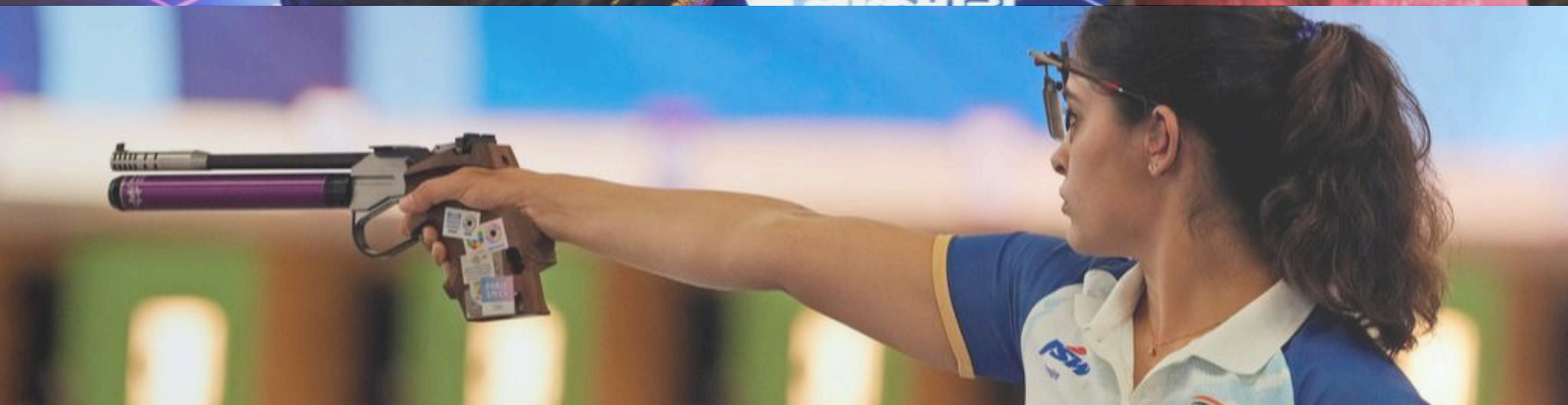




Progressive Education Society's  
Modern college of arts science and commerce warje

MARCH 2025

# INSPIRING WOMEN OF INDIA







# Aditi Gupta

-Co-Founder, Menstrupedia

Aditi Gupta is the influential woman behind an incredible initiative, Menstrupedia. Menstrupedia is a start-up committed to teaching young girls to explore their unique and complex bodies, with its main focus being on educating them about their periods and other aspects of puberty.

## The Birth of Menstrupedia

The idea for Menstrupedia was born out of Aditi's personal experiences and the lack of accurate information available to young girls regarding menstruation. Growing up in India, she faced the same societal taboos and misinformation that many women encounter. Recognizing the need for a platform that offers reliable information in a friendly and engaging manner, she teamed up with her co-founder, Tuhin Paul, to create Menstrupedia in 2013.

Menstrupedia serves as a comprehensive resource for menstrual health, providing accessible information through various mediums, including a website, comics, and workshops. The platform is designed to cater to the needs of young girls who often feel confused and anxious about their first menstruation experience. By presenting information in a relatable and easy-to-understand format, Menstrupedia aims to demystify periods and empower women with knowledge.

## Educational Impact

One of the key elements of Menstrupedia is its focus on education. The platform features a range of resources, including articles, infographics, and a comic book that tells the story of a young girl experiencing her first period. This comic has resonated with many readers, helping them understand menstruation and reproductive health in a way that feels comfortable and relatable.

Aditi and her team have also conducted workshops in schools and communities, fostering discussions about menstruation and addressing misconceptions. These initiatives have reached thousands of girls and boys, creating a ripple effect that encourages more open conversations about menstrual health.

## Tackling Stigma

Aditi's work with Menstrupedia has been pivotal in challenging the stigma associated with menstruation in Indian society. By promoting awareness and education, she aims to shift perceptions and encourage a more positive attitude toward menstruation. This cultural change is crucial, as many girls drop out of school due to a lack of sanitary facilities and support during their menstrual cycles.

Through partnerships with NGOs, educational institutions, and government bodies, Menstrupedia is working to ensure that menstruation is no longer viewed as a taboo but rather as a natural part of life. Aditi believes that with the right information and support, girls can embrace their menstrual health and continue to pursue their dreams without hindrance.

## Recognition and Future Goals

Aditi Gupta's contributions to women's health and education have garnered recognition both nationally and internationally. She has been invited to speak at various conferences and events, sharing her insights on entrepreneurship, health education, and the importance of addressing menstrual health in the broader context of women's rights.

Looking ahead, Aditi envisions expanding Menstrupedia's reach beyond India. By adapting their resources for different cultural contexts, they hope to empower young women globally. The ultimate goal is to create a world where menstruation is openly discussed, and every girl has access to the information and resources she needs to navigate her menstrual health confidently.

“  
*People are ashamed of talking about periods, and that's what we're trying to change. It has been our biggest win*  
”

## Conclusion

Aditi Gupta is not just an entrepreneur; she is a change maker who is transforming the landscape of menstrual health education in India. Through Menstrupedia, she is breaking down barriers, fostering understanding, and empowering the next generation of women. Her commitment to this cause serves as an inspiration, reminding us of the profound impact that knowledge and education can have in changing lives and societies for the better.

# Ashwiinii Dongare

-CEO SMART HOME DESIGNS LLP

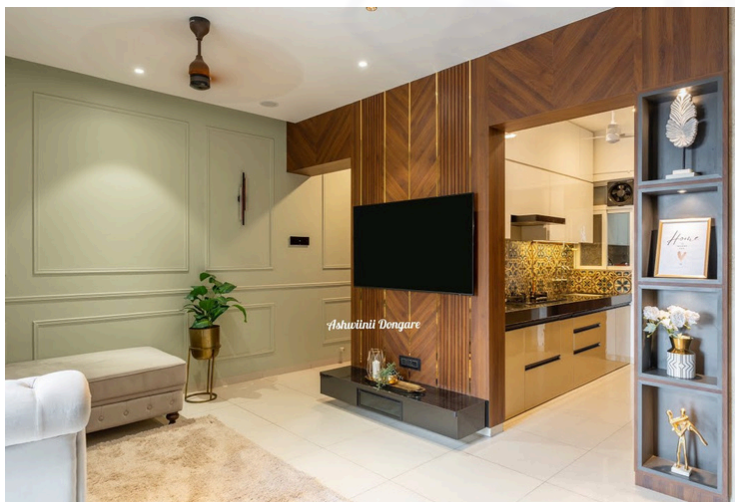
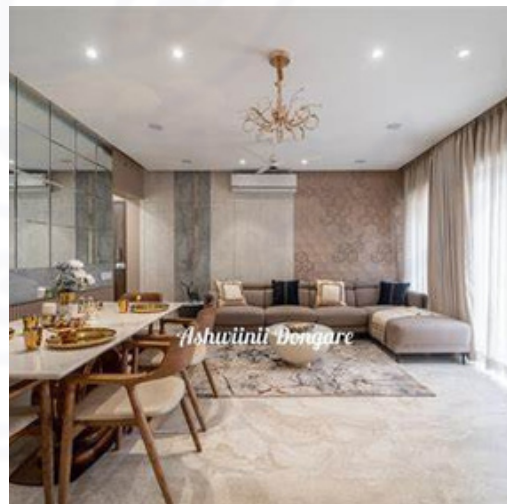
Ashwini Dongare is a renowned interior designer, interpreter, and influencer in Pune. She is running her own design studio Smart Home Designs LLP, a luxury interior design firm that has transformed many homes.

Smart Home Designs, also known as Interiors by Ashwini Dongare, is an excellent design studio based in Pune. The studio focuses on designing dream homes for each client infused with creativity and uniqueness.

Born and raised in a middle-class family in Khokarmoha, a village in Beed district, Maharashtra, Ashwiinii developed an early passion for drawing and sketching. Although she initially aspired to become an architect, she pursued engineering at Pune University due to unforeseen circumstances. During her engineering studies, she dedicated herself to interior design, completing a three-year course in the field in 2015.

In August 2019, with the support of her husband, Dr. Muskesh Bangar, Ashwiinii established Smart Home Designs LLP, also known as Interiors by Ashwiinii Dongare. The firm offers comprehensive interior design services, including space planning, custom furniture design, lighting design, and material selection, aiming to create cohesive and beautiful environments tailored to each client's unique style.

Ashwiinii's design philosophy emphasizes the importance of understanding clients' needs and preferences, ensuring that each project reflects their personality and lifestyle. She draws inspiration from nature and strives to incorporate sustainable and universal design principles into her work. Through her dedication and expertise, Ashwiinii has established herself as a leading figure in Pune's interior design industry, advocating for women empowerment and contributing to the transformation of residential spaces into personalized sanctuaries.







# Falguni Nayar

-CEO OF NYKAA

**F**alguni Nayar is a successful Indian entrepreneur and the founder of Nykaa, one of India's leading beauty and lifestyle e-commerce platforms. From Investment Banker to Nykaa's Trailblazing CEO her journey to success is an inspiring tale of determination, vision, and the ability to break barriers.

Falguni Nayar is a name that has become synonymous with success in India's e-commerce space. As the founder and CEO of Nykaa, she has redefined the beauty and wellness industry in India, providing millions of customers with access to global and homegrown beauty products. Her incredible story from an investment banker to a successful entrepreneur is both inspiring and transformative.

Falguni Nayar had a successful career in investment banking. She worked with prestigious firms like Kotak Mahindra Capital for over 18 years. She held the position of Managing Director at Kotak, where she gained valuable experience in finance, mergers, and acquisitions. Her time in the finance industry exposed her to the workings of businesses and provided insights into corporate growth, which would later play a crucial role in her entrepreneurial endeavors.

**The Birth of Nykaa** In 2012, at the age of 50, Falguni Nayar took a bold decision to leave her corporate career behind and launch Nykaa, an online platform that sold beauty, wellness, and personal care products. Nykaa, which means "a woman's beauty" in Sanskrit, was created with the vision of empowering women and providing them with a seamless shopping experience for beauty products.

Nayar's decision to enter the e-commerce space was driven by her observation that Indian consumers were increasingly turning to online platforms for their shopping needs. However, there was no dedicated platform for beauty and wellness. She saw an opportunity to bridge this gap and decided to build Nykaa from the ground up, leveraging her expertise in business strategy.

Starting Nykaa was not without its challenges. Falguni Nayar faced skepticism from many, given that she was entering a competitive market dominated by established players. However, her focus on curating quality products, building a user-friendly website, and offering a wide variety of beauty and skincare items helped Nykaa stand out.

Nykaa's growth trajectory has been impressive. From being an online-only platform, it expanded into physical stores across major cities in India. The brand has also become synonymous with influencer marketing, partnering with beauty influencers and celebrities, which has helped it build a strong community of customers.

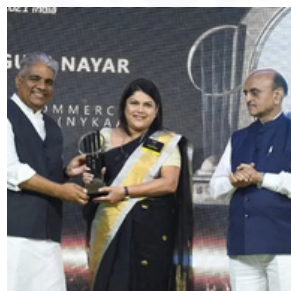
In 2021, Nykaa made history by going public and listing on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), becoming one of the most successful IPOs of the year. Falguni Nayar's leadership and vision played a significant role in this success.

Falguni Nayar's leadership is driven by a clear vision to make beauty and wellness accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live. Her strategic thinking, combined with her strong financial acumen, has helped Nykaa grow into a multi-billion-dollar company.

What makes Falguni Nayar's leadership even more impressive is her ability to balance her personal and professional life. As a mother and entrepreneur, she has managed to break stereotypes and redefine what it means to be a successful woman in business.

**Awards and Recognition** Falguni Nayar's work has not gone unnoticed. She has received numerous accolades, including being named one of Forbes Asia's Power Women and being featured in several top business leader lists. Her success has also inspired many women to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and challenge traditional career paths.

Falguni Nayar's journey is a testament to the power of persistence, vision, and resilience. From a career in investment banking to becoming the founder and CEO of one of India's most successful e-commerce platforms, Nykaa, Falguni has shown that it's never too late to follow your passion and make a difference. Her story continues to inspire entrepreneurs and women across India and beyond.







# Radhika Gupta

**-MD & CEO OF EDELWEISS MUTUAL FUND**

“**BE AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH IN BUSINESS THAT YOU DON'T SLEEP DURING THE DAY, BUT CONSERVATIVE ENOUGH THAT YOU DON'T HAVE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS**”

**R**adhika Gupta, the Managing Director and CEO of Edelweiss Asset Management, has been a prominent advocate for women's empowerment and financial inclusion. Throughout her career, she has emphasized the importance of women breaking biases and actively participating in financial markets. The identity of “the girl with the broken neck” is Radhika Gupta. Views of “The Girl With a Broken Neck,” a YouTube video featuring one of her talks, have exceeded 110,000.

Radhika Gupta's career path may appear meticulously crafted from the outside, but in reality, it is a testament to her ability to adapt and seize unexpected opportunities. Her trajectory has been marked by exploration and reinvention, transitioning from the tech industry to consulting and ultimately to finance.

At the age of 22, Radhika had to face rejection from several job opportunities. After facing a heart-wrenching rejection from her 7th job application, she could not stand the struggle anymore and decided to commit suicide. That unfortunate attempt led her to a psychiatric ward and she was diagnosed as depressed. However, after this, she was able to successfully secure a job in one of the leading corporations- McKinsey and her life finally came back on track! She also worked for Microsoft and AQR Capital Management. At the age of 25, she decided to move back to India, and then onwards, she began her own journey and started her very own Asset Management Firm with her husband and friend in the year 2009. Earlier the firm's name was Forefront Capital Management which was later on acquired by Edelweiss Financial Services Limited in the year 2014.

In 2016, Radhika Gupta assisted in the acquisition of Ambit Alpha Fund and the acquisition of the onshore business of JPMorgan Asset Management. Furthermore, Radhika worked as the head of Edelweiss Multi Strategy Funds Management Pvt Ltd. where she was responsible for setting up the strategies and overseeing all the investments, sales and distribution. In 2017, Radhika replaced Vikaas Sachdeva and overtook the position of the Chief Executive Officer of Edelweiss Asset Management Co. Going ahead, she and her work proved her personality to be one of the most influential figures in the business industry and she also took an active part in the Board of Association of Mutual Funds (AMFI) where she served as a Vice Chairperson for two consecutive terms from 2021 to 2023.

Moving forward, in the year 2023, she stood as one of the judges on the panel of Shark Tank India season 3 where she not only shared her passion for entrepreneurship and her interest in the world of start-ups but also effectively guided the pitchers who were a part of the show with her valuable insights. There were several emerging businesses that had to be guided with respect to their financial strategies and this is where she precisely helped them with their decisions. Her authenticity and her storytelling worked like a magic spell for the new ventures.

Radhika Gupta's journey from a young girl with big dreams to one of India's most influential business leaders is a testament to the power of perseverance, self-belief, and the courage to take risks. Through her work at Edelweiss and her advocacy for women in leadership, she continues to inspire millions of people around the world.

Her story serves as a reminder that no matter where you come from or the obstacles you face, success is achievable if you're willing to embrace discomfort, stay committed to your goals, and never stop believing in your potential. Radhika's legacy as an inspirational leader is one that will continue to shape the business world for years to come.





# MANU BHAKER

India's First Woman Shooting Medalist at the Paris 2024 Olympics



## The Journey to Glory

**M**anu Bhaker's journey to the podium was nothing short of spectacular. Competing against the best shooters in the world, she displayed nerves of steel and unwavering focus. Her precision and skill in the Women's 10m Air Pistol event earned her a well-deserved bronze medal, marking a significant milestone in her career and for Indian sports. This achievement is particularly noteworthy as Manu becomes the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal, setting a new benchmark for future generations.

On a bright day in Paris, Manu Bhaker stepped onto the shooting range with determination. Her precision, focus, and unwavering resolve paid off. She clinched the bronze medal, becoming the first Indian woman to achieve this feat in Olympic shooting. The medal ceremony was a proud moment for India, as the tricolor flag fluttered high.

Manu's journey to the Olympics has been one of dedication, perseverance, and sheer hard work. From her early days in Haryana to standing on the Olympic podium in Paris, her story is a testament to what can be achieved with determination and passion. Trained under the guidance of experienced coaches and supported by her family, Manu's rise in the shooting world has been meteoric. Her success is a culmination of years of rigorous training, sacrifices, and an unwavering belief in her abilities.

Manu Bhaker's bronze medal win is more than just a personal triumph; it is a source of inspiration for countless aspiring athletes, especially young girls who dream of excelling in sports. Her achievement underscores the importance of supporting and nurturing talent from a young age and providing the necessary infrastructure and encouragement to help them succeed on the world stage. Manu's success story will undoubtedly motivate many to pursue their passions and strive for excellence, regardless of the challenges they may face.

Manu Bhaker's journey from a village in Haryana to the Olympic podium exemplifies the power of determination and hard work. Her story continues to inspire aspiring athletes, highlighting the importance of resilience, focus, and a balanced approach to personal and professional growth.





# JAYANTI KATHALE

-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF “PURNABRAMHA



“ALLOW YOUR  
PASSION TO  
BECOME YOUR  
PURPOSE, AND  
IT WILL ONE  
DAY BECOME  
YOUR  
PROFESSION”

Dreams do come true and this story is a testament to this very statement. One determined woman with a dream to make authentic Maharashtrian food shine and feed people the dishes she grew up eating is nothing but a success story. With her sheer grit and passion, she built a global empire and this is her inspiring story.

*“I was carrying a huge responsibility of representing my state. I wanted to tell people that our cuisine is beyond Poha and Vada Pav. I wanted to be absolutely sure of every ingredient and process that I was going to use”*

Motherly energy giving wings to her dreams took flight and started the journey of her uneasy dreams. This is the journey of a mother whose motherly feelings hurt and who gave up her well-paying job at Infosys to direct a long list of Maharashtrian dishes with true taste and culture with her civilization and culture.

When Maharashtra native Jayanti Kathale travelled to Australia for work, she found that what she missed most was food from back home. She set out to search for an authentic desi restaurant to satisfy her cravings, but all she could manage was homemade food from Indian families in the area.

So when the software engineer returned to India, she decided she would cook and sell traditional Marathi cuisine on her own. She quit her job at Infosys to set up a small business to sell modaks.

Today, she is the founder of Purnabramha, which is the largest Maharashtrian food restaurant in the world, which has 14 branches in different states of the country and in foreign countries like Australia, and the USA. Purnabramha offers a wide range of true Marathi flavour — from the spice-laced misal pav to dal ka dulha, sabudana wada, sweet shrikhand puri and puran poli.



*“I would like to advise all women who want to start their own ventures to dream big. Next, identify what they really want to achieve. It's always good to make a list of all the hurdles that could be a stumbling block to reach their goals and then work towards eliminating them.”*

**-Jayanti Kathale**

The process of cooking is like a science experiment. Treat your kitchen as a scientific lab and replace chemicals with love.



# KAVYA DHOBALE

## - NURSE TO ENTREPRENEUR



### INSPIRING JOURNEY INTO ORGANIC FARMING

**K**avya Dhobale, a former nurse, has turned her back on a stable government job to champion organic farming and vermicomposting in a remarkable journey. After experiencing an overwhelming number of people suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, she decided to quit her high-paying government job and start her own vermicomposting business.

Her mission is to promote chemical-free, organic farming that boosts immunity and restores both human and environmental health. This bold move not only reflects her personal growth but also highlights the critical need for sustainable agricultural practices in today's world.

Kavya's journey commenced in the vibrant corridors of Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital and Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College in Sion, Mumbai, where she obtained her nursing diploma in 2017. Motivated by a strong desire to serve others, she dedicated herself as a staff nurse at TATA Hospital, providing care to cancer patients. Her career trajectory shifted significantly in 2019 when a government position was secured at Sion Hospital, marking a new chapter in her professional life.

Kavya Dhobale's transformative journey began under the high pressure of COVID-19 when healthcare professionals were fighting on the frontlines. As a dedicated nurse, she handled her job of saving lives relentlessly while making profound sacrifices like staying away from her family to minimize the risk of exposure. After having the emotional experience of losing numerous lives, Kavya experienced an emotional burden that stayed in her mind for a long time. When she contracted COVID, she realized the chronic diseases that surround humans are because of our unhealthy lifestyles and the food we consume.

Kavya went deeper into her research and realized that the problems lie in the pesticides and chemical-laden food and organic farming is the solution. She decided to pursue organic compost or vermicompost, which will make the cultivation natural and minimize the chemical and pesticide residue in our food. Kavya left the security of her government job and started an innovative vision of Organic farming by mastering vermicomposting, a sustainable method that naturally enriches soil.

After taking up vermicomposting as a full-time career, Kavya shifted to her village in Datkhilewadi in 2022 and tried solving the root cause of our diseases.

She wanted to encourage other farmers to switch to organic farming so that food, without chemicals and pesticide residue could be produced.

Kavya discovered that farmers were using so many pesticides that the soil was deprived of any earthworms. Earthworms are microorganisms that play a crucial role in enhancing soil fertility, structure, and health by aerating the soil, improving drainage, and decomposing organic matter, which enriches nutrients for plant growth.

Kavya decided to prepare vermicompost on her own and portray the benefits of organic farming to other farmers by providing them with education and compost that worked. With an initial investment of ₹ 5 lakh, this Nurse-turned Farmer built a small shed to set up vermicompost beds on the modest 0.2 acres of land. In the next six months, Kavya expanded them to 20 beds to prepare more vermicompost using cow dung which took about 60 days to prepare. She has made her business economically viable and manufactures about 20 tonnes of rich vermicompost every month serving clients across Maharashtra. Kavya has also achieved an impressive annual sale of ₹ 30 lakh, selling a 50 kg bag for ₹ 500, with a 50% profit margin. After researching and experimenting, Kavya realized that the demand for vermicompost was increasing due to people's shift to a healthy lifestyle.

Kavya's journey from being a nurse to becoming an inspiring example of saving the health of our soil by using natural fertilizers is a mission for health.

### For the Health of People and the Planet:



By focusing on restoring health for both humans and the planet, Kavya has started cultivating long-term changes that will impact thousands of people and promote organic farming.

As India nears 2070 Net Zero Carbon Emission goals, we need leaders like Kavya who have the determination to make organic farming education viable for others.



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# Magazine