



Gujarat University Startup & Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC)  
West Wing, Nr. Department of Botany,  
University School of Sciences,  
Gujarat University, Ahmedabad  
Email: [contact@gusec.edu.in](mailto:contact@gusec.edu.in)  
Ph: +91 8896 262 262





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**Message from the  
Chief, UNICEF Gujarat Field Office**

## **Dr. Laxmi Bhawani**

We, at UNICEF, are proud to partner with the Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC) on a number of initiatives and programmes such as the Child Innovation Festival (CIF) and this year, the HerStart platform. This platform will inspire many girls and women to pursue their dreams and explore opportunities in the area of entrepreneurship.

Today, there is more acceptance than ever before that women bring different experiences, perspectives and skills to the table, and make irreplaceable contributions to decisions, policies and laws that work better for all. Women are demanding their full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Investments in gender equality contributes to lifelong positive outcomes for children and their communities. It yields considerable inter-generational payoffs, as children's rights and well-being, often depends on the rights and well-being of women.

UNICEF is committed to gender equality. We believe investing in young women and men, and unleashing their power and potential may not just advance India's growth and development story but also carries an enormous potential to transform the global development indicators. We know educating girls is not just the right thing to do; it's also the smart thing to do. Building awareness, skills and capacities of girls around entrepreneurial opportunities and mentorship through the herSTART platform is indeed, a smart investment.

The herSTART platform is a good example of ensuring and supporting gender equality whereby women and men and girls and boys enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. I congratulate GUSEC and the Government of Gujarat for nurturing the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship among young people including women and girls.



**Message from the  
Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat University**

## **Prof. Himanshu Pandya**

As we propagate a vision for an Atmanirbhar Bharat, it becomes imperative that we allow the men and women of our country to be self-reliant. Owing to the generational disparity in equality of opportunities, it wasn't long before GUSEC identified the need to build a bridge between women and opportunities. Gujarat University takes pride in extending its support towards this noble initiative. Currently in its second edition, herSTART aims to promote and encourage innovative ideas by women and help them turn their ideas into scalable businesses, an attempt that shall catapult more and more women innovators to establish their businesses.

This year, herSTART aims to go a step ahead in bolstering women entrepreneurship by not only rewarding the best ideas but also establishing a herSTART Helpdesk to assist women entrepreneurs and business owners in their innovative endeavours. They are also in the way of inaugurating exclusive coworking spaces for women in the Gujarat University campus. The initiative shall go a long way in incorporating gender equality and inclusivity - values that the world is now rapidly embracing. Initiatives like herSTART once put into practice shall lead to more career opportunities for women and more places for them to occupy and bring changes wherefrom. I wish all the very best for young women advantaged from the herSTART platform in building their businesses and hope that they will inspire more women to take the mantle of innovation in the coming time.



# Foreword

India's low rates of women entrepreneurship are reflected in a dismal score in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2021, where the country ranks 140 out of 156 countries. Women own about 20.37% of all micro, small & medium enterprises in the country, as opposed to 79.63% of the same held by men.

Apart from the common barriers faced by startups in the country, women face additional hindrances which are a part of a broader and more pronounced gender gap in the male-dominated Indian society. These comprise of an unconscious gender bias, lack of confidence in women's business skills, dearth of access to finance, networks, and lack of safe workplaces/public places & family support. Through herSTART, we empower women to take a step over these fences and help them dream of possibilities beyond obstacles.

## About herSTART

To help women bridge the gap between economic and societal well being, it was pertinent to bridge the one between women and opportunities. As a premier institution that believes in pursuing excellence through innovation, GUSEC felt the need to provide women with a common turf that helps them scale up their careers and gives their innovative ideas newer, bolder heights. As a way of giving the right opportunity to the right talent, the foundation of herSTART was, thus, laid.

herSTART is one of GUSEC's flagship programmes established with the vision of empowering innovative ideas by women and hand-holding them as they navigate through, realise and materialise their entrepreneurial endeavours.

## Patrons



Department of  
Science and Technology  
Government of India

Department of Science & Technology,  
Government of India



Industries Commissionerate  
Government of Gujarat

Industries Commissionerate,  
Government of Gujarat



Education Department  
Government of Gujarat

Education Department,  
Government of Gujarat



SSIP, Government of Gujarat



MEITY STARTUP  
HUB

MeitY Startup Hub

## Programme Partners





# About the Organisers



GUSEC's foundation was laid in February 2016, with the aim of being a swift aid and an instrumental way forward for early-stage startups. For that purpose, it was modeled to support innovators and entrepreneurs with every aspect of their enterprise from the first day itself, without any additional costs. This strategy, as they call it 'zero-day, zero-cost', sets them apart from any other startup incubator in the country, making an innovator's journey easier and helping entrepreneurs ease into their business without any pointless costs. GUSEC aims to sensitize and encourage students, adults, and anyone else with a scalable idea to turn their dream prospect into reality and pledges to make India self-reliant by making Indians self-sufficient.

A recognised Technology Business Incubator by the Government of India, GUSEC has supported about 340 startups, currently incubating 156 of them. It has helped in the commercialisation of 75+ products/technologies and has led strong sensitisation efforts, introducing over 230,000 students & 500 colleges to innovation and entrepreneurship. It has also disbursed about 4.1 Cr of funds to startups and also provides seed support to entrepreneurs.



UNICEF India is committed in its continued support to the government in this extraordinary journey of development to reach every child everywhere in India. Their goal is to enable every child born in India to have the best start in life, to thrive and to develop to her or his full potential. To achieve this they use our technical expertise together with partners to tackle the root of several, deeply entrenched structural challenges. They have been present in India for over 70 years. UNICEF's key strength lies in our evidence-based technical expertise that informs policy action and implementation, while at the same time building the capacity of partners. With some 450 staff members working in 17 states that together cover 90 per cent of India's child population - largest field presence among UN agencies – they are well-positioned to reach the country's most vulnerable children. UNICEF believes that all children have a right to survive, thrive and fulfill their potential – to the benefit of a better world. Globally UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, they work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.



## Applicant Profile

## Applications Overview

Total Applications

**1377**

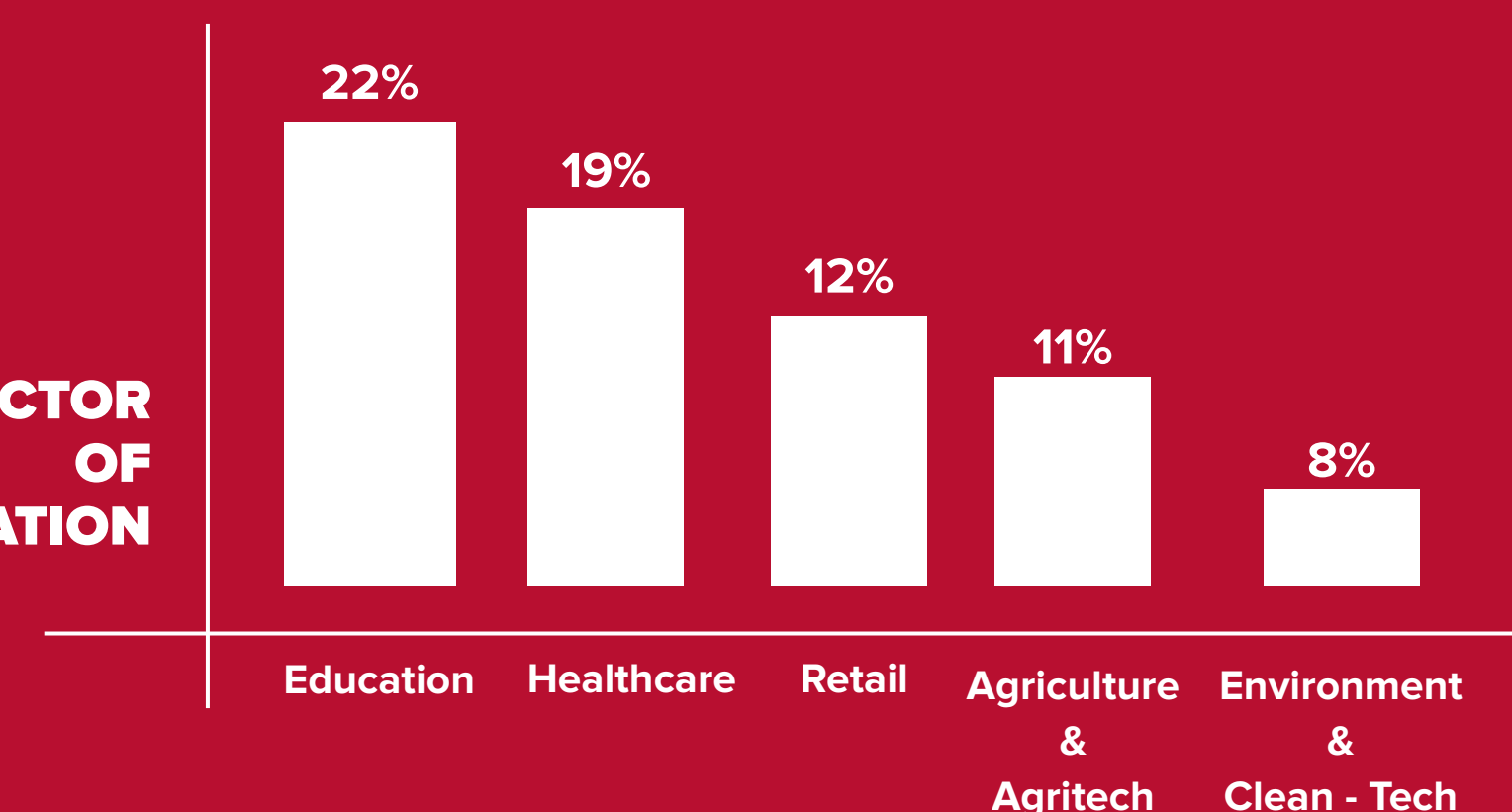
Total Participants

**2198**

### AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

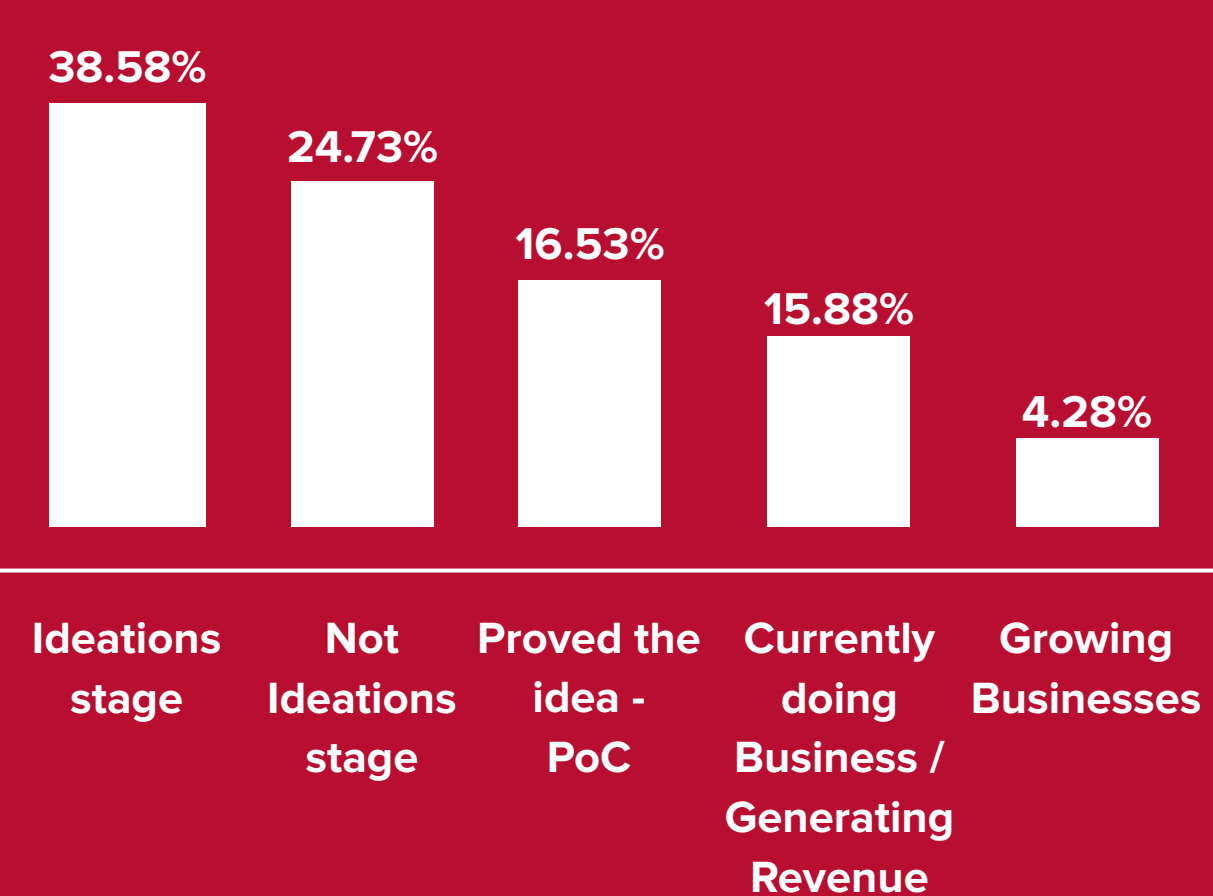
20-28 years account for 47% of the applicants and 29-39 years for 30% of the total

### SECTOR OF OPERATION

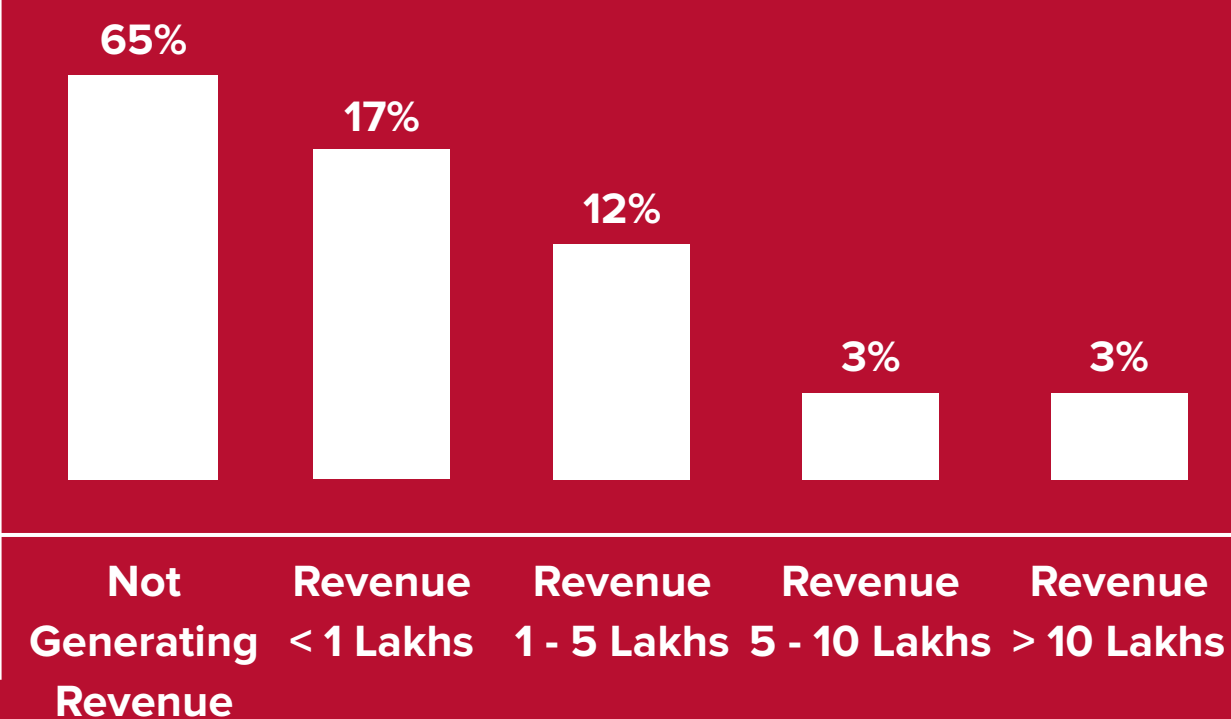




## STAGE OF THE STARTUP/ BUSINESS



## BUSINESSES GENERATING REVENUE & AMOUNT OF REVENUE GENERATED



# Outreach Activities

To ensure that our message for aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs got through, GUSEC conducted a series of outreach sessions to sensitise viewers to the concepts adjacent to entrepreneurship.

## 1. Introducing herSTART:

Entrepreneurship & Women of India March 18, 2021



The objective of the session was to sensitise the audience to the concepts of innovation, entrepreneurship and startups. Malay Shukla (AVP Growth) & Akanksha Bhadoria, (Sr. Associate, Incubation at GUSEC) explained to the audience the fundamental concepts related to entrepreneurship and spoke about how and why they should innovate, and why they should do it as early as possible.



## 2. Introducing herSTART:

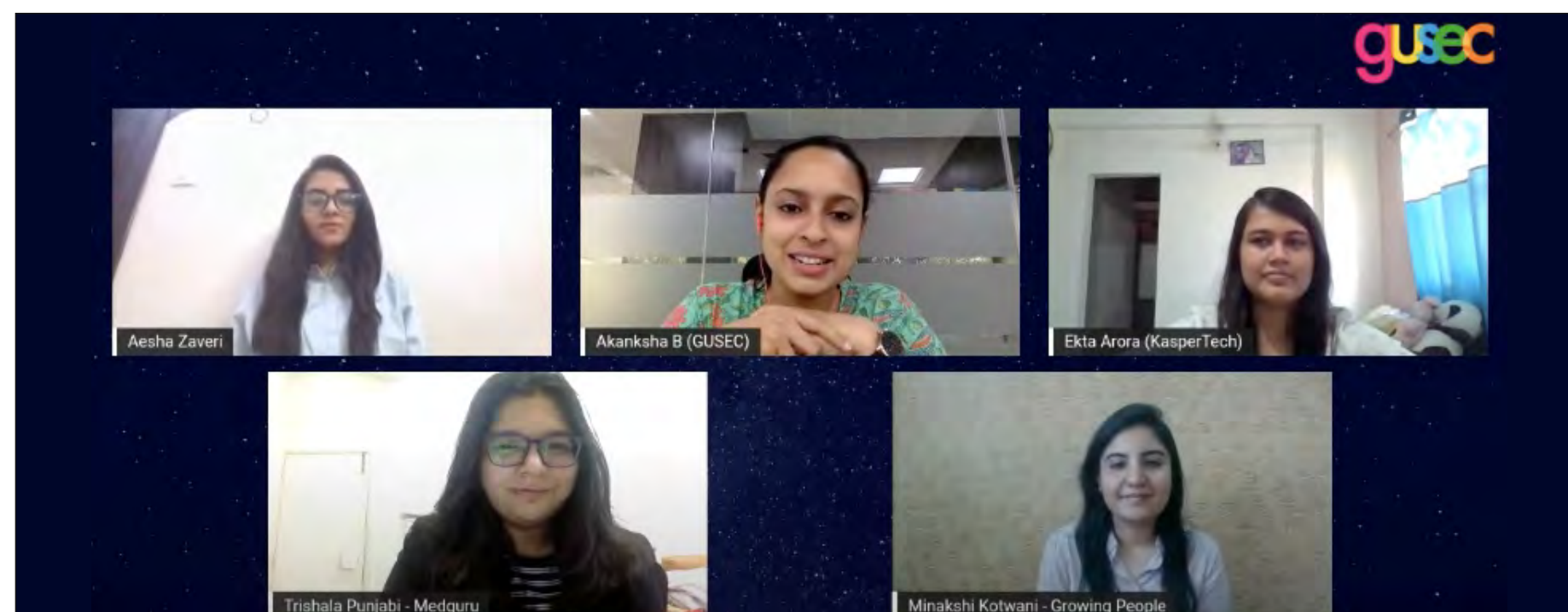
Entrepreneurship & Women of India with YuWaah!, March 24, 2021



The session was another in a series of sensitisation activities held as a part of herSTART 2021. It was organised with Shri Kumar Manish (State Consultant, YuWaah!), Malay Shukla (AVP, GUSEC) along with Akanksha Bhadoria (Sr. Associate, GUSEC) and Sarika Chitrodiya, (innovator incubated at GUSEC) through the 2019 edition of herSTART.

## 3. SheTales:

Hear the stories of Women Entrepreneurs of India, April 03, 2021



GUSEC organised SheTales, a session where women entrepreneurs incubated at GUSEC shared the stories of their entrepreneurial endeavours and spoke about the challenges they faced in the same. The session consisted of Ekta Arora (Co-founder, KasperTech), Minakshi Kotwani (Founder, Growing People), Trishala Punjabi (Founder, MedGuru), Aesha Zaveri (Co-founder, Ridgetiller), incubated at GUSEC through the Children Innovation Festival, 2019.

# herSTART Summit

## About the Summit

On March 08, 2021, dignitaries from the Government of India, Government of Gujarat, women entrepreneurs, innovators, leaders and stakeholders of the startup ecosystem came together to celebrate International Women's Day at the herSTART Summit as the audience of 1000+ people tuned in to listen to the seasoned insights of the speakers.

The international confluence featured women entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders from different walks of life who brought in their vibrant perspectives on topics centred around women and entrepreneurship. In a day-long event spread across six sessions, the Summit was organised as an extension of herSTART, a special platform by GUSEC for women entrepreneurs that aims to recognise, promote and encourage innovative ideas by women.

GUSEC organised the herSTART Summit with the objective of providing women entrepreneurs and innovators with global exposure and sensitising them to the positive impact innovation and entrepreneurship has on a worldwide scale. Supporting over 300 startups, GUSEC continues to make successive strides towards enabling innovators through its flagship programmes; one of which happens to be herSTART, a unique platform that aims to assist women-led startups in scaling their operations to newer heights while also supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs in getting their innovative ideas off the ground.

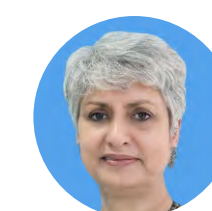
## List of Speakers



Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama



Dr. Renu Swarup



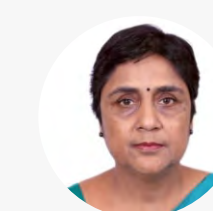
Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque



Asha Jadeja Motwani



Dr. Anita Gupta



Sunita Sanghi



Ya'akov Finkelstein



Peter Cook



Dr. Himanshu Pandya



Dr. Jagdish Bhavsar



Dr. Laxmi Bhawani



Chedva Kleinhandler



Pallavi Tyagi



Vandana Bhatnagar



Dhruwarakha Sriram



Sudeshna Mukherjee



Moira Dawa



Priyanshi Patel



Piyalee Chattopadhyay



Dr. Ravi Gor



Dr. Rakesh Rawal



Rahul Bhagchandani



Dheeraj Bhojwani



Shikha Shah



Yogita Ahuja



Anshu Bhartia



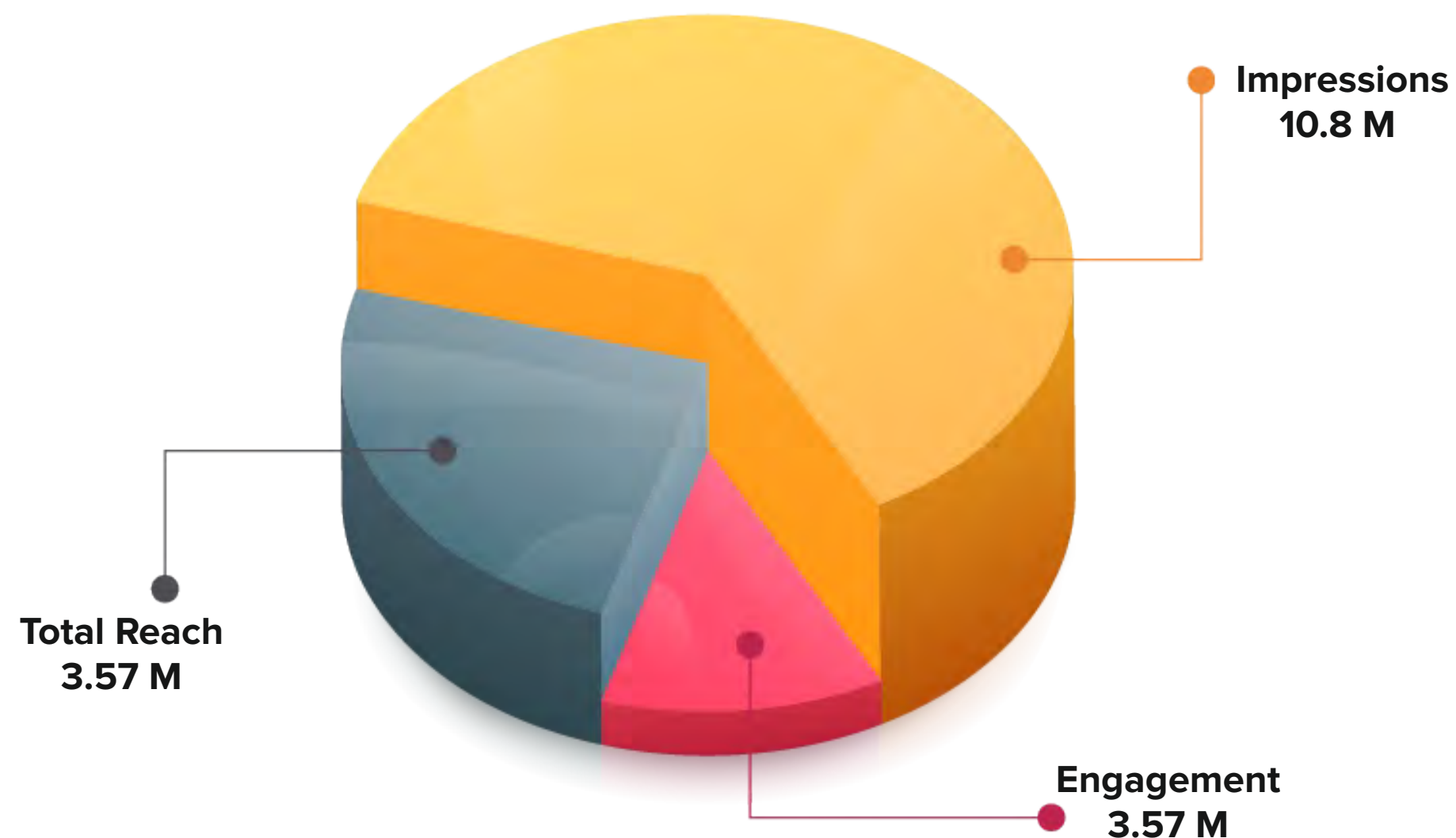
Bindi Patel



# Outreach Impact

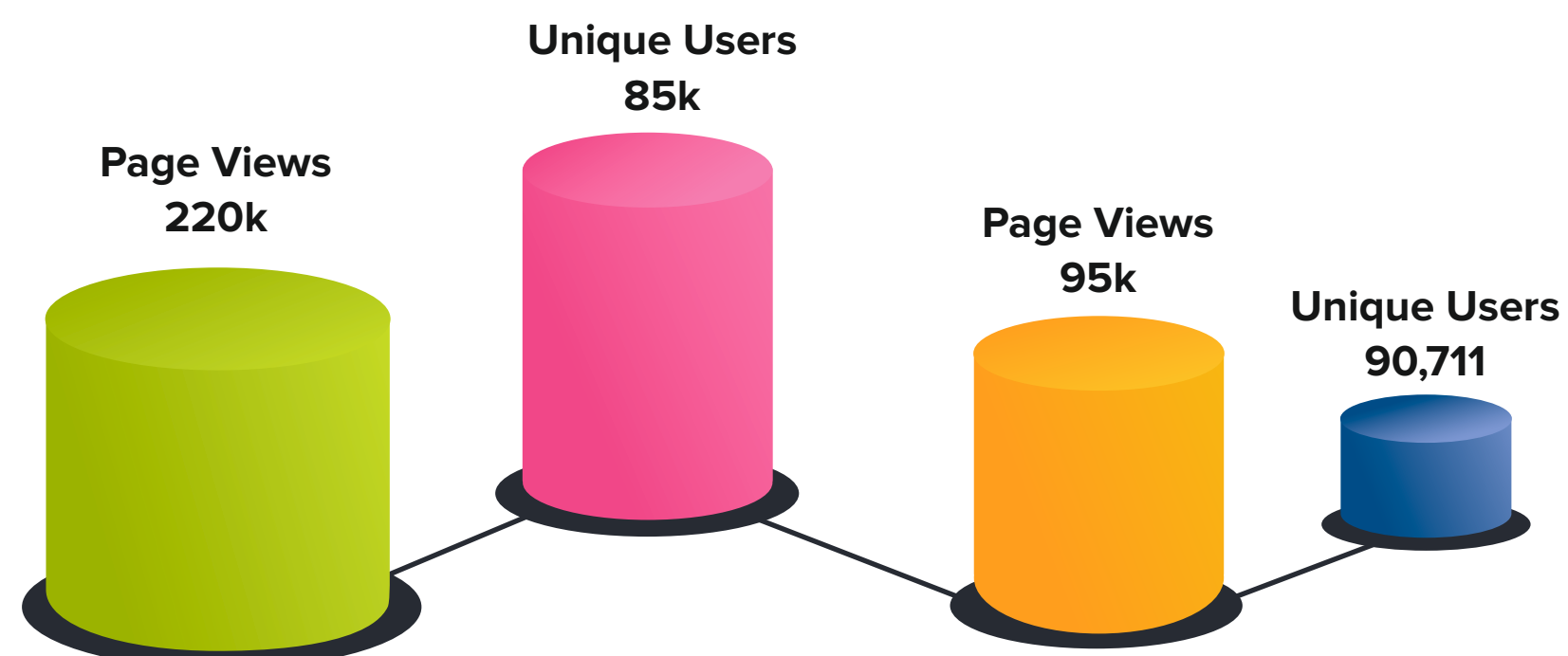
## Social Media Impact

Social media's data includes the visitors during the herSTART Summit Outreach / Promotions



## Website Traction

- Page Views (gusec.edu.in/herstart) 220K; Unique Users - 85K
- herSTART 2.0 Application Form (gusec.edu.in/herstart /#apply) Page views 95K; Unique Users - 90,711



## Activity Timeline

- February 26, 2021: Launch of the program & Application window opens
- March 08, 2021: herSTART Summit
- April 04, 2021: herSTART Application Window closes
- Shortlisting of Top 100 ideas of herSTART: May 31, 2021
- herSTART Accelerator: June 08-23, 2021
- Announcement of top 50 Ideas: July 03, 2021

## Media Coverage



City Bhaskar's coverage of herSTART and the women entrepreneurs of GUSEC

The Times of India's Coverage of herSTART 2.0

## GUSEC to support 50 women-led startups

**TIMES NEWS NETWORK**

**Ahmedabad:** Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC) on Thursday announced that it will support and incubate some 50 women-led startups from across 17 Indian cities.

The initiative is part of its accelerator programme for women-led startups, herSTART.

The startups have been selected by GUSEC through a competition and will now undergo a 90-day training to convert their innovative ideas into viable businesses.

These startups operate in various sectors such as education and education technology (EdTech), e-commerce, healthcare and environmental sustainability.

The previous edition of herSTART in 2019 garnered about 650 innovative ideas from women, with 120 ideas being shortlisted for a boot-camp and 35 ideas being selected for pre-incubation at GUSEC, of whom sixteen are still functional.

"We hope that the winning ideas of herSTART 2.0 shall aspire to bridge the gap between economic and societal well-being of women," said Himanshu Pandya, vice-chancellor, Gujarat University.

Promoters of these ideas will now be exposed to a range of stakeholders, including mentors and subject experts to ensure that these ideas mature into viable business models.

"It has been found that startups suffer early mortality because of lack of intervention by experts. The idea behind this exercise is to provide a platform to showcase the ideas, handhold them and then provide interventions to the most promising ideas," said Rahul Bhagchandani, CEO of GUSEC.



## 1

# Building a Resilient Water-Energy Nexus



**Startup Name / Idea:** Aumsat Technologies LLP

**Team Members:** Vrunda Maniya, Riddhish Soni, Mitali Damle, Karan Bhehar

**City:** Surat

Her Favourite Quote:

“ I don’t believe in taking the right decisions. I take decisions and then make them right.”  
- Ratan Tata

Aumsat Technologies is a provider of AI-enabled satellite-based precise energy-water analytics for setting up solar pumps and energy intelligence.

Aumsat is a team of specialised engineers, scientists, and thinkers who were inspired to come together to address irrigation sector problems by bringing together geomatics, predictive analytics, remote sensing, and object detection. By 2024, Aumsat aims to establish India’s first decentralized catchment management authority and provide hydro informatics to users.

Vrunda says amid depleting groundwater levels and erratic rainfall, the startup’s solutions can enable equitable distribution of water resources by more accurate groundwater forecasts and help build a sustainable and resilient water-energy nexus. Poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, clean water, and sanitation are the other problems the startup wants to address going ahead. For the young innovator, coding was the most exciting part of the startup journey and developing a user interface was the most challenging.

An avid follower of the theory of stoicism, Vrunda believes the path to happiness is in accepting the moment as it presents itself. Vrunda is highly inspired by Wing Commander Murali Krishna, who she describes as an out-of-box thinker and motivator with a vision of serving the nation.



She says more women entrepreneurs can be inspired to become innovators that incentivising investment in women-led companies and modernising certification, grant, and loan programmes. This can also bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship, she says. Vrunda hasn’t faced any obstacles because of the proverbial glass ceiling and credits her family, mentors, and friends’ support for the same.

“An excellent journey of learning, mentorship, and support,” she says about her association with herSTART 2.0.



# 2

## An AI Solution To Enhance Customer Experience



**Startup Name / Idea:** **Thrifty AI**

**Team Members:** Tanishi Mookerjee, Harsh Jha, Yashash Gupta

**City:** Gurugram

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Don't worry about being successful but work towards being significant and success will naturally follow.  
- Oprah Winfrey”

The startup aims to develop AI solutions that combine the efficiency of a chatbot with the empathy, emotion, and personality of a human to enhance customer experience and transform the way brands and customers interact. The startup aims to enhance human-machine collaboration and change the way customers and brands interact online. In the next few years, Thrifty AI sees its virtual human having a fully developed emotional quotient, AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) and human-like consciousness or self-awareness.

Personal experiences of poor customer service is what inspired the idea for the startup, says Tanishi. Moreover, research revealed that poor customer experience resulted in brands losing nearly half of their customers. Going ahead, the young innovator wants to address problems such as poverty, malnutrition, sanitation, and climate change.

“The entire journey has been filled with exciting moments, and it is hard to pick the most exciting part,” she says, noting the major challenge was bringing the idea to reality, but even that had its charms and learnings.

Tanishi's favourite innovator is Marie Curie. When feeling uninspired, the young innovator looks back at her journey and introspects, which she says helps her gather her thoughts.



Tanishi is among the lucky few who did not have to face the glass ceiling and got the exposure and support to pursue her dreams. The youngster believes more women entrepreneurs can be motivated to become innovators by providing them with the right resources. She feels that the gender gap can be bridged by giving more support and recognition to female entrepreneurs. Describing her journey with herSTART 2.0 as great and insightful, Tanishi says that it is an excellent platform for women entrepreneurs to interact and learn.





# 3

## Changing The Outlook on Packaging



**Startup Name / Idea:** Ecovia

**Team Members:** Dhvani Mehta, Pranjul Jain, Parikshit Joon

**City:** Surat

**Her Favourite Quote:**



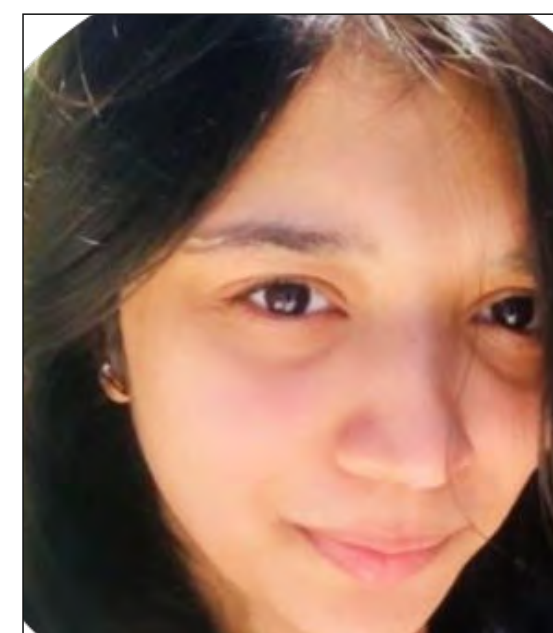
We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence then is not an act but  
a habit.



Ecovia is a startup working on offering packaging as a service solution to enable online businesses to switch to reusable packaging by incentivising the end-user to return it. Ecovia aims to pioneer reusable packaging in India and disrupt the space as Flipkart did with e-commerce.

While e-commerce and related aspects have evolved, packaging has seen no major technological or business model innovations. The drive to bring about a change in the way packaging is looked at in India was the key inspiration behind the startup, Dhvani says. Ecovia aims to have a national presence in five years and sees itself driving a change in the consumer mindset, with packaging not being dumped but returned. Going ahead, the startup also wants to work to end packaging waste. What was both exciting and difficult for the team was the fact that there was no precedent, and this was the first time reusable packaging was being introduced for e-commerce in India.

Dhwani's favourite innovator is Elon Musk "for his unique ability to achieve what very few thought was possible". When feeling uninspired, the innovator takes a step back to introspect, and based on the result, she either takes a break or hits reset and gets



back to chasing her goals. Dhvani says women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by making knowledge, network and capital accessible. Up-skilling women can bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship, she believes. She says that she has not let the glass ceiling affect her progress and has always stood up for herself.

"It has been really helpful and gave a lot of clarity in our approach and vision," Dhvani says about her journey with herSTART 2.0.



# 4

## Recycling Sewage Water to Avert Future Crisis



**Startup Name / Idea:** 6E

**Team Members:** Rudri Pandya, Kavan Dhamsani, Raj Gohil, Vatsal Safaya

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night.”

6E focuses on remote monitoring and optimising MBR sewage treatment plants and water monitoring systems using IoT and machine-learning on the Swadeshi microprocessor. Inspired by the fact that 38 billion litres of sewage water are dumped daily in India due to the high construction and maintenance cost of STPs, combined with the grim water availability scenario, the founders developed the IoT-enabled sewage treatment plant.

“This project will treat wastewater scientifically and hygienically. Recycling will reduce stress on fresh water resources and make them last five times longer,” Rudri explains. The pilot plant will be ready by September 2021, and the product will be marketable by January 2022, she shares. By the end of 2022, the startup aims to have 50 units in Ahmedabad.

She says that establishing the entire industrial automation of STP on RISC V-based Swadeshi microprocessor VEGA AS1061 was the most exciting part of the project. In the future, the startup also wants to address the problem of sanitation.

Rudri’s favourite innovator is SpaceX founder Elon Musk whose goals, she says, include reducing global warming by the use of sustainable energy production and consumption.

She and team member Kavan are each other’s go-to persons when they feel uninspired. When asked for an opinion on the glass ceiling that



seldom creates a hindrance for women, she says that she never encountered any glass ceiling, she feels more women can be encouraged to become innovators by introducing them to current problem scenarios and providing funding opportunities. She believes that equal opportunities for everyone can bridge the gap between male and female entrepreneurs.

“Splendid. I am looking forward to learning new things,” was what she said about her journey with herSTART 2.0.



# 5

## An Infallible Weapon to Deal with Fires



**Startup Name / Idea:** Achuk Environmental Solutions

**Team Members:** Sona Shah, Rahul Shah, Nishant Jain, Kari Kauppi

**City:** Ahmedabad

Her Favourite Quote:

“Everything Resolves.”

Achuk is a Gujarati word that means infallible. It is also the name of the startup’s innovative fire extinguishing composition that promises to extinguish the biggest of fires swiftly and safely. The startup aims to save lives, property, and the environment from fire with its innovative solution. “We aim to become an established player and have a presence across India in two-three years. We will also provide license patent rights for Achuk in other countries,” says Sona.

Despite advances in science and technology, the world is still struggling with wildfires, coal fires, etc. which lead to massive loss of life and property and cause environmental damage. Finding a solution to contain fire inspired the team to establish Achuk.

The most exciting part was overcoming the objections raised during the patent examination process, and it was equally exciting to see the composition’s successful application on live fires, she says. The most challenging part was deciding if they wanted to establish a startup. Going ahead, the team wants to work on solutions for other classes of fires and launch environment-friendly tools for dust control, waste disposal and energy savings.

Sona is inspired by how the world has benefited from innovations by unknown innovators. “The wheel, for instance”, she says.

The innovator says that it is natural to feel uninspired at times but the key is the commitment to go on.



‘Rewarding and insightful’ is how she describes her association with herSTART 2.0, a platform she believes is already encouraging women entrepreneurs. “Make young girls aware of the importance of innovation for nation-building and the contribution they can make”, she advises further. Sona says women are traditionally conditioned to be homemakers, and changing this mindset can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.



# 6

## Promoting Chemical - Free Farming With Agro Waste



**Startup Name / Idea:** BioPot

**Team Members:** Nidhi Jha, Rani Chauhan, Hardik Patni, Sagar Patel

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“The road to success and the road to failure are almost exactly the same.”

Made with a mixture of agricultural waste and beneficial microbes, BioPot is a completely biodegradable chemical-free plant growth promoter that improves soil fertility and immunity. “Their solution is based on agricultural waste utilisation and promoting chemical-free farming”, she explains, adding, that “they recycled over 200 tonnes of agricultural waste for our innovative solution. We try to solve most gardening and farming issues and promote organic gardening/farming”. “Tackling agricultural waste and reducing chemical fertiliser use can take care of at least 30% of pollution”, says Nidhi as she talks about the inspiration behind BioPot.

The most difficult and exciting part of developing the idea was collecting and segregating the waste and preparing the proper premix, she says. In the next few years, she sees their products being used in every home garden. The project for her means satisfaction, success, happiness, and knowledge enroute a meaningful journey, says Nidhi. She would also like to work on air pollution, water crisis, plastic pollution, and healthcare problems.

Her favourite innovator is Nivedha RM, Founder of TrashCon. “who developed the first automatic solid waste segregation machine that segregates biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste”, When feeling uninspired, she pens down troubling thoughts and ponders over solutions.



“Women have the potential to become innovators but are hesitant because of inadequate information. With proper guidance, training, and knowledge about innovation and entrepreneurship, they can be encouraged to become innovators,” she says. She feels the gender gap can be bridged if more women become entrepreneurs while pointing out that she hasn’t ever encountered a glass ceiling.

“The journey with herSTART 2.0 has been highly informative,” she says, adding that the boot camps helped them throughout the journey.



# 7

## Making Cognitive Skills Enhancement Simpler



**Startup Name / Idea:** CerboTech Education Pvt Ltd.

**Team Members:** Sweta Prajapati, Chirag Gadara, Hitesh Mehra, Parul Shah

**City:** Chennai

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Don’t worry if you don’t have expertise or experience; if you have focus, you will win.”

CerboTech assesses the cognitive needs of children and applies training solutions to enhance them by 10% or more.

“Through our research, we have simplified the process of cognitive skill enhancement through online login-based modules using brain-computer interface technology”, says Sweta. Their products and services are designed to address cognition-related challenges in students, professionals, housewives, and sportspersons. The entrepreneur feels that the coming years will see a rise in demand for high-level cognitive and socio-behavioural skills in jobs because of the impact of machine learning, AI, and automation.

Another issue on the young innovator’s radar is mental health. “Through our research, we will develop our modules to improve mental health and well-being,” Sweta shares.

“The most exciting part about being an R&D organisation is developing offline/online cognitive skills enhancement modules. As with many other startups, the most difficult part is managing research funding because we are bootstrapped”. “Enhancing these skills requires investing time, money, and efforts,” she says.

Her says her favourite innovator is Thomas Edison, best known for inventing the light bulb, for his significant innovations and inventions. For Sweta, her work is her inspiration. “There is always a lot of struggle in startups, but they have to continue with their vision,” she says.



Sweta believes that incubation support and seed funding are the best ways to inspire women entrepreneurs to further their ideas. When more women are inspired, the gender gap will automatically be bridged, she avers. So far, she has not had to deal with any glass ceiling.

Sweta’s journey with herSTART 2.0 has been very good and she is currently waiting for a big break



# 8

## Devices That Help Specially-Abled, Elderly Become Independent



**Startup Name / Idea:** **Fititout solutions**

**Team Members:** Harinii S, K Naveen, Ramalingam PL, Naveen

**City:** Chennai

Her Favourite Quote:

“ Grow. Let Grow. ”

Fititout is an assistive tech startup working on developing devices for specially-abled, elderly and special children.

The passion for creating a social impact by bringing about a change in the lives of the vulnerable with tech tools inspired Harinii and her team members to found Fititout Solutions. The startup has already launched personalised active and standing wheelchairs. Harinii sees her startup helping the specially-abled, elderly, and special children become independent leading their lives with self-confidence. The young innovator is deeply inspired by former President APJ Abdul Kalam for his work in developing lightweight prosthetics and sees Fititout emerging as a unicorn in a few years. Harinii also wants to work on developing agritech devices and supply chain management to help farmers earn more. Promoting entrepreneurship among youngsters is also on her agenda.

Speaking of her goals for the startup, she says “that they want to become a unicorn - not in terms of valuation, but in changing people’s lives with its innovative products”, adding she and her team also want to establish Fititout as the most innovative assistive tech company. Working on hundreds of prototypes but still failing was the most difficult part of her startup journey, and finally coming up with one that works was the most exciting, she says.

When feeling uninspired, Harinii spends time reading. She says women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by creating greater awareness and giving them the space to grow.



Discouraging gender discrimination can help in bridging the gender gap in entrepreneurship, she adds.

“Life is full of hurdles, and adapting to the situation matters,” she says about dealing with the proverbial glass ceiling.

She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as good.



# 9

## Solutions to Boost Agricultural Productivity



**Startup Name / Idea:** **Insitu Agritech**

**Team Members:** Anjali Garg, Jay Garg, Kaushal Malkhan

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Chal Chala Chal Rahi  
(Keep moving, traveller)”

Insitu Agritech is a startup working on tech-based solutions to boost agricultural productivity and enhance output.

Agriculture has sustained humankind on the planet for ages, but the growing population projected to cross 9 billion by 2050, shrinking farmland and depleting water resources pose a major challenge. Addressing the pressing challenge inspired Anjali and her team to establish Insitu Agritech.

The startup aims to use technology and biotech innovations to build an agricultural ecosystem that allows crops to be grown faster and in less space. It is developing kits that make plantation possible even under bridges, unused parking spaces, etc. “In the next few years, I see my startup growing to a scale where it can contribute significantly to the agricultural economy,” she says. The most exciting part of the startup journey was time management and lab work while developing the prototype, while the most difficult part was finding the right team, says Anjali. Going ahead, she also wants to focus on finding innovative and cost-effective health-tech related solutions.

Anjali does not have a favourite innovator, but respects every innovator for their contribution.

When feeling uninspired, the young innovator takes a break, reevaluates her journey, thinks about the milestones achieved, and starts a fresh with



a new drive. She hasn't faced any obstacles because of the glass ceiling and credits her strong will to make the most of her potential and capabilities. She believes women are born multitaskers, and more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by making them realise their full potential. Anjali says her association with herSTART 2.0 was wonderful and says such initiatives are the first steps to bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.



# 10

## Empowering Women Dealing with Incontinence



**Startup Name / Idea:** Meraki

**Team Members:** Komal Shah, Dr. Manish Arora

**City:** Bangalore

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“If you talk about it, it’s a dream, if you envision it, it’s possible, but if you schedule it, it’s real.”

Meraki is a startup with the mission to empower millions of women by making it easy for them to take control of their pelvic health anytime, anywhere with its innovative solution. The startup believes its work and the innovative and customisable solution will play an important role in facilitating a world where women are no longer pulled back because of incontinence.

Interactions with women having incontinence, which started as a course work when Komal was a student, and the impact the condition had on women’s daily lives, led to a strong desire to help them, and this is how Meraki was born. In two years from now, the startup sees its efforts leading to a meaningful change in the lives of millions of women. Going ahead, Meraki also aims to make an impact on other health issues, especially those related to maternal care.

For Komal and her team, getting women to open about the condition of incontinence was very difficult, and seeing the same women’s excitement about their work, was the most exciting.

Virginia Tower Norwood, who led the development of the first multispectral scanner to image earth from space, is her favourite innovator.

She believes initiatives that address challenges that women face can encourage them to turn into innovators. When feeling uninspired, Komal usually takes a short break.



Komal believes that empowering women through various initiatives and addressing societal gender disparities can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship. “There have been times when notions about women entrepreneurs have led me to question my actions”, she says about facing the glass ceiling.

Komal says learnings from herSTART 2.0 changed the way she thought about business.



# Giving Extra Protection from Virus, Bacteria

**Startup Name / Idea:** 4S Shield

**Team Members:** Hetika Shah, Adit Shah, Hardik Gupta, Karnav Patel

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Every situation is an opportunity; work hard, success will follow your path.”

Before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, masks were used by very few people, mainly by those connected with the healthcare sector. However, the pandemic changed that. Everyone was required to wear a mask that could give adequate protection against the coronavirus. The problems faced by frontline healthcare workers during the pandemic inspired Hetika and her team to design masks that were more efficient than even the N-95 mask. 4S Shield N99 covers four sensory organs — mouth, nose, ears, and eyes — and provides more than 99% protection from viruses & bacteria. According to her, the 4S Shield can give over 99% protection.

While the regular mask covers only the nose and the mouth, the 4S Shield covers four sensory organs, thus explaining its name. “No part of the face remains exposed to the virus, thus giving near-complete protection to the wearer,” explains Hetika. Through the product, the startup aims to check the spread of Coronavirus and their airborne diseases. According to Hetika, the most challenging part of the startup journey has been getting certifications.

Hetika says that books are her source of inspiration when she feels uninspired. In the next few years, Hetika wants the innovative product to cover 50% of the Indian market and export in large quantities. Another problem she wants to work on is global warming.



Hetika has never had to encounter any glass ceiling, but she agrees that more women need to be encouraged to become innovators. The gender gap, she believes, can be removed by supporting the women financially and mentally to become empowered.

The journey with herSTART 2.0 has been good, she says.



# Creating Bio-degradable Products with Agro-Waste

**Startup Name / Idea:** A-Wrap

**Team Members:** Mrinalini Singh, Priyabrata Rautray

**City:** Hyderabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“ Work is worship ”

A-Wrap aims to develop biodegradable, sustainable and carbon-negative material from mycelium and agro-waste and create a framework to take the technology to the grassroots level. The inspiration to work on the idea came from air pollution caused by stubble burning and large-scale dumping of synthetic packaging and building materials, says Mrinalini.

“We plan to set up an institute to develop new products and train people. We will also be actively engaged in selling these products to different businesses. We hope to create a circular economy where we will act as a conduit between consumer demand and cottage industries,” she elaborates. Being a microbiology student, the exciting part was working with mycelium after several years. She says that the most difficult part was getting the right growth of mycelium and getting all the required equipment. She wishes to address the problem of migration by creating jobs at the grassroots level and also developing a more robust agriculture system.

Her favourite innovator is Arunachalam Muruganantham who developed low-cost sanitary pads, thereby improving the lives of innumerable women while generating employment for many. In moments of self-doubt, Mrinalini looks for inspiration from people who have achieved success despite difficult situations.



Women innovators can be encouraged by providing them with the right platform and an opportunity, along with financial support during the initial years, she feels. “We should promote success stories of female entrepreneurs in schools and college. Inspiring them from a young age is very important to bridge the gap,” says Mrinalini, adding that Societal pressure and family’s expectations set the parameters for a woman.

Family support and encouragement never let any glass ceiling affect her growth.



# 13

## Tools to Make Learning Engaging and Fun

**Startup Name / Idea:** **Avidia Labs**

**Team Members:** Vidya Choudhary, Ajit Kohir

**City:** Bengaluru

**Her Favourite Quote:**

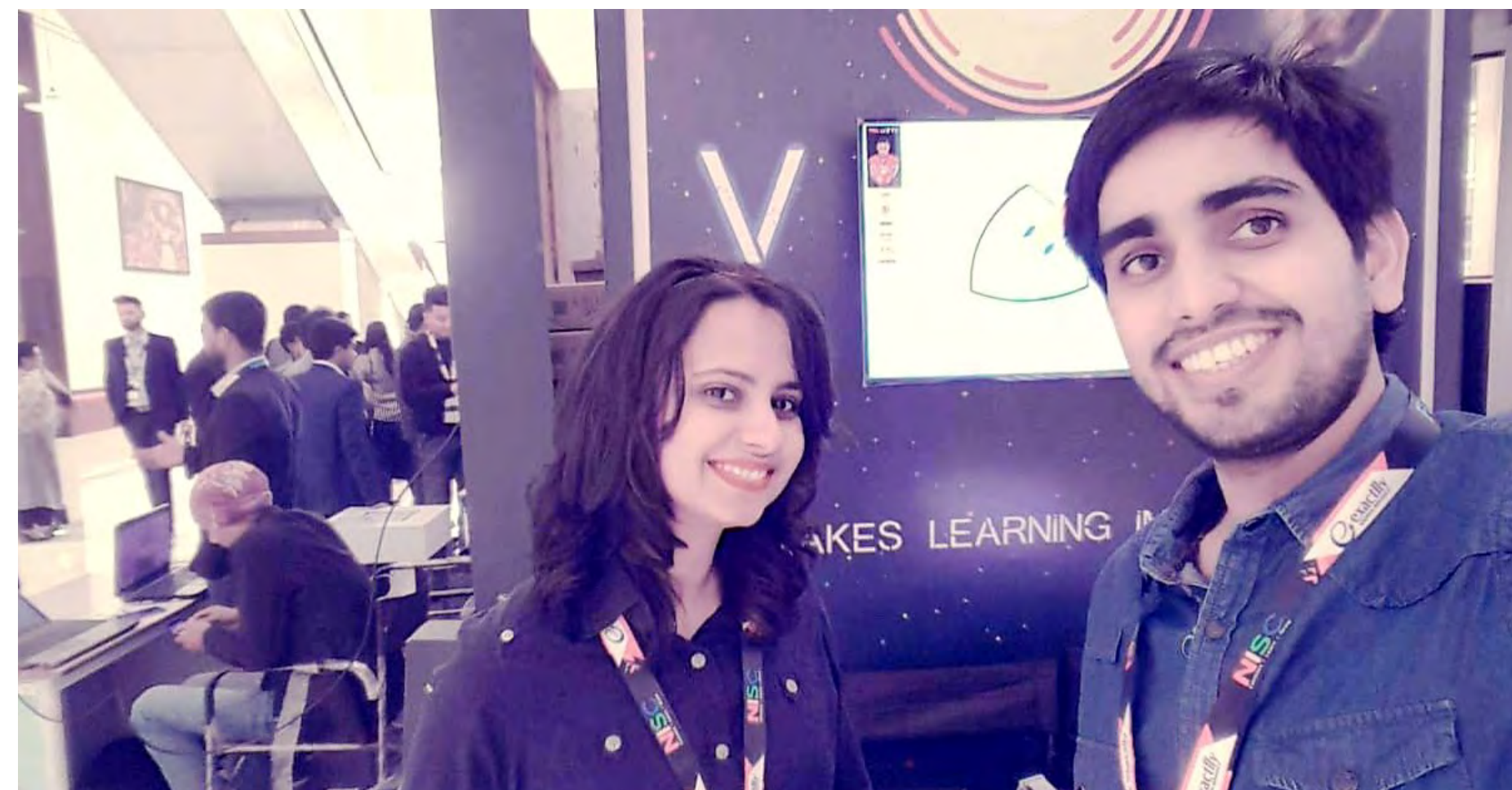
“Entrepreneurship is not a job, it is a lifestyle.”

Avidia Labs is a startup working on various tools to make skill-learning immersive, interactive, engaging, and fun. The startup aims to use cutting-edge technologies such as Extended Reality, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality to bridge the gap between skills being imparted in schools and future education.

Vidya was inspired to establish the startup to address the issue of rote, learning or memorising without understanding the basics, by creating a platform that would ensure children have fun while learning. She sees her newly launched web-based SaaS coding platform, QwikXR, reaching all students in India and overseas in a few years. She sees Avidia Labs becoming a billion-dollar startup and making a positive impact on society, she says. Unemployment is another problem she wants to work to address in the future.

Vidya considers herself her favourite innovator. She is passionate and relentlessly focused on inculcating logical and analytical skills in children and creating a better world and future for them, she explains.

The most exciting part of the startup journey for the innovator was transforming the idea into a working prototype and the final product, while the most difficult part was getting customers. When feeling uninspired, she listens to motivational music. She believes that more women



entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by providing them the right environment, financial support, mentoring, and networking opportunities. Safe workplaces for women and ensuring that they get all the support can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship, she opines. The entrepreneur says she has been lucky not to have faced any obstacles due to the glass ceiling and credits the support from her family and friends.

She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as informative, supportive, and helpful.



# Biological Control of the Destructive Invasive Rugose Spiralling Whitefly

**Startup Name / Idea:** Biological Control of the Destructive Invasive Rugose Spiralling Whitefly

**Founder's Name:** Dr. K. Praveena Deepthi

**City:** Eluru

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“A small body of determined spirits, fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission, can alter the future course of history.”

The startup aims to biologically control invasive pest Rugose Spiralling Whitefly and other such pests in horticultural crops. The imminent need for biological/organic/natural/regenerative crop protection strategies to prevent farm losses inspired Dr. Praveena to establish the startup.

The potential of *Pseudomallada astur* as an insect predator of Such crop pests is well known and is being mass-reared in Dr. Praveena's lab. The startup aims to effectively manage the pest problem through biological/organic means and avoid spurious pesticides.

Dr. Praveena sees her lab being well-established and having a capacity of up to 1 lakh eggs per day in a few years. She also aims to mass rear other potential insect parasitoids and predators, and sees the startup achieving strong growth.

Research on fecundity or egg-laying capacity improvement was the most exciting part of her startup journey while stabilising and maximising the fecundity, which depends on multiple factors, was the most difficult. She draws inspiration from all innovators who have succeeded despite lacking the necessary support or resources. “I continue to work,” Dr. Praveena says about the times when she is feels uninspired.

Preserving soil quality by promoting bio inputs and organic farming is another area she wants to focus on in the future.



She believes more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by providing funding and marketing tie-ups for their products. Addressing the struggles she faced, she admits encountering the glass ceiling.

She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as nice and says that the GUSEC team was accessible, prompt and supportive.



# Online Biomimicry Education for Sustainable Solutions

**Startup Name / Idea:** **Biomimicry India**

**Team Members:** Seema Anand, Prashant Dhawan

**City:** Bengaluru

## Her Favourite Quote:

“I think the biggest innovations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be at the intersection of biology and technology. A new era is beginning.”

Biomimicry refers to nature-integrated design thinking. The startup is working to scale up online biomimicry education to empower students and professionals to find sustainable development solutions. It aims to launch various products for biomimicry education and aspires to be an impactful company contributing to a sustainable future. The spark in customers' eyes was the most exciting part of Seema's entrepreneurial journey and access to funding was the most challenging.

The founders are biomimicry educators and their belief that learning from nature can help align social and economic systems towards sustainability inspired them to found Biomimicry India. Seema sees the startup becoming a part of all education streams in a few years and expects it to play a pioneering role. She believes biomimicry holds the promise to tackle poverty, waste management, etc. and wants to work on these problems in the future.

Nature is Seema's favourite innovator. It is where the most rigorous R&D has taken place for 3.8 billion years, she says. When feeling uninspired, she goes for a walk closer to nature.

She opines that more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by ensuring easy access to resources and funds, and guidance in legal and commercial matters. She believes the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by having a financial and social safety net, so women do not have to worry about failure.



**Seema Anand, Co-founder**  
Architect & Biomimicry Specialist  
Adjunct faculty at RV college of Architecture



**Prashant Dhawan, Co-Founder**  
Architect, Biomimicry Professional,  
MSc. Biomimicry & MBA from ISB



**Pramath Raj Sinha**  
(Honorary mentor)  
Vice-Chancellor of Indian School of Business (ISB)  
one of the Founders of Harappa Education  
& Ashoka University



**Peter Head**  
Advisor & Guide  
One of 30 global eco-heroes  
by Time Magazine &  
Biomimicry Educator



**Dr. Tamsin Woolley-Barker**  
Advisor & Guide  
World renowned Educator of  
Biomimicry & Author of TEEMING  
Founder of Borrego Institute of  
living design, USA



**Colin Mangham**  
Advisor & guide  
Head of Biomimicry Network Los Angeles  
Adjunct Lecturer at UCLA

Seema says that access to opportunity and resources is harder for women in India because of the glass ceiling. She says her journey with herSTART 2.0 to be good for mentoring and hopes the program helps them get access to funding.



# 16

## Introducing In-Cab Shopping Experience

**Startup Name / Idea:** CabKart

**Team Members:** Varnica Goenka, Abhidy Adukia, Vivek Goenka

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Your positive action combined with positive thinking results in success.”

CabKart is working to provide an in-cab shopping experience to travellers by providing them with a wide range of products in the cab itself. Apart from providing an added facility to travellers, the startup aims to help cab drivers earn additional money.

Varnica's personal experience of travelling in a cab late in the night and being unable to find anything to eat gave her the idea that the availability of food items, snacks, beverages, etc., in cabs could help travellers, which is how CabKart was born. Going ahead, the startup also wants to contribute to making education equitable, creating jobs, and working for environmental conservation.

For Varnica and her team, convincing drivers about their model and app was the most difficult part of their startup journey. The most exciting part was seeing more drivers seeing value in their proposition and agreeing to work with them. In a few years, the startup is targeting presence across Tier 1 and 2 cities and having tie-ups with leading cab companies.

The telephone is her favourite innovation, and its inventor Alexander Graham Bell is her favourite innovator. When feeling uninspired, Varnica says that she has a conversation with her parents. Varnica believes more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by improving their skills, backing them financially,



and making them feel safe at work. She also opines that the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by treating women at par with men at workplaces, promoting women entrepreneur networks and having better policies. The youngster says that she hasn't faced obstacles due to the glass ceiling but admits the environment sometimes becomes uncomfortable in male-dominated workplaces.

“It has been a great learning experience,” she says about the association with herSTART 2.0.



# Developing Plastic-Free Feeding Bottles for Babies

**Startup Name / Idea:** Cryba Bottles

**Team Members:** Ayushi Shukla, Tunesh Verma, Dr Satya Tapas

**City:** Bangalore

## Her Favourite Quote:

“If you fully accept the worst that can ever happen in your journey, fear won’t ever be an obstacle in starting up.”

Cryba Bottles aims to keep plastic out of children’s mouths and also contribute in saving the environment.

Plastic bottles are widely used for baby feeding bottles, but there is enough evidence to suggest that these bottles, as made up of Bisphenol A, are not safe. Recent studies suggest that Fluorene-9-Bisphenol, the alternative used in BPA-free bottles, too has serious effects on health. To address this challenge, Ayushi and her team developed baby feeding bottles made of food-grade stainless steel.

“Their vision is to eradicate the harmful plastic feeding bottles,” says Ayushi. She sees Cryba becoming one of the top brands in the coming years. “There have been difficulties along the way, but overcoming them with persistence and effective strategies has kept the journey quite exciting,” she adds. Going ahead, she also wishes to address issues like poverty, women empowerment, environmental and AI-centric issues.

CRED Founder Kunal Shah is her favourite innovator because of his belief that “Investors, partners or consumers are likely to give you a chance if you are persistent. But, as entrepreneurs, you need more than just persistence.”



When feeling uninspired, Ayushi starts working on her idea again. “It is the purpose of her life, and a person with a purpose in life is never uninspired,” she stresses. Times have changed, she says, denying ever having encountered the glass ceiling. Ayushi believes that opportunities like herSTART 2.0 are a great way to encourage women entrepreneurs and bridge the gender gap.

“I have learned a lot in my journey with herSTART 2.0,” she says.



# Fighting Cancer with Early Detection

**Startup Name / Idea:** Curobotic

**Team Members:** Pallabi Sharma, Dipankar Dutta, Manzoor Raziq Ahmed

**City:** Guwahati

Her Favourite Quote:

“All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”

According to an ICMR report, cancer claims around 20,000 lives annually in India alone. Curobotic aims to work on eliminating clinical errors in the detection of colorectal cancer and facilitating early treatment. The Curobotic team wants to eliminate the probability of clinical errors in diagnosing colorectal cancer, thus helping save lives, says Pallabi.

At a later stage, they hope to eliminate the need for a confirmatory test or biopsy. In the coming years, the team wants to expand its research to other types of cancer like breast, cervical, oral, etc. Pallabi also wants to develop software that can eliminate clinical errors completely and thus assist doctors. Poverty is another cause she feels strongly for.

The most challenging task was to acquire medical knowledge as Pallabi has studied computer science. As her favourite innovator, she looks upon Elon Musk, who is risking everything he has to bring a technology revolution for our better future. The most exciting part was when the system was finally developed and started categorising different polyps or tumours. It gave her sense of hope and accomplishment, she says.

In moments of despair, she cuts off from everyone and focuses on the future. She reminds herself that with a little push, everything will change soon.



“Living in a male-dominated society makes women reluctant to start their own ventures. If they can get proper mentorship and industry ideas, they can become innovators,” Pallabi feels, adding that this support can also help bridge the gender gap.

herSTART was a beautiful journey. I will forever cherish all the sessions that I have attended, says Pallabi, thanking everyone associated with herSTART 2.0.



# 19

## A Solution to Drive Social Impact

**Startup Name / Idea:** DELTA

**Team Members:** R Varadarajan, Reena Anthonyraj, Swapna Verlekar

**City:** Mumbai

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“If you fully accept the worst that can ever happen in your journey, fear won’t ever be an obstacle in starting up.”

DELTA is a Digi-tech solution working to empower field forces to carry information, products and services to grassroots communities and delivers, measures and drives social impact at scale.

With an experience of over a decade in social impact, the team wanted to deliver impact at scale using their knowledge and learnings in programme management and decided to found DELTA. The startup wants to see itself powering every single human interaction in the social sector, doubling productivity, and ensuring quality in social impact work. “They want field workers to love their work, be motivated, and know how to drive quality,” says Vinitha.

The innovator believes that they are not developing a product, but a value proposition, and making it contextual to clients was the most exciting part of the journey. The most difficult part was the product development. In a few years, Vinitha sees DELTA dominating the market with a 90% share, helping non-profits and social enterprises empower their field forces and generating sustainable revenue. Going ahead, she wants to work to make India among the top 10 in the UN World Happiness Report.

“She empowers women,” Vinitha says about social activist and her favourite innovator, Chetna Gala Sinha.



Vinitha writes when feeling low and believes that education, exposure and empowerment can encourage more women entrepreneurs to become innovators. Vinitha opines that women-centric initiatives like herSTART 2.0 can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship. “She feel very hopeful that it is already happening,” she says. Vinitha hasn’t faced the glass ceiling as she never thought of herself as the second gender and focused on realising her potential.

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it,” she says about the association with herSTART 2.0.



# Healthy Food Processing Method

**Startup Name / Idea:** Dough Adventures

**Founder's Name:** Dr. Manasi Kulkarni

**City:** Mumbai

Dough Adventures is introducing a food processing method to incorporate vegetables, legumes, multigrain flour, and millet flour in noodles and pasta to make them a healthier ready-to-cook option. Besides offering healthy and nutritious food products, the startup aims to boost local employment, prevent food wastage and gain a significant market share.

During the lockdown, Manasi, a doctor by profession, realised that many unhealthy snacks are available in stores but there are hardly any healthy options. She was inspired to establish the startup so she could offer RTC options that are easy to prepare, tasty and also nutritious.

“Our products are made of 100% natural ingredients and are high in protein and fibre. I see them becoming a household name like Maggi,” Dr. Manasi says, exuding confidence. Moving from physical stores to making products available online, in line with customers' changing shopping habits, was both most exciting and difficult part of the startup journey, she adds. Going ahead, she also wants to work to enhance healthcare reach in rural areas.

Manasi's favourite innovator is Tesla founder Elon Musk, as “he has excelled in hardware innovations. Manufacturing and hardware startups have different struggles than software startups,” she explains.

When feeling uninspired, she reads books on different innovators. According to Dr. Manasi, training women to delegate startup work by building a team can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship. She believes that supporting women entrepreneurs financially and technically in the initial years of the idea to prototype stage can encourage more women entrepreneurs to become innovators.



“After marriage, too many expectations have reduced her working time; Before marriage, nothing stopped her from doing my work,” she says about the glass ceiling. Shares that herSTART 2.0 was a great learning curve, and She is glad to be a part of this program she says.



# Towards Creating A Sustainable ECO System

Startup Name / Idea: **ECO System**

Founder's Name: Anusha Vyas

City: Ahmedabad

## Her Favourite Quote:

“Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and, above all, confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.”

ECO System aims for sustainable growth by providing alternative eco-friendly solutions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) waste increased manifold, and a lot was hazardedly dumped. The need for an eco-friendly alternative led Anusha to the idea of developing biodegradable PPE made from biopolymers by using agricultural waste as raw material. Through the startup, Anusha wishes to contribute to a sustainable planet with her innovative startup.

Anusha sees her idea maturing into a known solution in the next few years, providing a set of alternative sustainable products. The young innovator says the idea she is currently working on excites her the most. It is completely different from her academic background and has allowed her to innovate in an entirely new field, she says. Going ahead, she also wants to solve the problem of plastic by developing an eco-friendly alternative.

When feeling low, Anusha reads books or watches documentaries and biographies. She is deeply inspired by Nobel laureate Marie Curie who flourished as a scientist because of her ability to observe, deduce and predict and overcome the barriers placed in her way because she was a woman.



Anusha believes real-life examples can encourage women to become innovators. She feels that empowering women to overcome discrimination will go a long way in bridging the gender gap in entrepreneurship. No glass ceiling can stop you if you are passionate and focused, she stresses.

She calls her journey with herSTART2.0 as inspiring and full of learnings.



## Eco-Friendly, Pocket-Friendly

**Startup Name / Idea:** EcoTopia Earth N You

**Team Members:** Mayuri Bhate, Mandar Bhate, Gauri Bhate, Pooja D

**City:** Pune

### Her Favourite Quote:

“If you fully accept the worst that can ever happen in your journey, fear won't ever be an obstacle in starting up.”

EcoTopia was established with the idea of creating with eco-friendly options for existing products.

“While a lot of emphasis is on adopting greener technology and methods, being eco-friendly mostly remains in theory. This is because few products are eco-friendly and pocket-friendly. One cannot go the green way even if one wishes to, and the need is to create eco-friendly products that are also pocket-friendly,” says Mayuri, talking about the inspiration behind the idea. The team hopes to set up a manufacturing unit with strong R&D to innovate commercially viable eco-friendly products.

The most exciting part about their startup was converting their idea into a reality, says Mayuri, simultaneously adding that funding remains the most difficult aspect. In the next few years, she sees her brand present in every supermarket and accepted in the international market. Waste management and a practical approach to education are other areas she wants to work in.

Mayuri's favourite innovator is Steve jobs. “His vision makes innovations useful for common people,” she says.

According to Mayuri, educating college students to use their ideas, allowing access to technology in the right direction and inspiring them at that stage itself can be a great way to encourage women to become innovators. As for herself, when she finds herself lacking inspiration,



She looks back and recalls the more challenging situations she encountered and overcame in the past.

Glass ceilings never affected her, she says as she praises GUSEC for helping and encouraging women entrepreneurs and contributing to bridging the gender gap. Expressing gratitude to herSTART 2.0, she says taht it was very helpful and the sessions have helped her with the overall perspective of a startup.



# A Seed-To-Harvest App for Farming Projects

**Startup Name / Idea:** Family Culture

**Team Members:** Ahilya Kapley, Jasveen Khanduja

**City:** Nagpur

## Her Favourite Quote:

“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.”

Family Culture is a startup working to develop an app - Tap To Farm - that will help execute farm projects with the tap of a button. The startup aims to enable better utilisation of land and other farming assets, creation of passive income and employment generation in rural areas. The experience of pain points in traditional farming and the wish to bring about a change by streamlining the farming process and making it more accessible led Ahilya to establish the startup.

“I see my startup emerging as the Zomato for people planning to execute farm projects in a few years,” the innovator says. For Ahilya, the most exciting part of the startup journey was the Eureka moment, but it came after personally experiencing pain points in farming projects, she says. Going ahead, she also wants to work to address the problem of obesity.

Her favourite innovator is Elon Musk.

Ahilya says more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by organising more workshops where they can showcase ideas. She believes that the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by encouraging accountability and responsibility. She hasn't faced any obstacles because of the glass ceiling and believes that the only hurdle that came her way was her own mindset.



“She make sure that she keeps it focused on the things she can control,” she shares when asked what she does when feeling uninspired, besides spending time in the gym and listening to author Jordan Peterson’s podcasts. She says her journey with herSTART2.0 has been encouraging and empowering and expresses confidence in the platform to help more women achieve their potential.



# 24

## Helping Establish Closer Connections

**Startup Name / Idea:** **Feel Connect**

**Team Members:** Pooja Gami, Brijesh Patel, Darpan Patel, Amiras Mandirwala

**City:** Surat

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“ Knowledge is power, and we are the power source. ”

Feel Connect is a startup working to establish closer connections between friends and family in aspects of entertainment and professional requirements. The startup aims to establish healthy connections and attachments between people, even if they are separated by distance. The startup also sees professionals from across fields using the app for different purposes.

Growing boredom among people and the visible disconnect in society is what inspired Pooja and her team to launch Feel Connect. In a few years, Pooja sees the app being widely used helping people establish close connections. She also expects the startup to be a profitable venture with a significant revenue stream. She says that finding a niche market for the app was the most exciting and difficult part of the startup journey. Going ahead, the young innovator wants to gain a better understanding and go deeper in her pursuit of helping people establish better connections and networking with like-minded people.

Pooja's favourite innovator is Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla and SpaceX.

“At moments when I am feeling uninspired, I keep silent, observe things around me, and try to find solutions to different challenges we are faced with,” she says.



She believes that women can perform ten tasks at a time and are born innovators. “Women entrepreneurs only need some encouragement to turn into successful innovators,” she opines. According to Pooja, respecting the opinion of women entrepreneurs and trusting their abilities can contribute to bridging the gender gap in entrepreneurship. She believes that her association with herSTART 2.0 has helped her brush up her knowledge and understand the world of startups and given her more clarity about her own startup's path.



# Bus-Based Logistics to Connect Farmers with Retailers

**Startup Name / Idea:** GoBus

**Team Members:** Pratyusha Sarangi, Anup Paikaray

**City:** Bhubaneswar

Her Favourite Quote:

“The present is theirs; the future, for which I really worked, is mine.”

GoBus is a networking and logistics system that connects rural farmers directly with urban retailers using bus-based logistics. The startup aims to connect small and marginal farmers with urban retailers through bus-based logistics, yielding better returns for farmers.

The dependence of farmers on middlemen, and still not getting the best price for their produce, is what inspired Pratyusha and her team to come up with the idea for GoBus. The innovator sees the startup launching a beta service and having 1,000 customers in a few years. For Pratyusha, the most exciting part of the startup journey was the validation from multiple farmers who felt that the idea would work. The most difficult part was prototyping. Pratyusha believes that our education system encourages rote learning with little focus on practical learning, which she wants to work on going ahead.

Her favourite innovator is Nikola Tesla, and when feeling uninspired, Pratyusha imagines the hardships Tesla had to endure to leave his mark on the world. If he could do it, why can't she, she asks to her to regain her conviction.

Boot camps with successful innovators can inspire more women entrepreneurs to become innovators, she feels. In her opinion, gender-gap among entrepreneurs can be bridged through more gender-inclusive boot camps. Pratyusha says that the glass ceiling hasn't come in her way. "If you are capable, it doesn't matter if you are a man or woman, you can reach the top," she says.



She describes the journey with herSTART 2.0 as a great learning experience and one that cleared her doubts about entrepreneurship.



## Bridging Nutrition Gap with Natural Products

**Startup Name / Idea:** Hidaa Life Science

**Team Members:** Menka Gurnani, Raj Kumar Maurya

**City:** Ahmedabad

### Her Favourite Quote:

“If you are strong, focused, and passionate about what you do, everything falls in place.”

Hidaa Life Science aims to bridge the nutrition gap and prevent Vitamin D deficiency through its vegan solution, D'bello. The sobering reality that more than 80% of India's population is Vitamin D deficient, and a large number of people are malnourished is what led Menka to launch Hidaa Life Science.

Menka says that the startup aims to develop natural products which can help address the deficiency of various nutrients and contribute to improved health. Hidaa Life Science has its sights set on emerging as a global developer of natural nutrition supplements in a few years. Obesity and helping women deal with menstrual pain are the other challenges Menka wants to address.

Menka, who considers Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the worldwide web, as her favourite inventor, says the market trial of the startup's first product was the most exciting and difficult part of her startup journey. When feeling uninspired, the innovator does different things depending on her mood and the difficulty level of the challenge at hand. “She reads about great personalities, play with her dog, spend time in the natural environs, interact with family, and get ready for a new beginning,” she says.

Women are natural innovators and should be encouraged to focus on their careers, she believes, adding that and family has a big role to play to encourage more women entrepreneurs to become innovators.



In her opinion, treating women and men equally and inculcating gender equality right from childhood can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship. Menka says that the journey with herSTART 2.0 has been informative and advises women entrepreneurs to take advantage of the herSTART 2.0 community.



# Safe, Natural Colouring Products for Children

**Startup Name / Idea:** Kidsler Innovations

**Team Members:** Thulasi Krishna Haridas, Manju Krishna Haridas, Gayathri Mohan

**City:** Gandhinagar

## Her Favourite Quote:

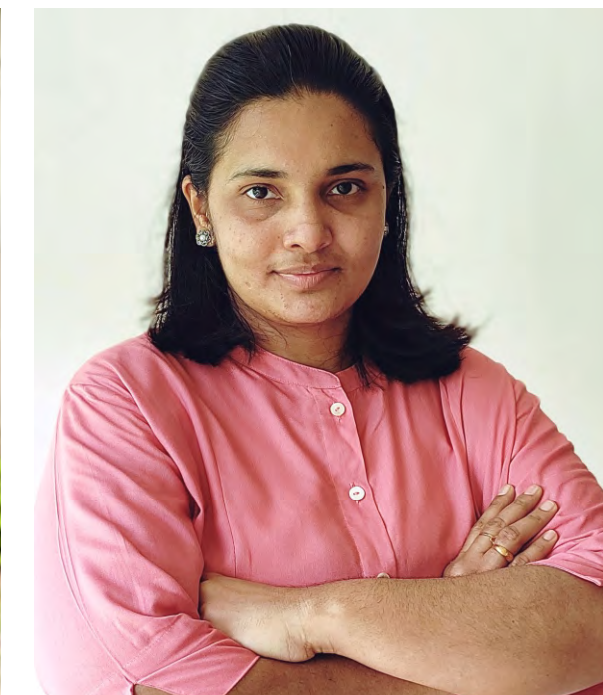
“In a day, when you don't come across any problems, you can be sure that you are travelling on the wrong path  
- Swami Vivekananda”

Kidsler Innovation is creating safe and sustainable colouring products and services for children aged 1-15. The startup aims to create products that help children lead a happy, healthy and long life.

Colouring products based on synthetic dyes have adverse impacts on children's health, and very few products that use natural dyes and non-toxic substances are available. The team was inspired to establish the startup to change this scenario. Thulasi says the most exciting part was the drive to build a brand and develop products that contribute to children's health and happiness. The most challenging part was finding new sources for mass production of natural dyes using microbes. In 7-10 years, she sees the startup as one of the brands most trusted by parents and establishing itself as a global brand. The startup would also like to work to address the problem of safe drinking water.

Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw is Thulasi's favourite innovator. she was brave to take up new challenges and foresaw where the industry would be in 25 years. That kind of a vision is important for an innovator, she explains.

She says that women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by making them realise that they can be independent and contribute to the nation. According to Thulasi, better support to working mothers, especially childcare facilities, can allow more women entrepreneurs to take off.



When feeling uninspired, she listens to music, reads, or goes for bicycle rides.

“The journey with herSTART 2.0 has been excellent, with a beautiful learning curve,” she says.



# Digital Tools to Empower Retail Stores

**Startup Name / Idea:** Lokaleye

**Team Members:** Dipti Palav, Prasad Palav

**City:** Surat

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“The present is theirs; the future, for which I really worked, is mine.”

Lokaleye is a retail tech startup working to empower & transform local retail stores into smart e-tail stores with a digital SaaS platform. The startup aims to help brick & mortar stores achieve higher sales and contribute to the country's economy. “They want to transform the way offline buying & selling takes place,” Dipti says about Lokaleye's goal for the next few years.

During interviews with offline retailers as a part of their college survey, the founders realised that the stores were struggling to attract customers. The idea of creating a SaaS platform that would allow retailers to get more customers is what inspired Dipti to found Lokaleye. She believes that her startup has the potential to change the way offline retailers do business. Coming from a management background, Dipti says that working with tech tools was the most difficult part. The most exciting part was when they made their dream become a reality. “She also want to do something to make our planet greener and healthier.”

Dipti is deeply inspired by Ritesh Agarwal, the founder and CEO of OYO Rooms. When feeling uninspired, the young innovator draws inspiration from her favourite quote, “Always remember why you started”.



“Women should support other women and see the change,” she believes. Giving women the same support in business they get in life can contribute to bridging the gender gap in entrepreneurship, Dipti opines. She says hasn't faced the glass ceiling and credits her family and husband for their unflinching support. She believes that more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators if women change their perception about other women and how they look at successful women.

She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as ‘amazing’.



# A Digital Learning Platform for Medical Students

**Startup Name / Idea:** Medguru Digital Learning LLP

**Team Members:** Trishala Rajesh Punjabi, Dr. Shital Punjabi, Dr. Rajesh Punjabi

**City:** Ahmedabad

## Her Favourite Quote:

“Lives of great men remind us, that we can make our lives sublime, & departing, leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time  
- Henry Longfellow.”

Medguru is the first digital learning platform for MBBS students and uses animations, 3D models and other innovative approaches to allow seamless and effortless learning. The create aims to provide high-quality medical education and contributes to creating better doctors.

The idea for Medguru was inspired by the struggles Trishala and her friends faced in the first year in medical college and the realisation that ed-tech revolution has not reached medical education. For the budding medico, the initial days were the most difficult part of her startup journey, while the most exciting was the app's launch and the initial downloads of the same. In a few years, Trishala sees Medguru offering different exam preparation tools to students.

Trishala, who considers Steve Jobs as her favourite innovator, sees enormous scope for healthcare delivery; venturing into healthtech is among her future plans.

When feeling uninspired, Trishala talks to friends and family and tries to have positive conversations with herself. “As an entrepreneur, there are ups and downs, and it is okay to feel sad or uninspired,” she stresses. Cultivating a leadership mindset from childhood can lead to more women turning entrepreneurs and innovators, she believes and says that equitable leadership roles at the grassroots level can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.



Trishala Punjabi Founder and CEO

She is a medical student and has been the top student throughout. Hence, she can understand the psyche of fellow medical students and create the exact specialized content required for them to get the absolute best results with the least effort possible.



Dr. Shital Punjabi Co-founder

She has been an MD and DGO double gold medalist in gynecology with a yet unbeaten record. She has been the top IVF specialist of Ahmedabad for 22 years and knows the ins and outs of medical education.



Dr. Rajesh Punjabi Co-founder

Having done a super specialty in France and being the top laparoscopic surgeon of Ahmedabad for 22 years, Dr. Rajesh Punjabi knows the importance of practical medical education.

Trishala shared that she did face the glass ceiling during her student days but hasn't had to deal with such issues in her entrepreneurial journey so far. “I have loved my journey with herSTART 2.0, and it's a brilliant initiative to empower women entrepreneurs,” she says.



## One-Stop Solution for Families with Differently-Abled Children

**Startup Name / Idea:** **MobiSETU**

**Team Members:** Dr. Shraddha Jasmin Diwan, Dr. Pankaj Patel, Dr. Dhiren Ganjwala, Dr. Ankita Bansal

**City:** Ahmedabad

### Her Favourite Quote:

“ I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination. ”

MobiSETU is working on a smart digital healthcare solution for connecting families with differently-abled children to service providers.

Families having a differently-abled child at home faced several difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Irrespective of their financial or educational background, families were forced to adopt digital tools, and this scenario inspired the team to come together for MobiSETU. The team aims to reduce the burden on such families by providing them with a one-stop solution for all needs, be it searching for information or connecting them to various service providers. Going ahead, MobiSETU also wants to offer its solutions to families of autistic patients.

They see their solution connecting 500+ families with a differently-abled child with over 100 service providers, says Dr. Shraddha about the startup's goals for the next few years. The most exciting part of the startup journey was working with like-minded teammates while getting out of the comfort zone and getting used to the business model and related terminologies was the most difficult, she shares.

“I talk to teammates. We are like energy boosters for each other,” Dr. Shraddha says about the times she feels uninspired.

His passion for technology and vision for the future makes Elon Musk the young entrepreneur's favourite innovator.



Dr. Shraddha says that promoting the work of women entrepreneurs and highlighting their achievements can encourage more of them to become innovators. “They can also inspire others,” she says. She believes that the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by providing improved access to finance and skill development to women entrepreneurs. She lauds the herSTART 2.0 team for being supportive and encouraging.



## Affordable And Sustainable Water Purification Solution

**Startup Name / Idea:** NanoPearl

**Team Members:** Dr. Prerana D Tomke, Dr. Shamraja S Nadar,  
Dr. Manjeshwari P Sonar

**City:** Mumbai

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“ Stay hungry, stay foolish. ”

NanoPearl is a startup working on an efficient, accessible, affordable and sustainable water purification solution. NanoPearl's innovative solution simultaneously removes TDS, heavy metals, and microbial contamination in a single unit, and aims to create a huge social impact by curbing water-borne diseases. The solution also ensures that, unlike RO systems, no water is wasted during the purification process.

The problem of poor drinking water quality due to microbes, heavy metals and TDS, and the high upfront costs and maintenance costs of existing technologies inspired the young innovators to work on a solution for purifying water. Going ahead, the NanoPearl team also wants to focus on making farming profitable, find ways for chemical-free food preservation, and develop natural cosmetics, shares Dr. Prerna.

She says that coming up with a proper business model was the most difficult part of the startup journey. In a few years, she sees the solution being widely adopted and becoming an iconic product.

“Steve Jobs is Dr. Prerana's favourite innovator. as he played the central role in the personal computer revolution and in developing the Macintosh, iPod, and iPhone. Innovation is impossible without passion,” she says.



When feeling uninspired, Dr. Prerana listens to pitches made by the founders and rethinks the problem she is addressing. She believes that addressing women entrepreneurs' problems in an innovative way and providing personal mentoring to them can encourage them to become innovators. She opines that giving an equal opportunity to women entrepreneurs and supporting newcomers can bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

“It has been a beautiful journey. I have learned a lot,” she says about her association with herSTART 2.0.



**Startup Name / Idea:** Natural Fibre Multipurpose Building Material

**Team Members:** Jisha Velikkal, Yadukul Bhuvanendran

**City:** Mumbai

Her Favourite Quote:

“Be just and fear not.”

Natural Fibre Multipurpose Building Material is a startup working to develop an environment-friendly and smart solution for the construction business.

As the threat of global warming gets bigger with each passing day, finding environment-friendly alternatives whenever and wherever possible has become imperative. The construction industry contributes significantly to pollution, climate change and waste generation, and there is an urgent need for eco-friendly alternatives.

One such alternative is the natural fibre multipurpose building material. Jisha says the it was a natural material wall that inspired her to work on the idea of developing building material that could reduce the stress on the environment. Through the startup, she hopes to popularise eco-friendly and cost-effective building materials. As the world increasingly turns to greener solutions, Jisha hopes her startup will be well-received in the market. Speaking about developing the idea, she said that researching on the same was the most exciting as well as difficult at the same time.

Almost every innovator and innovation inspires her, she says, adding there is something to learn from everyone. On days she feels she has hit a dead-end or cannot motivate herself to work further on a particular idea, Jisha prefers to shift her focus to learning something new. Ignorance repels her. It is a problem that she wants to address whenever she gets a chance.



There was no glass ceiling between her and her dream, she says. Much like charity beginning at home, bridging the gender gap, too, should start at home, Jisha opines. Her tip for encouraging women innovators is: “They must live life for themselves and live themselves.”

“The journey so far with herSTART 2.0 has been good,” says Jisha as she hopes for the momentum to continue



# A Home-Grown Sustainable Luxury Brand

**Startup Name / Idea:** NuPhi

**Team Members:** Meenu M Pillai, Siddharth Nair

**City:** Bangalore

## Her Favourite Quote:

“ Dream is not what you see in sleep. Dream is something that doesn't let you sleep. ”

NuPhi is a startup working on a home-grown sustainable luxury brand for the global market. The startup aims to create a sustainable brand with users and design at the centre, and one that has a positive impact on women empowerment, gender equality, inclusive manufacturing, and contributes to building sustainable community clusters.

The founder's innovation projects around leather bags made them aware of the various problems and shortcomings, which inspired them to work on a holistic, sustainable solution and launch the startup. In a few years, Meenu sees the startup successfully offering sustainable products for the luxury segment and the bottom of the pyramid. Going ahead, the entrepreneur says she also wants to bring back lost arts and crafts in product design and work to promote sustainable development in other areas. Financial and travel constraints were the most difficult part of the team's startup journey, Meenu says.

“I sketch and sing,” Meenu says about the times she is feeling uninspired.

Meenu is deeply inspired by former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for successfully using materials meant for space technology to create lightweight prosthetics.

## NU. PHI TEAM



**Meenu M Pillai**  
Chief Product Designer & Strategist  
NID- Apparel Designer.  
8 years of Industrial Experience.



**Siddharth Nair**  
Innovation Strategist  
Pursuing PhD - IISc  
Serial Entrepreneur



**Samridhi Singh**  
Institute of Chemical Technology,  
Mumbai



**Dipannita Ganguly**  
Master's in Science (Chemistry)  
National Institute of Technology



**Mahima Gandhi**  
Master's in Chemical Engineering  
Technical University Dortmund



**Davana Dhanraj**  
Polymer Science and Technology  
IIS Science and Technology



**Bhargav S Rao**  
Chemical Engineering  
Manipal Institute of Technology



**Kush Tiwari**  
B.Tech Textile Technology  
D.K.T.E Society's Textile and

She believes more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by providing them with the proper support with women-focused schemes and more opportunities. The innovator also opines the right policies and equal opportunities can help in bridging the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

“It has been a reinventing journey. It was a great experience listening to the mentors and learning from them,” she says about her journey with herSTART 2.0.



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## Making Plastic Packaging History

Startup Name / Idea: **Nutrideck**

Team Members: Shruti Dwivedi, Dr. Vijay Vyas

City: Vadodara

Her Favourite Quote:

“When the going gets tough,  
the tough get going.”

Nutrideck is a startup that wants to make plastic packaging a thing of the past and contribute to creating a sustainable planet.

Addressing the growing problem of plastic waste production and the challenge of malnutrition is what inspired Shruti to found Nutrideck. The young innovator and her team want to develop a bioplastic that is cost-effective, retains the quality of food, offers nutritional value when consumed, and can act as fertiliser if left untreated.

In a few years, Shruti sees the startup driving a huge change in the packaging industry by replacing more than 15 million tonnes of plastic used in food packaging. Going ahead, the young innovator would also like to devote her energy to address mental health challenges.

“She gets stuck, I imagine herself in five years from now, and that keeps her rolling,” says Shruti about the times when she feels uninspired. Shruti says that the most difficult part of the startup journey was coming up with the idea, making it commercially viable, and standardisation of the end product for effective scalability.

“Women are smart, and they just need the right resources and the experience to grow,” she says.



The youngster says that more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by introducing bite-sized learning modules in vernacular/regional languages on design thinking and ad-hoc or jugaad entrepreneurship. Shruti describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as ‘good’ and believes aggressive marketing of successful testimonials from the initiative can address the gender gap in entrepreneurship.



# Using Farm Waste to Replace Plastic Sapling Bags

**Startup Name / Idea:** Orgro Fibre LLP

**Team Members:** Jaimini Parmar, Gaurav Parmar, Kunal, Manoj Singh

**City:** Vadodara

## Her Favourite Quote:

“You learn more from failure than from success. Don't let it stop you. Failure builds character.”

Orgro Fibre has launched biodegradable sapling bags made of agricultural waste that replace plastic bags and contribute to a better environment.

The sight of saplings in black plastic bags and the impact millions of them have on the environment when discarded is what planted the idea of a natural and biodegradable sapling bag in the founders' minds.

It took five years of research, multiple trials and the support of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research for the startup to achieve the breakthrough. Orgro was successful in using agricultural waste to come up with a fabric that can be converted to bags of any shape or size. As an added benefit, the bags improve the top layer of soil when discarded, reduce water consumption by 30% during sapling growth and boost saplings' survival rate.

Jaimini believes that Orgro Fibres will make a huge contribution in saving the environment and help the country become plastic-free. She expects the startup to open new business avenues by offering environment-friendly substitutes for plastic. In the future, the startup also aims to work to reduce the usage of chemicals in farming, plastic pollution, and other environmental challenges.

For the young entrepreneur, the most exciting part of the startup journey was seeing their idea become a reality, while prototype development was the most difficult. Jaimini says that more women entrepreneurs can be



encouraged to become innovators by offering them special incentives, tax rebates, and other benefits.

When feeling uninspired, she looks at challenges from different perspectives to find solutions. She says that the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by ensuring equitable access to education to girls, providing women with the right platforms, and more opportunities for training, grants, and mentorship.

The young entrepreneur describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as 'good and informative'.



## An App to Easily Find PARKING Spaces

**Startup Name / Idea:** **PARKIN**

**Team Members:** Jaina Mehta, Vidit Ghelani

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Happiness is finding a way out.”

PARKIN is developing a database of parking spots to help vehicle drivers easily find parking spaces in Ahmedabad using its app.

Ahmedabad has grown at a rapid pace in recent years, but so have parking woes. The daily frustrations of vehicle owners being fined or vehicles being towed away over parking violations inspired the team to establish PARKIN. The startup aims to make parking a non-issue across the city by ensuring information about parking spots is easily available and accessible.

In a year, Jaina sees increased adoption of PARKIN, and managing parking at concerts and other gatherings through app integration. She sees the startup working with businesses, implementing a real-time booking system for parking and offering its solutions to different agencies.

Channelling their ideas into developing an app was the most challenging aspect, she says. According to her, adding more features to it and finding the idea of PARKIN was the most exciting. Going ahead, the team also wants to address air and noise pollution.

When stuck, the young innovators draw inspiration from the fact that the Wright Brothers made their first successful flight within ten years of inventor Lord Kelvin's words that objects heavier than air can't fly. "The work of several innovators inspires them, and it is difficult to single out anyone in particular," says Jaina.



"The success of women entrepreneurs is crucial to bridge the gender gap. More women will be inspired if they have examples to look up to," she opines. Jaina says that the environment and opportunities provided to her have been far more conducive than for plenty of other women, referring to the glass ceiling. She describes her experience with herSTART 2.0 as wonderful and says that more such initiatives can encourage women entrepreneurs to become innovators.



# Affordable Devices to Diagnose Micronutrient Deficiency

**Startup Name / Idea:** reportME

**Team Members:** Dr. Nithya M, Dr. Siddhartha Singha

**City:** Tadepalligudem

Her Favourite Quote:

“ Don't self reject. ”

reportME aims to develop ASSURED (Affordable, Sensitive, Specific, User-friendly, Rapid, Equipment-free, Delivered to those in need) point-of-care (POC) devices to diagnose micronutrient deficiency using patients' biological fluids.

The pandemic has ushered in growing awareness about the importance of immunity and people want to know if they are deficient, and if, of what micronutrient. The realisation that such tests are available only in centralised labs in cities and need of the hour is affordable POC devices, and that too at people's doorstep is what inspired Dr. Nithya to establish reportME. She believes reportME can deliver an affordable and efficient device for preventive diagnosis, which can help avoid future health risks. The startup also aims to develop POC devices for amino acids deficiency, food allergens, skin infections, etc.

She sees reportME's POC device in millions of homes, being used by diagnostic centres in a few years. She aims to address the challenge of sewage treatment in the future. Avoiding environmental interference while analysing the results was the most challenging part of the startup journey.

Dr. Manu Prakash, professor of bioengineering at Stanford, known for useful and affordable innovations such as the \$1 Foldscope, is her favourite innovator. "His focus on making innovations accessible for everyone is highly inspiring," she says.



"All women are innovators in general. We should encourage more women innovators to become entrepreneurs, and not the other way round," she says.

When feeling uninspired, Dr. Nithya listens to lectures of people who have contributed to society and approaches her mentor for advice. The innovator describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as great and says that such initiatives can bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.



# An Emergency Disposable Pocket Urinal

**Startup Name / Idea:** Rest in Pee

**Team Members:** Sushma Patel, Prakash Prajapati

**City:** Surat

## Her Favourite Quote:



Ye safar bahut hai kathin magar, na udaas ho mere humsafar.



Rest In Pee is an emergency disposable pocket urinal that instantly converts urine into a fragrant gel and can be used anywhere.

The experience of struggling to relieve herself while travelling, a situation made worse by a medical condition, inspired Sushma to find a solution to the problem. They want to help millions of people who suffer from this, she says. The young innovator's dream is to list her startup in a few years and make it one of the Top 5 in the hygiene/wellness segment.

According to Sushma, figuring out how to attach a paper funnel to the urine bag while working on the solution was the most exciting and challenging part of the startup journey. Going ahead, she also wants to work on women's and children's safety.

Her favourite innovator is Elon Musk. "There is one similarity between them she believes. He invested all his savings in SpaceX after two rockets were destroyed, and he could have been on the road if the third effort had gone wrong. In her case, She has sold her gold and liquidated my life's savings for this idea."

"I can't meet people alone in different cities and make deals. I have the courage, but I feel it's not safe or wise to do so," she says, about facing the glass ceiling. She believes that the gender gap can be bridged if women realise they can run the show.



She decided against seeking grants or funding from the government due to the tedious processes and opines the systems should be simplified to ensure women entrepreneurs can avail of the benefits. Sushma watches motivational videos when feeling uninspired and says that the sessions at herSTART 2.0 were eye-opening.



## A label Committed to Uplifting Weavers

Startup Name / Idea: **Rustic Hue**

Founder's Name: Swikruti Pradhan

City: Bhubaneswar

Her Favourite Quote:

“Why just see a tree? Think beyond!”

Rustic Hue is a conscious label committed to sustainability with a focus on working with handloom weavers for new design development. The startup aims to deliver contemporary, functional and durable clothing produced by local weavers using traditional techniques and aims to enhance community engagement and local practices, craft revival and cultural sustainability.

Swikruti always keen on working with local handloom weavers' communities, as she believes they have extraordinary skills but lack design innovation and environmental impact awareness. Her desire to bring about a change inspired her to establish Rustic Hue. She says that the most difficult part was to work on the craft revival project as it took many months to convince weavers to start weaving the traditional sarees they had stopped for a long time.

“In a few years, I see Rustic Hue going global in retail spaces and fashion weeks,” Swikruti says. Going ahead, she would also like to work on child welfare and education.

Sanjay Garg, the founder of Raw Mango, is Swikruti's favourite innovator.

When feeling uninspired, the innovator says that takes a short break to watch a movie or read. She believes women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by making them aware of the problem areas they are working on and providing them the right training and support.



She opines the gender gap in entrepreneurship can be bridged by focusing on talent and capabilities instead.

Swikruti says she has been facing the glass ceiling since she quit her job and started working on her own label. “I have chosen a tough path to work at the grassroots level. I felt both age and gender bias while working with weaver communities,” she says. She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as nice.



# Empowering Specially-Abled Kids And Families

**Startup Name / Idea:** Sashakt Prayas

**Team Members:** Vibha Tank, Jagriti Tank, Ravi Tank

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“There is always a way if you are committed.”

Sashakt Prayas is a startup that works for people with neuro-developmental disabilities.

A mother to an autistic child, Vibha felt the need to help parents like her face the challenges in raising children with special needs and launched Sashakt Prayas. Through their startup, she and her team offer Special Need Child Therapy Management via software that tracks the progress scientifically and methodically, provide local and customised learning tools, and create awareness. They hope to help children with special needs achieve better ability to handle situations and make life less challenging for their families.

What excites Vibha the most is the thought of the difference the startup will make to the lives of people already facing challenges. The most difficult part was making a business structure and convincing others that the idea was worth investing money, time, and energy in. For inspiration, she turns to her family and friends, and reminds herself of her goals. “In the next few years we can provide our services to more parents pan-India,” Vibha says.

“I would like women to be more empowered and be able to live a dignified life,” she says while talking about another cause close to her heart.



There was no glass ceiling to stop her, but she feels women innovators can be encouraged by placing trust in them, highlighting their achievements and providing them training and support groups. The gender gap can be bridged by providing women opportunities to grow, including financial support and mentoring for business, she says.

Vibha rates her journey with herSTART 2.0 as wonderful. “We have been given an opportunity to learn different aspects of business via various learning sessions,” she says.



# Making Science Education Meaningful

**Startup Name / Idea:** SciKnowTech

**Team Members:** Dr Megha Bhatt, Dr Saleel Bhatt

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Exposure leads to Exploration & Exploration to Innovation.”

SciKnowTech is a journey, where “Exposure leads to Exploration and Exploration to Innovation,” and aims to promote science. Their mission is to spread science in a meaningful way through basics and application-based learning.

“The idea came from my son and other children around. Children knew how to do the experiments by watching YouTube videos but didn’t know why that was happening. Thus came the idea for SciKnowTech,” says Megha, adding that the platform exposes children to various aspects of learning and makes them think out of the box. She shares that the startup has business modules of experiential learning in multiple languages with year-long programmes, workshops, science clubs, teachers’ training and online learning.

The most difficult part was making a graded programme with so many Education Boards in India and mapping them together, and the most exciting part was backing it up with experiential learning. In the future, they plan to reach the grassroots level pan-India and globally, to go virtual and to offer hybrid modules.

Her favourite innovator is Arvind Gupta, a toy inventor and science expert. “He developed many useful low-cost teaching/science teaching aids using locally available materials,” she says. Going ahead, she wants to work to provide meaningful education to society. “Like any scientific method, everything begins with identifying a problem and eventually developing a solution,” she adds.



Meeting and teaching children keeps her inspired, she says. Speaking of her association with herSTART 2.0, she says that “it has been a satisfying journey with a supporting family and work colleagues and an ecosystem like GUSEC.” She believes that such initiatives can help reduce the gender gap by encouraging, mentoring and hand-holding women entrepreneurs and training them from a business perspective.



## Towards Promoting Sustainable Fashion

**Startup Name / Idea:** Shveth

**Team Members:** Maira Doshi, Heman Sharma

**City:** Mumbai

### Her Favourite Quote:

“You learn more from failure than from success. Don’t let it stop you. Failure builds character.”

Shveth is an initiative to adapt to ‘less is more’ and is working to introduce eco-friendly apparel it is reinventing loungewear made of sustainable fabrics.

The realisation that fast fashion waste has harsh consequences for the earth inspired Maira to do her bit for the planet. “There's no Planet B, and it is high time for us to be mindful of what we are consuming,” she says. Maira is aiming at phase-wise growth for her startup, starting with establishing locally, then nationally and eventually globally. Going ahead, she wants to work to inspire consumers to adapt to an organic lifestyle and reduce the fashion industry's carbon footprint.

The most exciting part about her project has been the decision to start Shveth, while the most difficult was finalising the right fabric blend, she shares.

Seven years in the entertainment industry have, among other things, taught her to be self-motivated. Maira remarks that she, therefore, hasn't had to deal with a lack of inspiration. Speaking of encouraging more women to pursue their idea she says, “Creating more opportunities for that creating women will empower them to scale new heights and also inspire other women,” she adds that women empowerment is a powerful tool and can even remove the gender gap.



“The Internet is a powerful tool that can break any glass ceiling if used properly. Anyone with the potential and zeal will find their way to break the stereotypes,” she says.

Her favourite innovator is Tesla founder Elon Musk. as “he invented an electric vehicle which works on solar energy and is one of the world's most luxurious cars today.”

The attention given to events and processes at herSTART 2.0 was both surprising and heartwarming, she says.



# Producing Affordable Planting Material for Crops

**Startup Name / Idea:** **SM Plant Production Technologies**

**Team Members:** Sukhada Mohandas, Poovarasan S.

**City:** Bengaluru

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Don't search for a path, just make it.”

SM Plant Production Technologies is a startup working to produce high-quality yet affordable planting material for horticultural plants using innovative techniques. In a few years, the startup aims to successfully produce the planting material in bioreactors using embryogenic cells and make it in large quantities to ensure that it is affordable. Going ahead, Sukhada sees her startup producing planting material for a range of crops such as banana varieties, papaya, and pomegranate for a large number of farmers and contributing to their increased production.

The demand for planting material for horticultural crops and the huge gap in the available supply inspired Sukhada and her team to work on developing a technology that can produce the planting material. For the young innovator, the most exciting part of the startup journey was developing a large number of plants from single cells using bioreactors.

When feeling uninspired, she tries to learn more about the challenge facing her. She believes education and motivation are the keys to encouraging more women entrepreneurs to turn into innovators. “In fact, I believe it is happening already, as we are seeing more and more women become innovators,” she opines.



She believes that motivating women entrepreneurs at an early stage, equipping them with the right resources, and providing them with the right environment can contribute to bridging the gender gap between male and female entrepreneurs. The young innovator says that she has not faced any obstacles because of the glass ceiling. “In her case, no one has stopped her from becoming an entrepreneur,” she points out.

She describes her association with herSTART 2.0 as a ‘good journey’.



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# A Low-Cost Solution for Blood Analysis

**Startup Name / Idea:** Spectronics Solutions

**Founder's Name:** Sangeeta Palekar

**City:** Nagpur

## Her Favourite Quote:

“ You learn more from failure than from success. Don't let it stop you. Failure builds character. ”

Spectronics Solutions proposes to design and develop a blood analysis platform using image processing and machine-learning algorithms.

India's medical devices market relies heavily on imports and it was this scenario that inspired Sangeeta to work on her idea of innovative solutions that can help reduce import dependence. She now aims to develop an indigenous low-cost medical instrument that can be used even in rural areas.

She says that the initial startup journey was difficult but since then, things have been great. “It was exciting to get more accurate results at a low cost,” she says. Sangeeta sees that her idea taking the shape of a company in the coming days. Just like her role model Steve Jobs, her focus is on the end-user. “He had a passion for perfection and placed a lot of importance on the user perspective. He always focused on what they wanted; Every invention of his is a result of his out-of-box thinking,” she says.

In moments of self-doubt, she turns to motivational songs, friends, and mentors. Some ‘me time’ puts her back on track with fresh ideas. Sangeeta believes that women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by making them understand the importance of self-dependence.



Her family and friends have been her biggest support system, motivating her to make the most of her potential and never letting her encounter the proverbial glass ceiling. In her opinion, the gender gap is imaginary. “Only talent and attitude to work matter. If you have talent and passion for their work, no one can stop them,” she says.

Sangeeta describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as great and says that helped her develop the confidence she needed to build a successful startup. In the future, she would like to develop innovative solutions to help defence personnel.



# A Thriving Marketplace for Women Solopreneurs

**Startup Name / Idea:** **STREE**

**Team Members:** Diksha Singh, Major Vandana Sharma, Manasi Singh

**City:** Lucknow

**Her Favourite Quote:**

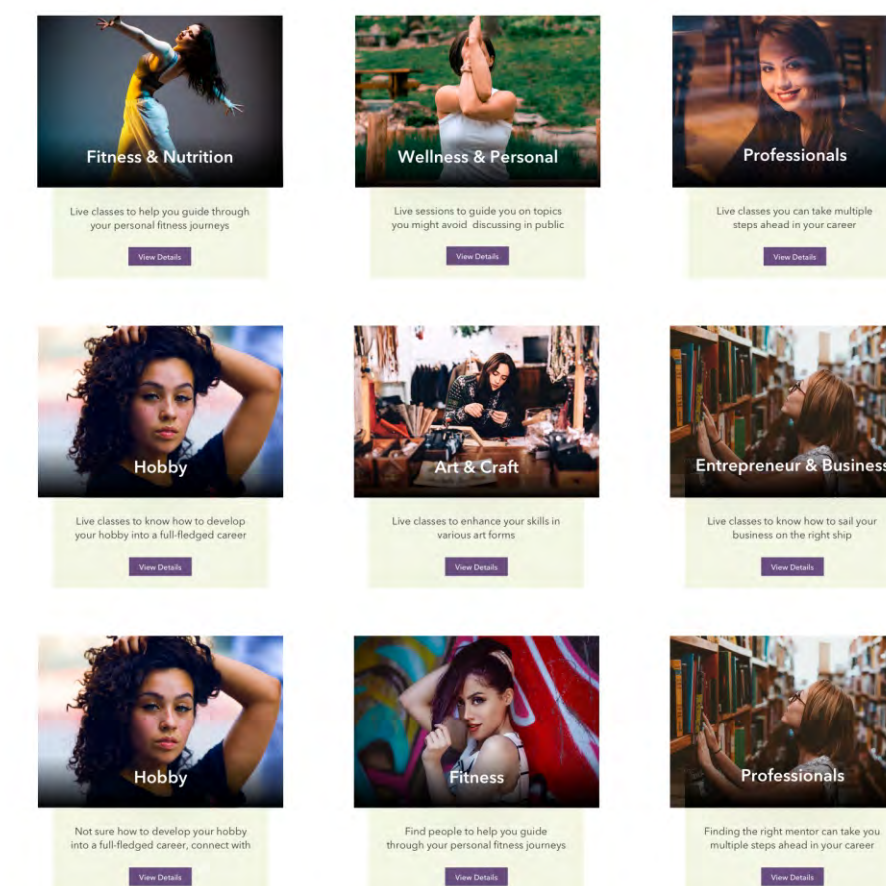
“Where there is a will, there is a way.”

STREE aims to develop a platform for women solopreneurs where women teachers and creators can create and sell their live courses with a focus on wellness and creative arts. The startup aims to build a complete digital infrastructure for women solopreneurs to grow and build their brands online and also support them in providing their patrons with a great customer experience.

Besides her own insecurities, the struggles faced by her mother, sisters and other highly talented women and solopreneurs due to a lack of supporting infrastructure inspired Diksha to launch STREE. Poverty alleviation, education, and mental health are the other areas STREE aims to work for in the future.

“In a few years, we see the startup building a futuristic marketplace with thriving women solopreneurs and making a positive impact on the ecosystem and communities,” she says.

For Diksha and her team, the most exciting part of the startup journey was the launch of their minimum viable product and the responses they received, while the most difficult part was fundraising. Her favourite innovator is Steve Jobs. When feeling uninspired, Diksha meditates, listens to music or goes for walk to regain her motivation.



Diksha says that she has faced the usual systemic biases, requiring her to prove her ability time and time again. She believes that the right role models, mentoring, and up-skilling can encourage more women entrepreneurs to become innovators. She lists the right knowledge, funding and networking as the tools to bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

“The team has been great in curating the sessions for early-stage startups and making them very relevant for us,” she says about her journey with herSTART 2.0.



# Making Supply Chain Management Efficient

**Startup Name / Idea:** **Tatkalorry Private Limited**

**Team Members:** Nikita Maheshwari, Shikhar Maheshwari, Vinod Patel

**City:** Ahmedabad

## Her Favourite Quote:

“Don't attach yourself to a person, a place, a company, an organisation or a project. Instead, attach yourself to a mission, a calling, a purpose. That's how you keep your power and your peace.”

Tatkalorry is a niche logistics and supply chain management company operating primarily in the ceramics and construction material industry and specialising in small load transportation, providing first-mile and last-mile deliveries.

The inspiration for the startup was born out of the desire to contribute to Make in India by supporting the manufacturing sector with effective logistics and supply chain management. The other inspiration was the failure of Nikita's first venture, mainly due to supply chain issues. Nikita's favourite innovators are her friend Anand Parikh and co-founder Shikhar. Tatkalorry aims to change the way retailers and manufacturers stock goods. For Nikita, the most difficult part of the startup journey was being stuck with a problem for a long duration and figuring out the solutions, while the most exciting part was later when everything came together. In a few years, Tatkalorry aspires to become the Swiggy of tiles, sanitary ware, laminates and plywood industries. The team also aims to contribute to the field of education.

Being a part of an industry with few women and being the youngest on the team, Nikita has often faced the glass ceiling, but she prefers to let her work speak for herself. She says that she takes a break, speaks with her father and meets her favourite people when feeling uninspired.



She believes that more women entrepreneurs can be encouraged to become innovators by developing risk-taking ability in them and creating an environment where failures are seen as learnings. Nikita says that the gender gap can be removed by acknowledging entrepreneurs for their skills and commitment.

“My journey with herSTART 2.0 has been wonderful,” she says.



# Helping Youngsters Develop Creative Writing Skills

**Startup Name / Idea:** **The Wandering Raven**

**Team Members:** Trishanya Raju, Uthara Murugamanikkam, Purna Singh, Rhea Menezes

**City:** Hyderabad

## Her Favourite Quote:

“Choose not to give in to the shame and judgment that people give you for living differently.”

The Wandering Raven helps develop creative writing skills among young writers and facilitates social and emotional learning through fun, game-based courses.

The education system is designed such that schools tend to focus on academic courses at the cost of art programmes. Trishanya says that she and her team saw the need for programmes that nurture the imagination of budding writers and help them develop creative skills with engaging and entertaining activities.

“We hope to help our community of writers fearlessly express themselves and find their voices as writers,” says Trishanya.

The team wants to offer a wider diversity of programmes to young writers in the next few years. They also want to work on innovative arts programmes that are accessible and affordable to everyone. She says that finding a team that held the same values and was as committed to children’s development was the most challenging part of the startup journey.

She does not have a favourite innovator but believes every innovator’s story has a lesson. When feeling uninspired, she introspects about what she is doing and the impact she is trying to create. Trishanya says that women entrepreneurs who are innovators have always existed and the world needs to see them for who they are.



She describes her journey with herSTART 2.0 as informative and interesting and opines that such programmes that support and guide women entrepreneurs can help bridge the gender gap. The innovator admits that she has experienced attempts to inhibit her growth because of her gender, but she doesn’t let such attempts affect her.

“I don’t back down from a challenge, and I am lucky to have an incredibly supportive team,” she says.



# Tracking Solutions for Public Safety

**Startup Name / Idea:** trackNOW Pvt Ltd

**Team Members:** Pooja Khemka, Suyash Khemka, Paulina Tenner

**City:** Ahmedabad

Her Favourite Quote:

“ Keep the passion alive. ”

trackNOW's myskoolbus app relieves the anxiety of parents and schools by tracking the movement of school transport vehicles.

It can be quite stressful to drop children at school bus pick-up points and pick them up on time. The worry and anxiety she suffered when she failed to pick up her child on time gave Pooja the idea of developing an app that would help parents and schools track the movement of the transport vehicles. Pooja says that she wanted to find a solution that would allow parents and guardians to stop fretting over the daily chore. Through the startup, she aims to ensure the safe commute of women and kids globally.

Pooja's favourite innovator is Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar. "He solved a grassroots-level problem and helped in the digitisation campaign," she says.

In the next few years, Pooja sees the company expanding its scope to ensure the safety of patients and women through a high-end AI-driven approach. Going ahead, she would also like to work further on the safety and security of children and documentation of violence against women.

According to Pooja, talking to her mentors helps her on days she feels uninspired. She says that getting the right industry connections has proven to be the most difficult part of the startup journey.



She feels that women should be encouraged to be innovators, adding Gujarat is the safest place for women and can inspire the rest of the country and the world to be the same. A strong support system in the form of her family ensured Pooja never had to bother about a glass ceiling. She opines that men and women should complement and support each other to grow to end the gender gap.

She terms her journey with herSTART 2.0 as inspiring



# Towards Fully Automated Algo-Trading Services

**Startup Name / Idea:** TradeAI

**Team Members:** Yesha Dhiren Shah, Hem Dhiren Shah

**City:** Vadodara

## Her Favourite Quote:

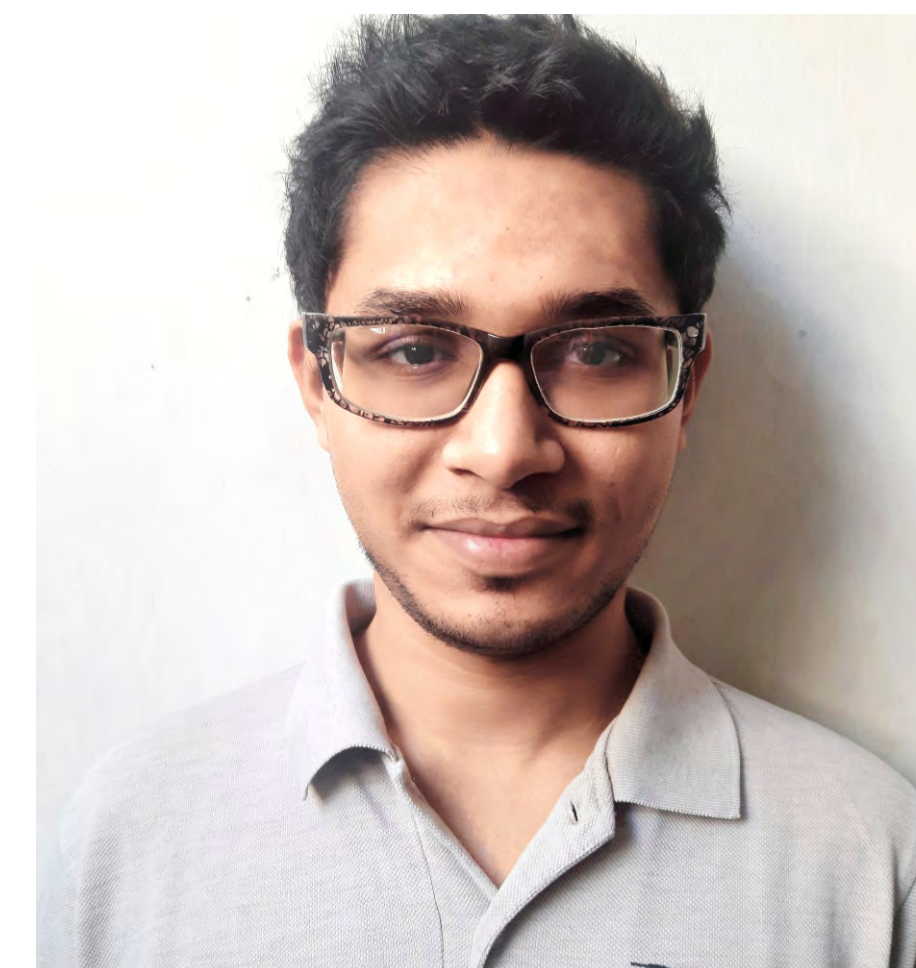
“It is extremely important to make something that 100 people would love, instead of creating something that 1,000 people would just like using.”

TradeAI offers a web-based service that codes the strategy of intra-day traders and enables them to create their own deep learning intelligence using visual data. A majority of the stock traders lose money because they let emotions rule their decisions and don't exit even when stop-loss levels are breached. This was a problem the team wanted to solve and, thus, TradeAI was born.

“My sibling helped me with coding the strategy based on the Fibonacci sequence. We provided end-to-end automation, and people were ready to pay for it” says Yesha. Finding the mathematical formula that would be profitable was the most exciting and difficult part of the journey for the startup, which aims to become Gujarat's largest and India's first fully automated algo-trading provider.

The young entrepreneur sees her startup acquiring its first 1,000 customers in a few years. Yesha also wants to work in the areas of plastic recycling and plastic waste management. Talking to experienced people and reminding herself of why she started in the first place helps lift her spirits when she feels low.

About her favourite innovator Ritesh Agrawal, Yesha says, that he is self-made and doesn't let his young age get in his way. and advises entrepreneurs to know the in and out of the technology they want to sell.



She feels financial literacy and making women believe in their potential can empower them to be innovators. She commends GUSEC for its work to promote women entrepreneurs and bridge the gender gap. Yesha says that she has never faced any glass ceiling.

Her journey with herSTART 2.0 has been 'smooth'.



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## Boosting Women's Health and Well-being

**Startup Name / Idea:** VibesGood

**Team Members:** Nishi Jain, Pranshul Khandelwal

**City:** Ahmedabad

**Her Favourite Quote:**

“Value yourself, value your time and the world will value you.”

VibesGood is a startup that wants to improve India's rank in the Happiness Index by boosting women's health, living standards and psychological well-being.

Some grim statistics regarding women's health and general well-being taking a toll on their daily lives and happiness levels inspired Nishi and her team to think of a platform that can lead to a positive change. By 2025, VibesGood wants to have its first offline store that will have zero human interaction.

More women being healthy and happy means the country's happiness levels automatically go up which directly relates to GDP, Nishi explains.

“I believe if I do my best, I can make a difference,” she says. The most exciting part of the startup journey was making the women they work with feel ‘wow’. “We received great feedback about how small changes advised by us had led to a huge change in their lives,” says Nishi, adding the most difficult part was to get the women to interact openly.

Her favourite innovator is Steve Jobs. as “he did not develop the computer, but also came up with unique ideas to sell those computers.”



When feeling uninspired, the innovator meets new people and seeks to broaden her horizon. Nishi says that she has faced the glass ceiling but she doesn't let the obstacles affect her. Women have ideas, and more female entrepreneurs can be motivated to become innovators, she believes. “But, unless they are self-inspired to step forward, no one can help them,” she adds. The young entrepreneur also says that the gender gap is everywhere but stresses that it can be bridged if women realise their powers and ability.

Nishi says the journey with herSTART 2.0 was good.



# herSTART Accelerator

To ensure that the shortlisted women innovators attained a better understanding of startup-centred and startup-adjacent topics, and were well-versed with the essential concepts surrounding entrepreneurship, GUSEC conducted a special Accelerator programme and invited industry experts from various fields to address

After a couple of scrutiny rounds, 104 ideas were shortlisted for the next round of herSTART and the following Accelerator program. The Accelerator comprised five

## 1. Product & Market Fit, June 08, 2021

### Speaker

Ajay Batra, Executive Vice President, Wadhvani Foundation



### Mr Batra during the session on Product & Market Fit

Mr Batra, a mentor and investor for startups who also served as a mentor for Atal Tinkering Labs and NITI Aayog, chaired the session on Product & Market Fit explaining to the audience

#### AGENDA

1. Startup Challenges
2. Going Beyond 'Product-Market Fit'
3. Customer Focus
4. Business Models
5. Pitching



## 2. Go to Market Strategy, June 11, 2021

### Speaker

Sahil Dharia & Smita Mishra



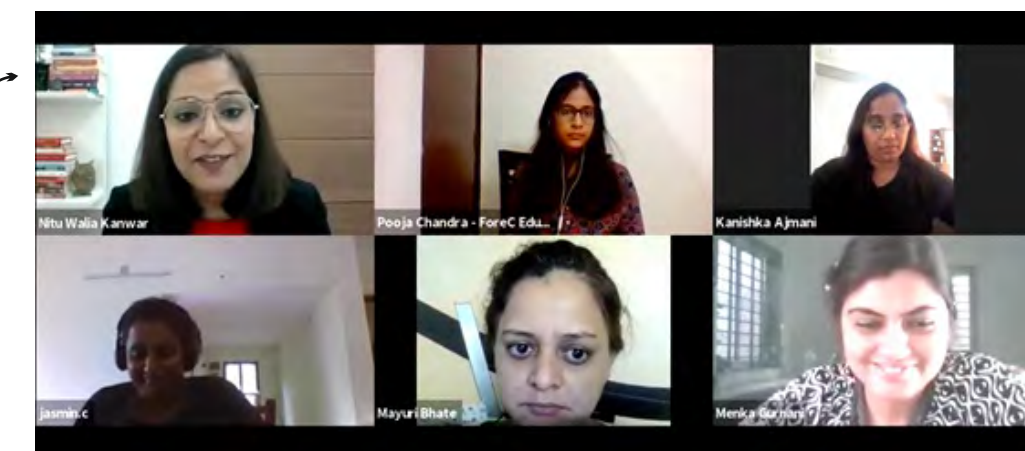
Sahil Dharia, CEO & Founder of Soothe Healthcare and a well-versed expert of product launch, entity management, compliance & regulatory/government affairs; and Smita Mishra, Founder of Fandoro, a cost-effective SaaS platform that helps enterprises and startups identify and manage their sustainability-related goals using the SDG framework, addressed the women innovators in the audience about how to chart out an effective go-to-market strategy and their queries on the subject

## 3. Communications, June 15, 2021

### Speaker

Nitu Walia Kanwar

### Nitu Walia Kanwar interacting with women innovators in the herSTART Accelerator



Nitu Walia Kanwar, Founder & Coach in Empower Image, a branding consultant, spoke to the women entrepreneurs in the audience about the ways to

## 4. Financial and Legal Compliance, June 18, 2021

### Speaker

Aparna Parelkar

### Ms Parelkar explaining the concept of Proprietorship during the session



Aparna Parelkar, Senior Manager at Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP and a well-versed expert of Corporate Tax Compliance & Advisory Services, spoke to the women innovators of the herSTART Accelerator and helped them understand the nuances of financial and legal compliances better, and the technical terminology of legal statutes and regulations surrounding startups and MSMEs.

## 5. Fundraising & Investments, June 23, 2021

### Speaker

Padmaja Ruparel

### A glimpse from the session on Fundraising & Investments



Besides being an active Angel Investor herself, Ms Ruparel, Founder of Indian Angel Network (IAN), is an industry veteran with her operating experience spanning large corporates, M&A and startups/early-stage companies. She spoke and helped the women entrepreneurs of the herSTART Accelerator understand the



## Programme Conclusion

With herSTART, GUSEC & UNICEF endeavoured to provide a platform for women with innovative ideas. Our call to women to be active trail blazers resonated strongly amongst women across the nation, more than 2000 of them gearing up to participate in the program with their innovations. Through various interventions established with herSTART, we aim to inculcate a gender balance to the startup ecosystem of the state as well as enable women to empower the economy of the nation and build a society which is progressive and more inclusive. We believe that placing women on the pedestal of innovation and helping them branch out in the right direction shall inspire more and more women to answer the call to build a better Bharat, and judging by the response we got in the last two versions of herSTART, we're already on the right track.



“A peculiar feature from the momentous event was the spirit of the program”. which incentivised the growth of the start-ups led by women entrepreneurs. A hundred women-led startups were shortlisted by the committee to present in front of an outstandingly talented jury. The measure of success did not depend on how far

**Rudri Pandya, 6E**

Some of our biggest takeaways from herSTART 2.0 were definitely the knowledge we gained through the sessions especially the ‘Go To Market Strategy’ session by Mr Sahil Dharia, and the ‘Financial and Legal Compliance’ by Ms. Aparna Parelkar were quite enlightening



**Tanishi Mookerjee, Thrifty AI**



herSTART 2.0 helped the entire core team understand Legal and finance better. We loved the session marketing. Thanks to the herSTART ecosystem, we got in touch with many useful leads.

**Vrunda Maniya, Aumsat Technologies LLP**

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