Impact of Government Schemes on Women Entrepreneurship in India (2015–2025)

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Abstract:

Women entrepreneurship plays a vital role in promoting economic growth, employment generation, and inclusive development in India. To encourage women's participation in entrepreneurial activities, the Government of India has introduced various schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Stand-Up India, and Startup India. This study examines the impact of these government schemes on women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025 using secondary data. The study is based on published reports, government publications, research articles, and statistical databases. Descriptive and trend analysis have been used to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in enhancing financial access, enterprise creation, and entrepreneurial participation among women. The study concludes that government schemes have contributed significantly to the growth of women entrepreneurship, although challenges such as limited awareness, regional disparities, and financial constraints continue to affect their effectiveness. The findings provide useful insights for policymakers and researchers to strengthen future initiatives for women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurship, Government Schemes, Secondary Data, PMMY, Stand-Up India, Startup India, India.*

Introduction:

Women entrepreneurship has emerged as a key driver of economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and social development in India. Women-owned enterprises contribute significantly to the country's economy by creating jobs, reducing poverty, and promoting inclusive growth. In recent years, increasing education, digitalization, and supportive government policies have encouraged more women to establish and manage businesses across various sectors.

Recognizing the importance of women entrepreneurs, the Government of India has introduced several initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Stand-Up India Scheme, Startup India, Mahila Coir Yojana, and various MSME support programs. These schemes aim to improve access to finance, skill development, market opportunities, and entrepreneurial support for women. Despite these efforts, many women entrepreneurs continue to face challenges such as limited access to credit, lack of awareness, social barriers, inadequate training, and market constraints.

Assessing the effectiveness of these government schemes is essential to understand their contribution to the growth of women entrepreneurship and to identify areas requiring further policy intervention. This study examines the impact of government schemes on women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025 using secondary data collected from government reports, published research, and official statistical sources. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders working towards strengthening women entrepreneurship in India.

Contextual Background:

Women entrepreneurship has gained considerable importance in India as a means of promoting economic development, employment generation, and gender equality. Over the past decade, increasing educational opportunities, technological advancement, digital financial services, and supportive government policies have encouraged more women to participate in entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs are now establishing enterprises in manufacturing, services, agriculture, retail, e-commerce, and technology, thereby contributing significantly to the nation's socio-economic development.

To strengthen women-led enterprises, the Government of India has launched several initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Stand-Up India Scheme, Startup India, Mahila e-Haat, and various programmes under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). These initiatives aim to improve access to institutional finance, entrepreneurship development, skill enhancement, market linkages, and digital empowerment for women entrepreneurs. In addition, institutions such as NABARD, SIDBI, and public sector banks have introduced financial assistance and capacity-building programmes to support women-owned businesses.

Despite these initiatives, women entrepreneurs continue to face several challenges, including limited access to credit, inadequate business training, social and cultural constraints, and unequal market opportunities. Therefore, evaluating the impact of government schemes is essential to understand their effectiveness in promoting women entrepreneurship. This study analyses the performance and outcomes of major government initiatives during the period 2015–2025 using secondary data from government reports, official publications, and published research to assess their contribution to the growth of women entrepreneurship in India.

Review of Literature:

Brush (1992), in the study Research on Women Entrepreneurship, highlighted that women entrepreneurs play a significant role in economic development. The study found that women entrepreneurs face several challenges related to finance, social support, and business growth, emphasizing the need for institutional and policy support.

Minniti and Naudé (2010), in their study Women Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, concluded that women entrepreneurship contributes significantly to employment generation and economic growth, particularly in developing countries. The authors stressed the importance of supportive policies and an enabling entrepreneurial environment.

Singh (2014), in the study Women Entrepreneurship in India, found that government support, education, and financial assistance are essential for promoting women-owned enterprises. However, the study also pointed out that social and cultural barriers continue to restrict women's entrepreneurial participation.

Sharma and Kushwaha (2015) examined Government Schemes for Women Entrepreneurs and reported that schemes such as PMEGP and MSME programmes have enhanced entrepreneurial opportunities for women. However, the study observed that awareness and utilization of these schemes remain limited in many regions.

According to the NITI Aayog (2022) report on the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), digital platforms, mentoring, financial inclusion, and policy support play a crucial role in strengthening women entrepreneurship in India. The report emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to create a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Ministry of MSME Annual Report (2024) highlighted a steady increase in women-owned MSMEs due to improved access to finance, entrepreneurship development programmes, and government initiatives. However, it also identified challenges related to market access, digital literacy, and business sustainability.

Research Questions:

1. What are the major government schemes introduced to promote women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025?

2. How have government schemes influenced the growth of women entrepreneurship in India?

3. What has been the impact of government initiatives on access to finance, enterprise development, and employment generation among women entrepreneurs?

4. What are the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs despite the implementation of government schemes?
5. What measures can be suggested to improve the effectiveness of government schemes for promoting women entrepreneurship in India?

Objective of the Study:

1. To examine the major government schemes introduced to promote women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025.
2. To assess how government schemes have influenced the growth of women entrepreneurship in India.
3. To evaluate the impact of government initiatives on access to finance, enterprise development, and employment generation among women entrepreneurs.
4. To identify the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs despite the implementation of government schemes.
5. To suggest measures for improving the effectiveness of government schemes for promoting women entrepreneurship in India.

Research Methodology:

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based entirely on secondary data. The study examines the impact of government schemes on women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025.

Secondary data have been collected from various reliable sources, including reports published by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Ministry of Finance, NITI Aayog, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), NABARD, Startup India, and other government publications. Relevant information has also been gathered from research journals, books, newspapers, websites, and published reports.

The collected data have been analyzed using descriptive and trend analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of government schemes in promoting women entrepreneurship. Tables, graphs, and percentage analysis have been used wherever necessary to present and interpret the data. The findings of the study are based solely on the analysis of secondary data.

Data Analysis:

Table 1: Major Government Schemes Supporting Women Entrepreneurs (2015–2025)

Scheme	Launch Year	Target Group	Major Benefit	Impact on Women Entrepreneurship
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)	2015	Micro entrepreneurs	Collateral-free loans	Increased women-owned micro enterprises
Stand-Up India	2016	Women, SC/ST entrepreneurs	₹10 lakh–₹1 crore loans	Encouraged first-generation women entrepreneurs
Startup India	2016	Startups	Tax benefits, funding, incubation	Increased women-led startups
Mahila e-Haat	2016	Women entrepreneurs	Online marketing platform	Improved digital marketing opportunities
Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)	2018	Women entrepreneurs	Mentoring, networking, funding support	Enhanced entrepreneurial ecosystem

Interpretation of Table 1:

The Government of India introduced several schemes between 2015 and 2025 to improve women's participation in entrepreneurship. These initiatives focused on finance, skill development, digital marketing, and mentoring, thereby strengthening women's economic empowerment.

Table 2: Women Beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (Cumulative)

Particular	Value
Total Mudra Loan Accounts	55.38 Crore
Women Loan Accounts	37.06 Crore
Loan Amount to Women	₹15.89 Lakh Crore
Share of Women Beneficiaries	About 67%

Interpretation of Table 2: Women constitute the majority of Mudra beneficiaries. The large number of loans demonstrates that PMMY has significantly improved women's access to finance and promoted self-employment across India.

Table 3: Stand-Up India Scheme Performance for Women (up to March 2025)

Indicator	Value
Women Loan Accounts	1,92,217
Total Loan Amount	₹43,884.41 Crore
Loan Size	₹10 lakh–₹1 crore

Interpretation of Table 3:

The Stand-Up India Scheme has enabled thousands of women to establish greenfield enterprises. The substantial loan amount indicates growing confidence among financial institutions in supporting women entrepreneurs.

Table 4: Overall Impact of Government Schemes on Women Entrepreneurship

Indicator	Before 2015	2025	Trend
Access to Finance	Low	High	Improved
Digital Business Participation	Low	High	Increased
Women-Owned Startups	Limited	Significant Growth	Positive
Financial Inclusion	Moderate	Very High	Improved
Employment Generation	Low	High	Positive

Interpretation of Table 4:

Secondary data indicate that government initiatives have significantly enhanced women's financial inclusion, business ownership, and employment generation during 2015–2025. Support through credit, digital platforms, and entrepreneurship development has strengthened the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women.

Findings of the Study:

1. Government schemes significantly improved women's access to institutional finance, enabling more women to establish and expand enterprises.
2. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) played a significant role by providing collateral-free loans to micro women entrepreneurs, improving access to institutional finance.
3. Stand-Up India promoted formal entrepreneurship by encouraging women to establish medium-scale enterprises.
4. Digital initiatives such as Mahila e-Haat and the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) enhanced market access, digital marketing opportunities, and business networking for women entrepreneurs.

5. Government initiatives collectively contributed to the growth of women entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, employment generation, and inclusive economic development in India.
6. Despite significant progress, challenges such as limited awareness, regional disparities, procedural delays, and access to information continue to affect the effective utilization of government schemes.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that government schemes have played a significant role in promoting women entrepreneurship in India during the period 2015–2025. Based on secondary data, it is evident that initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Stand-Up India, Startup India, Mahila e-Haat, and the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) have improved women's access to financial assistance, skill development, digital marketing opportunities, and business support services.

Among these initiatives, the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana has been the most impactful in terms of the number of women beneficiaries, while the Stand-Up India Scheme has encouraged women to establish new enterprises by providing institutional credit. Digital platforms and mentoring initiatives have further enhanced women's participation in entrepreneurship by expanding market access and strengthening business capabilities.

Despite these achievements, challenges such as limited financial literacy, lack of awareness about government schemes, inadequate access to technology in rural areas, and social and cultural barriers continue to affect the growth of women-owned enterprises. Addressing these issues through increased awareness campaigns, entrepreneurship training, digital inclusion, simplified loan procedures, and continuous policy support can further strengthen women's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Overall, the study finds that government schemes have made a positive contribution to increasing women's entrepreneurial participation, financial inclusion, employment generation, and economic empowerment. Continued policy support and effective implementation will be essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic development in India

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