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Impact of Government Policies on Women Entrepreneurship Development in Jharkhand: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Jharkhand, characterized by a predominantly tribal population and a rural-based economy, has witnessed increasing policy interventions aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship. This study examines the current status of women entrepreneurs in the state, evaluates institutional support mechanisms provided by both central and state governments, and analyses the financial performance of initiatives such as the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) and the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY). The research adopts a descriptive and analytical design based on secondary data sources, including the Jharkhand Economic Survey 2025–26, MSME reports, and State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) data. Quantitative analysis has been conducted using MS Excel to assess trends in enterprise registration and financial indicators. Findings reveal that Jharkhand has made notable progress, with approximately 291,164 informal units and 310,388 registered women-owned MSMEs. The concept of enterprise graduation is evident, as a significant proportion of women entrepreneurs are transitioning to higher credit categories under the PMMY, particularly within the 'Tarun' segment (33.1%), indicating business expansion. Additionally, the Self-Help Group (SHG)-based financing model under JSLPS demonstrates strong credit discipline, reflected in a low non-performing asset (NPA) level of around 1.00%. Government initiatives such as the Palash Brand and the Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana have contributed to creating an enabling ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. However, persistent challenges remain, including a digital gender gap of approximately 13% and a continued concentration in low-value agricultural activities. The study recommends enhancing digital literacy, promoting sectoral diversification, and strengthening market linkages to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of women-led enterprises in Jharkhand.

***Keywords**: Women Entrepreneurship, Jharkhand Economy, MSMEs, PMMY, JSLPS, SHGs, Economic Development.*

Introduction

Women entrepreneurship has become a significant catalyst for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and social transformation in India. In recent years, the Central Government and various state governments have implemented numerous schemes to promote women's participation in entrepreneurial activities. Jharkhand, a state endowed with abundant natural resources yet facing persistent poverty, unemployment, and regional disparities, offers a distinctive context for examining the development of women entrepreneurship.

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Jharkhand has a substantial tribal population and a predominantly rural workforce reliant on agriculture and informal economic activities. Historically, women in the state have engaged in sectors such as handicrafts, animal husbandry, forest produce collection, and small-scale farming. Despite this involvement, access to institutional finance, markets, technology, and entrepreneurial training has remained limited for decades.

To address these challenges, several policy interventions have been introduced. Programs such as the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Stand-Up India Scheme, and state-led initiatives through the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) have played a critical role in promoting women-led enterprises.

The present study attempts to analyse the impact of these government policies on women entrepreneurship development in Jharkhand and evaluate their contribution toward inclusive economic growth.

Review of Literature

Kumari and Singh (2023): Kumari and Singh (2023) examined the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in promoting women entrepreneurship in rural India. The study highlighted that government-supported SHGs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) significantly improved women's access to finance, decision-making ability, and income generation activities. The researchers observed that women entrepreneurs in eastern Indian states, including Jharkhand, benefited from collective financing and training support. However, inadequate digital literacy and weak market connectivity remained major constraints.

Sharma and Verma (2023): Sharma and Verma (2023) analysed the impact of the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) on women-owned micro enterprises. The study found that PMMY played a vital role in improving financial inclusion among women entrepreneurs by providing collateral-free loans under Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun categories. The researchers concluded that a growing shift toward the Tarun category indicated enterprise expansion and business graduation among women beneficiaries. The study also noted that lack of financial awareness limited the effective utilization of credit facilities.

Das and Roy (2024): Das and Roy (2024) studied women-led MSMEs in eastern India with special reference to Jharkhand and Odisha. The study revealed that government initiatives such as Start-up India, Stand-Up India, and state livelihood missions contributed significantly to increasing women-owned enterprises. The researchers emphasized that women entrepreneurs were predominantly concentrated in agriculture and allied sectors due to limited technical education and market exposure. The study recommended sectoral diversification and digital training programs for sustainable enterprise development.

Ali and Fatima (2024): Ali and Fatima (2024) examined the impact of digital financial services on women entrepreneurs in rural areas. The study found that digital banking, mobile payments, and online marketplaces improved business opportunities for women entrepreneurs. However, the researchers identified a significant digital gender gap, particularly in tribal and rural regions such as Jharkhand. The study suggested that digital literacy programs and affordable internet access were essential for inclusive entrepreneurial growth.

Prasad and Kiran (2025): Prasad and Kiran (2025) analysed the effectiveness of Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) in promoting women entrepreneurship through SHGs. The study highlighted that SHG-bank linkage programs improved women's participation in income-generating activities and strengthened financial discipline, reflected in low NPA levels. The researchers concluded that institutional support, skill development, and branding initiatives such as the Palash Brand played an important role in enhancing rural women's economic empowerment.

Nanda and Joseph (2025): Nanda and Joseph (2025) investigated policy interventions for women entrepreneurship under MSME development programs in India. The study observed that government schemes improved access to finance and entrepreneurship training, but challenges related to marketing, technology adoption, and business scalability persisted. The authors emphasized the importance of strengthening market linkages, e-commerce participation, and innovation-based entrepreneurship among women.

Statement of Problem

Several government schemes have been initiated to promote women entrepreneurship. But the actual impact of these policies is patchy in Jharkhand. Many women entrepreneurs continue to face financial, technological and marketing constraints. There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of government interventions and the challenges encountered.

Objectives

- To examine the status of women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand.
- To analyse the impact of government policies on women entrepreneurial development.
- To evaluate the role of PMMY and JSLPS in financial empowerment.
- To identify challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Jharkhand.
- To suggest measures for sustainable women entrepreneurship development.

Research Methodology

- **Nature of Study:** The study is descriptive and analytical in nature.
- **Sources of Data:** The study is based entirely on secondary data collected from:
  - Jharkhand Economic Survey 2025–26
  - MSME Annual Reports
  - SLBC Reports
  - NABARD Reports
  - Government policy documents
  - Research journals and websites
- **Tools Used**
  - Percentage Analysis
  - Trend Analysis
  - Tables and Graphs
  - MS Excel for data interpretation
- **Period of Study:** The study covers data mainly from 2020–2025.

Government Policies and Schemes Supporting Women Entrepreneurship

Government policies are important to provide financial assistance, training, market support and institutional guidance to promote the women entrepreneurship. The Central Government and State Government in Jharkhand have introduced various schemes to encourage women's participation in economic activities especially in rural and tribal areas. These initiatives are geared towards enhancing women's economic independence, job prospects and social empowerment.

Major government policies and schemes supporting women entrepreneurship development in Jharkhand are as follows:

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**

The Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) in 2015. It is one of the most important schemes to support micro and small enterprises among women entrepreneurs. The scheme provides collateral free credit to non-corporate small business sectors in non-farm sector through banks, micro finance institutions and NBFCs.

Loans under PMMY are categorized into three stages based on the growth of enterprises:

Category	Loan Amount	Purpose
Shishu	Up to ₹50,000	Starting small businesses
Kishor	₹50,000 – ₹5 lakh	Business expansion
Tarun	₹5 lakh – ₹10 lakh	Established enterprise growth

Women entrepreneurs are taking up PMMY loans in Jharkhand at an increasing pace especially in sectors like tailoring, food processing, handicrafts, retail trade, poultry farming and beauty services. The scheme has played a major role in the financial inclusion by providing the access to formal credit to women without the requirement of collateral security.

One of the important trends witnessed in recent years is the rising share of women entrepreneurs under the "Tarun" category. This mirrors the notion of enterprise graduation where women-owned businesses are graduating from being small-scale to larger and more sustainable enterprises.

Impact of PMMY on Women Entrepreneurship

- Increased access to institutional credit
- Promotion of self-employment opportunities
- Growth of rural micro-enterprises
- Reduction in dependence on informal money lenders
- Encouragement for first-generation women entrepreneurs

Despite its success, challenges such as limited financial literacy, low awareness, and repayment concerns still affect effective implementation.

- **Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS):**

Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) is the nodal agency working under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) for poverty reduction and women empowerment in Jharkhand. JSLPS works towards formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of Rural Women and promotion of entrepreneurial activities for their livelihood.

The SHG based model has become one of the strongest tools for women entrepreneurship development in Jharkhand. JSLPS has helped thousands of women to start income generating enterprises through collective savings, internal lending, skill development and bank linkage programmes.

The institution supports women entrepreneurs through:

- Formation of SHGs and village organizations
- Capacity-building and entrepreneurship training
- Financial linkage with banks
- Promotion of rural products
- Marketing and branding support

One of the major achievements of JSLPS is the maintenance of a very low Non-Performing Asset (NPA) level, approximately around 1%, which indicates strong financial discipline among women SHGs.

Major Livelihood Activities Supported by JSLPS

- Poultry farming
- Dairy farming
- Mushroom cultivation
- Handicrafts and weaving
- Food processing
- Leaf plate making
- Agriculture and allied activities

JSLPS has also encouraged women entrepreneurs to participate in exhibitions, fairs, and local markets for better market exposure.

- **Stand-Up India Scheme**

In 2016, the Government of India has launched the Stand-Up India Scheme for promotion of entrepreneurship among women and socially backward communities. The scheme offers bank loans ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore for the establishment of greenfield enterprises in the manufacturing, services and trading sectors.

Under this scheme, at least one-woman borrower is encouraged in each bank branch.

The scheme helps:

- New business start-ups
- Entrepreneurial training

- Facilitating loans
- Technical advice

In Jharkhand, the scheme has helped educated women entrepreneurs to start their business in the following sectors:

- Processing of food products
- Garment manufacturing & boutique
- Small scale manufacturing units
- Enterprise services

However, the scheme's scope in rural areas is constrained by poor awareness and complicated procedural requirements.

- **Palash Brand Initiative**

The Palash Brand is a unique project implemented in Jharkhand for the development of products produced by women Self Help Groups. The program serves as a marketing tool which will assist rural women entrepreneurs in selling their products through a common brand.

Some of the products encouraged by this project include:

- Handicrafts
- Tribal arts
- Organic food products
- Pickles and spices
- Products related to textiles and handlooms

The key goals of the Palash Brand Project are:

- Building market linkages
- Branding of products
- Earning extra money for rural women
- Fostering entrepreneurship among tribal

The Palash Project has helped products from Self Help Groups to become more visible both within and outside the state of Jharkhand.

- **Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana:**

Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana is one such welfare scheme that the Jharkhand Government has launched to ensure monetary aid and social support for women. Though this scheme is a social security scheme for women, it indirectly helps in women's entrepreneurship by enhancing their financial security and purchasing power.

This scheme contributes towards:

- Empowerment of women financially
- Increased economic activity
- Lessening financial insecurity
- Improving household economic situation

Monetary help provided through this scheme helps many women join in economic activity.

- **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Training Programs**

The Government of Jharkhand, along with a number of organizations like MSME Development Institutions, Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs), and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), has skill development programs for women entrepreneurs.

Training areas include:

- Digital literacy
- Tailoring and embroidery
- Beauty and wellness

- Food processing
- Computer applications
- Financial management
- E-commerce and online marketing

These programs help women acquire technical and managerial skills necessary for running sustainable enterprises.

Role of Banks and Financial Institutions

Banks and financial institutions have a significant role to play in the execution of entrepreneurships-based schemes, which include:

- NABARD
- SIDBI
- Commercial Banks
- Regional Rural Banks
- Cooperative **Banks**

These institutions offer:

- Loans and credits
- Linkage SHG banks
- Financial education initiatives
- Subsidized lending facilities
- Counseling services on entrepreneurship

In addition to the above, even the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) in Jharkhand oversees credit lending for women entrepreneurs and MSMEs.

Overall Impact of Government Policies

Policies by the government have played a significant role in achieving:

- Rise in the number of women-led MSMEs
- Better involvement in SHGs
- Banking for rural women
- Employment creation
- Reducing poverty
- Economic empowerment

Nonetheless, issues like lack of digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, poor access to markets, and operating in low-income industries still pose obstacles to entrepreneurship sustainability. As such, the implementation of these policies requires effective institutional coordination, digital empowerment, and market-oriented approaches.

Data Analysis of Major Government Schemes Supporting Women Entrepreneurship in Jharkhand (2021–2025)

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**

Table 1: Women Beneficiaries under PMMY in Jharkhand (2021–2025)

Year	Women Beneficiaries (Approx.)
2021	2.10 Lakh
2022	2.45 Lakh
2023	2.82 Lakh
2024	3.20 Lakh
2025	3.65 Lakh

Source**:** PMMY Annual Reports, Ministry of Finance; SLBC Jharkhand Reports (2021–2025).

Interpretation

The beneficiary numbers for women under PMMY witnessed an increment from 2.10 lakhs in 2021 to 3.65 lakhs in 2025. This scheme has made a huge contribution towards making institutional credit available to women entrepreneurs. The increase in participation shows that there is an improvement in awareness levels related to entrepreneurship and financial inclusion by the government.

- **Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS)**

Table 2: SHG Credit Linkage under JSLPS (2021–2025)

Year	SHGs Credit Linked (Approx.)
2021	1,15,000
2022	1,32,000
2023	1,48,000
2024	1,65,000
2025	1,84,000

Source**:** JSLPS Annual Reports; NABARD SHG-Bank Linkage Reports (2021–2025).

Interpretation

The table depicts a continuous rise in SHG-bank linkage through the JSLPS program. There has been a considerable rise in SHG units supported with financial resources during the study period. It is evident from the rising trend that the SHG model is successful in fostering women empowerment and income generation. The low NPA ratio of almost 1 percent shows the high repayment behavior of SHGs.

- **Stand-Up India Scheme**

Table 3: Estimated Women Beneficiaries under Stand-Up India in Jharkhand

Year	Women Beneficiaries (Approx.)
2021	1,250
2022	1,480
2023	1,720
2024	2,050
2025	2,420

Source**:** Stand-Up India Scheme Progress Reports; Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF).

Interpretation

The number of women entrepreneurs utilizing loans under the Stand-Up India Scheme has been rising progressively throughout the research period. The Stand-Up India Scheme has motivated women to set up new businesses in manufacturing, services, and trading industries. The growing instances of sanctioning of loans point towards rising entrepreneurial spirit amongst women.

- **Palash Brand Initiative**

Table 4: Estimated Women Participation under Palash Brand

Year	Women Associated (Approx.)
2021	1.80 Lakh
2022	2.20 Lakh
2023	2.60 Lakh
2024	2.95 Lakh
2025	3.20 Lakh

Source**:** JSLPS Publications; Palash Initiative Reports; Times of India Reports.

Interpretation

However, the Palash Brand program has been able to prove its significance as an effective platform to promote the manufacturing of products created by women and SHGs. The involvement in the program has consistently grown because of better market linkages and state-level promotion. Through the Palash initiative, women entrepreneurs have been able to reach out to wider markets.

Today, the Palash initiative reaches millions of SHG women through branding, packaging, processing, and selling. There have been more than 46 Palash Marts established throughout the state, featuring more than 30 categories of products.

- **Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana**

Table 5: Beneficiaries under Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana

Year	Beneficiaries
2021	Not Introduced
2022	Not Introduced
2023	Not Introduced
2024	38 Lakh
2025	56 Lakh (Approx.)

Source**:** Government of Jharkhand Notifications; Scheme Reports.

Interpretation

In 2024, Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana was launched as a mechanism for providing monetary benefits to women directly. Within no time, the scheme gained momentum, becoming one of the largest schemes dedicated to women in Jharkhand. The beneficiary base grew substantially owing to DBT, Aadhaar-based payments, and an increase in eligibility criteria.

The scheme helped enhance the financial well-being of women, which in turn has contributed to small-scale entrepreneurship and livelihood development through the improvement of incomes. During the early phase, around 38 lakh women benefited from the scheme, whereas by 2025, the number exceeded 56 lakh beneficiaries.

- **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Training Programs**

Table 6: Women Trained under Skill Development Programs (Approx.)

Year	Women Trained
2021	45,000
2022	52,000
2023	61,000
2024	74,000
2025	88,000

Source**:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Reports; JSLPS Skill Training Data; Jharkhand Economic Survey 2025–26.

Interpretation

There has been significant progress in terms of skills development and entrepreneurship training programs. Women have been trained in areas like tailoring, food processing, computer skills, handicrafts, beauty parlors, and finance. The increasing number of women who are trained is an indication of the policy emphasis on women empowerment through skill development.

Training programs along with livelihood missions have made possible sustainable enterprises run by women entrepreneurs in Jharkhand.

Major Findings of the Study

As per the findings from the analysis of government schemes and women entrepreneurship development in Jharkhand over the years 2021-2025, the following key findings have been drawn:

- **Growth in Women Entrepreneurship:** There has been substantial growth in women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand, owing to various government programs and SHG-based initiatives.
- **Benefits of PMMY Program:** The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana has helped to increase the flow of institutional loans for women entrepreneurs. This has been evident from the rising number of Kishor and Tarun category beneficiaries which suggest growth in businesses.
- **Success of JSLPS Scheme:** JSLPS scheme has made vital contributions to boost women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand. The consistent rise in bank-linkage program and low level of NPAs indicate good management practices followed by women entrepreneurs.
- **Congratulations of Stand-Up India Scheme:** Through this scheme, many women have become entrepreneurs and started their ventures in sectors like manufacturing, trading, and services, but there is a lower reach of this scheme in far-off areas of Jharkhand.

- **Success of Palash Brand Scheme:** The Palash Brand scheme has benefited women entrepreneurs by providing them better marketing channels for their goods.
- **The Role of Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana Scheme:** The initiative has helped improve women's financial security by providing financial assistance indirectly contributing to entrepreneurship.
- **Enhancement in Entrepreneurial Skills:** Training programs initiated by the government have enhanced entrepreneurship skills along with technical skills among women.
- **Decreased Financial Marginalization:** Many women have been seen to join the banking and financial system during the period under review.
- **Lingering Problem of Digital Divide:** Although there has been improvement, yet many rural and tribal women entrepreneurs remain technologically challenged.
- **Industry/ Sector Bias:** Majority of women entrepreneurs still remain engaged in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, and handicrafts which are low on value addition.

Suggestions

From the conclusions made from this research, the following recommendations can be made for improving women entrepreneurship development in Jharkhand State:

- **Digital Literacy and Skills Development:** The state government needs to conduct training sessions regularly for women entrepreneurs on digital literacy and skills including making digital payments, using ecommerce sites, digital marketing, and fintechs.
- **Access to Institutional Finance and Awareness:** Financial institutions need to make lending policies less cumbersome and more favorable to women and raise awareness among women entrepreneurs about programs like PMMY and Stand-up India. Adequate credit at low interest rates can promote entrepreneurship among women.
- **Sectoral Expansion:** Women entrepreneurs need to explore different sectors other than agriculture and handicraft industries by venturing into manufacturing industries, food processing, tourism, information technology, and services businesses.
- **Market Linkages and Branding:** Government needs to extend programs like Palash Brand to help women entrepreneurs develop brands, package, certify and exhibit their products through trade fairs.
- **Encourage Development and Skill Up-gradation:** Entrepreneurship training must revolve around business planning, finance, digital marketing, and innovations in technology. The process of constant skill improvement is bound to increase their competitiveness and productivity.
- **Development of Enterprise Through Self-Help Groups:** The SHGs must be encouraged to evolve from livelihoods into micro or small-scale enterprises through improved access to credit and other business incubation services.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurship is one of the key tools for facilitating economic growth, poverty alleviation, and empowerment of women in Jharkhand. This study demonstrates that the government policies and institutions have made a considerable contribution to boosting women entrepreneurship between 2021 and 2025.

Specifically, initiatives such as PMMY, JSLPS, Stand Up India Scheme, Palash Brand Initiative, and the scheme of Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana have had a significant positive impact on the financial inclusion and enterprise creation among women. In addition, the SHG-based approach proved to be quite efficient in promoting rural entrepreneurship and maintaining strict financial discipline.

Despite these positive results, the research highlights several factors which limit the growth potential of women entrepreneurs. These include a low level of digital literacy, poor technological awareness, lack of adequate market access, and excessive involvement in low-value economic activities. Thus, consistent policy support, digital empowerment, market orientation, improved infrastructure, and financial inclusion are crucial for sustaining the growth of women entrepreneurs.

With further development of women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand, women can transform into a powerful force for driving the inclusive economic growth in the region.

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