

## **Archana Jahagirdar** **Founder & Managing Partner, Rukam Capital**

As the Founder and Managing Partner of Rukam Capital, an early-stage consumer-focused VC fund, Archana Jahagirdar stands out as one of the few solo women General Partners in the venture capital ecosystem, both in India and globally. Archana is a vocal advocate for India's entrepreneurial ecosystem, leveraging her unique blend of creative storytelling and data-driven insight to drive meaningful change in the startup landscape.

As an "accidental VC" who built her career on a foundation of journalism and storytelling, Archana brings a fresh perspective to startup investments, ensuring that every founder's story gets the attention it deserves. Whether through Startup Table with AJ\* or her contributions on global platforms, Archana's work is driven by a singular mission: to create spaces where innovation thrives, challenges are overcome collectively, and growth is shared. Her approach emphasizes trust, authenticity, and purpose-driven leadership, positioning her as a cornerstone of India's entrepreneurial narrative and a global advocate for impactful change.

With a deep belief in the potential of Indian startups, Archana sees the next decade as an era of unparalleled opportunity. Whether mentoring early-stage entrepreneurs or driving systemic change through policy advocacy, she remains at the forefront of India's growth story.

### **Elevating India's Startup Landscape**

As a core member of the organizing committee for Startup Mahakumbh, Archana is dedicated to advancing India's startup ecosystem. In collaboration with key government leaders, Archana is focused on making the second edition of Startup Mahakumbh flagship event bigger, more inclusive, and impactful. Her goal is to create a platform that encourages collaboration, celebrates innovation, and highlights India's entrepreneurial spirit.

Archana has also been a key organizer of New Delhi Slush'd, India's licensed version of Slush Helsinki, and Startup Mahakumbh and has also co-led the Indian startup delegation at Latitude 59 in Estonia.

As a venture capitalist, Archana's investments go beyond business ventures; she is committed to empowering India to lead the world in innovation, inclusivity, and impact.

### **Championing Women in Leadership**

Archana is a vocal advocate for empowering women in leadership and entrepreneurship. With her venture capital expertise, her participation in platforms like the Women's Private Equity Summit and WINLounge at Davos 2025 exemplifies her dedication to elevating women's voices, fostering collaboration, and driving systemic change in industries traditionally dominated by men. Her vision is to nurture an inclusive ecosystem where talent thrives, regardless of gender, to drive meaningful impact in Indian technology and beyond.

### **Founder and Host of Startup Table with AJ: A Platform for Founders, by Founders**

Archana is the visionary creator and host of *Startup Table with AJ\**, a trailblazing series that unites founders from diverse sectors to candidly share their journeys of grit, growth, and resilience. Already in its second season, the initiative has evolved into a trusted hub where entrepreneurs can exchange insights, celebrate successes, and learn from challenges.

*\*Startup Table with AJ aims to highlight the often-overlooked struggles of early-stage founders, bringing their stories to the forefront amid the prevailing hype around unicorns and*

*high-profile investors. Through this series, Archana Jahagirdar aims to share her wealth of knowledge but also empower others to achieve their potential and contribute positively to society.*

In addition to this, Archana established the **Bootstrap Incubation and Advisory Foundation**, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering a vibrant community for early-stage startup founders, investors, industry experts, and business enthusiasts.

### **Global Leader & Advocate for Change**

Archana has represented India at prestigious global events, including GITEX GLOBAL in Dubai, where she discussed leadership pathways for women and moderated key panels on India's growing influence in global markets. At #Together2024 by She Capital and Encubay's Global Immersion Week, she celebrated diversity, inspired female founders, and advocated for inclusivity in the VC space.

As a panelist at the Women Inspiring Network (#WINLounge) at Davos 2025, Archana engaged in discussions on pivotal topics, including AI, social impact, sustainability, and Gender Lens Investing, alongside global leaders from India, Israel, North Macedonia, and the US. Her participation highlights her dedication to harnessing innovation and promoting inclusivity for global advancement.

### **Early Career and Contributions**

Before founding Rukam Capital, Archana excelled in deal sourcing, setting up accelerators, and collaborating with the Indian Angel Network. Her early stage investing expertise is demonstrated in brands like Go DESi, Sleepy Owl Coffee, BECO, The Indus Valley, Curefoods, etc. Her transactional acumen is matched by her ability to scale portfolio companies and foster relationships with tier-1 funds

**Education:** Archana holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Literature from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University.