

STUDIES SAY SOCIETAL PERCEPTION, FEAR OF FAILURE THE BIGGEST ROADBLOCKS

SHE-POWERED STARTUPS

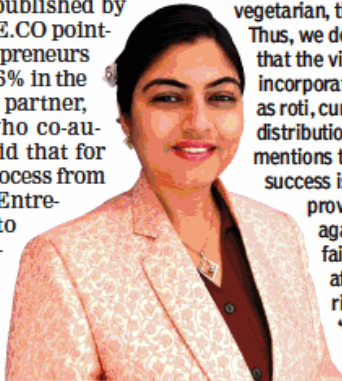
**STARTUP &
INNOVATION**


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The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for India point at the rise of new women entrepreneurs – out of total registered ventures, it was 6.4% in 2013 which rose to 8.7% in 2018-19.

Dr Sunil Shukla, director of EDII and lead author of the report for India, said that entrepreneurship as perceived opportunity for women has increased from 32% in 2013 to 44.4% in 2018-19. “Women believed that successful entrepreneurs have high status in society. On the other hand, fear of failure was found to be a significant entry barrier,” he said.

A study yet to be published by IIM-Ahmedabad’s CIIE.CO pointed at 10% women entrepreneurs in India compared to 36% in the US. Supriya Sharma, partner, Insights, CIIE.CO, who co-authored the report, said that for many women, it’s a process from denying to defying. “Entrepreneurs often try to balance claims to legitimacy (factors such as male validation, marriage and education) and challenging norms,” she said.


NIDHI ANARKAT: CO-FOUNDER & CEO, EMPOWERED

A computer engineer from Ahmedabad, Nidhi worked for a city-based education venture before going to Harvard University and pursuing technology, innovation and education (TIE). “I found the scope in training college youths for interviews and also training them for higher education exams such as CAT,” she said. Nidhi said that her decision to branch out as an edupreneur was supported by her family – full of chartered accountants – with her idea of pedagogy. Her venture is incubated at CIIE.CO at IIM-Ahmedabad. “The interplay of factors such as societal biases, one’s own expectations and governance structure create issues for women entrepreneurs. Women’s representation should not be tokenism – it should be the way for her to realize her own potential,” she said.


MENKA GURNANI: FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, HIDAA LIFE SCIENCE

After a master’s course in microbiology and a medical lab technology, Gurnani worked as a senior research associate with a pharma giant in Ahmedabad before deciding to venture out in uncharted territory – promoting vegan vitamin D. “About 80% of the population is deficient in the vitamin and if one is a vegetarian, there are fewer options.

Thus, we developed a technology so that the vitamin can be incorporated into staple food such as roti, curry and salad for fast distribution,” she said. She mentions that the pressure for success is there. “We have to prove ourselves time and again – if a man’s venture fails, people would attribute it to business risk but in women’s cases, ‘we told you so’ is the common response,” said Gurnani.

NIKITA TIWARI: FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, NEERX TECHNOVATION

A chance meeting with Prof Anil Gupta propelled Nikita, a B.Tech from NIT Raipur, to develop a technological solution for farmers of India. Thus, her flagship product ‘Smart Sensor for Hydrology & Land Application’ took shape which got validated by ISRO. Winner of multiple awards, the venture is incubated at EDII.

“My family wanted me to become an IAS officer. But they backed my decision to start my venture,” she said. “Often, when we go for business meets or interact with farmers, they don’t talk to me directly, thinking that I might not be acquainted with the technical aspects,” said Nikita.

