**Rural Development Programmes for Farm Women**

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The dream of socio–economic empowerment of women will not be complete without empowering those who are living at India's last periphery. The ones whose day starts before sunrise and continues after sunset. These are the women farmers of India, whose voices often go unheard owing to their gender, and who struggles to establish their identity at a grassroots level due to patriarchal traditions and gender socialization. Women’s work in agriculture is in addition to her role as a wife, a daughter-in-law and as a mother. However, gender based discrimination continues in multiple ways: women are not recognized as farmers in Indian policies thereby denying them of institutional supports of the bank, insurance, cooperatives, and government departments.

Facts about rural women

* Agriculture sector employs[80 per cent of all economically active women in India](http://www.aajeevika.gov.in/sites/default/files/resources/MKSP-Agriculture-Guidelines.pdf); they comprise 33 per cent of the agriculture labor force and 48 per cent of the self-employed farmers.
* In India, 85 per cent of rural women are engaged in agriculture, yet only about 13 per cent own land, though women play an important role in various agricultural activities.
* Economic Survey 2017-18 says that with growing rural to urban migration by men, there is ‘feminisation’ of agriculture sector, with increasing number of women in multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and laborers.
* Bihar’s agriculture sector is highly feminized, with 50.10 per cent of the total workforce engaged in farming activities being women
* 70 per cent of all women engaged in cultivation are from households witnessing migration.
* About 60-80 per cent food are produced by rural women.

“Empowered Women Empowered Nation”. Women are extensively engaged in the activities pertaining to agriculture and allied sector. The workforce participation rate for rural females is significantly higher at 41.8 percent against urban women participation rate of 35.31 percent (MoSPI, 2017)

In rural communities, agriculture and allied sector is the primary source of livelihood that includes 80 percent of all economically active women, out of which 33 percent constitute agricultural labour force and 48 percent are selfemployed farmers. Rural women are engaged at all levels of agricultural value chain; i.e., production- pre-harvest, post-harvest processing, packaging, marketing to increase productivity in agriculture. As per Pingali et al. (2019), the ratio of women to men working in agricultural sector has increased over the time and made greater amount of contribution to GDP per capita. They are the momentous demographic group for sustainable food system (FAO, 2011). It is projected that women-oriented reforms, ensuring equal access to resources, skill development and opportunities in agriculture would increase agricultural output in developing countries between 2.5 and 4 percent (FAO,2011).

The following progrmmes/Schemes have made significant contributions in socio-economic empowerment of women in India.

1.Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Program (PMEGP)

2.National Livelihoods Mission

3.Deen Dayal Upadhayay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY),

4.Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY),

5.Beti Bachao Beti Padhao,

6.Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana I (PMMVY)

The details of each project/Yojana/Scheme mentioned below

1. **Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Program (PMEGP):** This is central government scheme launched in 2008. Run by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). It is the single nodal agency for the implementation of the programme is Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

**Objectives of Programme**

* + To create employment opportunities in the country by setting up new self-employment ventures or projects or micro-enterprises rural as well as urban areas.
  + To provide self-employment opportunities to widely spread traditional artisans or rural and urban unemployed youth by bringing them together to the extent possible, at their place.
  + To provide continuous and sustainable employment to rural and urban unemployed youth artisans
  + To increase the wage-earning capacity of artisans so that they can contribute to

increasing the growth rate of rural and urban employment.

1. **National Livelihoods Mission:** The DAY-NRLM is essentially a poverty relief programme of the Central government. It was launched as ‘Aajeevika – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)’ by the GOI’s Ministry of Rural Development in the year 2011. It was renamed as DAY-NRLM in 2015.

The scheme is an improved version of the earlier Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY).

**Objectives of the Scheme**

The aim of the Mission is to promote sustainable livelihoods for the poor.

* Access to formal credit
* Support for diversification and strengthening of livelihoods and
* Access to entitlements and public services

**3.Deen Dayal Upadhayay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY),**

[Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana](http://ddugky.gov.in/) (DDU-GKY) is a placement-led government scheme, which focuses on rural development in India. It aims at aims transforming rural youth of India into a skilled, future-ready workforce. It is one of the cluster of initiatives of the [Ministry of Rural Development](https://www.india.gov.in/official-website-ministry-rural-development-0), Government of India that seeks to promote rural livelihoods. The scheme will benefit more than 55 million poor rural youth who are ready to be skilled by providing sustainable employment. This is a great step towards reducing the poverty and minimizing unemployment in the Country.

**Objectives of the Yojana**

* + Incorporating diversity to the incomes of rural poor families
  + Catering to the career aspirations of rural youth
* The focus of the scheme is on rural poor youth between the ages of 15 and 35.
* It is a demand-driven skills training program that is placement-linked.
* It supports the social and economic programs of the government such as Digital India, Make in India, Smart Cities, Start-up India and Stand-up India, as part of the [Skill India](https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/skill-india-mission/) campaign.

It is also designed to be a major contributor to the Prime Minister's '[Make in India](https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/business-opportunity-all-investors-0)' campaign.

**4.Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY),**

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship outcome-based skill training scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). PMKVY was launched in 2015 to encourage and promote skill development in the country by providing free short duration skill training and incentivizing this by providing monetary rewards to youth for skill certification. The overall idea is to boost both industry and employability of youths.

**Objectives of Yojana**

* Enable and mobilize a large number of youths to take up industry designed quality skill training, become

employable and earn their livelihood.

* Increase productivity of the existing workforce and align skill training with the actual needs of the country.
* Encourage standardization of the Certification process and put in place the foundation for creating a

registry of skills.

**5.Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:**

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was introduced in 2015 by Indian government to address concerns about gender discrimination and women empowerment in the country. The name Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao translates to **‘Save the girl child, educate the girl child’**. The scheme aims to educate citizens against gender bias and improve the efficacy of welfare services for girls. It was launched with initial funding of Rs. 100 crore

**Objectives of Yojana**

* Improve the child sex ratio
* Ensure gender equality and women empowerment
* Prevent gender-biased, sex-selective elimination
* Ensure survival and protection of the girl child
* Encourage education and participation of the girl child

**6. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):**

The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana was launched on 2017. It is a [conditional cash transfer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conditional_cash_transfer) scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth. A maternity benefits program in which a cash incentive of ₹ 5000/- to Pregnant The incentive is provided in three instalments and is to be claimed within 150 days, 180 days, and at childbirth respectively. The scheme is aimed at women who were working and had to experience a wage loss due to pregnancy. The incentive can be used to meet the daily requirement of nourishment of pregnant women. PMMVY is implemented through the Anganwadi Centers (AWC). It is being implemented in States / UTs in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare & Empowerment and the Department of Health & Family Welfare**.**

**Objectives of Yojana**

* Promoting appropriate practice, care and institutional service utilization during pregnancy, delivery and lactation
* Encouraging the women to follow (optimal) nutrition and feeding practices, including early and [Exclusive breastfeeding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breast_feeding#Exclusive_breastfeeding) for the first six months; and
* Providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers.

**Towards Millennium Development Goals@2030**

India’s performance has improved from 0.665 in 2018 to 0.668 in 2020 (Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020). Initiatives for mainstreaming women participation in economic activities could work as catalyst in achieving goals as set under United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. Promotion of gender equality and access to Government schemes/programmes will encourage women participation in agriculture sector. This will help in alleviating extreme poverty and hunger and support in improving the country’s economy. Further, adequate investment in pro-rural women schemes and more community level participation will expedite the empowerment in a mission mode for better future prospects. Skill development and access to education, health care and digital ecosystem can play a significant role in lives of rural women. Proper training and capacity building on new agricultural technologies can help women farmer. ( Patel and Sethi, 2021)

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