Developing a Women Entrepreneurship Policy for Maharashtra

महाराष्ट्र शासन

Maharashtra State Innovation Society

GAME

Global Alliance For Mass Entrepreneurship

Foreward

Minister
Skills, Employment,
Entrepreneurship & Innovation

सत्यमेव जयते

I am delighted to present before you the Women Entrepreneurship Scorecard and Policy Reports. This is an effort to look into gender disaggregated data and come up with recommendations to boost up Women Entrepreneurship in Maharashtra, something which MSINS is committed to and have been working on through several innovative measures.

Maharashtra is a productive place for Innovation and Business and MSInS has been focussing strongly to foster the same. Maharashtra State Innovation Society is the nodal agency for startups and innovation, set up under the aegis of the Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Government of Maharashtra - responsible for implementing the Maharashtra State Innovative Startup Policy 2018 which envisions transforming Maharashtra by catalyzing the growth of an innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem to achieve wholesome and inclusive socioeconomic development.

These two reports are aligned with MsInS' objective to develop innovative approaches for fostering a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra. They have been created through thorough research and understanding of Women Entrepreneurship status and thereby will enable all institutions to look into initiatives that accelerate and nurture women entrepreneurship.MsInS envisages to have path-breaking success in creating a robust women entrepreneurship ecosystem. We welcome you all to go through the reports, assimilate the learnings and share with us your views and support to together create a vibrant environment for women entrepreneurship and thereby contributing to the growth of the economy.

Mangal Prabhat Lodha

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Foreward

Additional Chief Secretary
Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship
& Innovation Department

सत्यमेव जयते

I am thrilled to share with you the latest findings from the Women Entrepreneurship Scorecard and Policy Reports. This initiative focuses on analyzing gender-disaggregated data to provide valuable insights and propose actionable recommendations aimed at fostering Women Entrepreneurship in Maharashtra. This aligns with the unwavering commitment of the Maharashtra State Innovation Society, which has tirelessly pursued innovative measures to support and empower women entrepreneurs in the region.

Presenting a compelling snapshot of the economic landscape, women-led businesses, constituting 14% of India's enterprises, play a pivotal role in employing 30% of the nation's female workforce. The data from the Fifth and Sixth Economic Census underscores the remarkable growth of women-owned businesses in Maharashtra, rising from 5.45% in 2005 to 10.82% in 2016.

Recognizing the transformative impact of women's entrepreneurship on both the economy and society, our mission is rooted in the commitment to empower and support these entrepreneurs. Maharashtra, as the economic capital of the country, aims to pioneer a scorecard index, assessing the status of Women Entrepreneurship across the state and exploring policy reforms to catalyze growth.

In alignment with the Maharashtra State Innovation Society's (MsInS) objective, these reports are a testament to our dedication to developing innovative approaches for creating a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs. The Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC) stands as a significant initiative, strategically planning and executing programs to foster women entrepreneurship in the state.

Maharashtra aspires to achieve groundbreaking success in establishing a thriving women entrepreneurship ecosystem. The introduction of these reports, featuring a scorecard for analysis and policy reform recommendations, represents a significant stride towards gender-responsive initiatives. We invite you to delve into the reports, absorb the insights, and join us in creating a vibrant environment that contributes to the growth of women entrepreneurship and, in turn, the economy. Your views and support are crucial as we collectively work towards this shared goal.

O. P. Gupta, IAS

Foreward

Chief Executive Officer
Maharashtra State Innovation Society

सत्यमेव जयते

I am delighted to present before you the Women Entrepreneurship Scorecard and Policy Reports. This is an effort to look into gender disaggregated data and come up with recommendations to boost up Women Entrepreneurship in Maharashtra, something which Maharashtra State Innovation Society is committed to and have been working on through several innovative measures.

India's growth story has left behind a key demographic: women. Despite improvements in social parameters, India's growth does not translate to the economic inclusion and development of women. Rather, women's participation in the labor force has stagnated and is expected to decline further because of labor trends, technological disruption and constraining social barriers. In the coming decade, India will have the largest working-age population in the world and this demographic dividend, when combined with an increasingly educated population, has the potential to transform India's economic and social development.

Entrepreneurship among women is a key component of the overall solution. It not only boosts the economy through job creation, but also delivers transformational social and personal outcomes for the idea behind this venture, our mission and what you can expect from us in terms of products and services.

Maharashtra being the economic capital for the country intends to be the pioneer to have a scorecard index to understand the status of Women Entrepreneurship across the state and look into measures to accelerate enabled by policy reforms.

These two reports are aligned with MsInS' objective to develop innovative approaches for fostering a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra. One of the significant initiatives has been Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC) with a focus on planning and executing initiatives to foster women entrepreneurship in the state of Maharashtra.

Maharashtra envisages to have path-breaking success in creating a thriving women entrepreneurship ecosystem and these two reports enabling a scorecard to analyze status and recommendations on policy reforms are two significant gender-responsive initiatives in that regard.

We welcome you all to go through the reports, assimilate the learnings and share with us your views and support to together create a vibrant environment for women entrepreneurship and thereby contributing to the growth of the economy.

Nidhi Choudhari, I.A.S

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About the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS)

Maharashtra State Innovation Society is the nodal agency for startups and innovation, set up under the aegis of the Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Government of Maharashtra. It is responsible for implementing the Maharashtra State Innovative Startup Policy 2018 which envisions transforming the state by catalysing the growth of an innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem to achieve holistic and inclusive socio-economic development. The Maharashtra State Innovation Society spearheads transformative initiatives as the nodal agency of the state government, fortifying the startup ecosystem. With a dedicated outlay of INR 100 Crore, it has established 19 incubation centres throughout Maharashtra, including the SNDT - WISE incubator, that specifically focuses on empowering women entrepreneurs. MSinS also pioneers the annual Maharashtra Startup Week which enables 24 early-stage startups to pilot their innovations within government departments. Additionally, a substantial INR 200 crore Seed Fund has been allocated specifically for Deep Tech and Women-Led Startups. The society also furthers entrepreneurship in the state via a State-wide Startup Yatra, which helps foster an entrepreneurial mindset and offers incentives to aspiring entrepreneurs. MSInS also hosts a grand challenge, wherein it sources problem statements from government bodies and invites startups and innovators globally for solutions. Additionally, MSInS also provides startups receive direct financial support of INR 14 lakhs each for Intellectual Property and Certifications, solidifying their innovative contributions.

In January 2021, the Maharashtra State Innovation Society established the Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC) with a focus on planning and executing initiatives to foster women entrepreneurship in the state of Maharashtra. WEC is designed to collaborate with both public and private sector organisations, aiming to create a unified platform by cataloguing their existing women-focused entrepreneurship schemes, initiatives, and programs. Additionally, it will facilitate the sharing of best practices among women entrepreneurs and partner organisations while actively promoting evidence-based policy making for women entrepreneurship. These efforts together address several barriers that women entrepreneurs encounter including but not limited to, lack of funding, inadequate support, restrictive social norms, etc.

Objective of the study

The primary objective of this proposed study is to suggest policy recommendations to develop a 'Women Entrepreneurship Policy' tailored specifically for Maharashtra. The rationale behind this initiative stems from a critical analysis of the current landscape of women entrepreneurship within the state and its comparison on a national and international level.

This study aims to meticulously examine the existing ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in the state to assess need. It will delve into various facets such as the number, depth, quality, and size of women-led enterprises. By conducting a thorough analysis using secondary research, this study intends to identify not only the challenges faced but also the opportunities that can be capitalised upon.

01 Introduction

A vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem is increasingly being recognized as a catalyst for economic development and sustainability. Across the globe, economies are also emphasising the need for promoting women's entrepreneurship to achieve greater gender parity and enhanced participation of women in the workforce. The thrust for this policy imperative has been particularly significant in the context of India, owing to the lower female workforce participation (compared to the global average) and the extent of informalisation of women's work in the Indian economy. In fact, a joint report by Bain & Co and Google (2019) estimated that supporting the establishment of 30 million women-led enterprises in India could potentially create between 150-170 million jobs, which is more than 25% of the new jobs required for the entire working-age population until 2030[1].

Against this backdrop women entrepreneurship across India, including Maharashtra, has shown growth in recent years, with more women starting their own businesses and contributing to the state's economy. According to data made available in the Fifth[2] and Sixth[3] Economic Census, in Maharashtra, the number of women-owned businesses increased from 5.45% in 2005 to 10.82% in 2016. However, despite such stellar progress, women entrepreneurs continue to face several challenges in their entrepreneurial journey.

One of the main challenges is access to funding[4]. According to the Sixth Economic Census[5], only about 21% of women entrepreneurs in India receive external financial support. In Maharashtra, this number is lower at 17%, with credit access through formal financial institutions being more challenging for women. Several factors contribute to this, including information asymmetry on both the demand and supply sides, low confidence and motivation, and socio-cultural norms that result in women often not being seen as creditworthy, making it difficult for them to secure loans or other forms of financing. Another challenge faced by women entrepreneurs in India is the lack of support and networking opportunities, as the business ecosystem is often dominated by men. This is especially true in rural areas, where women entrepreneurs may not have access to the same resources and networks as their urban counterparts.

It is also pertinent to note that in India, the majority of women-owned businesses operate in a sustenance phase, focusing on basic income needs rather than profit or expansion. These ventures, comprising almost 90% of women-owned businesses, arise from economic necessity rather than entrepreneurial aspirations[6].

Societal norms and negative attitudes towards women in business are also critical factors that inhibit women's motivation and entrepreneurial journey. Women entrepreneurs also often contend with additional responsibilities, including the crucial role of caring for children or elderly family members. These responsibilities can create a challenge in allocating the necessary time and energy to their businesses. Moreover, the expectation of unpaid care and domestic work often leads women to situate their entrepreneurial endeavours closer to home, or even within the home itself. This dynamic can inadvertently diminish entrepreneurial independence and confidence and dampen their appetite for risk-taking[7].

This report aims to provide an overview of the current state of women entrepreneurship in Maharashtra, identify the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, and propose potential policy interventions to support the growth and success of these businesses.

02 Scope, methodology, and limitations

Empowering women in business holds profound implications for their individual well-being, as well as for society at large. When women enter the business arena, they gain not only economic independence but also a more significant role in decision-making processes, leading to a rebalancing of power dynamics. This, in turn, fosters more inclusive and diverse representation. Studies have highlighted how businesses run by women have a clear impact on the empowerment of women, which further expands economic growth, promotes social development, and enhances overall business performance[8]. Additionally, investing in women's empowerment produces the double dividend of benefiting women and children and is pivotal for the health and social development of families, communities, and nations.[9]

According to the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs,[10] Women Business Owners as a percentage of Total Business Owners stood at a meagre 8.2% in 2017 where 'business owner' was defined as employing at least one person other than herself or himself. However, the Government of India has identified a woman-led enterprise as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprise to women."[11] According to this definition, and as per the Sixth Economic Census of India, women constituted only around 13.76% of total entrepreneurs in the country in 2013-14 and the average employment per establishment for women-owned establishments was found to be 1.67%.[12] Regardless of the definition we choose for women entrepreneurship, the numbers reveal poor engagement of women entrepreneurs in the country. As per the Global Female Entrepreneurship Index (FEI) 2015,[13] India ranks a dismal 70th among 77 countries.

To draft a women entrepreneurship policy for Maharashtra, it is essential to examine what leads to this skew in numbers and what role the state government can play to grow the number of women entrepreneurs in the state. Towards this end, the study has been carried out in four distinct phases:

The **first phase** focused on a detailed literature review and policy mapping exercise. The objective of the literature review was to collate gender-disaggregated data and information on entrepreneurship, both at the state and national levels. By assessing reports from various sources, the authors have been able to put together a broad picture of women entrepreneurs and women-led enterprises in the state — identifying some of the key enablers and barriers in their entrepreneurship journey. The literature review also focused on analysing information from the rich pool of academic studies on women's entrepreneurship and various enablers and barriers along women's entrepreneurial journeys.

Similarly, the policy mapping exercise served as a crucial component of our methodology. Its purpose was to systematically identify and analyse the various schemes and incentives already in place to support women entrepreneurs. This endeavour provided valuable insights into the strengths and gaps within the ecosystem. By pinpointing key schemes and aligning them with the broader frameworks established by the teams at TQH and IFMR LEAD,[14] we gained a comprehensive view of the existing policy landscape. This, in turn, empowered us to formulate precise recommendations and interventions aimed at creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs in the state.

Following a thorough literature review and policy mapping, the **second phase** of the study focused on key informant interviews. The objective of this phase was to collect first-hand experience of the

primary stakeholders in the women's entrepreneurship ecosystem - women entrepreneurs themselves, mentors, managers of incubators, civil society organisations working for the empowerment of women entrepreneurs, researchers, and government officials.

The findings from the second phase have helped strengthen the assessment from the literature review and helped create a human-centric policy framework for encouraging entrepreneurship among women, in the **third phase** of the study. In designing the framework, the findings from the previous two phases were critical towards identifying the principal factors of influence which determine women's access to and progress with entrepreneurship.

Taking feedback on the emerging recommendations from the report, the **fourth phase** of the study is structured around formulating the draft policy document on women entrepreneurship. The aim of this phase is to ensure that the recommendations from the analysis have been reflected in the draft policy.

This qualitative study has thus analysed the most recent available data, extensive policy mapping as well as insights from stakeholders to arrive at the recommendations and eventual draft policy document. *However, while a holistic approach has been adopted towards looking at this policy, there are a few research constraints associated with the gender disaggregated data landscape (See Annexure 1 for details).*

SECTION A:

Introduction to the Women Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Maharashtra

01 Women entrepreneurship ecosystem in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is one of the most prosperous and industrially advanced states in India, contributing 15% to the country's GDP.[15] The state's capital, Mumbai, is also the financial capital of India and is an economic hub of global significance.[16] Due to Mumbai's reputation as an important centre for trade, Maharashtra has also been seen as a lucrative base for setting up businesses. According to the Sixth Economic Census published in 2016,[17] of the 58.5 million business establishments found to be in operation in India, 10.49% of all enterprises were in Maharashtra. In terms of the total number of establishments, Maharashtra stood 2nd behind Uttar PradeshWomen's participation in economic activities has remained consistently high in Maharashtra compared to the national average. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS),[21] Female Labour Force Participation (FLFPR) in the age group of 15 and above in Maharashtra was 36% in 2020-21, surpassing the national average of 32.5%. A significant share of the FLFPR comes from rural women, with 43.5% of rural women engaged in the labour force as compared to only 24.9% of urban women. Recent data from the Ministry of MSME suggests that as of 2022, Maharashtra has nearly 1.2 lakh women-led MSMEs registered on the Udyam portal, which is the highest among states in absolute terms.[22] However, when it comes to overall enterprises, only 10.82% of all enterprises in the state were led by women, compared to the national average of 13.76%.

The table below captures a few other characteristics of women-owned and led enterprises. .

Government initiatives to accelerate women's entrepreneurship in Maharashtra

Within India, Maharashtra has a relatively strong ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. The state has rolled out a variety of initiatives to achieve this. For example, as per the Special Policy for Women Entrepreneurs in Maharashtra, a woman entrepreneur is eligible to receive financial assistance ranging from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 1 crore, amongst other benefits. The assistance is provided in the proportion of 15% to 35%, depending on the project's capital investment.[18] Similarly, with the vision of cultivating an innovation-based economy and nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit state-wide, the Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Department of the Government of Maharashtra crafted the Maharashtra State Innovative Start-up Policy 2018. The policy aims to develop incubators that will provide targeted support, attract investment for new businesses, facilitate startups and create employment opportunities in the state.[19]

In addition, the state has several government schemes that specifically facilitate entrepreneurship within women. Some key interventions that these schemes include are incentivising training for skill development, making credit more accessible, changing social norms through targeted efforts, etc. Research by NITI Ayog has highlighted that Maharashtra is one of the few states that makes information about accessing the scheme easily available online using portals for different schemes. Similarly, several programs also provide support to disabled women entrepreneurs separately.[20]

Table 1: Characteristics of enterprises in Maharashtra[23]

Indicators	All enterprises	Women-led enterprises
% Share of rural enterprises	53.68%	52.12%
Engagement in agricultural activities (other than crop production and plantation)	25.94%	26.86%
Own account establishments without hired workers	71.92%	87.36%
Avg. no. of employees per establishment	2.36	1.65
% Share of perennial enterprises	94.36%	92.28%
Major source of finance: a. Self-finance b. Donation or transfer from other agencies c. Government financial assistance d. Borrowing from financial institutions	 a. 89.93% b. 6.44% c. 1.58% d. 2.05%	 a. 83% b. 11.42% c. 2.93% d. 1.65%
% Share of enterprises categorised by caste profile of the entrepreneurs: a. General category b. OBCs c. Scs d. Sts	 a. 63.33% b. 23.7% c. 8.89% d. 4.09%	 a. 60.42% b. 23.29% c. 11.80% d. 4.49%

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

An overview of the women entrepreneurship ecosystem in Maharashtra

Maharashtra has the fifth-highest number of women-owned establishments in India with 8.25%[24] of all women-owned establishments being in the state. However, the state still has a low entrepreneurship adoption rate among women as the 6,64,300 women-owned establishments make up only 10.82% of the 61,37,342 establishments in Maharashtra - placing Maharashtra 20th amongst 36 states and UTs in India in terms of the percentage share of women entrepreneurs. This figure, however, does not consider cultivators and farmers. With 21.68 lakh female agricultural landowners, Maharashtra constitutes 10.72% of all female agricultural landowners in India. The female land ownership share is marginally higher in Maharashtra at 14.74% than the national share of 13.87%.[25]

Location

In India, many enterprises (men and women-owned) are rural-based (60%).[26] This trend is also seen in Maharashtra, but the urban-rural divide is lower, with 53.57%[27] of all enterprises operating from rural areas. In the case of women-owned enterprises, 52.12% of them operate in rural areas. Almost four out of every five (78.96%) women-owned enterprises in Maharashtra are in 15 of the 35 districts in the state. Among these, Kolhapur has the highest number of women-owned establishments, having 15.07% of the state's total. This is followed by Satara, Pune, Solapur, Mumbai Suburban, and Thane - which cumulatively account for more than half (52.58%) of the state's total.

In terms of intra-district uptake of women's entrepreneurship, only 8 districts have a higher percentage share of women's ownership in establishments than the state average of 10.82%. Of these, however,

three districts have low numbers of establishments (i.e, they are not part of the top 15 districts). Kolhapur again has the highest percentage share of women-owned establishments in the district with 17.54% of the establishments being owned by women. This is followed by Chandrapur, Satara, Solapur, and Nagpur whose figures vary between 12%-15%.[28]

Table 2: Location of women-owned enterprises in Maharashtra

District	Total number of women-owned Enterprises	Percentage share of all women-owned establishments in Maharashtra	Percentage share of all establishments in the district
Kolhapur	100,128	15.07%	17.54%
Satara	54,403	8.19%	14.18%
Pune	52,973	7.97%	10.30%
Solapur	50,629	7.62%	13.56%
Mumbai Suburban	48,428	7.29%	10.41%
Thane	42,771	6.44%	9.75%
Nagpur	33,373	5.02%	12.90%
Sangli	29,001	4.37%	10.43%
Mumbai	20,474	3.08%	7.84%
Nashik	20,444	3.08%	9.54%
Ahmednagar	15,768	2.37%	6.40%
Chandrapur	15,076	2.27%	14.64%
Jalgaon	14,057	2.12%	8.86%
Aurangabad	13,899	2.09%	9.70%
Amravati	13,159	1.98%	9.61%
Total - Top 15 districts	**5,24,583**	**78.97**	**11.04%**
Other districts	139,719	21.03%	8.93%
Total	**6,64,300**	**100.00%**	**10.82%**

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Sector

Of all women-owned enterprises in the state, more than three-quarters are involved in Manufacturing (27.02%),[29] Livestock-rearing (25.26%), and Retail (20.63%). The Manufacturing sector itself also has the largest share of female entrepreneurs with 19.50% of the establishments in the sector being owned by women. Other sectors that have a high share of women's ownership are Education (12.63%), Human health & social work activities (11.32%), and Livestock (11.46%).

Table 3: Sector-wise distribution of women-owned enterprises

Sector	Women-owned Enterprises	Percentage of all women-owned establishments	Percentage of total enterprises in the sector
Manufacturing	179,502	27.02%	19.50%
Livestock	167,822	25.26%	11.46%
Retail trade	137,036	20.63%	9.10%
Education	24,729	3.72%	12.63%
Human health & social work activities	13,552	2.04%	11.32%
Total	**664,300**	**100.00%**	**10.82%**

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Scale

Almost nine out of 10 (87.36%)[30] of the women-owned establishments in the state function without hired workers (Own Account Establishments), ranking Maharashtra 28th among all the states in India. Women-owned establishments in districts that are urban, urban adjacent or have major urban centres (Mumbai, Thane, Mumbai Suburban, and Pune) have higher rates of scaling, with 20-30% of the establishments in these districts having at least one hired worker. In contrast, in districts such as Kolhapur and Satara, which have a high number of women-owned establishments, a majority are OAEs without hired workers (95.89% and 95.46% respectively). Sectorally, Human health & social work activities and Education have high rates of women ownership and relatively higher rates of establishments with hired employees (57.53% and 28.91% respectively). The rest, especially Manufacturing and Agriculture-related activities are predominantly OAEs.

Table 4: Overview of women-led enterprises in terms of employment

Type of Establishment	OAE (Without Hired Workers)		With At least One Hired Worker	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Agricultural Establishments	173,027	26.05%	5,395	0.81%
Non-Agricultural Establishments	407,310	61.31%	78,568	11.83%

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Table 5: District-wise overview of women-owned establishments with at least one hired worker[31]

District	% of Women-owned Establishments with at least one hired worker
Mumbai	30.31%
Thane	28.49%
Mumbai Suburban	25.32%
Pune	22.18%
Raigarh	21.04%
Total	**12.64%**

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Employment

The average employment rate for women-owned establishments in Maharashtra is 1.65,[32] marginally lower than the national average of 1.67 and significantly lower than the overall state average of 2.36 for all enterprises. For non-OAEs, the average size of a women-owned enterprise was 4.69. Similar to the above, the five districts with the highest percentages of women-owned non-OAEs also have the highest average size of non-OAEs. These five districts account for almost two-thirds (58.89%) of those employed in women-owned non-OAEs in the state.

Sectorally, the three major sectors of manufacturing, livestock, and retail employ nearly two-thirds of the workers in women-owned businesses. However, only manufacturing and retail have a significant portion (34.22% and 28.39% respectively) of employment generation among non-OAEs. Additionally, education and human health & social work activities have a high number of employees in non-OAEs. Cumulatively, these four sectors make up 58% of the state's total employment generated by non-OAEs.

Table 6: District-wise characteristics of women-owned enterprises in terms of total employment[33]

District	Average size of workforce for non-OAEs	Total number of employees in women-owned establishments (EWoE)	% of EWoE employed in non-OAEs
Mumbai	4.41	44,460	61.57%
Thane	4.58	93,018	59.97%
Mumbai Suburban	6.63	1,23,490	65.84%
Pune	4.84	1,08,827	52.29%
Raigarh	4.71	20,348	51.98%
Total	**4.69**	**1,09,7876**	**35.87%**

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Nature

A majority (92.28%) of the enterprises in the state are perennial. This is only marginally lower than the state average of 94.36%. Districts with lower shares of women-owned enterprises (outside the top 15) mostly have higher shares of seasonal and casual enterprises of around 10% compared to the state average of approximately 7%. Certain districts like Nandurbar and Ratnagiri have almost 20% of women-owned enterprises operating as seasonal or casual businesses.

Table 7: District-wise share of enterprises by nature of the operation[34]

District	Perennial	Seasonal	Casual	Total
Nandurbar	3,134	689	69	3,892
Akola	8,856	1,390	355	10,601
Thane	38,446	3,612	713	42,771
Mumbai Suburban	45,340	2,209	879	48,428
Mumbai	19,489	765	220	20,474
Raigarh	9,871	727	80	10,678
Pune	50,593	2,058	322	52,973
Ratnagiri	7,643	1,593	280	9,516
Kolhapur	92,251	6,436	1,441	1,00,128
Total	**6,13,038**	**44,616**	**6,646**	**6,64,300**
In (%)	**92.28**	**6.72**	**1**	**100**

Source: Sixth Economic Census for Maharashtra State

Financing

In districts with higher numbers of women-owned establishments, higher rates of self-financing is observed (average ~88%) while in districts with a lower number of women entrepreneurs, a larger fraction (more than twice the state average) of the establishments are dependent on donations and transfers from other agencies. A similar trend is also observed for financial assistance from government sources although the dependencies on this mode of financing are significantly lower. Chandrapur is an exception to this, with 16.12% of the women-owned establishments in the district being financed through financial assistance from Government sources.

Table 8: District-wise share of enterprises by the source of funding[35]

District	Financial Assistance from Govt. sources	Borrowing from financial institutions	Borrowing from Non-institutions / Money Lenders	Loan from Self Help Group	Donations / Transfers from other agencies
	Percentage	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*
Pune	2.14%	2.19%	0.38%	0.73%	9.96%
Thane	2.26%	1.22%	0.54%	0.27%	13.08%
Nagpur	2.45%	0.71%	0.28%	0.31%	7.00%

Mumbai	1.35%	0.61%	0.42%	0.10%	8.64%
Nashik	2.58%	1.83%	0.30%	0.38%	10.06%
Ahmadnagar	3.75%	2.16%	0.58%	0.30%	17.22%
Chandrapur	16.12%	1.38%	0.32%	0.49%	17.76%
Jalgaon	3.09%	1.26%	0.78%	0.18%	19.63%
Aurangabad	6.07%	1.56%	0.30%	0.34%	13.86%
Amravati	2.88%	0.55%	0.33%	0.46%	27.66%
Raigarh	4.35%	1.93%	0.47%	0.52%	20.21%
Akola	4.32%	1.02%	0.27%	0.15%	26.23%
Gondiya	4.80%	0.52%	0.51%	0.23%	10.35%
Bid	9.72%	1.83%	1.64%	0.44%	15.53%
Wardha	4.35%	1.74%	0.11%	3.07%	38.23%
Buldhana	3.86%	1.44%	0.25%	0.22%	31.48%
Nanded	4.78%	1.21%	0.65%	0.47%	22.08%
Jalna	3.69%	0.78%	0.31%	0.19%	17.87%
Parbhani	4.03%	0.69%	0.13%	0.21%	27.84%
Gadchiroli	4.99%	0.66%	1.21%	0.19%	18.88%
Nandurbar	5.16%	0.69%	0.46%	0.23%	11.90%
Hingoli	5.61%	1.03%	0.31%	0.09%	25.25%
Washim	3.35%	1.45%	0.21%	0.21%	25.48%
Total	**2.93%**	**1.65%**	**0.45%**	**0.56%**	**11.42%**

02 The need for promoting women entrepreneurs

Being the second most populous state, which houses Mumbai - the Financial Capital of India,[36] Maharashtra is considered an important driver of industrialisation in India. As per the State's annual Economic Survey, Maharashtra's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices (nominal) for 2022-23 is estimated to be Rs 35.27 lakh crores - highest of all states. However, as the state takes the lead in charting India's growth story, there is greater potential for women entrepreneurship to be fully realised. Although 48.17% of the state's population is female,[37] when it comes to owning establishments, just 8.25% of all establishments in the state are owned by women. As per data from the Sixth Economic Census of Maharashtra held in 2013-2014,[38] it was found that the top 10 districts with the highest percentage of women-owned establishments out of total establishments in the State were Kolhapur (15.07%), Satara (8.19%), Pune (7.97%), Solapur (7.62%), Mumbai Suburban (7.29 %), Thane (6.44%), Nagpur (5.02%), Nashik (3.08%), Mumbai (3.08%) and Ahmednagar (2.37%). Looking at the corresponding data from the Economic Survey of Maharashtra for the same year,[39] we found that the same set of districts - Mumbai (City+Suburban) (2,08,946), Thane (1,24,665), Pune (1,03,141), Nagpur (43,170), Nashik (40,900), Kolhapur (33,079), Solapur (26,329), Ahmednagar (25,291), Aurangabad

(24,129) and Raigad (22,881) had some of the highest Gross Domestic District Product contributions for the state at constant prices.

This overlap can be considered against two hypotheses:

(i) It could indicate a trend that districts that foster women to actively participate in the entrepreneurship ecosystem also in turn see better economic outcomes and better contributions to the progress of the state; a conclusion reiterated by organisations such as the World Bank[40] and International Monetary Fund,[41] among others.

(ii) Alternatively, it could suggest that a prosperous entrepreneurship ecosystem in turn facilitates wider opportunities for different segments to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. Research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[42] and International Labour Organization (ILO)[43] highlights that creating a conducive business environment helps increase the ability of women to participate in the labour force and harness their enthusiasm, energy, and ambition to contribute to economic development. However, it is pertinent to note that entrepreneurship development measures must be gender-responsive and inclusive of young people, women, migrant workers, and other marginalised groups to maximise their contributions and fuel economic progress. But, regardless of which of the two hypotheses is more likely in this scenario, it does establish a strong correlation between entrepreneurial activity more generally, and women's entrepreneurship in Maharashtra.

The International Monetary Fund has also recognised that entrepreneurial initiatives empowering women have a multifaceted impact. By investing in women, particularly those who wield influence both in their communities and households, we enable them to make informed decisions regarding fertility, education, and the health of their children. This ripple effect culminates in heightened levels of economic and social prosperity, not only for individual families but also for the nation.[44]

Given these reasons, government intervention in promoting women's entrepreneurship is a valid need of the hour. An effective policy to promote entrepreneurship among women, which is conscious of the current enablers and barriers in the ecosystem, can not only help achieve better socio-economic conditions for the women in the state, but also ultimately lead to a stronger state economy, higher levels of workforce participation and education, and better overall conditions of public health and nutrition.

03 Mapping policies promoting women's entrepreneurship

Existing policies

In our efforts to draft a comprehensive policy for promoting women entrepreneurship in Maharashtra, we sought to map the various schemes and incentives that already exist, to better understand the strengths and gaps in the ecosystem. The objective of this exercise is to highlight the nature of support available to women entrepreneurs. For the scope of our study, we decided to look at schemes/policies being implemented at the central-level and state-level, along with the bank schemes. The schemes were largely assessed based on their objective and the category of support they sought to provide to entrepreneurs, namely, capital support, skill training and social and market development support. A study by Microsave Consulting, for instance, highlighted that there are not enough schemes that support marginalised groups like trans-women or persons with disabilities.

Maharashtra is one of the few states that has one scheme specifically focusing on differently abled women. Similarly, the state also has online portals which make accessing information about relevant schemes relatively easier.[45]

Table 9: Existing policies for women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra

SCHEME/POLICY
Chief Minister's Employment Guarantee Program

MINISTRY Directorate of Industries

OBJECTIVE To have 30,000 women-owned MSMEs by 2024.

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY
Tejashree Financial Service Scheme

MINISTRY Ministry of Finance

OBJECTIVE To bring rural women into mainstream development; Debt relief to rural women through SHGs

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY
Package Scheme of Incentives

MINISTRY Industries, Energy, and Labor department

OBJECTIVE To encourage the dispersal of industries to lesser-developed areas of the State

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	Yes

SCHEME/POLICY
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program

MINISTRY Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

OBJECTIVE To generate employment through the setting up of self-employment enterprises

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Tejaswini Maharashtra Rural Women Empowerment Programme

MINISTRY Department of Social Justice and Social Welfare

OBJECTIVE To improve women's wellbeing in the state

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Mahasamruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran Scheme

MINISTRY Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department

OBJECTIVE To empower the rural women of Maharashtra

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women centric scheme with components of entrepreneurship

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
No	Yes	Yes

SCHEME/POLICY

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission

MINISTRY Ministry of Rural Development

OBJECTIVE To provide rural poor long-term support such that they diversify their livelihoods to improve their incomes and quality of life

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy with women-focused components/elements

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
No	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme

MINISTRY Ministry of Food Processing Industries

OBJECTIVE To enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganised segment of the food processing industry and promoting formalisation

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

MINISTRY Ministry of Finance

OBJECTIVE To provide access to finance to unfunded enterprises

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Stand-Up India Scheme

MINISTRY Ministry of Finance

OBJECTIVE To empower women entrepreneurs and link them with bank loans

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Startup India Initiative

MINISTRY Ministry of Commerce and Industry

OBJECTIVE To support entrepreneurs, build a robust startup ecosystem and transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	Yes

SCHEME/POLICY

Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Startups by Women

MINISTRY Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with GIZ

OBJECTIVE To establish incubation and acceleration programs for women micro entrepreneurs

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
No	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises

MINISTRY Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

OBJECTIVE To ensure credit availability for Micro and Small enterprises

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Entrepreneurship policy with women-focused components/elements

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

PNB Mahila Uyami

MINISTRY Punjab National Bank

OBJECTIVE To encourage women to participate in generating activities

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Bank

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Cent Kalyani Scheme

MINISTRY Central Bank of India

OBJECTIVE To encourage women entrepreneurs to start initiatives and expand

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Bank

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Udyam Sakhi Portal

MINISTRY Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

OBJECTIVE To provide pertinent information to women entrepreneurs via a single portal

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Centre

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
No	Yes	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Union Nari Shakti Scheme

MINISTRY Union Bank of India

OBJECTIVE To help women entrepreneurs access working credit for working capital

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL Bank

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	No	No

SCHEME/POLICY

Women Entrepreneurship Cell[46]

MINISTRY Maharashtra State Innovation Society

OBJECTIVE To serve as a dedicated hub for boosting women entrepreneurship

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	Yes

SCHEME/POLICY

WISE SNDTU Incubation Centre[47]

MINISTRY Maharashtra State Innovation Society & SNDT University

OBJECTIVE To serve as a specialised women-focused incubator to help boost women entrepreneurship

EXTENT OF WOMEN SPECIFICITY
Women entrepreneurship focused

LEVEL State

SUPPORT TYPE

Capital	Skill training	Social and market development
Yes	Yes	Yes

The entrepreneurial journey of a woman is enabled by and challenged by several factors. As such, there are several schemes in the domains of women and child development, MSMEs, and textiles, among others that have the potential to impact women's entrepreneurship ecosystem. However, for the scope of this study, we have decided to focus on specific schemes which have a distinct women entrepreneurship focus to them and have a wider uptake. After assessing 17 popular schemes in the state, we found that 3 out of every four schemes had a financial support component but only 2 out of 5 schemes had a skilling component, and 1 out of every 5 schemes had a social and market development support component.

Maharashtra State Innovation Society

Maharashtra State Innovation Society is the nodal agency for startups and innovation, set up under the aegis of the Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Government of Maharashtra - responsible for implementing the Maharashtra State Innovative Startup Policy 2018 which envisions transforming Maharashtra by catalysing the growth of an innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem to achieve wholesome and inclusive socioeconomic development.

Key Initiatives Empowering Women Entrepreneurs:[48]

- **Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC)**

  Established by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society in January 2021, the Women Entrepreneurship Cell is a dedicated division within the society that focuses on consolidating women-centric entrepreneurial schemes and initiatives. It acts as a hub for collaboration between public and private sectors, fostering knowledge exchange and evidence-based policymaking.

- **Dedicated Women-focused Incubator**

  In partnership with SNDT Women's University, MSInS has set up a specialised incubator dedicated to supporting women-led start-ups. This initiative aligns with the state's innovative startup policy, offering substantial grants to bolster incubation facilities.

- **Support Programs for Women-led Start-ups**

  The WEC conducts various support programs, including Acceleration, Mentorship, Financial Assistance in IPR and Quality testing among others, and Compliance Support, fostering an environment conducive to women's entrepreneurial endeavours.

- **Small-Scale Schemes**

  Initiatives like the 'Hirkani Maharashtrachi' scheme being managed by MSinS provide a platform for Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to showcase their innovative ideas and entrepreneurial skills, receiving funding through a district-level business plan competition.

- **Entrepreneurial Development Impact**

  MSInS has facilitated the growth of a vast entrepreneurial landscape in Maharashtra. As of present, there are 20,799 DPIIT Recognized Startups in Maharashtra, out of which nearly 10,243 are owned by women entrepreneurs.[49] 25.6% of all startups are in ideation phase, 36.05% are in the validation phase, 28.1% are in early traction phase, and 10.36% are in scaling phase respectively. The MSInS is presently supporting 17 incubators across Maharashtra, nurturing 100+ incubatees, and has over 55 mentors enlisted on its portal, actively contributing to entrepreneurial development.[50] Additionally, it is also supporting 76 startups with seed-funding and 36 with venture-funding.

The WEI Framework

To better assess women-led entrepreneurship in Maharashtra, IFMR LEAD has introduced the Women Entrepreneurship Index (WEI) framework.[51] This tool evaluates and quantifies women-led entrepreneurial efforts in various districts across the state. The framework encompasses pivotal factors of influence, each accompanied by specific indicators for accurate measurement. The table below captures a comprehensive overview of the framework.

Table 10: Indicators for the revised WEI framework

Factors	Indicators
Level of Entrepreneurship	a) Percentage of women business owners b) Women entrepreneurial activity rate c) Net District Domestic Product
Access to Market	a) Access to international markets b) Total value of exports c) Industrial attractiveness d) Enterprises benefitted from public procurement e) Public-private partnerships
Regulatory & Infra Support	a) Number of Special Economic Zones (Operational) b) Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal c) Access to telecommunications/broadband (below data is percentage of women used internet) d) District-Wise Road Length (Public Works Department And Zilla Parishad) 2021-22 e) Access to pucca roads (road length per lakh population) - Road length per lakh population (km) f) Road length per 100 sq. km. of geographical area (km) g) Private infrastructure for IT industry (# of IT parks)
Access to Govt Schemes	a) Grants-in-aid released to Jan Shikshan Sansthans during the financial year 2021-22 b) No of women entrepreneurs who received credit under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana c) Number of women entrepreneurs reached through different government programs d) Amount of funds provided through schemes (both target and distribution) e) Udyogini Scheme, Mudra yojana, and Annapurna yojana
Start-up Ecosystem	a) Number of Incubators b) Number of accelerators c) Number of mentors from the district d) Number of Atal Tinkering Labs e) Number of MCED Regional offices f) Cluster trainings (Completed/ Ongoing) June 21-June23
Human Capital & Workforce	a) Women labour force participation (per 1000) b) Women literacy rate(%) c) Number of women with higher education d) Number of women enrolled in management courses e) Number of women enrolled in technical courses (Engineering + IT) f) Women enrolled under PMKVY (2019-20)

Access to Credit	a) Percentage of women who hold an active bank account b) Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance c) District-Wise Number of Functioning Offices of Commercial Banks as at end of the Quarter (March 2023) d) Total # of SHGs that were sanctioned loans under NRLM in 2021-22 e) Total amount of loans sanctioned under NRLM in 2021-22 f) # of SHGs who received Revolving Fund Disbursed in 2022-23 g) Total amount of loans sanctioned as Revolving funds to SHGs in 2022-23 h) District-Wise Annual Credit Plan for Priority Sector Lending (2022-23) - Non Farm Sector i) District-Wise Annual Credit Plan for Priority Sector Lending (2022-23) - Other Priority Sector j) District-Wise Annual Credit Plan (2022-23) - Non Priority Sector k) PMJDY accounts Opened (Till Sept. 2022) l) # of Rupay cards issued # of zero balance accounts opened m) Total deposits in PMJDY accounts

In line with LEAD's Women Entrepreneurship Index (WEI) Framework, which comprehensively assesses government initiatives across seven vital parameters—level of entrepreneurship, credit accessibility, human capital development, market access, regulatory and infrastructure support, government scheme access, and startup ecosystem enhancement — we conducted a preliminary analysis of the same 17 significant central, state, and bank schemes.

Table 11: Scheme mapping in accordance with the WEI framework

Name of the Scheme	Name of The Indicator		
Chief Minister's Employment Guarantee Program	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	Yes	*Percentage of women business owner* *Women entrepreneurial activity rate*
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	
Tejashree Financial Service Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	2/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	

Tejaswini Maharashtra Rural Women Empowerment Programme	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	Yes	*Industrial attractiveness*
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Package Scheme of Incentives	Indicators Met (Summary)	2/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	Yes	*Number of Special Economic Zones (Operational)* *Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal*
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program	Indicators Met (Summary)	2/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Stand-Up India Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	5/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	Yes	*Percentage of women business owners* *Women entrepreneurial activity rate*
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	Yes	*Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal* *Private infrastructure for IT industry*
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	*Number of MCED Regional offices*

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana	Indicators Met (Summary)	2/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	Yes	*Percentage of women business owners* *Women entrepreneurial activity rate*
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)* *Women enrolled under PMKVY (2019-20)* *Women trained under PMKVY (2019-20)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance* *Total # of SHGs that were sanctioned loans under NRLM in 2021-22* *Total amount of loans sanctioned under NRLM in 2021-22* *# of SHGs who received Revolving Fund Disbursed in 2022-23* *Total amount of loans sanctioned as Revolving funds to SHGs in 2022-23*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Startup India Initiative	Indicators Met (Summary)	5/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	Yes	*Percentage of women business owners* *Women entrepreneurial activity rate*
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	Yes	*Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal*
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	*Number of Incubators* *Number of accelerators*

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	Yes	*Total value of exports* *Industrial attractiveness*
	Regulatory & Infra Support	Yes	*Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal*
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises	Indicators Met (Summary)	1/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Udyam Sakhi Portal	Indicators Met (Summary)	5/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	Yes	*Percentage of women business owners* *Women entrepreneurial activity rate*
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	Yes	*Percentage of women-led enterprises that are registered/formal*
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	Yes	*Number of women entrepreneurs reached through different government programs* *Amount of funds provided through schemes (both target and distribution)*
	Access to Credit	No	
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	*Number of mentors from the district*
Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Startups by Women	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	Yes	*Total value of exports* *Industrial attractiveness*
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	No	
	Start-up Ecosystem	Yes	*Number of Incubators* *Number of accelerators*

Cent Kalyani Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	1/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs with access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Union Nari Shakti Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	1/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
PNB Mahila Uyami	Indicators Met (Summary)	1/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	No	
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	No	
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women who hold an active bank account* *Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	
Mahasamruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran Scheme	Indicators Met (Summary)	3/7	
	Level of Entrepreneurship	No	
	Access to Market	Yes	*Total value of exports* *Industrial attractiveness*
	Regulatory & Infra Support	No	
	Human Capital & Workforce	Yes	*Women labour force participation (per 1000)*
	Access to Govt Schemes	No	
	Access to Credit	Yes	*Percentage of women entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial finance*
	Start-up Ecosystem	No	

Our findings from this mapping reveal that facilitating access to credit is a predominant feature in existing schemes that women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra can access, with an impressive 88.24% (15 out of 17) of the schemes featuring components tailored to empower women in this regard. Noteworthy schemes in this category include the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Startup India Initiative, Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme, and Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises.

In the realm of human capital development, approximately 52.94% (9 out of 17) of the schemes demonstrate a strong commitment to building the capacities of women entrepreneurs, with a clear objective of bolstering female labour force participation.

With respect to nurturing the broader startup ecosystem, around 35.29% (6 out of 17) of the schemes actively foster an enabling environment specifically for women entrepreneurs, with a focus on expanding entrepreneurship touchpoints and the incubator and accelerator network in Maharashtra.

For regulatory and infrastructure support, approximately 29.41% (5 out of 17) of the schemes aim to create a conducive regulatory environment by emphasising the formalisation and registration of women-led businesses, promoting private infrastructure development, and facilitating access to special economic zones for women entrepreneurs.

When it comes to enhancing the level of entrepreneurship, a similar 29.41% (5 out of 17) of the schemes endeavour to elevate the Entrepreneurship Activity Rate[52] of women as per the WEI Framework's criteria, working diligently to create an environment conducive to increasing the percentage of women-owned businesses in Maharashtra.

Regarding market access, roughly 23.53% (4 out of 17) of the schemes concentrate on facilitating market linkages for women entrepreneurs by enhancing industrial attractiveness and boosting the value of women-led exports.

Lastly, approximately 5.88% (1 out of 17) of the schemes aim to enhance access to government schemes by increasing the outreach of women entrepreneurs through various government programs and augmenting the funds allocated for target distribution.

Outcomes of Government Schemes

Utilising publicly available information, we have systematically delineated the objectives and outcomes of the 17 prominent schemes mentioned earlier. Assessing the uptake and outcomes of these initiatives is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of the women entrepreneurship ecosystem. It provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of these schemes and informs future strategies for fostering women's economic empowerment.

Table 12: Objective and outcomes of government schemes for women entrepreneurship

Name of the Scheme	Objective	Outcome
Chief Minister's Employment Guarantee Program	To have 30,000 women-owned MSMEs by 2024.	Data from the CMEGP dashboard reveals that out of 2,08,889 beneficiaries under the scheme from September 2019 - September 2023, 94953 (45%) are women in Maharashtra.[53]
Tejashree Financial Service Scheme	To bring rural women into mainstream development;	Total loans worth 54.08 crore were disbursed under the scheme up to December 2022.[54]
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission	To provide rural poor long-term support such that they diversify their livelihoods to improve their incomes and quality of life	As of 24th August 2022, there are 571346 SHGs registered in the state of Maharashtra that have 57,77,772 members respectively. Since 2013-14 women SHGs have cumulatively leveraged a credit of Rs.3.56 Lakh Crores from Banks to take up income generating activities.[55]

Maha Samruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran Scheme	To improve women's wellbeing in the state	No data available
Package Scheme of Incentives	To encourage the dispersal of industries to lesser-developed areas of the State	No data available
Tejaswini Maharashtra Rural Women Empowerment Programme	Debt relief to rural women through SHGs	Up till 31.03.2017, Tejaswini was operational in 10,495 villages. A total of 60,852 SHGs have been formed and a total 9.06 lakh members have been organised. Since the last two years MAVIM's focus has been more on livelihood related activities, which has resulted in formulation of 3,609 Micro Livelihood Plans involving 89,143 members. Major focus in Micro Livelihood Plan (MLP) has been on Goat Rearing. As of March 2017, 403 social enterprise activities have been started by 226 CMRCs under the entrepreneurship initiatives.[56]
Stand-Up India Scheme	To empower women entrepreneurs and link them with bank loans	Maharashtra has the third highest number of women beneficiaries. An amount of nearly Rs. 10,238 Cr. has been disbursed to women entrepreneurs as of 2nd December 2022.[57]
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program	To generate employment through the setting up of self-employment enterprises	From 2018-2021, 77,439 women benefited from the scheme, with 6% (4,780) from Maharashtra. Between 2021 and Feb 2022, there were 1,710 additional beneficiaries from Maharashtra under the scheme.[58]
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana	To provide access to finance to unfunded enterprises	Data suggests that out of 1,52,21,237 loan accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana in Maharashtra, about 1,21,31,115 (79.6%) beneficiaries were women.[59]
Startup India Initiative	To support entrepreneurs, build a robust startup ecosystem and transform India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers	As on 8th December 2021, 46% of the total 60,011 DPIIT recognised startups i.e., 27,655 startups in India have at least 1 woman appointed as a director of the entity. Maharashtra has a total of 5,387 such startups with women directors, making it the state with the highest number of startups with women directors.[60]
Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme	To enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganised segment of the food processing industry and promoting formalisation	No data available
Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises	To ensure credit availability for Micro and Small enterprises	No data available

Udyam Sakhi Portal	To provide pertinent information to women entrepreneurs via a single portal	No data available
Economic Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Startups by Women	To establish incubation and acceleration programs for women micro entrepreneurs	Out of the 725 entrepreneurs selected for incubation and acceleration as of February 2022, 120 of them were from Maharashtra.[61]
Cent Kalyani Scheme	To encourage women entrepreneurs to start initiatives and expand	No data available
Union Nari Shakti Scheme	To help women entrepreneurs access working credit for working capital	No data available
PNB Mahila Uyami	To encourage women to participate in generating activities	No data available

The uptake of schemes providing financial support to women in Maharashtra is relatively higher, when compared with other states. Data suggests that out of 1,52,21,237 loan accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana in Maharashtra, about 1,21,31,115 (79.6%) beneficiaries were women.[62] Similarly, under the central government's Stand-up India Scheme, Maharashtra has the third-highest number of women beneficiaries. An amount of nearly Rs. 10,238 Cr. has been disbursed to women entrepreneurs as of 2nd December 2022.[63] However, this high uptake fails to translate into entrepreneurial growth. NPAs from MUDRA loans in Maharashtra stand at nearly 16.32% as of June 2022, suggesting that structural reforms are still needed to support entrepreneurship in women.[64]

At the state level, it was found that while schemes were able to generate interest in promoting self-employment, there was a disparity between the approval of loans and those that had received sanctions. Data from the CMEGP portal reveals that out of 1.6 lakh applications received under the scheme, only 70,341 (43.9%) were from women.[65] However, only 16,790 loans (11% of approved loans) have been sanctioned, as of 2021-2022. The skilling component that particularly aims to target entrepreneurs is mostly an additional provision that is conditionally linked to schemes that already provide financial assistance.

The Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) is a notable initiative. It has made considerable progress in upskilling women in the state, nudging them to take up entrepreneurship in different forms. The organisation has a presence in 34 districts and oversees 5.5 lakh SHGs that cover around 55 lakh households.[66] It aims to provide women assistance in various forms such as helping them to perform collective business activities and promoting financial inclusion, among others.

Recently, the government has also launched a few standalone schemes for skilling entrepreneurs such as the Mahasamruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran scheme. However, there is limited information available regarding their uptake. However, there continues to remain lack of gender disaggregated data available on the performance of schemes such as the Mahasamruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran Scheme,

Package Scheme of Incentives, Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises, Udyam Sakhi Portal, and bank schemes.

International Comparison of Women Entrepreneurship Schemes/Policies

Apart from mapping the existing schemes and policies in India, there is also merit in evaluating how women's entrepreneurship is perceived across the world and what schemes and policies exist to enable its growth. Demographic differences aside, this exercise would prove beneficial to understand if any interventions have had a considerable impact on women's entrepreneurship globally and assess if they could be adapted to a policy framework for the state.

For the scope of our study, we decided to look at schemes/policies being implemented to enable women entrepreneurship in 14 countries, which included developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom and developing nations such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. The interventions were largely assessed based on the extent of support they sought to provide to entrepreneurs in domains of Education, Experience, Networks, Access to Capital, and Social Benefits, among others.

Table 13: International women entrepreneurship policies and programs

Country	WEP policies/programs	Other Key Policy Recommendations/focus areas
Broad focus areas in a majority of the policies Growth; resources (mainly finance); internationalisation; competitiveness; barriers; specific sectors – e.g., youth, rural, agri- business, STEM, ICT, craft; developing the ecosystem (right conditions, improving rules and bureaucracy). Education in financial literacy; increasing soft supports; encouraging the growth of STEM; improving coordination amongst policies and agencies; target specific sectors; improving welfare benefits for entrepreneurs; empowering youth.		
Australia	**Education:** Financial Literacy program **Experience:** Business management advice & capability programs **Networks:** Developing innovation Connections	Strengthening financial literacy
Canada	**Education:** Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hubs **Networks:** Developing Networks and Associations for Women entrepreneurs **Access to Capital:** Microloans	Strengthening financial literacy Fiscal measures to encourage investments in high-risk enterprises.
Germany	**Education:** National Coordination Office for Women Entrepreneurs **Networks:** Develop WE Networks **Access to Capital:** Various financial initiatives **Social benefits:** National Coordination Office for Women Entrepreneurs; Various measures to reintegrate women into employment; Project "FRAUEN unternehmen" addressing the need for visibility of women entrepreneurs	

Ireland	**Education:** Going for Growth program **Networks:** Develop WE Networks **Access to Capital:** Various financial programs	Youth Entrepreneurship
Northern Ireland	**Education:** Various business training and advice programs **Networks:** Women in Business Network	
Norway	**Experience:** Mentoring **Networks:** Develop WE Networks **Access to Capital:** Competitive prize funds **Social benefits:** Improving welfare benefits for entrepreneurs	Welfare and social security benefits to women entrepreneurs / self-employed women
Pakistan	**Education:** Women's Study Centres **Experience:** Skills Development Centres; Reservation of seats for women in the National Assembly **Access to Capital:** The First Women Bank Ltd **Social benefits:** Crisis Centres; Child care Centres; Working Women's Hostels	
Spain	**Experience:** Business Support Program for Women (PAEM); Program of Development for Women Potential Managers. **Access to Capital:** Micro Credit programs. €10 million funds to attract female entrepreneurs into the country.	Welfare and social security benefits to women entrepreneurs / self-employed women
Sweden	**Education:** Business Ambassador Program (in schools) **Experience:** Regional Resource centres; Program promoting women's entrepreneurship. **Networks:** Develop WE Networks **Social benefits:** Regional Resource Centres (Established to create gender equality)	Women's Association with 'gendered' sectors and diversification Welfare and social security benefits to women entrepreneurs / self-employed women
Tanzania	**Experience:** Women's Entrepreneurship Development Unit **Networks:** Tanzanian Women Chamber of Commerce (TWCC) **Access to Capital:** SERO - Business Women's association involved in leasing & financing **Social benefits:** Women Entrepreneurship Development Unit (SIDO- WED)	
UK	**Experience:** Women's Business Council (WBC) **Social benefits:** Women's Business Council (WBC); Mentoring programs – 'Get Mentoring'/'Mentor-me'.	Encouraging more girls/women into STEM areas Tax incentives for STEM and ICT-related Commercialisation Childcare facilities and support

USA	**Experience:** Women's Business Centres **Access to Capital:** 'InnovateHer' program; 'JOBS' funding initiative. **Social benefits:** Women's Business Centres; Women's Equity in Contracting Act; Women-Owned Small Business Contract Prog.	Encouraging more girls/women into STEM areas Strengthening financial literacy
Bangladesh	**Experience:** Entrepreneurial and technical skilling programs. **Access to Capital:** Microcredit disbursement and access to collateral free loans.	
France	**Education:** Strengthening entrepreneurship in the education system **Networks:** Entrepreneurial and technical skilling programs. **Social benefits:** Autonomous health-maternity insurance scheme	

Findings from our study revealed that most countries had dedicated interventions to promote women's entrepreneurship, albeit in different ways, based on their respective ecosystems. For example, it was found that in developed nations such as the UK and the US, the interventions for promoting women entrepreneurs were focused on bringing women into STEM, whereas interventions in developing countries were mostly aimed at promoting women to take up entrepreneurship.

SECTION B:

Developing a Women Entrepreneurship Policy for Maharashtra

01 Types of women entrepreneurs

The 2019 Bain & Co. and Google report proposed six personas of women entrepreneurs in India, highlighting that these segments have varying needs, aspirations, and motivations for embarking on their ventures, and that the challenges they face are also varied. From our stakeholder discussions, we found that while these six personas also hold true for the state of Maharashtra, collectives also operate to facilitate women's entrepreneurship. In this regard, based on a combination of data analysis[67] and the framework proposed by the Bain report, the following categories of women entrepreneurs represent the heterogeneity of women-led enterprises in the state:

Table 14: Types of women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra

Category	Description
Scaler	• Founders of non-farm startups with high growth potential • Operate from formal office settings • Generate > INR 50 lakh revenue or employ > 10 people • This segment comprises a relatively small portion of women entrepreneurs
Rural Small Business owners	• Rural non-farm operators, typically employing 1-10 workers • In Maharashtra, women ownership accounts for 2.10% in the manufacturing sector, 1% in trade, and 2% in the service sector of non-incorporated industries operating at this scale • Overall, women's ownership constitutes 1.70% of all rural small non-incorporated businesses in the state
Urban Small Business owners	• Small urban non-farm businesses employing 1-10 workers; typically cater to a local customer base • In urban areas of Maharashtra, women ownership accounts for 3.40% in manufacturing, 3.10% in trade, and 9.50% in the service sector of non-incorporated industries operating at this scale • Overall, women's ownership constitutes 5.40% of all non-incorporated enterprises of this scale operating in urban areas of the state
Rural Solopreneurs	• Rural solo operators running non-farm businesses, often home-based • In rural areas of Maharashtra, women's ownership accounts for 43.80% in manufacturing, 12.90% in trade, and 4% in the service sector of non-incorporated industries operating at this scale • Overall, women's ownership constitutes 19.90% of all non-farm businesses without hired workers that operate in rural areas of the state

Urban Solopreneurs	• Urban solo operators without hired workers, often home-based • In urban areas of Maharashtra, women's ownership accounts for 49.60% in manufacturing, 9.70% in trade, and 13.80% in the service sector of industries operating at this scale • Overall, women's ownership constitutes 19.90% of all businesses without hired workers (OAEs) operating in urban areas of the state
Agripreneurs	• Farm-based business owners who focus on cultivating and selling agricultural and allied products for profit. They are typically located in rural areas • Characterised by mobility constraints and primarily rely on offline channels like local markets or distributors for market access • Women comprise 14.74% (21,68,000) of the agricultural landowners in the state • 85% are marginal or small landowners, with an average landholding size of 0.46 hectares and 1.39 hectares respectively. • It's important to note that subsistence farmers are not included in this category
Collectives	• Represent a minority among enterprise owners in the State • Despite their relatively low numbers, they hold significant potential for empowering marginalised women • Successful policies led to their recognition as a distinct entrepreneur category • This recognition enables the customization of recommendations to address their specific needs

02 Understanding the entrepreneurial journey

As suggested in the previous section, women entrepreneurs are certainly not a homogenous group. Even within the specific categories of entrepreneurship, it is critical to understand that the needs of an entrepreneur vary widely depending on the specific type of business (service or delivery-based) and on where they are on their entrepreneurial journey.

From our conversations with entrepreneurs, incubators, and researchers, we have identified the following broad phases in a women's entrepreneurial journey. It is important to note that these phases are not necessarily dictated by the number of years dedicated to building and promoting an enterprise, nor are they always chronological.

Entry phase: This is a critical phase in the journey to becoming an entrepreneur as this is the point at which a woman may decide to dedicatedly act upon her aspirations of becoming an entrepreneur. As such, in this period, it would be important for her to gain access to all the necessary information about accessing business loans, registering a company, tax and other regulatory compliances, and marketing, among others.

Sustenance phase: In this phase, a woman entrepreneur is not actively thinking of increasing profit or

growing the business, but rather thinking of sustaining the business just enough to support her basic income needs. Such models of subsistence businesses reportedly make up nearly 90% of the total women-owned businesses in India.[68] They are mostly needs-based operations, with the women entrepreneurs having largely set up the enterprises owing to their economic deprivation as opposed to entrepreneurial aspirations. This also often results in a poor risk-taking appetite for increasing their investments and positioning for scale. Ensuring exposure to women entrepreneur role models and mentors, as well as increasing access to collateral-free and risk-free loans, would be critical to encouraging women entrepreneurs in this phase to think actively about scaling.

Growth phase: This phase in an entrepreneurial journey is categorised by women who are actively looking out for growth and have positioned their business for scaling. In this phase, it would be critical to support them with market linkages, information on regulatory compliances including applying for export licences, etc., technical support for building websites, access to private sector funding, and supportive infrastructure including for child and elderly care among others.

Closing out phase: While there is no reliable data on how many women-led businesses fail in a year in the state, it is logical to assume that not all businesses survive. This phase is often categorised by a recurring period of financial loss, often resulting in heavy debt. At this stage, women entrepreneurs would require access to those who can either help them figure out how they can turn the business around into a profit-making venture, or support from financial experts who can help them assess their assets and help them close their business with limited damage. In this phase, it is also important to provide the entrepreneurs with psychosocial support.

The above four phases are largely indicative of where a woman entrepreneur might be on her entrepreneurial journey, and it is critical to understand these phases from a policymaker's perspective to be able to provide the necessary support at the required phase.

03 Identifying the enablers and barriers to women's entrepreneurship

There are several factors that enable or challenge a woman's motivation and access to resources which influences her experience as an entrepreneur. Undoubtedly, these factors are spread across multiple layers — skill and motivation at an individual level, support and encouragement at a family and community level, access to services and resources at the government level, and also the various laws and policies which support her operations at the regulatory level.

Through secondary research and insights collected during stakeholder conversations, we have arrived at a tentative framework for women entrepreneurship policy in Maharashtra by identifying six major factors of influence. These factors have been largely categorised into two distinct levels - an individual level and an ecosystem level.

Table 15: Enablers for women entrepreneurship

Broad Category	Subcategory	Description	Components
Individual level	Human Capital	Knowledge, skills, and abilities that an individual possesses, including education, experience, and training.	Education, experience, business training, personal skills training, leadership, motivation, self-confidence
	Social Capital	The network of relationships and social connections that provide access to resources, support, and opportunities.	Social networks, access to skilled labour, partners, mentors, role models
	Financial Capital	The monetary resources available to an individual, including access to capital, loans, and financial support.	Access to seed capital, business loans, financial support (including maternity benefits, financial distress funds for risk tolerance development)
Ecosystem level	Socio-cultural norms	Established societal beliefs, attitudes, and practices that influence behaviour and perceptions, particularly regarding gender roles and opportunities.	Gender sensitisation for families, ecosystem players (bank managers, credit officers, etc.)
	Regulatory ease	The level of simplicity and efficiency in the regulatory environment, including business registration, tax compliance, and other administrative processes.	Ease of doing business including registration, tax filing, compliances
	Infrastructure support	Physical and organisational resources and services that facilitate business operations, such as access to markets, technology, and support networks.	Access to markets, technology, innovation, infrastructure outside of homes, childcare, disability and elderly care support networks

Based on the learnings from Table 14 and Table 15, we have devised a framework (Table 16) to map the various challenges and needs among various types of women entrepreneurs at different phases in their entrepreneurial journey. Further, this analysis also helps identify the existing gaps in the policy ecosystem to develop recommendations towards addressing these challenges and needs. The findings were then used to suggest a comprehensive women entrepreneurship policy.

Table 16: Framework for women entrepreneurship in Maharashtra

Types of women enterprises/ factors of influence	Rural solopreneurs	Urban solopreneurs	Rural small business owners	Urban small business owners	Scalers	Agripreneurs	Collectives
Human capital							
Social capital							
Financial capital							
Socio-cultural norms							
Regulatory ease							
Infrastructure support							

04 Needs assessment of the various types of women entrepreneurs

A key prerequisite to drafting a policy for women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra is to understand the needs of different entrepreneurs in the state which can subsequently be addressed through policy interventions. Hence, for the purpose of this study, we have conducted a needs assessment based on our classification of broad types of women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra and their needs and requirements from the factors of influence. The needs have broadly been based on sentiments echoed during stakeholder conversations and determined on the basis of secondary research. A detailed breakdown of the needs of different women entrepreneurs in different categories is highlighted below:

Human Capital

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy pertains to the needs of women entrepreneurs to leverage modern technology for enhancing their venture. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Getting proficient with mobile phone and mobile Internet access and use
- Leveraging digital business operation skills through WhatsApp/Instagram/Facebook
- Interlinking digital wallets and bank accounts and transfers for online payments
- Effectively using social media marketing to maximise sales
- Learning know-how of website development and management among other digital infrastructure development tools (emails/communications)

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for basic digital literacy is primarily felt amongst solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Agripreneurs, and Collectives.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy refers to the need of women entrepreneurs to effectively use their financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing, for the betterment of their business. In our study, assistance with the following components were highlighted:

- Basic banking skills (Business account operation, etc)
- Cash Flow management
- Bookkeeping
- ITR filing
- GST registration
- Bank loan application
- Access to Bookkeeping/auditing services
- Training on capital markets and various sources of funding
- Grant writing/funding material preparation skilling
- Information to avail various govt. Schemes

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for basic financial literacy is something that is voiced by solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, as these businesses grow, the need for understanding capital markets and various sources of funding is a need voiced by Scalers.

Vocational Training and Skill Development

This encompasses the need of women entrepreneurs in terms of skilling gaps that might be detrimental for their work. In our study, assistance with the following components of skilling was highlighted:

- Product Development Training
- Business setup/registration training
- Government schemes application
- Basic management, business operations training
- Resource/people management training

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for vocational training and skill development is something that is voiced by solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) , Agripreneurs, and Collectives which also differs based on the nature of their work. However, startups that are poised for growth have specific vocational training needs as well such as managing human resources for instance which would exclusively impact them.

Entrepreneurial mindset

This factor of influence covers the needs of women to hone their entrepreneurial mindset that enables them to identify and make the most of opportunities and overcome and learn from setbacks that hinder their growth as entrepreneurs. In our study, the following needs were identified:

- Early education on entrepreneurship
- Training to improve risk taking appetite and decision-making

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for honing the entrepreneurial mindset is one which unequivocally echoes across all categories, i.e., Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives.

Social Capital

Incubation

Incubation refers to the needs of a dedicated program that helps entrepreneurs access mentorship, investors and other support to help them get established. In our study, the following need was highlighted:

- Need of dedicated women entrepreneurship incubators that specialise in supporting women-led businesses.

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: While the need for incubation was predominantly voiced by scalers poised for growth, other categories such as Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Agripreneurs, and Collectives have expressed similar needs with respect to guidance and handholding.

Development of social networks

This includes the needs of women entrepreneurs in forming and leveraging networks for their business. In our study, the following needs was highlighted:

- Formation of networks of similar size/scale/industry of entrepreneurs

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for developing social networks is one which unequivocally echoes across all categories, i.e., Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives.

Exposure

This includes the needs of entrepreneurs to be exposed to different experiences that could potentially aid them through the course of their venture. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Connection to established women entrepreneurs in similar sectors/scales who have overcome similar challenges
- Development of relationships with vendors, sellers and in markets.
- Improving linkages to other sector leaders, conventions, trade fairs etc.

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for honing the entrepreneurial mindset is one which unequivocally echoes across all categories, i.e., Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives.

Financial Capital

Setup expenditure

This Includes financial needs of entrepreneurs in starting off with their business. In our study, the following needs was highlighted:

- Access to limited, collateral-free fixed capital for tools and machinery with flexible repayment options
- Registration cost
- Licensing/permit fees
- Access to limited, collateral-free initial capital investment at reasonable interest rates
- Access to initial fixed investment for plant and machinery (<50 lakh)
- Access to Seed funding

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for obtaining access to setup expenditure is one which was predominantly voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the quantum of need and assistance required by them differed vastly across categories.

Land / rental of space

This encompasses the spatial needs of women entrepreneurs through the course of their business. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Workshop unit that is located at/close to the place of dwelling
- Storage units for holding stock
- Store/workshop that is located at commercially successful place
- Large manufacturing unit for workers
- Specialised storage facility for preserving stock
- Office space for employees
- Factory/ Manufacturing units
- Warehouses
- Retail stores
- Multiple large chunks of land that can be utilised for collective manufacturing and enterprise use

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for obtaining land/rental space was one that was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural + Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the quantum of need and assistance required by them differed vastly across categories.

Working capital

This includes challenges and needs pertaining to working expenses borne by women entrepreneurs while running their business. In our study, the following needs were identified:

- Access to cheap and good quality raw materials
- Low maintenance and repair costs
- Affordable logistics
- Subsidised utilities
- Easy payment to workers
- Limited marketing costs

- Access to Insurance
- Research and development expenditure
- Legal fees

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for obtaining land/rental space was one that was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the quantum of need and assistance required by them differed vastly across categories.

Regulatory Ease

Ease of Doing Business measures

This includes all challenges and needs of women entrepreneurs that would facilitate Ease of Doing Business (EODB). In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Assistance with incorporation
- Knowledge to avail govt. schemes/subsidies
- Handholding support
- Easy access to raw material and market linkages
- Understanding of permits
- Focus on psycho-social support and sensitisation
- Basic information for paying taxes
- Enabling inflow of private investment
- Assistance with licences and permits

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for enabling Ease of Doing Business was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the categories in which support was sought differed vastly based on the type of entrepreneur.

Regulatory Support

Encompasses provisions where there is a distinct need for regulatory support as voiced by women entrepreneurs. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Dedicated physical single window system for all queries, permits and licences for women entrepreneurs
- Focus on provision of psycho-social support and gender sensitisation
- Encouraging land ownership for women
- Facilitating peer-learning and support networks dedicated for women entrepreneurs
- Promoting the uptake of relevant insurance (crop insurance, etc.) to mitigate risks arising from adverse events
- Streamlined application process for all queries, permits and licences for women entrepreneurs via SHGs

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for obtaining regulatory support was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the categories in which support was sought differed vastly based on the type of entrepreneur.

Infrastructure Support

Business-specific infrastructure

This covers the infrastructure needs as regurgitated by women entrepreneurs that have a direct role to play in the production of public goods or production processes. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Market linkages
- Affordable logistics
- Online sales channels
- Accessible and secure office space
- Storage units

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for business-specific infrastructure was one that was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the quantum of need and assistance required by them differed vastly across categories.

Systemic Infrastructure

This refers to the infrastructure needs that have an indirect role to play from the business perspective but are still crucial for the welfare of women entrepreneurs. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Access to childcare facilities and creches
- Access to childcare facilities and creches
- Motorable roads
- Access to agricultural land ownership

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for obtaining land/rental space was one that was unequivocally voiced by Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives. However, the quantum of need and assistance required by them differed vastly across categories.

Socio-cultural Norms

This refers to the long-term and structural needs of women entrepreneurs for enabling their acceptance in the society. In our study, the following needs were highlighted:

- Training to improve confidence and risk-taking appetite
- Awareness campaign to sensitise men and boys about women in business

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: The need for bringing about a change in socio-cultural norms was one that was voiced repeatedly, with stakeholders suggesting that it includes, Solopreneurs (Rural+Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban), Scalers Agripreneurs, and Collectives.

The needs assessment exercise helped us comprehensively evaluate the various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. The exercise has a crucial role to play in giving direction to the recommendations and reforms that would be needed to efficiently meet these needs.

05 Analysis of the existing policies against the needs of women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra

The central, state and bank schemes detailed above have further been analysed based on the framework for women entrepreneurship that has been developed in the previous section. This mapping and analysis (given below) helps understand the existing gaps in the current ecosystem.

Table 17: Needs assessment in accordance with WE framework

	Solopreneurs		Small business owners		Scaler	Rural Agripreneur	Collective	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban			Rural	Urban
Human capital								
Digital Literacy								
Financial Literacy								
Vocational training and skilling					NA			
Entrepreneurial mindset training								
Social capital								
Incubation	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA
Development of social networks								
Exposure								
Financial capital								
Setup capital								
Land/rental of space								
Working expenditure								
General								
Regulatory ease								
EODB measures						NA		
Regulatory support						NA		
Infrastructure support								
Business-specific infrastructure								
Systemic Infrastructure								
Socio-cultural norms								
Behavioural changes								
Social benefits								

Legend:
- Schemes/policies exist which cover most needs of women entrepreneurs
- Schemes/policies exist only for certain types of needs
- Schemes/policies exist but with very limited coverage
- Schemes/policies do not exist

Human Capital: The development of Human Capital has been analysed under the subcategorization of access to digital literacy, financial literacy, and vocational training and skilling. While some schemes look at the development of human capital among women entrepreneurs, the scope for most of these is somewhat limited — either in terms of their coverage or the types of skills they provide. Skilling programs for women are not usually entrepreneurship-focused (especially programs targeting SHGs), or they have extremely specific eligibility criteria limited to certain sectors with a small financial outlay (like the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprise Scheme). Similarly, no specific schemes or policies focus on developing entrepreneurial mindsets amongst women to help them overcome societal constraints. Further, schemes like 'Standup India' focus on skill development and financial literacy in the context of the provision of capital (loans) for enterprises at the entry-level which might not appeal to smaller-scale home-based entrepreneurs who are usually self-funded.

Social capital: The development of social capital has been analysed through the lens of access to incubation facilities, development of social networks, and exposure. While incubation facilities have been developed in Mumbai and Pune, these are lacking (in number and quality) in smaller urban, peri-urban, and rural settlements. Further, while there has been a push to develop women's SHGs, specific programs that facilitate developing social networks among women solopreneurs or small business owners are missing. These networks are often needed to gain connections to help navigate the entrepreneurial space. Similarly, in terms of exposure, the only government scheme (which was part of the package scheme of initiatives for industries in Maharashtra) tailored to women entrepreneurs enables them to attend international events, while other forms of exposure (like women's business conclaves, exposure visits, etc) are not covered.

Financial Capital: Access to financial capital has been analysed under the subcategories of access to capital to set up operations, working capital, land/rental capital, and general capital. While there are a large number of schemes targeted at providing women entrepreneurs collateral-free access to loans for setting up their enterprises, there is almost nothing looking at providing working capital to women entrepreneurs. From interviews with ecosystem stakeholders, it has also been observed that even public sector banks which are responsible for the dispersal of government loans tend to prefer lending to entrepreneurs who focus on the purchase of physical assets which can be tied to the loans rather than those involved in creating knowledge products or delivering services.

Regulatory ease: There are very few schemes and policies that look at easing regulatory restrictions and providing technical support to women entrepreneurs to navigate the current regulatory environment. This is an area of shortfall observed within the current policy environment.

Infrastructure support: While some infrastructural support has been provided to women-owned enterprises, such support is very limited to certain sectors. Moreover, it only provides a fraction of the services and support that women entrepreneurs require within the ecosystem. Based on initial stakeholder consultations, access to markets, supply chains and logistics are also hindrances to women entrepreneurs.

Socio-cultural norms: Social norms, which include patriarchal biases and the lack of an entrepreneurial mindset, are some of the biggest hindrances stopping women from embarking on their entrepreneurial journey. However, there are no policy measures currently in place that help women entrepreneurs overcome these.

Based on this, and the stakeholder interviews, a needs assessment for women entrepreneurship has been developed.

06 Targets for Women Entrepreneurship in Maharashtra

Setting measurable targets can be an effective way to measure the impact of the policy and can provide tangible goals to work towards. To this end, based on the existing potential for women entrepreneurship in the state, global standards, and the planned impact of the below-mentioned policy recommendations, the following targets can be adopted for the horizon year of this policy — 2030, which has been selected to coincide with the SDG Agenda goal year. In future years, findings from the women entrepreneurship scorecard, once published at an established interval, can also help redefine these targets.

25% women-owned enterprises

Data from Economic Census states that 10.82% of all enterprises in Maharashtra are women-led as of 2014.[69] In 2005, the number of women owned Private Other Establishments was 5.4%.[70] These numbers are significantly lower than other regions of the world. The number of recognised women-led enterprises in countries like the U.S is 42%[71] as of 2020. Additionally, this number is also higher in places with similar socio-economic conditions like Latin America (50%), Sub-Saharan Africa (29%) and Middle East and West Africa (23%). Given the already established business ecosystem and the projected double-digit growth for non-agricultural sectors in the state, a target of achieving 25% women ownership of business enterprises in the state is both aspirational and achievable.

25% of women-owned enterprises to grow beyond OAEs

One goal behind promoting entrepreneurship is to create jobs through the enterprises being promoted. However, as of 2014, only 12.64% of the women-owned enterprises in the state have hired employees.[72] However, given access to formal credit, targeted training, and capacity building on growing businesses, more women business owners can look to scale up their businesses and generate employment within their communities.

20% of all women-led enterprises in the state should be formally financed

Despite various schemes and programs that exist to enable women entrepreneurs to seek financial assistance from formal sources, its uptake is relatively low. As per the 2014 Economic Census, just 2.93% of women enterprises have received financial assistance from govt sources, 1.65% had loaned from financial institutions, and 0.56% had loaned from SHGs.[73] However, this is likely to have improved given the abundance of existing schemes in this regard. However, due to the lack of consolidated data in this context, the 2014 figures can be taken as a baseline for this policy. Given these factors, this policy can have an ambitious target. It can ensure that at least 1 in 5 women-owned enterprises is formally financed by the horizon year.

07 Recommendations for key provisions in the Women Entrepreneurship Policy

Based on our findings from the literature review, policy mapping, and stakeholder consultations, we arrived at a few recommendations for the women's entrepreneurship policy. The recommendations have been suggested keeping in mind the efforts that are already being taken at the Central and state level, and the gaps that exist within the ecosystem.

Before diving into the recommendations, it is imperative to highlight the existing role of MSInS and the Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC) in the state — which focuses on consolidating women-centric entrepreneurial schemes and initiatives.

Women Entrepreneurship Cell[74]

The WEC was set up by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society in 2021 to encourage women entrepreneurship in the state. For the WEC, a woman entrepreneur is defined as any enterprise, business, team, or startup working on innovative solutions with a woman founder, co-founder(s), director(s), CXO(s), or partner(s). Collaborating with both public and private sector organisations, WEC aims to create a unified platform by cataloguing existing women-centric entrepreneurship schemes, initiatives, and programs. Additionally, it aims to facilitate the exchange of best practices among women entrepreneurs and partner organisations, fostering evidence-based policy-making for women entrepreneurship. It also undertakes various initiatives to support women entrepreneurs in the state, creating a more conducive environment for women to engage in entrepreneurship. These initiatives include acceleration programs, mentorship and incubation support, financial assistance, and compliance support.

Recognizing the crucial role of incubation in laying a strong foundation for early-stage entrepreneurs, MSInS has also set up a dedicated women-focused incubator in partnership with SNDT Women's University, Mumbai. Complying with the Maharashtra State Innovative Start-up Policy 2018, MSInS supports and scales state incubators through a grant-in-aid of INR 5 Cr each over a specified period. The establishment of an incubator at SNDT Women's University is seen as strategically significant in supporting women entrepreneurs in the state. This incubation centre is designed to run dedicated accelerator programs, offer technical/business mentoring, facilitate investor connections, and provide market access.

Maharashtra's MSINS and the work done through the WEC is a unique model for women's entrepreneurship development, however, innovation societies for entrepreneurs in other states are not absent. For example, Mission Startup Karnataka established Karnataka Startup Cell- a unified digital platform for everything a startup in the state of Karnataka requires to succeed.[75] For women specifically, the institution has launched a separate program- "Elevate WomEN"- with the objective of elevating women entrepreneurship with accelerator and incubator programs to make the startup ecosystem in Karnataka more inclusive.[76] Similarly, WE-HUB in Telangana is also a pioneering state-led incubator, dedicated to nurturing and advancing women entrepreneurship, enabling startups to scale up and accelerate with global market access in Telangana and across India. The core focus of WE-HUB revolves around providing comprehensive access to technical, financial, government, and policy support, to foster and scale startups led by women.[77]

In this context, as highlighted previously, the Maharashtra State Innovation Society, a government agency to boost entrepreneurship in the state with a special cell dedicated to enable women

entrepreneurs, is a substantial body, strengthening the ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in the state of Maharashtra. To further bolster this ecosystem, the state can provide more targeted support through the following recommendations:

Establishing Women Entrepreneurship Resource Centres (WERCs)

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Enabled Factors of Influence: Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, and regulatory ease.

Need: The various schemes launched by the central and state governments are regulated by different ministries/departments. In addition to keeping track of schemes, the lack of knowledge amongst women entrepreneurs about the registration process, and the eligibility criteria to avail the benefits further complicates the process for them.[78]

The involvement of multiple departments and nodal points further adds to the complexity. For aspiring women entrepreneurs, the lack of such knowledge may completely deter them or slow their progress toward registering their businesses. There is, hence, a need to centralise the existing information and processes about women's entrepreneurship and provide them with easy access to this knowledge through a common node.

Recommendation: We suggest addressing this gap by establishing Women Entrepreneurship Resource Centers, which would act as nodal multi-functional units at the municipal / panchayat level.

The WERCs could be a critical mechanism for the effective delivery of the Women Entrepreneurship Policy, with at least one centre in every district. In the first instance, they could be set up at the MSInS incubation centres. Where such centres are not available, they could be set up in partnership with NGOs/CSOs which have been working for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship and have gained credibility among the community. In areas where neither of the two is available, it could be set up with the help of government support in partnership with SHGs. Selected incubation centre/NGO staff and SHG members at all WERCs can be trained, with an annual refresher course with information on all schemes and programs available for women entrepreneurs as well as the process to access them.

At these centres, there could be a dedicated helpdesk, preferably managed by a female frontline functionary from 9 AM to 5 PM on all working days that can improve access to information on the various efforts by the state and Central governments to promote women's entrepreneurship.

The Women Entrepreneurship Resource Centres should not merely serve as service delivery points but can also be encouraged to serve as micro-incubation centres that conduct awareness campaigns, training programs and networking events to encourage their utility as an entrepreneurs' hub for all women entrepreneurs. The centres can set up devices for video conferencing to consult experts based in other regions who can assist women entrepreneurs in accessing relevant information. WERCSs would be positioned as a Change Agent - that would promote rural entrepreneurship, build rural capacities and livelihoods, enable community participation and collective action for social change - through a bottom-up model with focus on women.

MSInS can potentially serve as the Designated State Agency and provide all State level support for smooth implementation of the WERCs. Its responsibilities would include:

1. Help identify WERC locations
2. Facilitate e-readiness of WERCs and provide policy, regulatory and other support at State level
3. Coordinate, manage & monitor the receipt & utilisation of financial support received from the State Government
4. Coordinate and facilitate interactions between the State Government Departments, District Administration for enabling delivery of Government services through CSCs, in an integrated manner
5. Facilitate training and capacity building
6. Facilitate awareness campaigns

Through WERCs, the state can seek to bring about interventions in the following domains:

a) Training of Women Entrepreneurs:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Human Capital and socio-cultural norms

Lack of necessary skills is a major hurdle for most early-stage entrepreneurs and is a factor in restricting women from taking up entrepreneurship. The WERCs can serve as micro-incubation centres that work in partnership with local skilling centres such as ITIs, RSETIs, and DICs to provide skill training to bridge key knowledge and skill gaps among existing, new, and aspirational women entrepreneurs. The curriculum for such training can be decided at the state level and can be tailored to cater to women in various stages of the entrepreneurial journey (by having beginner, intermediate, and advanced modules). This training can also be implemented through existing training programs conducted by the government like PMKVY or other state skilling schemes. The training modules should primarily focus on the following aspects:

1. Skill training to equip women with market-driven skills and jobs for sunrise sectors: These modules could focus on product development, marketing, business processes, resource management, etc. For small business owners and scalars, people management, organisation setups, and development strategy modules can also be offered. Apart from this, WERCs can also facilitate an apprenticeship program for women to gain hands-on experience of building a business, wherever tax incentives are being offered to sunrise sectors. The Maharashtra State Skills University (MSSU) could serve as the nodal agency for developing the women-training and apprenticeship model.

   The skilling component should also focus on women who are looking to restart their careers and enter the workforce. In this regard, the state could seek to expand its WINGS - "Women Inspired to Navigate Growth and Success" program where the Skilling University could enter into a partnership with leading industry players in the sunrise sector to upskill women with the necessary technical skills, management, and leadership skills to restart their careers with confidence.
2. Digital technology training focused on the basic and advanced use of digital technologies for marketing, business expansion, operations management, branding, digital payments, etc. These modules can be developed in partnership with social media platforms that can further assist with providing the training.

3. Financial literacy training focused on educating women entrepreneurs on banking, cash flow management, bookkeeping, GST registration, ITR filing, govt/bank loan application, etc. The WERCs could be set up to help women entrepreneurs (particularly small business owners and scalers) with writing impactful proposals to seek funding and they could provide women assistance with expanding their business for exports.
4. Personality development and entrepreneurial mindset training that focuses on developing confidence and risk-taking ability is crucial for the success of any enterprise among women entrepreneurs. These modules will be tailored for the different types of women entrepreneurs based on their desire to scale and grow.

In addition to the training modules, the WERCs can provide facilities for teleconsultation services with experts to address specific concerns of the women entrepreneurs.a

b) Mentoring and networking:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, Sociocultural norms, regulatory ease and infrastructural support.

Developing a network of women entrepreneurs can be important as they provide a supportive community for women in business. Being part of a network can give women entrepreneurs access to resources, advice, and mentorship from other successful women in the industry. They can also provide opportunities for networking and collaboration, which can be crucial for business growth and success. Additionally, women entrepreneur networks can help to promote diversity and representation in the business world and provide a platform for women to share their experiences and support each other. These networks can also be leveraged, in addition to MSInS's existing mentorship programs, to develop a network of women entrepreneurs who can mentor aspirational entrepreneurs.

In this regard, the government of Maharashtra could establish a Mentorship Program for women entrepreneurs, implemented through an MOU with a dedicated agency. This structured program would provide guidance and support to women at various stages of their entrepreneurial journey, connecting them with experienced mentors across different verticals. By prioritising mentor selection, incorporating networking opportunities, and evaluating program effectiveness, this initiative could empower women, foster business growth, and contribute to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in Maharashtra. Adequate funding, resource allocation, and strategic promotion will be crucial for the program's success.

A mentor can help a woman entrepreneur navigate the unique challenges and obstacles that she may face in the business world. Mentors can offer advice on how to grow a business, provide feedback on business decisions, and connect her with valuable resources and networks. They can also provide emotional support and encouragement as an entrepreneur navigates the ups and downs of starting and running a business. Furthermore, having a mentor can also help to increase the chances of success for the mentee, and provide a role model for the mentee to look up to.

The WERCs can enable the formation of such networks among the women entrepreneurs in the district and provide a physical space where these women can meet and network.

c. Assistance for securing loans and enrolling in government schemes:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Financial Capital and Regulatory ease

Both the central and state governments currently have several schemes offering loans and other forms of financial assistance to entrepreneurs. Yet, complicated application processes, high compliance requirements and lack of knowledge of the existing schemes and benefits significantly reduce the uptake of these schemes among women entrepreneurs. To assist with this, the WERCs could have a helpdesk to help women entrepreneurs apply for these various schemes. The assistance would include support with paperwork, compliance regulations and documentation. For small businesses and scalers, this support can extend to the preparation of business plans, growth projects and pitch decks which can be used to seek external sources of funding.

Additionally, the WERCs can work with financial institutions to develop specific low-interest financial products which are more accessible to its members. This could include:

- Gold loans where the WERCs (or the state) assumes part of the risk (similar to other loan schemes like MUDRA) thereby reducing the rates of interest that its members will be paying to avail of it.
- Microcredit products which accept alternative forms of business documentation (like UPI transaction history) instead of traditional audited accounts which smaller entrepreneurs might not have. These could be modelled around how Paytm loans operate, with the WERC providing the surety for the loan thereby helping reduce interest rates and making these more accessible.

d. Addressing Social Norms:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Sociocultural norms

The WERCs, in partnership with local NGOs or SHGs, can conduct public campaigns which focus on the idea of women in business, targeting the common socio-cultural bias owing to which women often hesitate to start their businesses. This could be conducted through regional television or radio programming, newspaper advertisements or other forms of public service announcements. In more rural communities, this could also take the form of direct community engagement through workshops and meetings to highlight the benefits of women entrepreneurship to the overall welfare of the family. Some proven strategies that could be implemented include celebrating and engaging with community role models, conducting focused training programs for aspiring entrepreneurs from vulnerable communities (SC,ST, widowed, migrants, etc.)

In collaboration with the WERCs, the Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship & Innovation Department (SEEID) could also conduct annual awards to recognise women entrepreneurs at the district and national levels. This would give additional motivation to the entrepreneurs and can be an excellent method to showcase success stories.

At a state level, MSInS could also consider developing a mascot which can be used in all the campaign activities across the state. It could also consider conducting periodic gender sensitivity training with government officials in charge of entrepreneurship schemes and with bank officials to highlight the problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

e. Supporting women entrepreneurs' engagement in trade fairs and conferences:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Social Capital and Financial Capital,

Trade fairs and conferences can be an effective way for women entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services to many potential customers and partners. This can help them expand their customer base and increase their sales. Additionally, participating in trade fairs and conferences can help increase their access to markets, clients, and suppliers, and can provide them with valuable networking opportunities. It can also provide women entrepreneurs with valuable information about industry trends, new technologies, and best practices, which can help them improve the quality and competitiveness of their products or services.

Networking opportunities that these trade fairs and conferences provide also can be very beneficial for women entrepreneurs, allowing them to connect with other business owners, industry experts, and potential partners, which are valuable relationships while growing a business. The WERCs can potentially organise trade fairs to showcase the products of the women in their network. These can be within the state, in partnership with other state governments, or national-level trade fairs. The WERCs can also develop programs to provide financial and logistical support to women entrepreneurs to attend other trade fairs.

MSInS can also look to partner with ecommerce platforms to develop virtual trade fairs so that local small businesses can showcase their products to a national market. With an increasing emphasis on One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, the state government could partner with e-commerce platforms to have a separate storefront to showcase Maharashtra's ODOP products developed by women to help them expand their market reach.

Formation of a Cross-department Committee on Women's Entrepreneurship:

Need: The different factors of influence that have been listed above fall within the purview of different departments of the Government of Maharashtra. Each of these departments has programs or schemes to assist with these different metrics. However, without central coordination, these efforts often overlap. Further, the individual compliance requirements of each of these programs make access to them harder for women entrepreneurs.

Recommendation: It is, therefore, recommended that a Cross-Departmental Committee (CDC) be formed that can play a pivotal role in ensuring convergence between the various government

schemes. The CDC can also take the lead in proposing various cross-departmental programs and schemes that can impact one or more of the factors of influence.

The CDC can be formed with officials, belonging to the level of Joint Secretary or higher, from relevant departments. This would include (but is not limited to) MSInS, MAVIM, MIDC, MSSDS, DVET, MAITRI, and Finance departments. The CDC can be headed by the Secretary, Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Department as chair and should convene at least once every quarter. Officials from other departments which might be critical to the implementation of certain projects and schemes like Urban Development, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Transport, Energy, Cooperative, Marketing and Textiles, School Education and Higher and Technical Education can be invited to the quarterly CDC meetings on an as-needed basis.

Given the CDC's place within the women's entrepreneurship ecosystem, it can also become the nodal body to implement the following activities:

a. Improve the system of data collection:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, Socio-cultural norms, regulatory ease and infrastructural support.

Quantitative and qualitative data on women's entrepreneurship will be useful in determining the state of entrepreneurship and the effectiveness of the various government programs being implemented. There is currently no specific dataset highlighting the state of women's entrepreneurship with the latest data on this coming from the NSS (2016) and the Economic Census (2014-15). Further, any existing data on this and the various government schemes and interventions are scattered across departments and not aggregated in a useful manner.

Collecting and analysing granular data on intersecting identities within the category of women entrepreneurs will help enable targeted policy interventions. This entails understanding the unique needs and challenges faced by diverse groups, such as migrant women in urban slums. This nuanced approach will facilitate the formulation of policies that address specific requirements within the broader spectrum of 'women entrepreneurs', ensuring a more inclusive and effective support framework.

Given its position in the ecosystem, the CDC can take the lead on collecting this data and creating a database of women entrepreneurship. One way to operationalise this is by utilising LEAD's current efforts on the women entrepreneurship scorecard to see the geographical distribution of services for women entrepreneurs and consider emerging recommendations from their analysis. This will enable the CDC to take a cluster-based approach and provide targeted interventions in different geographies in the state to address specific gaps. Ensuring that departmental data is mapped to this scorecard at regular, agreed-upon intervals of 2-3 years can also enable effective collaboration across departments.

This can be a useful tool to gauge the growth of entrepreneurship in the state as well as the effectiveness of the different government programs allowing the CDC to take evidence-based decisions on future initiatives. Additionally, the CDC can also leverage the position of the WERCs

to help collect real-time data on the implementation challenges of the various schemes which would allow the concerned department to make required changes at the state level. The WERCs can also help develop a real-time database of women entrepreneurship in the state which, along with the data gathered from the various departments, can be integrated into the WEP portal of NITI Aayog so that it can be open and accessible to all.

b. Enable uptake of state schemes

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Financial Capital and Regulatory ease.

Government schemes targeting women's entrepreneurship are currently overseen by a range of departments and ministries — each having its own set of compliance requirements, eligibility, and application processes. There are also additional sector-focused schemes by different departments that could be beneficial to women entrepreneurs. While the existing schemes provide significant support, particularly financial, to women entrepreneurs, due to the difficulties associated with the application, only a small number of women entrepreneurs take these up.

To address the challenges associated with this, the CDC can work to develop convergence between these various schemes to help with its uptake among women entrepreneurs. This process could begin with a coalition of all the schemes impacting women entrepreneurs across all departments in the state (not just those part of the CDC). This could be done through a short checklist sent to the relevant department to determine the impact of the various schemes on women entrepreneurs. This can further be used to collect information on the schemes including eligibility, application processes, benefits available, methods of scheme delivery, and uptake.

The CDC can utilise the information collected to understand the extent of overlap in benefits and compliance in these schemes. The CDC could then develop mechanisms to reduce the compliance requirements of women entrepreneurs with the approval of all the relevant departments; either by standardising the compliance and application mechanism of the various schemes or by developing a central unified application mechanism used to approve women entrepreneurs for all the schemes operated by the state government. Such a system would allow women entrepreneurs to get approvals for all relevant schemes (from over 400 in the state) through one application only. This would likely encourage more women entrepreneurs to apply for and take up the benefits offered to them by the state.

The information collected in the initial stages can also feed into the WEP portal of NITI Aayog and can be shared with the WERCs where the women entrepreneurs can directly benefit from it (refer to point 1. (e)).

c. Developing Gender responsive infrastructure

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Socio-cultural norms and Infrastructural support.

Physical infrastructure that is not gender-responsive can create barriers for women business owners, making it difficult for them to access markets, clients, and suppliers, and to transport goods and materials. This can limit their ability to start and grow their businesses and can make it difficult for them to compete with other businesses. For example, well-lit streets and public spaces, separate toilets for men and women, and the availability of safe and affordable transportation options can help to increase the sense of security and reduce vulnerability for women. Gender-responsive physical infrastructure can help to create an enabling environment for women business owners, promoting their economic empowerment and increasing their chances of success.

The CDC could work with the respective departments in the state government (like Urban/Rural Development, Industrial Development etc) to develop standards and guidelines for the development of gender-responsive infrastructure in the state. This would involve ensuring:

- Regular gender audits of community marketplaces
- Designated sanitation facilities for women in industrial areas and public markets
- Adequate lighting and other safety measures in these spaces.
- Availability of mobility and connectivity options for women to access these facilities, particularly industrial parks which are located in the urban peripheries.

Apart from this, the government can propose converting all Anganwadi centres into Anganwadi-cum-creches, providing a dual benefit of early childhood education and day-care facilities. This expansion can potentially increase the availability of affordable and quality childcare options for working mothers.

The government may also consider offering rebates to private creches and day-care centres, enabling them to lower day-care fees. This financial support will alleviate the financial burden on women while encouraging the growth and sustainability of private childcare providers. These measures will help contribute to the overall development and well-being of children in Maharashtra and drive more women into the workforce.

In order to address the challenge of affordable office rental space for entrepreneurs in both urban and rural areas, the government of Maharashtra should consider implementing a scheme inspired by the rental housing policy. This scheme would make government infrastructure available for office and business rental spaces at strategic locations specifically for women entrepreneurs. By providing affordable rental options, this initiative would support women in establishing and expanding their businesses. Furthermore, the scheme could be extended to cover warehouses and storage facilities, ensuring women entrepreneurs have access to essential resources for their operations. By promoting accessibility and affordability, this policy would foster a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs to thrive and contribute to the economic growth of Maharashtra.

d. Development of an entrepreneurship curriculum

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Human Capital and Socio-cultural norms

Learning about entrepreneurship in a formal education setting, like schools or colleges, can help

women develop a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges of starting and growing a business. This can help to increase their confidence and motivation to start their own businesses. Additionally, learning about entrepreneurship in school or college can help to expose women to role models, networks and resources that can be valuable in starting and running a business. Targeting women at a young age can be critical to inculcate an entrepreneurial spirit within them and foster the belief that entrepreneurship can be a viable career for them.

To aid with this, the CDC can work to ensure that there are dedicated entrepreneurship help desks for women entrepreneurs at ITIs/ Colleges.

To facilitate education in entrepreneurship the CDC, in partnership with relevant departments like School Education, and Higher and Technical Education, can develop an entrepreneurship curriculum for school and college school-going women. The school curriculum can be focused on showcasing entrepreneurship as a viable career option for women while the higher education curriculum can focus on how women can start a business, the processes, available resources, and government support and how to avail these. The state could potentially build its program in partnership with organisations like Udyam Learning Foundation which is conducting similar initiatives in public and private schools.

In order to foster an inclusive and empowering entrepreneurship ecosystem, the government of Maharashtra integrated gender intentionality into the entrepreneurship curriculum, to enhance the uptake of entrepreneurship amongst women in non-conventional domains. This can be achieved by incorporating case studies and success stories of women entrepreneurs as role models in the curriculum. By actively highlighting and showcasing the achievements and experiences of women entrepreneurs, aspiring women can be motivated and inspired to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

To give the students a practical, hands-on experience, a state level competition for students to start an enterprise can be organised by MSInS across schools/ vocational training institutes. Students can be asked to envision an enterprise model which can be showcased at a convention. Winning projects could receive seed-fund to implement their project from the state government.

e. Developing a Business in a Box model:

Types of Women entrepreneurs impacted: Solopreneurs (Rural + Urban), Small Business owners (Rural +Urban) Scalers, Agripreneurs, and Collectives

Factors of Influence benefited: Financial Capital and Regulatory ease

Need: Aspirational women entrepreneurs face a myriad of challenges to get their businesses underway. These include issues with lack of time to start an enterprise, the regulatory hurdles that are associated with starting and running a business, the availability of information to perform due diligence, and the difficulties associated with securing viable sources of credit for entrepreneurial ventures.

Recommendation: When women do start their enterprises, they are largely limited to a few sectors - as seen in section A (3). MSInS can therefore help these entrepreneurs by developing a business-in-a-box model that can have standard business plans, financial projections, marketing strategies and other support materials for women entrepreneurs to open certain types of

businesses. The model will significantly increase the regulatory ease for women setting up businesses and improve their chances of getting formal sources of credit.

A pre-written business plan will not only increase the ease of setting up a business but also significantly save the time it would take to develop such a comprehensive plan. The business-in-a-box model will also be significantly cheaper for entrepreneurs as they get all the information from a single source without having to work with multiple professionals. These plans can also be developed to allow for an extent of customisation so that the entrepreneurs can tailor it to suit their individual needs.

There is also significant time-saving from a regulatory perspective as it becomes easier to register enterprises that are taking up the predefined business-in-a-box model. It also helps easily register the women entrepreneurs for the various schemes that they are eligible for with minimal effort on the part of both the entrepreneur and government body. Further, it helps women entrepreneurs remain compliant with various business and taxation regulations without having to rely on a professional consultant which can be expensive.

Providing women entrepreneurs with professionally developed business plans, financial projects, and market research, businesses-in-a-box will make it significantly easier to get financial assistance from formal sources. This includes both financial assistance from the government through various schemes as well as through banks that are more likely to accept loan applications from such entrepreneurs. MSInS can further work with PSU banks to develop a direct approval mechanism (potentially under the mudra scheme) for collateral-free loan approval for women entrepreneurs utilising the pre-developed business model.

Implementation of Business in a Box: The business model will have to be developed centrally by MSInS using its own experts and partners and the data gathered from the CDC to determine which sectors to focus on. These can then be taken to the WERCs through which aspirational women entrepreneurs can be identified, trained and equipped with the business models to begin establishing their own enterprises. The WERCs can have an extent of flexibility and support to customise these models to suit the needs of each of the districts where these are implemented.

Way Forward

To build on our understanding of the ecosystem and recommendations, it is crucial to further engage with various actors involved in the women entrepreneurship ecosystem at various levels in Maharashtra. By convening these stakeholders, we aim to work towards gauging their perspectives and insights on translating the recommendations into a comprehensive policy document. This collaborative approach will ensure that the policy reflects the ground realities, addresses the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, and garners the necessary support for effective implementation.

After deliberations on the report and draft policy document, there is also merit in taking a goal-oriented approach and drafting clear and actionable outcomes along with a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for assessing the progress being made.

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Additionally, the authors are grateful to stakeholders who provided their time and inputs, captured in the table below:

Table 18: Stakeholders consulted

Ecosystem Enablers	Entrepreneurs	Incubators	Mentors	Government Agencies
Aafreen Siddiqui, Project Manager, Data for Policy, UNDP	**Sayalee Marathe,** Founder, Aadyaa.com	**Gaurang Shetty,** Chief Innovation Catalyst, RIIDL Incubator	**Dr Aparna Rao,** Startup Mentor, IIT Bombay	Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM)
Arshia Gupta, Consultant, World Bank	**Daya Patki**, Founder, Bamboo Tantra	**Laxmi Goritiyal,** CEO, WISE SNDT Incubator	**Dr. Rama Venkat,** Startup Mentor, SPP University	Maharashtra Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (MCED)
Sruthi Niveditha Kande, Strategy Lead, WE Hub	**Manjari Sharma,** Founder, Farm Didi	**Nikhil Kulkarni,** MAGIC Incubator, Auragabad	**Tejas Shyam,** Startup Coach and Founder, TEJ	Maharashtra Small Scale Industries Development Corporation (MSSIDC)
Amrita Sabnavis, CSO, Mann Deshi Foundation	**Rajashri Sai**, Founder, ImpacTree	**Jinal Shah**, Manager, JITO Incubation and Innovation Manager	**Dr. Sucheta Agarwal**, Professor, GLA University	Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM)
Sanjana Mohanty, Programme Manager, SEWA Bharat	**Megha Phansalkar,** Founder, TISSER	**Sagar Patil,** Manager, KCIIL		
Dr. Lalitagauri Kulkarni, Director, Deasra CEED	**Swagatika Priyambada**, Co-founder, Withstand Fitness			
Neetika Shree, Research Associate, Catalyst Atal Incubation Center	**Vrunda Nimje,** Founder, Accelo			

Annexures

Annexure 1: Constraints identified in the study

Through the course of the exercise, a few limitations have also been identified:

1. While there were opportunities to speak to a few government officials to discuss the emerging recommendations, there has been limited access to recent government data to triangulate the findings from the literature review and key informant interviews.
2. There has been a limited availability of updated gender-disaggregated data on women's entrepreneurship.

Annexure 2: Annexure Tables

Note: All tables are from the 6th Economic Census

Annex. table.1: District-wise percentage of women-owned establishments

District	Total number of women-owned Enterprises	Percentage share of all women-owned establishments in Maharashtra	Percentage share of all establishments in the district
Kolhapur	100,128	15.07%	17.54%
Satara	54,403	8.19%	14.18%
Pune	52,973	7.97%	10.30%
Solapur	50,629	7.62%	13.56%
Mumbai Suburban	48,428	7.29%	10.41%
Thane	42,771	6.44%	9.75%
Nagpur	33,373	5.02%	12.90%
Sangli	29,001	4.37%	10.43%
Mumbai	20,474	3.08%	7.84%
Nashik	20,444	3.08%	9.54%
Ahmednagar	15,768	2.37%	6.40%
Chandrapur	15,076	2.27%	14.64%
Jalgaon	14,057	2.12%	8.86%

Aurangabad	13,899	2.09%	9.70%
Amravati	13,159	1.98%	9.61%
Total - Top 15 districts	**5,24,583**	**78.97**	**11.04%**
Raigarh	10,678	1.61%	10.50%
Akola	10,601	1.60%	8.56%
Gondiya	10,289	1.55%	14.66%
Bid	10,000	1.51%	7.18%
Ratnagiri	9,516	1.43%	13.16%
Osmanabad	9,308	1.40%	7.48%
Bhandara	9,001	1.35%	10.40%
Latur	8,770	1.32%	8.52%
Wardha	7,894	1.19%	11.68%
Buldhana	7,855	1.18%	8.27%
Nanded	6,191	0.93%	6.59%
Jalna	5,876	0.88%	6.02%
Dhule	5,397	0.81%	7.43%
Sindhudurg	4,975	0.75%	9.71%
Yavatmal	4,952	0.75%	7.26%
Parbhani	4,670	0.70%	7.81%
Gadchiroli	4,226	0.64%	8.79%
Nandurbar	3,892	0.59%	8.32%
Hingoli	3,208	0.48%	8.95%
Washim	2,418	0.36%	7.44%
Other districts	**139,719**	**21.03%**	**8.93%**
Total for Maharashtra	**6,64,300**	**100.00%**	**10.82%**

Annex. table.2: District-wise distribution of establishments by status of workers hired

District	Without Hired Workers		With At least One Hired Worker	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Kolhapur	96,017	95.89%	4111	4.11%
Satara	51,932	95.46%	2,471	4.54%
Pune	41,224	77.82%	11,749	22.18%
Solapur	49,112	97.00%	1,517	3.00%
Mumbai Suburban	36,167	74.68%	12,261	25.32%
Thane	30,586	71.51%	12185	28.49%
Nagpur	28,609	85.72%	4,764	14.28%
Sangli	27,132	93.56%	1,869	6.44%
Mumbai	14,268	69.69%	6,206	30.31%
Nashik	17,404	85.13%	3,040	14.87%
Ahmednagar	13,752	87.21%	2,016	12.79%
Chandrapur	13,866	91.97%	1,210	8.03%
Jalgaon	12,830	91.27%	1,227	8.73%
Aurangabad	11754	84.57%	2,145	15.43%
Amravati	11851	90.06%	1,308	9.94%
Raigarh	8,431	78.96%	2,247	21.04%
Akola	9,195	86.74%	1,406	13.26%
Gondiya	9,620	93.50%	669	6.50%
Bid	9,236	92.36%	764	7.64%
Ratnagiri	7,931	83.34%	1,585	16.66%
Osmanabad	8,354	89.75%	954	10.25%
Bhandara	8,280	91.99%	721	8.01%
Latur	8,038	91.65%	732	8.35%
Wardha	7,135	90.39%	759	9.61%
Buldhana	7,225	91.98%	630	8.02%
Nanded	5,243	84.69%	948	15.31%

Jalna	5,307	90.32%	569	9.68%
Dhule	4,808	89.09%	589	10.91%
Sindhudurg	4,339	87.22%	636	12.78%
Yavatmal	4,354	87.92%	598	12.08%
Parbhani	4,233	90.64%	437	9.36%
Gadchiroli	3,790	89.68%	436	10.32%
Nandurbar	3,520	90.44%	372	9.56%
Hingoli	2,672	83.29%	536	16.71%
Washim	2,122	87.76%	296	12.24%
Total	**580,337**	**87.36%**	**83,963**	**12.64%**

Anex.table.3: District-wise characteristics of women-owned enterprises in terms of total employment

District	Average size of workforce for non-OAEs	Total employment in women-owned establishments (A)	% of (A) employed in non-OAEs
Kolhapur	3.64	139,692	10.71%
Satara	4.55	76,079	14.79%
Pune	4.84	108,827	52.29%
Solapur	3.79	63,660	9.02%
Mumbai Suburban	6.63	123,490	65.84%
Thane	4.58	93,018	59.97%
Nagpur	3.94	50,730	36.95%
Sangli	6.08	49,421	22.99%
Mumbai	4.41	44,460	61.57%
Nashik	4.51	33,542	40.88%
Ahmednagar	3.94	26,730	29.72%
Chandrapur	4.35	20,181	26.09%
Jalgaon	4.19	19,387	26.49%
Aurangabad	5.34	24,962	45.89%

Amravati	3.82	18,205	27.46%
Raigarh	4.71	20,348	51.98%
Akola	3.49	15,871	30.94%
Gondiya	3.59	13,619	17.66%
Bid	4.12	13,609	23.10%
Ratnagiri	3.58	14,634	38.79%
Osmanabad	3.68	14,470	24.28%
Bhandara	3.76	12,971	20.89%
Latur	3.52	12,168	21.19%
Wardha	3.42	10,591	24.50%
Buldhana	5.11	11,065	29.07%
Nanded	3.94	9,544	39.17%
Jalna	3.65	8,102	25.62%
Dhule	4.30	8,039	31.50%
Sindhudurg	3.71	7,368	32.04%
Yavatmal	3.82	7,138	31.97%
Parbhani	3.78	6,285	26.27%
Gadchiroli	3.90	5,877	28.96%
Nandurbar	3.49	5,477	23.74%
Hingoli	3.27	4,769	36.78%
Washim	3.99	3,547	33.27%
Maharashtra	**4.69**	**1,09,7876**	**35.87%**

Annex.table.4: District-wise share of enterprises by nature of operation

District	Type of Business						
	Perennial		Seasonal		Casual		Total
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*
Kolhapur	92,251	92.13%	6,436	6.43%	1,441	1.44%	100,128
Satara	50,762	93.31%	3,360	6.18%	281	0.52%	54,403
Pune	50,593	95.51%	2,058	3.88%	322	0.61%	52,973
Solapur	49,341	97.46%	1,145	2.26%	143	0.28%	50,629
Mumbai Suburban	45,340	93.62%	2,209	4.56%	879	1.82%	48,428
Thane	38,446	89.89%	3,612	8.44%	713	1.67%	42,771
Nagpur	31,883	95.54%	1,296	3.88%	194	0.58%	33,373
Sangli	25,786	88.91%	3,099	10.69%	116	0.40%	29,001
Mumbai	19,489	95.19%	765	3.74%	220	1.07%	20,474
Nashik	19,552	95.64%	814	3.98%	78	0.38%	20,444
Ahmednagar	14,942	94.76%	723	4.59%	103	0.65%	15,768
Chandrapur	11,933	79.15%	3,052	20.24%	91	0.60%	15,076
Jalgaon	12,910	91.84%	1,025	7.29%	122	0.87%	14,057
Aurangabad	12,734	91.62%	1,040	7.48%	125	0.90%	13,899
Amravati	12,215	92.83%	760	5.78%	184	1.40%	13,159
Raigarh	9,871	92.44%	727	6.81%	80	0.75%	10,678
Akola	8,856	83.54%	1,390	13.11%	355	3.35%	10,601
Gondiya	8,891	86.41%	1,324	12.87%	74	0.72%	10,289
Bid	8,352	83.52%	1,592	15.92%	56	0.56%	10,000
Ratnagiri	7,643	80.32%	1,593	16.74%	280	2.94%	9,516
Osmanabad	8,399	90.23%	857	9.21%	52	0.56%	9,308
Bhandara	7,882	87.57%	1,017	11.30%	102	1.13%	9,001
Latur	8,366	95.39%	367	4.18%	37	0.42%	8,770
Wardha	7,543	95.55%	325	4.12%	26	0.33%	7,894
Buldhana	7,41	94.35%	404	5.14%	40	0.51%	7,855

Nanded	5,822	94.04%	290	4.68%	79	1.28%	6,191
Jalna	5,258	89.48%	562	9.56%	56	0.95%	5,876
Dhule	5,125	94.96%	249	4.61%	23	0.43%	5,397
Sindhudurg	4,163	83.68%	645	12.96%	167	3.36%	4,975
Yavatmal	4,704	94.99%	213	4.30%	35	0.71%	4,952
Parbhani	4,444	95.16%	205	4.39%	21	0.45%	4,670
Gadchiroli	3,795	89.80%	391	9.25%	40	0.95%	4,226
Nandurbar	3,134	80.52%	689	17.70%	69	1.77%	3,892
Hingoli	2,948	91.90%	238	7.42%	22	0.69%	3,208
Washim	2,254	93.22%	144	5.96%	20	0.83%	2,418
Total	**613,038**	**92.28%**	**44,616**	**6.72%**	**6,646**	**1.00%**	**664,300**

Annex.table.4: District-wise share of enterprises by nature of operation

District	Financial Assistance from Govt. sources	Borrowing from financial institutions	Borrowing from Non-institutions / Money Lenders	Loan from Self Help Group	Donations / Transfers from other agencies
	Percentage	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*	*Percentage*
Kolhapur	1.58%	2.90%	0.70%	0.70%	4.77%
Satara	1.57%	1.96%	0.22%	0.22%	5.43%
Pune	2.14%	2.19%	0.38%	0.38%	9.96%
Solapur	0.88%	0.94%	0.20%	0.20%	4.44%
Mumbai Suburban	1.60%	1.10%	0.36%	0.36%	8.95%
Thane	2.26%	1.22%	0.54%	0.54%	13.08%
Nagpur	2.45%	0.71%	0.28%	0.28%	7.00%
Sangli	2.77%	1.88%	0.54%	0.54%	18.88%
Mumbai	1.35%	0.61%	0.42%	0.42%	8.64%
Nashik	2.58%	1.83%	0.30%	0.30%	10.06%
Ahmednagar	3.75%	2.16%	0.58%	0.58%	17.22%
Chandrapur	16.12%	1.38%	0.32%	0.32%	17.76%
Jalgaon	3.09%	1.26%	0.78%	0.78%	19.63%

Aurangabad	6.07%	1.56%	0.30%	0.30%	13.86%
Amravati	2.88%	0.55%	0.33%	0.33%	27.66%
Raigarh	4.35%	1.93%	0.47%	0.47%	20.21%
Akola	4.32%	1.02%	0.27%	0.27%	26.23%
Gondiya	4.80%	0.52%	0.51%	0.51%	10.35%
Bid	9.72%	1.83%	1.64%	1.64%	15.53%
Ratnagiri	4.89%	2.70%	0.40%	0.40%	14.61%
Osmanabad	4.33%	0.78%	0.18%	0.18%	6.01%
Bhandara	5.01%	1.70%	1.22%	1.22%	14.27%
Latur	2.59%	1.29%	0.62%	0.62%	7.43%
Wardha	4.35%	1.74%	0.11%	0.11%	38.23%
Buldhana	3.86%	1.44%	0.25%	0.25%	31.48%
Nanded	4.78%	1.21%	0.65%	0.47%	22.08%
Jalna	3.69%	0.78%	0.31%	0.19%	17.87%
Dhule	3.87%	1.13%	0.37%	0.78%	7.34%
Sindhudurg	2.95%	3.80%	0.26%	0.44%	13.57%
Yavatmal	5.41%	1.29%	0.30%	0.50%	18.68%
Parbhani	4.03%	0.69%	0.13%	0.21%	27.84%
Gadchiroli	4.99%	0.66%	1.21%	0.19%	18.88%
Nandurbar	5.16%	0.69%	0.46%	0.23%	11.90%
Hingoli	5.61%	1.03%	0.31%	0.09%	25.25%
Washim	3.35%	1.45%	0.21%	0.21%	25.48%
Total	**2.93%**	**1.65%**	**0.45%**	**0.56%**	**11.42%**

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Introduction

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Section A: Introduction to the Women Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Maharashtra

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[46] While this is not a dedicated scheme and has thus not been analysed as such in this chapter, it has been included here to highlight the available avenues for women to receive support. Additionally, its inclusion also aids in formulating an understanding of the policy ecosystem and outlining best practices for the state.

[47] While this is not a dedicated scheme and has thus not been analysed as such in this chapter, it has been included here to highlight the available avenues for women to receive support. Additionally, its inclusion also aids in formulating an understanding of the policy ecosystem and outlining best practices for the state.

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Section B: Developing a Women Entrepreneurship Policy for Maharashtra

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