



## **SCHEMES FOR WOMEN, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS**

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### **Abstract**

*The Scheme for Women, Youth, and Social Entrepreneurs is a comprehensive initiative designed to promote inclusive economic growth by empowering traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Women and youth often face systemic barriers such as limited access to finance, inadequate mentorship, skill gaps, and social constraints that hinder their ability to participate fully in economic activities. Additionally, social entrepreneurs—who aim to address pressing social and environmental challenges through innovative business models—often struggle to secure the resources and recognition necessary for scaling their impact. This scheme addresses these challenges through a multi-pronged approach that includes financial assistance, capacity-building programs, access to incubation and acceleration services, mentorship from industry leaders, and integration into market networks. Special emphasis is placed on leveraging technology and digital platforms to increase outreach and ensure scalability and sustainability.*

### **Introduction**

Inclusive growth is one of the primary objectives of modern economies, particularly in developing nations like India. Women, youth, and social entrepreneurs are crucial stakeholders who play a vital role in shaping the nation's economic transformation, social development, and innovation capacity. However, these groups face numerous challenges such as lack of financial access, inadequate mentorship, skill gaps, and socio-cultural barriers. Entrepreneurship is no longer limited to large-scale industrialists; it is now seen as an important path for self-employment, job creation, and social change. Women entrepreneurs struggle with gender stereotypes and financial barriers. Youth entrepreneurs, on the other hand, face challenges of inexperience and lack of market exposure. Social entrepreneurs, who design innovative solutions to social issues, often face difficulties in scalability and funding.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth. According to the World Bank (2021), entrepreneurship fosters innovation, creates jobs, and enhances competitiveness. Sharma & Gupta (2019) emphasized that women entrepreneurs in India often struggle with limited credit facilities and social restrictions, while youth entrepreneurs face barriers related to access to mentorship, experience, and initial investment. Comparative studies from countries like the United States, Singapore, and China reveal that strong institutional support through training, funding, and incubation centers accelerates the growth of entrepreneurial ecosystems. For instance, Singapore's Enterprise Development Grant and the U.S. Small Business Administration provide structured mentorship, credit support, and tax relief. In India, the government has recognized these challenges and launched several flagship programs such as Startup India, Mudra Yojana, and Stand-Up India.

**Methodology:** This research is descriptive and qualitative in nature. It is based on **secondary data** collected from:

1. Government reports and policy documents.
2. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) publications.
3. Ministry of MSME and NITI Aayog portals.
4. Peer-reviewed academic journals.



The study categorizes schemes into three broad areas: women entrepreneurs, youth entrepreneurs, and social entrepreneurs. A comparative analysis is conducted to evaluate benefits, challenges, and overall impact.

### Schemes for Women Entrepreneurs

The Government of India has launched several programs to empower women and increase their participation in business ventures:

1. **Stand-Up India Scheme:** Provides bank loans ranging from 10 lakh to 1 crore to women and SC/ST entrepreneurs.
2. **Mahila E-Haat:** An online platform to help women entrepreneurs market and sell their products directly to customers.
3. **Annapurna Scheme:** Offers loans specifically to women entrepreneurs in the food catering business.
4. **Bharatiya Mahila Bank Business Loan:** Financial support exclusively for women-led enterprises.
5. **Udyogini Scheme:** Provides financial assistance to women in rural and semi-urban areas to start small businesses.

**Impact:** These schemes have contributed to improved credit access and greater business opportunities. However, studies reveal that many women remain unaware of these schemes or face challenges in providing collateral, which limits their ability to secure loans.

### Schemes for Youth Entrepreneurs

Youth form a critical segment of India's demographic dividend. Promoting entrepreneurship among them not only reduces unemployment but also fosters innovation:

1. **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** Provides loans under categories Shishu (up to 50,000), Kishore (50,000– 5 lakh), and Tarun (5–10 lakh).
2. **Startup India Scheme:** Offers tax exemptions, incubation support, and easier compliance for start-ups.
3. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** Focuses on skill development and vocational training to improve employability.
4. **National Skill Development Mission:** Provides structured training programs for youth to meet industry demands.
5. **Digital India Initiatives:** Encourage youth entrepreneurs to build businesses in technology-driven sectors.

**Impact:** These schemes have motivated thousands of young entrepreneurs to establish start-ups. However, lack of consistent mentorship, limited access to global markets, and bureaucratic hurdles still pose significant challenges.

### Schemes for Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who innovate to solve pressing social challenges such as education, health, sanitation, and environment. Recognizing their role, the government has introduced several schemes:

1. **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** Promotes innovation through Atal Incubation Centers and Atal Tinkering Labs.



2. **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs):** Provide free training and capacity building for rural entrepreneurs.
3. **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** Enhances employability of women through skill development.
4. **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog:** A knowledge-sharing and networking platform to connect women entrepreneurs.
5. **Social Entrepreneurship Schemes under CSR:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects often fund social ventures aligned with development goals.

**Impact:** These initiatives have empowered individuals and communities to tackle social issues. However, scalability and sustainability remain major concerns as many social enterprises depend on external funding.

### Challenges in Implementation

Despite multiple schemes, there are several hurdles in execution:

1. Lack of awareness among potential beneficiaries.
2. Difficulty in accessing credit due to collateral requirements.
3. Bureaucratic delays and red-tapism.
4. Low financial and digital literacy.
5. Persistent gender and social barriers in conservative communities.
6. Limited mentorship and incubation support in rural areas.

These challenges restrict the effective reach and success of many schemes.

### Suggestions / Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of these schemes, the following measures are recommended:

1. Simplify loan approval processes and reduce paperwork.
2. Conduct grassroots-level awareness campaigns about government schemes.
3. Launch digital and financial literacy programs in rural areas.
4. Provide structured mentorship and incubation facilities.
5. Encourage public-private partnerships for wider outreach.
6. Regular monitoring and transparent evaluation of schemes to ensure accountability.

### Conclusion

Government schemes for women, youth, and social entrepreneurs are crucial for fostering inclusive and sustainable growth in India. Considerable progress has been made in financial inclusion, skill development, and innovation support. However, gaps in awareness, accessibility, and execution still exist. If these challenges are addressed through better implementation and stronger institutional support, these schemes can significantly contribute to the empowerment of marginalized groups and the overall economic development of the country.

### References

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