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Unlocking Financial Opportunities: A Study On Awareness Of Funding Schemes For Women Entrepreneurs In India With Special Reference To Medchal- Malkajgiri District

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ABSTRACT

In the present times, Women Entrepreneurs shared a major role in the growth of Indian Economy. Women Entrepreneurs face many challenges in balancing professional, social and personal responsibilities. Women Empowerment and the growth of women led businesses are very important for sustainable development. In India Most of the women entrepreneurs focus on micro level businesses due to the economic requirements. To overcome the financial constraint of women entrepreneurs ,both central government and State Government of India has introduced many funding schemes . These initiatives provide financial assistance , skill training programs and income generating opportunities to women entrepreneurs

These funding schemes aim to enhance the financial independence of women entrepreneurs by offering access to credit, subsidies, and training programs, thereby enabling them to establish and expand their businesses. Participation in local networks of women entrepreneurs further strengthens their role by facilitating access to resources and policy-making platforms at local, regional, and national levels. By creating a supportive ecosystem through policy interventions and financial support, India can accelerate the growth of women entrepreneurs, contributing to overall economic progress and social empowerment.

Encouraging women to leverage these funding opportunities and entrepreneurial resources will not only enhance their personal growth but also lead to greater national economic development. Ensuring accessibility and awareness of these schemes is essential for maximizing their impact and fostering a thriving community of women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, financial assistance or aid , funding schemes, Government and non-government schemes.

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital component of economic growth and development, contributing significantly to innovation, job creation and social progress. Despite their growing presence in the business landscape, Women entrepreneurs continue to face numerous challenges, particularly in accessing finance. Limited awareness of available funding schemes can hinder their ability to secure necessary resources, stifling business growth and potential. This study aims to explore the awareness of funding schemes among women entrepreneurs, shedding light on the current state of knowledge and utilization of these schemes.

Women entrepreneurship in India has seen significant growth and recognition over the last few decades, though the journey has not been without its challenges. Women entrepreneurs are individuals who establish and manage their own businesses, contributing to the economy and society in unique ways. In India, these entrepreneurs face a complex mix of opportunities and obstacles, ranging from gender biases and limited access to resources, to the rising number of women-led startups and innovations.

Various Financial Schemes for Women Entrepreneurs

In India, there are several funding opportunities and schemes designed to support and encourage women entrepreneurs. These funds are provided by government agencies, financial institutions, and private sector players. Some of the key initiatives and schemes for women entrepreneurship funding include:

1. Mahila Coir Yojana

- **Implemented by:** Coir Board (under Ministry of MSME)
- **Description:** This scheme is aimed at empowering women by providing financial assistance to set up coir-based production units.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs involved in coir products manufacturing.
- **Funding:** Up to 50% of the project cost or a maximum of ₹2 lakh (in the case of individual entrepreneurs).

2. Stand Up India Scheme

- **Implemented by:** Government of India
- **Description:** Provides financial assistance to women entrepreneurs from SC/ST and OBC categories to set up greenfield enterprises in the manufacturing, services, or trading sector.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs between 18 and 65 years, with a minimum of 51% ownership.
- **Funding:** Loans between ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore.

3. Mudra Yojana (Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana)

- **Implemented by:** Government of India
- **Description:** Provides loans to women entrepreneurs in micro and small enterprises through three categories: Shishu, Kishore, and Tarun.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs running micro businesses.
- **Funding:** Loans up to ₹10 lakh.

4. Nari Shakti Puraskar

- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **Description:** This award recognizes the contributions of women in different fields, including entrepreneurship. While it is an award rather than a direct funding scheme, it highlights successful women entrepreneurs.
- **Eligibility:** Women of all age groups.
- **Funding:** The award comes with a certificate, cash award, and other forms of recognition.

5. Bharatiya Mahila Bank Business Loan

- **Implemented by:** Bharatiya Mahila Bank (At present part of State Bank of India)
- **Description:** Aimed at providing financial assistance to women entrepreneurs for setting up or expanding small and medium businesses.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs who own a business.
- **Funding:** Up to ₹20 lakh, with flexible repayment terms.

6. Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- **Implemented by:** NITI Aayog
- **Description:** WEP is an initiative to support women entrepreneurs by providing them with mentorship, funding opportunities, and a platform to connect with other entrepreneurs.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs across India.
- **Funding:** WEP collaborates with various funding agencies to offer financial assistance and resources.

7. TREAD Scheme (Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development)

- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)
- **Description:** Provides financial assistance and training to women entrepreneurs for establishing their own businesses.
- **Eligibility:** Women from economically weaker sections of society.
- **Funding:** Loans up to 30% of the project cost (up to ₹1 crore) along with subsidy for the training.

8. Udyogini Scheme

- **Implemented by:** Punjab National Bank (PNB)
- **Description:** This scheme offers financial assistance to many women entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Eligibility:** Women aged between 18 and 55 years, running small and micro enterprises.
- **Funding:** Loans up to ₹1 lakh for the establishment of micro-businesses.

9. SBI Stree Shakti Package

- **Implemented by:** State Bank of India
- **Description:** Aimed at providing financial assistance to women entrepreneurs who own small businesses or intend to start a new one.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs having 50% or more equity in the business.
- **Funding:** Loans ranging from ₹5 lakh to ₹20 lakh, depending on the business size.

10. NSIC – Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED)

- **Implemented by:** National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)
- **Description:** Provides financial and technical support to women entrepreneurs through training, marketing assistance, and product development.
- **Eligibility:** Women-owned MSMEs.
- **Funding:** Assistance for product development, training, and marketing.

11. Rural Women Entrepreneur Fund (RWEF)

- **Implemented by:** NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development)
- **Description:** Focuses on empowering rural women entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance for setting up small enterprises.
- **Eligibility:** Rural women with an entrepreneurial background.
- **Funding:** Loans and financial assistance for setting up businesses in rural areas.

12. SIDBI – Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) Fund

- **Implemented by:** Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
- **Description:** Provides funding support to women entrepreneurs in the micro and small enterprise sectors.
- **Eligibility:** Women entrepreneurs in manufacturing or service sectors.
- **Funding:** Working capital, term loans, and equity assistance.

13. Angel Investors and Venture Capital

- **Private Funding:** In addition to government schemes, there are various angel investor networks and venture capital firms that specifically invest in women-led startups. Some platforms like **SheCapital**, **Upaya Social Ventures**, and **Venture Catalysts** are dedicated to women entrepreneurs.

14. Corporate Women Entrepreneur Programs

- **Implemented by:** Various Corporates (e.g., Microsoft, Google, Facebook)
- **Description:** Many large corporations offer programs and funds to empower women entrepreneurs through mentorship, grants, and funding.
- **Funding:** Varies by program.

These are some of the key funding opportunities and support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs in India. To take advantage of these schemes, women entrepreneurs need to research the specific eligibility requirements and application procedures for each fund. Many of these schemes also provide additional support such as training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to ensure sustainable business growth.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Women entrepreneurs often face challenges in accessing finance, and awareness of funding schemes can play a crucial role in bringing this gap. Understanding the awareness levels and factors influencing awareness can help policymakers, financial institutions, and support organization design targeted interventions to support women entrepreneurs. As women entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the growth of Indian economy, there is a need to create awareness on funding schemes available to women entrepreneurs in India. The present study emphasis on creating on financial support available to women led businesses. By knowing these funding schemes women led business can make independent financial decisions, and can leverage the available resources to the maximum benefit.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the level of awareness of various funding schemes available for women entrepreneurs

To identify and evaluate the various funding schemes available for women entrepreneurs in India.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is emphasized to know the extent of awareness of funding schemes availability to women led business in India, Specifically restricting to women entrepreneurs in Medchal-Malkajgiri district of Telangana state.

It also includes the level of awareness of the funding schemes among the women entrepreneurs of the selected sample size

It also analyses factors influencing their awareness and utilization of funding schemes.

The study provides insights about challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in obtaining finance from the funding schemes.

The study also suggests policy makers, financial institutions and supporting organizations about the improvement measures for promoting women entrepreneurship

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: Primary and Secondary Data

Primary data: Questionnaires

Secondary data: Referring Articles and government websites

Area of study: Women entrepreneurs in Medchal- Malkajgiri District

Sample Size: 70

Sampling method: Convenience Sampling

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**Demographic Profile**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-30	10	14.28571429
	31-40	35	50
	41-50	16	22.85714286
	51-60	8	11.42857143
	Above 60	1	1.428571429
Marital Status	Unmarried	38	54.28571429
	Married	21	30
	Other	11	15.71428571
Educational Qualification	Below SSC	4	5.714285714
	SSC	6	8.571428571
	Intermediate	11	15.71428571
	Undergraduate	18	25.71428571
	Post Graduate	21	30
	Doctorate	10	14.28571429

Interpretation

The demographic profile indicates a predominantly middle-aged (primarily 31–40 years), well-educated, and largely unmarried population, suggesting a sample of professionally active, career-oriented individuals. With most respondents holding postgraduate or undergraduate degrees and a notable share having doctorates, the group likely possesses strong access to information and decision-making capabilities. The minimal representation of older age groups and those with lower educational backgrounds further underscores a modern, informed audience. These characteristics are particularly relevant when assessing awareness of funding schemes for women entrepreneurs, as this demographic is more likely to engage with such opportunities, understand eligibility requirements, and actively seek resources for business development. Tailoring outreach and policy efforts to align with their preferences and communication channels could significantly enhance the effectiveness of awareness initiatives.

Business Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Business Type	Sole proprietorship	52	74.28571429
	Partnership	7	10
	Family Business	11	15.71428571
Nature of Business	Manufacturing	21	30
	Trading	15	21.42857143
	Service	24	34.28571429
	Others	10	14.28571429
Experience	More than 1 year	28	40
	More than 5 year	17	24.28571429
	More than 10 year	15	21.42857143
	More than 15 year	10	14.28571429
Initial Investment	Below 50000	10	14.28571429
	50000-200000	27	38.57142857
	200000-500000	26	37.14285714
	500000-1000000	5	7.142857143
	Above 1000000	2	2.857142857
Source of Capital	Savings	11	15.71428571
	Borrowings	59	84.28571429

Interpretation

The data reveals that the majority of women entrepreneurs operate sole proprietorships (74.29%), primarily within the service (34.29%) and manufacturing (30%) sectors, indicating a preference for independent business models in accessible industries. Most have limited experience, with 40% having more than one year and only 14.29% exceeding 15 years, suggesting many are relatively early in their entrepreneurial journey. Initial investments are modest for most, with nearly 76% investing below ₹5 lakhs, and a dominant 84.29% relying on borrowings rather than savings as their primary capital source. This heavy dependence on external funding, combined with the relatively low investment levels and short business experience, points to a critical need for greater awareness and accessibility of formal funding schemes tailored to women entrepreneurs in India. Many may be unaware of government-backed initiatives or find them difficult to access, underscoring the importance of targeted outreach, simplified processes, and education around funding options to empower women in scaling and sustaining their businesses.

Scheme	Not Aware at All	Slightly Aware	Moderately Aware	Very Aware	Excellently Aware
Mahila Coir Yojana	50	8	6	6	0
Stand Up India Scheme	21	24	15	10	0
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana	8	6	8	48	0
Nari Shakti Puraskar	48	8	7	7	0
Bhartiya Mahila Bank Business Loans	6	4	15	45	0
Women Entrepreneurship Platform	30	10	14	16	0
Tread Scheme	58	7	0	5	0
Udyogini Scheme	45	5	15	5	0
SBI Stree Shakthi Package	32	5	8	15	10

NSIC- Women Entrepreneurship Development	29	15	11	15	0
Rural Women Entrepreneur Fund	34	10	15	11	0
SIDBI- MSE Fund	48	9	11	2	0
Angel Investors and Venture Capital	31	5	8	11	15
Corporate Women Entrepreneur Program	33	14	18	5	0
Dena Shakthi Scheme	43	11	8	8	0
Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme	44	9	11	6	0
Cent Kalyani Scheme	52	15	3	0	0
Annapurna Scheme	42	18	7	3	0

Top Schemes by Awareness

Scheme	Moderately Aware	Very Aware	Total Awareness (Mod. + Very)
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana	8	48	56
Bhartiya Mahila Bank Business Loans	15	45	60
Angel Investors and Venture Capital	8	11	19
Women Entrepreneurship Platform	14	16	30
Stand Up India Scheme	15	10	25
NSIC - Women Entrepreneurship Development	11	15	26
Rural Women Entrepreneur Fund	15	11	26

Low Awareness Schemes

Scheme	Not Aware at All	% of Total
Tread Scheme	58	83%
Cent Kalyani Scheme	52	74%
Mahila Coir Yojana	50	71%
SIDBI - MSE Fund	48	69%
Nari Shakti Puraskar	48	69%
Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme	44	63%
Dena Shakthi Scheme	43	61%
Annapurna Scheme	42	60%

Interpretation:

The data reveals a general lack of awareness among respondents regarding most women-focused entrepreneurship and financial support schemes in India. A significant portion of participants are "Not Aware at All" of these programs, particularly schemes like the TREAD Scheme (58%), Cent Kalyani Scheme (52%), Mahila Coir Yojana (50%), and Nari Shakti Puraskar (48%). Notably, only the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and Bhartiya Mahila Bank Business Loans show relatively higher awareness at the "Very Aware" level (48% and 45% respectively), suggesting these programs have achieved better outreach or visibility. Conversely, most other schemes have negligible representation in the "Excellentlly Aware" category, indicating a substantial gap in effective dissemination and public engagement. This highlights the need for stronger awareness campaigns and targeted outreach to ensure that women can access and benefit from these schemes.

FINDINGS

- **Age & Education:** The majority of respondents fall within the 31–40 age group and hold postgraduate or undergraduate degrees, suggesting a relatively young and well-educated entrepreneurial population.
- **Marital Status:** Over 54% are unmarried, potentially indicating greater flexibility or fewer traditional constraints in business engagement.
- **Business Nature:** Most operate sole proprietorships (74.3%), with the service (34.3%) and manufacturing (30%) sectors being most common.
- **Capital Source:** A high percentage (84.3%) rely on borrowings rather than personal savings, underscoring the critical importance of accessible financial support.
- Only two schemes demonstrated high visibility they are Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana – 48 participants were very aware, Bhartiya Mahila Bank Business Loans – 45 were very aware.
- Moderate awareness was noted for Stand Up India Scheme, NSIC-WED, Women Entrepreneurship Platform, and Angel Investors.
- Low or negligible awareness existed for the majority of other schemes, including TREAD Scheme, Mahila Coir Yojana, Cent Kalyani Scheme, and SIDBI MSE Fund.
- No scheme had any respondents reporting "Excellentlly Aware", suggesting poor in-depth understanding.

- Despite the availability of multiple schemes, limited knowledge and complex application processes may prevent women entrepreneurs from leveraging these funds.
- A lack of targeted and localized outreach appears to be a major barrier to awareness.

SUGGESTIONS

- Government and financial institutions should conduct localized awareness campaigns, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, using vernacular languages and community engagement models.
- Develop a centralized online portal or mobile app that provides clear, scheme-wise information with eligibility, documentation requirements, application process, and contact support in user-friendly formats.
- Collaborate with NGOs, women's SHGs (Self Help Groups), and local chambers of commerce to disseminate information about schemes and assist with application support.
- Sharing case studies of successful women entrepreneurs who have benefitted from these schemes can motivate and guide others.
- Offer regular training programs on financial literacy, business planning, and funding application processes to help women effectively utilize available resources.
- Implement a feedback loop from beneficiaries to identify pain points in the current schemes and streamline processes accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly illustrates a significant awareness gap among women entrepreneurs regarding available funding schemes in India. Although several comprehensive schemes exist, including Mudra Yojana and Bhartiya Mahila Bank Loans, the utilization remains skewed due to limited outreach, complexity in procedures, and lack of targeted communication.

Given that a majority of women entrepreneurs rely heavily on borrowings and operate on modest capital, improving awareness and accessibility of financial schemes is crucial for empowering women and boosting sustainable economic development. Stakeholders, including the government, financial institutions, and support organizations, must work collaboratively to create a more inclusive, informed, and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

By enhancing visibility and simplifying the process of availing funding opportunities, we can bridge the gap between policy intent and actual impact, thereby driving greater financial independence and success among women entrepreneurs in India.

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