

Rural Entrepreneurship: A Roadmap for Women's Empowerment in New India

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ABSTRACT:

The entrepreneurial environment in rural India has become a landmark change in bringing social-economic change. In modern India, particularly in the empowerment of women, rural entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the revolutionary changes in socio-economic development processes. With the country moving towards the vision Viksit Bharat 2047, rural women are being more and more placed in the role of agents of change, as they do not just serve as the source of income to the household but also contribute to community development. The paper states that future strategies should focus on the availability of finance, comprehensive capacity-building initiatives, mentorship programs, and awareness campaigns to overcome stereotypes and establish an enabling environment to become an entrepreneur. To sum up, rural entrepreneurship is a crucial tool in the economic, social, and psychological empowerment of women, which is why it can become an important asset to the development of a more inclusive growth and transformation of India into a developed state by 2047.

KEYWORDS:

Economic Development, women entrepreneurship, Viksit Bharath, Rural Development.

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Introduction

Empowering rural women entrepreneurs is a very important strategy in the development of India in general. Over the past few years, the policy change has been strategic with a greater concern for improving the role of women in the formation of enterprises. The DAY-NRLM, Startup India, the growth of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), assistance to women-owned Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and developing innovative digital platforms are all contributing to a silent but necessary change in rural India. These moves are breaking down the

conventional roles of both sexes, and women are emerging as leaders in economic growth and development in society.

Within the framework of New India, the discussion of women's empowerment pays growing attention to the entrepreneurial activity as one of the main tools to achieve socio-economic progress. Women in rural areas, who are most of the time faced with intricate socio-economic issues, are being identified to play a pivotal role in contributing to the economic growth by engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Such a course of action is considered to be a feasible way to attain economic autonomy and self-reliance, where women could escape the conventional gender restrictions and contribute to their societies.

Moreover, the government and non-government bodies have initiated various initiatives that are meant to promote entrepreneurship by rural women. These programs acknowledge the enormous potential of female entrepreneurs to push the economy and societal transformation, and the need to further nurture this ongoing wave of action by means of additional backing as well as policy reforms.

Review of Literature:

The literature review highlights the importance of entrepreneurship in the rural setting of India, especially for women entrepreneurs who play an important role in the development of the country. As it has been pointed out in many studies, the empowerment of women is a key to the economic growth and the social development of these communities. This literature highlights that special measures and policies should be taken to increase the engagement of women in entrepreneurial work.

Empirical studies in Odisha have indicated that participation rates in micro-enterprises boost household incomes as well as agency levels among women in their households and communities to a significant extent. Senapati and Ojha (2019) underline that the involvement of micro-enterprises will enable female individuals to make more rational decisions and have a greater impact on society, which will eventually enhance their empowerment.

The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, a leading micro-credit scheme, has had a central role in setting up tribal women-headed enterprises. Not only does this program enhance economic autonomy, but it also enhances bargaining strength at the village level, as reported by Sahu et al. (2021)

and Jacob and Munuswamy (2022). The success of the scheme highlights the role of financial services that are easily accessible in rural development.

The research on self-help groups (SHGs) and micro-enterprises also proves that the involvement in entrepreneurial activities leads to the improvement of the financial independence of women, their decision-making skills, and their social capital. According to Pandhare et al. (2024), SHGs are important platforms to empower women and allow them to become more economically and socially independent.

Objectives

- » To determine the empowerment of rural women through entrepreneurship in a socio-economic manner.
- » To examine major policies and plans of women's rural entrepreneurship.
- » To examine the role played by rural women in the business by Viksit Bharat's inclusive growth vision.

Research Methodology:

Collecting data for this study involves a secondary method. The data collected from various reports, review articles, government reports, the Niti Aayog report, and various press notes are used in this study. The study focuses on how women entrepreneurs create opportunities for women in developing India and face problems, and how these barriers impact individuals and society. Government publications, NGO reports, and census data were used to find evidence.

Empowering Rural Women in Economics by being entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is considered critical in the economic empowerment of women in rural areas through offering them a chance to generate income. The women are busy in various activities which include: handicraft, food processing, tailoring, dairy farming, and agricultural-based business. Such activities have not only helped to complement household earnings but also helped to lessen the economic dependency on male earners in the family, consequently enhancing gender equality and economic resilience. Women's empowerment is based on financial independence. The women can get these credits and resources needed to start and sustain small enterprises through access to microfinance, membership of

self-help groups (SHGs), and government schemes. This financial inclusion helps women to take up independent choices, enhance their livelihoods, and also play significant roles in their communities. Sustainable development involves the creation of assets and savings. The women business owners tend to use the profits to invest in the purchase of goods, which may be land, equipment, or animals. These assets are used as a security for future investment and as a safety net during economic uncertainty. In general, entrepreneurship serves as an engine of empowering rural women as it allows them to participate in the economy and become financially independent, as well as accumulate assets. All these factors are part of the larger agendas of gender equality, poverty reduction, and community building.

Social Empowerment:

Women's Social entrepreneurship is a key factor in changing the rural areas as it promotes individual and communal agency. It promotes the change in the old social relations, which results in greater respect and power of women in their families and society. Women business persons tend to act as examples and encourage others to engage in economic activities and defy social conventions that limit their involvement in the community.

Increased Position and Decision-making Authority: Women who earn money are respected more by their family members and peers in society. They are more empowered in making decisions related to the household, hence creating a fairer social situation. Not only does this change their lives for the better, but it also influences the change of society at large as it creates a challenge to gender stereotypes.

Destroying Social Pigeonholes: Entrepreneurship will help women (particularly in the rural parts of the country) get out of the traditional roles of a home-maker. It helps them to be active in the development of their communities, access markets, and open up to formal institutions, thus diminishing social exclusion and ensuring gender equality.

Socio-Economic Outcomes:

Poverty Reduction: Women's entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the reduction of poverty as it helps in eliminating poverty by diversifying income amongst the family. Economic diversification increases household stability and resilience.

Better Education and Health Results: Women's enterprises tend to use much of the income in educating children, feeding them, and providing health services. The positive intergenerational impact of these investments is in the form of improved health and education.

Sustainable Development: Women entrepreneurs are more inclined to use local resources, become environmentally friendly, and come up with community-based solutions. These strategies lead to rural inclusive development, environmental stability, and social unity.

Women are assertively venturing into business in India. An Indian report released by Bain and Company and Google in 2020 found that there are approximately 13.5 to 15.7 million women in leadership positions in enterprises in India. The Indian government has put in place numerous policies that specifically target women in business.

1. Stand Up India Scheme:

This program is a project initiated by the Ministry of Finance to encourage financial aid to women entrepreneurs within SC/ST and Women Entrepreneurs. Greenfield enterprises are established with the assistance of bank loans ranging between 10,000 and 1 crore Indian rupees. One of the shareholders should either be a member of SC/ST or be a woman entrepreneur, holding at least 51 percent of the shareholding.

2. Udyogini Scheme:

The Udyogini Scheme, which is the project of the Karnataka State Women Development Corporation (KSWDC), provides subsidised loans and entrepreneurship training to women, especially those who belong to weaker sections. The rural women can get loans to do their businesses like dairy, petty shops, tailoring, and small food processing. The scheme also offers financial literacy and technical assistance so that the women would have the chance to manage their businesses.

3. Streeshakthi Scheme:

The Streeshakthi Scheme aims at creating self-help groups of rural women in a bid to promote savings, access to credit, and community entrepreneurship. SHGs are given the power to initiate small enterprises and income-generating operations through revolving funds and subsidies on interest on their loans. The scheme not only empowers women in the rural setting economically but also instills confidence and leadership at

the grassroots.

Discussion:

These effects include the increase in financial independence, the ability to make better decisions within families and society, and the ability to have access to education and healthcare both personally and on behalf of their families (Prabha et al., 2025). Moreover, the entrepreneurial activity has been demonstrated as helping to increase social status, enabling women to take a more active role in the process of community governing and policy making, thus breaking traditional patriarchal standards (Velmurugan et al., 2024). This empowerment also reaches their capability to work in non-agricultural industries, which is especially important when the agricultural jobs do not grow, allowing them to evaluate and exploit their natural talents (Senapati & Ojha, 2019).

Conclusion:

Within the broad spectrum of Viksit Bharat 2047 that envisions a developed and prosperous India by the year 2047, there is recognition of women entrepreneurs as important players towards the sustainable and inclusive development of the country. This program focuses on the need to empower female-led startups, which can play a big part in making the economy resilient, innovative, and fair. By empowering women businesspeople, India will be able to utilize different skills and attitudes, which will make it economically developed and socially progressive. It is aimed at building an enabling environment that will motivate women to engage in entrepreneurship actively by availing resources, mentorship, and policy support to enable them. This will eventually be in line with the bigger objective of creating a country where gender equality and economic empowerment are inseparable, and help in achieving a dynamic and inclusive India by the year 2047.

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Conflict of interest:

The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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