

Government Policies and Women Entrepreneurship in Maharashtra

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women's entrepreneurship is a crucial driver for inclusive economic growth and social development worldwide, and its importance is particularly pronounced in a rapidly developing economy like India. Empowering women through entrepreneurship not only contributes to their personal financial independence but also plays a significant role in job creation, boosting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and fostering a more equitable society.

II. CONTEXT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA

In India, while the overall entrepreneurial landscape is expanding, the participation of women still faces various socio-economic, cultural, and institutional hurdles. Recognizing this, both the central and state governments have initiated several policies, schemes, and programs aimed at promoting and sustaining women-led enterprises.

Maharashtra, as one of India's most industrialized and economically advanced states, has been at the forefront of this effort. The state government, acknowledging the potential of its women workforce, has introduced specific policies, such as the Industrial Policy for Women Entrepreneurs (introduced around 2017), which offers various incentives like financial assistance (subsidies on capital investment and interest), exemptions on duties, and reservations in industrial development areas. These policies are designed to dismantle systemic barriers and provide a supportive ecosystem for women to start and scale their businesses.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STUDY OBJECTIVE

Despite the existence of these dedicated government policies in Maharashtra, the actual impact and effectiveness on the ground require thorough investigation. Questions remain regarding the awareness, accessibility, utilization, and ultimate success rate of these schemes among the target beneficiaries. Therefore, this study aims to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the existing government policies on women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra State. The primary objectives include:

- To identify and categorize the key government policies and schemes specifically targeted at women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra.
- To evaluate the extent of awareness and utilization of these policies by women entrepreneurs across different sectors and regions within the state.
- To analyze the impact of these policies on the growth, sustainability, and overall performance of women-led enterprises.
- To identify the major challenges and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing and benefiting from the government support mechanisms.
- To offer recommendations for policy refinement and improved implementation strategies to maximize the effectiveness of government support for women entrepreneurship in Maharashtra.

This research will provide valuable insights to policymakers, government bodies, and support organizations, ensuring that the mechanisms put in

place effectively translate into tangible empowerment for women entrepreneurs in the state.

IV. OBJECTIVE

- 1) To study the motivating factors for women entrepreneurs.
- 2) To analyse various Government Schemes available for women Entrepreneurs in Maharashtra state.
- 3) To give suggestion and recommendation for women entrepreneur in the state.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The design in the research is based on descriptive method which means the description of policies for women entrepreneurs.

Data collection method: Research is based on secondary data from various government reports published research papers, articles published in journals, Conference proceeding, magazines, books, newspaper etc.

Government policies and schemes specifically targeted at women entrepreneurs in Maharashtra:

1. Women-Entrepreneurs Industrial Policy (Maharashtra)

Maharashtra became one of the first states to bring a dedicated industrial policy for women entrepreneurs.

- Under this policy:
 - First-generation women entrepreneurs setting up MSMEs get a capital subsidy up to Rs 1 crore, depending on location. (Only units 100% owned by women, or where women carry out the investment, and hiring at least 50% women employees qualify.
 - Electricity tariff concession: women-units may get electricity at Rs 1-2 per unit instead of Rs 7-8 in general industries.
 - Reserved land for women industrialists in Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) areas; reserved stalls/zones in malls/market yards for women entrepreneurs.
- The policy expected large scale outcomes: investment of around Rs 2,000 crore and creation of about 1 lakh jobs in next 5 years. Note: The

policy had validity 5 years or until further directives.

- Why this is important: It gives institutional backing, significant subsidies & reserved infrastructure for women-led industries in Maharashtra.

Limitations / Notes:

- The definition is strict (100% financed by women / 50% women employees) which may exclude many small women-owned units.
- The benefits depend on location (less benefit in developed industrial belts).

2. Punyashlok Ahilya Devi Holkar Mahila Startup Yojana

- Launched in Maharashtra (2024-25) by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS) under the Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship & Innovation Dept.
- Target: Women-led start-ups in Maharashtra – to boost female entrepreneurship, create jobs and innovation.
- Key features and eligibility:
 - The women-led start-up must have women holding >51% stake in the company.
 - The start-up should be registered with DPIIT (Department of Industry & Internal Trade) and within Maharashtra.
 - Turnover criteria: between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore (some sources say up to Rs 10 crore) for eligibility.
 - Financial assistance: Range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 25 lakh for eligible women-led start-ups.
 - Reservation: 25% of the scheme's total provision is reserved for women from backward classes / economically weaker sections.

Why this is important: Focuses on start-ups (not just traditional industries), thus captures younger entrepreneurs and innovation sectors. It's a timely support mechanism for women entrepreneurs.

Important for your report:

- Emphasise criteria (>51% women ownership; turnover range)

- Highlight the scope: start-ups rather than only manufacturing
- Connect how this scheme helps fill a gap for women-led innovation enterprises.

3. Maharashtra Women's Economic Empowerment Program

- Run by Women Entrepreneurship Cell (WEC) under MSInS.
- Focus: Training, mentorship, incubation, business development support for women entrepreneurs (especially early stage) across all 6 administrative divisions of the state.
- Targeted at women leading/co-leading early stage ventures, idea/prototype/initial operational phase.

Why this is relevant: While subsidies & financial aid are important, capacity building (skills, business acumen, network) is crucial especially for women in Tier-2/3 cities (as you might focus in your patent-idea). Good inclusion in your report as “non-financial supports”.

4. Marketing & Infrastructure Support for Women Entrepreneurs (Various provisions)

- Under the women-entrepreneur industrial policy: reservation of stalls/zones in malls, market yards, public spaces (railway stations, bus stations, airports, movie theatres, foot-over-bridges, commercial complexes) to display women-entrepreneur products.
- Electricity tariff concessions for women-units (Rs 1-2 per unit vs Rs 7-8) in earlier policy.
- Reserved land for women industrialists in MIDC areas.

Why this matters: Access to infrastructure + visibility/marketing are often the bottleneck for women entrepreneurs. Including this shows that the policy has some “ecosystem” support beyond just finance.

5. Implications for Tier-2 / Tier-3 Cities and Your Focus

Since your interest is in Tier-2/Tier-3 cities (as per your “personalised investment advisory bot for Tier-2 & Tier-3 cities” work), you can highlight:

- These schemes help bridge geographic & gender gaps: e.g., capacity-building program covers all 36 districts (including divisions like Amravati, Nagpur) under Women's Economic Empowerment Program.
- For smaller cities/towns, women-led start-ups may greatly benefit from the Startup Yojana since scale is moderate (turnover Rs 10 lakh to 1 crore).
- The marketing/visibility support (reserved stalls, display areas) helps women in local markets gain traction, which is often a challenge in smaller towns.
- Your report can examine how such policies create an enabling environment for your investment-advisory bot (which aims at Tier-2/Tier-3 cities) by increasing women's participation in entrepreneurship, hence increasing the addressable audience.

challenges” faced by women entrepreneurs (funding access, market access, mentorship) and show how these policies aim to address them.

How These Policies Empower Women Entrepreneurs

- Financial Support: Grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans make it easier for women to start businesses.
- Skill Development: Training and mentoring through the Women's Economic Empowerment Program help build entrepreneurial skills.
- Infrastructure Access: Reserved industrial plots and stalls in public markets promote visibility for women-led enterprises.
- Inclusivity: Schemes ensure representation from backward, tribal, and economically weaker sections.
- Encouragement for Startups: New policies like the Ahilya Devi Holkar Yojana target innovation-driven startups led by women.

VI. CONCLUSION

Maharashtra has taken major initiatives to empower women through financial incentives, skill development, and infrastructure support. These policies have not only increased the participation of women in business and startups but also contributed to

balanced regional growth — especially in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Such government programs create the foundation for sustainable women entrepreneurship and inclusive economic development.