



MORE POWER TO WOMEN
Advancing Women Enterprises in India



Background

Women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship are critical for India's development. PM's vision prioritizes efforts to increase women's economic participation. Women entrepreneurship fosters inclusive growth, economic development, and women's empowerment.



Compared to global average of 37%, Indian women contribute just 18% to GDP despite being 48% of the population. Only 14% are business owners due to challenges like societal biases, limited resources, lack of skills and training, and insufficient policies. Closing the gender gap could increase India's GDP by \$700 billion by 2025 (IMF), highlighting women's potential as economic drivers.

Rationale

The Government of India has focused on supporting women entrepreneurs through financial aid, skilling and training. Despite the significant progress made in recent years, gaps remain in access to markets, finance, skills development, and addressing gender barriers, which are crucial for enabling women's economic participation and enterprise growth.



While recent efforts have advanced women's entrepreneurship, coordinated support is needed to create an ecosystem that provides women entrepreneurs access to finance, markets, skills training, mentoring, and challenges gender norms. This is beyond the excellent individual efforts that several institutions are making.

The proposed "**Advancing Women's Entrepreneurship (AWE) India Network**" aims to bring together organizations committed to gender equality, address gender gap in entrepreneurship and complement government efforts towards women-led development by sustainably fostering women's economic participation and entrepreneurship.



Vision and Core Values

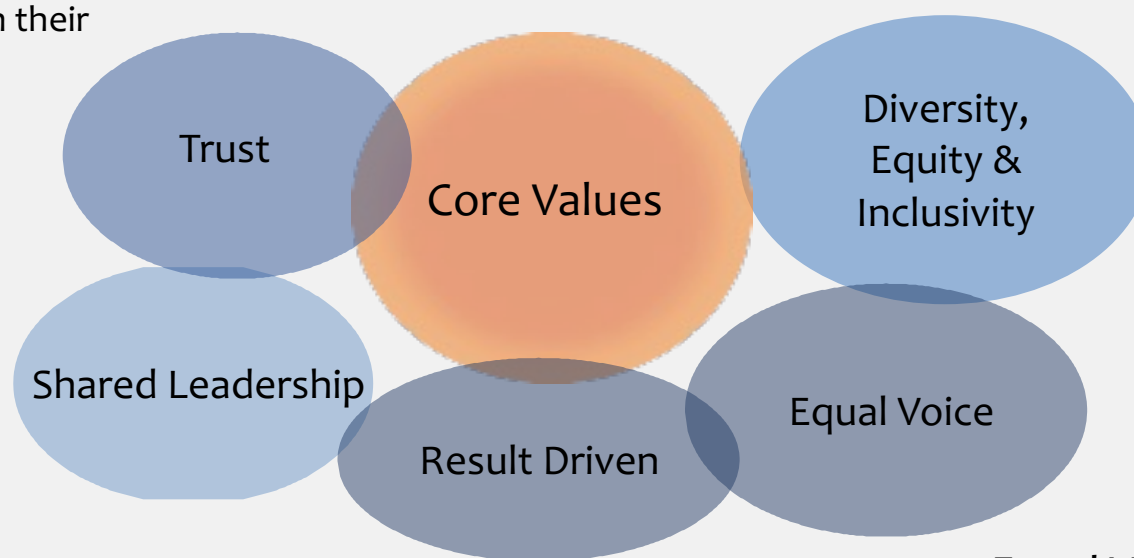
The AWE-India Network seeks to build a robust network of organisations that serves as a catalyst for advancing committed and collective efforts towards women entrepreneurship to transform the Indian entrepreneurial landscape by fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth.

Trust

Cultivating an atmosphere where the members can depend on one another and feel secure in their interactions

Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

Building an inclusive network and providing equal space to each member



Shared Leadership

Fostering a collaborative environment where decision-making is distributed among the members, empowering each individual to contribute their unique expertise

Result Driven

Demonstrate results supported by evidence, quality and excellence

Equal Voice

Striving for fairness by providing everyone with an opportunity to express their opinions to ensure that no one's perspective is overlooked or marginalized

Objectives

Policy Support and Implementation:

Convene high-impact policy forums at national, state and regional levels. Engage with policymakers at various levels to champion gender-responsive policies and foster collaborative initiatives ensuring a multi-pronged approach to accelerate efforts towards women entrepreneurship.

Knowledge Sharing:

Facilitate collaboration and information sharing among partners to enhance collective learning and impact. Establish a dynamic platform for CSOs, women entrepreneurs, and other similar networks to share insights, best practices, and success stories.

Capacity Building and Mentorship:

Bridge the gap between women entrepreneurs and markets, providing opportunities for capacity building, mentorship and business development support.

Institutional Product Creation:

Collate institutional products relevant to Indian female entrepreneurs. Disseminate innovative knowledge products including research papers, report, and policy briefs.



Scope of Work

The AWE- India Network will:

- Address women entrepreneurs' challenges accessing finance, markets, resources, networks.
- Develop shared understanding and definitions around Indian women entrepreneurs.
- Champion gender-intentional policies and programs.
- Identify gaps in gender-disaggregated data around women's enterprises.
- Raise awareness to change hindering social norms.
- Collate and disseminate information on relevant financial products, policies, and programs.
- Focus on sectors with significant female participation and growth potential.
- Develop and execute evidence-based campaigns focused on key policy areas like access to finance, market barriers, and discriminatory regulations.
- Collaborate and Co-create knowledge products such as studies, research papers, reports, or policy briefs etc.
- Encourage capacity building and knowledge sharing among members to strengthen their capabilities and ensure long-term effectiveness.



The network will meet in a hybrid mode through virtual as well as in-person meets, to stay connected and to discuss their progress on various initiatives undertaken by them.

Membership

The strength of the AWE-India Network will lie in its diversity and inclusion. Each member will bring their knowledge, resources, and expertise to the table, which will be used for the benefit of the network. Such a rich and diverse pool of experts will help make this initiative a success. The potential members of the Network could be:



- NGOs supporting women entrepreneurs
- Microfinance institutions and NBFCs
- State-level networks on related issues
- Private Sector Companies
- Grassroot Organisations
- Women Entrepreneurs across sectors
- Development experts in Women's entrepreneurship

- Institutions or individuals may become members
- Formal sign-up proposed
- 12 month membership term
- Registration fee- 20,000 for institutions and 10,000 for individuals. (proposed)



Steering Committee

The network will have a Steering Committee volunteering time regularly to formalize the overall vision and roadmap. As the Network grows, it will have thematic Working Groups based on members' expertise and interests, focused on key areas.

Working Group	Objectives	Intended Outputs
Access to Market	The WG will discuss the challenges women micro-enterprises face in accessing and negotiating markets and offer appropriate solutions	❑ 1 Policy paper ❑ 1 National level Study (e.g. 'Making Markets work for Women/ What are the impeding challenges faced by women in accessing markets?'). ❑ 1 Roundtable with Ministry of Corporate Affairs on 'CSR Spends' ❑ Engaging with key market players
Access to Finance	The WG will deliberate and provide recommendations on addressing the critical challenge of access to tailored and specific financial products and services, and increased access to integrated credit and deepening financial inclusion through suitable products and services for Women Entrepreneurs	❑ Policy Briefs ❑ National level Study (e.g. demand and supply side issues in access to finance, how Mudra loans have impacted Women Entrepreneurs) ❑ 1 Op-Ed ❑ Engagement with FFIs / MFIs
Gender, Social Norms and Enabling Environment	The WG will dwell on challenges women-led enterprises in India face due to gender norms and biases, and lack of enabling environment within family, and local entrepreneurial ecosystem, and recommend strategies to tackle social and normative norms.	❑ Gender Analysis and Impact Assessment of at least 1-2 policies/programmes/schemes on WE ❑ 1 Policy brief on Gender responsive public services and infrastructure ❑ Design/Suggest Awareness campaigns on breaking gender barrier and social stigmas ❑ Development of Gender intentional training modules
Building capacities, Skilling and Entrepreneurship	The WG will highlight significant challenges for women entrepreneurs in acquiring and updating the necessary skills to keep pace with changing market demands, consumer needs and managing their enterprises and their access to digital technology, skilling upskilling opportunities. mentorship and networks.	❑ Digital resource compendium ❑ Study on the "Analysis of emerging sectors/future potential for women entrepreneurs in India'. ❑ One Roundtable with the Ministry of MSME, MSDE, NRLM

Hands Joined, Dreams Realized

The AWE-India Network unites diverse stakeholders across sectors to foster an ecosystem of support and opportunities empowering 5 million women entrepreneurs to flourish by 2030.



Join us in building an India where women-led enterprises can thrive!

