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The Role of Yashasvini Campaign and Mahila Coir Yojana in Reshaping Women Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

The main goal of this research paper is to assess the strategy development of India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector, in the context of empowering women entrepreneur. India's vision for a \$5 trillion economy makes the MSME sector a key driver for growth by contributing 30% to India's Gross Domestic Product and 45% to India's exports. The biggest barrier in achieving gender equality is a major challenge in India's growth story.

The paper attempts to examine the relationship between these two different policy interventions:

The Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY): The MCY is a conventional policy that is production oriented and focuses on women entrepreneurs who make up 80% of the workforce. The policy targets rural employment through modern technology and stipends for women.

The Yashasvini Campaign: The Yashasvini Campaign is a contemporary policy that is formalisation oriented and seeks to overcome financial barriers for women entrepreneurs in the digital economy.

One of the findings of the study is the registration of over 3.07 crore women-led businesses on the Udyam Portal as of February 2026. This indicates a massive shift from informal to formal employment. The study shows the success of the improved credit guarantee schemes, such as the 90% guarantee offered to women led MSMEs. However, the study identifies the challenges of low digital literacy levels and the challenges of expanding of micro enterprises to small and medium enterprises. The study concludes by saying that the future of entrepreneurship lies in the "gender-intelligent financial system," which bridges the gap between traditional manual skills and the formalisation of the digital age. By uniting the two worlds, India can create a more inclusive, evolving and sustainable future.

Keywords: MSME, Women Entrepreneurs, Yashasvini Campaign, Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY)

Introduction

In the modern Indian economy, women entrepreneurs are the main forces behind the country's

shift to a \$5 trillion economy; they are no longer merely a demographic segment. By definition, they are women or groups of women who start, plan, and run businesses while managing financial risks to attain crucial economic independence. MSMEs currently employ over 11 crore people and account for an astounding 30% of India's GDP and 45% of all exports. These businesses are categorized under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) according to certain investment and turnover levels.

New MSME classification Criteria as per Union Budget 2025

Category	Investment Limit (Plant, Machinery, Equipment)	Annual Turnover Limit
Micro Enterprise	Up to ₹ 2.5crore	Up to ₹10 crore
Small Enterprise	Up to ₹25 crore	Up to ₹100 crore
Medium Enterprise	Up to ₹125 crore	Up to ₹500 crore

Source: www.msme.gov.in

There is still a sizable "Sophistication Gap" in spite of these remarkable macro-statistics. Even while the "First Wave" of empowerment was effective in formally integrating an unseen workforce-as of February 2026, there were over 3.07 crore women-led units on the Udyam portal-registration by itself does not guarantee growth. Many businesses are still stuck in "digital survival," using simple tools like UPI or WhatsApp while being unaware and unable to use tools like sophisticated AI or ERP systems.

The Indian government has used two different architectural models to address these subtleties:

The Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY): The Coir Board has a traditional, production-based self-employment scheme known as the Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY). It focuses on the rural skills and physical labor development in the coconut fiber industry, women in rural areas are empowered with subsidized machines and stipends.

The Yashasvini Campaign: It is a modern, awareness-building project that was introduced on International MSME Day in 2024. It is intended to be a "continuum of support," shifting the focus from survival to formal business development through financial availability and digital literacy.

However, these business owners now face a "Triple Burden" in the post-COVID-19 environment. The women have been forced to balance both work, home and taking care of the children simultaneously as the workplace has been incorporated into the home thus leading to a tremendous loss of productivity. This paper evaluates the capacity of Yashasvini and MCY to go around these barriers and proposes a Gender- Intelligent system according to the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. The long-term goal is to transform Indian women into Borrowers to Builders and ensure that formal identity is converted into actual digital maturity and scalable business success.

The Objectives are Formalization Transformation - It focuses on assessing the quantitative shift of women-led MSMEs from informal "subsistence" labor to registered enterprises (2022-2026).

Comparative Policy Efficacy - Focusing on evaluating the impact of traditional production models (MCY) versus contemporary formalization campaigns (Yashasvini).

The "Sophistication Gap" - Identifying structural hurdles that prevent women from tran-

sitioning from basic digital tools to advanced "Digital Maturity" and using tools like ERP systems

The "Triple Burden" Hypothesis - Exploring how the post-COVID "New Normal" merges vocational and domestic roles, causing a massive productivity drain.

"Gender-Intelligent" Framework - Suggestions of the practical policy changes to establish such a financial and digital ecosystem that would be in line with the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

Literature Review

The existing body of research highlights that women entrepreneurship in India has undergone a dramatic change, moving from a fight against traditional societal structures to a contemporary struggle for digital inclusion and post-pandemic recovery.

Meenu Goyal and Jai Prakash (2011) noted that although Indian women still have to deal with deeply ingrained patriarchal customs, they are becoming more inclined to question this conventional wisdom and take financial risks in order to become independent. **M.S. Chaitanya Kumar et al. (2014)** entrepreneurial behaviour in tribal areas is frequently "medium to low," but it has a negative correlation with age and a positive correlation with education, family support, and marketing facilities. **Hemasei kumar et al. (2018)** women are more important in tribal family economies than social groupings, and their potential is unlocked when they have easy access to training and financing. **Subhash Chandra Nandi and Khama Sharma (2018)** a multi-tiered development of the person, household, and nation as a whole result from integrating women's empowerment with entrepreneurship. **D.C. Chandrashekara (2021)** noted that although education and urbanization have raised knowledge of rights, women's participation in large-scale industries and technology-based firms is still disproportionately low. **Bharati Gohel and Bhavik Shah (2023)** identified the "double burden" caused by the pandemic, which forced women to turn to home-based digital endeavours due to concurrent supply-demand shocks and increased domestic obligations. **Rakhi Khandelwal and Ashutosh Priya (2024)** said that, if digital literacy gaps are closed, women can overcome conventional societal obstacles through digital transformation through cloud computing and e-commerce. **Rakhi Saratni K. S. and S. Ramola Ponmalar (2024):** Coined the term 'dual crisis,' where the 'accessibility gap' was more pronounced for rural women in comparison to their urban counterparts. **Ankita Mishra (2025)** Connected the theme of formalization through the Udyam Assist platform to the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' vision, where the theme of 'unpaid care work' is seen as a 'hidden barrier' in the quest for economic potential.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study follows a **Qualitative Analytical Approach** that interprets high-level government statistics through the specific prisms of the Triple Burden Theory and Sophistication Gap Framework. This descriptive and analytical secondary research methodology allows for a deep dive into the structural barriers faced by women entrepreneurs without the constraints of small-scale primary sampling.

Comparative Geographic Focus:

To effectively analyse the issue, this study maintains a comparative geographic focus:

Urban Tech Hubs (Delhi NCR): This focus area examines service sector MSMEs, specifically the digital sophistication and productivity of hybrid work models.

Rural Manufacturing (Coir Clusters): This focus area assesses the formalization of artisanal labor and the effect of machine subsidies offered through the Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY).

Multi-Dimensional Data Sources:

The paper integrates data from different authentic statutory reports and platforms:

Formalization Metrics: The data is sourced from the Ministry of MSME Annual Reports (2024-25) and the Udyam Assist Platform (February 2026 data).

Financial Inclusion: Data and insights related to credit growth and the shift from 'borrowers to builders' are derived from the RBI Financial Inclusion Index (2025) and NITI Aayog reports.

Traditional Sector Performance: Data related to the traditional sector is sourced from the Coir Board Vision 2025 and SFURTI Cluster data to analyze the rural manufacturing sector.

Analytical Tools & Techniques:

The crux of the analysis relies on two main techniques, as follows:

Comparative Evaluation: This technique compares and contrasts the "Bottom-Up" approach to manual skill acquisition, as seen in the MCY, and the "Top-Down" approach to digital formalization, as seen in the Yashasvini Campaign.

Gap Analysis: This technique seeks to understand the trajectory of women-led companies as they seek to progress from "Digital Survival" to "Digital Maturity" in terms of the acquisition of complex digital systems.

Policy Analysis and Findings

An analysis of existing frameworks reveals that there has been a significant shift in the landscape of women entrepreneurship, characterized by a transition from "Identity Crisis" to "Stagnation Challenge".

The Formalization Milestone

The most significant achievement of the recent policy interventions is the tremendous structural shift from informal labor to formal identity. As of February 2026, more than 3.07 crore women-led units have registered on the Udyam Portal. This achievement reveals that the Yashasvini Campaign has successfully overcome the "Identity Crisis" by bringing the invisible workforce into the official economy.

Comparative Performance: MCY vs. Yashasvini

The study reveals that there are differing levels of efficacy between the traditional and the new models of intervention:

Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY): The traditional model is highly effective for rural employment generation, as seen in the high female participation rate of 80%. However, there is no "on-ramp" for this rural artisan to connect to the digital economy.

Yashasvini Campaign: The new model has seen significant success in "on-boarding" into the digital economy, but literacy barriers are a significant issue in rural clusters.

The "Stagnation" and Credit Challenges

The transition of women-led businesses from "Micro" to "Small" continues to experience stagnation despite the record-breaking registrations. This can be attributed to:

The Sophistication Gap: The general lack of growth capital and technological advancements continues to hinder the growth of businesses to beyond their basic operations.

Credit Challenges: Despite the 90% Credit Guarantee (CGS) reducing the barriers to entry for new female entrepreneurs, the process continues to be hindered by a "Collateral-Based Mindset" in conventional banking structures.

The Triple Burden Effect

The results validate the notion of the "Triple Burden" hypothesis and observe that in the post-COVID-19 "New Normal," there is now a merger between vocational and domestic life. This is

significant as it indicates that there is now a critical productivity drain for women entrepreneurs who have to balance three areas simultaneously in the same space.

Recommendations

In order to fill the identified gaps and move from the "First Wave" of formalization to the "Second Wave" of scaled growth, the following gender intelligent policy changes are recommended:

Integrated "Coir-to-Commerce" On-Ramps: There is an imperative need to close the gap between traditional manufacturing and digital markets. It is recommended that Mahila Coir Yojana beneficiaries are automatically enrolled into the digital mentoring track of the Yashasvini Campaign. This would involve rural artisans being automatically enrolled onto digital marketplaces such as the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) or the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

Financial Innovation with Cash Flow Lending: The banking industry is recommended to move from the existing "Collateral-Based" to a "Capability-Based" lending system. The real-time information on the Udyam Assist Platform or GST returns can help financial institutions to determine the credit worthiness of women entrepreneurs with no traditional collateral.

Bridging the "Sophistication Gap": It is essential to leave behind the simple tools of digital survival such as UPI or WhatsApp to reach the level of scale. The government needs to initiate Digital Maturity Bundles to provide subsidized and ready-integrated software solutions such as cloud ERP and CRM solutions to assist the Micro units to become small units.

Neutralizing the "Triple Burden": To offset the productivity loss presented by the hybrid work mode caused by the COVID-19, structural measures are required. The government needs to think of establishing "Neighbourhood Micro-Coworking Hubs" in the residential places, which should be equipped with high-speed internet and child care facilities so that women can balance between their jobs and home.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the study highlights that India has successfully made through the "First Wave" of empowerment by achieving the mass identity and formalization and incorporating over 3.07 crore invisible workers onto the Udyam portal. The successfulness of the "Second Wave" however requires that policy realizes that formalization alone does not guarantee growth. The transition of the Borrowers to Builders is needed as a structural transformation not just to basic digital survival, but to actual digital maturity.

The future of the MSME sector lies in the development of a so-called Gender-Intelligent System that would integrate the modern, credit-based system of the Yashasvini Campaign with the rural manufacturing capabilities of the Mahila Coir Yojana. By addressing the issue of the so-called Sophistication Gap and the so-called Triple Burden caused by the post-pandemic integration of home and work domains, India is in a position to unlock the entire productive potential of its female entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the empowerment of women entrepreneurs is not just a social objective but an important macroeconomic objective in order to meet the aim of India becoming a developed nation by 2047 and the greater objective of achieving the economic milestone of a five trillion economy.

Limitations

Even though this research provides an in-depth framework of understanding the transition of women-led MSMEs, it is important to note that there are certain structural and data-reliant shortcomings that can restrict the generalizability of the findings:

Secondary Data Reliance: The primary source of information to be used in this study is

statutory papers by the Ministry of MSME, RBI, and NITI Aayog. The research does not have the primary field on the ground interviews that may offer more in-depth personal tales of individual entrepreneurs, despite the fact that these sources are quite reliable and offer a macro-level perspective.

Geographic Diversity: The digital infrastructure and performance of the different Indian states in terms of MSME was quite different. Conclusions made due to specific tech hotspots or coir clusters, therefore, may not be relevant to the whole of the country.

Time-Lag in Technology Adoption: To fully assess the long-term survival and scaling of firms organized under this paradigm, future longitudinal studies are needed, since the Yashasvini Campaign is a contemporary project, which was realized in 2024.

Informal Sector Volatility: The proportion of businesses operated by women that are yet to be registered with Udyam remains high. This hidden sector is still hard to quantify and therefore it is hard to determine the impact of the current policy structures on the overall female labour.

Scope for Future Research

The findings of the research give several important directions on how more academic and policy-driven research might be conducted to ensure the sustainability of women-run MSMEs in the long term:

Longitudinal Impact Assessment: o analyze the five-year growth curve of the 3.07 crore units already registered on the Udyam portal as they attempt to move out of the category of "Micro" to that of "Small" firms, the future study should extend further than the current registration data.

Primary Field Surveys in Particular Clusters: To put the secondary data into perspective with the ground reality, cluster-specific research, including the coir regions of Kerala or Tamil Nadu, is needed to estimate the direct effect of motorized ratts and modern technology on the income and personal agency of rural women.

Regional Accessibility Mapping: A "Digital Maturity Index" must be created in order to pinpoint geographical "blind spots." This will help develop hyper-local interventions in places such as those in Delhi-NCR that are currently trailing behind big tech centres.

Emerging Technologies' Effects (AI & ONDC): It is important to examine the next frontier of the Sophistication Gap. Future studies need to evaluate how traditional craftspeople can bypass intermediaries and go directly to the global markets using AI-based marketing and the Open Network to Digital Commerce (ONDC).

Comparative Worldwide Research: The next major step is to compare the Indian system on Gender-Intelligent to global models. The comparison of women-centric MSME policies in such countries as Bangladesh or Vietnam with the 90% Credit Guarantee and Yashasvini model could give cross-border insights.

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