

Women Entrepreneur India

WOMEN LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE
NOVEMBER, 2023

WOMEN IN BUSINESS



RESHMA VANARSE CHAINANI

CEO, RESHMIKA MINERALS & CHEMICALS

A LEADER IN THE AGROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

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Editor Note



RAPID GROWTH & EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Agriculture is India's backbone. Not only does it provide sustenance to the entire nation but also employs a large majority of Indians.

The sector has experienced rapid growth at an average of 4.6 per cent over the last six years informed the Economic Survey 2022-23. The data also highlighted how India's agriculture sector and its allied activities sector contributed towards country's overall growth, development and food security.

India is also known for exporting agricultural produce to other nations, with export value touching US \$50.2 billion in 2021-22.

The Indian agricultural sector is also aligning with tech trends and needs of modern India. Not only is agritech emerging as a burgeoning industry but India also has the highest number of organic farmers in the world.

Indian agri entrepreneurs and farmers are giving ample importance to growing organic and natural produce that is chemical and pesticide. The emphasis is also on improving soil health and reducing environmentally pollution to ensure sustainable agricultural practices take the lead.

Women entrepreneurs are at the forefront of this evolution. The current edition of Women Entrepreneur India magazine introduces you to a few such prolific women leaders from the agriculture sector.

In this magazine edition meet Lokita Patel, Co-Founder, Farmivore. She is a trailblazing entrepreneur, who has embarked on an unconventional journey of innovative hydroponic farming to bring quality ingredients to restaurants. She envisioned Farmivore as a solution to supply top-quality produce to local restaurants, aiming to elevate the food scene in Chennai to match the standards found in the North.

Next up is Rekha Chandak, CEO, Gropure Organic Farm. Rekha she has been at the helm since its inception, driving the organization's mission to empower farmers and make organic food accessible to all. Her work aligns perfectly with the vision of a healthier and more sustainable future, making her a true inspiration in the realm of Organic Farming.

Another worthy name to be a part of the list is Reshma Vanarse Chainani, CEO of Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals, is a powerful force accelerating the agrochemicals manufacturing space in India through her company, applying her extensive leadership skills.

Bhumika Aggarwal, Founder, FEBC Group is another woman leader redefining the agriculture sector. She is a luminary and a visionary entrepreneur. As the force behind a pioneering horticulture agritech platform, with a strategic mindset and passion for innovation, she bridges industry gaps, provides sustainable solutions, and beyond her tangible achievements, her entrepreneurial journey serves as a beacon of inspiration, lighting the way for budding innovators and business leaders across generations.

Read more about these women leaders and their contributions to India's agriculture sector.

Do let us know your thoughts.

Rachita Sharma
Managing Editor
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UPCOMING
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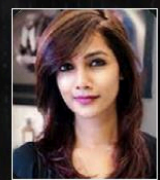
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STATE BANK OF INDIA ERD ADVOCATES 33PERCENT RESERVATION FOR WOMEN BCs



The State Bank of India's Economic Research Department (ERD) is championing a transformative move by recommending a 33% reservation for women business correspondents (BC) to alter India's socio-economic landscape significantly.

The ERD team contends that this strategic initiative can bring in much-needed transparency, with women BC agents being characterized by enhanced patience and a greater willingness to address queries and explain product features.

Highlighting the potential advantages of women BC networks, the ERD report underscores their suitability for serving remote areas, elderly customers, and other under-served demographics. The unique attributes of women BC agents, such as patience and customer-centric approaches, are believed to foster more accessible and customer-friendly financial services.

Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser at SBI, emphasizes the transformative potential of women BCs in promoting financial inclusion and empowering women at the grassroots level.

The recommended move aligns with activities typically undertaken by BCs, including disbursing small-value credit, recovering principal and collecting

interest, managing small-value deposits, and selling various financial products.

This initiative aims to tap into the unique strengths of women agents, fostering a mix of advantages such as encouraging savings among women, onboarding first-time female users, facilitating low-value but high-frequency transactions, and providing doorstep delivery of financial services.

Over the past six years, the ERD points to the success of the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) scheme, showcasing a notable increase in disbursement and deposits per woman. The PMMY scheme, designed to empower women at the grassroots level, has seen disbursement per woman rise to Rs 49,157 and deposits per woman increase to Rs 42,500.

As the ERD pushes for greater representation of women in the financial domain, this initiative not only aligns with the broader goal of financial inclusion but also stands as a testament to the pivotal role women can play in reshaping the landscape of banking and economic development.

The move is poised to empower women, enhance financial services accessibility, and contribute to the larger narrative of gender equality and socio-economic progress in India. [wri](#)

INFOCUS

SREYA FRANCIS SHORTLISTED FOR INTERNATIONAL AI SUMMIT AWARD



Ontario-based Malayali researcher Sreya Francis has been selected for the esteemed 'Alconics Solutions Implementer of the Year' award, presented by the International AI Summit. The recognition highlights her noteworthy contributions to the security aspects of artificial intelligence (AI).

Sreya is among the five accomplished individuals shortlisted from a pool of over 1,000 global entries. The recipient of the award will be determined through public voting during the summit scheduled for December 6 in New York.

At 29, Sreya Francis has carved a niche for herself in artificial intelligence, particularly focusing on its applications for human development. Currently serving as the Technical Innovation Head of Farm Mutual Re, she stands as the sole daughter of Dr M V Francis and Susan Thomas, the Principal of VNSS SN Trusts School in Cherthala.

Sreya's innovative contributions are marked by her adept merging of distributed machine learning, causal machine learning, and blockchain technologies to decentralize AI. Notably, she conceived and implemented the pioneering 'Causal Federated Learning,' a concept embraced by leading research laboratories, including Microsoft Research Laboratory and IBM Research, as well as industries globally.

An alumna of Thrikkakara Model Engineering College, Sreya has actively participated in international conferences, focusing on the safety and security aspects of AI.

Beyond her technical expertise, she has emerged as a mentor for young women in the AI domain and an advocate for electronic data interchange. Sreya's commitment to promoting diversity is reflected in her role as a member of the Equity and Diversity Council at Farm Mutual Re.

The accolades bestowed upon Sreya include the prestigious Microsoft Research Diversity award in both 2020 and 2021. Her research leadership extends to Privacy Preserving Machine Learning at the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithm in Canada.

Furthermore, she has led projects in AI and robotics with industry giants like Wipro, Panasonic AI, and the research and development lab of TATA Elxsi in Japan and India.

The Alconics Solutions Implementer of the Year award serves as a benchmark for industry excellence, acknowledging individuals instrumental in breakthrough innovation and the cutting-edge application of artificial intelligence in business.

Sreya's nomination stands as a testament to her exceptional contributions and commitment to advancing the field of AI, emphasizing its impact on human development and security. [LWR](#)



MEASURES CASHLESS FUTURE: TRENDS & SECURITY IN BFSI

By Karunya Sampath, Co-founder & CEO, of Payoda Technologies.

Karunya Sampath was a leader in the tech space with over a decade of experience at a few reputed Wall Street firms in New York. Karunya worked extensively on various technical roles with product and platform teams at leading global companies. Besides, she has mentored many scores of people at eminent corporate and educational institutions through life skills workshops.

In a conversation with Keerthana, Correspondent, Women Entrepreneur Magazine, Karunya Sampath, co-founder & CEO at Payoda Technologies, shared her views and thoughts on diversity in the cashless world as well as trends and security measures in BFSI.

The financial world is in the midst of a thrilling transformation led by rapid technological advances and changing consumer preferences. One of the most captivating changes is the rise of cashless transactions, sparking the question: are we heading towards a truly cashless society? In this article, we'll explore the fascinating trends reshaping the way we handle financial transactions and delve into the importance of security measures in a cashless economy.

Riding the Digital Payment Wave

Traditional payment methods are undergoing a digital makeover, and it's nothing short of a revolution. The options available to consumers are expanding at an astounding pace. From credit and debit cards to digital wallets and the convenience of contactless payments, it's all about making our lives easier, safer, and more efficient.

The Rise of Digital Wallets & Contactless Payments

Digital wallets have become a prominent player



CASHLESS TRANSACTIONS ARE NOT JUST EFFICIENT; THEY LEAVE A DIGITAL TRAIL, ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS TO TRACK THEIR SPENDING AND MANAGE THEIR FINANCES MORE EFFECTIVELY

in the cashless journey. Imagine linking your bank accounts, credit cards, and even crypto currencies to a single platform for seamless transactions. Providers like Apple Pay, Google Pay, and PayPal have won the hearts of consumers, making payments as simple as a tap on your smart phone.

Contactless payments are no longer the new jargon; it's the technology that is evolving as we are using it. Just a tap of your card or smart phone on a payment terminal, and your transaction is complete. Quick processing times and top-notch security features have pushed cash to the backseat.

COLUMN

10 NOVEMBER
2023

Embracing the Cashless Advantages

The transition to cashless transactions offers a myriad of benefits. Say goodbye to the days of carrying wads of cash in your wallet; it's all about simplifying transactions in our fast-paced world. Digital payment methods are equipped with robust security features like encryption and biometric authentication, reducing the risk of theft and fraud. Moreover, cashless transactions are not just efficient; they leave a digital trail, allowing individuals to track their spending and manage their finances more effectively.

The Cashless Challenge

While the road to a cashless society is paved with potential, it's not without its challenges. Digital exclusion is a real concern, as not everyone has access to the technology required for digital payments. Security worries loom large as cyber threats and data breaches become increasingly common. The heavy reliance on technology poses a risk, as technological failures could grind transactions to a halt. The exchange of personal and financial information in digital transactions also raises privacy and surveillance concerns.

Diversity in the Cashless World

The pace of transition to a cashless society varies based on culture and geography. Factors like technology infrastructure, financial literacy, and regulatory frameworks influence the speed of adoption. Some governments eagerly embrace digital payments, while others approach with caution.

Balancing Tomorrow's Cashless World

Transitioning to a cashless world is an exhilarating journey filled with complexity. Striking the right balance between technological advancement and financial inclusivity is vital. A completely cashless society might not be the ultimate goal. Instead, a hybrid economy that accommodates various preferences and demands may be the way forward.

Security in a Cashless Economy: Safeguarding the Future

As cashless transactions become the norm, the need for robust security measures becomes paramount. With an increasing number of platforms in the banking ecosystem, cyber threats are evolving, presenting a formidable challenge.

PCI DSS Compliance: Ensuring that all financial service players are PCI DSS-compliant is fundamental. The higher the level of certification, the better the security.

Biometric Authentication: Implementing secure authentication methods, preferably biometric authentication, reduce the risk of stolen credentials.

Data Access Controls: Implement strict data access controls, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to sensitive information. Limit access based on roles and responsibilities.

Secure Backup and Disaster Recovery: Establish secure backup and disaster recovery procedures. Regularly back up data and test recovery processes to ensure business continuity in case of security incidents.

Real-time Transaction Monitoring: Implement real-time transaction monitoring to detect and respond to suspicious or fraudulent activities. Unusual patterns or large transactions should trigger alerts for further investigation.



Embracing the Cashless Revolution

In conclusion, the future of cashless transactions in BFSI is indeed a promising one. It's a world marked by convenience, efficiency, and heightened security. However, as we embark on this digital journey, it's essential to remember the critical role of security and a balanced approach that accommodates diverse preferences and potential challenges.

While the path to a cashless society is clear, the details of this exciting journey will be shaped by technological advancements, societal changes, and cultural shifts. With robust security measures and adaptability, we can navigate this transition successfully and build a more inclusive financial future. So, get ready to embrace the cashless revolution, where convenience, efficiency, and security are the currency of the future. [WFI](#)



In the pursuit of excellence, I find my strength in the supreme guidance of the Universe & my family, illuminating my path to enduring success

Women
Entrepreneur ^{India} Top 10
**WOMEN LEADERS
IN AGRICULTURE** 2023

RESHMA VANARSE CHAINANI

CEO, RESHMICA MINERALS & CHEMICALS

COVER STORY

Buoyed by its agricultural richness, India has long positioned itself as the leader in the agriculture sector globally. Still, meeting the demands of a large fragment of the population seems challenging but one industry that is significantly helping build on it and conscientiously boost the graph is 'Agrochemicals'. Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals Pvt. Ltd., is a unique agrochemical manufacturing organization that stands tall here, to leverage the current agriculture opportunities, considering the global population growth, growing importance to protect against crop losses and increase yields, rising consumer demand for sustainably produced food and the role of agrochemicals in tackling climate change.

Reshma Vanarse Chainani, CEO of Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals, is a powerful force accelerating the agrochemicals manufacturing space in India through her company, applying her extensive leadership skills. Let's get to know her in depth.

Tell us about yourself, and specifically what led you to join Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals.

Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals represents a 53-year-old family legacy founded by my visionary father, Sunil Vanarse who is a Chemical Engineer from ICT Mumbai. His innovative approach, immense passion, self-belief, industrious nature, ethics and excellent leadership qualities set a remarkable standard in the business world, inspiring us to follow his trailblazing path. We have gained valuable knowledge from his expertise, shaping my own journey toward success and integrity. As the next-generation entrepreneur in 2020, revitalizing the company with a background in Polymer Engineering from Maharashtra Institute of Technology (Pune) and an ICFAI Diploma in Business Finance, I bring a strong educational foundation to the business alike other technocrats in our organization along with my sister who is a Psychologist. My professional journey includes roles in renowned banking institutions such as Citigroup, BNP Paribas, ANZ Grindlays, ICICI Bank and the SME division of Citibank in Singapore. This diverse experience has equipped me with financial expertise, allowing me to understand the business from various angles.

I also furthered my education by enrolling in a one-year program at SP Jain College under the Women's Management program for family businesses. I also attended workshops and courses at IIM Ahmedabad focused on family businesses and leadership skills. Through these experiences, I realized my potential to handle client management and business growth, eventually leading me to consider the role of Group CEO. Business acumen runs in our family and with the guidance of experienced mentors Reshmika has been navigating promisingly.

What are some of the most critical challenges you encounter as an entrepreneur? What steps do you undertake to overcome these roadblocks?

Certainly, as an entrepreneur, I face various challenges with the constant market competition and financial uncertainties, concerning timely payments. Despite these challenges our company maintains ethical practices, ensuring no job losses during the COVID times and timely payments to vendors. We realize that change is the only constant and embrace it with upgradation and modifications required in our systems and processes. We have training programs for safety and conduct regular audits and have all the desired safety equipment and protocols in place.

In today's competitive and regulated market, adhering to ethical business conduct and being a zero effluent discharge agrochemical company is challenging. However, Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals, as an environmentally conscious company effectively does this by offering niche products, producing zero liquid effluents and recycling materials.

How do you align yourself and your team with the evolving industry and technology trends?

Recognizing the enduring importance of technology, we have partnered with organizations like NEETI to stay updated on industry advancements. We maintain strong communication channels between our head office in Pune and both the factories (Gujarat and Talegaon) through various modes of communication. Regular weekly meetings with team members are conducted to monitor production, quality control, assess working capital, address monthly needs and challenges, growth prospects & development. This information is meticulously tracked through our Management Information System (MIS) database

How has Reshmika's growth journey been over the past six years? What are some key milestones the company has achieved so far?

Having originated in Pune under the name of Vansum Industries in 1970 and later expanding with the addition of an ancillary unit, in Talegaon under the name of

Kemtech Solutions in 1995, Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals celebrated its 13th anniversary this year. Thriving as a pivotal and reliable agrochemical manufacturing intermediate company, providing essential raw materials to industry leaders like Indofil and UPL, our mission is to revolutionize the Chemical Industry through disruptive innovation, and at the same time maintain the ecosystem of environmental protection & corporate governance to enhance the agricultural sector. As a leading supplier, we take pride in delivering a seamless customer experience through our high-quality products. Despite challenges faced during our expansion from Maharashtra to Gujarat, our bold move paid off significantly, leading to a substantial doubling of production in 2021 after the COVID pandemic. This milestone marked the beginning of a prosperous growth trajectory, transitioning from a low business cycle to a high-growth phase.

What has been your success mantra or guiding leadership philosophy?

Leadership is an ongoing journey, often presenting challenges. I continuously push my personal boundaries for self-growth through education and try to maintain confidence as I strive to meet industry standards. My goal is to establish an environment of enhanced work culture and operational efficiency. I believe at the same time to being firmly grounded & humble and grateful for the opportunity being given by my family to shoulder the responsibility of a good leader. I am dedicated to delivering my best, guided by the wisdom of my educated business family and my well-equipped team.

Any advice for aspiring women entrepreneurs or business leaders?

Follow your passion with a belief and vision that you will be successful. Nothing comes easy, hence even if you don't succeed at times, just take it as a lesson and keep trying until you succeed. The women should use their inner power of Shakti, Bhakti and Yukti to reach the pinnacle of success at the same time maintaining the softer emotional side to strike a balance to lead from the front. [WFI](#)



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 VANTAGE
POINT

TALENTED INDIAN FEMALE ACTORS WHO ALSO MOONLIGHT AS SUCCESSFUL PRODUCERS

Indian Female actors are widely popular for a variety of reasons, including their talent, beauty, and the fact that they are often portrayed in glamorous and aspirational roles in Indian cinema. They are proving themselves even on global stages. The talent of Indian actresses is one of the main elements of their appeal. They have a spark in singing, dancing, acting, and whatever role they are playing which puts a great impact on the minds of their audiences and fanbase.

Apart from being famous personalities for their acting skills, they have also gained popularity for their notable activities. Some of them are great climate activists, some have performed the role to educate society, some have performed the roles of real-life heroes who have made the nation proud, some of them even run campaigns for good causes whereas some have turned out to be great producers who have their production labels.

Here are the top six young female actors who have also showcased their talent as successful producers. These actors are redefining the gender norms in the Indian film industry and churning out unique movies.

Anushka Sharma

Popular Bollywood actress, Anushka Sharma has produced a number of blockbuster movies under her production company named Clean Slate Filmz. She has produced movies such as NH10, Phillauri, Pari, and Bulbul. She is among the most talented and well-experienced artists in the industry. Anushka founded the production company along with her brother Karnesh Sharma in 2013. In an interview, she mentioned about her love of filmmaking and the value of creating meaningful content. As a producer, she

aims to encourage and promote female talent in front of and behind the camera. The majority of films showcase strong female roles that have been directed by women like Prosit Roy, Anvita Dutt, and Konkona Sen Sharma.

Deepika Padukone

One of India's highest-paid actresses, Deepika Padukone established her production company, KA Productions in 2018 with the aim of making films that strongly focus on content that has a positive social impact. The first film that Deepika produced under her production label is Chhapaak, which portrays the story of an acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal. She is moving forward to break the boundaries in Indian cinema to explore new forms of storytelling. She even worked for those films which handle social issues and promotes diversity and inclusivity. Along with Chhapaak, she also produced the film, '83, which revolves around the life of the former captain of the Indian National Cricket team, Kapil Dev.

Priyanka Chopra

The well-known Bollywood actress, Desi Girl of Bollywood who has been widely popular in the Hollywood industry as well, Priyanka Chopra has also produced a number of films and television programmes under her production company named, Purple Pebble Pictures. She produced many films such as The Sky is Pink, The White Tiger, Pahuna: The Little Visitors, and Ventilator. With the purpose to support new talent and showcase regional Indian Cinema, she founded her production company Purple Pebble Pictures in 2015. Priyanka has been a strong supporter of women's rights and women's empowerment. She has utilized this platform to raise awareness about the topics which



concern society including domestic violence, gender inequality, and mental health.

Dia Mirza

Renowned Bollywood actress, Dia Mirza who acquires the title of Miss Asia Pacific has also produced a number of films under her production banner, Born Free Entertainment in 2011. Movies like Love Breakups Zindagi and Bobby Jasoos and the highly anticipated web series Kaafir are produced under her label. Along with her ex-husband Sahil Sangha, she founded her own production company. Dia is mostly dedicated to supporting socially conscious and relevant stories being a producer. Topics such as gender equality, environmental conservation, and social justice revolve around her films and web series.

Along with being such a talented actor and producer, Dia is an active environmentalist. She has been serving as a climate activist for several years. She actively promotes sustainable living and has taken part in numerous campaigns. She is also the UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador. Dia has contributed to several other humanitarian issues such as the Girl Rising campaign, which supports the empowerment and education of females.

Alia Bhatt

One of Bollywood's most promising young actress, Alia Bhatt is widely popular for the energetic roles she played. She started her production company named Eternal Sunshine Productions in 2015. She started this production label along with her mother Soni Razdan. Her company aims to create films that are both artistically challenging and commercially successful. Alia produced her first film which was a musical drama with a predominantly female cast and crew Darlings. Jasmeet K. Reen is the director of the film along with the cast Alia Bhatt herself as the main protagonist, Shefali Shah, Vijay Varma, and Roshan Mathew.

Twinkle Khanna

Twinkle Khanna is well known for her skills in interior design, she is an author and an actor. She is the wife of legendary actor, Akshay Kumar. She launched her production company named Mrs. Funnybones in 2016 and released its debut movie, "Padman" which stars Radhika Apte, Sonam Kapoor, and Akshay Kumar. The movie was based on a true story of a social activist and inventor of an affordable sanitary pad manufacturing machine, Arunachalam Muruganatham.



IN

**THE TAPESTRY
OF AGRICULTURE,
WOMEN ARE THE VIBRANT
THREADS WEAVING
TOGETHER PROSPERITY,
EQUALITY, AND A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**



**Women
Entrepreneur**
India Top 10
**WOMEN LEADERS
IN AGRICULTURE** 2023

Sowing Seeds of Leadership in Agriculture

Women leaders in the real estate industry in Asia have made significant strides in recent years, breaking Women leaders in agriculture play a pivotal role in shaping the industry and driving sustainable development. Historically marginalized, women have increasingly emerged as trailblazers, breaking barriers in a sector traditionally dominated by men. Their contributions extend beyond the fields, influencing policies, fostering innovation, and championing inclusivity. They are indispensable agents of change, reshaping the landscape with their expertise and determination. Their multifaceted contributions encompass productivity, community development, entrepreneurship, and policy advocacy. As the agricultural sector evolves, acknowledging and supporting the role of women is essential for creating a more sustainable and equitable future.

Plowing Progress, Planting Leadership

In many regions, women are the backbone of agricultural production, actively involved in crop cultivation, livestock management, and agribusiness. Women's leadership in agriculture is characterized by a holistic approach, incorporating traditional knowledge with modern practices for improved yields and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, women leaders are catalysts for community development. They often initiate and participate in cooperative farming ventures, fostering collaboration among farmers. This cooperative spirit not only enhances productivity but also strengthens social bonds, creating a supportive network within rural communities. In the realm of agribusiness, women entrepreneurs are making significant strides. From establishing farmers' markets to launching organic food ventures, these leaders contribute to economic growth while promoting environmentally friendly practices. Their ventures often prioritize local and sustainable agriculture, aligning with global efforts to address food security and climate change. Through their activism, women push for policies that promote equal access to resources, credit, and education. Their advocacy also emphasizes the recognition of women's rights in land ownership, a critical aspect of empowering women in agriculture.

In this issue, the **Women Entrepreneur** magazine brings a list of **'Top 10 Women Leaders in Agriculture – 2023'**, who are domineers of change in the corporate realm of the country. This list of ten leading and inspiring women is crafted by a team of CEOs, VCs, and the editorial board, delivering inspiring stories of their journey and the contributions & roles played by them in the creation and empowerment of an economically powerful nation.



Women
Entrepreneur ^{Top 10}
India
**WOMEN LEADERS
IN AGRICULTURE** 2023

Akhila Vijayaraghavan Founder & Director

Parna Farms
Coimbatore
parnafarms.com

A vibrant leader with expertise in environmental consultancy over a decade, specialising in ESG, waste management, water efficiency and corporate governance

Archana Stalin Founder

Bhoominalam myHarvest Farms
Chennai
myharvestfarms.com

An innovative leader passionate about grassroots impact & sustainability, skilled in public speaking, empathy mapping, marketing, IT and GIS based services & solutions

Bhumika Aggarwal Founder

Urbot
Delhi
urbot.in

A pioneering leader with a background in finance and technology, expertise in strategic, B2B services, consumer and business markets within the horticulture sector

Krishi Janani Founder & CEO

Krishi Janani
Tiruppur
krishijanani.org

An agriculture professional expertise is in architecting sustainable, culture-specific, and locally-appropriate technology solutions in resource constrained environments

TOP 10 WOMEN LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE - 2023

Lokita Patel Co-Founder

Farmivore
Chennai
farmivore.in

A trailblazing entrepreneur having expertise in the hydroponic farming field, specializing in management, finance, investment management and agri-preneurship

Rajul Patkar Co-Founder & CEO

Soilsens
Mumbai
soilsens.com

An interactive leader with over a decade of experience in the technology and agricultural field, skilled in soil testing, weather testing and more

Rekha Chandak CEO

Gropure Organic Farm
Pune
gropureorganic.com

A visionary leader in the organic food revolution and focused on making organic food readily accessible to everyone, aligning with the vision of a healthier and more sustainable future

Reshma Vanarse Chainani CEO

Reshmika Minerals & Chemicals
Pune
reshmika.com

A prominent leader having extensive experience in banking and agrochemical industry, specializing in finance, management, business development and more

Sambavi T R Founder

Lefi Agro
Chennai
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Women
Entrepreneur ^{Top 10}
India

**WOMEN LEADERS
IN AGRICULTURE** 2023



BHUMIKA AGGARWAL

PIONEERING HORTICULTURE AGRI
TECH FOR ULTIMATE GARDENING
SOLUTIONS

BHUMIKA AGGARWAL FOUNDER URBOT

Bhumika Aggarwal is a luminary and a visionary entrepreneur. As the force behind a pioneering horticulture agritech platform, with a strategic mindset and passion for innovation, she bridges industry gaps, provides sustainable solutions, and Beyond her tangible achievements, her entrepreneurial journey serves as a beacon of inspiration, lighting the way for budding innovators and business leaders across generations.

In the thriving landscape of entrepreneurship, women have emerged as catalysts of innovation and change, reshaping industries and inspiring generations despite societal constraints. Among these achievers stands Bhumika Aggarwal, a visionary entrepreneur whose journey from societal expectations to entrepreneurial triumph exemplifies the spirit of women's entrepreneurship.

With a background in finance and technology, Bhumika pursued entrepreneurship strategically, motivated by a profound interest in making significant contributions to the economy. Her motivation was deeply rooted in understanding larger societal needs and contributing to both her company and the broader community. It was this passion and vision that gave birth to URBOT—a pioneering horticulture tech platform, serving as a one-stop solution for all garden and landscaping needs. Bhumika identified critical gaps in both consumer and business markets, particularly within the horticulture sector and embarked on a mission to bridge these gaps through URBOT. Through her innovative approach, she not only nurtured a thriving business but also sowed the seeds of inspiration for generations to come.

What are some important facets of your life and professional journey?



I come from an entrepreneurial family, but societal expectations and traditional values limited my aspirations as a female entrepreneur. Overcoming family restrictions was my first challenge. Despite pressure to conform, I pursued my ambitions, excelling academically and securing a job. However, I realized this wasn't my true calling. Breaking free from family constraints, I embraced creativity and ambition, launching a technology company. The mission of the company extends beyond personal success; we aim to create opportunities, provide employment, and remove barriers for others. It's not just about my journey; it's about paving the way for a brighter future for everyone.

Tell us about your education and industry experience.

My academic foundation is in business and mathematics, subjects I passionately pursued and excelled in. Keen to gain a deeper insight into the economic fabric, I undertook economic honours at GGSIP, an institution renowned for its pragmatic approach.

A competitive spirit has always been an integral part of my persona. Much of this drive is inspired by a playful rivalry, a constant endeavour to surpass my father in achievements. Professionally, I have a strong footing in both finance and technology. My stint as a data scientist equipped me with invaluable industry insights. When I look at entrepreneurship, it's through

a lens honed by these experiences and a strategic mindset. My tenure in multifaceted roles in two startups imparted me with knowledge of corporate alignment and instilled in me confidence.

What is the motive behind establishing URBOT? What sets your horticulture services apart?

URBOT is an agritech platform specializing in horticulture that bridges the gap between manufacturers, vendors, and consumers via an e-commerce marketplace. By offering manufacturers insights into consumer preferences and demand for their most preferred products, URBOT addresses the industry's analytical shortcomings.

URBOT offers an integrated platform where consumers can easily book gardeners and landscapers for their projects. Beyond this, the platform prioritizes consumer education, ensuring they make informed purchasing decisions while advocating for a greener and more sustainable approach. Additionally, URBOT not only fuels employment prospects but also elevates the living standards of gardeners and nurseries while supporting an environmentally responsible lifestyle.

For manufacturers, our offerings stretch beyond the typical to include B2B services. We have incorporated an analytics dashboard that provides manufacturers with key insights to understand their market performance and optimize their strategies. We also provide sales and product dashboards that

distribution. We are integrating a wallet system into our platform; from this, they can manage financial transactions seamlessly.

What major challenges do you face, and how do you overcome them?

In the bustling startup landscape, my dedication to employee well-being, especially in training newcomers, has yielded positive outcomes. Yet, being a young female entrepreneur possess distinct challenges. Financial hurdles, constituting 70 to 80 percent of my obstacles, coupled with age and gender biases, complicate building credibility. As a pioneer in the field, I've navigated the complexities of innovation, partnerships, and facing uncertainties, and rejection, all while maintaining a positive outlook.

These challenges have become invaluable lessons in resilience and determination.

How do you adapt to industry and tech trends?

My strategy for staying aligned with industry and tech trends involves fostering a culture of openness and collaboration within our team. We value every team member's contribution, holding regular workshops to facilitate active discussions and idea exchange. Our commitment to transparency enables team members to voice any concerns and suggest possible alternatives, thus ensuring everyone's understanding of our daily operations. We maintain constant communication using digital platforms to share new articles, ideas, and information about the latest industry updates.

Our Upcoming e-commerce platforms will be equipped with the latest technology features such as AR and AI, plus analytical tools for monitoring content and marketing strategies. These advanced additions not only keep us at the forefront of our industry but also equip us with adaptability and competitiveness in a rapidly advancing business environment.

What significant milestones has URBOT achieved throughout?

Our core emphasis is on technological progression, fine-tuning algorithms, and enhancing operational efficiency. With the creation of a transparent platform that connects over 50 local manufacturers to consumers, we've given a digital boost to small businesses. Furthermore, we're innovating by introducing a distinctive lens system for visualizing

plants and planters. Additionally, we're augmenting our in-house GPT capabilities with lens features to offer interactive educational materials, thereby enriching user understanding of products and plant care.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS NOT JUST ABOUT CREATING A BUSINESS; IT'S ABOUT CRAFTING A VISION, STRATEGIZING WITH PURPOSE, & LEAVING AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC CANVAS

We've developed a robust service ecosystem akin to service-offering platforms, connecting users with gardeners and landscapers for prompt services in Delhi, with plans for expansion into Bangalore and other metropolitan cities. Despite our recognition, including being honoured as one of the top 10 female leaders in agriculture and earning the title of the most trusted brand in 2023, our drive remains strong. Moreover, we have been recognised as a pioneering brand in the industry.

What's your guiding success mantra?

My business philosophy, inspired by my father's wisdom, emphasizes finding immediate solutions without overthinking problems. I lead by example, engaging in all aspects of the business to ensure my team feels supported. Rather than pursuing materialistic goals, I focus on creating significant pathways for others' success, promoting personal and collective growth while providing opportunities for everyone. [WFI](#)



SIGNIFICANCE OF PEER LEARNING FOR BUDDING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

By: Sneha Redla, Vice President, Aarvee Associates

Sneha has been working as a VP at Aarvee Associates (Construction Industry) for 13 years. She brings in exceptional knowledge in Railways, Project Management, Operations, Structural Engineering, New Business Development, People Management, Process Improvement and more.

Stepping into the leadership of any form is a rewarding yet isolating process. Every day is spent strategizing, firefighting and multitasking - and I know that most people who embark on the journey love it and even thrive on it. While in general, I don't subscribe to assessing or making allowances for women leaders based on their gender, it is a reality that we live with every day. There will always be a few different battles that women fight as compared to our male peers. I think that a lot of the limitations that we women set for ourselves in the isolation of our subconscious are what we have been conditioned to every single day of our existence. Even if we have been raised equally to our male siblings the sheer amount of biased content that one is exposed to unknowingly seeps into our thinking. They are so in-built that it doesn't even occur to us to question that thinking.

The fact that this conditioning exists - in every ad, movie joke, and even casual conversation - only occurred to me when some of my male peers gave significantly matter-of-fact simple solutions to my hard-coded self-



THE ABILITY TO REFLECT INWARDS AND SHARE THOSE THOUGHTS WITH A NONJUDGMENTAL GROUP THAT UNDERSTANDS YOUR STRUGGLE

limiting beliefs. Once that moment of epiphany occurred - there is no limit to our ability to handle things. Being part of organizations that give access to peers from similar leadership positions and having an ecosystem to promote structured peer-based learning is what helped open my thinking. We all grow up with friends who share our past, interests, and values. But once we step into a leadership role, there will come a degree of separation that will come about in the closest of friendships because they might not understand the frustration

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of something as fundamental as lack of ownership towards work. It is in this mindset that I was exposed to a peer-learning setup.

A peer-learning group is essentially a group of people who are alike in terms of the role that they occupy professionally but come from diverse business industries. This group meets periodically and reflects on their state of mind and issues both professionally and personally. It is a structured and confidential interaction where the members can develop mutual trust and respect to open up over time. The more diverse the group the richer the learning and wisdom it brings to the members. As part of an Ascent all India trust group, my co-members come from across the country, age groups, and industries.

In the daily grind of work, we rarely take time out to think about what has happened and what we want to happen in the future, and how we feel about it. It is just this practice that gives us the most learning – the ability to reflect inwards and share those thoughts with a nonjudgmental group that understands your struggle. The structured reflection process not only allows you to pause and assess where you are at this point but also helps you find those little victories that need to be celebrated and issues that you keep parking month on month. It is these small finds that add tremendous value in opening up your ability to handle things. While all of us attend training sessions and read help books – our access to best practices expands exponentially as we are now able to tap into a

whole group's learning, reading, and experiences with the added footnotes of implementation hacks and customizations that work.

Being in a diverse peer group also gives you the ability to deep dive into a completely unrelated industry and perhaps find some learning that you could retrofit to use in your business. Frankly, the possibilities are endless. As women, we do tend to bring different perspectives to the table. We do have different life experiences after all. Having this perspective to think differently, connect differently to an issue, being more inclusive of everyone – just because we have been doing it every day of our lives, makes women absolute rockstars. We have a lot to offer to the world if only we start participating a little more. For me having this support system where my unique perspective is received and appreciated gives me way more confidence to be assertive in my every endeavor.

Bottom line - we realize that we all battle with the same problem in one way or the other. Firstly, it is reassuring that we are not alone and secondly, we get a whole group to bounce ideas with. What worked or hasn't worked for one becomes a learning lesson for the rest of the group. This peer group is hard-wired to help you succeed. While all we do is share stories and listen to others' stories, we are building a friendship around the driftwood fire that will support us in moments of doubt, give clarity in moments of confusion, and essential be your companions on the journey of leadership. [W3](#)



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**WOMEN LEADERS
IN AGRICULTURE** 2023

LOKITA PATEL

HARVESTING DREAMS OF
GOOD, QUALITY FOOD

LOKITA PATEL CO-FOUNDER FARMIVORE

Lokita, a trailblazing entrepreneur, has embarked on an unconventional journey of innovative hydroponic farming to bring quality ingredients to restaurants.



**WE ARE PASSIONATE
ABOUT MAKING
PREMIUM-QUALITY,
PESTICIDE-FREE
PRODUCE EASILY
ACCESSIBLE**

Across generations, talented women have long found their potential confined within the walls of their homes. Lokita witnessed this first-hand in the lives of her mother and grandmother, whose abilities seemed restrained compared to the opportunities available to the men in their lives. This disparity disturbed Lokita, wanting her to challenge these norms and break down the barriers holding women back. This is not the only shield she defied but also chose several educational and professional paths that diverged from the conventional route. Lokita Patel's journey is a fascinating blend of unexpected turns and purposeful choices. A journey from finance professional to agri-preneurship, let's hear more from the woman herself.

Take us through your educational and professional journey in brief.

Growing up, I was brilliant academically but I opted for commerce in college, which surprised many as they expected me to lean towards the sciences. I knew that accountancy wasn't my cup of tea, so I switched to international business management, where I found a passion for French. I took several courses in French mastering the language to such an extent that I would often say that I spoke it better than my mother tongue. I didn't continue with being a foreign language teacher

or translator and pursued CFA because I thought success was all about making big bucks to me.

I realized practical experience was crucial, so I participated in a program for women in investment, which landed me an internship at a major hedge fund in Bombay. Despite enjoying the work, the long hours and subtle biases against women in the corporate world made me reassess my priorities. It became clear that money wasn't as vital as family and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Though I excelled in investment management, I made a choice to step back. It's crucial for me to find balance between work and life, and the corporate setting didn't quite align with that. Finally, when I moved to Chennai after getting married, my husband and I together established Farmivore in the hydroponics segment of agriculture.

What's the reason behind your shift from a corporate career to entrepreneurship?

Sure, the shift primarily stemmed from a genuine belief that I could make a more meaningful impact by investing my efforts and time into my own pursuits. Moreover, a significant factor influencing the transition was my fundamental principle of contributing to society. While it might sound cliché, it's a guiding principle in my life. Entrepreneurship allows me to contribute in a way I couldn't in a corporate job, whether by hiring directly from the community, raising awareness, or serving as an inspirational figure for others to aspire to. So, that, in essence, fueled my move from a lucrative corporate role to an entrepreneurial path.

What inspired the establishment of Farmivore, please introduce us to the company?"

Farmivore is a hydroponics farm located in Chennai. We came up with the idea after my recent move from Pune to Chennai due to marriage. I've always cherished good food and spending time with family. The shift in culinary experiences from Pune to Chennai was substantial, leading me to question the food I ate and its sourcing. Conversations with chefs in Chennai revealed a prevalent issue with sourcing high-quality ingredients locally. Farming around Chennai is limited to paddy which means the all of the city's fruits and vegetables come from either Coimbatore or Bangalore. Even something as basic as coriander is not grown locally. The long hours of transit takes a toll on the produce. Whether in a five-star hotel or a tiny café, chefs faced challenges with ingredient quality.

I, along with my husband, sought to address this gap. We envisioned Farmivore as a solution to supply top-quality produce to local restaurants, aiming to elevate the food scene in Chennai to match the standards found in the North.

What are the challenges that you encountered on your way?

One of the main challenges we faced was making our hydroponics farm affordable. Although the technology is well established in the West, in India, the high capital cost for setting up this type of farm posed a significant hurdle. To overcome this, we extensively researched how others established their farms. By tweaking various technologies, we managed to set up our farm at a significantly lower cost, about 30 percent of what others quoted. This took several months of understanding and implementing changes to ensure our costs remained low. Additionally, our farm specializes in providing produce to organic stores, restaurants, and specifically South Korean products in Chennai, growing greens that have cultural importance to our South Korean clients living in the city.



Any advice for aspiring women entrepreneurs?

From my point of view, women are often seen as caretakers while men are expected to be providers. Young entrepreneurs, especially women, put tremendous effort into their work but sometimes at the cost of personal life. I've seen successful entrepreneurs struggle when their personal lives suffered. My advice to women entrepreneurs like myself is to strive for a balanced life, giving your all to your work but not at the expense of your personal well-being. This is a major reason why I shifted from a corporate to an entrepreneurial path. [WFI](#)



IMPACT OF MENTORSHIP AND NETWORKING ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

By Revathi Raghunath, Chief Marketing Officer at Randstad India

Revathi Raghunath, leveraging two decades of diverse sales and marketing leadership, is dedicated to harmonizing Randstad India's localized growth strategies aligned with Randstad's vision of emerging as the most specialized and equitable talent company in the world. On a personal front, Revathi passionately works towards ensuring menstrual hygiene awareness and accessibility in marginalized communities.

In an exclusive interaction with Women Entrepreneur recently, Revathi shared her insights on various aspects pertaining to gender equality and empowering women in society. Below are excerpts from the exclusive interview:

The key challenges that women face in today's society when it comes to empowerment

The 2023 World Economic Forum gender gap report reveals a global gender gap of 68.4 Percent, while the top 10 countries have achieved 80 Percent gender parity. Among 146 participating countries, India has progressed to 127th place from 135th the previous year, particularly in education enrollment parity. However, given the current pace, it will take the world 131 years and India 149 years to achieve full gender parity. To expedite this progress, there are three crucial dimensions of empowerment: social, education, and economic.

Social empowerment is paramount, encompassing women's freedom to make choices related to family, health, marriage, and finances. Deep-rooted social inequalities persist, impacting women's health, early

childbirth, and marriage. Despite some progress, issues like anemia and menstrual hygiene persist, affecting young girls. Additionally, early marriages continue, leaving women isolated as they age, with limited policies to address their needs.

Education empowerment provides agency and meaningful choices. While India's literacy rate for women is 79 Percent compared to 84.7 Percent for men, low education completion rates limit women's entry into the formal workforce. Only 2 out of 5 girls complete 10 years of education, reflecting social challenges.

Economic empowerment translates education and social progress into practical outcomes. Women's roles in informal sectors, managing childcare and family needs, significantly impact the economy. Barriers like gender pay gaps, occupational segregation, and biases persist, limiting women's economic opportunities.

Addressing these dimensions is pivotal for India's gender parity journey. Empowering women socially, through education, and economically can accelerate progress and contribute to a more inclusive society and thriving economy.

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Policies or initiatives are necessary to promote gender equality and empower women in society

Promoting gender equality and empowering women is a vital step towards reaping the gender dividend, particularly significant for India amid its demographic shift. With a burgeoning working-age population of 1.04 billion by 2030, India's focus on the gender dividend is crucial.

The first step involves education, ensuring equitable access and retention of girls till they successfully complete higher secondary. Education also includes access to skill development programs that equip women with relevant expertise for employment. Economic inclusion demands initiatives addressing gender disparities in the labor market, as well as, policies fostering entrepreneurship, formalizing industries that are largely women-led (for e.g. handicrafts), and ensuring pay equity. In the formal sector, enabling women's leadership and encouraging their involvement in decision-making processes is essential.

Legal reforms must protect women's rights and counter discriminatory practices. Healthcare accesses, especially reproductive and mental health, are areas that require immediate attention and improvement. While social support and safety measures are necessary, engaging men as allies, sharing care giving

responsibilities, and altering societal norms are pivotal. Finally, empowering disabled women within the workforce folds is an imperative focus.

Gender-disaggregated data is paramount for informed policymaking. All these measures collectively foster gender equality and women's empowerment, yielding a transformative gender and demographic dividend.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS MUST ALSO EQUIP WOMEN WITH RELEVANT EXPERTISE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Mentorship and networking programs contribute to women's empowerment and career advancement

Addressing the disparity of female representation in leadership roles is essential. The lack of diversity is

rooted in issues like pay inequity and advancement barriers. Effective mentorship and networking programs are crucial solutions. Research reveals that employees with mentors are promoted five times more often and feel empowered, boosting confidence. Women specifically benefit by gaining access to role models, fostering self-esteem, and creating a sense of belonging. Such programs counter isolation felt in male-dominated fields, nurturing a supportive community. Mentorship also provides access to opportunities and resources, aiding career growth. Crucially, it empowers women to advocate for themselves, addressing the gender pay gap and encouraging salary negotiation. In essence, mentorship guides women in developing domain skills, soft skills, and leadership competencies for a successful career path. The implementation of structured mentorship and networking programs holds immense potential for participants and organizations alike, driving positive change toward equality and inclusivity.



Promote a more inclusive and diverse workplace culture to empower women

Indian corporations are embracing a deliberate effort to enhance gender diversity within their workforce. Recognizing the value of diverse teams, companies are implementing initiatives like flexible work arrangements and mentorship programs to foster innovation and engagement. Notably, the number of firms with formal programs for returning and second-career women has risen to 75 Percent, a significant improvement from 30 Percent in 2016. Leadership roles for women have also expanded due to legislative

mandates, with about 47 Percent of top 500 companies having multiple women directors. To sustain progress, companies are advised to document their equality strategies, foster ally ship, address pay disparities, tackle bias in hiring, and normalize inclusive policies. Ultimately, prioritizing gender diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels will drive women's upward mobility and contribute to organizational success.



Steps can be taken to break down societal stereotypes and biases that hinder women's progress and limit their choices

Societal stereotypes have cast shadows on gender-based roles, impacting hiring, promotions, and opportunities for women. Unequal pay is rooted in undervaluing traditionally female-dominated roles, hindering self confidence and ability to negotiate higher pay. Safe environments are pivotal; speaking up should be encouraged without fear. Clear policies on workplace safety need to be coupled with enforcing accountability at all levels. Support groups like Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), and communities at the workplace to combat marginalization will also help break stereotypes. Biases tied to color and race must be confronted to ensure fair hiring and equitable opportunities for growth. . By addressing these stereotypes, recognizing biases and fostering transparent communication, organizations can reshape workplaces and contribute to alleviate social prejudices. [WFI](#)



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REKHA CHANDAK A VISIONARY LEADER IN THE ORGANIC FOOD REVOLUTION

REKHA CHANDAK CEO GROPURE ORGANIC FARM

Rekha Chandak is the CEO of Gropure Organic Farm, she has been at the helm since its inception, driving the organization's mission to empower farmers and make organic food accessible to all. Her work aligns perfectly with the vision of a healthier and more sustainable future, making her a true inspiration in the realm of Organic Farming.



ORGANIC FARMING IS KNOWN FOR ITS HEAVY RELIANCE ON MANUAL LABOR & WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO RURAL EMPLOYMENT

Organic Food has gained significant popularity among health-conscious consumers, driven by a growing demand for clean, chemical-free, and sustainable food options. In this context, Rekha Chandak, CEO of Gropure Organic Farm stands out as a prominent leader in this field. Her remarkable journey commenced with the realization that the most effective way to ensure the quality and purity of organic products was to deliver them directly to consumers, bypassing the interference of middlemen. This realization gave birth to 'Gropure Organic' a platform that provides convenient access for individuals to purchase Organic Groceries. Rekha Chandak, a graduate of Delhi University, is not only a genuine food enthusiast but also deeply committed to environmental sustainability. As the founder, Rekha has played a pivotal role in empowering farmers and making organic food readily accessible to everyone, aligning with the vision of a healthier and more sustainable future. Know more from Rekha Chandak, CEO of Gropure Organic in the below interview snippets.

Could you please provide a brief overview of your educational history and previous industry experience?

I come from a modest lower middle-class family that faced financial challenges, even during my early years. I

completed my undergraduate studies at Delhi University. Nevertheless, I was a diligent learner and had a keen sense of observation with Sharp Business Acumen.

What inspired you to establish Gropure Organic Farming? Please share the core concept behind your enterprise and its primary areas of expertise.

My spouse and I were determined to ensure that our loved ones had access to uncontaminated food. While my husband held a high-ranking position in the automobile industry, he fully supported this initiative. In early 2016, we embarked on a quest to find suitable land for our organic farming venture, eventually locating a property near Pune, which had become our home. By 2017, it became apparent that this endeavor had significant potential to benefit society and generate economic viability. Gropure Organic's primary focus has been on Organic Farming and the sale of its produce.



In your perspective, what are the most significant challenges you face as an entrepreneur, and what strategies do you employ to surmount these obstacles?

Our initial major challenge was the realization that farming could only be economically sustainable when conducted on a large scale. Large land holdings and substantial capital were prerequisites for this. After consulting with my spouse, who also became my co-founder, we

made the strategic decision to expand our operations to Madhya Pradesh. This expansion proved to be a pivotal moment, as it allowed us to grow rapidly, thanks to the availability of more affordable and less contaminated land in that region.

How do you ensure that you and your team stay in sync with the ever-evolving industry and technological advancements?

Organic farming is known for its heavy reliance on manual labor, and we take pride in our significant contribution to rural employment, with a particular focus on empowering women. We leverage technology across various aspects of our operations. For instance, we employ drones to efficiently apply naturally produced plant nutrition over large sections of our farms. Additionally, we are actively using farm-based sensors to monitor soil moisture and temperature. Moreover, we are in the process of implementing technology that involves embedding RFID chips in high-value plantations to maintain complete traceability.

What has been the trajectory of Gropure's growth in the past six years, and could you highlight some significant achievements along the way?

In 2022, we achieved a major milestone by expanding our farming operations to cover more than 500 acres of land across multiple operational sites. Presently, we are actively engaged in our second phase of expansion, aiming to procure an additional 2000 acres of land for farming with the support of investors, with this goal set to be realized within the next 12 to 18 months. We have developed a unique approach to involve like-minded investors who can invest in small land parcels of just 5 acres and start earning a consistent, tax-free income. We invite anyone interested in investing in the highly profitable field of Organic Farming and generating tax-free agricultural income to connect with us. If you share our passion for providing chemical-free food to your family and want to contribute to the protection of our environment, we encourage you to reach out to us.

What principles or leadership philosophy have guided your success as a business leader?

I believe the key to achieving success is having a passionate drive coupled with a clear sense of direction. Another crucial element for success is maintaining one's happiness. If you can master the art of happiness, everything else falls into place. [WTA](#)



CURRENT TRENDS IN THE INDIAN HEALTHCARE, PHARMA & NUTRACEUTICAL SPACE

By Rajat Mittal Shah, Co-founder & Executive Director, Nutriventia

Holding an MBA in Marketing, Strategy & Entrepreneurship from Southern Methodist University - Cox School of Business and a Certificate of Achievement in Pharmacology from Harvard Medical School, Rajat joined Inventia in 2012 and is also the co-founder of two companies - In knowledge and Nutriventia. Additionally, she is also a Global Liaison for Women in Nutraceuticals for India.

Women Entrepreneur recently got a chance to interact with Rajat, wherein she shared her insights on the current healthcare, pharma & nutraceuticals market, along with her journey so far as a woman leader. Below are the excerpts of the exclusive interview -

What are the most significant technology trends emerging in 2023 that are poised to change the business world?

Any discussion pertaining to emerging tech trends in current times will never be complete without AI taking-up a majority of the part in it. Such is the magnitude at which the Artificial Intelligence technology has had on the business world in recent times. AI technology has evolved beyond its traditional role of automating repetitive tasks and is now embracing a new realm of creativity by delving into Generative AI. Generative AI harnesses existing data to develop novel & unprecedented creations.

As a result, It can help with idea generation to doing all the grunt work to get a new online business completely ready for launch.

While AI has been used in drug development and delivery for several years now, it has become more accessible only in recent times. Today, it is helping even the smallest research teams to

traverse massive amounts of scientific data to help them identify new arrays of optimization for R&D. This will result in a significant cut-down in the time durations of new researches. Thus, AI is one technology that is capable of completely transforming the way businesses function today.

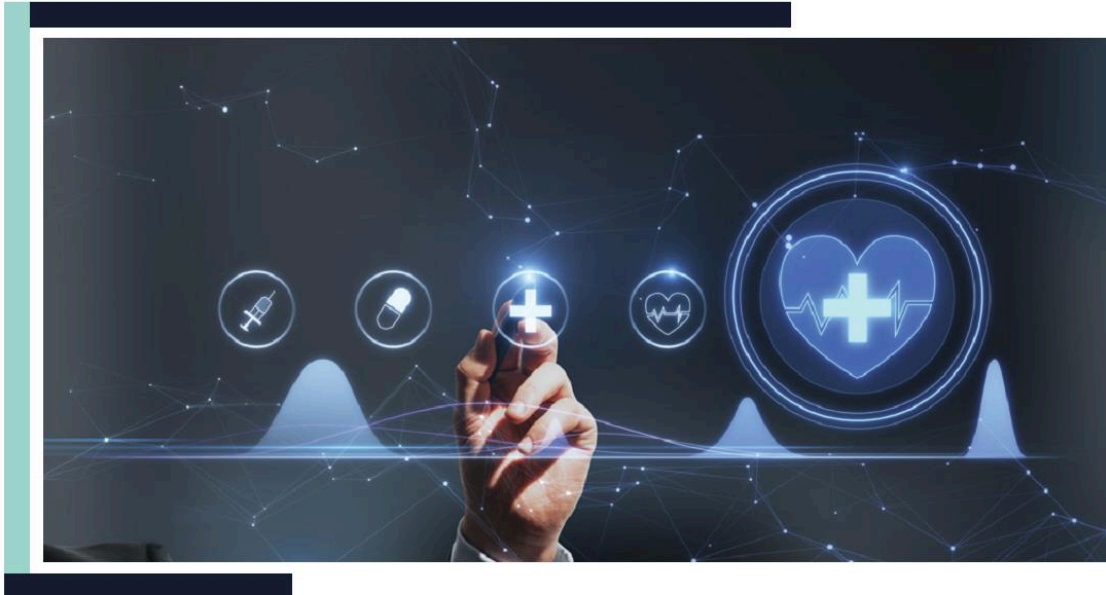
Few other tech trends that are gaining vast



HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS ARE NOTHING BUT MICRONUTRIENTS THAT DELIVER POTENT DOZES OF NUTRITION WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO BOTH PREVENT AND AID IN THE TREATMENT OF VARIOUS DISEASES

prominence today are our devices becoming smarter, emergence of autonomous vehicles and medicines & food supplements being 3D printed. I strongly believe that we are entering an era of deep personalization which will leverage

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technology to deliver customizations for a very healthy and optimized living. Such advancements are bound to bring along a variety of ethical and security concerns as well. Thus, it is very much essential for businesses to be responsible in the way these niche technologies are being put to use.

Tell us about some new technologies that are currently under development to improve healthcare industry.

Despite personalized medicine being in development for a few years now, we are only seeing a superficial attempt at it. For instance – today, it is possible to understand your health parameters, genetic composition and predisposition to diseases and thus have an optimal healthcare plan. However, there is a lack of standardization and thus accessible by only a few. There is a severe need for a synchronized approach to increase the lifespan of all individuals.

Do nutraceuticals have the same pharmaceutical effects as drug supplements? Tell us your company's approach towards the two segments.

To understand the basics, macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates & fats) are large building blocks and micronutrients (vitamins) are essential for various functions of the body. Herbal supplements are nothing but micronutrients that deliver potent doses of nutrition which are essential to both prevent and aid in the treatment of various diseases.

I am part of the promoter family of a large pharmaceutical company and the Co-Founder of a

young nutraceutical company. Working with both these closely enter twined organizations has enabled us to develop a science based approach towards herbal supplements. Every dietary supplement ingredient that we develop today is done so using the same yardstick as the pharmaceutical business. We as a company are bridging the gap in standards between the two industries since both of them have a significant role to play in the improvement of everyone's health and wellbeing.

How do you manage to strike a balance between your personal & professional lives? Also, what are your strategies to overcome gender-specific hurdles in your business journey?

As a woman leader, the most important lesson that I have learnt is that I am not a superhuman, a supermom, a superwife, or a superdaughter. Thus, to do justice on all fronts, I will need the support of family, friends and colleagues. Delegating various tasks and responsibilities to team members and setting boundaries to prioritize my self-care are the must-have tools for every leader today.

I am also a global liaison for women in nutraceuticals for our country and share the vision of helping more women reach c-suite positions in our industry. This platform will help many women leaders like me to network with each other, share their experiences & strategies to overcome any gender biases that might hamper their growth and identity. This way, I am constantly looking to improve myself and create awareness among others about the significance of having women in leadership roles. [WFI](#)

LAST WORD

VARIOUS FACETS OF A WOMAN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

By **Ambika Gupta, Founder & CEO, The A-Cube Project**

Ambika Gupta, Holding a B.Tech degree in Biotechnology from SRM University and a PG in Communication & Journalism from Xavier Institute of Communications, Ambika is a passionate entrepreneur with exceptional leadership and managerial skills. Additionally, she is also a Certified Florist from London Flower School and has even completed certificate program on Leadership Principles from Harvard Online Business School.



What inspired you to start a company of your own? Tell us about some of the challenges that you faced during the initial phase of your entrepreneurial journey.

When I shifted to Chennai in 2011, my family didn't let me work anywhere else and wanted me to either join the family business or start-up a company of my own. This pressure from my family members pushed me towards thinking about what I like doing. I love to travel, meet new people and get bored very easily. So I constantly need something which is really challenging and keeps me on the edge. This constant search of 'something new' in everything led me to foray into the events space and incept The A-Cube Project.

How do you manage your work-life balance as a women entrepreneur?

During the peak season times, I do not have much work-life balance. So I chose a team of people whom I enjoy working with. When I am with them, I feel surrounded by good energy and it is really fun to hang-out with them, wherein we take small breaks in the office to watch Netflix or sit together and go on a binge-eating marathon. Such activities free us of our work related thoughts and ensure that we remain stress-free.

What are your strategies to overcome any gender-specific hurdles in the business world?

I am proud to be in an industry that values women. As a woman, I am really good at multitasking and am capable of balancing between business and emotions. I have never faced any gender disparity in this industry; in fact, my gender has actually helped me be more successful. This is because I have been able to connect with our clients quite easily and thus have a clear understanding of their expectations and demands. My work speaks for me and I have thus been able to command a certain amount of respect in my field.

How have you leveraged your unique perspective and experiences as a woman entrepreneur to drive innovation and differentiation in your business?

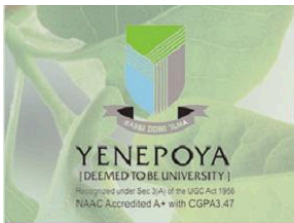
I had lost half my family by the time I was 14 years. I therefore learnt very early in life that we as humans are very brave because we tend to lead our lives fully aware of the fact that we aren't going to be alive for too long. So as long as I am alive, I want to touch the lives of as many people as possible and have a positive impact on their lives as well. Thus, I lay immense

emphasis on design at A-Cube and even encourage individuals to develop various leadership skills and qualities to mold themselves into future leaders.

Instead of copying design from Pinterest boards, I prefer developing our own creative designs that inspire others and make it to the Pinterest boards for other to copy. I thus use my emotional quotient and creative quotient to bring about a change in the industry in terms of design and developing future industry leaders.

Share a few lessons from your journey as a women entrepreneur that could inspire other aspiring women entrepreneurs or business owners?

Perseverance, grit and resilience – having these three characteristics going a long way in surviving the entrepreneurial field. Also, one must get accustomed to being stressed and fatigued as an entrepreneur. Patience is another virtue that every entrepreneur must imbibe, because entrepreneurship is not a destination, but a life-long ongoing journey. Most importantly, chose a team that shares your views & opinions, are flexible to working extra hours when necessary, and perform to their maximum ability. [WR](#)



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