






# AI DRIVEN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS: STUDY OF WOMEN-OWNED MICRO-ENTERPRISES IN INDIA

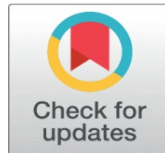
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## DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i6.2024.6158](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i6.2024.6158)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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## ABSTRACT

Fostering entrepreneurship, women empowerment and innovation in small business has been key focus in the recent times. With adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)-driven business models, the success stories of AI driven business models have surfaced recently. These businesses are not only examples of innovation and empowerment, they are also sustainable. Present study had adopted a qualitative, exploratory multiple-case study methodology. Each AI driven business model, selected for the present study, employs context-specific AI tools—from predictive diagnostics and performance analytics to ethical data labor platforms—creating scalable, inclusive, and economically empowering solutions. Notably, in India, these models are equipping rural women with digital tools, financial access, and skill development, thereby generating employment, enhancing public health, and enabling community-based education and sports enterprises. The results of this study also highlight that how AI-driven innovation, when ethically and locally applied, can foster resilient, grassroots entrepreneurship among women.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Business Model, Micro-enterprise, Women Entrepreneurs, Sustainability

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into business models has revolutionized the way enterprises operate, particularly for women-owned micro-enterprises. In the data-based era, rising environmental concerns and increasing need for more groundbreaking approaches (Liboni et al., 2023), the rising need for business models and technologies that are capable enough to navigate the data-based business environment with the paradigm of environmental sustainability is rising (Bai et al., 2020; Sjodin et al., 2023a). Aiswarya and Sangeetha (2022) discussed that AI becomes an inevitable tool for fine-tuning all factors of a business firm. It provides services such as being capable enough to predict demand, implementing automatic accounting, and experience servicing. They emphasized the fact that structural

barriers, like insufficient resources and gendered discrimination, are dampening the maximum revolutionary potentiality of AI (Vohra and Nanda, 2020). AI-driven business model innovation is transforming women-owned micro-enterprises by enhancing their competitiveness and market reach through the integration of advanced technologies like machine learning and natural language processing. These innovations are supported by inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems that address the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, promoting gender equality and economic empowerment (Bai et al., 2020). The digital transformation of micro-enterprises, facilitated by AI, not only improves operational efficiency but also opens new avenues for growth. However, the adoption of AI technologies presents both challenges and opportunities, necessitating tailored solutions that cater to the specific needs of these enterprises (Vohra and Nanda, 2020).

The transition to AI-driven business models is crucial for empowering women entrepreneurs, as it not only enhances operational capabilities but also promotes greater inclusivity in the entrepreneurial landscape. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has ushered in a transformative era for business models across various sectors, particularly within the realm of micro-enterprises. Through a series of case studies, this research will showcase how these pioneering women have leveraged AI to redefine their business models, illustrating the transformative power of technology in fostering entrepreneurship.

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The impact of AI-driven business models has significantly influenced women-owned micro-enterprises by enhancing operational efficiency, improving decision-making, and enabling customer-centric approaches. Studies indicate that AI-driven business models have transformed traditional strategies, offering innovative solutions that cater to specific market needs. For instance, AI technologies such as chatbots and data analytics have been instrumental in optimizing marketing strategies, leading to increased sales and reduced costs for MSMEs in Indonesia. Moreover, AI has empowered women entrepreneurs by providing them with tailored tools and platforms. For example, the IBMC SuriPreneur system, an intelligent Business Model Canvas recommender, has been designed to assist B40 women entrepreneurs in creating suitable business models, addressing their specific needs, and fostering growth. This also highlights the potential of AI in bridging the gap between traditional and innovative business practices. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can significantly enhance their competitiveness and productivity by automating tasks and improving customer service. However, these enterprises face substantial barriers to AI adoption, including limited resources, lack of awareness, and the complexity and cost of AI solutions (Vohra and Nanda, 2020). To overcome these challenges, targeted AI training programs can empower women entrepreneurs by equipping them with the necessary skills in areas like machine learning and data analytics. Additionally, AI-powered marketing tools can help these businesses reach their target audiences more effectively, personalizing customer experiences and optimizing marketing strategies (Vohra and Nanda, 2020). Addressing these barriers and providing training is essential for fostering AI adoption among women-owned micro-enterprises, ultimately driving their growth and sustainability.

The adoption of AI-driven solutions not only streamlines operations but also creates pathways for women entrepreneurs to engage in traditionally male-dominated sectors, thus challenging existing gender norms. Furthermore, AI can play a pivotal role in addressing gender pay disparities by facilitating transparent hiring practices and ensuring equitable remuneration, which is crucial for fostering an inclusive economic environment. By harnessing data analytics and machine learning, women-owned micro-enterprises can also gain insights into consumer behavior, enabling them to tailor their products and services more effectively to meet market demands (Vohra and Nanda, 2020). This strategic use of AI not only enhances their competitive edge but also contributes to a more diverse and resilient economy, reinforcing the notion that technology can be a powerful ally in the pursuit of gender equity in entrepreneurship.

**Figure 1****Future of AI in Micro-Enterprises: Emerging Trends**

The future of AI-driven business models in women-owned micro-enterprises is promising, with several emerging trends expected to shape the landscape. One key trend is the increased adoption of AI technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing to enhance business operations and decision-making. Additionally, the integration of AI with digital transformation strategies is expected to accelerate the growth of women-led MSMEs, enabling them to compete globally (Bai et al., 2020). Another significant trend is the growing emphasis on ethical AI practices and inclusive policies to ensure equitable access to AI opportunities for women entrepreneurs. This aligns with the broader goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women in the digital economy.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study had adopted a qualitative, exploratory multiple-case study methodology. Primary as well as secondary data is used for analysis of the success of the AI driven business models selected for the present study. Women owned, innovative AI driven business models are selected as sample for the present study.

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the AI driven Business model for each of the selected business.
- 2) To study the AI driven Technological Innovation adopted by each business model.
- 3) To study the challenges and future visions of the selected businesses.
- 4) To study the impact of AI on success of small businesses in India.
- 5) To study the social impact of Women owned business in India.

### Case Study 1: NIRAMAI – AI-Powered Breast Cancer Screening (Founder: Dr. Geetha Manjunath)

Dr. Geetha Manjunath, a seasoned computer scientist with extensive experience in AI and data analytics, founded NIRAMAI (Non-Invasive Risk Assessment with Machine Intelligence) to address a pressing healthcare challenge: the lack of affordable and effective early-stage breast cancer screening in India. Her motivation stemmed from observing how conventional mammography often failed to serve younger women—especially in resource-constrained or culturally conservative settings—due to high costs, physical discomfort, and limited diagnostic accuracy for denser breast tissue. NIRAMAI emerged from her vision to harness machine intelligence for preventive healthcare, thereby reshaping access to diagnostics for millions of women who had previously remained medically underserved.

**Technological Innovation:** NIRAMAI's solution reflects a convergence of thermal imaging, AI, and cloud computing to provide a non-invasive, private, and scalable diagnostic method for breast cancer. The core innovation lies in how it transforms temperature data into actionable clinical insights.

**Thermal Sensing:** Unlike traditional mammograms that use X-rays and involve physical compression of the breast, NIRAMAI's system uses high-resolution thermal sensors to capture infrared heat patterns emitted from the body. These

thermal images, also known as thermograms, offer a pain-free and privacy-respecting method suitable for mass screenings.

- 1) **Thermalytix AI Engine:** At the heart of NIRAMAI's technology is its proprietary AI engine—Thermalytix. This model employs a multi-layered deep learning framework to extract and interpret over 100 distinct statistical and textural features from thermograms. These include asymmetry, edge sharpness, thermal contrast, and vascular patterns. The model has been trained on thousands of annotated datasets and continually improves its diagnostic accuracy using supervised learning. Its performance rivals that of expert radiologists while being more scalable.
  - **Cloud Integration:** The system integrates with secure cloud platforms to facilitate remote consultations and data storage. This allows radiologists in urban centers to interpret scans from rural or mobile clinics, dramatically extending reach. It also enables longitudinal monitoring of patients, making it suitable for preventive health frameworks.
- 2) **Societal Impact:** NIRAMAI's societal impact extends beyond clinical innovation into the realm of public health access, gender equity, and rural healthcare transformation:
  - **Cost Reduction:** By using low-cost thermal cameras and AI algorithms, the screening cost is reduced by 50–70% compared to mammography. This makes regular screening viable even for economically disadvantaged populations.
  - **Portability & Scalability:** The device is compact, requires minimal infrastructure, and can be operated by trained health workers. This makes it ideal for deployment in rural areas, mobile health vans, and community camps.
  - **Privacy & Comfort:** The screening is non-contact and does not require disrobing in the presence of a technician, which overcomes socio-cultural barriers, especially in conservative settings. This improves participation rates among women who might otherwise avoid checkups.
  - **Early Detection:** With enhanced sensitivity for younger women with denser breast tissue, the system has the potential to improve early diagnosis rates, which is critical for successful treatment outcomes.
- 3) **Challenges & Lessons:** Implementing a novel AI-based healthcare technology in culturally diverse and infrastructure-deficient regions of India came with numerous challenges:
  - **Community Resistance:** Initial skepticism and cultural hesitations around cancer screenings, especially those involving private body areas, led to low adoption. Community outreach, gender-sensitive communication, and partnerships with trusted local health workers helped overcome these barriers.
  - **Training Health Workers:** The technology's success depends on frontline workers operating the device accurately and managing patient flow. Structured training programs and digital modules had to be developed to standardize usage.
  - **Integration into Health Systems:** Convincing hospitals and clinics to adopt AI diagnostics required extensive demonstration of clinical validation and regulatory compliance. This highlighted the importance of rigorous, peer-reviewed trials and pilot studies.
  - **Data Privacy:** As the solution involves medical image data and cloud-based storage, ensuring HIPAA-compliant data handling and robust cyber security measures became a critical operational need.
- 4) **Future Vision:** NIRAMAI's roadmap looks to scale its solution both horizontally and vertically:
  - **Predictive Diagnostics:** By integrating patient histories, genomics, and AI-based risk stratification, the company aims to transition from diagnostics to predictive care. This would allow identification of individuals at high risk before clinical symptoms emerge.
  - **Global Expansion:** NIRAMAI is actively pursuing collaborations across Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America where similar challenges in breast cancer screening persist. The model's portability and cost-effectiveness offer a blueprint for scalable global deployment.
  - **AI Model Advancements:** Future iterations of Thermalytix will likely incorporate multi-modal data—combining thermal, ultrasound, and clinical text data to further enhance diagnostic precision.

- **Public Health Integration:** Partnering with governments for population-level screening programs, and integrating the system with national health databases, will enhance public health surveillance and long-term impact assessment.

Through a well-calibrated blend of technology, empathy, and strategic partnerships, NIRAMAI represents a paradigm shift in preventive healthcare. It showcases how AI, when rooted in contextual understanding, can transform lives at the grassroots level while building pathways for global health innovation.

### **Case Study 2: Stupa Sports Analytics – Democratizing Table Tennis (Founder: Megha Gambhir)**

Stupa Sports Analytics, founded by Megha Gambhir, represents a powerful intersection of sports science, artificial intelligence, and inclusive innovation, aiming to transform India's grassroots sports ecosystem—starting with table tennis. Born out of Megha's personal experiences as both a table tennis enthusiast and a data-driven technologist, the idea for Stupa emerged from a critical realization: while elite sports infrastructures in India. Traditional coaching methods, even among high-potential players in sports like table tennis, were still rooted in human observation, intuition, and informal pedagogy. This created a massive analytical and developmental gap between rural academies and international training environments. To bridge this, Stupa Sports Analytics was built as a full-stack AI-powered ecosystem for performance tracking, feedback generation, and virtual coaching. The core mission was not merely to introduce technology into training, but to democratize precision coaching so that aspiring players across socio-economic and geographic boundaries could receive the same level of performance insight once reserved for elite athletes.

Technologically, Stupa's platform is built around a multilayered AI infrastructure that incorporates edge computing, computer vision, pose estimation models, and predictive analytics to capture and analyze biomechanical and strategic aspects of a player's game. The flagship innovation includes portable Edge AI cameras—affordable, self-sufficient devices capable of recording training sessions and processing performance data in real time without the need for constant internet connectivity. This was a strategic choice, ensuring usability in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities where bandwidth and power fluctuations remain a challenge. These cameras feed into a pose-estimation algorithm that maps player movement—down to wrist angle, step length, shoulder rotation, and stroke cadence—using skeletal modeling techniques common in kinesiology labs but adapted here for mass deployment. This model not only evaluates accuracy and technique but also detects injury risk and muscular imbalance, offering a layer of preventive health analytics often missing in amateur training settings. Once the raw data is processed, athletes and coaches access a performance dashboard, a visual analytics interface designed to be intuitive for users with minimal tech exposure. The dashboard displays a spectrum of metrics: rally length, footwork efficiency, shot consistency, unforced errors, spatial movement maps, and temporal heat maps that indicate fatigue buildup or lapses in concentration. Crucially, the dashboard includes AI-generated drill recommendations that act as personalized micro-coaching routines, helping players internalize feedback and self-correct during future sessions.

From a business model perspective, Stupa has innovated along two primary axes: accessibility and modularity. It offers tiered solutions for academies of different sizes—from grassroots clubs with basic camera setups to national teams with advanced sensor integrations. Its fermium model allows smaller centers to onboard essential features while encouraging incremental upgrades. Stupa also provides a B2B SaaS (Software as a Service) platform to sports federations, training academies, and institutional clients who want to embed performance analytics into their athlete development pipelines. Its partnerships with over 40 international federations and adoption across Asian and European table tennis organizations reflect a product architecture that is not only globally competitive but globally relevant. Domestically, it has forged collaborations with state sports authorities and government-backed academies in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka, helping hundreds of youth athletes elevate their game through data-backed training. As of 2024, Stupa employs a core team of around 80 full-time professionals, including data scientists, biomechanical experts, sports psychologists, software engineers, and outreach coordinators. Its extended network includes technical advisors from the international sports tech community and field partners embedded in local sports hubs.

Financially, Stupa's operational model blends product sales (hardware and software kits), subscription-based analytics access, institutional consulting, and data licensing. Its estimated annual turnover reached ₹18–20 crore (~USD 2.4 million) in FY 2023–24, driven largely by an uptick in international licensing contracts and domestic federation deals. As the AI engine continues to evolve, Stupa is now developing predictive models for talent scouting—tools that use longitudinal data to forecast a player's growth curve, helping coaches and federations identify future champions early. Another frontier is the integration of generative AI simulations, which allow athletes to engage with synthetic match



scenarios and AI avatars mimicking real opponents based on archived game play. These generative environments create high-fidelity virtual sparring opportunities that build cognitive agility and strategic depth, even for solo players training in isolation.

Additionally, the company's focus on Explainable AI (XAI) ensures that the metrics and recommendations provided to coaches are transparent, interpretable, and trust-building. This addresses a key barrier in sports AI—skepticism among traditional coaches who fear algorithmic intrusion. Instead, Stupa's tools are designed to empower coaches, helping them blend domain expertise with machine precision. In rural centers where formal coaching credentials are rare, these tools also act as virtual mentorship aids, allowing young athletes to benefit from consistent, data-led guidance even in the absence of elite trainers. This dual impact—improving both player and coach—forms a virtuous feedback loop that enhances learning, retention, and ambition. Stupa's localized approach further includes multi-language dashboards, region-specific training guides, and mobile-first interfaces, making it one of the most inclusively designed sports AI platforms in the global south.

Overall, Megha Gambhir's Stupa Sports Analytics is a living proof of how AI can be contextually embedded into real-world domains to create systemic transformation. It not only enhances physical performance but reshapes the cognitive and strategic intelligence of players, making them data-literate athletes equipped for international competitiveness. The enterprise's growth, however, is not measured just in revenue or reach—it's reflected in the stories of underdog athletes who now have a scientific edge, of small-town coaches whose intuition is now amplified with data, and of a sports ecosystem that is gradually shedding its infrastructural bias. In a country like India, where talent is abundant but tools are scarce, Stupa stands as a case study in how AI can act as an equalizer—bridging aspiration and achievement through innovation that is accessible, scalable, and deeply human-centric.

### **Case Study 3: Embibe – AI for Education Equity (Founder: Aditi Avasthi)**

Embibe, founded in 2012 by Aditi Avasthi, represents one of India's most ambitious and technically advanced AI-driven educational platforms. Aditi, with a background in engineering and a Wharton MBA, combined her insights from working with global tech firms like Bharti Airtel and Barclays with a deeply personal mission: to democratize access to quality education by eliminating blind spots in student learning. Her approach was not to replace the teacher, but to augment traditional pedagogy with precise, data-driven feedback and intelligent content delivery. Embibe's model uses advanced AI systems to create a "Knowledge Graph" for each student, making learning not only adaptive but dynamically introspective.

Embibe deploys a suite of proprietary AI technologies that form the backbone of its product architecture. One of the most distinctive innovations is its "Knowledge Graph AI Engine", which maps over 15,000 concepts and learning outcomes across subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. The graph is dynamically updated based on user interaction — every time a student answers a question, the system evaluates not just correctness but confidence level, time spent, method used, and even behavioral indicators such as hesitation or second-guessing. This fine-grained data is fed into an AI algorithm for cognitive gap detection, enabling the platform to identify not just what a student doesn't know, but why they don't know it — whether due to conceptual confusion, lack of practice, or psychological blocks.

Another key AI tool used by Embibe is "Behavioral Modeling AI", which integrates affective computing principles to analyze patterns such as attention span, guessing behavior, and even burnout signals. This allows the platform to recommend customized learning paths that balance rigor with retention. Their "Explainable AI" (XAI) framework ensures that students and educators understand why the system is making certain recommendations — which adds a crucial layer of transparency to algorithmic decision-making. Additionally, Embibe uses Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Automated Question Generation (AQG) algorithms to continuously generate adaptive tests and practice questions aligned with user progress, exam boards (like CBSE, JEE, NEET), and personalized weak spots.

A transformative aspect of Embibe's impact is its scale. As of 2024, Embibe has over 18 million users and partnerships with state and central educational boards across India. The company was acquired in a majority stake by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) in 2018, which injected ₹900 crore (~USD 110 million) into scaling the platform. This financial backing has allowed Embibe to build one of the largest educational data lakes in India, containing billions of learning interactions — a goldmine for continuous AI training and optimization. The company now employs over 500 people, including engineers, data scientists, pedagogical experts, and behavioral psychologists. Its revenue has seen substantial growth, with its annual turnover estimated at ₹240 crore (~USD 29 million) in 2023–24, reflecting rapid monetization through B2B partnerships, licensing, and subscription models.

Embibe's business model innovation hinges on a multi-tier strategy: B2C, B2B2C, and government partnerships. In its B2C model, students and parents subscribe to Embibe for coaching and test prep, benefiting from AI-guided learning journeys. The B2B2C model involves licensing its platform to coaching institutes, schools, and private educators who wish to embed AI-based analytics into their teaching. The government partnerships are perhaps the most socially significant — Embibe powers the AI infrastructure for state board learning platforms in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra, making high-quality test prep accessible to millions of rural students free of cost. These implementations are not superficial — entire state curricula are integrated into Embibe's Knowledge Graph, and teachers are trained to interpret and act on AI feedback.

A unique feature that underscores Embibe's human-centric AI philosophy is its "Attempt Strategy" engine. Unlike conventional tutoring apps that only assess scores, this tool evaluates how efficiently students attempt tests — for example, if a student gets 80% of a test correct but takes too long, the AI flags it as a suboptimal test strategy. Conversely, a student who guesses correctly may receive lower confidence scores, prompting the system to target those areas for further conceptual reinforcement. These layers of diagnostic analysis go far beyond what any traditional test prep model can offer, making Embibe's AI truly prescriptive rather than just descriptive.

In terms of content, Embibe has built a large AI-curated repository of 3D interactive videos, explanatory simulations, and real-time doubt resolution tools. This is particularly effective for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds or those in underserved regions, who may struggle with abstract textual instruction. With its multilingual interface and culturally localized content, Embibe serves as a bridge between high-tech personalization and inclusive pedagogy. By mid-2024, Embibe had content aligned with 13 Indian regional languages, making it one of the most linguistically accessible ed-tech platforms in the country.

Embibe's role in India's educational ecosystem is now not only as a learning platform but also as a policy enabler. Through its government collaborations, Embibe has been involved in drafting AI-readiness frameworks for state education boards, including teacher dashboards, performance forecasting models, and district-level intervention tracking. This positions the startup not merely as a service provider but as an architect of AI-integrated public education infrastructure. In states like Andhra Pradesh, for example, drop-out rates in STEM subjects have decreased by over 11% after deploying Embibe's platform for personalized remediation.

Despite its successes, Embibe has also faced challenges—primarily around data privacy and the ethical use of AI in education. To navigate this, the company adheres to strict compliance under India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023), and employs federated learning models to minimize the transfer of sensitive student data. Its commitment to explainable algorithms and user consent-based tracking also reflects a forward-looking approach to ethical AI governance.

Embibe's story reflects the convergence of tech intensity, social purpose, and entrepreneurial grit. Under Aditi Avasthi's leadership, the startup has evolved from a test prep disruptor to a national educational infrastructure partner. In doing so, it redefines what it means to "scale with empathy"—reaching millions not just with content, but with insight. The result is a platform where AI is not an opaque layer but an active agent of student transformation—mapping, nudging, and mentoring learners toward mastery.

In summary, Embibe demonstrates how AI can drive inclusive educational excellence by creating personalized, adaptive, and explainable learning experiences at scale. Its use of deep-learning based cognitive graphs, behavior-driven recommendation systems, and natural language tools are a case study in responsible and impactful AI deployment. With a growing team, multi-crore revenue, and government collaborations, it's poised to shape India's AI-driven educational landscape for years to come.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The integration of AI into women-led micro-enterprises in India is gradually redefining the region's entrepreneurial landscape by fostering indigenous innovation, socio-economic sustainability, and inclusive business models. AI-powered breast cancer screening platform offers a compelling model for accessible, community-integrated healthcare innovation. AI driven businesses creates opportunities for rural health entrepreneurship while promoting preventive care. This model not only increases healthcare equity but also allows local women to participate in a tech-enabled public health value chain.

AI driven sports based business model that can be localized for rural talent hubs by offering affordable edge AI cameras and pose-estimation algorithms through mobile-based interfaces, it enables women coaches and players in non-urban academies to access elite-level training feedback. AI-based education platform is especially relevant in India where rural learning outcomes face systemic gaps due to teacher shortages, language barriers, and rigid curricula. By partnering with public schools and anganwadi centers, local educators (especially women) can deliver personalized test preparation services.

Together, these case studies illuminate how AI is not merely a high-tech disruption but a practical tool for women-led enterprise development. By adapting AI for local conditions, promoting digital skill adoption, and building sustainable income models, these ventures are seeding indigenous entrepreneurship that is resilient, scalable, and socially transformative.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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