Impact of Selected Public Sector Bank Schemes on Entrepreneurship Promotion in Pune District: Evidence from a Pilot Study

Shripad Balkrushna Karjatkar[1], Dr. Kishor Nikam[2]
[1,2] *Post Graduate Research Centre, Dr. D. Y. Patil Arts, Commerce and Science College, Pimpri, Pune – 411018*

Abstract*—This paper reports an empirical pilot study of selected public sector bank schemes that support entrepreneurship in Pune District. The pilot examines the accessibility and perceived usefulness of these schemes and, just as importantly, tests the reliability, clarity and field feasibility of the instruments proposed for a larger doctoral study. A descriptive and exploratory design was adopted. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to entrepreneurs, semi-structured interviews with bank and development-agency officials, informal discussions, and field observation. The pilot covered 47 participants: 40 entrepreneurs drawn equally from agriculture/agri-business, manufacturing, technology/start-ups and services; five public sector bank officials; and two government or development-agency officials. Early evidence shows MUDRA was recognised more readily than CGTMSE and the Fund of Funds for Startups. The main practical difficulties reported were documentation requirements, eligibility conditions, confusion over collateral- and guarantee-related terminology, limited forward-looking advisory support, and sparse communication during processing. Reliability coefficients of 0.74 to 0.81 indicate acceptable-to-good internal consistency for an early-stage instrument across four questionnaire dimensions. The pilot also surfaced an important construct issue: the five interventions differ in institutional design. Stand-Up India and MUDRA are direct bank-credit schemes, PMEGP is a hybrid of bank finance and a capital-linked subsidy delivered through implementing agencies, CGTMSE is a lender-facing guarantee rather than an independent loan, and the Fund of Funds for Startups operates indirectly through SIDBI-backed alternative investment funds. The study recommends scheme-specific wording, separate measurement of application, sanction, rejection and disbursement stages, plain-language explanations, revised respondent routing, and a dedicated evidence strategy for the Fund of Funds. The findings support the feasibility of the main study and suggest the pilot be read as a methods trial rather than an area-wide generalisation.

***Index Terms*—entrepreneurship finance, Pune District, pilot study, MUDRA, Stand-Up India, PMEGP, CGTMSE, Fund of Funds for Startups, financial inclusion, MSME development.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship drives innovation, job creation and regional development, but a good idea does not automatically become a viable business. New and small enterprises need timely finance, workable repayment terms, documentation readiness, market knowledge and access to credible advisory support. Public sector banks occupy a critical position in this process because they combine ordinary commercial lending with a development role that includes priority-sector lending and delivery of government-backed schemes.

Pune District offers a good setting for this study. It has a varied economic base spanning agriculture, industry and manufacturing, retail and other services, and an active technology start-up ecosystem. This diversity makes it possible to test whether a single policy framework actually reaches entrepreneurs with different financial needs, business models, documentation capacity and levels of financial literacy.

The parent doctoral study, "Impact of Selected Public Sector Bank Schemes for Entrepreneurship Promotion in Pune District," examines five schemes: Stand-Up India, the Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA

Yojana (PMMY), the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), and the Fund of Funds for Startups administered under Startup India. Although these are often grouped together as entrepreneurship-support measures, their delivery mechanisms differ substantially, with direct consequences for questionnaire design, respondent selection and interpretation of results.

This paper reports only the pilot phase. A pilot study is not a smaller version of the final study; its purpose is to test feasibility, refine instruments, identify operational problems and confirm that the proposed methods can generate interpretable evidence for the main study [10]. Pilot sample sizes follow from this feasibility purpose: a sample of the size used here is appropriate for assessing feasibility and preliminary measurement performance, but it is too small to support population-level inference [3].

A. Policy and Scheme Context

TABLE I Policy and Scheme Architecture and Measurement Implications

Scheme	Institutional form	Pilot measurement implication
Stand-Up India	Direct composite bank loan for eligible SC/ST and women borrowers establishing greenfield enterprises.	Measure eligibility, application, sanction, disbursement, handholding and empowerment outcomes.
PMEGP	Credit-linked subsidy programme implemented through KVIC/KVIB/DIC and financing banks for new micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector.	Measure agency referral, project approval, bank sanction, margin-money subsidy, enterprise creation and employment.
MUDRA / PMMY	Bank and financial-institution credit for micro units, organised by loan-size category.	Record the exact category, purpose, amount, processing experience and enterprise-level use of funds.
CGTMSE	Credit-guarantee mechanism protecting eligible member lending institutions on qualifying MSE credit facilities.	Do not ask only whether the entrepreneur "received CGTMSE"; verify whether the underlying bank facility was covered by a guarantee.
Fund of Funds for Startups	Indirect equity-support architecture in which SIDBI commits capital to SEBI-registered alternative investment funds that invest in start-ups.	Branch-level bank officials may not be the correct primary respondent; include SIDBI/AIF/start-up ecosystem evidence and avoid treating it as a routine PSU-bank loan.

This classification is one of the more important results of the pilot. It guards against the common measurement error of asking respondents to compare programmes that use different delivery channels, target different groups and involve different financial instruments. It also explains why branch-level respondents may report higher awareness of MUDRA than of the Fund of Funds, since the latter rarely functions as a direct branch loan product.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Entrepreneurs need finance to start, run and scale their enterprises, but the existence of a scheme does not guarantee effective access. In preliminary conversations, prospective beneficiaries admitted that they did not fully understand what several of the schemes were for; they confused ordinary loan products with government-backed products, and they struggled with terms such as collateral, margin money, guarantee cover and the stages of loan processing. If a survey instrument assumes knowledge that respondents do not have, the resulting responses may not be valid.

The research problem is therefore twofold. The substantive question concerns the accessibility, feasibility and perceived usefulness of specific bank-linked schemes for entrepreneurs in Pune District. The methodological question is whether a newly designed

questionnaire and interview schedule can elicit reliable, scheme-specific evidence on awareness, access, bank support, processing experience and entrepreneurial outcomes.

This pilot was undertaken to identify ambiguous wording, estimate respondent burden, check access to entrepreneurs and officials, test coding feasibility, and confirm that the intended hypotheses could eventually be operationalised with observable variables. It deliberately separates questions of method from questions of substance: the results reported here describe questionnaire reliability and field conditions, not the prevalence of scheme use or causal effects in Pune District.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PILOT STUDY

- To verify whether respondents can answer scheme-specific questions without undue effort or confusion.
- To identify the level of awareness of Stand-Up India, PMEGP, MUDRA, CGTMSE and the Fund of Funds for Startups.
- To document the practical challenges entrepreneurs face when seeking business loans from public sector banks.
- To determine whether bank and development-agency officials can provide usable information on scheme implementation, loan processing and delivery barriers.
- To assess the acceptability of an urban-rural, multi-sector sampling approach ahead of the main study.
- To assess the internal consistency of the principal questionnaire dimensions.
- To identify, ahead of the main survey, the revisions needed to the questionnaire, interview schedule, respondent routing and coding plan.

IV. HYPOTHESES CONSIDERED FOR MAIN-STUDY INSTRUMENT TESTING

The pilot did not test hypotheses in a confirmatory sense. The paired hypotheses below were used only to check that the instrument could collect evidence relevant to the eventual main study; this paper neither accepts nor rejects any null hypothesis.

TABLE II Hypotheses Used to Inform Pilot Instrument Coverage

Scheme	Null and alternative hypotheses
Stand-Up India	H0: No significant impact on empowerment of SC/ST and women entrepreneurs in Pune District. H1: A significant impact exists.
PMEGP	H0: No significant support for micro-enterprise creation and employment generation. H1: Significant support exists.
MUDRA Yojana	H0: Not effective in promoting small businesses through collateral-free micro-loans. H1: Effective in doing so.
CGTMSE	H0: No significant role in encouraging banks to fund new and small enterprises. H1: A significant role exists.
Fund of Funds for Startups	H0: No significant support for innovation-driven start-ups in Pune through SIDBI and public-sector-bank channels. H1: Significant support exists.

V. SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

- Geographical coverage: Pune District, including urban, semi-urban and selected rural areas.
- Reporting institutions: public sector banks and selected entrepreneurship-support and development agencies.
- Respondents: entrepreneurs, bank officials, and officials involved in scheme implementation.
- Scheme coverage: Stand-Up India, PMEGP, the MUDRA loan, CGTMSE and the Fund of Funds for Startups.
- Functional scope: awareness, accessibility, processing experience, bank support and perceived entrepreneurship outcomes.
- Analytic delimitation: the pilot is intended to refine methodology; it does not support district-level generalisation or causal inference.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study uses a descriptive and exploratory design. The descriptive component records respondent profiles, awareness, experiences and perceived difficulties. The exploratory component captures field-level issues that are harder to anticipate from scheme documents alone, such as confusion over technical terms, differences between urban and rural respondents, and the practical constraints faced by bank officials.

B. Data Sources and Collection Techniques

TABLE III Data Sources Used in the Pilot Study

Type of data	Source
Primary	Structured questionnaire for entrepreneurs; semi-structured interviews with bank and development-agency officials; informal discussions; field observation.
Secondary	Government publications, bank reports, scheme documents, research articles and related literature.

C. Pilot Sample and Respondent Profile

TABLE IV Composition of the Pilot Sample

Respondent category	No.	Share	Purpose
Entrepreneurs	40	85.1%	Coverage across four enterprise sectors.
Public sector bank officials	5	10.6%	Officials handling MSME/entrepreneurship-related credit.
Govt./development-agency officials	2	4.3%	Scheme implementation and entrepreneurship development.
Total	47	100.0%	Pilot-stage participants.

TABLE V Sector-wise Distribution of Entrepreneur Respondents

Sector	Resp.	Share	Illustrative area coverage
Agriculture/agri-business	10	25.0%	Indapur and nearby rural areas
Manufacturing	10	25.0%	Industrial and semi-urban Pune District
Technology/start-ups	10	25.0%	Pune city and nearby start-up ecosystem
Services	10	25.0%	Retail, education, healthcare, hospitality and other services
Total	40	100.0%	Urban-rural and sectoral mix

D. Instrument Development and Scaling

The questionnaire covers respondent and enterprise profile, awareness of the five selected schemes, bank-finance experience, documentation and collateral-related barriers, perceived bank support, and business outcomes. The official schedule covers the schemes typically handled by the branch, the profile of entrepreneurs served, reasons for delay and rejection, project-viability appraisal, awareness activities and implementation bottlenecks.

Opinion items use a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The bank-official version (n = 5) included 15 scheme-impact items and 10 branch-level multiple-choice items. The resulting instrument is data-ready, but the pilot suggests that scheme-impact statements should be routed only to officials with relevant operational knowledge, and that

a "not familiar / not applicable" option should be added to avoid forcing a neutral response.

E. Pilot Procedure

The questionnaire and interview schedule were drafted from the research objectives and scheme framework, then reviewed informally to identify unclear terms and items. Entrepreneurs were selected across urban and rural locations and across four sectors. The entrepreneur questionnaire was administered and follow-up interviews were conducted with bank and development-agency officials. Terms that respondents found unclear, questions that were skipped, and respondents' reasons for incomplete answers were all recorded. Initial internal-consistency statistics were calculated for the main subscales, and wording, routing, response options and the coding plan were revised on that basis.

Completing the entrepreneur questionnaire took about 20–25 minutes; official interviews took 25–35 minutes depending on the level of detail. These durations were broadly workable, though respondents lost focus when a question repeated a concept already covered elsewhere, or combined two distinct processing stages into a single item.

F. Pilot Analysis Strategy

The analysis was deliberately limited to frequency and percentage tabulation, triangulation of responses with the qualitative field-observation record, and assessment of internal consistency. Because the pilot sample was small and purposive, and because the intervention groups were individually too small for inferential analysis, correlation-, t-test- and regression-based hypothesis testing were deferred to the main study. This is consistent with the recommendation that a pilot study should focus on feasibility outcomes rather than effect estimates [10].

VII. PILOT FINDINGS

A. Preliminary Field Observations

TABLE VI Preliminary Field Observations and Instrument Implications

Area	Pilot observation	Required instrument response
Scheme awareness	MUDRA was much better known than CGTMSE and the Fund of Funds for Startups.	Add scheme-by-scheme awareness screening before impact statements.
Documentation	Eligibility conditions and documents were difficult to understand without guidance.	Use simplified language with a scheme-wise document checklist.
Collateral vs. guarantee	Respondents routinely conflated collateral-free lending, guarantee cover, promoter contribution and margin money.	Describe each concept separately; avoid defining them all as "collateral-free."
Bank support	Entrepreneurs wanted clearer information, status updates and stronger advisory support.	Separate information support, application support and post-sanction support.
Urban-rural differences	Urban respondents were more familiar with digital banking and online application channels.	Use bilingual/plain-language administration; record the mode of application.
Sector differences	Technology entrepreneurs reported limited tangible collateral; manufacturers emphasised machinery and working-capital needs.	Use sector-specific finance and outcome questions.
Process stages	Respondents sometimes treated application, sanction, subsidy approval and disbursement as a single event.	Create separate variables and dates for each processing stage.
Access to data	Officials had limited time to explain processes and barriers and could not disclose account-level detail.	Request aggregate branch-level data and schedule interviews in advance.

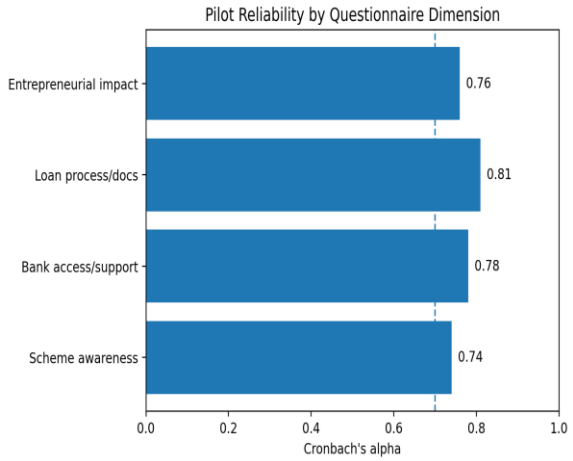

Fig. 1. Summary pattern of pilot field observations across schemes.

These observations establish relevance to the research problem but do not yield prevalence estimates. For instance, the finding that Pune entrepreneurs in the pilot were more familiar with MUDRA than with CGTMSE does not indicate what share of all Pune entrepreneurs know either scheme. It does show that the awareness module can distinguish between schemes, and that low-familiarity schemes should be routed to behavioural questions before attitudinal ones.

B. Reliability and Validity

TABLE VII Internal Consistency of Questionnaire Dimensions

Questionnaire dimension	α (pilot)	Interpretation
Scheme awareness	0.74	Acceptable
Bank accessibility and support	0.78	Acceptable
Loan process and documentation	0.81	Good
Entrepreneurial impact	0.76	Acceptable

All four dimensions produced coefficients above 0.70. Values in this range are generally considered adequate for preliminary research, but alpha should not be read as evidence that a scale is unidimensional or valid [9]. For the main study, item-total correlations, "alpha if item deleted" statistics, construct dimensionality and the substantive meaning of individual items should all be examined. Different respondent groups may not interpret identical statements in the same way, so reliability may need to be calculated separately for the entrepreneur and official instruments.

C. Feasibility and Field Difficulties

Content validity was assessed by matching questionnaire domains against the study's aims and the selected schemes. Coverage was judged highly relevant, but the pilot flagged room for improvement in construct boundaries. Some "access" items combined awareness, eligibility, ability to apply and sanction outcome; some "impact" items combined enterprise creation, expansion, income, employment and confidence. These should be measured separately in the main instrument.

A more significant construct-validity issue concerns the Fund of Funds for Startups. Unlike a conventional branch-level loan, SIDBI's Fund of Funds supports start-ups indirectly, through eligible alternative investment funds (SIDBI Fund of Funds – I and II), rather than through direct disbursement [8]. A questionnaire administered only to public sector bank branch officials cannot, therefore, generate reliable evidence on this scheme. The main study should either build a dedicated start-up-finance module or confine the branch-level survey to direct and guarantee-backed credit schemes, gathering evidence on the Fund of Funds separately from SIDBI, AIFs and investee start-ups.

A related but distinct construct problem concerns CGTMSE. An entrepreneur may take an unsecured or partly secured loan without ever being told that the bank has guarantee cover on the account. Awareness of the acronym does not, therefore, indicate actual scheme reach. The main study should collect two separate variables: whether the entrepreneur was informed of guarantee coverage, and confirmation

from the lending institution that the account was in fact covered under CGTMSE.

D. Feasibility Assessment

TABLE VIII Feasibility Assessment Across Domains

Domain	Pilot judgement	Decision for main study
Recruiting entrepreneurs	Feasible with a clear academic-purpose justification.	Proceed, using consent language and sector/location quotas.
Access to bank officials	Possible but limited by workload and confidentiality concerns.	Use scheduled appointments, short interview blocks and aggregate-data requests.
Questionnaire duration	20–25 minutes; moderate, close to the practical upper limit.	Trim overlapping items before the main survey.
Official interview duration	25–35 minutes; workable with a semi-structured schedule.	Focus on priority questions; allow written follow-up for statistics.
Urban-rural coverage	Feasible but requires area-specific explanation.	Prepare plain-language and, where needed, Marathi versions.
Coding and data entry	Feasible but ambiguous for multi-stage loan-status items.	Use exclusive numeric codes with separate fields for date/status.
Reliability	All four dimensions exceeded the 0.70 benchmark at this early stage.	Retain constructs, pending item analysis and validation in the main sample.

VIII. INSTRUMENT REVISIONS BASED ON PILOT EVIDENCE

TABLE IX Instrument Revisions Made After the Pilot

Field amended	Revised version	Anticipated benefit
Number of questions	Overlapping or duplicate items across questionnaires were dropped or merged.	Less respondent fatigue and faster completion.
Language	Technical terms were simplified and defined concisely.	Better understanding among rural, service-sector and first-generation respondents.
Scheme awareness	Scheme-specific screening questions were added.	Respondents unfamiliar with a scheme are not asked to rate its impact.
Loan process	Broken into application, eligibility screening, sanction/rejection, subsidy approval and disbursement.	Enables stage-wise delay and conversion analysis.
Impact measurement	Split into enterprise start/expansion, employment, turnover/income stability, and confidence/sustainability.	Avoids a single, vague “impact” score.
Bank-official schedule	Added items on schemes handled, entrepreneur profile, delay/rejection reasons and applicability; added “not aware,” “not applicable,” “cannot disclose” and “other” options.	Generates operationally relevant evidence and reduces forced or misleading answers.

Field amended	Revised version	Anticipated benefit
Coding plan	Numeric codes finalised for location, sector, scheme-track status and Likert responses.	Supports clean SPSS data entry and validation.
MUDRA categories	Instrument will be aligned to the official PMMY category list (including Tarun Plus, if applicable) at the time of fieldwork.	Keeps the questionnaire current with the scheme's design.
Fund of Funds routing	SIDBI/AIF/start-up evidence will be collected separately.	Improves construct validity and avoids branch-level misclassification.

IX. DISCUSSION

The pilot suggests that scheme availability alone is not an adequate measure of entrepreneurship finance. Access unfolds through a sequence — awareness, understanding of eligibility, document preparation, application, appraisal, sanction, disbursement, use of funds and post-sanction performance — and weakness at any single stage can undermine the apparent effect of a scheme. The main survey therefore needs to track the full credit journey rather than rely on a single item asking whether a scheme was "helpful."

The pattern of awareness observed appears consistent with how each scheme is delivered. Micro and small entrepreneurs are more likely to encounter MUDRA directly through routine bank channels, while CGTMSE, which functions purely as a guarantee to the lender, may go largely unnoticed by the borrower. The Fund of Funds is even more indirect, operating through investment funds rather than a branch loan. Awareness therefore reflects both the strength of communication and the underlying architecture of each programme, and this duality should be kept in mind when interpreting awareness scores.

Documentation emerged as a persistent obstacle. It underpins a borrower's ability to demonstrate identity, business existence, cash flow, market demand, statutory compliance and repayment capacity. Simplifying questionnaire language does not mean banks should relax appraisal standards; rather, the main study needs to separate genuinely necessary risk assessment from avoidable complexity, repeated requests for documents already submitted, inconsistent guidance, or weak status communication. The urban-rural and sectoral differences observed also support a differentiated design. A technology start-up typically needs growth capital and has few tangible assets to offer as security; a manufacturer is more likely to need machinery finance or working capital; an agri-business in a more rural setting may depend heavily on local facilitation and face greater connectivity or documentation constraints. Measuring "bank support" with a single undifferentiated item would obscure these differences, so the main study should use stratified analysis.

The reliability of the four main dimensions held up after revision, but reliability is only one aspect of measurement quality. The main study should also establish face and content validity through expert review, carry out item analysis, examine factor structure with an adequate sample, and test whether the measures behave consistently across sectors, settings and beneficiary groups. Perception-based scores should be supplemented with objective indicators such as sanction status, processing time, amounts applied for and disbursed, employment before and after financing, and business continuity.

A. Scheme-Specific Interpretation

Stand-Up India should be evaluated with explicit attention to eligibility within the target group, the greenfield nature of the enterprise, the quantum of credit, the extent of handholding support, and whether financing improved ownership, decision-making power and economic independence among SC/ST and women entrepreneurs. Empowerment cannot be inferred from sanction alone.

For PMEGP, the main study should capture the relationship between the beneficiary, the implementing agency and the financing bank, including the source of the application, entrepreneurship-development training, promoter contribution, margin-money subsidy, sanction and disbursement dates, and the resulting employment and

enterprise survival. Programme design should be analytically separated from how it is actually experienced by beneficiaries.

MUDRA should be disaggregated by loan category, business stage, purpose and repeat borrowing. Official MUDRA documentation currently distinguishes Shishu, Kishor, Tarun and Tarun Plus products, and the final instrument should be checked against the current official categories immediately before fieldwork [6]. The key evaluative question is not simply whether a collateral-free loan was received, but whether the amount and repayment terms matched the enterprise's operating cycle and supported sustainable activity.

CGTMSE should be treated as a risk-sharing mechanism that is likely to affect a lender's willingness to extend qualifying credit without conventional collateral or third-party guarantees. Because borrowers often do not know whether a guarantee is in place, the main study should, wherever possible, collect evidence from both lender and borrower. This is consistent with the official scheme document, which states that guarantee support is extended in respect of eligible credit facilities disbursed by member lending institutions [1].

Research design for the Fund of Funds for Startups needs a different approach. SIDBI operates as a fund of funds, channelling capital through SEBI-registered alternative investment funds into start-ups. Evidence of impact should therefore focus on fund-level commitments, investment in start-ups, follow-on capital and enterprise outcomes rather than on conventional loan-processing variables. Where the doctoral study addresses this scheme, this distinction should be made explicit in the title, hypotheses and data-collection plan.

X. MAIN STUDY DATA PLAN

A. Recommended Variable Structure

TABLE X Recommended Variable Structure for the Main Study

Domain	Variables
Profile controls	Age, gender, social group (where voluntarily declared), education, location, sector, legal form, enterprise age, employment size.
Scheme awareness	Unaided and aided awareness, source of information, correct understanding of eligibility.
Credit journey	Scheme/product applied for, application date and amount requested, documentation completeness, appraisal status, sanctioned amount, disbursement date, processing time.
Bank guidance	Clarity of information, application support, status communication, grievance redressal, post-sanction assistance.
Barriers	Documentation, trust and collateral perception, promoter contribution, credit history, project end-use, licences, digital access, agency coordination.
Enterprise outcomes	Start-up/expansion, fixed assets, working capital, employment, turnover/sales, formalisation, business continuity.
Perceived outcomes	Satisfaction, self-confidence, financial inclusion, financial sufficiency, perceived effectiveness.
Official implementation data	Schemes handled, applications, sanctions, rejections, common delays in appraisal, awareness activities, implementation challenges.

B. Proposed Statistical and Qualitative Analysis

- Describe familiarity, access and processing experience using frequencies, percentages, medians/means and measures of dispersion.
- Recalculate internal consistency for all multi-item scales and check corrected item-total correlations.

- Examine construct structure through exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis where sample size and model design allow.
- Build scheme-specific indices rather than a single composite "scheme impact" score.
- Test appropriate group comparisons (urban/rural, sector, gender/target category, beneficiaries versus non-beneficiaries) after checking underlying assumptions.
- Model entrepreneurial outcomes with controls only once temporal order and adequate statistical power have been established.
- Analyse interview data thematically under awareness, documentation, appraisal, delay, rejection, coordination and post-sanction support.
- Triangulate entrepreneur perceptions with branch- or agency-level data wherever available.

C. Data Quality Controls

- Use unique, anonymous respondent identifiers, with administrative data linked only where consent is given.
- Define all codes in a data dictionary before entry begins.
- Build range checks, skip logic and consistency checks across application, sanction and disbursement fields.
- Verify a sample of completed questionnaires against source forms.
- Record missing values by reason (not applicable, not known, refused, or not available).
- Keep the entrepreneur, bank-official and agency-official instruments separate.
- Finalise the questionnaire and record the date of every official scheme document used.

XI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study purpose was clearly stated, and participation was voluntary throughout. No personally identifiable customer information was collected. Bank and agency officials were asked to discuss only aggregate-level information and general observations, without disclosing confidential account details. Respondents were told they could skip questions or withdraw at any point. Data are stored securely and reported only in aggregate form. Where Stand-Up India analysis requires target-group data such as caste or gender, this is collected only where necessary, with sensitivity and with clear assurances of confidentiality.

The pilot also indicated that respondents may find questions about loan rejection, credit history and business performance sensitive. Interviewers should avoid judgemental language and should not imply that participation could affect a business's access to future bank finance or government support. Institutional approval and applicable ethics procedures must be obtained before full-scale fieldwork begins.

XII. LIMITATIONS OF THE PILOT STUDY

- The sample was small and purposive; equal sector allocation was designed to test the instrument, not to represent the population.
- The paper reports early descriptive and reliability results and does not provide a respondent-level dataset for independent re-analysis.
- No hypothesis tests, causal estimates or district-wide prevalence estimates were attempted.
- Findings rely on respondent understanding and self-report.
- Official participation was limited, with five bank officials and two development-agency staff representing institutional perspectives.
- Because the five schemes have very different delivery architectures, a single composite impact scale is difficult to justify without scheme-specific modules.
- Current circulars and guidelines for each scheme should be re-verified before the questionnaire and fieldwork are finalised.

XIII. CONCLUSION

The pilot demonstrates the feasibility of a larger study of public-sector-bank-linked entrepreneurship support in Pune District, and it shows why pilot testing was necessary in the first place. The instrument produced usable evidence, and four questionnaire dimensions showed acceptable-to-good internal consistency. Respondents struggled with technical vocabulary describing the stages of loan processing and the differences between collateral, guarantees, subsidy and margin money. Short, well-scheduled interviews with advance appointments, focused on aggregate data, worked well with bank officials.

The central methodological finding is that the five schemes examined are not interchangeable. Stand-Up India and MUDRA are direct credit-delivery schemes; PMEGP combines collateral-free bank credit with a subsidy delivered through implementing agencies; CGTMSE provides guarantee cover to lending institutions; and the Fund of Funds supports start-ups through an indirect investment channel. The main study should therefore use scheme-specific constructs, respondents and outcome indicators.

The pilot provides a solid foundation for the full doctoral survey, subject to the revisions suggested here. The next phase should finalise the sampling design, obtain institutional permissions where needed, update scheme details, test the revised instrument, and conduct an adequately powered analysis. Because this stage has not yet been completed, the present results should be read as illustrative and methodological, not as conclusive evidence of scheme impact in Pune District.

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