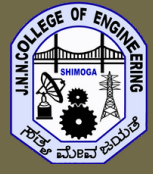




# NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY (R) JAWAHARLAL NEHRU NEW COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, SHIVAMOGGA

(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi, Affiliated to VTU, Belagavi)

**INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL (IQAC)**



## DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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**INSTITUTION'S INNOVATION COUNCIL (IIC)**



# JNNCE - MBA Meets Entrepreneurship: From Passion to Profession: Fitness Coaching with Courage and Commitment



**Ms. Sunitha**



## About Ms. Sunitha

Ms. Sunita Chetan was born in Mysore into a well-known jewellery business family. The younger of twin sisters, she displayed a natural inclination towards extracurricular activities from childhood, while also assisting her father in the family business.

After completing her B.Com graduation, she married Chetan, a member of the reputed TSB family, owners of Srinidhi Silks & Textiles, Shimoga. Post marriage, she contributed to the family enterprise by managing its fashion jewellery section.

A lifelong passion for dance and fitness inspired her to pursue professional training. She completed Aerobics training in Bangalore, earned the prestigious Reebok Training Certification, and became a certified Zumba trainer. Sunita began her career as an aerobics instructor at Café Chillax. After four years of success, she launched her own fitness studio, Fit Arena, on Savalanga Road, Shimoga, which she managed successfully for six years.

Currently, Sunita works as a fitness trainer at Naren Fitness. Over the years, she has trained more than 1,000 individuals in aerobics, earning a reputation for her passionate approach and visible results. She strongly advocates that regular aerobics can significantly improve overall health-enhancing strength, fitness, and managing conditions such as diabetes, joint pains, and PCOD.

Her expertise has also been showcased through special training sessions for students during Independence Day and Annual Day celebrations, as well as an aerobics presentation at Yoga Dasara organised by the Shimoga City Corporation.

Sunita's personal life is equally fulfilling. She is the proud mother of Prateet, a Chartered Accountant currently pursuing his MBA at IIM Kozhikode.



### Can you tell us a little about your journey into fitness coaching?

I grew up in a family of jewellery business in Mysore and open to business environment right from my childhood days, after coming down to Shivamogga, I had the passion and I realized there was a lack of professional fitness guidance in our city. Moreover my husband inspired me in initiating the journey. The formal fitness training wasn't common. I decided to pursue certifications in personal fitness training and nutrition, and that's how my entrepreneurial journey began 15 years ago.



### What inspired you to start fitness center instead of any other business?

Tier-two cities often get overlooked when it comes to quality fitness services. I noticed people here were interested in fitness but lacked access to certified trainers and personalized programs. I wanted to bring that level of professionalism home, instead of people having to go to only the gyms.



### Did you receive any financial support or government funding when you started?

No, I didn't require government funding. Since the investment was minimal, I managed it with my own savings. Later, when the academy started growing, my husband and brother-in-law supported me with logistics and promotion.




**Who has been your biggest support system throughout this journey?**

My family. My husband and brother-in-law encouraged me when I expanded after five years. And my parents have been my lifelong role models. My father and mother were always proactive and taught me to be independent and confident—that shaped me into who I am today.




**What challenges did you face as a woman entrepreneur in this field?**

Initially, many didn't take me seriously because fitness training is often male-dominated. Convincing clients that I could handle strength training, diet consultations, and even group classes was tough. Managing late hours and balancing family expectations was also challenging. But slowly, my results and client transformations spoke louder than doubts.




**How has the response been from the people of Shivamogga?**

Honestly, overwhelming! Women especially feel more comfortable approaching a female trainer. I train not only youngsters but also homemakers, senior citizens, and working professionals. Word-of-mouth has been my biggest growth driver.




**How do you differentiate your services from regular gyms?**

I focus on holistic wellness, not just weight loss. My programs include aerobics, strength training, functional workouts, yoga, diet counseling, and mental well-being. I also do body composition analysis and personalized fitness tracking, which most gyms in small cities don't provide.




**What role has family support played in your journey?**

Immense support. My husband, my brother-in-law and parent in laws encouraged me when I had to invest time and seed money for the business as well as during certifications. My husband helps me manage accounts and marketing. Without their backing, I couldn't have sustained during the initial years.




**What do you think about competition in a tier-two city fitness market?**

Competition is healthy. Many gyms are coming up, but most are equipment-driven. I focus on personal transformation, which gives me an edge. Also, being approachable and building relationships with clients matters more here than flashy infrastructure.



**What advice would you give to women who want to become fitness entrepreneurs?**

Believe in yourself and don't hesitate to enter male-dominated fields. Start small, focus on quality service, and build trust. In fitness, your credibility is your biggest asset. And remember—consistency is key, not just for workouts but also for business.




**How do you manage work-life balance as a fitness entrepreneur?**

My day starts very early with client sessions and often ends late in the evening. Hence time management becomes very important. Initially, it was exhausting, but over time I created a routine. My family support has been great in this regard. I dedicate mornings and evenings to training, afternoons for family and business planning. Fitness itself keeps me energized, so I practice what I preach.



**How do you attract and retain clients in a smaller market?**

In a tier-two city, people value trust and personal connection more than advertisements. I focus on client transformations and let their stories speak for me. I also conduct community fitness workshops in schools and other associations, which helps spread awareness and bring in new clients.




**Do you see a difference in fitness awareness between tier-one and tier-two cities?**

Yes. In metros, fitness is seen as a lifestyle. Here, many people still look at it only for weight loss or medical necessity. But the mindset is changing fast—especially among youth and working women.




**What role does technology and social media play in your business?**

A huge role! I use fitness tracking apps, online diet monitoring. I use social media to connect with clients. Instagram reels and YouTube workout videos help build credibility. I have uploaded plenty of videos which has crossed more than lakh views.




**How do you handle nutrition and diet counseling?**

Many clients think dieting means starving. I educate them about balanced meals using local foods like ragi, millets, seasonal fruits, and home-cooked dishes. I never promote fad diets, but sustainable nutrition habits.



**What is the most rewarding experience you've had so far?**

Once, a 45-year-old homemaker who had diabetes and obesity trained with me for a year. She not only lost weight but reversed her sugar levels and gained confidence to travel alone. That transformation was more rewarding than any business milestone. Similarly, many patients with PCOD issues, stress related issues etc., have found themselves better after the training which is very gratifying.



**Do you also train men, or do you focus only on women?**

I train both, but 70% of my clients are women. Many men too approach me. Initially, there was hesitation and disinclination because my aerobics training is dance-based, but now they respect my expertise and appreciate the classes.



**How do you ensure safety and avoid injuries during training?**

Education is key. I teach proper posture, warm-ups, and stretching. I never push clients beyond safe limits. In small cities, many gyms neglect form, but I make safety my brand identity.



**Every entrepreneur faces risks. What were the risks or challenges in your journey?**

For me, investment was never a big challenge because I started small. The real risk has always been consistency in clients. In a tier-two city like Shivamogga, people sometimes join with enthusiasm but drop out due to work, family, or lack of discipline. Keeping them motivated and consistent is the toughest part.



**What is your ultimate dream as a fitness entrepreneur?**

My dream is to make fitness accessible and affordable to everyone. I want to create a chain of community-driven fitness centers where people feel fitness is a celebration, not a punishment.



**What is your message being a woman entrepreneur to us?**

“Confidence, Courage, Commitment, Action.”

“Confidence to believe in yourself, courage to face doubts, commitment to stay consistent, and action to keep moving forward. Don’t wait for perfect conditions—start small, and grow step by step. Your passion can transform not just your life, but also your community.”

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