CASE STUDIES IN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: GOING AHEAD WITH REDOUBLED CONFIDENCE

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Abstract: **In this male dominated world, generally women lag behind in every sphere of life. People think that business field is not an exception. But many business women are proving this to be a misconception for most enthusiastic Indian Youth, to be an entrepreneur is a manifestation of the great startup dream. They want to find an idea that solves a need, take the risk, work hard and become rich. Women are in no way interior in this aspect. They are also part of the game, the treasure hunt. More than 14 % of all startups, mostly in technology, in India have women founders and co=founders. More than 50 % of the entry technology jobs in the country are being grabbed by women. This article introduces such promising women entrepreneurs, their modus-operandi, their achievements etc, so that women students of management education get inspired, to follow the same enlightened path. The writer of this article is highly indebted to "The Economic Times' which published an extensive success stories of such women, in its issue dated 30.04.2019.**

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Introduction

Times are changing rapidly. There has been a rising cult of women tech founders. In the start-up and tech world, previously it was a man's world, with sexual superiority and gender bias; where women who are the part of the technology world, who now play a prominent role as professionals or founders of companies has suffered from these biases.

"Happy Shappy" is one of India's fastest growing social-commerce companies. Sana H Sood is the co-founder of the firm. Once a venture capital investor asked her bluntly what does she do. It is an absurd question which is insulting too for Sood who co-founder the company with her husband, Nitin, a former World Bank Consultant. The guy who asked the question might not have known about the capability of Sood as a successful entrepreneur who spent a decade in the United States, working with global firms like PWC and the Gate group. Later the wife and husband shifted to India in 2016, with their two children to launch startup on their own. She is also an author whose blogs are popular among business circles. In her blogs she writes about her experiences as an entrepreneur. She is also the creative head of the company.

She had some ugly experiences too. An investor texted her a message asking her whether her husband was asleep. He was ruthlessly removed from the list of their investors. Another problem faced by women entrepreneurs is the dearth of women employees in their firms. Mrs. Sood faced a business problem in her company. The company helps its users find new life style and fashion products, buy them or mark them on the platform to purchase later. Sood and her husband are building a layer of artificial intelligence (AI) which will help users discover products they desire using image recognition. Her husband could not have solved the discovery problem and identifying the right products all by himself. If Mrs Sood had not assisted him.

"Happy Shappy" demonstrates what women perform: click pictures, do window shopping, short lists products and create multiple wish lists. AI can not perform everything. For many tasks, the human mind needs to be put at work. It takes much time to explain her tech team the work on the app. A woman's mind has to be applied. But she is not bothered by technology because theirs itself is a technology company. She knows full well who exactly their users are. So technology does not daunt for her.

Soods thoughts are reflected by many female entrepreneurs. 'Cashkaro' is the largest affiliate marketing company whose clients are Flipkart, Amazon and more than 1000 oher commerce companies. Swati Bhargava, the co-founder of the company faced the same problems as Mrs. Sood did. She complains that investors enquire her husband Rohan about the tech stack and her about the number of workers in the company. She traces back roots of the bias against women in the Indian society itself. She is highly educated and qualified, who did her under-graduation in Maths and Economics from the London School of Economics.

The academic background of Smt Swati Bhargava was interesting. She hails from a small town, Ambala. She got a scholarship from the Singapore government to pursue her higher secondary from abroad. Her parents and well wishers were alarmed much, as to how a teenaged girl would go all the way abroad, all by herself. But she proved her mettle by successfully completing her education and securing a job at Goldman Sachs in the U. K. She was the junior most and the only woman in her team. But over years, she has become one of the poster children of women in tech in India.

Deals company My Dala was launched nearly 10 years ago by Anisha Singh who was the CEO and founder of the firm. She says that in those days at every conference on women, technology and start-ups, there were some regular four to five women. But at present, we can draw inspiration from many women entrepreneurs. Asha Singh was motivated by Julie Holdren, President and CEO

of Olympus group, a data warehousing concern. Asha received internship training from Julie Holdren who was almost a demi God for her. She ran a company with a broad insight into technology. Physically too, she was very fit. She could do 30 pushups at a stretch. Asha craved to become like Julie. She achieved 25 pushups at a time. Asha was always ahead of others in talent as well as performance. She took her P.G. Degree in Management in IT. She served in an e-learning company initially. She accomplished design integrations of two systems to communicate with each other. Women of such caliber were rare in those days. She was eagerly sought after by unmarried boys for marriage. Elderly people wanted her as their daughter in law. To avoid such embarrassing situations, she used to wear a cheap engagement ring, to ward off unwanted attention. In those days e-learning was in high demand. Very few women were found in that field. Anisha Singh was always surrounded by men.

It is not the case with women entrepreneurs only. Even the young tech professionals are the victims of indecent and flirtatious advances. Barkha Sarma, CEO and Founder of Bash. She faced some uncomfortable situations with her boss who remarked that she looked sexier with her hair open etc. Their company provides artificial intelligence based human resource solutions. She experiences this gender bias more as a professional than as an entrepreneur. Women, she says were confined to office work whereas men could travel abroad. One of the reasons assigned to the downgrading of women in professionalism is that they are inferior to men in understanding the technology. But BarkhaSarma proved this notion to be false. She can code and understand business pretty well. Her insight is explicit when he says that their product automates mundane hard work. Human beings can act with empathy, creativity and formulate new polices effectively. They can understand the psychology of the customers where as bots can do only file work, raising tickets and complaints. Sharma is a forerunner in the future technology like vision completing. By this solution, the companies can safely do way with the swiping machines for recording the attendance of their employees, at the very entrance of the office and mark attendance. Though Sharma hailed from an ordinary town, Sitarganj in Uttarakhand, she could get herself immersed in the tech world easily.

There are many such women who have explored and built companies around Al-enabled bots. Morph.ai, AceBot.ai and Kontikilabs are a few of them. They have one thing in common. They are part of Facebook's women in tech initiative called "She Leads Tech". Mr. Satyajeet Singh, Head of Platform partnerships, facebook India and South Asia reiterated that in can change inequality in the start-up ecosystem and provides women founded or co-founded start-ups access to stools, mentership and resources which help them overcome some of the barriers they face and build a successful business in technology. 'She Leads Tech' has 596 members across 87 cities and 30 women mentor. The organisation guided several members in scaling their business , strengthening their products by extending its resources and creating marketing strategies, to reach their customers. Facebook mentors start-ups who have no ample financial resources and provides technical support to them including ad credits, tools credit and service credits from premier partners like Animoto, Angel List and Stripe.

Even the number of women in coding and software has been increasing steadily. During 1950-1980, for three decades, coding was being done by women basically because it was aimed that women can do more justice to software development, than men as it was a gloried clerical job. Santanupaul Co-founder and CEO of "talent sprint" aimed that women were displaced by the system gradually as men hired more men through referralbased hiring processes. 'Talent Sprint' is a digital upskilling and boot camp platform. It joined hands with Google to provide scholarships to 600 girls in software courses.

Morph.ai is working on suggestive AI, to get more value out of marketing chatbot. Nityati Agarwal, Co-founder of morph.ai says that they will help in convincing the customer to buy a product they are aware of the company's timings, when online/offline, what is the drop rate, conversion rate etc. They help brands generate more ROI out of their marketing expenditure.

Sameera Vanekar founded Ace Bot.ai to give users a better experience online by removing pop-ups and embed on AI-enabled chat interface with which the user interacts at his own discretion. She says that they took the chatbot technology and customized it for the marketer so that the user experience is not broken, But she is astonished by the gender-bias, even here, which she experienced when she worked with no less brands like HP and IBM, She stresses that more and more women entrepreneurs are needed to bridge the gap.

PayalChakraborthy is the founder of Kontikilabs, which concentrates on natural language procession, deep learning and machine learning. Once someone enters the internet and entity, they run an algorithm and then create the bot to perform better to get the desired outcome.

Those who study the industry are of the opinion that the number of women in AI and data science is increasing. Women want to build up an aspiration value. Even when they are on maternity leave, they keep on upgrading themselves, by taking up technology courses, as Ishan Gupta, India M. D of Udacity has put it in an online training platform.

ShakunSethi, founder of Tickle life, a technology platform for sexual problems, where users can come in person and discuss their sexual problems, lost all her data as her head of techonology did not buy enough space in the cloud to run a beta testing. Sethi wants to combine tech and wellness. She fired the man who was responsible for the disaster. This failure has made her more of a techie than she would ever have become.

While some women non-tech founders are becoming tech savvy, some founders are taking up new challenges.

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