

 THE 2024 WEPs AWARDS  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS**  
Winner



Anjali Ravi Kumar,  
Chief Sustainability Officer -  
Zomato

## Zomato Ltd.

### About the Company

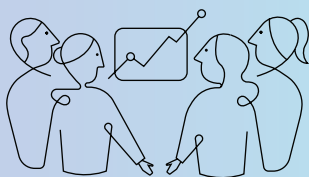
**Name:** Zomato Ltd.

**Country:** India

**Employees:** 5001 – 10000 Employees

**Percentage of women employees:**  
Between 15% – 29%

**Website:** <https://www.zomato.com>



Zomato Ltd, launched in 2010, is a leading technology platform that connects customers, restaurant partners and delivery partners. It offers services such as restaurant discovery, food delivery, table booking and digital payments, while also empowering restaurants with marketing tools, reliable delivery services and high-quality procurement solutions.

### Breaking barriers for women in India's gig economy

India is emerging as a global hub for platform-driven gig work, with about 7.7 million people already engaged in the sector as early as 2021.<sup>1</sup> The gig economy holds transformative potential for women, offering flexible work and income opportunities that are often unavailable in traditional employment.

Among its fastest-growing segments is last-mile delivery—the final step in the supply chain where goods reach consumers. Despite the sector's accessibility and flexible work modalities, women remain underrepresented. In 2021, they made up just 28 per cent of India's overall gig workforce<sup>2</sup> and only 4 to 7 per cent of delivery personnel.<sup>3</sup>

To help close this gap, Zomato launched Project Arya, named after Goddess Durga, a symbol of strength, courage and resilience. The initiative was designed to increase women's participation in last-mile delivery by tackling barriers such as limited mobility, low digital

literacy and lack of financial independence. It offers financial literacy workshops and helps women fast-track bank account access. By addressing these structural challenges, Project Arya empowers women and expands the candidate pool, which is critical for meeting rising demand in the delivery sector.

<sup>1</sup> NITI Aayog (2022). India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work. Available at: [https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-02/25th\\_June\\_Final\\_Report\\_27062022.pdf](https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-02/25th_June_Final_Report_27062022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Drishti IAS (2025). Transforming India's Gig Economy. Available at: <https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/transforming-inw-dia-s-gig-economy>

<sup>3</sup> Panda, S. (2023). Is GIG Economy Changing the Work for Women? International Journal of Indian Psychology, 11(4), 2884–2887. Available at: <https://ijip.in/articles/is-gig-economy-changing-the-work-for-women/>



## Empowering women through training and support

Traditional last-mile delivery models, primarily designed for men, often discourage women's participation by overlooking the structural disadvantages many women face. These models assume access to personal vehicles, digital tools and freedom of movement, which are less common for women, particularly those from underserved communities.

Recognizing this, Project Arya goes beyond mere recruitment by offering comprehensive support and training to ensure women's success. Community mobilization is the first step, requiring trust-building and family engagement.

Zomato collaborates with municipal corporations and NGOs such as Pratham and DriverBen, which leverage local credibility to introduce the concept of delivery work, often through repeated conversations to normalize the opportunity among women and their families.



Once women agree to participate in the project, they undergo extensive training that includes driving lessons, digital literacy education and assistance with obtaining essential documentation. They are also provided with free delivery vehicles during training. After completion, participants join the Zomato platform and receive access to digital modules that guide them through the delivery process.

*At Zomato, we are committed to building a sustainable and inclusive food delivery ecosystem where women have **equal access to opportunities** and can contribute to the growth of our industry. The Women's Riding Centre initiative is about more than just teaching women to ride two-wheelers; it's about providing them with essential life skills and access to economic independence. This is a significant step towards building an inclusive and supportive gig work environment.*

Vibha Kothari,  
DEI Lead, Zomato Ltd.

Once on the job, a dedicated team of 1,500 members and more than 650 fleet coaches offer round-the-clock assistance, helping address any challenges that arise. All Zomato's delivery partners also gain access to subsidized vehicle rental and lease-to-own options. For women, Zomato organizes visits where vehicle providers allow them to test and familiarize themselves with different models, helping them decide which option best suits their needs.

The project is guided by the diverse perspectives of Zomato's DEI, sustainability and logistics teams and supported by a network of partners, including municipal bodies, driving schools and electric vehicle companies. Because few organizations can provide the full range of training and equipment, Zomato engages multiple partners. This sometimes results in dropouts, reduced consistency, delays between trainings, location changes or interruptions in the training sequence. Despite these challenges, Zomato remains committed to fostering an inclusive ecosystem and expanding opportunities for women in delivery work.



To ensure safety, the programme incorporates measures such as an in-app SOS button, rapid ambulance response and free torches and pepper spray at onboarding. Women also receive additional benefits, including a two-day income cover during menstruation; health, accident and maternity insurance; and scholarships for their children. Additionally, women delivery partners earn 1.2 times more than men—a deliberate measure to ensure pay parity and boost participation, since most women prefer daytime shifts, which typically pay less. Women are also offered the flexibility of choosing delivery routes and the option to wear a traditional kurta instead of a uniform.

Through these efforts, Project Arya has challenged assumptions and social norms that have shaped women’s workplace opportunities and preferences. For example, women were initially limited to short-distance deliveries due to safety concerns, and late-evening shifts were discouraged. However, when given the choice, more than 200 women now opt for long-distance deliveries, and over half work during peak dinner hours. These women, challenging preconceived social norms, are a testament to the importance of ensuring autonomy and equal opportunities in advancing gender equality.

### Creating pathways for women in delivery work

As of FY25, Zomato has a fleet of 2,500 active women delivery partners across 100 cities, with 55 per cent operating in southern and western India. In March 2024 alone, these partners completed 18,900 orders. Project Arya’s impact extends beyond onboarding and retention metrics. Focus group discussions show that participants report greater financial independence, the ability to support personal and family needs, and enhanced social mobility and participation in economic activities.

At its core, Project Arya is about breaking stereotypes and de-genderizing delivery work, creating space for women to thrive. By empowering women from diverse backgrounds, the initiative not only advances gender equality but also strengthens the economic fabric of communities across India. Over the next two years, Zomato plans to train an additional 5,000 women, equipping them with skills for employment in last-mile delivery roles on any platform.

To scale its impact and institutionalize its learnings, Zomato is developing a training toolkit for women in platform work. This resource will enable NGOs focused on women’s economic empowerment to replicate similar programmes, covering last-mile delivery training and digital literacy. Through this, Project Arya’s benefits will extend beyond Zomato’s operations, fostering lasting opportunities for women across the sector.

The UN Women Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards recognize exemplary private sector actions to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment within a specific category, location, and time period. Recognition as an awardee does not imply endorsement by UN Women of the organization or of individuals, nor does it constitute a formal partnership. Any claims, statements, or endorsements made by awardees remain the responsibility of the respective private sector organization and do not reflect the official policies or positions of UN Women.

## Women’s Empowerment Principles



High-Level Corporate Leadership



Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination



Employee Health, Well-Being and Safety



Education and Training for Career Advancement



Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices



Community Initiatives and Advocacy



Measurement and Reporting

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