

# Empowering South Asian Women Entrepreneurs through Trade and Technology

## Empowering Women Entrepreneurs:

**A) UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015:** Gender Equality and Empowerment (SDG no. 5) mainstreamed in all SDGs. Goals to be achieved by 2030

Reality check: World Economic Forum's Report on Global Gender Gap Index, 2021:

- India ranks 140<sup>th</sup> among 156 nations. Bangladesh (65), Nepal (106), Sri Lanka (116), Bhutan (130), Pakistan (153) and Afghanistan (156)
  - India closed only 62.5% of the gender gap till date. Share of women in professional and technical roles 29.2%. Share of women in senior and managerial positions 14.6%. Firms with female top managers 8.9%
- ❖ We have miles to go before we sleep....

**B) Global Movement for promoting Women in Trade:** WTO 2017 Buenos Aires Declaration: Agenda: i) foster women's economic empowerment ii) remove gender-specific barriers to trade iii) collect and share gender-specific data on women in trade. **Percentage of South Asian women in regional and global trade is estimated to be below 5%**

**C) Survey conducted amongst South Asian women entrepreneurs in March 2019 by WTO in collaboration with SAWDF:**

Overwhelming majority indicated interest in participating in regional and global trade. Trade seen as a vehicle to improve their incomes, socio-economic status. Trade as a window to access new technologies and improve competitiveness. Export to achieve economies of scale. Aware of the pitfalls in global trade: seek guidance/training/support

## Assisting South Asian Women Entrepreneurs to become globally competitive

Woman-owned enterprises: 1) large 2) small and medium 3) micro. **Focus on SMEs**

**What are the challenges/hurdles faced by Women Entrepreneurs?** Lack of support/mentoring at the stage of conceptualization (which product, what technology, which equipment, what location, which markets), no immovable asset to offer as collateral to banks, marketing constraints, lack of networking opportunities, harassment by Government inspectors, lack of family support. “Lone Woman struggling in a Man’s world”

- Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India (ALEAP)-Comprehensive approach to support women entrepreneurs-Govt of India wants it to be a model for replicating in other parts of the country
- Flagship project-Industrial estate exclusively for women entrepreneurs at Gajularamaram near Hyderabad 1995. ALEAP as a developer and manager of industrial estates. Policy of Government of AP to recognize private development and management of industrial estates under Industrial Area Local Authority Act 1994. State Government provided basic infrastructure up to the border of the industrial estate-electricity, water supply, road connection, internet connection. Internal infrastructure developed and maintained by ALEAP. Setting up **Export-oriented Green Industrial Parks** with platinum rating. Developed 3 estates and 3 under construction
- **Woman as owner of an asset** (industrial plot), advisory services at the doorstep, protection from harassment by local govt officials, CFCs, social support systems-creches, canteens, medical clinics, security. **If unit fails, appreciated value of land as a safety net to settle bank dues**

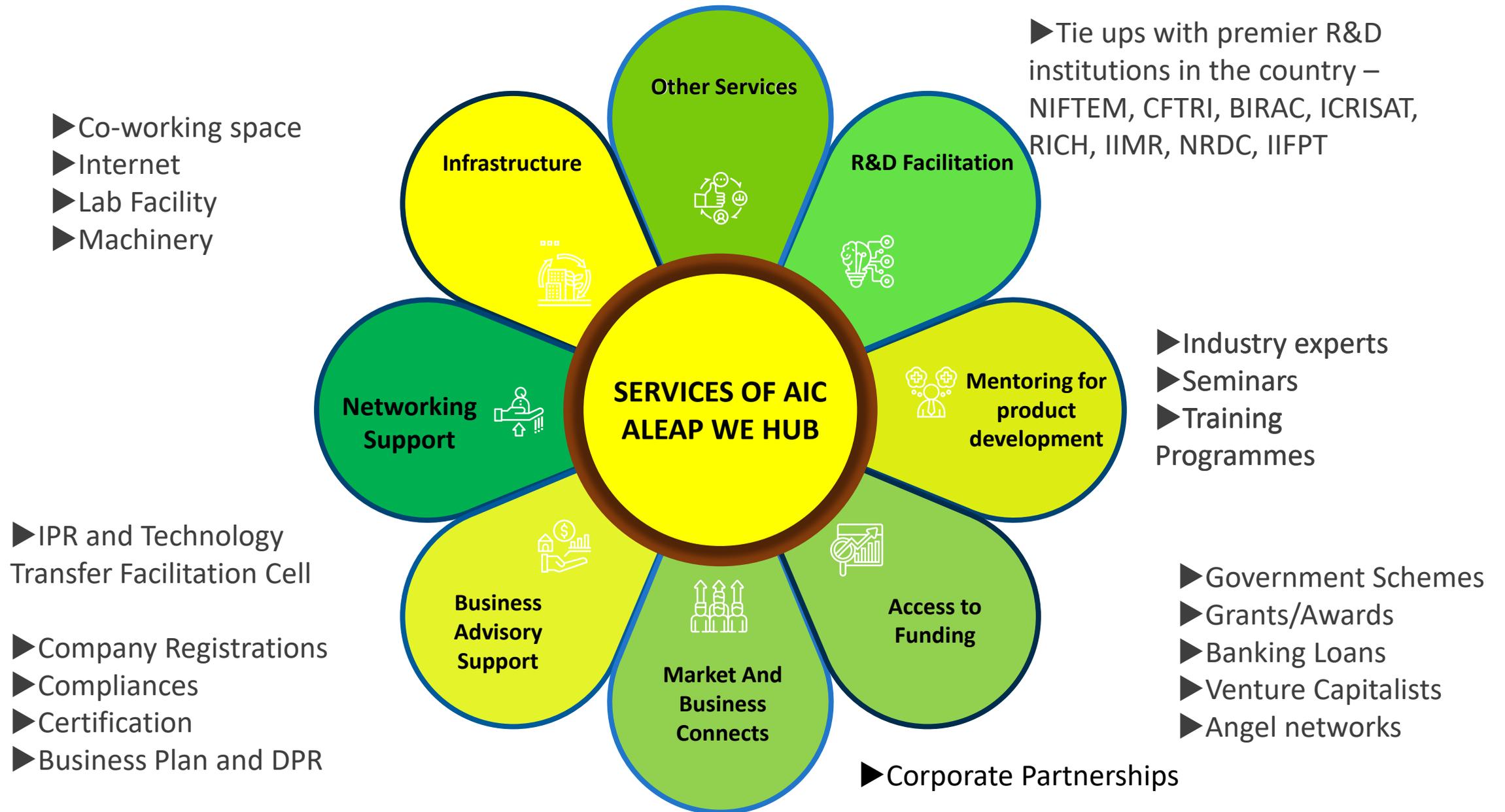
## Support Services for Women Entrepreneurs

- **Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED):** Training and support services-assistance in preparing DPRs, technology transfers, selection of machinery, company secretarial services, regulatory environment, Government's promotional schemes, marketing support-trade information/market surveys, product exhibitions & catalogue shows, marketing skills. 300 policy and business experts on roles of CED for consultations. Collaboration with ISB for EDP programs. Reaching out through "MSME HELP DESK". Business Survival and Resilience during Covid - digital skilling, e-Commerce
- Nearly 60,000 beneficiaries of skilling programs across various professional, technical, personnel and business skills under **Vandemataram** Program. Industrial Apprenticeship Program-Ministry of Skill Development under STRIVE and PM YUVA
- **ALEAP Credit Guarantee Association:** facilitating sanction of bank loans without collateral security.  
**ALEAP a member of State Level Bankers' Committee**
- **Corporate tie-ups:** Hub & Spoke Model for garment manufacturing with Aditya Birla Group
- Own **E-Commerce platform "ALEIZONE"** and also physical shops to provide marketing support
- **300,000 women entrepreneurs aided** thru' incubation, training, infra, market support and other programs
- **International Experiences:** international conferences/exhibitions/trainings/exposure visits for women entrepreneurs
- **Partnerships and Global Collaborations:** Government, industry, academia, R&D institutions, Institutes of National Importance (INI), Banks and International Development Institutions-World Bank, EU, ADB, GIZ

## ALEAP WE HUB: Focus on Innovative Technology

- **Multi-sector Incubation Centre** for MSME start-ups under Atal Innovation Mission. Grants from Niti Aayog, Ministries of Food Processing Industries and of I.T and Electronics. Infrastructure facilities and support for Start-Ups
- **Andhra Pradesh Government decision in 1983 to reserve 30% seats for women in all technical institutes**
- Sectors:
  - **Biotechnology:** cleantech/biotech applications for waste to wealth, instant diabetic breakfast, probiotics for marine pond eco-system
  - **Bio-degradable technologies**-corn plastic bags, waste cloth/paper into Buddha statues, toys, handicrafts, municipal waste into bio-fuel
  - **Food-processing technology:** cajoos fruit drink from cashew apple, millet-based healthy snacks, solar dehydration of fruits and vegetables (spinach mix), freeze drying/lyophilization
  - **Garments and textiles:** jute products, printing machines for jute material, socks cluster with computerized machines for knitting and stitching socks, computerized embroidery machines
  - **Electronics and engineering:** 3 D printing machines, makerspace and FAB LAB
  - **IT and ITeS:** computers with advanced software for development of apps, designs, and development of prototypes and production, CAD/CAM

# From Concept to Commercialization



## Nimaya Robotics Private Limited:

Nimaya uses robotics for psychomotor and cognitive skills training for children with Autism and other disabilities.



**Autocracy Machinery Private Limited**  
building oxygen concentrators. **Founder : Santhoshi**



**Cajoose** - Cashew apple juice, very rich in vitamin C (one cashew apple's vitamin C content 8 times that of an orange)-vital role in boosting the immune system.

**Founder: Dr Uma Talasila**



Solar Dried Fruits & Vegetables-  
good export potential- **Arka Foods Pvt Ltd.**

**Founder: Mrs Volga**



**Millet based Foods-Nutrition diet - HedyFarm Foods**  
nutritious immune-boosting cookies and chikkis-supplying  
for mid-day meals to school **Founder: Mrs Praveena**



## Exploring new Horizons in Regional and Global Trade

- South Asian countries have seen **sustained economic growth** over last decade of over 7.4% on average
- Yet, in South Asian region **low level of intra-regional trade-just 5% of total trade with R.O.W. Least integrated region of the world**
- UNCTAD and ADB Study 2018: **Great potential for intra-regional trade in South Asia but several barriers:**
  - 1) Poor trade facilitation, complexity and high costs of trade procedures
  - 2) Under-developed logistics services
  - 3) Trade finance barriers
  - 4) Non-harmonization of certification and labeling requirements
  - 5) Non-tariff barriers such as TBT, quantity controls over essential commodities
  - 6) Low level of B2B contacts/networking. FIEO has no formal links to counterpart institutions
  - 7) Historic political animosities
- **Can women entrepreneurs of South Asia work together to overcome/mitigate these barriers?**

## Promoting South Asian Women in Trade: Initiative of WE ITTC

- **Women Entrepreneurs International Trade and Technology Centre (WE ITTC)**. A Not-for-Profit company promoted by ALEAP and SAWDF with the objectives of :
  - i) promoting the **participation of South Asian women** entrepreneurs in regional and global trade
  - ii) providing women entrepreneurs **access to technologies** to assist them in manufacturing high-tech, innovative products which are globally competitive
- **Exhibition and Marketing Centre**-WE ITTC setting up facility near Hyderabad with grant from Government of India **i)** to hold exhibitions/trade fairs, B2B meets, buyer-seller meets, conferences and seminars. **ii)** to provide comprehensive support services through accredited agencies such as testing facilities for export products, packaging and labeling services, insurance and freight forwarding services, port services, banks for providing export finance **iii)** to maintain trade data, market surveys.
- **Regional E-Commerce Platform** for South Asia and the ASEAN: proposed collaboration between WE ITTC, ALEAP, SAWDF, AWEN and UNESCAP. Access to internet for women in South Asia and ASEAN crucial-need for policy advocacy with Governments of the Region
- **Training programs in trade-related matters/procedures**
  - i) **WTO programs** for South Asian women-Rules governing international trade, Tariffs, NTBs, Trade Facilitation etc
  - ii) **Indian Institute for Foreign Trade and Centre for WTO Studies**-programs for South Asian women in Trade Policies, Export-Import Procedures, product standards, labelling and packaging standards prevailing in South Asian countries
  - iii) **Long term training for young professional women trade consultants and apprenticeship in Trading Houses**

## Access to Technologies: Enhancing Competitiveness of Products and Services

- Strategy to develop **high value, niche products** based on locally available unique resources to ensure competitiveness esp. of small South Asian countries. Collaboration with **Institutes of Excellence in India**. Hub and Spoke strategy for creating a network of specialized institutes throughout South Asia
- Encouraging women in **STEM**: Report of Asia Pacific Economic Council, 1918 “Governments must invest more in women’s education in STEM fields not just to achieve gender equality but also to give a thrust to innovation and rapid economic growth”. Reservation of seats for girls in technical institutes
- Focus areas:
  - a) **traditional sectors** with technology upgradation: agro-food processing, herbal-based wellness and beauty products, indigenous traditional medicine, apparel, textile and home furnishings, handicrafts, tourism
  - b) **new, emerging technology-driven sectors**: applications of biotechnology and life sciences, I.T and ITeS, AI, electronics and engineering, scientific waste management, bio-medical devices and diagnostics, phyto-pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, medical instruments
- Encouraging **Green Manufacturing**: Promotion of **Export-oriented Green Industrial Parks** exclusively for Women Entrepreneurs in all South Asian countries with technical support of GIZ. Kavre GIP near Kathmandu and Addu Atol in Maldives
- Plugging into **Global Value Chains**: Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone, Vizag, AP
- **ITC’s “She Trades”** initiative: connecting 3 million women entrepreneurs to the market. WE ITTC proposes to seek support of ITC in training its staff to organize international fairs