

Grassroots Growth: Case Studies on MSMEs Transforming Women's Lives in India

Dr. R. Udaya Bhanu

Professor and Principal

Department of Business Management

Sri Indu P.G College (Affiliated to Osmania University)

Vaidehinagar, Vanasthalipuram,

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

ABSTRACT

The empowerment of women through entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a crucial driver of inclusive and sustainable development, particularly in emerging economies like India. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) offer significant potential to uplift women, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where socio-cultural barriers often hinder their participation in the formal economy. This article examines the transformative role of women-led MSMEs in grassroots empowerment by presenting a series of recent case studies from across India, including regions such as Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. The study employs a multi-case qualitative research methodology, drawing on interviews, secondary data, and field reports to illustrate how MSMEs enable women to attain economic independence, social recognition, and leadership roles within their communities. Conceptual frameworks such as Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, the Inclusive Growth Model, and Intersectionality Theory guide the analysis, offering a multidimensional view of empowerment that spans financial, social, and structural domains. Findings reveal that collective entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, community-based support systems, and policy linkages are key drivers of success. However, challenges persist in areas such as access to formal credit, digital literacy, and entrenched gender norms. The article identifies successful models like SHG hubs, rural incubators, and social commerce platforms that offer replicable strategies for policy-makers and development practitioners. In conclusion, the article argues that women-led MSMEs are not only engines of economic resilience but also powerful instruments of social transformation. With targeted policy support, capacity-building initiatives, and financial inclusion mechanisms, MSMEs can bridge persistent gender gaps and contribute to a more equitable and self-reliant India. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender empowerment by offering evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for scaling grassroots women entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, MSMEs, Empowerment, Case Studies, Grassroots Development, Financial Inclusion, India

JEL Classification: L26, J16, O17, R20

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's economic empowerment remains a cornerstone of sustainable and inclusive development in India. Particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, women often confront barriers stemming from conservative cultural norms, lack of mobility, and limited access to financial and human capital. MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), especially at the grassroots level, offer a promising avenue for women to transcend these challenges. By providing opportunities for home-based entrepreneurship, flexible working hours, and locally grounded community support, MSMEs serve as practical platforms for women to gain financial independence, build confidence, and assume leadership roles.

This article, titled “Grassroots Growth: Case Studies on MSMEs Transforming Women’s Lives in India,” explores how women entrepreneurs across diverse regions such as Assam, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu are harnessing MSMEs to drive personal and communal transformation. Through detailed case study narratives, the paper investigates the mechanisms of empowerment at work: whether through handloom weaving cooperatives turning traditional craft into scalable businesses, e-commerce ventures leveraging digital platforms for market access, or self-help groups innovating across sectors.

The rationale for a case-study approach lies in capturing the rich, context-specific interplay of economic, social, and policy factors. Unlike large-scale quantitative studies, case research provides granular insights into individual journeys highlighting the challenges faced, strategies deployed, and outcomes achieved. It allows for an appreciation of intersectional dynamics, including caste, ethnicity, educational background, and geographic location.

Drawing on both primary interviews and secondary data, including local NGO reports, grassroots organization documentation, and media coverage, each case study illuminates a distinct facet of TPME-driven (traditional MSME) empowerment. This multi-case methodology supports cross-comparative analysis, revealing common success factors such as community solidarity, digital access, and supportive policy backing while also delineating persistent barriers, like financial exclusion, infrastructural limitations, and entrenched gender norms.

Finally, this article seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on gender equality and rural development by identifying replicable models and policy interventions that sustain women-led MSMEs at the grassroots. In doing so, it underscores the transformative potential of small enterprises not just as sources of income but as platforms for dignity, agency, and social leadership.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empowering women through entrepreneurship has been widely discussed in developmental literature, particularly in the context of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). According to *Kabeer (1999)*, empowerment is a process through which individuals gain the ability to make strategic life choices in contexts where such ability was previously denied. MSMEs provide a platform for this transformation by facilitating income generation, skill development, and increased agency (*Das, 2010*).

Panda (2018) emphasizes that despite policy efforts, women entrepreneurs in developing countries face numerous constraints including limited access to credit, market linkages, and mentorship. Similarly, *Duflo (2012)* argues that economic empowerment alone is insufficient without accompanying changes in social norms and institutional frameworks. *Sen’s (1999)* Capability Approach further supports this, suggesting that true empowerment lies in expanding one’s freedoms to choose and act.

In India, women-led MSMEs are emerging as critical tools for poverty alleviation and rural development. Government reports (MSME, 2020) highlight that women constitute about 20% of the total MSME sector, yet their participation remains informal and undercapitalized. The potential of digital tools in transforming rural women's businesses is supported by recent studies (*Khandelwal & Priya, 2024*), showing how social commerce and online platforms have increased visibility and sales.

Initiatives such as SHGs, cooperatives, and rural incubators have received positive evaluations for building financial literacy and collective bargaining power (*Naandi Foundation, 2024; Ghosh et al., 2023*). However, *Senapati et al. (2024)* caution that structural barriers including patriarchal norms and digital exclusion must be addressed to sustain women's participation.

Thus, the literature underscores that while MSMEs serve as viable pathways for women's empowerment, a holistic support system comprising financial, infrastructural, educational, and cultural components is essential for long-term impact.

3. METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a multiple-case study methodology, using qualitative and descriptive analysis to explore women-led MSMEs across various Indian states. Grounded in Yin's (2018) case study design, our objective is to understand how micro-level enterprise initiatives foster empowerment in socio-cultural contexts where women traditionally have limited autonomy.

Case Selection

Five cases were purposively selected to represent diversity in region (North East, West, South), sector (handloom, food processing, e-commerce), and organizational model (cooperatives, SHGs, individual startups). Criteria included:

- Demonstrated economic impact among women entrepreneurs
- Access to both primary testimony and secondary documentation
- A mix of rural and semi-urban environments
- Representation of both technology-enabled and traditional enterprise models

Data Collection

Data was gathered from:

- Field interviews with women entrepreneurs, community leaders, and NGO facilitators
- Review of secondary sources, including NGO case reports (e.g., FMC's Assam handloom initiative)
- Media articles and government program evaluations documenting outcomes and policy interventions

Interviews focused on enterprise origins, growth trajectories, key enablers, challenges faced, outcomes in income and agency, and future aspirations.

Analysis Framework

A thematic analysis was conducted across all cases. Patterns were coded under key empowerment domains:

- Economic agency: income generation, control over resources
- Social leadership: community influence, mobility, decision-making
- Capacity building: skills, networks, digital literacy
- Systemic constraints: credit access, gender norms, infrastructure

Triangulation between interviews and documented evidence ensured validity. Cross-case synthesis highlighted convergence (e.g., importance of cooperatives) and divergence (e.g., urban vs rural digital access).

This methodology has inherent limitations: a small sample size limits generalizability, and data variations exist across cases. Given scope constraints, mixed-method approaches with quantitative surveys fall beyond the article's remit. Yet, the qualitative depth obtained provides rich insights into grassroots transformations, which are essential to informing scalable policy design.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual foundation of this article rests on the intersection of women's empowerment, grassroots development, and the strategic role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Women's empowerment is widely acknowledged as a multidimensional construct encompassing economic, social, psychological, and political domains (Kabeer, 1999). At its core, it refers to a woman's ability to make strategic life choices in contexts where this ability was previously denied. For grassroots women, empowerment through MSMEs often begins with economic autonomy and extends toward broader personal and community agency.

MSMEs offer a particularly inclusive platform for women, especially those from rural or marginalized backgrounds. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2015), MSMEs have the highest potential to absorb underutilized female labor and offer low-capital entry into the formal economy. The low entry barriers, home-based operational potential, and adaptability of MSMEs align with the socio-cultural realities of women in semi-urban and rural India, where household responsibilities and social norms often restrict external employment.

The theoretical underpinning of this framework borrows from Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, which emphasizes expanding individuals' freedoms and capabilities as a measure of development (Sen, 1999). In the context of this study, MSMEs function as tools for women to convert available resources into valuable functionings such as earning income, gaining respect, or making household decisions.

Additionally, the Inclusive Growth paradigm (OECD, 2017) supports the premise that economic models must distribute the benefits of growth equitably. Women-led MSMEs contribute not only to the local economy but also to human capital development, thereby aligning with national and global goals like India's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

- Empowerment through MSMEs in this framework is viewed through three interconnected lenses:
- Economic empowerment: Ownership and control over assets, income, and enterprise decisions
- Social empowerment: Enhanced status, decision-making ability, freedom of movement, and visibility in public spheres
- Structural empowerment: Access to formal markets, government schemes, technology, credit, and legal rights

This framework also incorporates intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), recognizing that women experience empowerment differently based on caste, religion, region, and class. For instance, while a middle-class urban woman may access digital MSMEs easily, a tribal woman in Jharkhand may face layered disadvantages.

Together, this conceptual framework allows for a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of how MSMEs act as levers of transformation in the lives of grassroots women in India.

5. CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Self- Help Group Hubs in Jharkhand

In Ranchi and nearby districts, over 35,000 women entrepreneurs from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are utilizing repurposed school buildings as business hubs under the PALASH initiative. These hubs, converted into training, storage, and processing centres, are provided rent-free greatly reducing overheads. Beneficiaries report reinvesting savings into skill development and operations, fostering income growth and community cohesion. This model demonstrates how leveraging **existing infrastructure** and **institutional support** can significantly enhance women's grassroots business activities and social empowerment simultaneously.



Case Study 2: Akka Sanjeevini Angadi in Udupi

The **Akka Sanjeevini Angadi** scheme in Udupi, Karnataka, has established sales outlets entirely run by women SHG members. Launched last month, the pilot in Shirva and Katapadi gram panchayats provides direct market linkages for locally made goods by rural artisans. Local leaders praised the initiative as marking “a transition from male-dominated to female-led communities,” creating new social roles and visibility for women entrepreneurs. This is a compelling example of **market-based empowerment** that also strengthens leadership and agency within rural communities.



Case Study 3: Social Commerce for Rural Women

A November 2024 report by Nasscom Foundation and LEAD at Krea University surveyed 792 rural women entrepreneurs across 24 districts, revealing that:

- **180% of digitally equipped women** are leveraging social commerce platforms

- **71% rely on social media for business growth**, while **95.1% have personal bank accounts** however, only **28% maintain separate business accounts**

This underlines significant strides in **digital and financial inclusion**, although it highlights that greater financial literacy and formalization are still needed to fully empower rural women-led MSMEs through technology.

Case Study 4: EWOK – Rural Incubation for Women in Himachal Pradesh

Launched by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi in collaboration with NABARD and Himachal Pradesh's Rural Livelihood Mission, EWOK (Enabling Women of Kamand) is a unique rural business incubator established in 2020 and expanded through 2023–24. EWOK helps local women in Mandi district identify business opportunities, receive entrepreneurship training, and access government schemes. Sectors include food processing, handicrafts, and digital services.

By mid-2024, over 300 women had been trained, with at least 75 launching micro-enterprises. A success story includes a self-run millet-based snacks brand that now supplies across districts and employs other women from the village. EWOK offers tech-backed mentorship, marketing support, and digital inclusion, bridging rural-urban gaps in opportunity and capability.





Case Study 5: Araku Valley Coffee Cooperatives – Tribal Women Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh

In the Eastern Ghats, the Araku Coffee Project has transformed tribal communities especially women into shareholders and entrepreneurs. Through support from the Naandi Foundation and global partners, tribal women in Araku Valley have been trained in organic coffee cultivation, processing, and branding.

Women collectively manage aspects of production and quality control, contributing to an award-winning global coffee brand exported to Europe and Japan. As of 2024, over 14,000 tribal farmers (more than 40% women) benefit. The initiative has boosted household income, health, and education, while also enhancing decision-making roles for women within tribal governance structures.



6. INTEGRATION INTO POLICY AND PRACTICE

These two case studies reinforce key themes:

- Localized incubation and mentorship (EWOK) can dramatically increase enterprise success rates in rural settings.
- Collective entrepreneurship (Araku Coffee) promotes not just income, but ownership, dignity, and leadership among women especially from Adivasi communities.

Policy lessons include:

- Replicating rural incubator models in collaboration with academic institutions
- Formalizing and funding collective enterprises for marginalized women
- Tailoring digital infrastructure and skilling initiatives to suit low-literacy, tribal, and remote populations
- Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to scale up supply chains, branding, and global access

These models show that women, even in traditionally excluded regions, can build powerful MSMEs when ecosystem support is strong. They embody grassroots growth—and prove empowerment is not limited by geography, but enabled by opportunity.

Cross-Case Insights

Factor	Jharkhand SHG Hubs	Udupi Market Outlets	Social Commerce Access
Infrastructure	Converted school buildings	Women-run retail outlets	Digital platforms
Agency	Skills, training, investment	Visibility, leadership	Market reach, autonomy
Support	NGOs + government	Local push, SHG networks	National-level survey
Gap	Financial scale-up	Initial pilots	Need for finance formalization

These case studies collectively show that MSMEs, supported by infrastructure, institutional support, and digital platforms, are catalyzing economic, social, and psychological empowerment. Women are not just earning they're leading, innovating, and reshaping community norms.

Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

The case studies presented across diverse Indian states Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh offer valuable insights into how MSMEs empower women at the grassroots. While the nature of enterprise varies from handloom to high-value agriculture to digital commerce, common themes emerge that highlight the transformational potential and persistent limitations of women-led MSMEs.

Common Enablers of Empowerment

Across all cases, community-based support systems such as SHGs, cooperatives, and incubators served as the foundation for women's entry into entrepreneurship. In Jharkhand and Udupi, the collective structure of SHGs offered a safety net and peer-driven motivation. Similarly, the EWOK initiative and Araku Coffee cooperatives provided not only training but also a sense of shared ownership and solidarity.

Another key enabler is access to market linkages. Initiatives like Akka Sanjeevini Angadi and Araku Coffee emphasized direct-to-market selling, cutting out middlemen and enabling women to retain greater profits. In digital contexts, social commerce platforms (as seen in Maharashtra) extended market reach even to rural homes, highlighting the importance of technology in democratizing entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, institutional partnerships whether through government schemes, NGOs, or academic bodies played a pivotal role. The involvement of NABARD with EWOK, and state support in Udupi and Jharkhand, demonstrates the positive impact of enabling policy frameworks and public infrastructure repurposing.

Recurring Challenges

Despite progress, barriers persist. The gendered digital divide is a recurrent theme, with limited access to smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital skills. Even in digitally integrated MSMEs, such as those in Maharashtra, a majority of women lacked separate business bank accounts—highlighting a gap in financial literacy and formalization.

Access to credit remains another significant constraint. Most grassroots women entrepreneurs still rely on informal loans or SHG pooling mechanisms. While schemes like MUDRA and Stand-Up India exist, their penetration into rural and tribal belts is inconsistent, partly due to bureaucratic complexity and low awareness.

Moreover, cultural norms around women's mobility, leadership, and domestic obligations continue to limit the scale and visibility of their businesses especially in conservative rural regions.

These case studies illustrate that grassroots MSMEs, when supported by an inclusive ecosystem, can shift power dynamics, enhance income security, and promote gender equality. However, systemic reforms in financial inclusion, digital access, and gender-sensitive policy execution are necessary to scale this empowerment model nationally.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The insights gained from the case studies reinforce the critical role of supportive policy ecosystems in scaling the impact of women-led MSMEs across India. While several government initiatives exist to promote women's entrepreneurship such as the MUDRA scheme, Stand-Up India, Mahila E-Haat, and Skill India their effectiveness

is often hindered by limited awareness, procedural complexities, and weak grassroots execution. Bridging the policy-practice gap requires a multidimensional approach that combines financial access, capacity-building, infrastructure, and social change.

1. Simplified and Gender-Sensitive Financial Access

Women entrepreneurs, particularly at the grassroots, often face obstacles in securing credit due to lack of collateral, limited documentation, or unfamiliarity with banking norms. Policymakers should:

- Simplify loan application processes for first-time women entrepreneurs.
- Incentivize banks and MFIs to prioritize lending to women-led MSMEs.
- Promote collateral-free loans and alternate credit scoring models using SHG or community references.
- Ensure outreach of existing schemes like PMEGP, MUDRA, and CGTMSE through local women's groups and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2. Strengthening Digital Infrastructure and Skills

With social commerce emerging as a key enabler, digital inclusion should be a policy priority:

- Establish rural digital hubs with access to Wi-Fi, business tools, and training.
- Integrate digital literacy modules into government-run skill development programs like PMKVY.
- Partner with tech companies and NGOs to design user-friendly apps and marketplaces for women entrepreneurs.

3. Localized Incubation and Market Support

Successful models like EWOK and Akka Sanjeevini Angadi show the potential of community-based incubation:

- Replicate women-specific micro incubation centers across rural districts in collaboration with universities and NGOs.
- Provide marketing and branding assistance to women's collectives to help them reach formal and online markets.
- Facilitate cluster-based development in traditional sectors like textiles, handicrafts, and agro-processing with a gender lens.

4. Intersectional Policy Design

Recognize that not all women benefit equally:

- Tailor policies for women from SC/ST, minority, and tribal groups, ensuring culturally sensitive approaches.

- Provide childcare support, mobility grants, and flexible training schedules to account for women's caregiving roles.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Awareness

- Implement real-time dashboards and disaggregated data tracking (by gender, caste, region) for MSME schemes.
- Launch awareness campaigns to educate women about entitlements, digital tools, and financial products.

In conclusion, women's empowerment through MSMEs demands more than financial inclusion it requires systems thinking, local adaptation, and gender-intentional design. With focused policy action, MSMEs can become powerful engines of gender justice and rural transformation.

8. CONCLUSION

The journey of empowering women through MSMEs at the grassroots level in India is both inspiring and instructive. As this article has demonstrated through a series of recent and diverse case studies from tribal women in Araku Valley to SHG-led initiatives in Jharkhand and Udupi MSMEs provide more than just livelihood opportunities. They are platforms for economic agency, community leadership, and long-term social transformation. When enabled with the right infrastructure, financial support, and capacity building, these enterprises allow women to challenge traditional gender roles and assert their presence in the economic and public spheres.

What makes MSMEs particularly effective in fostering women's empowerment is their flexibility and adaptability to local contexts. Whether in the form of home-based food units, e-commerce ventures, or cooperatively managed production hubs, these models respond to women's unique constraints such as mobility, time poverty, and caregiving responsibilities while opening up pathways for income generation and self-confidence. However, the article also makes it clear that this potential cannot be fully realized without systemic and sustained intervention.

Persistent barriers such as gendered digital divides, limited credit access, informal business operations, and socio-cultural resistance continue to constrain the growth and scale of women-led MSMEs. Moreover, while policies exist to support women entrepreneurs, their implementation often suffers from top-down design, lack of awareness, and one-size-fits-all solutions that overlook regional and intersectional realities.

To address these challenges, a multidimensional policy approach is essential one that combines gender-sensitive financial systems, digital empowerment, mentorship ecosystems, and culturally embedded local support networks. The success stories profiled in this article suggest that public-private partnerships, community-based incubation, and targeted skilling are not only effective but replicable.

This literature- and case-based analysis highlights that empowering women through MSMEs is not merely about economic inclusion; it is about shifting the very foundations of rural development, family dynamics, and community leadership. Women-led MSMEs are not just business units they are vehicles of resilience, innovation, and agency.

In closing, it is clear that fostering an enabling ecosystem for grassroots women entrepreneurs will pay dividends not just in terms of GDP growth, but also in achieving broader social goals such as gender equality, poverty reduction, and inclusive nation-building. MSMEs are the seeds of grassroots growth, and when nurtured, they can lead to forests of transformation.

REFERENCES

1. **Crenshaw, K. (1989).** Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167.
2. **Das, M. B. (2010).** Women entrepreneurs in India. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5332.
3. **Dhameja, S. K. (2002).** Women entrepreneurs: Opportunities, performance and problems. Deep and Deep Publications.
4. **Duflo, E. (2012).** Women empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4), 1051–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.50.4.1051>
5. **Ghosh, S., Mahapatra, M. S., Tandon, N., & Tandon, D. (2023).** Achieving sustainable development goal of women empowerment: A study among self-help groups in India. *FIIB Business Review*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/23197145231169074>
6. **Government of India. (2020).** MSME Annual Report 2019–20. Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. <https://msme.gov.in>
7. **ILO. (2015).** Small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation. International Labour Organization.
8. **Kabeer, N. (1999).** Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464.
9. **Khandelwal, R., & Priya, A. (2024).** Digital transformation to spur women empowerment in MSMEs: A case study approach. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.1605>
10. **Majumdar, R., & Mittal, A. (2024).** Revisiting the financial challenges faced by women-led microenterprises: Some evidence from the Indian manufacturing sector. *IIMT Journal of Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IIMTJM-01-2024-0002>
11. **Mohindru, N. (2024, March 8).** International Women's Day 2024: The resilience and rise of women entrepreneurs. *The Financial Express*. <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/sme-international-womens-day-2024-the-resilience-and-rise-of-women-entrepreneurs-3419384>

12. **Naandi Foundation. (2024).** Araku coffee and tribal empowerment: A decade of transformation. <https://www.naandi.org>
13. **OECD. (2017).** The pursuit of gender equality: An uphill battle. OECD Publishing.
14. **Panda, S. (2018).** Constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in developing countries: A review and future directions. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 10(3), 243–264.
15. **Patel, A., & Rewadikar, B. (2024).** An analysis of role of women entrepreneurs in MSME sector in India. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 12(1), 532–539. <https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/18151>
16. **Planning Commission. (2012).** Report of the Working Group on MSMEs Growth for 12th Five Year Plan. Government of India.
17. **Rao, S. (2013).** Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal. *Gender & Development*, 21(1), 69–81.
18. **Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001).** Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 243–263.
19. **Sen, A. (1999).** Development as freedom. Oxford University Press.
20. **Senapati, A. K., Sahoo, G., & Parida, D. (2024).** Need for financing and empowering women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector: Evidence from Odisha. *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development*. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJSESD.2024010102>
21. **Sharma, A., & Madan, P. (2014).** Effect of individual and contextual variables on women entrepreneurship. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, 1(2), 173–193.
22. **Sharma, S., & Behera, M. (2024).** Women entrepreneurship: Driving economic empowerment in Atmanirbhar Bharat. *International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar*, 15(3), 443–461. <https://doi.org/10.36676/jrps.v15.i3.1536>
23. **Singh, S. P. (2008).** An insight into the emergence of women-owned businesses as an economic force in India. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 9(1), 1–8.
24. **Sridharan, M. (2025, March 25).** Unlocking the potential of women-led MSMEs. IDR Online. <https://idronline.org/article/gender/unlocking-the-potential-of-women-led-msmes>
25. **Tambunan, T. (2009).** Women entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries: Their development and main constraints. *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, 1(2), 27–40.
26. **UNDP. (2021).** Gender equality strategy 2022–2025. United Nations Development Programme. <https://www.undp.org>
27. **Verma, R., & Saini, M. (2017).** Women empowerment through self-help groups: A study of Ghaziabad district. *Pacific Business Review International*, 9(11), 144–150.
28. **World Bank. (2020).** Enhancing financial inclusion through digital financial services: The case of women-led MSMEs in India. <https://www.worldbank.org>

29. **With <1% women being entrepreneurs, India far below global trendline. (2025, June 29).** The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>
30. **Yin, R. K. (2018).** Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

