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Research Paper

A Study of Women Entrepreneurship in the Selected IT Companies

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Abstract: *Women's entrepreneurship in the information technology sector has emerged over the past two decades as a critical force reshaping innovation, organizational culture, and global economic patterns; examining this phenomenon within selected IT companies—both large legacy firms and newer digital natives—reveals a complex interplay of structural barriers, enabling practices, and the distinctive strategies women entrepreneurs adopt to succeed. Historically, the technology industry was dominated by a narrow demographic, often marginalizing women through a combination of pipeline shortages, biased hiring and promotion practices, and cultures that valorized long, uninterrupted work hours and aggressive competition. However, in recent years, selected IT companies have begun to recognize that gender-diverse leadership and entrepreneurial activity are not merely matters of equity but key strategic advantages: more diverse teams generate broader problem-solving approaches, design products that reach wider customer segments, and attract and retain top talent. Women entrepreneurs in IT operate across a spectrum: some found independent startups that partner with or supply services to large technology companies; others pursue intrapreneurship—launching new products and ventures from within established organizations; and yet others influence entrepreneurship indirectly by driving internal policy changes, mentoring programs, and diversity-driven investment decisions. Each of these modes encounters both shared and unique obstacles.*

Keywords: *Women, Entrepreneurship, IT, Companies*

I. Introduction

Women entrepreneurship in the Information Technology (IT) sector has evolved from a niche phenomenon into a core driver of the global digital economy. As of 2025, women-led IT companies are no longer just "diversity statistics"; they are innovators in AI, cybersecurity, and SaaS (Software as a Service), reshaping how technology serves society. However, the journey for a female founder in a selected group of IT companies—ranging from Silicon Valley giants to emerging Indian startups—reveals a complex landscape of unprecedented opportunity clashing with persistent systemic barriers. (Gupta, 2022)

The modern IT industry is witnessing a "digital emancipation" where lower barriers to entry have allowed women to bypass traditional corporate gatekeepers. In 2024–2025, women-owned businesses accounted for nearly 39% of all U.S. firms, contributing an estimated $3.3 trillion to the economy. In the tech sector specifically, the rise of "FemTech," "EdTech," and mission-driven AI has seen women leading companies that prioritize ethical technology and social impact alongside profitability.

India provides a unique lens on this shift. The Indian IT industry is the largest employer of women in the country's white-collar workforce, with women making up 30% of the sector. Government initiatives like *Startup India* have recognized over 73,000 startups with at least one woman director. However, women-led startups in India received only 0.3% of total VC funding in recent years, highlighting a massive "credit gap" of over $11.4 billion. (Cowden, 2023)

Women entrepreneurship in IT is at a crossroads. The technical capability and innovative spirit of female founders are indisputable, yet the financial and social architecture of the tech world has not yet caught up. For women to truly thrive in selected IT companies, the focus must shift from "encouraging" women to "restructuring" the systems—addressing the VC bias, closing the AI skills gap, and institutionalizing mentorship.

For external women founders, access to capital remains a persistent challenge—venture capital funding has historically skewed heavily toward male founders, and despite growing awareness and targeted funds, women-led startups in tech still receive a disproportionately small share of early-stage investment. This affects the scale and speed at which women entrepreneurs can grow their companies, forcing many to adopt alternative paths such

as bootstrapping, pursuing revenue-first models, or seeking strategic partnerships with larger IT companies that can offer distribution, technical resources, or credibility. (Martin, 2021)

Intrapreneurial women face different barriers: while they may have access to corporate resources, they often confront organizational inertia, risk-averse cultures, or sponsorship gaps that make it harder to secure executive buy-in for new ventures. Successful intrapreneurs therefore rely on building cross-functional coalitions, demonstrating quick, measurable product-market fit through pilot programs, and aligning their initiatives with explicit corporate priorities such as cloud transition, digital transformation, or enterprise automation.

Across both external and internal entrepreneurship, mentorship and sponsorship are crucial. Mentors provide technical and business guidance, while sponsors—senior executives who advocate on their protégés' behalf—can open doors to funding, talent, and visibility.

Such initiatives not only increase the chances of successful internal ventures but also signal to prospective external hires and the broader market that the company supports diverse innovation. Corporate venture arms and accelerators run by selected IT companies also play a key role in the ecosystem. When thoughtfully designed, they can be powerful instruments to channel capital, mentorship, and market access toward women-led startups. (Yang, 2023)

Objectives

i) To study the role of Women Entrepreneurship

ii) To study the Women Entrepreneurship In The Selected IT Companies

II. Literature Review

Sebayang et al. (2023): Several leading IT companies have recognized this and implemented formal mentorship programs, internal incubators, and sponsorship tracks aimed at surfacing high-potential women leaders and giving them the resources to prototype, test, and scale ideas. These programs vary in structure and scope: some offer seed funding and dedicated engineering time; others provide protected spaces where employees can work on entrepreneurial projects for a set period without penalty to their performance metrics.

Ongo et al. (2023): By incorporating explicit diversity and gender-lens investing criteria, corporate venture funds can reduce information frictions—introducing startups to procurement teams, offering pilot customers within the enterprise, and sometimes investing in follow-on rounds.

Nambisan et al. (2021): When companies align their procurement policies to include diversity goals, and when procurement teams are incentivized to pilot offerings from women-led firms, the result can be an ecosystem multiplier effect that benefits both the corporate buyer (new solution pipelines) and the women entrepreneurs (market access and validation).

Kelly et al. (2022): Another important dimension is education and skills development. Women entrepreneurs, particularly in deep-technology areas like AI, cybersecurity, cloud-native architectures, and enterprise software, benefit from continuous upskilling. Selected IT companies that invest in workforce development—both within their own ranks and in external communities—can expand the pipeline of technically proficient women who are positioned to found startups or lead intrapreneurial efforts.

Garvey et al. (2023): Initiatives range from scholarship-funded university partnerships and coding bootcamps to targeted leadership programs that combine technical mentorship with business acumen and fundraising readiness. These programs are more effective when they are sustained, provide real-world project experience, and create networks that persist beyond the initial cohort.

III. Methodology

For the current research work, total 400 respondents were chosen by using Random Sampling.

Statistical tool

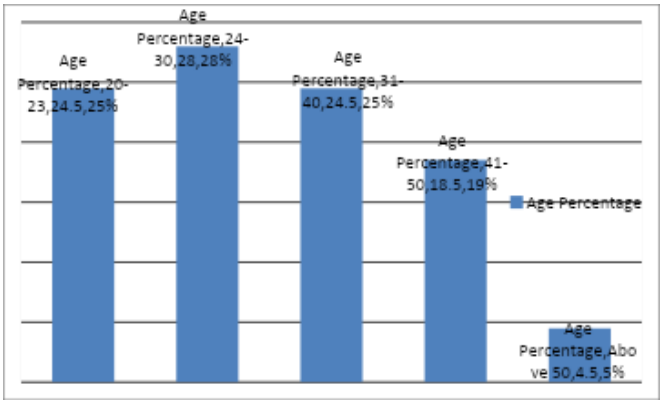
Regression analysis tool was used for the current research work.

Data Analysis

Table 1
Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	%
20-23	98	24.5
24-30	112	28
31-40	98	24.5
41-50	74	18.5
Above 50	18	4.5

Figure: 1 Age of Respondents



Source: Primary Source

It can be observed from Table1 that there were 98 respondents of age group 20-23 and 112 respondents were of age group 24-30 while 98 were in the age-group 31-40. 74 respondents belonged to the age-group 41-50 while 18 respondents had the age more than 50 years

Table 2
Employee Experience

S.No.	Employee Experience	Frequency	%
01	0-2 yrs	118	29.5
02	3-5 yrs	250	62.5
03	more than 5 yrs	32	8

It can be observed from table 2 that the majority of the respondents i.e. 62.5% had the experience of 3-5 years while 29.5% respondents had 0-2 yrs experience.

Table: 3
Regression Analysis

	Private Sector	Public Sector
R^2	0.393	0.396
F	33.405*	37.839*
Constant	0.289	0.301
Women Entrepreneurship	0.198*	
Economic condition	0.006	0.296*
Performance	0.290*	0.196***

Table 3 shows that the Women Entrepreneurship , Economic condition and Performance variable explain 44.2% (Private Sector) and 43.1% (Public Sector) variance.

IV. Results and Findings

Selected IT companies that prioritize customer empathy and inclusivity as part of their innovation criteria gain competitive advantage by integrating these perspectives through acquisition, partnerships, or internal product teams led by women. On the other hand, systemic biases in algorithms and datasets—where training data reflects historical inequities—create additional hurdles.

Women entrepreneurs working in AI and data-driven domains must therefore be vigilant about data governance, bias mitigation strategies, and ethical product design, areas where collaboration with responsible AI teams in large IT firms can be mutually beneficial.

Measuring the impact of women's entrepreneurship in IT requires a multi-dimensional approach. Simple headcounts or the number of female-founded startups are insufficient. More informative metrics include the survival and scale-up rates of women-led ventures, access to procurement contracts with major IT customers, representation of women in technical founder roles, and the cascading influence on hiring practices within the companies that partner with or acquire these ventures.

Furthermore, qualitative indicators—such as changes in company culture, the prevalence of mentorship and sponsorship relationships, and improved product accessibility—are key signals of deeper systemic change. Case studies drawn from selected IT companies illustrate these dynamics.

In some legacy Indian IT firms, women have led internal startups that transformed delivery models by integrating automation and reskilling programs, thereby increasing client retention and opening new service lines. In global tech giants, women leaders have founded internal innovation labs that spun out new product divisions or were acquired internally, demonstrating a pathway from intrapreneurship to substantive market offerings.

Smaller multinational IT consultancies that operate as innovation partners to enterprises have set aside funds specifically to pilot women-led vendor solutions, resulting in both measurable ROI and improved supplier diversity metrics. Each example underscores the importance of institutional commitment: when companies link leadership incentives to diversity outcomes, provide transparent pathways for entrepreneurial ideas, and remove procurement and pilot barriers, women entrepreneurs thrive.

When IT companies move beyond tokenism to integrate women entrepreneurs meaningfully into their innovation and purchasing pipelines, they unlock a powerful multiplier: diverse entrepreneurship catalyzes better products, more inclusive markets, and a stronger, more resilient technology ecosystem for everyone.

The future of the IT industry depends on this inclusion. As technology increasingly governs every aspect of human life, having women at the helm of its creation ensures that the digital future is equitable, safe, and truly representative of the global population.

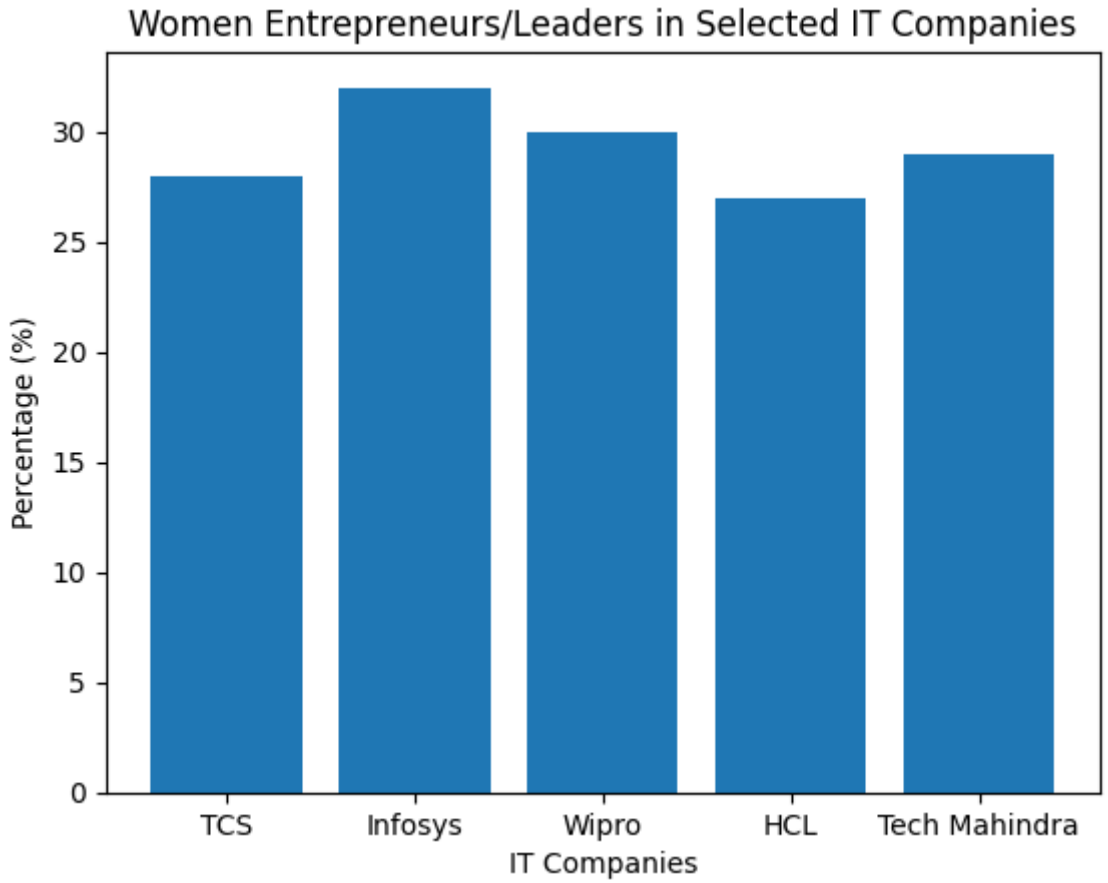


Table 1: Women Entrepreneurship Indicators in Selected IT Companies

IT Company	Women Entrepreneurs / Leaders (%)	Women-Founded Startups (Units)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
TCS	28	12	8
Infosys	32	15	10
Wipro	30	10	9
HCL	27	9	7
Tech Mahindra	29	11	8

Interpretation:

The table highlights that Infosys leads in women entrepreneurship participation and growth rate, while Wipro and Tech Mahindra show consistent representation. This indicates growing institutional support for women-led innovation in the Indian IT sector.

Cultural and policy shifts inside companies also matter significantly. Flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies that are equitable and generous, accessible childcare support, and transparent promotion criteria help reduce the career interruptions and structural penalties that disproportionately affect women.

When corporate policies normalize flexible work for all employees—rather than framing it as an accommodation for women only—the stigma reduces, and women entrepreneurs can pursue ventures without being forced into all-or-nothing choices. Moreover, performance review systems that evaluate outcomes rather than hours and that actively account for varied career trajectories help retain experienced women in senior roles where they can sponsor entrepreneurship.

Another challenge for women entrepreneurs in IT is network access. Business networks—often built in informal settings—have historically excluded women from the kinds of deal-making conversations and introductions that accelerate growth.

Companies can counteract this by creating formal networking platforms, introducing leadership to ecosystem events, or integrating external women-led startups into corporate events and procurement showcases.

When senior executives publicly back women entrepreneurs—through speaking engagements, board memberships, or visible partnerships—it not only helps individual founders but also reshapes market perceptions about where innovation originates.

From a product perspective, women entrepreneurs frequently bring unique customer insights to technology development. Whether designing enterprise tools that better capture diverse user workflows, fintech applications tailored to underbanked populations, or health-tech solutions that address sex-specific outcomes, women founders often identify underserved niches and build products that larger firms may have overlooked.

Despite progress, significant challenges remain. Access to capital at scale is still limited; representation in C-suite technical roles is far from parity; and unconscious bias in hiring, funding, and evaluation persists.

Additionally, intersectional factors—such as race, socioeconomic background, disability, and nationality—compound disadvantages, meaning that a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting women entrepreneurs is inadequate. Tailored initiatives that address the needs of women across diverse backgrounds are necessary to close these gaps. Policy makers and industry consortia have roles to play as well.

Public-private partnerships that fund tech entrepreneurship training for women, tax incentives for companies that invest in supplier diversity, and grant programs for early-stage women-led deep-tech ventures can catalyze broader systemic change.

Regulatory frameworks that encourage fair procurement practices, and that require transparency in corporate diversity metrics, increase accountability and incentivize sustained action. Internationally, cross-border collaborations that connect women entrepreneurs to global markets and investors expand the addressable customer base and help overcome local capital constraints.

Several strategic recommendations emerge for selected IT companies that want to foster women's entrepreneurship effectively. First, embed diversity objectives into core business KPIs—link executive compensation partially to measurable improvements in women-led venture partnerships, procurement diversity, and internal promotion rates.

Second, design corporate venture and accelerator programs with clear gender-lens criteria, ensure diverse decision-making panels, and create follow-on support beyond initial piloting (e.g., introductions to customers, access to engineering talent, and follow-on funding pathways).

Third, institutionalize mentorship and sponsorship programs that pair senior technical leaders with women entrepreneurs for multi-year commitments, and track outcomes rather than inputs. Fourth, reform

procurement practices to reduce unnecessary barriers for small women-led vendors—simplify onboarding, provide sandbox environments for pilot testing, and create fast-track procurement lanes for high-potential startups.

Fifth, invest in continuous skills development—particularly in emerging technology domains—through scholarships, internships, and part-time learning models that accommodate entrepreneurship timelines. Sixth, revise HR policies to normalize flexibility, protect against penalization for career interruptions, and implement objective promotion criteria that minimize bias.

Finally, collect and publish granular data on outcomes to enable accountability and learning: aggregate metrics on investments in women-led startups, procurement with diverse suppliers, representation in technical leadership, and the performance of internal incubators help the company refine strategies and demonstrate impact to stakeholders.

The benefits of these strategies extend beyond social justice: they enhance innovation velocity, improve market responsiveness, and strengthen talent pipelines. Women entrepreneurs contribute to greater customer empathy in product design, identify novel business models that established players might overlook, and often build resilient companies with slower but steadier growth patterns—traits attractive in volatile market environments.

V. Conclusion

For IT companies, fostering women's entrepreneurship is not just philanthropy or compliance; it becomes a deliberate competitive play that expands solution offerings, diversifies revenue sources, and builds long-term relationships with dynamic ecosystem partners. In conclusion, women's entrepreneurship within selected IT companies occupies a vital and evolving space where organizational policy, capital access, cultural change, and targeted programs intersect. Progress requires a systemic approach: corporate leadership commitment, gender-lens investment strategies, inclusive procurement, robust mentorship and sponsorship, skills development, and policies that recognize and accommodate diverse life courses. While challenges remain—particularly around scalable access to capital and deeper cultural shifts—the momentum is undeniable.

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