

ROLE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIAN ECONOMY: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

Women play a significant role in the Indian economy across various sectors, contributing to its growth and development in multifaceted ways. The multifaceted role of women entrepreneurs in the Indian economy has long been ignored. Even today, there are certain generalised notions about women that undermine their entrepreneurial skills and their achievements. Women, it is believed, are better suited for domestic chores, bearing, rearing and caring. Although the picture, as it exists, is quite the opposite. Of course, women are good at all that, but there is much more that they are capable of. This paper seeks to bring to the mainstream discourse the important issue of women entrepreneurs—their achievements, concerns and future prospects. And through this discussion, the paper intends to give an overarching and honest account of the role of women entrepreneurs in Indian economy. However, it may be stated at the outset that although the researcher does not involve much data that is quantifiable, the qualitative aspect of the data, and its interpretation, is expected to meet the desired outcome—of highlighting women entrepreneurs' contributions, challenges, and their prospects for the future.

KEYWORDS: Indian Economy, Women Entrepreneurs, Gender, Equality, Sustainability, Growth.

Introduction

The history of Indian women entrepreneurship is rich and diverse, reflecting the evolving socio-economic landscape and the changing roles of women in society. While women have been active participants in economic activities for centuries, their engagement as entrepreneurs has witnessed significant transformations over time. Here's a brief overview of the history of Indian women entrepreneurship:

Pre-Independence Era

Women in pre-independence India were primarily involved in traditional household-based enterprises such as cottage industries, handicrafts, and agricultural activities. Despite societal constraints and limited access to education and resources, some women demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit by managing family businesses, selling homemade products, and engaging in local trade.

Post-Independence Period (1947-1990)

The post-independence period witnessed gradual changes in societal attitudes towards women's education and employment opportunities. Government initiatives such as the establishment of cottage industries, small-scale enterprises, and self-help groups aimed to promote economic empowerment among women. Women entrepreneurs emerged in sectors such as textiles, handlooms, food processing, and handicrafts, often supported by microfinance institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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Liberalization and Economic Reforms (1991 onwards)

The liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s brought new opportunities and challenges for women entrepreneurs. Women began venturing into diverse sectors including information technology, retail, hospitality, healthcare, education, and finance, leveraging technological advancements and changing market dynamics. Government policies promoting entrepreneurship, access to credit, skill development, and women's empowerment further facilitated the growth of women-owned businesses.

Digital Era and Technological Advancements (2000s onwards)

The proliferation of the internet, e-commerce platforms, and digital technologies provided women with new avenues for entrepreneurship and market expansion. Women entrepreneurs embraced online platforms to showcase their products, reach a wider audience, and establish digital businesses across various domains such as e-commerce, digital marketing, content creation, and technology-driven startups.

Emergence of Women-led Startups and Innovations (2010s onwards)

The past decade witnessed a surge in women-led startups and innovative ventures in India, fueled by increased access to venture capital, incubation support, and a conducive startup ecosystem. Women entrepreneurs have been at the forefront of innovation, launching ventures in areas such as fintech, healthtech, edtech, sustainable fashion, social entrepreneurship, and impact-driven initiatives addressing critical societal issues.

Role of Women Entrepreneurs: The Indian Context

Indian women entrepreneurs have gained international recognition for their achievements, leadership, and contribution to economic growth and innovation. Women-led Indian startups have attracted investment from domestic and international investors, expanding their footprint globally and creating employment opportunities. Here are some key aspects highlighting their role:

- **Workforce Participation:** Women constitute a substantial portion of India's workforce, contributing to sectors ranging from agriculture and manufacturing to services. However, the workforce participation rate for women in India is lower compared to men, primarily due to socio-cultural factors, limited access to education, and traditional gender roles.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Women entrepreneurship in India has been steadily rising, with more women starting and managing businesses across diverse industries. They have been venturing into traditionally male-dominated sectors like technology, finance, and manufacturing, as well as creating innovative solutions in areas such as healthcare, education, and sustainability.
- **Family and Informal Economy:** In addition to formal employment, women play crucial roles in the informal economy, including family-owned businesses, small-scale enterprises, and agricultural activities. They contribute significantly to household income and often manage household finances and budgeting.
- **Empowerment and Financial Inclusion:** Economic empowerment of women is essential for overall societal development. Initiatives promoting financial literacy, access to credit, and entrepreneurship training empower women to participate more actively in economic activities, enhance their decision-making autonomy, and improve their socio-economic status.
- **Labour Force Diversity:** Increasing gender diversity in the workforce can lead to greater innovation, productivity, and profitability for businesses. Recognizing the value of women's skills and perspectives, many companies are implementing policies and practices to promote gender diversity and inclusivity in their organizations.
- **Government Policies and Programs:** The Indian government has implemented various schemes and initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation in the economy, such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter) program, Mahila Shakti Kendras, and Mudra Yojana for women entrepreneurs. These initiatives focus on education, skill development, financial inclusion, and creating a conducive environment for women's economic empowerment.

Challenges and Barriers

Despite their significant contributions, women in India face various challenges and barriers, including gender-based discrimination, unequal access to resources and opportunities, limited mobility,

and work-life balance issues. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from multiple stakeholders, including governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and communities. Of all the major issues of women entrepreneurs, gender discrimination in workspace, or the economic field, stands out as the most prominent one and hence, it needs some elaborate discussion.

Gender Discrimination in the Field of Economy

Gender discrimination in the field of economy is a pervasive issue that persists across societies worldwide, including in both developed and developing nations. Despite significant progress in women's rights and gender equality, disparities in economic opportunities, access to resources, and treatment in the workplace continue to hinder the full participation of women in the economy. This essay explores the various forms of gender discrimination in the economic sphere, its impact on individuals and society, and suggests solutions to address this critical issue.

• Forms of Gender Discrimination

- **Wage Gap:** One of the most visible manifestations of gender discrimination is the gender wage gap, where women are systematically paid less than men for the same work or work of equal value. This disparity persists across sectors and occupations, reflecting underlying biases and structural inequalities in the labor market.
- **Occupational Segregation:** Women are often concentrated in low-paying and traditionally female-dominated industries and occupations, such as caregiving, hospitality, and retail, while men dominate higher-paying sectors like technology, finance, and engineering. Occupational segregation limits women's access to well-paid jobs and career advancement opportunities.
- **Glass Ceiling:** Despite advancements in education and skills attainment, women continue to encounter barriers to career progression, commonly referred to as the "glass ceiling." Discriminatory practices, stereotypes, and biases prevent women from ascending to leadership positions and accessing decision-making roles within organizations.
- **Unpaid Care Work:** Women disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid care work, including household chores, childcare, and eldercare. This invisible and undervalued labor reduces women's participation in the formal economy, constraining their ability to pursue education, employment, and entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Access to Finance:** Women face systemic barriers in accessing financial services, credit, and capital for business ventures. Discriminatory lending practices, collateral requirements, and cultural norms contribute to women's limited access to funding, constraining their entrepreneurial aspirations and business growth.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue in Indian workplaces, creating a hostile environment for women and inhibiting their ability to work with dignity and safety. Despite the existence of laws such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, many cases go unreported due to fear of retaliation, victim-blaming, and inadequate mechanisms for redressal.
- **Maternity Discrimination:** Women often face discrimination and bias based on their reproductive roles, particularly during pregnancy and motherhood. Maternity discrimination manifests in various forms, including denial of promotions, termination of employment, and lack of support for work-life balance. These challenges contribute to women's underrepresentation in the workforce and perpetuate gender inequalities.

Impact of Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination in the economy has far-reaching consequences for individuals, households, and societies:

- **Economic Inequality:** Persistent wage gaps and occupational segregation perpetuate economic inequality between men and women, exacerbating poverty and widening wealth disparities.
- **Human Capital Loss:** Discrimination hampers the full utilization of women's talents, skills, and potential, resulting in a loss of human capital and productivity for the economy.

- **Inter-generational Effects:** Gender discrimination perpetuates inter-generational cycles of poverty and inequality, limiting opportunities for future generations, especially girls and young women.
- **Social and Political Marginalization:** Economic exclusion reinforces women's social and political marginalization, undermining their agency, voice, and representation in decision-making processes.

Solutions to Address Gender Discrimination

Addressing gender discrimination in the economy requires a multi-faceted approach involving concerted efforts from governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals:

- **Legal Frameworks:** Strengthen and enforce anti-discrimination laws and labor regulations to prohibit gender-based discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and compensation practices.
- **Gender-Responsive Policies:** Implement gender-responsive policies and programs to promote women's economic empowerment, including equal pay measures, parental leave policies, and affordable childcare services.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Expand access to financial services, credit, and capital for women entrepreneurs through targeted initiatives, such as microfinance programs, women-led investment funds, and financial literacy training.
- **Education and Training:** Invest in education and skills development programs that empower women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue diverse career paths, including STEM fields and leadership positions.
- **Cultural and Social Change:** Challenge harmful stereotypes, cultural norms, and biases that perpetuate gender discrimination in the economy through awareness-raising campaigns, diversity training, and inclusive workplace practices.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Foster collaboration between governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and international stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and best practices in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Emerging Women Entrepreneurs of India

India has seen a significant rise in women entrepreneurs in recent years, contributing to the country's economic growth and societal development. After a fair discussion of the problems of women entrepreneurs in India-which can also be extended to the global horizon, of course-it would be only befitting to outline the emergence of a new dawn in Indian economy. In recent decades, India has witnessed a surge of some excellent women entrepreneurs. Some notable names that deserve mention include:

- **Richa Kar (Zivame):** Richa Kar, the founder of Zivame, has significantly impacted the Indian lingerie industry by revolutionizing the way women shop for intimate wear. Her journey began with the recognition of a gap in the market, where traditional brick-and-mortar lingerie shopping experiences often lacked privacy, comfort, and accessibility for women.

With a vision to transform this landscape, Richa Kar founded Zivame in 2011, India's first online lingerie store. Through Zivame, she aimed to provide women with a discreet, convenient, and personalized shopping experience for intimate wear, empowering them to explore and purchase lingerie that catered to their individual preferences and needs.

Richa Kar's entrepreneurial acumen and innovative approach to e-commerce propelled Zivame to become a leading destination for lingerie shopping in India. By leveraging technology and digital platforms, she addressed the stigma associated with lingerie shopping in traditional retail settings, offering women a diverse range of styles, sizes, and brands to choose from, all from the comfort and privacy of their homes.

Under Richa Kar's leadership, Zivame not only disrupted the conventional lingerie market but also championed body positivity and self-expression. The platform celebrated diversity and inclusivity, embracing women of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds, and encouraging them to embrace their individuality with confidence.

Beyond revolutionizing the way women shop for lingerie, Richa Kar's entrepreneurial journey with Zivame has inspired a new generation of female founders and innovators in India. Her success story exemplifies the transformative power of identifying unmet needs in the market and leveraging technology to create meaningful solutions that resonate with consumers.

- **Falguni Nayar (Nykaa):** Falguni Nayar, the visionary founder of Nykaa, has transformed the beauty and wellness industry in India through her innovative e-commerce platform. With a background in finance and a successful career as an investment banker, Falguni Nayar identified a gap in the market for a comprehensive and accessible destination for beauty and wellness products.

In 2012, she founded Nykaa, an online platform that offers a wide range of beauty, skincare, haircare, and wellness products from both Indian and international brands. With its user-friendly interface, curated product selection, and expert advice, Nykaa quickly became the go-to destination for beauty enthusiasts across India.

Under Falguni Nayar's leadership, Nykaa revolutionized the way Indians shop for beauty products, offering a convenient and personalized shopping experience that was previously unavailable in the traditional retail landscape. Through Nykaa's digital platform, customers could browse, compare, and purchase products from the comfort of their homes, with access to a wealth of information and resources to make informed purchasing decisions.

Beyond its e-commerce offerings, Nykaa has also expanded its presence with brick-and-mortar stores, beauty lounges, and a private label range of beauty and skincare products. This omnichannel approach has further solidified Nykaa's position as a market leader in the beauty and wellness industry, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of consumers across India.

Falguni Nayar's entrepreneurial journey with Nykaa exemplifies the transformative power of innovation, vision, and perseverance. Through her leadership, Nykaa has not only disrupted the traditional beauty retail landscape but has also empowered millions of Indians to explore, experiment, and express themselves through beauty and wellness.

Moreover, Falguni Nayar's success story serves as an inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly women, encouraging them to pursue their passions, challenge the status quo, and create meaningful impact in their respective industries. As Nykaa continues to expand its offerings and influence, Falguni Nayar's legacy as a trailblazer in the beauty and wellness sector will undoubtedly endure, leaving an indelible mark on India's retail landscape for years to come.

- **Vani Kola (Kalaari Capital):** Vani Kola, the founder of Kalaari Capital, has been a driving force in India's startup ecosystem, championing innovation, entrepreneurship, and diversity. With a keen eye for emerging trends and disruptive technologies, she established Kalaari Capital as one of the country's premier venture capital firms, investing in promising startups across various sectors.

One of Vani Kola's notable contributions is her commitment to supporting and nurturing women entrepreneurs. Recognizing the underrepresentation of women in the startup ecosystem, she has been instrumental in providing funding, mentorship, and resources to female-led ventures, empowering them to thrive and succeed in a predominantly male-dominated industry.

Through Kalaari Capital's Women Entrepreneurship Initiative, Vani Kola has actively sought out and invested in startups founded or co-founded by women, addressing the systemic barriers and biases that hinder their access to capital and opportunities. By fostering a supportive ecosystem and providing a platform for women entrepreneurs to showcase their talent and potential, she has catalyzed a new wave of innovation and leadership in India's startup landscape.

Vani Kola's advocacy for women entrepreneurs goes beyond just financial investment. She has played an advisory role, offering strategic guidance, industry insights, and networking opportunities to help female founders navigate the challenges of scaling their businesses and achieving sustainable growth.

Moreover, Vani Kola's leadership and mentorship have inspired countless women to pursue entrepreneurship, break barriers, and shatter stereotypes. Her unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion has not only enriched Kalaari Capital's investment portfolio but has also contributed to building a more vibrant, equitable, and dynamic startup ecosystem in India.

As Kalaari Capital continues to invest in groundbreaking startups and innovative ideas, Vani Kola's vision and leadership will remain instrumental in shaping the future of entrepreneurship in India. Her dedication to empowering women entrepreneurs serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future for all in the world of startups and venture capital.

- **Shradha Sharma (YourStory):** Shradha Sharma, the visionary founder of YourStory, has made a profound impact on India's entrepreneurial landscape by providing a powerful platform for sharing stories of innovation, resilience, and success. With a passion for storytelling and a commitment to amplifying the voices of entrepreneurs, she founded YourStory in 2008 with a mission to celebrate and empower the startup ecosystem in India.

YourStory quickly emerged as a leading media platform, showcasing the journeys of entrepreneurs and startups across diverse sectors and regions. Through compelling articles, interviews, videos, and events, YourStory has become a trusted source of inspiration, knowledge, and networking for aspiring and seasoned entrepreneurs alike.

One of Shradha Sharma's significant contributions is her focus on highlighting the stories of women entrepreneurs. Recognizing the importance of diversity and representation in entrepreneurship, she has actively sought out and featured women-led ventures, providing them with a platform to share their experiences, challenges, and triumphs.

By giving visibility to women entrepreneurs through YourStory, Shradha Sharma has not only celebrated their achievements but has also inspired a new generation of women to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. Her platform has shattered stereotypes, challenged biases, and empowered women to defy the odds and chart their paths to success in the male-dominated world of startups.

Moreover, Shradha Sharma's advocacy for women in entrepreneurship goes beyond just storytelling. She has actively supported initiatives and programs aimed at promoting gender diversity, mentorship, and networking opportunities for women founders, fostering a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurship in India.

As YourStory continues to grow and evolve, Shradha Sharma's vision and leadership will remain instrumental in shaping the narrative of entrepreneurship in India. Her unwavering commitment to amplifying diverse voices, including those of women entrepreneurs, will continue to inspire and empower countless individuals to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations and make a meaningful impact on society.

- **Suchi Mukherjee (Limeroad):** Suchi Mukherjee, the innovative founder of Limeroad, has redefined the e-commerce landscape in India with her pioneering platform focused on women's fashion. With a vision to combine social networking and online shopping, she founded Limeroad in 2012, introducing a novel concept known as "social commerce."

Limeroad stands out from traditional e-commerce platforms by integrating social elements, allowing users to create and share their own fashion collections, discover new trends, and connect with like-minded individuals. Suchi Mukherjee's platform empowers users to curate their personalized style boards, shop from a vast selection of products, and engage in a vibrant community of fashion enthusiasts.

Under Suchi Mukherjee's leadership, Limeroad has gained popularity for its unique approach to online shopping, blending the convenience of e-commerce with the social interaction of social media. By harnessing the power of user-generated content and social networking, Limeroad has created a dynamic and immersive shopping experience that resonates with its target audience.

One of Suchi Mukherjee's notable contributions is her focus on catering to the needs and preferences of women shoppers. Recognizing the importance of inclusivity and diversity in fashion, she has curated a diverse range of products, styles, and sizes to cater to women of all shapes, sizes, and tastes. Limeroad's inclusive approach has earned it a loyal customer base and garnered praise for its commitment to empowering women through fashion.

Moreover, Suchi Mukherjee's entrepreneurial journey with Limeroad has inspired other startups and entrepreneurs to explore innovative business models and disrupt traditional industries. Her success story exemplifies the transformative potential of combining technology, creativity, and consumer-centricity to create meaningful impact in the digital age.

As Limeroad continues to evolve and expand its offerings, Suchi Mukherjee's vision and leadership will remain instrumental in shaping the future of e-commerce in India. Her commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and social empowerment through fashion will continue to drive Limeroad's growth and success, inspiring countless individuals to express themselves boldly and confidently through style.

- **Aditi Gupta (Menstrupedia):** Aditi Gupta, the visionary co-founder of Menstrupedia, has made a significant impact on menstrual health awareness in India through her pioneering platform. Recognizing the pervasive taboo and stigma surrounding menstruation in Indian society, she embarked on a mission to educate young girls and women about menstruation in a culturally sensitive and empowering manner.

In 2012, Aditi Gupta, along with her husband Tuhin Paul, founded Menstrupedia, an online platform that provides comprehensive and accessible information about menstruation through comics, illustrations, and educational resources. Their initiative aims to break the silence and myths surrounding menstruation, empower girls with knowledge about their bodies, and promote menstrual health and hygiene practices.

Menstrupedia's approach to menstrual education has been widely praised for its innovative use of storytelling and visual aids to engage and educate young audiences. By presenting information in a relatable and non-threatening manner, Aditi Gupta has effectively addressed the taboo and embarrassment associated with menstruation, fostering open dialogue and understanding.

Moreover, Aditi Gupta's initiative has had a ripple effect, sparking conversations, advocacy, and policy changes related to menstrual health and hygiene in India. Menstrupedia's educational materials have been integrated into school curricula, community outreach programs, and public health initiatives, reaching millions of girls and women across the country.

Aditi Gupta's entrepreneurial journey with Menstrupedia exemplifies the transformative power of social entrepreneurship in addressing pressing societal issues. By leveraging technology, creativity, and empathy, she has not only challenged cultural norms and taboos but has also empowered a generation of girls to embrace their bodies with confidence and dignity.

As Menstrupedia continues to expand its reach and impact, Aditi Gupta's vision and leadership will remain instrumental in advancing menstrual health awareness and education in India and beyond. Her tireless advocacy for menstrual equity and empowerment serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for individuals and organizations working to create a more inclusive and supportive world for women and girls.

- **Swati Bhargava (CashKaro):** Swati Bhargava, the dynamic co-founder of CashKaro, has been instrumental in shaping the e-commerce landscape in India through her innovative cashback and coupons platform. With a vision to revolutionize the way Indians shop online, she co-founded CashKaro in 2013 alongside her husband, Rohan Bhargava, leveraging their expertise in digital marketing and technology.

CashKaro quickly emerged as India's largest cashback and coupons website, offering users the opportunity to earn cashback rewards on their online purchases from a wide range of retailers across various categories. Swati Bhargava's platform pioneered the concept of cashback in India, incentivizing consumers to shop smarter and save money while driving sales for partner retailers.

Under Swati Bhargava's leadership, CashKaro has transformed the way Indians approach online shopping, introducing a new paradigm of value-driven and rewarding shopping experiences. By partnering with leading e-commerce platforms and brands, CashKaro has expanded its reach and influence, becoming a trusted destination for millions of savvy shoppers seeking discounts, deals, and savings.

Swati Bhargava's entrepreneurial journey with CashKaro has not only disrupted the traditional e-commerce model but has also empowered consumers with greater transparency, choice, and affordability. Her platform has democratized access to savings and rewards, enabling individuals from all walks of life to make the most of their online shopping experience.

Moreover, Swati Bhargava's leadership and innovation have earned her recognition and accolades within the e-commerce industry and beyond. She has been a vocal advocate for entrepreneurship, women in tech, and digital empowerment, inspiring others to pursue their dreams and harness the power of technology to drive positive change.

As CashKaro continues to grow and innovate, Swati Bhargava's vision and leadership will remain instrumental in shaping the future of e-commerce in India. Her commitment to value, innovation, and customer-centricity has positioned CashKaro as a market leader and a catalyst for growth and transformation in the digital economy.

- **Upasana Taku (MobiKwik):** Upasana Taku, alongside her husband Bipin Preet Singh, co-founded MobiKwik in 2009 with a vision to revolutionize the digital payment landscape in India. Their aim was to create a seamless and secure platform that would empower millions of Indians by providing a wide range of financial services. MobiKwik emerged as a pioneering force in the fintech industry, offering mobile wallets, digital payments, bill payments, and more, catering to the evolving needs of consumers in the digital age.

As the co-founder of MobiKwik, Upasana Taku played a pivotal role in shaping the company's strategic direction and driving its growth trajectory. With a strong focus on innovation and customer-centricity, she led efforts to develop user-friendly solutions that catered to the diverse needs of India's burgeoning digital population. Under her leadership, MobiKwik became synonymous with convenience, reliability, and security in the realm of digital transactions.

Beyond her role as a co-founder, Upasana Taku has been a vocal advocate for financial inclusion and empowerment. She recognized the transformative potential of digital payments in democratizing access to financial services, particularly for underserved and unbanked populations in India. Through MobiKwik's initiatives and partnerships, she sought to bridge the gap between traditional banking systems and the aspirations of millions of Indians seeking convenient and affordable financial solutions.

Upasana Taku's entrepreneurial journey with MobiKwik embodies resilience, innovation, and a commitment to driving positive change in society. By leveraging technology to democratize access to financial services, she has helped empower individuals and businesses across India, catalyzing economic growth and fostering a culture of digital inclusion. As MobiKwik continues to evolve and expand its offerings, Upasana Taku's vision of creating a seamless and secure digital payment platform continues to inspire millions, shaping the future of finance in India and beyond.

These women entrepreneurs have not only achieved remarkable success in their respective fields but have also paved the way for countless other women to enter the world of entrepreneurship in India. Their stories serve as inspiration for aspiring women entrepreneurs across the country. At this point, it must be stated that the list of successful women entrepreneurs of India is not all exhausting. There are many more names that are making India proud, and Indian economy, richer.

Conclusion

The paper discusses the pivotal role women play in the Indian economy, addressing both the challenges they face and the prospects they offer. It highlights various aspects such as workforce participation, entrepreneurship, family and informal economy, empowerment, diversity, government policies, and programs. Moreover, it sheds light on the forms of gender discrimination prevalent in the economic sphere, including the wage gap, occupational segregation, glass ceiling, unpaid care work, access to finance, sexual harassment, and maternity discrimination, along with their impact on individuals and society. Additionally, it suggests solutions to address these challenges, emphasizing legal frameworks, gender-responsive policies, financial inclusion, education and training, cultural and social change, collaboration, and partnership. Furthermore, it showcases the remarkable contributions of emerging women entrepreneurs in India, such as Richa Kar (Zivame), Falguni Nayar (Nykaa), Vani Kola (Kalaari Capital), Shradha Sharma (YourStory), Suchi Mukherjee (Limeroad), Aditi Gupta (Menstrupedia), Swati Bhargava (CashKaro), and Upasana Taku (MobiKwik), illustrating their achievements and impact on the entrepreneurial landscape. Finally, it concludes by emphasizing the importance of addressing gender discrimination to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, where all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to society.

Gender discrimination in the field of economy remains a formidable barrier to women's full participation, economic empowerment, and inclusive growth. By addressing systemic inequalities, challenging discriminatory practices, and promoting gender-responsive policies and programs, we can create a more equitable and prosperous society where all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to the economy. Achieving gender equality in the economy is not only a matter of social justice but also a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development and shared prosperity.

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