understand whom to sell to. Today, Rezovate combines cutting-edge material science with a well-planned digital marketing strategy, carving a space for itself as an expert in innovative flooring solutions.

Navigating challenges

When asked about her challenges as a woman entrepreneur, Priyanka responded with: "A problem is a problem, irrespective of gender." She said that she has been lucky that her family is extremely supportive and a driving force for her. Therefore, the only challenges she has to deal with are business-related.



Entrepreneurship is solving real problems with an open mind.

She told that developing Odus flooring required 18 months of intensive R&D, and consulting with experts from IIT Bombay and NIT Bhopal. However, since it was a new category altogether, initial market adoption was a challenge. Therefore, the team had to work extra hard to onboard clients through extensive client education, multiple meetings, and even free pilot projects. Closing clients at that point in time sometimes took as long as 2.5 years. However, once they managed to get recognised brands in their portfolio, convincing others became fairly easy. She says she is extremely thankful to the early adopter companies who gave them the opportunity to prove themselves.

Talking about present challenges, she shared that they are now looking to get more industry seniors onboard to help with better structuring and make the company ready for global expansion.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Rezovate aims to increase production, especially of the Terrazzo line, and expand globally. New innovations addressing region-specific challenges—such as plastic shrinkage cracks under heat—are underway. The company is seeking experienced senior leadership to help grow the business and looking for affordable land to establish a large-scale manufacturing unit.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
Website	https://www.rezovate.com/
Industries	Deep technology, infrastructure, material sciences, real estate and construction, smart manufacturing
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Nanotechnology, others
Business models	B2B
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felicitated by the Minister of Science and Technology • Received a grant and funding from IIT Ropar • Accolades from companies such as P&G • Recognition and grants from IIT Roorkee

22

Ritu Mathran

Incruiter India Private Limited

Charting new paths

Born and raised in Tinsukia, Assam in a traditional Marwari family, Ritu Mathran grew up with two seemingly opposing forces: cultural norms that limited girls' ambitions and a family that urged her to aim higher. Backed by their encouragement, she pursued chartered accountancy, embracing an ethic she picked up from her brother early on: "If you start, you must finish." This mindset would later become her compass.

After graduating and getting married, Ritu moved to Bengaluru. A role at an architecture firm exposed her to the staggering cost of a wrong hire. The company lost significant money and was pushed to the brink of bankruptcy after hiring missteps. Watching a sizeable business unravel for the want of the right people, she discovered a problem and a purpose she could not ignore.

From conception to creation

In 2018, Ritu and her co-founder (and husband), Anil, began shaping an idea to make recruitment less painful for companies that lacked deep technical hiring expertise. They built software through 2019, just as the pandemic hit. COVID-19 forced them to lay off early hires right as they took their first office. Just when things looked bleak, a client from the US asked them to build a tech team in India. The project helped them to stand up in a marketplace full of consultants and freelancers. But it also drew them towards becoming just another staffing firm—something they never intended.

Instead of sourcing, they focused on screening. The company's interview-as-a-service would deliver the first round of technical assessments, so clients could move only the best candidates forward. Ritu's team built a vetted community of freelance interviewers, put rigorous quality checks in place, and added AI where it created real value.

Today, the company operates from Indiranagar, Bengaluru, with a 75+ person team and a presence in the US and the Middle East. It has a diverse clientele, ranging from startups to enterprises. Through it all, Ritu has led operations and finance, while Anil focuses on sales and product—an intentional division that enables precise execution and fast decision-making.

Ritu's story is a reminder that technology alone does not transform industries, but people do. From a small town in Assam to building a global interview platform, she turned a personal conviction into an operational craft. For the millions of candidates and thousands of recruiters navigating hiring today, the combination of AI at scale and humanity by design might be the difference between noise and a truly fair shot.

Navigating challenges

Ritu's entrepreneurial hurdles were not just professional. During the pandemic, Ritu became a mother. The 'mom guilt', as she calls it, was real. Both her son and her company needed her at the same. She persevered, learned to be kind to herself, leaned on family support, and kept showing up. Some days were operations, dashboards, and quality flags—others were about bedtime stories and stolen hours.



Never give up.

Operationally, the company staked its reputation on service, not slogans. While competitors might offer similar features, Ritu’s team built around outcomes, a stringent onboarding and mock interview process for freelance interviewers, backed by constant quality monitoring and clear consequences for when standards slip.

They also made a deliberate choice to keep humans in the loop. Ritu believes there are some things AI cannot replace. Accordingly, the founders chose to automate repetitive tasks, while engaging humans for making hiring more empathetic.

Ritu believes that founders should learn every part of the business. Coming from a finance background, she taught herself product, tech, sales flows, and marketing funnels which is enough to design processes, set KPIs, and mentor specialists. In deep tech operations, cross-functional fluency is not a bonus—it’s a core need.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Ritu is focused on 100% AI-driven recruitment. She wants AI to carry out high-volume outreach, first-level screening, coordination, while reserving the human touch for nuanced evaluation, escalations, panel stability, and client relationships. The company is building to counter ghosting and proxy interviews, safeguard integrity, and help employers avoid the costly risk of a wrong hire.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Website	www.incruiter.com
Industries	Enterprise SaaS
Company size	51–200
Technologies	IaaS, others
Business models	B2B, B2C
USP	<p>InCruiter’s solution stands out from other companies due to its exclusive focus on Interview-as-a-Service (IaaS), combining human expertise with automation to deliver fast, unbiased, and high-quality interview experiences. Unlike traditional recruitment platforms that only assist with sourcing or applicant tracking, InCruiter specialises in conducting interviews on behalf of companies, leveraging a pool of 3,000+ vetted industry experts to ensure domain-specific assessments. This ensures candidates are evaluated by professionals with real-world experience, improving the quality of hire.</p> <p>Additionally, InCruiter offers modular, plug-and-play tools such as IncBot (AI-driven video interviews), IncVid (live tech interviews with coding interface), and IncFeed (automated scheduling), allowing clients to customise the process as per their hiring needs. The platform is white-labelled, GDPR-compliant, and integrates easily with existing ATS systems. Its pay-per-interview pricing model offers flexibility and cost efficiency, especially for high-growth or remote-first organisations. The combination of expert-led interviews, AI automation, and scalable infrastructure makes InCruiter a differentiated and value-driven solution in the hiring technology space.</p>
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Best Ease of Use Award’ in 2025 across multiple categories by Gartner Digital Markets • Ranked at the 280th position among the Top SaaS Bootstrapped Startups globally
Funding (₹)	Government grants (in lakh): 20

23

Divya M Teli

Inspirochem

Charting new paths

Divya M. Teli, a passionate pharmaceutical chemist, started a one-of-a-kind business venture amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Witnessing severe shortages in life-saving medicines like paracetamol and the dependence on imports—particularly from China—she and her husband, both pharmaceutical chemists, envisioned a new path. Motivated by the pressing demand for self-reliance in India's pharmaceutical raw materials, they founded an indigenous manufacturing startup, Inspirochem. This venture aimed to reduce import dependency and ensure affordable medicines for the local population, thus creating a roadmap for sustainable healthcare.

From conception to creation

The idea began to materialise during Gujarat's stringent lockdowns, when raw material shortage exposed systemic vulnerabilities. With support from LM College of Pharmacy's incubation centre, Divya and her team founded Inspirochem LLP in 2021. Starting from scratch, they leveraged cutting-edge laboratory facilities provided by the incubator and state funding schemes, carefully developing environment-friendly and cost-effective processes for manufacturing critical chemical intermediates. Their innovation aimed to simplify complex chemical syntheses, while reducing steps, toxic waste, and total costs—contributing to India's 'Make in India' vision.

Navigating challenges

Divya's journey wasn't without hurdles. Balancing startup demands, professional and personal commitments, she showed relentless resilience. Initially operating on limited budget and resources, she wrestled with finding proper manufacturing facilities and assembling a skilled team. Despite being challenged by social expectations and lack of funds, Divya's determination secured government grants, seed funding, and formed a growing team. With time, she overcame operational barriers, improved scaling production, and ensured quality—all while adhering to environmental standards. The team's close understanding of pharmaceutical chemistry proved key to overcoming these challenges.

Future horizons

Today, Inspirochem is on the brink of increasing its manufacturing output from pilot batches to commercial volumes, targeting critical life-saving medicines including hypertensive and anti-cancer drugs. With rising revenues and plans for sustainable growth, Divya envisions a thriving indigenous pharmaceutical industry that not only meets domestic demand but also enables India globally. Partnerships with global institutions globally and steady government incentives further reinforce their mission. Driven by innovation, social impact, and unwavering determination, Divya's startup envisions a future where strategic self-reliance in healthcare becomes a reality.



Our goal is to build a sustainable, indigenous pharmaceutical industry that not only reduces dependency on imports but also contributes meaningfully to society—because true success lies in serving the community.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
Website	www.inspirochem.com
Industries	Healthcare
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B
USP	<p>Our solution adopts a deep tech, chemistry-driven approach that combines cost efficiency, environmental responsibility, and supply chain independence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous focus with green chemistry: Unlike many companies that replicate existing processes, we develop novel, optimised synthetic routes using green solvents, fewer reaction steps, and locally sourced raw materials making production more economical and environmentally safe. • Import substitution for critical APIs: We target high-import dependence APIs identified under the Government of India’s PLI scheme—something most companies have yet to commercialise at scale. • High-value, low-volume strategy: We focus on APIs like Dabigatran, Erlotinib, and Linagliptin products with high margins and global demand, ensuring commercial viability even at a smaller scale. • Adaptability and innovation: Our platform is designed to adapt quickly to emerging market needs, offering process innovation not just for existing APIs but also new molecules based on market gaps. • Led by scientists, not traders: Our founding team includes PhDs and M.Pharm. professionals with deep domain knowledge, giving us a scientific edge over trade-driven API companies.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured in the 6th Edition of Innovations for Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog - Recognised among the top 50 biotech startups in India • Seed funding - Gujarat Industrial Policy 2020 (Startup Innovation Scheme) • Grant awardee - Srujan Seed Fund (S4 Program) by i-Hub Gujarat • Selected in MSME Idea Hackathon 3.0 - Women Innovators category • Aspiring Innovator Award - International Women’s Day 2023
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 25 • Government grants (in lakh): 30

24

Chanchal Goyal

Vigorus Healthtech Private Limited

Charting new paths

Chanchal Goyal, co-founder of Vigorus AI (part of Vigorus Healthtech Private Limited), embarked on her entrepreneurial journey following a cyber incident involving a large healthcare chain. The organisation's data was compromised and the threat actors demanded a hefty ransom to return the same. A seasoned healthcare data analyst whose husband is a tech-savvy security professional, together, they imagined creating a blockchain-based health locker to safeguard medical records from breaches. Their ambition was clear: revolutionise healthcare data management by merging data security with AI-powered clinical tools. Hailing from Jaipur, Chanchal combined her competence with her husband's, setting foot in a largely untapped niche of healthcare technology.

From conception to creation

Initially driven by data protection issues, the couple's idea soon evolved as they performed a comprehensive study. They discovered that hospitals prioritised financial information over patient details and were weighed down by a high volume of paperwork duties, which contributed to clinical errors—the second leading cause of death around the globe. To resolve this, Vigorus AI developed many AI agents including Voice MD—a multilingual voice-to-text solution that transcribes doctor-patient conversations into electronic medical records (EMRs). Complementing this were tech innovations handwriting OCR, fraud-detecting claim management modules, and focussed bots to assist nurses and radiology staff. Their groundbreaking solutions now run across India and the Middle East, merging effortlessly with legacy hospital systems, adhering to standards like HIPPA and ISO 27001, and partnering with national programmes such as ABDM.

Navigating challenges

The startup path was filled with challenges. Convincing hospitals to adopt new technology posed obstacles due to rigid legacy software, fear of improper data handling, and scepticism towards startups. As a woman entrepreneur juggling family responsibilities and business, Chanchal navigated societal expectations and workforce retention issues, especially with talented employees seeking positions in tier-1 cities. Fundraising limitations also constrained rapid expansion, delaying ventures like entering the Dubai market. However, their in-house expertise kept the product robust. Adaptability became their strength—by pivoting from a focus solely on blockchain security to broader AI-driven healthcare solutions and shifting sales efforts towards B2B partnerships, they established footholds in over 50 hospitals and secured significant pilot projects.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Vigorus AI intends to grow both revenue and workforce exponentially over the next three years, targeting around ₹7–8 crore in earnings and business expansion to a 50-person team, predominantly tech and sales experts. Continued product testing with more than 70 AIIMS hospitals will reinforce their product strength. They envision reducing clinical errors globally through AI, digitalisation, and secure data platforms, ultimately scaling across countries while fostering a women-led startup culture.



Successful entrepreneurship means being a 'chief everything officer'—tackling technology, operations, finance, and more—with the resilience to launch quickly, learn from feedback, and adapt relentlessly to make a substantial difference.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Website	https://vigor.us.ai/
Industries	HealthTech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, SaaS
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	<p>Vigorus AI distinguishes itself through deep AI integration, ABDM compliance, and modular interoperability. Unlike traditional HIMS platforms that are rigid and input-heavy, Vigorus AI uses multilingual AI agents to automate documentation, claims, and patient engagement, considerably reducing workload for doctors and staff.</p> <p>What makes us unique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI-powered clinical agents: Tools like VoiceMD AI and RadiBot convert voice conversations into medical records and diagnostic reports, saving 60% of doctor’s and radiologist’s time. • End-to-end insurance automation: Our ClaimIQ module uses AI + Health Claim Exchange standards to streamline insurance claims, cutting rejection rates by 75% and improving cash flow for hospitals. • Built for India, scalable globally: Chikitsa is multilingual, mobile-first, and modular platform designed for both large hospitals and small clinics in urban and rural areas. • Plug-and-play SDKs: We offer API/SDK kits for third-party labs, pharmacies, EMRs, and TPAs to integrate Chikitsa’s AI modules into their systems, enabling co-branded or white-labelled deployments. • Blockchain-backed trust: We incorporate blockchain for secure, tamper-proof patient records essential for insurance and medico-legal compliance.
Awards and accolades	Awarded with AI-Driven Healthcare Startup of the Year on Women’s Day and Selected in Top 10 Startup in Healthcare and awarded by Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 25 • Government grants (in lakh): 17 • Institutional Investor (in lakh): 100

25

Mugdha Pradhan

ThriveTribe Wellness Solutions Pvt Ltd.

Charting new paths

Mugdha's journey as an entrepreneur was deeply personal as it was rooted in her struggle with health issues and dissatisfaction with conventional medical treatments. After completing her master's degree in food science and nutrition, she initially worked 15 years in corporate HR. However, after battling severe physical ailments and clinical depression, she sought alternative solutions beyond mainstream healthcare.

Discovering functional medicine—a system focused on identifying and treating the root cause of diseases rather than the symptoms—marked a turning point in her life. By educating herself through international institutes and conducting scientific research, she applied functional protocols to her own health. This transformed her well-being and inspired her to help others who also face chronic health challenges. In 2017, she started working with people 1:1 to help them with their health challenges, offering personalised, science-based nutrition and lifestyle coaching.

Mugdha's vision centres on providing scalable, data-driven healing, and filling the gap left by conventional medicine. In 2019, she set up iThrive so that she could scale her work and help people with their wellness goals.

From conception to creation

Leveraging her HR and startup experience, Mugdha laid strong foundations for her organisation by defining a clear vision, mission, and values early on—even before the formal registration of the company in 2019. She focused on creating a reproducible system combining blood test analysis, tailored nutrition, supplements, and behavioural coaching. By relying on basic technology and in-depth training, the model was able to ensure consistent client outcomes and could also be delegated to trained practitioners.

Technology integration was modest at first—mainly based on instant messaging services and spreadsheets—however, there has been a recent push to integrate AI-driven tools. iThrive is developing proprietary AI and small language models that leverage their extensive client data to automate blood test analysis and protocol design. Alongside personalised consultations, the company now operates an academy for training practitioners and offers a line of pharmaceutical-grade supplements distinguished by additive-free, bioavailable formulations.

Mugdha emphasises the importance of hiring individuals with integrity, intelligence, and resilience to build a growing, value-driven team.

Navigating challenges

While Mugdha did not face gender bias in the female-dominated nutrition field, she encountered other challenges with investors sceptical of a female founder from a non-technical background. Some male colleagues initially found her assertive leadership style challenging, but Mugdha remained resilient.



Entrepreneurship is about resilience, integrity, and creating solutions that heal—starting with yourself and empowering others along the way.

Client scepticism about functional medicine’s effectiveness and resistance to lifestyle changes and supplements were another challenge for Mugdha. Educating clients through science-based coaching helped her overcome her clients’ doubts. Though achieving the product-market fit was organic, it required continuous product refinement—especially as the supplement market became crowded, and pricing strategies demanded adjustments.

After facing many personal challenges, Mugdha’s journey underscores the sacrifices women entrepreneurs often endure in addition to professional challenges.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, she sees exponential growth potential for functional medicine in India, propelled by rising practitioner interest and consumer demand for holistic healthcare. iThrive plans to scale its AI-powered platform as a SaaS solution and partner with diagnostic labs to expand access and empower practitioners nationwide. Mugdha’s vision is to support the entire functional medicine ecosystem, not just her company, and she aims to transform the healthcare system by leveraging education and technology.

Her advice to entrepreneurs includes prioritising team integrity, intelligence, and resilience in addition to rigorously securing product-market fit, balancing customer feedback with

the organisation’s vision, and investing in solid operations. For Mugdha, entrepreneurship is intertwined with her mission to provide meaningful, scalable healing.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Pune, Maharashtra
Website	https://www.ithrivein.com/
Industries	Health and wellness
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Web platform
Business models	B2B, D2C, B2C
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TiE Women Icon 5.0 Finalist • 9th Annual Women Power Summit and Awards 2024 by Billionium Divas • 8th IHW Summit Awards - Inspiring Speaker of India Health and Wellness 2022 • Zest talks - Powering Change 2023 • 9th IHW Summit Awards - Inspiring Speaker of India Health and Wellness 2023 • Sushma Swaraj - Stree Shakti Samman 2024 ('swasthya' category) • Healthcare Heroes by HealthTech and Wellbeing 2023 • Women in Power Summit and Awards 2024 (Women in Power in HealthTech) • Gupshup Startup 2022 - Best healthcare startup

26

Nidhi Samania

VetSERV Animal Care Private Limited

Charting new paths

A women-led founding team, with Dr Nidhi Samania's insights as a veterinarian, identified the critical gap in veterinary diagnostic services and launched VetSERV to address it. Together, they envisioned a referral-class diagnostics platform that would bring advanced, human-grade testing within the reach of veterinary practices beyond major institutions, ensuring timely and reliable results for patients nationwide.

From conception to creation

The founders collectively shaped the company's core strategy with Dr Nidhi Samania, leveraging her training as a veterinary microbiologist. Dr Nidhi highlighted the distinct requirements of veterinary samples, testing protocols, and result interpretation compared with human diagnostics. In parallel, her co-founders contributed complementary expertise in operations, technology integration, and business scaling. Together, they automated key diagnostic workflows to eliminate operator variability and guarantee consistent, accurate outcomes. This process-driven model delivered scalable, dependable service quality that veterinarians could trust.

Navigating challenges

While Dr Nidhi Samania built their diagnostic lab's robust technical architecture, the team faced shared hurdles in building the enterprise. Perishable veterinary samples demanded a robust logistics network to preserve integrity and speed—to fix it, the founders jointly engineered cold-chain protocols and courier partnerships. Recruiting scarce veterinary diagnostic specialists proved equally daunting, so the team collaborated on talent pipelines, training programmes, and knowledge-sharing frameworks. Securing capital and resources for nationwide expansion required unified strategic planning, investor outreach, and phased growth milestones.

Future horizons

The founders agree that relentless innovation and continuous learning are non-negotiable for long-term success. They commit to tracking breakthroughs in veterinary biotechnology and diagnostics to anticipate market needs.

To women aspiring for entrepreneurship, Dr Nidhi offers this advice: validate real market gaps before chasing trends, persist through setbacks, and proactively showcase achievements. Greater visibility—she emphasise—builds credibility, attracts partnerships, and dismantles barriers, paving the way for sustained impact.



The foundation of our work is credibility. Trust is essential in veterinary diagnostics because, once gained via perseverance and commitment, it enables us to truly impact our patients and their caregivers, spurring ongoing innovation and advancement in the industry.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	South Delhi, Delhi
Website	www.vetserv.co.in
Industries	BioTechnology, EVs, health and wellness
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molecular diagnostics for a range of diseases for companion animals in India; largest range of organisms and diseases covered with own R&D at affordable prices • Industry-first veterinary practices including microscope-based confirmation of machine findings • Adding pictures and information to the report, leaving little room for doubt and enhancing credibility • Use of data analytics based on anonymous data of thousands of pet samples and applying insights to improve diagnostics • Use of automation and barcodes to decrease manual intervention, and increase speed and accuracy significantly • Introduction of lateral flow assays for milch animals
Awards and accolades	Selected for Safal-2023 Agriprenuership incubation programme for a grant of ₹25 lakh by Chaudhary Charan Singh Hisar Agricultural University in October 2024
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 76.53 • Boot strapped (in lakh): 15 • Government grants (in lakh): 10

27

Saloni Anand

Traya

Charting new paths

Growing up in a family of doctors in the small town of Vapi, Gujarat, Saloni Anand initially envisioned a conventional career trajectory, one far from entrepreneurship. After completing her engineering degree from Cummins College and an MBA from IBS Hyderabad, Saloni's career path meandered through product marketing roles and a stint as entrepreneur-in-residence at a SaaS firm. Though entrepreneurship wasn't part of her plan, her skill at resolving complex issues eventually nudged her towards it. Co-founding Traya became an unintentional yet passion-driven leap into addressing real, overlooked issues.

From conception to creation

The spark for Traya was ignited by a personal challenge. Saloni's husband was experiencing hair loss amid the stressful startup grind. Unsatisfied with the ineffective, superficial haircare solutions saturating the Indian market that were not solving the root cause but working on symptom-based solutions, they identified a glaring gap. Committed to changing the narrative of the hair care industry, they built Traya around a holistic system combining ayurveda, dermatology, and nutrition, focusing on internal balance. Starting small in 2019 with friends as test subjects, their data-backed, doctor-led haircare programme showed significant results, laying a solid foundation. This success led to pan India launch. Even amid the pandemic, they pressed forward, creating a pioneering HealthTech platform for hair fall diagnosis and treatment, growing their team while many paused.

Navigating challenges

Establishing credibility in a market clogged with quick fixes was one of Traya's toughest battles. Educating consumers to look beyond cosmetics to pre-existing health conditions, such as stress or hormonal imbalance required transparency, consistent clinical evidence, and patient guidance. The journey demanded patience, teaching users that real transformation requires time, personalisation, and science—not magic potions. Being a woman entrepreneur in tech brought new perspectives. Fortunately, she did not get deterred by any gender biases. Maintaining work-life balance entailed quality family time, delegation, and a supportive partner, which proved pivotal for her resilience amidst entrepreneurial demands.

Future horizons

Technology remains the driving force behind Traya's innovation, with AI-powered diagnostics, seamless integration of customer data, and personalised care at scale. Offline experiential centres complement this digital ecosystem, merging human touch with advanced scalp analysis. Traya offers remarkable efficacy and breakthroughs like a recent clinical trial to redefine hair loss treatment by targeting root causes holistically. Looking ahead, she advises aspiring women entrepreneurs to celebrate their individuality, stay resilient through setbacks, and approach challenges with calm confidence. For her, entrepreneurship is an ever-evolving journey of creativity, adaptability, and lasting impact—proving that health indeed comes first, and hair follows.



True transformation begins when we heal from within—by addressing the root, not just the symptom. At Traya, we don't chase quick fixes; we believe lasting confidence grows from real, personalised care backed by science and compassion.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Mumbai, Maharashtra
Website	https://traya.health/
Industries	Health and wellness
Company size	501–1,000
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, API, mobile app, software, web platform
Business models	D2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traya stands apart from conventional hair growth/care brands by offering not just products, but a clinically backed, personalised treatment system. While most competitors address symptoms superficially, Traya tackles the root causes of hair loss through an integrated approach that combines ayurveda, dermatology, and nutrition, thereby working on an internal plus external result-oriented approach. • A key innovation is Traya’s AI-powered hair test, which diagnoses individual factors like stress, hormonal imbalances, gut health, sleep patterns, genetic conditions, nutritional deficiencies, and others. This scientific, data-driven process ensures every customer receives a customised treatment plan that treats their root cause, not a one-size-fits-all solution. • Traya further differentiates itself with its hair coach framework—a first-of-its-kind model where each patient is assigned a dedicated coach who ensures adherence, tracks progress and liaises with doctors for timely adjustments. 93% users have seen visible results thus proving the efficacy of the brand. • To date, Traya has transformed the lives of 12 lakh+ customers, proving that hair care can be both scientific and holistic, making it India’s most trusted and effective solution for hair loss.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She the People - Digital Women Awards 2024 • Campaign Awards 2024 - Health and Wellbeing Awards • Honoured by Hurun India and featured in the Under 35 Entrepreneur List for exceptional contributions as a female founder in the D2C sector • Social Samosa 50 Most Influential Women • Impact CMO 40 under 40 • Fortune India 40u40 2025 • Adgully Women Disruptors Award - Women Entrepreneur of the Year • Indian Retailer D2C Awards ‘Best Woman D2C Entrepreneur of the Year’ • ET Brand Equity ‘The Big Leap’ • HerZindagi - Health and Wellness Entrepreneur of the Year • Under45 Healthcare Changemakers Award • TellyChakkar ‘Wonder Women Awards’

28

Vidhya Parshuramkar

AgroZee Organics Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Vidya Parshuramkar's entrepreneurial journey was shaped by a personal health challenge—she suffered from iron deficiency while pursuing her post-graduation in food process engineering at IIT Kharagpur. Instead of following the conventional corporate route, Vidya decided to address a serious public health concern through her innovations. She focused on pearl millet (bajra)—a nutritious grain that is rich in iron but is often neglected due to its poor shelf life. Starting as an intern at AgroZee Organics, Vidya's passion and dedication helped her scale up to the position of the co-founder, showcasing how women entrepreneurs can overcome personal struggles to pour their energy into impactful startups.

From conception to creation

Vidya developed a patented Hydro NIR technology that extends the shelf life of pearl millet flour from 10–15 days to six months without losing its nutritional value. This innovation formed the building blocks of Nutri Dabba—a set of seven natural, preservative-free millet products rich in iron and vitamin C—which helps fight iron deficiency in children, adolescent girls, and adults.

AgroZee Organics operates a manufacturing facility near Pune and works closely with more than 30 farmer producer organisations (FPOs) in Maharashtra. Through a fair buy-back system, farmers receive fair prices for their pearl millet, helping them to improve their income and ensure high-quality supply. The products are mainly sold online and through partnerships with schools and NGOs, reaching hundreds of thousands of people in rural areas across several Indian states.

Navigating challenges

Vidya faced many challenges common to women entrepreneurs in India. Initially, she encountered resistance from her family due to choosing an unconventional career. Later, investors and rural partners often doubted a young woman's ability to manage operations in rural and tribal areas. She overcame these hurdles by proving her leadership and impact, reaching over 3,30,000 schoolchildren with her products. On the technical side, scaling production remains a challenge for her because the patented Hydro NIR process is batch-based and limited to only 25 kg per hour. Vidya plans to develop a continuous processing system to improve this. While cultural challenges in building and leading her team have arisen, they are minor compared to her overall mission. Vidya also participates in incubation programmes promoting circular economy solutions.

Work-life balance is nearly non-existent, as her role as co-founder demands most of her time. She observes this dedication as a necessary commitment and not a sacrifice.



Confidence in your idea and relentless dedication are the foundations of every successful woman entrepreneur.

Future horizons

Looking forward, Vidya’s plans include finalising the continuous processing machine, expanding into other pearl millet-growing regions in Asia and Africa, scaling rural school outreach, and establishing a large-scale manufacturing facility approved for international markets. Her vision is rooted in combating malnutrition and advancing nutrition security on a broader scale.

Vidya advises aspiring women entrepreneurs to stand firmly by their ideas with confidence and unwavering dedication, emphasising that persistence and performance are critical to overcoming obstacles and succeeding in the startup world.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Hadapsar Pune, Maharashtra
Website	https://milletsnow.com/
Industries	AgriTech, food and beverages
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B, B2C, B2G, D2C
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner of Start-up Grand Challenge by MoFPI • Winner of India’s First International Agri-Hackathon, Pune • AgroZee Organics has achieved key milestones, including patented and validated technology, awards from the President of India and the chief minister of Maharashtra, international recognition from MassChallenge Switzerland, and endorsement by the FAO World Food Forum.
Funding (₹)	Bootstrapped (in lakh): 5

29

Shaivee Malik

Yotuh Energy Pvt Ltd.

Charting new paths

Shaivee Malik's entrepreneurial journey started while she was a member of the Formula Racing team while pursuing her B.Tech. at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. She became interested in making hardware products because of her practical experience building race cars and running the team like a startup, including logistics and recruitment. Shaivee and her co-founders established Yotuh Energy after graduation, concentrating on clean energy solutions to address major power consumption challenges in transportation—drawing inspiration from her experiences and the startup ecosystem.

From conception to creation

Yotuh Energy creates electric cooling systems for the transportation of items that are sensitive to temperature—frozen foods, ice-cream, medications, and vaccines. Its electric cooling units, which use technologies like SolidWorks, MATLAB, and IoT for temperature monitoring and enhanced performance, provide cost savings of about 25% when compared to conventional diesel refrigeration. After studying the cold chain industry for about eight months, the founding team found inefficiencies in refrigerated trucks and investigated how EVs might offer a more environmentally friendly option.

Navigating challenges

The high initial cost of Yotuh Energy's electric cooling units is a major obstacle since it makes financing for smaller transporters challenging. The company is putting considerable effort into marketing to overcome these obstacles. This includes taking part in exhibitions and using their cars as active marketing tools to show prospective buyers the value proposition.

Future horizons

In the future, Yotuh Energy intends to broaden its influence on energy consumption by venturing into sustainable cooling solutions for commercial and residential buildings. Based on her experience, Shaivee encourages others to tenaciously pursue their entrepreneurial goals by highlighting the significance of self-assurance, market validation, and persistence for aspiring female entrepreneurs.



Time management and passion make the journey more sustainable. Focus on solving real problems, staying committed, and continuously adapting—these are key to creating impactful, scalable solutions that can shape a greener future.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Website	https://yotuh.com
Industries	Agriculture, AgriTech, clean technology, deep technology, EVs, food and beverages, hardware, supply chain and logistics, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Hardware, logistics
Business models	B2B, B2C
USP	<p>Yotuh offers an independently powered system architecture and a self-developed technology of adaptive cooling controls (IP). Its ecosystem takes live inputs from multiple data points such as delivery patterns, door openings, container temperature, and ambient conditions, devising how to run units in the most energy-efficient manner. This technology helps reduce energy requirements by up to 40%. In short, Yotuh can provide longer refrigeration run times without increasing battery sizing, keeping the product economical. It also enables smart cooling modes such as faster pull-down, steady temperature control, and battery-optimised operations.</p> <p>Other novel elements of their technology compared to current diesel-based ACs include a stand-by feature that ensures that the system runs even in case of vehicle breakdown and can operate from grid power with just a single-phase power outlet. Moreover, the company increases operational visibility by providing live telemetry of temperature, energy, and location data through its web app without needing additional hardware devices. Yotuh is the first in India to introduce preventive maintenance solutions and error alerts in AC systems. Uniquely, its system can convert any kind of small commercial vehicles—whether IC engine-based or electric—into refrigerated vehicles to serve the cold chain, which existing systems cannot achieve.</p>
Awards and accolades	<p>Grants and awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare - RKVY Raftaar programme (through PABI) • Department of Science and Technology - NIDHI Prayas and NIDHI EIR programmes (through Fire and IIM Udaipur) • Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology - TIDE 2.0 EIR programme (through IIM Visakhapatnam) • Acumen Social Entrepreneurship Grant • Grant from incubators including IIT Madras Incubation Cell • Technical Assistance Grant from Nexus Program (funded by the US Embassy to India) • Carbon Zero Challenge 4.0 winner (IIT Madras) • The Fishtank Innovation Award (Aquaconnect) • The Startup Tech Pioneer Award (IIT Madras Incubation Cell) • The Next Startup Dragon Award (IvyCap Ventures)

<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<p>Programme participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acumen: Energy for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme • IIT Startups Cohort 9 • Startup Nexus (US Embassy to India-run programme) • UNDP Women Climate Champion Programme <p>Media feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times of India • The Hindu • Economic Times • Tie Delhi NCR • Swarajya Magazine
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 95 • Other sources (in lakh): 55.25 • Government grants (in lakh): 40.6 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 150

30

Kirity Datar

Canectar Foods Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

From an IT professional to a successful entrepreneur—the story of Kirity Datar’s journey is certain to inspire new entrepreneurs. Her career has been driven by a sense of purpose, a creative mind, and smart thinking. Kirity grew up in a very dynamic environment, which made her adaptable to various environments. She gained a master’s degree in computer management and worked for more than ten years as a product lifecycle manager with large manufacturing companies. This work experience helped her gain considerable experience in managing hardware products through various stages.

While traveling internationally, Kirity and her husband Milind observed how simple products, when standardised and branded smartly, could be made into a highly profitable consumer business. They noticed that sugarcane juice is India’s second most consumed beverage after tea, but it lacks a commercial retail presence, branding, and adequate hygiene. Also, small sugarcane farmers are unable to get a fair price for their crops. Hence, they came up with the idea of creating an automated, hygienic solution that could provide fresh sugarcane juice to consumers and co-founded CaneBOT. This solution also aims to empower farmers with a steady income.

From conception to creation

In the initial days, semi-automatic kiosks were installed inside IT company cafeterias where hygiene was ensured by human operators, and the business was able to earn significant revenue. However, high real estate costs and scalability issues flagged the need for automated vending machines. Then, the CaneBOT vending machines were introduced. These machines occupied less space (approximately 12 sq. ft) and significantly reduced the rental costs.

These fully automated vending machines can extract and serve fresh sugarcane juice without any human contact. These machines are entirely manufactured in Pune through an exclusive OEM partnership and have been granted seven patents for core technologies. The machine stores finely sliced raw sugarcane sticks (cut to about 18–20 inches) and upon digital payment, it crushes the cane using patented vertical rollers, extracts the juice, and serves it fresh. The entire processing is done in front of the customer, maintaining freshness and transparency. Remote monitoring, self-cleaning, and real-time data logging have been enabled in these machines for maintenance purposes.

CaneBOT offers a convenient, healthy alternative to carbonated drinks at a reasonable price. India’s nostalgic love for sugarcane juice is an added advantage. The price ranges from ₹30 in corporate offices and around ₹60–100 in shopping malls for one cup of refreshing sugarcane juice, maintaining a gross profit margin of approximately 50%.



As a woman entrepreneur, I’ve found more support than challenges, and I believe women should never attribute their failures to gender.

Navigating challenges

CaneBOT is a hardware-based startup which needs longer time for product stabilisation than software-based startups. According to Kirty, progressing faster requires higher R&D investment, but conservative funding slows iteration cycles.

There are certain operational challenges as well. These include variation in regional agricultural products, creating differences in sugarcane diameters. This impacts machine performance and requires reengineering of the crushing mechanism to accommodate various sizes of sugarcane. Supply chain management is streamlined by decentralised sourcing from local farmers near Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities. Refrigerated secondary storages are required to support buffer fluctuations.

Future horizons

Kirty’s vision for CaneBOT extends beyond sugarcane juice. The design of the machine enables adaptation for many other fruits and vegetables, with approximately 80% reusable technology. This makes CaneBOT a scalable platform for a variety of fresh and healthy beverage choices.

Expansion plans include pan-India presence in malls, railway stations, corporates, airports, and multiplexes. Kirty also has ambitions to enter the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and European markets and make CaneBOT a global success.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Pune, Maharashtra
Website	https://canebot.com
Industries	AgriTech, FoodTech, FoodRobotics, DeepTech, Food and Beverages, ConsumerTech, IOT
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B, B2C, B2G, D2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-to-end automation: From juicing to self-cleaning zero human contact • Rich IP assets with 7 patents and 16 trademarks • Smart technology-based machines with data logging, remote monitoring, and analytics • Brand-led consumer focus: While many vending products are tech-first, Canectar Foods Private Limited is also building India’s first native beverage brand. • Scalable across different sectors including retail, corporates, airports etc.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Startup Award 2023 - Retail Innovator of the Year • Appeared on a popular television reality show ‘Shark Tank India’ • Startuppreneur Award – Women-Led Innovation from CII • Showcased at the 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup at Bengaluru • Runner-up of Bhashini Startup Velocity 1.0 Challenge under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, and received a prize money of ₹3 lakh in 2024 • Received invitation from Global Bio India 2023 to showcase CaneBOT

Awards and accolades

- CaneBOT became India’s first hardware solution to integrate with the Bhashini platform and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Digital India Bhasha Interface for India Division, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India
- Winner of Best Pitch Award at UPSTART’23 - Indian Business Model Competition conducted by Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and received a prize money of ₹50,000 in 2023
- Winner of Emerging Startup of the Year Award at Bharat Pitchathon’23
- Winner of The Indus Entrepreneurs Women Global Pitch Competition 2022 for Pune Chapter
- Winner of Pitch of the Day Award at Atman 2023
- Winner of SAMRIDHI 1.0 Pitching Competition conducted at IIT Ropar and received a funding commitment of ₹43 lakh in 2023
- CaneBOT Venture Story has been published by the Better India, Times of India, Indian Express, Lokmat (Marathi Newspaper) and Sakal (Marathi Newspaper)
- CaneBOT Venture Story was published by ‘Electronics for You’ magazine in their December 2024 issue, which is the world’s most renowned electronics magazine
- Finalist at the Global Pitching Competition at Atal Innovation Mission Congress
- Successfully completed Cornell Maha60, India’s first Ivy League Business Accelerator Program jointly organised by the Government of Maharashtra and Cornell University
- Selected for Qualcomm Women Entrepreneurs India Network (QWEIN) Program organised by Qualcomm in collaboration with NITI Aayog, Government of India
- Part of India Delegation (20 DeepTech startups from India) selected by Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) for the Artificial Intelligence Ubiquity Event at TiEcon Silicon Valley
- Part of India Delegation (five startups from Maharashtra) for the Atal Innovation Mission Congress 2024, selected by Maharashtra State Innovation Society

Funding (₹)

- Bootstrapped (in lakh): 60
- Other sources (in lakh): 10
- Government grants (in lakh): 60
- Angel investors/venture capitalists (in lakh): 195
- Institutional investor (in lakh): 73

31

Arpana Kumari

Robofly Technology Private Limited

Charting new paths

Arpana Kumari, the founder of Robofly Technology Private Limited, has one of the most inspiring stories among many successful women entrepreneurs. Arpana has immense passion for robotics—particularly drones. Hailing from Bihar, Arpana completed her bachelor's degree in electronics engineering. She developed an early interest in drones through her college projects.

During her undergraduate years, Arpana participated in the India Innovation Contest (IICDC). The positive feedback she received in this contest gave her the motivation and the confidence to quit her job later and become an entrepreneur. She started Robofly as a solo venture and gradually built a team of hardworking experts who offered diverse domain experiences. She also made it a point to hire students and new graduates to provide them with industry-level experience and learning opportunities. Her goal was to serve agriculture, forestry, and the defence sectors through custom drone solutions.

From conception to creation

Robofly provides intelligent and customised unmanned aerial vehicles tailored for agriculture, forestry, and defence operations. These drones can be used for surveillance, pesticide and fertiliser spraying, first-person view (FPV) operations, and help in advanced data analytics.

Robofly creates drones which are tailored as per customer specifications. These customisations can alter flight duration, payload, and other operational needs. For example, the forest fire prediction system provides a natural forest fire prediction model. Currently, Robofly is piloting this system with the forest departments of Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. Unlike existing satellite-based systems with 8–10 hours delay in reporting, Robofly provides predictive modelling which helps with early fire detection and quick response.

Robofly provides drone solutions for fertiliser spraying, water spraying, and crop health monitoring, which are highly useful in the agricultural sector. These drones use multi-spectral and RGB sensors to deliver crop mortality analysis, disease prediction, and yield optimisation. In the defence sector, Robofly delivers specialised drones such as bomb-dropping devices and training drones for army personnel.

They also provide onsite drone training services for users. The pricing of these drones varies by sector and application. Manufacturing partners source basic drone components from Indian manufacturers and then Robofly builds the customised solutions and assemblies.



My advice to all women is to keep dreaming and pursuing those dreams passionately, because even just a few years ago, I never imagined starting my own company. Taking that leap has been the most rewarding step of my life.

Navigating challenges

Arpana started this venture largely alone with limited resources. She faced many initial hurdles in growth and team building. Transitioning from a purely technical background to learning business aspects like revenue models and operational scaling was a major challenge. Without a sales or a marketing team, finding customers was difficult. Arpana heavily relied on networking, exhibition participation, and continuous outreach. Despite all this, she experienced revenue drought for about a year.

In India, educating farmers on the benefits of drone technology is very challenging. This is due to affordability issues, misinformation, and lack of awareness. By working with groups of adjacent farmers and liaising with the government to create awareness, Robofly is trying to encourage the adoption of drone technology in the sector.

Future horizons

Robofly is focusing on scaling the team and production capacity. The company envisions significant growth over the next five years, expanding both in India and global markets. It is also trying to increase awareness in the agricultural sector about the benefits of drones for better livelihood and sustainable farming practices.

The forest fire prediction system aims to offer large-scale environmental and economic impact through early fire detection and management. In the defence sector, Robofly is planning to bring in more innovations in response to the frequent requests from the army for new drone capabilities and mass production.

While logistics and package delivery drone solutions have great potential in future, the high operational costs currently limit scalability in this area. Arpana encourages aspiring women entrepreneurs to dream big and pursue their goals, sharing her own journey from a software engineer to a founder.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Patna, Bihar
Website	roboflytech.com
Industries	Aerospace and aviation, AgriTech, deep technology, drones, hardware, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, automation, drone, hardware, IoT, software
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	Robofly is providing a unique solution for preventing forest fires. While current solutions are based on satellite systems with a delay of 8–10 hours, Robofly’s predictive model is able to share relevant data much more quickly, using its drone system.
Awards and accolades	Awarded by the Entrepreneurs Association of India for its startup innovation with the ‘Bharat Startup Award’ Received recognition by IICDC for winning the contest at the idea stage
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 5 • Government grants (in lakh): 13

32

Vidya TG

WTSLN Fintech Private Limited

Charting new paths

Vidya TG, the focus of this story is an enterprising leader with over 15 years of experience in the banking sector. As the co-founder of WhatsLoan, she has consistently defied convention, paving innovative paths in the domain of financial technology by integrating her extensive knowledge from her tenures at prestigious institutions. Her journey in the FinTech world is emboldened by a vision to revolutionise financial services, moving BFSI providers from mere product sellers to entities which can understand customer needs and meet them in the shortest possible time. By empowering customers with a digital financial identity, Vidya envisions a seamless access point to financial services for millions of farmers, consumers, and businesses.

From conception to creation

WhatsLoan was born out of a desire to address the substantial challenges faced by customers in the traditional loan processing industry. Vidya's journey from an employee to a trailblazing entrepreneur was driven by her commitment to bringing change in digital finance.

WhatsLoan was incubated by NSRCEL at IIM Bangalore in 2020 and has since blossomed into a platform that offers a comprehensive suite of services for end-to-end loan processing. The platform is designed to reduce turnaround times from weeks to minutes, providing a streamlined solution for lenders and borrowers alike.

The platform operates predominantly on a B2B model and collaborates with major banking entities as clients. But Vidya aspires to transition to B2C engagements eventually. By creating a marketplace model, Vidya aims to create a sustainable lending solutions, offering an inclusive approach for various customer demographic segments.

Under her leadership, WhatsLoan has emerged as a forerunner in digital innovation in agri credit for farmers through kisan credit card loans, providing paperless and branchless processing for farmers under RBI's ULI.

Navigating challenges

Initial setup and scaling of WhatsLoan faced typical hurdles of long sales cycles, often stretching from several months to more than a year. Banks' hesitation to outsource work to external new age FinTech companies was also another significant hurdle. However, Vidya remained resilient through these complex challenges.

One of the more subtle challenges that Vidya encountered was due to her being a woman co-founder within the FinTech ecosystem. However, she categorises her experience as largely egalitarian—crediting the industry's evolving mindset towards gender parity. Despite personal challenges like having to manage family responsibilities alongside a business venture, Vidya prides herself on balancing these dynamics with grace and diligence.

Vidhya also gave her two cents for all the budding entrepreneurs planning to venture into FinTech: patience and resilience. She believes these virtues will help aspiring innovators to learn and withstand the dynamic FinTech ecosystem.



Don't fear failures—just do it and you're going to achieve your goals.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Vidya plans to delve deeper into B2C engagements and solidify the platform’s position as a symbol of digital innovation, with strategic penetration into both unserved and underserved and not very well served markets to enhance financial inclusivity. By collaborating with various lending, banking establishments and agritech firms, she wants to create many more solutions customised for different customer segments.

She also envisions developing digital financial identity solution, highlighting the potential of blockchain technology in transforming financial services. Through this, Vidya aims to decentralise the financial marketplace, granting consumers greater control while democratising access to vital loan and other BFSI products across a digital continuum.

Vidya’s influence in the FinTech sector is both pioneering and transformative. Through tenacity and innovation, she and WhatsLoan are not only reshaping paradigms but also setting commendable precedents for future leaders in the FinTech domain. WhatsLoan stands as a testament to her achievement of building not just a business, but an ecosystem where technology and finance intertwine seamlessly to empower individuals as well as entire communities.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka
Website	https://www.whatsloan.com
Industries	Agri Fin Tech, FinTech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, API, RPA , automation, generative AI, mobile app, SAAS, software, web platform
Business models	B2B and B2B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Built for Bharat: Urban to Rural, Retail to Agri’: Purpose-built to serve Tier 2 India, with modules for agri loans, KCC, MSME, and co-lending, supporting both regulated FIs and last-mile partners. • Modular, API-first lending OS: From sourcing to servicing, the platform is completely modular— partners can pick and plug only what they need. • Deep lender and infra integrations: It is already integrated with 25+ banks/NBFCs, account aggregators, and digital identity rails. • Partner-centric architecture: WhatsLoan empowers direct selling agents, sourcing agents, Agri/FinTech partners. • White-labelled journeys for embedded credit: Plug-and-play, bank-grade lending journeys that partners can brand as their own. • Real-time decisioning and built-in compliance. • Proven at scale: Deployed in live production with more than 1 million loan applications processed and ₹100,000+ crore of credit enabled. • Made in India, for Indian credit infrastructure: Natively supports Indian regulatory protocols

<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritech company of the Year under TIE 2021 • Incubated by NSRCEL under NITI Aayog in 2020 • Accelerated for Global Expansion by Bank of America - Vidya TG as Women Leader in Fintech - 2024 • Excellence in Digital Innovation - Banking and Finance - Elets - KDEM - GOK - TiE Bangalore 2025 • Tech for Social Good - Mint and TechCircle - 2022 • Tech30 by Your Story 2024 Building Bharat • One of Top 5 Fintech in Digital Lending GFF 2025
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<p>Bootstrapped (in lakh): 30</p>

33

Saumya Rawat

Ekosight Technologies Private Limited

Charting new paths

Saumya Rawat has a master's degree in agriculture. During her academic years, she frequently visited agricultural lands, where she discovered how soil health was being adversely impacted through excessive use of chemical-based fertilisers due to low awareness among farmers. Farmers found it challenging to perform lab-grade soil testing due to a lack of infrastructure or cost considerations. Saumya began Ekosight Technologies Private Limited in mid-2021, focused on enabling lab-grade soil testing using eco-friendly means. The firm helps farmers by providing inputs about soil quality and necessary interventions to ensure sustainable farming and enhanced productivity.

From conception to creation

During the initial phase, the firm invested heavily in R&D, leading to the creation of 'Soil Doctor'—a portable soil-testing device. At present, this device can analyse 14 parameters and two derived parameters, along with micronutrients. It significantly reduces testing time by enabling the analysis of a single parameter in about 15 minutes as compared to several days in traditional labs. It also uses eco-friendly reagents instead of hazardous chemicals. Soil Doctor also comes with pictorial guides, which help ground-level operators perform soil testing seamlessly. The device is integrated with an AI-powered 'Soil Intelligence' app, which ingests test results generated by device. The app integrates test result data, satellite imagery, and historical data to provide recommendations related to pre-sowing, seeding, nutrient scheduling, and irrigation management to farmers. The app also has interactive dashboards and supports multiple languages to simplify the user experience.

Navigating challenges

Ekosight performed pilots around Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. However, initially, there were concerns regarding the company's intent as farmers lacked awareness and were hesitant to avail free services. To build trust and establish credibility, Ekosight partnered with NGOs to identify and train women at the grassroots level, known as 'soil didis'. These women were equipped with manuals on how to collect samples, perform the testing, and communicate the test results to farmers. This operating model provided clarity, context, and visible results on the ground which helped Ekosight scale its operations. Ekosight does not charge farmers directly for their products and services. The firm focuses on selling its Soil Doctor device to NGOs and agri-input firms, who in turn employ soil didis for performing tests, suggesting recommendations and selling eco-friendly nutrient-related products.



Move forward without thinking too much. Focus on speaking out and executing things.

Future horizons

Saumya emphasises the need for trust and demonstrable performance—values she keeps in the forefront while choosing Ekosight’s partnerships. This is reflected in the company’s current associations with Zydex Group, IPL Biologicals, Fasal Amrit, and DeHaat. From an R&D standpoint, the firm wants to expand the capabilities of its Soil Doctor device to enable analysis of additional nutrients, so that the recommendations can become more effective. Currently, it is generating demand organically through LinkedIn and Instagram and plans to continue this approach going forward. Within the next five years, Ekosight plans to expand to other parts of the country and put together field teams to deepen operations in southern India. In the long term, Saumya envisions ‘Soil Doctor certified’ to be recognised as a benchmark of quality and sustainability when it comes to agricultural produce.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	New Delhi, Delhi
Website	https://www.ekosight.com/
Industries	AgriTech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	3D printing, API, automation, battery technology, hardware, IoT, mobile app, SaaS, software, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated hardware-software ecosystem: Our solution is built around Soil Doctor—a portable, rapid soil testing device that generates 13+ soil parameters on the field. The platform exclusively processes reports from our device, ensuring data reliability, standardisation, and end-to-end control over testing and advisory. • Instant, actionable soil intelligence: Farmers don’t just receive a report—they get crop-specific, regionally contextualised recommendations generated through our AI-backed advisory engine. The platform interprets complex nutrient interactions and turns them into simple, timely decisions. • Delivered by trained local entrepreneurs: Our model is powered by trained rural agri-entrepreneurs who use the device to deliver personalised services at the village level, ensuring last-mile trust and adoption. • Focus on regenerative farming + input optimisation: Our recommendations promote balanced nutrition, use of bio-inputs, and restoration of soil health, helping farmers improve yields while reducing input costs and long-term soil degradation. • Field-proven, farmer-centric approach: With over 5,000 farmers served across five states, we’ve validated our platform in real-world conditions proving its relevance, affordability, and impact for smallholder farmers.

Awards and accolades

- Winner of Nidhi Prayas from AIC Banasthali
- Winner of HST-CPS PRAYAS organised by IIT Mandi
- Winner of MSME Idea Hackathon
- Winner of Agri Grand Challenge organised by C-CAMP
- Winner of FASAL COR OCP 1.0 Organised by Software Technology Parks of India
- Winner of Chunnauti 3.0 organised by Software Technology Parks of India
- Won the Best Startup Award (agriculture) at the Global Bio India Event organised by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council
- Winner of Delhi- NCR leg of TiE Women Competition
- Winner of Impact for Bharat Innovation 2024, organised by SBI Foundation and Villgro

Funding (₹)

- Other sources (in lakh): 150
- Government grants (in lakh): 30

34

Salomi Dabral

VertoX Labs Private Limited

Charting new paths

Salomi, founder of VertoX Labs Private Limited, brings a unique blend of engineering expertise and a passion for sustainability in wastewater treatment. Witnessing India's heavy reliance on imported technology for wastewater instrumentation, she identified a crucial technological gap. During her postgraduate studies, Salomi deepened her understanding of both rural and urban wastewater challenges and the socio-economic and policy-related difficulties in this field. This awareness inspired her to unite a community of sustainability and development professionals, and establish VertoX during the COVID-19 pandemic. The company's central mission is to tackle eutrophication—the nutrient overload destroying water bodies—and to develop Indian-made, cost-effective, and efficient wastewater treatment technologies that cater to urban and rural contexts alike.

From conception to creation

VertoX Labs addresses wastewater treatment by using innovative technological solutions such as in-house developed IoT sensors, cloud analytics, AI-driven predictive maintenance, and robotic dashboards. They offer modular, plug-and-play solutions tailored for various sectors, including municipalities and industries such as oil refineries. These solutions continuously monitor critical parameters like chemical oxygen demand, biochemical oxygen demand, turbidity, and conductivity and optimise aeration and resource recovery to reduce operational costs. By empowering operators through training and phased implementation, VertoX ensures that the technology adoption is sustainable. Their projects with the Municipality of Mangalore and Indian Oil Corporation Limited highlight the company's ability to bridge policy, technology, and on-ground implementation. VertoX's goal is to minimise pollution, ensure regulatory compliance, reduce operational expenses, and foster long-term sustainability.

Navigating challenges

Convincing stakeholders, especially in the government and industrial sectors, posed significant hurdles. Lengthy procurement and cash flow cycles slowed deployment, while operational challenges like sensor tampering and integrating VertoX labs solutions with existing water treatment setups required adaptive strategies. Salomi highlighted the mental block in ground-level operators who are resistant to change, emphasising the importance of sensitisation and training. As a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated engineering and manufacturing sector, Salomi faced presumptions and gender biases. However, she overcame them through persistence, continuous learning, and building a trustworthy team. Though she had to make financial and personal sacrifices, the support of her network and mentors played a significant role in her journey.



Just turning up, showing up, and being serious about what you want ensures that your accountability and your credibility become clearly evident to others.

Future horizon

Looking ahead, VertoX Labs plans to expand its reach targeting pharmaceutical industries, scaling municipal projects, and entering aquaculture markets. With ambitions to raise ₹1–3 crore for manufacturing and team growth, the startup aims to treat millions of litres of water daily and pilot solutions in smaller river tributaries to address the problem of upstream pollution. International expansion into Southeast Asia, North America, and Europe is also a part of the company’s vision. Salomi emphasises the importance of policy collaboration, real-time monitoring, and developing Indian-specific sustainability roadmaps. Her vision includes advancing technology to detect heavy metals instantly and helping government bodies implement robust water quality management frameworks. For aspiring entrepreneurs, Salomi advises balancing passion with de-risking personal life and also emphasises building resilience, learning on the go, and self-care as the key to success.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://www.vertoxlabs.com/
Industries	Agriculture, agritech, clean technology, deep technology, hardware, smart manufacturing, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, automation, hardware, IoT, robotics, SaaS, software, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house AI sensor module for real-time water quality monitoring • Feedback-driven dosing logic to prevent chemical overuse • Coagulation flocculation aeration process managed by automation • Energy-efficient operation at 1/3rd cost compared to traditional setups • Integrated GHG emission capture and MRV compliance loop • Market-tested with municipal and industrial partners
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patent filings as major innovation milestone • Collaboration with Indian Oil and CIBA validated through pilots • Featured in multiple public sector projects
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boot strapped (in lakh): 25 • Other sources (in lakh): 1 • Government grants (in lakh): 96 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 20 • Institutional investor (in lakh): 12

35

Shwaita Uniyal

City Greens (Vertical Farming Technologies Pvt Ltd)

Charting new paths

Shwaita Uniyal's journey into entrepreneurship was anything but conventional. After completing her master's in food and nutrition in the UK, she spent a decade working abroad before moving to New Zealand. However, her personal challenges as a new mother and struggling to find clean, pesticide-free food in India sparked an idea. Her prior experiences in developed nations stood in sharp contrast to the lack of transparency in food sourcing in India. She made the decision to take the unexplored path of hydroponic and vertical farming with her partner, who had a solid background in healthcare. Their dedication and curiosity drove them to learn about this new technology despite having no prior experience in agriculture.

From conception to creation

Shwaita and her team meticulously created a vertical farming prototype using PVC pipes and irrigation techniques, beginning with a small trial on the terrace of a house across from their own. During their initial research, they discovered ways to maximise nutrient supply and water flow in vertical configurations. They were able to construct a 10,000-square-foot experimental farm due to their partnership with ICreate, a government-backed R&D hub, which marked a turning point in their journey. Here, they developed unique nutrient solutions that were suited to the climate of India. They also focused on automation, driven by IoT sensors to control microclimates within the farm, optimising temperature, humidity, and water supply. This extensive R&D laid the groundwork for commercial viability, bringing City Greens to life.

Navigating challenges

The journey was not at all simple. Shwaita encountered several obstacles, including personal, professional, and technical ones. For instance, the team had to modify their automation systems because most of the imported farming technology was unsuitable for India's climate and erratic electricity supply. Labour issues were another challenge, as inconsistent manual intervention caused crop failures—automated solutions became crucial. Beyond business struggles, Shwaita navigated motherhood with no immediate family support, juggling long work hours early in the day to be present for her children in the afternoon. Health issues, including severe allergies, further complicated her journey. Yet, with her partner's support, and a community willing to help, she persevered.

Future horizons

In the future, City Greens is ready to go global. Although their primary business is still in India, they have established offices in the UK and the UAE and are concentrating on exporting their technology rather than building full-fledged farms abroad. Shwaita plans to hire a CEO to manage Indian operations so that she can concentrate on scaling in international markets. With six patents and 30+ intellectual properties, the startup's technological innovations have been recognised globally. Their unique, community-driven mission to deliver clean food and empower farm entrepreneurs aligns closely with emerging global demands for sustainable urban agriculture, promising a bright future for City Greens.



Building City Greens was not just about growing food; it was about cultivating trust, innovation, and a healthier tomorrow. With patience and persistence, technology can transform farming—making clean, safe food accessible to every home.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://www.citygreens.ai/
Industries	AgriTech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, automation, IoT
Business models	B2B, B2B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s a Make-in-India, proprietary and multi-award winning tech that is comparable to, if not better than, any existing solutions in the world. • Most existing alternatives work on a fixed rule engine based system. But City Greens solution has a virtual farm manager which can decide and tweak the rules on the fly. Moreover, a customer can talk to the virtual farm manager, discuss, and share feedback as they would with a real human being. This ensures better outputs through dynamic decision making without needing any human intervention.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award by Ministry of Agriculture, GoI • Award by State Government of Karnataka • Award by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs • Award by DST, Ministry of Science & Tech • Award - Start up Maharathi Challenge at Startup Mahakumbh • Award by Innovate Telford, Government of UK • Award by Global gateway, Government of USA • Award by SBG, Government of UK
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 63 • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 30 • Government grants (in lakh): 86 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 280

36

Nidhi Gautam

Samak Technologies Private Limited

Charting new paths

Nidhi Gautam's entrepreneurship journey has been fuelled by her extensive work experience with rural women and dairy farmers across India. She completed her MBA and has more than ten years of experience in rural operations, livelihood development, and women-led entrepreneurship. Before starting her entrepreneurship journey, she led many community initiatives and managed a dairy producer company which aimed at uplifting women dairy farmers. She had worked closely with women in SHGs and dairy cooperatives, understanding their challenges firsthand. She realised that many small farmers suffer from low productivity due to traditional feeding practices and high methane emissions. All these factors motivated Nidhi to find her purpose in empowering women through sustainable dairy practices and helping them achieve financial independence. The idea of MooRakshak emerged from discussions between Nidhi and her co-founder Samrat Kaushik. Their primary focus was on improving profitability and sustainability for dairy farmers.

From conception to creation

MooRakshak is an AI-powered mobile platform which provides precision cattle nutrition and climate-smart dairy management, tailored to each animal's requirements. It has a NutriChecker module which analyses nutrient deficiencies and optimises feed formulation using locally available ingredients. The platform also estimates per-animal enteric methane emissions, enabling climate-smart practices and carbon credit readiness. Climate-smart features reduce methane emissions by up to 15%. An upcoming feature on this application will be image-based body condition scoring (BCS) through AI-powered computer vision, which will make animal health monitoring easier.

Beyond individual farmers, MooRakshak also supports cooperatives, FPOs, and impact groups with herd-level analytics and actionable insights. The system helps improve milk yields, reduce feed costs, and enhance animal health and environmental outcomes.

Navigating challenges

One of the biggest challenges for Nidhi and her team was to gain farmer trust. They spent extensive time in villages, conducting demonstrations and listening to farmers in order to build credibility. Facilitating behavioural change was a major challenge due to traditional feeding practices. The company also designed farmer-friendly mobile apps with multilingual, pictorial interfaces to overcome digital literacy barriers. Balancing affordability with scalability was a challenge. Subsidised and cooperative-based deployment was required to ensure that precision nutrition was accessible to small farmers.

As a woman entrepreneur in a male-dominated sector, Nidhi faced a lot of uncertainty but overcame it through her competence, compassion, and quiet credibility.

Future horizons

The cattle feed market positions MooRakshak for large-scale growth. MooRakshak has been able to directly impact more than 15,000 women dairy farmers and over 45,000 livestock. They have been able to achieve 10–20% milk yield increase and up to 15% feed cost savings.



Being a woman entrepreneur in technology means reshaping the system with your own voice and values. Start with a purpose, stay grounded, and never underestimate the strength of quiet conviction.

Socially, the platform empowers women micro-entrepreneurs with leadership and income opportunities. Climate-smart features align dairy farming with national and global sustainability goals. Collaborations with IIT Kanpur, Indian Veterinary Research Institute Bareilly, and incubators have validated the scientific and technological robustness of the platform. Nidhi aims to continue expansion into new regions and markets, scaling both outreach and product innovation. She also advocates for women entrepreneurs to lead with courage, consistency, and care.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://www.moorakshak.com
Industries	AgriTech, SocialTech, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Artificial intelligence/machine learning, analytics, automation, computer vision, mobile app, SaaS
Business models	B2B2C, B2C, B2G
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI-driven personalised nutrition: Delivers customised, least-cost feed plans for each animal which are based on the local feed availability as well as unique parameters for individual animals • Integrated methane emission estimation: Helps farmers and cooperative bodies to track and minimise enteric methane, supporting climate goals and future carbon credit opportunities • Image-based BCS: Upcoming AI vision module will enable easy, accurate animal health and condition monitoring directly through photos • Full ecosystem support: Provide cooperatives, FPOs, and impact associations with herd-level analytics, cost-saving suggestions, and community-based emission dashboards
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published by Confederation of Indian Industry's Centre of Excellence for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Startups as one of the Top Social Technology based Startup in September 2024 Compendium • Ranked among the Top 50 Startups in Bharat Pitchathon Challenge 3.0 by HEADSTART in August 2024 • Ranked among the Top 50 Social Impacting Startups by Tata Social Enterprise Challenge in association with IIM Calcutta in September 2024 • Selected among the Top 50 Startups among 1,600+ startups in Low Carbon Earth Cohort from 20+ countries • Selected among the Top 19 startups as India Delegation Team to UAE in Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX) Expand North Star Tech Event by the Ministry of Commerce & Trade • Part of Climate Tank 1.0 as one of the Top 15 Climate Tech Startup across India
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government grants (in lakh): 67 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 30

37

Elizabeth Mukhedkar

Aukera Jewellery Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Lisa Mukhedkar started her career as a fresh graduate with a well-known marketing communications brand, where she worked her way to become the Associate Account Director in the span of eight years while graciously balancing work and family. Enlightened by this experience, she proceeded to establish her own marketing consultancy firm which was her first startup.

Lisa actively worked with a known jewellery brand, identifying gaps and solving them for the Indian market. One significant hurdle was the high import duty of materials and gaps in the Indian market which predominantly favour gold and silver over any other materials.

Later, she also started a successful retail design company. Today, with a dedicated management team in place, the company operates stably and has expanded its presence in the design industry.

From conception to creation

Lisa Mukhedkar's brand Aukera under the company Aaryak Jewellery focuses on expression and empowerment through jewellery. The brand's tagline 'My choice, my voice' reflects the core philosophy of encouraging women to make personal decisions confidently and celebrating their individuality.

Aukera was inspired by a personal experience: Lisa remembers wanting to buy a 2-carat diamond but being unable to justify the expense. She then came across the concept of lab-grown diamonds. Lisa very promptly mentioned the general bias people have against lab-grown diamonds and the questions raised about their authenticity. She explains that jewellery and diamonds are something that need to be experienced by people to realise their authenticity.

R&D is considered the core of her brand. Not only does Aukera focus on innovation—like developing the world's first flower solitaire diamond—it also solves very underrated issues—such as creating a bracelet clasp while keeping usability in mind. Lisa also highlighted her upcoming launch of Exotic Diamonds enabled by advanced light science and precision cutting.

Lisa is also proud of Aukera's flagship initiative 'Share the Sparkle' which sponsored the education of over 70,000 children (primarily girls) in North-eastern India.

With 60% of the corporate workforce being women, Aukera harmonises a very flexible work culture to accommodate parents without compromising on equal standards, promoting inclusion and diversity.

Navigating challenges

Despite her successful track record of launching two companies and a rich experience of 30+ years under her belt, Lisa still faced hurdles for funding, where investors favoured younger/tech-oriented entrepreneurs. Lisa remained resilient and invested her own money, along with a Co-Founder, navigating setbacks and creating Aukera as we know today.



Good enough is never good enough.

Another aspect, not particularly a challenge but something she is careful about, is who joins the team. While the team requires highly skilled professionals, she focuses on individuals who share the company values and are a culture fit for the company, Aukera insightfully deals with issues by accommodating employees with personal and physical challenges in suitable areas, reflecting a family like ethos and commitment to inclusion.

Future horizons

Starting a company in her mid-50s, Lisa’s dedication towards doing meaningful work is what fuelled her to build a whole new company. Her discipline and dedication to fitness and routine have kept her motivated to pave the way for her company. Her belief in building a business and brand, to last, is her fuel.

While mentioning future plans, Aukera is set to launch its Exotic Diamonds collection, offering unique products and an exclusive experience to its customers. The company currently has over 20 physical stores in both North and South India and is looking to expand rapidly.

Lisa also plans to expand her ‘Share the Sparkle’ initiative by introducing scholarships for employees’ children and exploring multiple other routes to champion women and girl children, continuing their mission to promote empowerment in the best possible way—education.

The company aims to keep evolving, enhancing product quality, service, and social impact for women and children everywhere.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Website	www.aukerajewellery.com
Industries	Retail
Company size	180
Technologies	Global standards of craftsmanship
Business models	B2C
USP	Aaryak Jewellery is disrupting the precious jewellery market. The market size in India is \$80 billion, of which diamond jewellery is \$8 billion. Aukera Grown Diamonds offers a product which is vastly superior to mined diamonds—in quality, design, range, and value.
Awards and accolades	A D2C award from India Retailer
Funding (₹)	Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 2

38

Aparna Chavan

Kalapuri Private Limited

Charting new paths

A biotechnology engineer from Kolhapur, Aparna Chavan began her career at a research institute in Pune. But the pull of building something of her own brought her back home. In 2009, she opened a small apparel boutique. After marrying in 2011, frequent sourcing trips to Jaipur with her husband (now co-founder) changed her trajectory. Watching artisans present their work in forts, hotels, and cultural centres, she saw what a craft-led economy could look like and how Kolhapur, with 10+ living crafts and thousands of artisans, could be so much more than a supplier to middlemen.

From conception to creation

Aparna started by trading Kolhapuri chappals, traditional Maharashtrian jewellery, idols, and wool rugs on early e-commerce platforms. Operating from a Tier-4 city involves everyday hurdles, such as no pickup hubs, circuitous logistics etc. However, orders still came, accompanied by quality problems. Returns spiked to 30–40% on chappals due to non-standard sizes, variable raw materials, and deeply ingrained methods. Aparna stopped operations for 6–8 months and spent that time in artisans' homes to understand the root cause of these issues. There she found a cycle of dependencies on intermediaries like partial payments stretched over months, loans from vendors, and little agency.

As a result, Kalapuri started to operate with a hybrid model. One is a regular business (Kalapuri Private Limited) that promises to buy whatever artisans make, if they cannot sell it themselves. The other is a non-profit (Kalapuri Foundation) that helps artisans learn new skills, get exposure, and build a supportive community. Most of Kalapuri's sales (around 90%) come from its own website: kalapuri.com. They also sell on other online marketplaces, make products that big brands sell under their own names, and ship some orders to other countries.

On the workshop side, Aparna improved how the sandals are made, so they will be consistent and comfy, without losing the handmade touch. With help from leather experts and design schools, the team used simple tools and a few machines to make a real difference. Certain parts of the sandal are manufactured using small machines—a press to cut pieces neatly, safe booths to spray colour evenly, and a machine to join parts so the sizes are always the same. However, the signature braided top is still made entirely by hand. As a result, new and improved sandals with soft cushioning were manufactured, which can be worn all day. The slippers are safe, with non-toxic colours, non-slip soles, and vegetable-tanned leather that doesn't get mouldy, even in the rain or at the beach.

Navigating challenges

Changing the old ways is not just about tools—it is also about people. Making Kolhapuri chappals was mostly done by men, while women usually did only the leather braiding. At first, not many women came to the training sessions. So, Aparna and her team went house to house, spoke with husbands and in-laws, and set up women-only workshops in the same villages. In just two months, young women learned how to make the entire chappal, not just one part. Their confidence grew, and some of them now believe that, in a few years, one of them will win a government craft award that, until now, only men have received.



There is no alternative to hard work.

The change did not stop at the workbench. The team also taught women practical skills like using smartphones, booking tickets online, handling basic finances, and even making Instagram reels to showcase their work. A big achievement was when some of these women travelled on their own for the first time—booked bus tickets to Mumbai, called a cab, set up and ran an exhibition at a city institute, and came back with sales, stories, and a new sense of independence.

To make these livelihoods stable and fair, Aparna set up proper systems. She formed producer companies where artisans are part-owners. One is Kalami Handicraft Producer Company for jewellery, and another is Karvir Handicraft Producer Company for chappals. She also created common facility centres, which is a 3,000 sq. ft space for making products, training, and working with dignity. They company invested serious money, about ₹1.5 crore each in the jewellery and chappal clusters, and around ₹50 lakh in the baskets cluster, backed by government support and corporate social responsibility partners.

Future horizons

Kalapuri’s growth plan is rooted in people. The jewellery cluster aims to expand from roughly 150 artisans to about 400. The chappal cluster is targeting 200 families, including husband and wife teams that keep heritage alive at home. A third baskets cluster, started in 2017–18, already provides work to around 100 women and is set to grow to 300 with recent support. The company also focuses on terracotta and is organising about 200 potter families with the same model of skilling, producer ownership, and a dedicated facility.

Commercially, the brand will double down on its D2C engine with an eye on the 100-crore mark in the next five years. Demand is strong in Maharashtra’s major cities and across South India, where traditional motifs resonate in both jewellery and lifestyle products.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Kolhapur, Maharashtra
Website	https://kalapuri.com/
Industries	Retail, smart manufacturing
Company size	50
Technologies	Logistics, software, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C, D2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End-to-end craft ecosystem (not only a marketplace) Unlike most brands that simply source or resell, Kalapuri builds and nurtures the entire artisan value chain from training and raw material support to production, branding, and direct sales. They work directly with clusters to ensure both quality and fair livelihoods. Multi-craft, multi-category model While most craft-based start-ups focus on one product (e.g. footwear or jewellery), Kalapuri integrates three distinct crafts: Kolhapuri chappals, traditional jewellery, and handwoven baskets under one brand. This enables cross-selling, gifting bundles, and greater income diversification for artisans. Design + social impact fusion Kalapuri combines contemporary design thinking with deep grassroots engagement. Their in-house designers co-create with artisans, making products both culturally rich and market relevant. Meanwhile, their projects (via Kalapuri Foundation) focus on women empowerment, cluster building, and CSR collaborations.

<p>USP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalable D2C + CSR hybrid model Kalapuri operates on hybrid business model scaling through D2C digital sales and implements CSR-funded community projects. This allows us to grow sustainably, maximising impact and ensuring artisan ownership. <p>In short, Kalapuri is not just selling crafts—they are building a scalable, impact-driven brand that is preserving heritage while empowering hands behind it.</p>
<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft Council of Telangana Award of Recognition 2023 'Craftpreneur (National) Award' • Change Agent 2020 MSME National award by Amazon India • 6th eNGO challenge 2019 Heritage and Culture International Digital Empowerment Foundation • Recognised and awarded by deAsra's Foundation, Pune with Entrepreneur Excellence Award 2021-22 • Rotary Club of Kolhapur Vocational Service Excellence Award 2023-24 • 8 March 2024 - Felicitated by the auspicious hands of our Chief Minister Eknath Shinde for her contribution in the field of Women Empowerment. • Digital Artisans of India Award in the category of Social Enterprise received from Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), Creative Dignity and Digikargha • Kalapuri Private Limited was honoured Ahilyabai Holkar Women Start-Up scheme award by Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS)
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sources (in lakh): 10 • Government grants (in lakh): 5+2.1

39

Disha Shah

Audentia Tech Ventures Private Limited

Charting new paths

Disha Shah's journey into entrepreneurship is deeply rooted in her diverse global experiences and intrinsic passion for business. Growing up in a small town in Gujarat, she pursued engineering and later completed her master's degree in the US. Early professional stints and a tech startup in Germany exposed her to cutting-edge technology and the importance of understanding local culture, as evidenced by her dedication to learning German. Her decade-long leadership role in India showcased her ability to build cross-border partnerships and operate at the intersection of business and diplomacy. This rich background ultimately sets the stage for her to embrace entrepreneurship.

From conception to creation

Gofig launched in 2023, seamlessly combining Disha's entrepreneurial ambition with a focus on sustainability. Inspired by a visit to Hong Kong's GreenPrice stores, where surplus premium products are sold transparently at discounted rates, she recognised a glaring gap in India's handling of FMCG surplus inventory. In India, surplus items often end up being wasted, causing economic losses and environmental harm. Gofig positions itself as India's first transparent, consumer-facing platform facilitating the resale of surplus and close-to-expiry FMCG products. Partnering directly with premium chocolate and confectionary brands, Gofig operates via an online marketplace, a retail outlet in Gurgaon, a tie-up with Delhi Metro's app, and corporate partnerships—all aimed at reducing wastage sustainably.

Navigating challenges

Launching Gofig meant confronting the entrenched stigma about surplus products. Many consumers associated discounted items with low quality, while FMCG brands were apprehensive due to opaque, unregulated resale channels causing brand risks. Breaking this cycle required education, transparency, and stringent quality controls. Gofig only works with brands or authorised distributors, ensuring every product passes a rigorous five-point quality check before reaching consumers. Technology plays a pivotal role—Gofig's dynamic discounting algorithm and centralised inventory system optimise pricing and availability. Disha also emphasises the importance of balance: delegating responsibilities and compartmentalising work and home life help her maintain clarity and focus on her dual roles as CEO and mother.

Future horizons

Looking forward, Gofig plans exponential growth—aiming to partner with over 750 brands and expand its offline footprint alongside a thriving online platform. Sustainability remains integral, with significant waste reduction and carbon emission savings already documented. Awards like the HDFC Parivartan Award and recognition on Shark Tank India underscore Gofig's impact. Disha's advice for aspiring entrepreneurs is clear: understand your problem in depth, build the right team, lean on mentors, and most importantly, show up every day—ready to learn and adapt.



Many times, startups don't work as expected. It is a continuous iterative process, and the only thing to do is to just show up every single day.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Pune, Maharashtra
Website	https://gofig.in/
Industries	FMCG, food and beverages, sustainability and environment
Company size	2–10
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, logistics, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gofig is India’s first organised tech-enabled platform that bridges the gap between FMCG brands with close-to-expiry, surplus products and value-conscious, sustainability-driven consumers. FMCG brands are mandated today by regulation and ESG standards to manage their close-to-expiry, surplus inventory in a responsible manner—without risking the health of consumers or harming the environment. Our tech-enabled platform offers trusted, transparent, and ESG-aligned liquidation, helping brands maximise value while protecting reputation. For consumers, Gofig provides high-quality products at green discounts (20–70% off) with full shelf-life visibility and safety assurance. By redistributing rather than discarding products, they prevent waste and reduce pollution caused by landfill emissions and resource-intensive overproduction. Gofig is a category leader, and our solution stands out from other competing liquidation solutions on the following parameters: tech enablement, sustainability focus, best value recovery for the brands, highest discount for the consumers, and brand reliability (transparency, quality, and service).
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Startup India Seed Fund (SISFS) Award, 2024 HDFC Bank Parivartan Award, 2024 TiE Women Pune Chapter Finalist, 2024 Pernod Ricard India Foundation Award, 2024 Shark Tank India Season 4, 2025 Top 100 Startups in Maharashtra, 2025 Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Award, 2025 INSEAD Business Sustainability Finalist, 2025
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bootstrapped (in lakh): 17 Other sources (in lakh): 24 Government grants (in lakh): 5 Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 10

40

Anita Kshetri

Whizz Confectionary LLP

Charting new paths

Dr Anita Kshetri is the co-founder of Whizz Confectionery, an innovative bakery business. Anita completed her PhD in marketing and was an academician before starting her entrepreneurship journey. Prior to academia, she also worked in business banking with two leading banks. While she was leading her college entrepreneurship cell, she met her co-founder who proposed this creative business idea that sparked their joint venture. This campus-level discussion evolved into a real-world business as they launched Whizz Confectionery LLP in Pune.

Anita's always been curious, experimental, and passionate about learning and exploring new opportunities. These traits fuelled her entrepreneurial spirit. The company emphasises transparency and clean-label ingredients to build consumer trust and promote an 'eat without a second thought' philosophy. The founders faced many challenges right after they launched, including the COVID-19 pandemic which hit just as the business was gaining traction. However, the company was able to find its way through meaningful pivots, such as shifting to delivery-based models. The founders strategically focused on niche markets by specialising in customised, hygienic patisserie items. This helped them build a strong brand reputation.

From conception to creation

Whizz Confectionery LLP operates two distinct brands: The Belge Cakes and Healthy Bakes by Belge (HBB). The Belge Cakes offers premium artisanal pastry, handcrafted cakes, gourmet desserts, and personalised hampers focusing on aesthetics and culinary artistry. HBB specialises in functional, millet-based baked snacks. The brand delivers guilt-free, baked snacks made from ancient grains (e.g. millet, ragi, bajra), emphasising high fibre, low sugar, and no preservatives to satisfy health-conscious customers. Products under HBB include millet bars, baked cookies, and savoury snacks like jowar puffs. These products are designed to blend health benefits with indulgent taste and texture.

The company is primarily working with third-party manufacturers for scalability. The baking process is based on advanced, computer-controlled electric ovens and assembly line technology. Innovative packaging solutions such as nitrogen flushing and ambient-controlled packaging ensure product freshness and shelf life without compromising any nutritional value. Their distribution channels include institutional partners such as the Indian Railways as well as Indian Navy, enabling large-scale reach.

Navigating challenges

According to Anita, the initial years were very challenging, especially with limited sales. The COVID-19 pandemic forced a shift from walk-in store sales to delivery-focused operations. Raising awareness and educating consumers about healthy snacking and millet-based products was also crucial. Attracting qualified and talented personnel remains a hurdle, as many prefer traditional corporate roles over startup risks. Institutional approval processes were long and rigorous and required persistent follow-up and validation. Apart from that, sourcing the right machinery and setting up hygienic production facilities were also challenging aspects.

As a woman entrepreneur, Anita faced additional biases and procedural hurdles in funding and legitimacy, but she persisted and overcame such challenges.



Keep dreaming and keep walking, because every step forward is a step towards turning those dreams into reality.

Future horizons

Currently, Whizz has eight existing retail stores in Pune. Anita has plans to expand to at least 12 within the next few months. The company is targeting an annual revenue milestone of ₹100 crore across both brands within the next five years.

The company aims to increase its institutional reach beyond defence and railways into general trade and modern retail. These institutional partnerships will remain key to establishing credibility before entering high-competition retail markets. The company also aspires to enter international markets, including Dubai. Anita wants to prioritise innovation, especially functional foods and snacks aligned with evolving customer preferences. Her vision is to position the brand as a leader in guilt-free snacking. She wants to promote conscious eating habits without compromising on the joy or taste of food.

Anita encourages more women entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams and highlights the importance of persistence. She mentions how taking meaningful risks and embracing continuous learning can result in entrepreneurial success.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Pune, Maharashtra
Website	www.whizzconfectionery.com
Industries	Food and beverages
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B2C
USP	<p>Whizz Confectionery LLP combines culinary craft with functional improvements contributing significantly to health benefits, and driving continuous innovation across the food industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking as a continuum: Unlike traditional bakeries that focus solely on celebration products (cakes, pastries), Whizz offers a range of baked eatables, from functional snacks to artisanal comfort foods. • Millet-based innovation: While many FMCG brands are exploring healthy snacks, few are leveraging millets in baked formats. Whizz transforms traditional grains like ragi, bajra, and jowar into modern, tasty, kid-friendly snacks, balancing health and taste. • Clean label, no compromise: All HBB products are baked, not fried, contain no refined sugar or preservatives, and are fibre rich. Whizz challenges the myth that healthy snacks are boring. • Institutional access + impact focus: Whizz goes beyond retail; supplying to Indian Railways, Indian Navy, and defence nutrition programmes. This allows it to bring together commercial viability and social impact, something most snack brands don't pursue. Its primary focus for HBB was defence personnel who require nutritional food to maintain their health.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times Food & Nightlife Award 2025 'Best Bakery & Patisserie in Pune' • Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Entrepreneur Program Dr. Anita Kshetri, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, was selected for this global initiative and trained at IIM Bangalore, highlighting her leadership and impact-driven entrepreneurship.
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 90 • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 100

41

Himansha Singh

Craste

Charting new paths

Himansha Singh's journey is a compelling tale of transition from academia to entrepreneurship. With a stellar background as a research scientist in pharmacology and protein biology, her pivot to creating sustainable materials was sparked by conversations with her brother, Shubham Singh—a chemical engineer working in climate tech. They recognised the stagnant nature of the paper and plywood industry, which had seen little technological innovation for centuries. Motivated to tackle real-world problems around climate change, they wanted to transform crop waste—an abundant but underutilised resource—into valuable products. This is how Craste was conceptualised.

From conception to creation

Himansha's entrepreneurial journey did not start with a product but with curiosity and problem-solving. After exploring carbon capture technologies in concrete, Himansha and her brother identified crop burning in India as an urgent environmental challenge with no meaningful solution. Taking a hands-on approach, they spent over a year engaging with farmers in villages to understand why crop stubble was being burned and why it had no commercial value. This led to the inception of Craste, also known as FuMa (Futuristic Material) Labs, focused on converting crop stubble into eco-friendly wood panels and paper products.

Through research and experimentation, they developed formaldehyde-free adhesives using lignin, extracted as a byproduct from their pulping process, enabling the production of non-toxic, sustainable boards that outperform existing options both in terms of quality and cost. The manufacturing processes they designed are environmentally friendly, minimising water use and eliminating waste. Importantly, their model fosters circular manufacturing and empowers rural communities by integrating decentralised, farmer-run pulping units. This inclusive and innovative process turned scientific insights into tangible, scalable products that address both environmental and market needs.

Navigating challenges

Being a woman founder in a traditionally male-dominated field like construction presented unique hurdles for Himansha. She candidly recounts the subtle biases and infrastructural gaps, such as the absence of women's toilets at construction sites and scepticism from labourers and builders. Despite this, her persistence, communication skills, and deep technical knowledge helped her earn respect and break stereotypes. For her, these challenges reinforced her resolve.

Balancing the demands of entrepreneurship with personal life also required considerable effort. Himansha stresses the need for effective delegation and building a trustworthy team to maintain a healthy work-life balance. She observes practices such as strict no-work Sundays, taking regular vacations, and fostering a collaborative environment where team members grow into roles of greater responsibility. This approach not only ensures her well-being but also strengthens the enterprise.



Do not ask for permission. Women don't need permission to do anything in their life. Just do it.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Himansha envisions Craste becoming a household name in sustainable materials globally, especially across the Asia-Pacific region, where demand for formaldehyde-free healthier wood panels is rising. She aspires to expand decentralised manufacturing units across India to reduce logistics costs and tap into diverse agricultural waste streams beyond crop stubble—such as invasive plant species (e.g. Lantana).

Education and awareness form a significant part of her strategy for growth. While architects and builders are currently primary adopters, broad consumer awareness remains a challenge due to the unglamorous nature of plywood as a product. Himansha hopes for a future where sustainable materials become the norm rather than a niche—accessible and affordable so that consumers choose quality products without guilt or compromise.

Inspired by James Dyson, Himansha admires how everyday technology can be transformed through persistent innovation, making science an integral part of daily life. She wants Craste to similarly embed sustainability seamlessly into construction. Her advice to women entrepreneurs is clear and empowering: Never ask for permission, speak up louder if ignored, and let your work make the strongest statement in every room you enter.

Her proudest achievement is the successful scaling up of industrial production, which is tough in agri business due to seasonality and consistent raw material procurement and selling high-quality, formaldehyde-free panels in competitive markets like Bengaluru and Mumbai as well Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam markets—proof that sustainability and market success can walk hand in hand. BBC World business weekly also featured Craste for this. Himansha’s story is one of relentless innovation, breaking barriers, and building a greener future through science and entrepreneurship.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh
Website	www.craste.co
Industries	AgriTech, clean technology, infrastructure, material sciences, social tech, sustainability and environment
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Biotechnology, others
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craste offers high-quality, formaldehyde-free boards at a price the Indian market can afford. Most agri-based boards available today are low-grade particle boards—they’re cheap but they break easily, swell with moisture, and don’t last. On the other hand, formaldehyde-free premium boards are either too expensive or imported, which limits their use. • Craste’s patented technology allows it to make boards from any type of crop waste, in any season, and still match the quality of top HDHMR brands. All this is done without using harmful chemicals and meeting global CARB II NAF standards. This means the boards are better for individual health and the planet. • Strong, durable, and cost-effective

In a nutshell

<p>USP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The company doesn't white-label or outsource. Everything from lab research to full-scale production was built by the team. This gives them full control over quality, pricing, and innovation.
<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EnterpriseTech Scholarship Judge Business School, University of Cambridge • CSAR (Centre for Science and Advance Research and Lundgren Award, University of Cambridge, UK • Winner of What Design Can Do: Make it Circular Challenge (Netherlands) • Recognised globally for creating circular and regenerative material solutions from agri-waste • Top 10 startups globally (2019) selected for Stanley + Techstars accelerator, Hartford, USA. • AB InBev 100+ Accelerator Grant – For developing circular economy solutions tackling agricultural waste • Millennium Alliance Award– For scaling clean-tech solutions for rural-to-urban markets • BIG Grant – From the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India for bio-based innovation • Cummins CSR Innovation Grant – For environmental and livelihood impact through crop-residue utilisation • HDFC Grant – For green-manufacturing and livelihood creation in rural supply chains • Winner of National Bio Entrepreneurship Competition by C-CAMP • India's largest bio-entrepreneurship platform supported by BIRAC; awarded for innovation in bio-based materials • Winner of AgriRaftaar Grant by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India • for pioneering work in value-added agri-waste utilisation • Finalist at Seoul Design Awards (South Korea) • Selected among the Top 10 global innovations in sustainable design; nominated for the Citizen's Prize • Finalist at Sustainability Awards 2023 • Shortlisted for our tree-free, compostable millet-straw packaging solution Chosen as a climate-tech enterprise for a no-equity, high-impact scale-up programme • Winner of BIRAC-SOCH Innovation Challenge Award • Recognised for developing social and environmental biotech innovation • Honoured for impactful grassroots innovation in rural and climate resilience • Women in Construction Award March 2025, Conferred by The Real Woman platform on Women's Day, recognising Craste's role in enabling women-led climate solutions in construction
<p>Intellectual properties held</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 30 • Government grants (in lakh): 150 • Institutional investor (in lakh): 85

42

Vaishali Mithari

Aeronica Advance Technologies Private Limited

Charting new paths

For over 20 years, Vaishali built a career in industrial automation, working across the UK, the US, Canada, Italy, Israel, and Abu Dhabi. Over time, the work started to feel repetitive. During the pandemic, she wanted to learn something new and build something of her own. So, in 2023 she joined Aeronica Advance Technologies, the drone company her husband started in 2020, not just to run operations, but as a co-founder with a 30% stake.

She did not take the easy route. She chose to start from scratch in a field where safety and rules come first. That meant learning India's aviation regulations, testing drones, working with suppliers, and designing error-free systems. She brought discipline and empathy to her leadership, while balancing both family and a fast-growing tech business.

From conception to creation

Aeronica's primary focus was farming in agriculture. The team built a crop-spraying drone with a 10-litre tank called Samruti 10L. It went through tough, independent lab tests by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories to prove performance and environmental safety. Vaishali drove the behind-the-scenes work by setting up quality systems, writing manuals, planning and running tests, and preparing all the documents needed for official approval. Step by step, through audits and rechecks, the team earned DGCA type certification for Samruti 10L. To build trust on the ground, Vaishali also got her official DGCA drone pilot licence.

The product range grew fast. Aeronica is mapping drones that can swap cameras based on the job (including thermal cameras), and upgrading its farming drones from 10L to 16L and 20L versions. Aeronica's key strength is that it builds the core 'brain' of the drone (an in-house flight controller) and control software and station, for end-to-end reliability and support. For security and monitoring purposes, the company is developing a drone that can fly for 48-50 minutes continuously, which is much longer than the common ones available in the market with 15-30 minutes of flying time. Beyond selling products, Aeronica also offers spraying services, planning early morning and late afternoon flights to suit farmers and deliver better results. The team has also grown to 50+ personnel across mechanical and aeronautical engineering, electronics/software, GIS mapping, pilots, and operations.

Navigating challenges

Starting up in a young industry meant learning on the go while conducting R&D, field tests, and careful hiring of specialists. In the beginning, importing parts increased costs and caused delays. The company spent time and effort to find and work with local suppliers to stabilise the supply chain. Getting certifications was filled with heavy paperwork, two-stage audits, regulator feedback, and repeated fixes. Funding was kept realistic: bootstrapping, cutting costs, and moving forward through pilot projects. On the personal front, Vaishali balanced home and work by prioritising, delegating, and building a strong support system—showcasing how leadership can be both firm and compassionate.



Don't underestimate your abilities: follow your passion and your dreams.

Future horizons

Aeronica plans to launch the in-house flight controller and ground control software, finish the long-flight surveillance drone, scale the farming drones to 16L and 20L. Additionally, it aims to strengthen maintenance and after-sales service, so that the drone’s reliability in the field matches its performance in the air. Aeronica will keep serving farmers, FPOs, businesses, and government agencies. The company is also talking to partners in Africa and the Middle East.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://aeronica.in/index.html
Industries	Aerospace and aviation, deep technology, drones
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, drone, hardware, SaaS, software, web platform
Business models	B2B2C, B2G
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic ecosystem: Unlike firms offering isolated drones, Aeronica provides hardware (from flight controller to airframe), software (cloud-based mission planning, analytics), and services (training, maintenance, GIS processing). This seamless integration reduces vendor juggling and accelerates deployment. • In-house flight controller: Its indigenous controller is designed and manufactured domestically, optimised for local operating conditions (temperature, humidity, electromagnetic environments). This ensures reliability, faster support, and easier regulatory compliance compared to off-the-shelf imports. • Data-driven intelligence: Aeronica’s cloud platform unifies mission planning, live telemetrics, GIS processing, and analytics. Users gain actionable insights (e.g. crop health trends), not just raw footage. • Local R&D and support services: The company collaborates closely with farmers, security agencies, and industries to iterate features rapidly. On-the-ground teams provide faster service, spares, and training (critical for continuous uptime). • Regulatory and sustainability focus: Designs comply with DGCA guidelines and embrace energy-efficient components. Its precision spraying and mapping solutions help to reduce resource waste and their environmental impact. • With modular attachments and safety testing, they tackle high-risk tasks efficiently. Integrated with the flight controller and cloud ecosystem, they enable precise planning and real-time monitoring. As inventors, the company delivers unmatched support, rapid iteration, and solutions adjusted to local conditions.
Funding (₹)	Bootstrapped (in lakh): 550

43

Iram Maimuna

E-Waste Social

Charting new paths

Iram Maimuna has been making waves across the clean technology landscape in Bengaluru, Karnataka. With extensive experience that spans operations, technology, and administration, Iram channels her diverse skills towards solving one of India's pressing environmental challenges—e-waste management. As the founder of E-Waste Social, her journey exemplifies the blend of academic prowess and seasoned industry exposure. Having completed her MBA, she stands at the helm of innovation and empowers fellow women to venture into sectors that are traditionally overlooked by them.

Iram's vision for E-Waste Social originated from a commitment to address a lingering problem: the hazardous informal waste sector. She understood that in order to bring about systemic change, she needed to achieve the right balance of technology and education. Her endeavour transforms supply chain mechanisms, and also the societal understanding of waste management, proving that impactful change is possible when dealt at its root.

From conception to creation

E-Waste began in 2019, while Iram was looking for avenues to explore during her sabbatical. She observed major negligence in handling municipal solid waste and knew what she needed to do. She decided to create a digital marketplace with her co-founder, Aditya Mehta. She subsequently envisioned a platform that connects corporate entities generating recyclable waste to registered recyclers. The founders knew it had the potential to shift the paradigm.

The unique selling point of E-Waste Social is its digital B2B SaaS platform designed to ensure traceability and compliance with global standards. Bolstered by AI tools for waste assessment and route optimisation, the platform enables efficient operations while reducing environmental impact. Its education arm 'EWS Learning', instills sustainability practices and awareness among all its stakeholders and society in general, bridging the gap between policy intent and practical realisation.

Navigating challenges

Iram's entrepreneurship in the waste management sector was riddled with challenges. One persistent challenge is the inherent undervaluation of waste management, often considered marginal to business operations, impacting how resources are allocated and waste management processes are prioritised.

Securing funds exposed Iram to gender bias as well, with investors showing preference for male-led ventures. The informal networks managing e-waste, thriving on practices that neglect environmental sustainability and worker welfare, also posed hurdles. But her dedication to the dual mission of E-Waste Social—ensuring environmental safety and empowering society, especially women—drove the enterprise forward.



Always listen to your gut—because if you think it's going to work, it will work.

Future horizons

E-Waste Social aims to advance India’s circular economy significantly. Presently, a mere 10% of total e-waste is recycled formally—Iram aspires to double this in the forthcoming years, capturing 20 to 25% of the market through her company.

She envisions E-Waste Social becoming an integral cog in waste management regionally and nationally. Her mission prioritises advocacy, education, and technological innovation, and finally, an adaptable and scalable model. By challenging the status quo, Iram seeks to offer a future where environmentally friendly practices are seamlessly integrated into industry norms, fostering rapid sustainable growth. E-Waste Social stands as a testament to the limitless possibilities of empathetic entrepreneurship, with recognitions from some of the biggest global institutions such as the UN.

Iram wants other women to step into this sector, embrace its challenges, and redefine societal perceptions about waste. Her narrative will surely inspire others to champion responsibility, inclusivity, and the protection of our planet.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka	
Website	http://www.ewsociallearning.com	
Industries	Clean technology, education and skilling	
Company size	11–50	
Technologies	Computer vision, IoT, mobile app, SaaS, software	
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2G	
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Waste Social is not just a digital marketplace for e-waste and recyclables; it is integrated with EWS Learning, the education and training vertical. While most companies focus only on collection or recycling, their approach combines technology, compliance, and capacity-building. Dual impact model: E-Waste Social provides a traceable, AI-enabled platform for transactions, while EWS Learning builds awareness, green skills, and certifications for corporates, institutions, and waste workers. End-to-end ecosystem: Unlike others who operate in silos, it offers businesses a complete solution disposal + compliance + training, ensuring they meet Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)/environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals while fostering sustainability culture. Human-centric approach: EWS Learning empowers employees, managers, and waste handlers with customised programmes and certifications (ISO 14001, SDGs-aligned), bridging the critical gap between policy and practice. Scalability and replicability: The combination of a SaaS platform plus an education arm makes the model unique, scalable across industries, and adaptable to other waste streams like packaging and textiles. 	
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded by BRICS Women Innovation Contest Awarded by Global Triumph Foundation startup summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGMP Achiever Rise to the Challenge award - supply chain/healthcare sector
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank loans (in lakh): 25 Bootstrapped (in lakh): 150 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government grants (in lakh): 10

44

Ann Alexia Anra

Wasted 360 Solutions

Charting new paths

Ann Alexia Anra, founder of Wasted 360 Solutions, was shaped by her international education in marketing and communications and early family life works to address social and environmental issues. Driven by her disagreement with materialism as portrayed by daily advertisements, she chose to tackle the issue of waste management. Ann fondly remembers her grandmother, crediting her for the early exposure of volunteering projects with the marginalised communities in Chennai, which helped her recognise the intricate problem of urban waste.

From conception to creation

Long before Ann launched her venture, she mentions personal habits and experiences like recycling old clothes for occasions. She started off by selling pre-owned clothes of friends in the entertainment and modelling industry via social media. While pursuing a career in advertising, she came across government projects adhering to social causes.

When she saw authorities approaching her to develop and use tech to curb social issues, Ann decided to devise a solution to manage urban waste. She started from domestic waste segregation and interactions with independent waste dealers. During her interactions, she realised the huge gap—a large portion of household waste had zero market value, leading to irresponsible disposal.

This interaction opened multiple paths for Ann. She enlisted the support of the local community, identified the section that was excluded, and proactively took measures to help them. She started collecting hard-to-recycle items like old clothes and tetra packs through community-driven collection points. She launched her social media page as an educational channel to raise awareness on how to manage household waste. Ann also launched an online auction on the same page to increase engagement and then opened her first thrift store.

Navigating challenges

Ann considered the lack of both monetary and human capital as major challenges. The waste area Ann had picked up has zero monetary value. There were valid concerns around full functionality of operations and profitability. Hence, securing community workers as well as physical spaces was a major challenge initially. When asked if she had to face any issues with the regulatory board, she admitted that while there are challenges in extended production in field, she didn't have any regulatory issues as her focus was on recycling.

She further mentioned that government agencies and pollution boards were rather quite welcoming and appreciated her efforts.

Being a young woman in the field of waste management, Ann generated a healthy amount of support from the community rather than scrutiny. She also describes the ground-level challenges while working with marginalised communities, which revolved around members being unable to attend lengthy training sessions as those clashed with their daily jobs. Ann adapted to these and developed a training programme that helped women learn on the job while complying with their daily schedule.



Alone we can do so little; together, we can change the world.

Future horizons

Ann’s vision for scaling focuses on the tech platform Drop Loop. It is intended as a revolutionary tool that offers a variety of services for consumers such as streamlined waste pickup and traceability. The platform will help local verified workers access government relief schemes and help them in generating a sustainable income. Ann expects Drop Loop to enable scaling beyond Chennai through collaborations, adding profitability and legitimacy to informal waste trade, and actively combating corporate greenwashing with actionable impact.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Website	https://www.indiawasted.com/
Industries	Sustainability and environment
Company size	2–10
Technologies	IoT, logistics, mobile app, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2C
USP	<p>Unlike most waste management companies that focus on high-value recyclables like paper and plastics, Wasted 360 Solutions targets zero-value and hard-to-recycle waste—textiles, cigarette butts, multilayer packaging, footwear, and personal care items—that typically end up in landfills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining technology + grassroots action: It ran India’s first circular economy on wheels, bringing awareness, repair, and collection services directly to communities. • Drop Loop platform empowers users to schedule pickups, shop sustainably, and track their climate impact—all in one place. <p>The company integrates social equity by creating green jobs for waste workers, survivors of violence, and informal repair specialists. It has proven financial sustainability through over 40,000 drop-offs and 60,000+ thrift product sales, all without relying on just scrap trade. In short, it tackles waste that others ignore, bridges digital and physical ecosystems, and embeds inclusion at the core of its circular model.</p>
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 14 • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 15

45

Rajashri Sai

Impactree Data Technologies

Charting new paths

Rajashri Sai is the Founder and CEO of Impactree Data Technologies. Her journey as an entrepreneur began as a social activist. Initially she worked in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions at BGR Energy during the 2008–09 recession. She used to participate in campaigns led by Aruna Roy, focused on the Right to Information Act and the Employment Guarantee Act. Rajashri holds an educational background in economics and is a qualified company secretary. She also participated in the Jagriti Yatra in 2009, which was an inspiration behind her entrepreneurial transition.

During her initial work, she realised that there is a lack of real-time, actionable data to guide decision-making in various enterprises. Hence in 2017, she co-founded Impactree Data Technologies along with Vivek Shankaranarayanan as an attempt to bring manufacturing-grade data monitoring solutions to social and sustainability sectors. The mission was to harness AI-powered data platforms for transforming social impact management at scale.

Rajashri worked with global organisations such as the UN and US State Department as well, which helped her expand her influence and exposure.

From conception to creation

Impactree is an AI-powered ESG data platform that enables enterprises to track, manage, and accelerate their sustainability goals through insight-led and actionable solutions. The platform provides services to seven industries—including logistics, oil and gas, chemicals, pharma, automotive, real estate, and retail.

Impactree offers mainly two product suites: Compass, a 360-degree ESG reporting tool, and Navigator, a strategic decision intelligence system. The platform combines AI agents called ‘sentinels’, industry-specific frameworks ‘fractals’, and a data integration pipeline ‘CODEX’. These products help companies to track and optimise sustainability performance across various supply chains and operations, transforming static data into actionable intelligence. The platform provides sustainable decision-making capability through real-time AI analysis. It empowers stakeholders across the client organisations to act with purpose.

Currently, Impactree provides services to more than 80 enterprises across India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Vietnam, and Singapore. This platform has delivered significant results in emission reduction, cost savings, faster reporting cycles, and improved ESG score for clients.

Navigating challenges

According to Rajashri, Impactree requires constant agility, because significant market and regulatory pivots occur every two to three years. For example, any geopolitical tensions impact manufacturing sectors directly. In India, a major challenge is the scarcity of long-term venture capital that supports deep tech software and product innovations. Data fragmentation and poor data quality issues persist widely among Indian companies. Many of these companies still rely on spreadsheet-based, manual processes.



As an entrepreneur, your biggest challenge is to mentally accept that every two to three years, the world is going to change. You must be ready to pivot and adapt quickly to keep your product and business relevant.

As a solution, Impacttree is building platforms which can be integrated with legacy systems and both cloud and on-premises infrastructures. AI components address the high computational cost issue by focusing on modular, efficient, and cloud-native architecture.

Future horizons

Impacttree aims to expand across emerging markets like the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Rajashri highlights the importance of family-based enterprises in South Asia and sees this understanding as an opportunity for inclusive growth.

Impacttree aims to commercially scale key products like Rubica Net Zero and Rubica Balance within these new regions. The company is focusing on building a sustainable legacy business rather than chasing short-term exponential growth. The vision is to create a long-lasting enterprise that will go beyond the founders.

Impacttree has received significant international recognition as well, which brought them opportunities to speak at the UN and the World Economic Forum. Impacttree also supports rural women entrepreneurs and plans to increase this outreach substantially.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Website	https://www.impacttree.ai/
Industries	Enterprise SaaS, sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, analytics, automation, SaaS, software
Business models	B2B
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacttree stands out by transforming ESG from a compliance task into a strategic advantage. Unlike most ESG platforms that focus only on data collection or static reporting, Impacttree offers a full-stack decision intelligence system that turns raw sustainability data into actionable insights for real-time decision-making. • The solution is built on a multi-layered architecture combining three powerful components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sentinels: AI agents that analyse ESG data, detect patterns, score performance, and provide real-time recommendations – Fractals: Domain-specific frameworks that ensure relevance across industries and regulatory landscapes – CODEX: A robust data pipeline that integrates, cleans, and standardises data from multiple sources – This structure facilitates automation of complex ESG functions such as emissions tracking, benchmarking, vendor assessments, and impact measurement with greater accuracy and far less manual effort. • What further differentiates Impacttree is their modularity. Organisations can start with a focused use case like carbon management and scale into broader ESG operations as their maturity grows. • With deep automation, data intelligence, and cross-functional utility, Impacttree redefines ESG platforms empowering companies to lead, not just comply.

Awards and accolades

- Impactree and its founder, Rajashri Sai, have been recognised nationally and internationally for leadership in ESG innovation, sustainability intelligence, and inclusive technology.
- Rajashri was selected by the US State Department for the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program and invited to speak at the UN Headquarters during the International Commission on Women. She was also the only Asian woman entrepreneur to address the US Chamber of Commerce on Women’s Day, spotlighting her leadership in rural entrepreneurial networks.
- At the national level, Impactree was honoured among the Top 10 Women-led Enterprises by the Gujarat government, in the presence of the President of India. Rajashri was recognised by NITI Aayog as one of India’s Top 75 Women Entrepreneurs and featured in various media reports and Rise Global Summit for her pioneering role in tech-driven social innovation.
- Internationally, Impactree was selected to represent India at the World Economic Forum 2022 by the Tamil Nadu government.
- The company has also received grants and recognition from Atal Innovation Mission.

Investments (₹)

- Bootstrapped (in lakh): 105
- Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 165

46

Jaya Prabha

Greenspring Energys Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Jaya Prabha holds a Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and a Bachelor's degree in Hindi. Before launching her startup, she gained rich experience working in various capacities across multidisciplinary engineering and automobile companies. Her varied experience provided her with a strong foundation and industry knowledge that fuelled her aspirations to become an entrepreneur.

Her inspiration to start the business came during her tenure as technical director, where she developed sustainable biotech and green energy products. Acknowledging the positive policies of the government that support sustainable and ecological products, she made the decision to start designing, developing, deploying fire extinguishers that are 100% biological and green certified. This creative business concept matched her enthusiasm for market opportunity and sustainability.

From conception to creation

To implement her vision, she planned two manufacturing units in Tamil Nadu and Jharkhand. The Tamil Nadu government allotted her 21,000 square feet of land on outright purchase terms, enabling factory construction, which she expects to complete within 90 days.

The startup's technology is fully biological and ecological, using extracts from about 17 flowers with no harmful chemicals such as POPs, AFFF, PFAS, carbon, or fluorine. This green product has been certified at ICAO Level B, assuring quality and safety compliance suitable for international and domestic markets.

Financially, she secured debt assistance for purchasing land from the Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation Limited, along with loans for factory construction and imported machinery. She is currently looking for a working capital to support production scaling, underscoring the importance of institutional financing for expansion.

Navigating challenges

Jaya encountered numerous obstacles during her entrepreneurial journey. However, she attributes her success to careful market research and mental preparation. She was able to build resilience and confidently overcome obstacles in the industry with the help of like-minded professionals.

The startup has already achieved major milestones, including in-principal approval from the Safety Council of All India Railway for vendor empanelment. It has received significant orders from leading companies such as Ashok Leyland, Ola, and Ather Energy.

Beyond all commercial success, her venture creates substantial social impact as a woman-led rural enterprise. It directly employs 50 people and indirectly supports about 2,000 farmers by purchasing raw materials from them. This integrated model shows how sustainable entrepreneurship can promote economic upliftment in rural communities.



Realistic efforts combined with a strong idea always lead to deserving and meaningful success.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, she emphasises that a well-grounded idea paired with realistic efforts will always lead to success. Her advice for women entrepreneurs is to actively leverage government initiatives aimed for supporting female founders and unlock their hidden potential to expand and grow tech-enabled businesses.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Salem, Tamil Nadu
Website	www.trident-csl.com
Industries	Sustainability and environment
Company size	11–50
Technologies	Others
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C, B2G
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank loans (in lakh): 750 • Bootstrapped (in lakh): 200

47

Neha Chauhan

Aviotron Aerospace Private Limited

Charting new paths

Hailing from an Army background, Neha Chauhan's early exposure to armed forces left a profound fascination towards aerospace technology. Right from her preliminary years in army schools, she set her sights on pursuing a career in aviation. Having qualified for the Commonwealth Scholarships, she left for the UK in 2012, studying aerospace engineering at the University of Liverpool. After working for GE Aviation (Southampton) she pursued her master's at Cranfield, followed by a visionary project at NASA.

Aviotron Aerospace Private Limited oversees multiple sister firms including AeroBay (school B2B brand), Kintaro (D2C), and KinderBay.

From conception to creation

Despite working in one of the best research labs in the UK, Neha realised that there was a considerable gap between the theory-heavy curriculum in India and application-based schooling in the UK. This realisation came after she failed to clear an open book exam despite being good at math.

Neha, with her co-founders trained in the UK, returned to India to build an ecosystem to make an application/tool-based learning for students. They founded Aviotron Aerospace Private Limited which comprises sub-brands: AeroBay (school B2B brand), Kintaro (D2C), and KinderBay.

They began by manufacturing drones and UAVs. In the beginning, they sold these to corporations and government units. Since their target was to teach and not just sell, AeroBay started setting up test labs in universities and then finally pivoted to schools in 2019. The founders ensured that students learned to design and build drones indigenously, without depending on imports.

AeroBay's learning model complies with the government mandates to include skill-based learning and the company customises it as per the students' schedules. AeroBay has installed a self-manufactured industrial-grade machinery lab for the simulation of real-world for the students to get early exposure. Their list of machinery includes but is not limited to computer numeric controls, 3D printers, curing units, and even wind tunnels.

When asked about the operations and how the tech-heavy company manages skill requirements, Neha mentioned they initially used to hire graduated students from across all engineering streams and train them. Later, to offset the capital-intensive task, they started offering year-long internships instead. By the time a candidate gets converted as an official AeroBay hire, the only training required for them to start as trainers is the soft skill requirement. Crucially, Aviotron manufactures its own equipment, ensuring fit-for-purpose machinery, warranties, rapid iteration, and deep curriculum integration.



Don't wait for others to clap. Clap for yourself. Seeking validation can't be the engine; conviction must be. Celebrate small wins daily. Those small steps that we take are what will compound into the result that we see.

Navigating challenges

With an extremely policy-shy and fragmented market with unclear regulations, the drone business was initially very competitive with respect to cheap imports. Schools were particularly affected by the kit vendor model, which supplied machines and technology but lacked support and maintenance, resulting in wasted resources and space. AeroBay tackled this issue with a manufacturing-led B2B edtech operation.

As a woman founder, Neha found most bias in venture rooms despite her own fluency in numbers. She persisted and raised a seed round in 2022 from a Middle Eastern venture capitalist (VC). Pre-Series A and Series A followed from a Japanese VC, each at rising valuations.

The company culture embraces dedication and hard work. When describing her office in Noida, she mentioned the environment to be extremely comfortable and creative.

When asked about her achievements, she happily recalled her time at the TedEx because it sparked curiosity amongst many people for the upcoming future.

Future horizons

Aviotron is expanding in the Middle East with Knowledge and Human Development Authority’s approval. Along with the school partnerships, it plans to introduce shorter diploma/certificate course for older learners within the engineering domain with specialisations in aviation, AI, EVs. Its plan is to collaborate with expert panels for more industrial exposure as well as scale up manufacturing to serve regional requirements.

With NEP 2020 catalysing hands-on cross-disciplinary learning, AeroBay aims to facilitate aerospace-related learnings in schools.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi
Website	https://aerobay.in
Industries	EdTech
Company size	51–200
Technologies	3D printing, AI/ML, AR-VR-MR, drones, geospatial and space tech, hardware, logistics, robotics, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C, B2G, D2C
USP	<p>Aviotron Aerospace is not just an EdTech provider—it provides a complete, self-sustainable learning ecosystem that integrates real-world industry exposure directly into the education journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial-grade infrastructure in schools: Unlike most players offering coding classes or kits, AeroBay installs fully functional, industrial-grade labs inside schools featuring wind tunnels, drones, satellites, EV models, and 3D printers, bringing the engineering world directly into the classroom. • In-house product development and manufacturing: They design, prototype, and manufacture all their kits and lab tools in-house, giving complete control over quality, innovation, and cost.

<p>USP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum-integrated, career-linked learning: Their programmes are aligned with CBSE/ICSE/IB boards and incorporate STEAM + design thinking, along with exposure to career paths in aerospace, automotive, EVs, marine, and space tech, thereby bridging the academic-to-industry gap. • Full-time expert trainers: They deploy dedicated, qualified STEM trainers (aerospace/mechanical engineers) to deliver sessions, not part-time freelancers, ensuring consistent quality and mentorship. • Dual-model scalability: They operate both B2B2C (AeroBay Labs) and D2C (KINTARO STEM Kits) models offering scalable, tech-enabled learning both within schools and directly to homes, supported by their upcoming Dubai Innovation Centre.
<p>Awards and accolades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Indian Startup, Aim Investment Meet (AIM) Congress Dubai 2019 • Stanford Seed program • Selected from 20,000+ startups across 143 countries • Special Invitee, Global Aviation Summit (2019) • British Council (UK) Entrepreneurial Award (2020) • Investment Win of ₹1 crore, Horses Stable investor showcase (2020) • TiE Global Women Entrepreneur Award, showcased at GITEX Global (2021) • Winner, Accelerator Aichi 500 Global (Japan) • Finalist, JACOB Foundation Learning Differences Track (out of 1,150 companies) • Finalist, Ten-Minute Millions, E-Cell IIT Bombay • Featured on Shark Tank India strong reception and recognition
<p>Funding (₹)</p>	<p>Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 10</p>

48

Nidhi Tatia

Dev Mantra Online Services Pvt Ltd

Charting new paths

Nidhi Tatia's journey as an entrepreneur began after spending years as a professional chartered accountant and company secretary at her own practice, which she started in 2005. This experience exposed her to the common struggles that individuals face in managing personal finances, taxes, and succession planning. After witnessing her clients' problems, Nidhi envisioned a technology-driven platform that could consolidate wealth management, taxation, wills, and compliance under one roof. This vision led to the creation of Optymoney in 2018, creating an amalgamation of cutting-edge technology and financial services. Nidhi's deep technical understanding, along with her experience as a finance professional, helped her to bridge the gap between finance and technology, building a solution tailored to users' real needs.

From conception to creation

Optymoney's portfolio reflects Nidhi's comprehensive approach to financial services, which combines traditional practices with innovative tech solutions. The platform provides users with a real-time financial dashboard where they can set and track goals such as travel or higher education expenses through planned investments. Additionally, Optymoney offers some unique features like online will creation aligned with legal frameworks, simplifying succession planning for families. Nidhi also manages a traditional audit and tax firm along with a management consulting company, Dev Mantra, which supports corporate clients with transaction advisory and financial outsourcing. This multi-faceted experience enhances Optymoney's offerings, ensuring that the clients receive personalised and holistic financial guidance.

Navigating challenges

This startup journey was not without its obstacles. Nidhi realises the difficulties of working with technical teams and the slow pace of implementing innovative ideas in the product. Recognising this gap, she plans to onboard a tech co-founder to accelerate development, balancing product innovation and marketing efforts. Post-COVID dynamics also pushed Optymoney towards online service options, making financial literacy sessions more interactive but challenging in terms of audience engagement. Furthermore, developing a seamless hybrid model combining physical presence and digital convenience remains her key focus to retain the personalised touch that differentiates Optymoney in a crowded market. For expanding their reach, they have started working with corporates to provide financial services for their employees. Nidhi highlighted that employee trust significantly increases when financial services are recommended by their company's HR team.



Our platform consolidates what a lawyer, a wealth manager, and a chartered accountant provide, giving clients a real-time dashboard to plan and track their financial goals seamlessly.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, Nidhi plans to grow Optymoney through smart partnerships and stronger digital marketing. She’s focused on serving women entrepreneurs and NRIs with tailored offerings from franchise opportunities to personalised investment advice. Fundraising efforts are poised to scale with the addition of a tech co-founder, enabling better products while focusing on marketing and other expansion plans. Nidhi also emphasises the importance of having someone from a tech background in the founder team to overcome bottlenecks like tech challenges. Her experience inspires the next generation of women entrepreneurs to be independent, collaborative, and adaptable in a financial services world that never stands still.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka
Website	https://optymoney.com
Industries	Finance, FinTech
Company size	2–10
Technologies	Analytics, API, automation, mobile app, SaaS, software, web platform
Business models	B2B, B2B2C, B2C
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical presence: Optymoney is not just a faceless app or a website—it has a physical presence where clients can walk in, speak to experts, and get guided assistance. At the same time, their digital platform ensures users can manage, track, and optimise their finances from anywhere, anytime during working hours. This model builds trust and accessibility, especially for those who value human interaction over purely app-based advice. • Single dashboard for all financial needs: Most platforms focus on only one vertical like mutual funds, taxes, or insurance. Optymoney uniquely brings together investments, tax filing, compliance, insurance, loans, and estate planning under a single platform, so users don’t need to juggle between multiple service providers. • Tailored for individuals and businesses: Our services are structured to cater not just to salaried individuals and professionals but also to MSMEs, startups, and family-run enterprises—supporting them with registrations, loans, taxation, and legal structures. • Real experts, not just chatbots: Behind our digital interface is a dedicated team of certified tax advisors, investment planners, insurance experts, legal consultants, and operations professionals. Clients get access to real advisors not just automated suggestions. • Education-first approach: Optymoney is not about pushing products. We focus on financial literacy, empowering users to make informed decisions through simple, jargon-free advice, explainer content, and guided consultations. • Custom alerts and reports: Our users get curated reports, due date alerts, and reminders to help them stay financially compliant and on track without needing to follow up manually. • Trust, transparency, and compliance: We operate in a fully regulated and compliant framework, ensuring data security, privacy, and ethical financial practices.
Awards and accolades	Awarded as the most promising startup in 2018 by NITTE KBL MSME AWARDS 2018
Funding (₹)	Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 80

49

Smridhi Seth

WritePlus AI Private Limited

Charting new paths

Unlike her peers, Smridhi Seth chose a different path after completing her master's. While everyone started taking up placement offers and chased a corporate career, she chose pursue the start-up route. Smridhi was awarded a gold medal by the President of India for acing organisational behavioural psychology from Delhi University and her research work. This motivated and pushed her to start LiaPlus AI.

From conception to creation

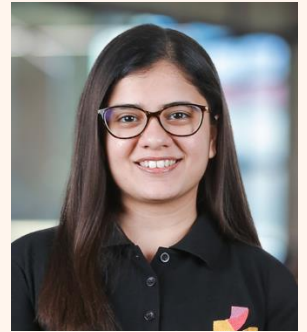
Smridhi started experimenting with AI for over 40 use cases, leading to the creation of LiaPlus AI. This tool is an intelligent language assistant designed to offer customer support with enterprise-wide platforms in vernacular languages and dialects across India and globally. LiaPlus AI offers to provide customer support services 24x7 to ensure the best customer experience in every single interaction. Additionally, it recognises the language a user is speaking in and switches to it instantly. LiaPlus is also powered by sentiment analysis which allows it to respond according to the user's emotions. Currently, it is offered in 300 languages and 1,200 accents, including dialects rarely supported by conventional systems.

Smridhi's startup journey began modestly, with bootstrapped investments and initial scepticism from clients and investors. Support from the government's startup hub and grants helped in transforming the product from a prototype to being market-ready. During the early phases of client acquisition, Smridhi prioritised trust-building and strong performance metrics like achieving over 90% first-call resolution. From there on, she expanded on to the Middle East, leveraging grants and accelerator programmes in Saudi Arabia, where she was mentored by the likes of Bill Gates. This led to a roster comprising international clients and investors, including large banks in South Africa.

Navigating challenges

As a woman in a startup ecosystem, Smridhi encountered both societal and organisational hurdles. She was often questioned in pitch meetings by biased investors who deemed a young female incompetent to present complex AI products. Despite these setbacks, Smridhi maintained her composure and confidently pitched her products, often turning the tide in her favour. Her resilience through adversity, support from her family—especially her mother—helped her build her dream product.

Operationally, it remains a struggle to hire skilled AI engineers, given the nascent stage of formal AI education and the high costs associated with experienced engineers. Despite these obstacles, LiaPlus AI prioritises data privacy and security, meeting international compliance standards such as ISO 27001, GDPR, and HIPAA.



Embrace technology—treat it as a friend. Gain education in the field. Women should be unapologetically proud of their achievements.

Future horizons

Looking ahead, LiaPlus AI aims to scale globally. Over the next decade, Smridhi envisions deepening integration in sectors such as banking, financial services, e-commerce, and government, focusing on accessibility and inclusivity to bridge language gaps in AI adoption worldwide. The company also plans to create ‘AI employees’ capable of automating various administrative and operational tasks, freeing human employees to focus on decision-making.

In a nutshell

Headquarters	Delhi, India
Website	https://liaplus.com
Industries	Enterprise SaaS, FinTech
Company size	11–50
Technologies	AI/ML, API, automation, generative AI, SaaS
Business models	B2B, B2G
USP	Unlike generic voice bots, LiaPlus AI excels in understanding regional accents and delivering emotionally intelligent conversations. It offers support in 18 languages, including complex dialects like Arabic variations. The voice AI handles enterprise-grade transactions securely, with faster integration into client systems. Clients achieve higher customer satisfaction and substantial cost savings versus traditional IVR or human-only support models.
Awards and accolades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forbes Select 200 Startups with Global Potential • Bharat Pitchathon Winners • TIDE 2.0 by MeitY • Covered on 10 Years of Digital India Corporation podcast for creating the first voice bot on a government website • The only Indian startup selected in the GAIA’s cohort in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Intellectual property held	In process for filing one for the architecture
Funding (₹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government grants (in lakh): 60 • Angel investors/VCs (in lakh): 200

Conclusion

As we conclude ‘Navigating turbulence, solving for tomorrow: Inspiring women in innovation’, we pause to reflect on the inspirational stories and remarkable achievements of women entrepreneurs who are leading an epoch of transformation in our nation’s history. This compendium is a testament to their impact on various sectors and a resounding affirmation of their role in crafting a more promising tomorrow.

We hope these journeys serve as catalysts for empowerment, inspiring all who dream to break barriers and venture boldly into the world of entrepreneurship. As leaders, we hope to continuously embrace and advocate for a landscape where women-led enterprises thrive, knowing that their leadership is integral to the tapestry of a harmonious and sustainable future.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the people from CII and PwC who contributed towards building this compendium.

1. Rumjhum Chatterjee, Chairperson, CII Women in Innovation Steering Committee and Co-Founder and Managing Trustee of The Infravision Foundation and Chairperson - Feedback Foundation
2. Vijayalakshmi Rao, Mentor - Startup
3. Nemesisa Ujjain, VP & Head, The Circle FC
4. Poyini Bhatt, Former CEO, SINE IIT Bombay
5. Ninad Karpe, Founder, Karpe Diem Ventures
6. Ankita Pegu, Leading Women Entrepreneurship Programs, NSRCEL, IIM Bangalore
7. Prateek Garg, Chairman, CII North Regional Startup, Committee & Founder and CEO, Progressive Infotech
8. I Vijaya Kumar, Co-Founder & CTO, Crayon Data
9. Dr Geetha Manjunath, Founder, MD & CEO, Niramai Health Analytix
10. Dr.A.Balachandran, Director, VIT Technology Business Incubator, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore
11. M Murali, Gen AI/Quantum Advisor Independent Consultant
12. Sunil David, Digital Technology Consultant, Ex- Regional Director – IOT, AT&T India
13. Prashant Malviya, Sr AI Architect, Wadhvani Center for Government Digital Transformation (WGDT)

About CII CIES

CII Centre of Excellence for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Startups (CIES) serves as a catalyst for fostering innovation, driving entrepreneurship, and bridging the gap between corporates and the dynamic startup ecosystem in India. Through a comprehensive suite of services, CIES aims to elevate organizations in innovation, technology adoption, and investment potential, thereby contributing significantly to the growth of the startup ecosystem. CII is a force multiplier, uniquely positioned to catapult growth in the country by leveraging its 300,000 members connect, 500+ sectoral councils, 65+ offices in the nation, 8 international offices, and 300+ MoU's with international partners from over 100 countries.

Mission

Empower corporates to thrive by embracing innovation through startup connect, simultaneously guiding startups to grow into renowned corporate leaders.

Vision

To be a world-class, state-of-the-art, corporate-driven, startup resource platform that enables growth of successful startups in India.

Key services

1. **Capacity Building Programs:** CIES offers meticulously curated programs aimed at addressing the unique needs of startups, providing them with the tools and resources necessary for sustainable growth.
Family Offices | C-Suite Executives | Government Officials
2. **Market Access Initiatives:** Facilitate market access programs for startups by leveraging our extensive network of corporate members and employing the Open Innovation Paradigm to create opportunities for collaboration and growth.
Corporate Accelerator Program | Open Innovation Program | Corporate Pitching
3. **Summits:** Our flagship events bring together high-impact companies, thought leaders, and stakeholders to foster collaboration, share insights.
Unicorn Summit | Investor Summit | Startup Summit | Social Entrepreneurship Summit
4. **Academic Collaboration:** Collaborate with academic institutions to establish incubation centres, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among students and faculty.
5. **Policy Advocacy:** Regular and active engagement with central and state governments to represent diverse policy-related issues. Regular policy roundtables are held for key sectors for advocacy to promote ease of doing business.
6. **Awards and Recognitions:** Through initiatives, CIES recognizes and celebrates the achievements of India's top startups, unicorns, fostering meaningful partnerships between established corporations and innovative startups.
Startuppreneur Awards | Women in Innovation | Unicorn Awards

7. **Community Building:** ICONN is an industry connect platform to catalyse strategic interactions between key stakeholders in the ecosystem to create an integrated, inclusive, and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country.
ICONN Alpha is a dedicated mobile app for connecting with CII CIES startup and innovation community.
8. **Bilateral Engagement:** The overarching objective is to empower businesses by providing exposure to international markets and facilitating connections with innovation ecosystems worldwide.
International Delegations | Institutionalized Framework | Inbound and Outbound
9. **Startup Affiliation Framework:** Enabling growth stage startups in the ecosystem to be affiliated by CIES for enhanced market access opportunities.

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Mantosh Sondhi Centre

23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003 (India)

www.ciicis.in

Contributors

NMP Jeyesh

Senior Director and Head, CII Centre of Excellence for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Startups

Priyanka Mukhija Mishra

Deputy Director, CII



Confederation of Indian Industry

About CII

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organisation, with around 9,700 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 318 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For more 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with the Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Through its dedicated Centres of Excellence and Industry competitiveness initiatives, promotion of innovation and technology adoption, and partnerships for sustainability, CII plays a transformative part in shaping the future of the nation. Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes across diverse domains, including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

For 2025-26, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 9 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 250 counterpart organisations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Mantosh Sondhi Centre

23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110 003 (India)

T: +91-11 45771000

E: info@cii.in

W: www.cii.in

Reach us via CII Membership Helpline: 1800-103-1244

About PwC

We help you build trust so you can boldly reinvent

At PwC, we help clients build trust and reinvent so they can turn complexity into competitive advantage. We're a tech-forward, people-empowered network with more than 364,000 people in 136 countries and 137 territories. Across audit and assurance, tax and legal, deals and consulting, we help clients build, accelerate, and sustain momentum. Find out more at www.pwc.com.

PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see www.pwc.com/structure for further details.

© 2025 PwC. All rights reserved.

Contact us



Arijit Chakraborti

Partner
Advisory, One Consulting
PwC India
arijit.chakraborti@pwc.com



Anuradha Gupta

Director
Advisory, One Consulting
PwC India
gupta.anuradha@pwc.com

Contributors

Arijit Chakraborti

Anuradha Gupta

Ayan Bandopadhyay

Sayantana Das

Sagnik Sengupta

Editors

Dion Dsouza

Rashi Gupta

Design

Arun Packirisami

Data Classification: DC0 (Public)

In this document, PwC refers to PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited (a limited liability company in India having Corporate Identity Number or CIN: U74140WB1983PTC036093), which is a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited (PwCIL), each member firm of which is a separate legal entity.

This document does not constitute professional advice. The information in this document has been obtained or derived from sources believed by PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited (PwCPL) to be reliable but PwCPL does not represent that this information is accurate or complete. Any opinions or estimates contained in this document represent the judgment of PwCPL at this time and are subject to change without notice. Readers of this publication are advised to seek their own professional advice before taking any course of action or decision, for which they are entirely responsible, based on the contents of this publication. PwCPL neither accepts or assumes any responsibility or liability to any reader of this publication in respect of the information contained within it or for any decisions readers may take or decide not to or fail to take.

© 2025 PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited. All rights reserved.

AP_November 2025 - M&C 49697

Copyright © 2025 Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). All rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under the copyright reserved, this publication or any part of it may not be translated, reproduced, stored, transmitted in any form (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, audio recording or otherwise) or circulated in any binding or cover other than the cover in which it is currently published, without the prior written permission of CII.

All information, ideas, views, opinions, estimates, advice, suggestions, recommendations (hereinafter 'content') in this publication should not be understood as professional advice in any manner or interpreted as policies, objectives, opinions or suggestions of CII. Readers are advised to use their discretion and seek professional advice before taking any action or decision, based on the contents of this publication. The content in this publication has been obtained or derived from sources believed by CII to be reliable but CII does not represent this information to be accurate or complete. CII does not assume any responsibility and disclaims any liability for any loss, damages, caused due to any reason whatsoever, towards any person (natural or legal) who uses this publication.

This publication cannot be sold for consideration, within or outside India, without express written permission of CII. Violation of this condition of sale will lead to criminal and civil prosecution.

Published by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), The Mantosh Sondhi Centre; 23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110003, India, Tel: +91-11-24629994-7, Fax: +91-11-24626149; Email: info@cii.in; Web: www.cii.in