

## Nari Shakti se Viksit Bharat: Women Leading India's Economic Transformation Story

Women's employment rate nearly doubled between 2017-18 to 2023-24, shows PLFS data

Female Unemployment Rate (UR) dropped from 5.6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24

Rural India shows 96% rise in female employment, urban areas reflect 43% growth

1.56 crore women have joined formal workforce in past seven years, attests EPFO payroll data

429% rise in gender budgets over last decade; 70 central schemes and over 400 State-level schemes support female entrepreneurship

Nearly every second DPIIT registered startup has at least one-woman director

68% of total MUDRA loans received by women; 44% beneficiaries under PM SVANidhi are women

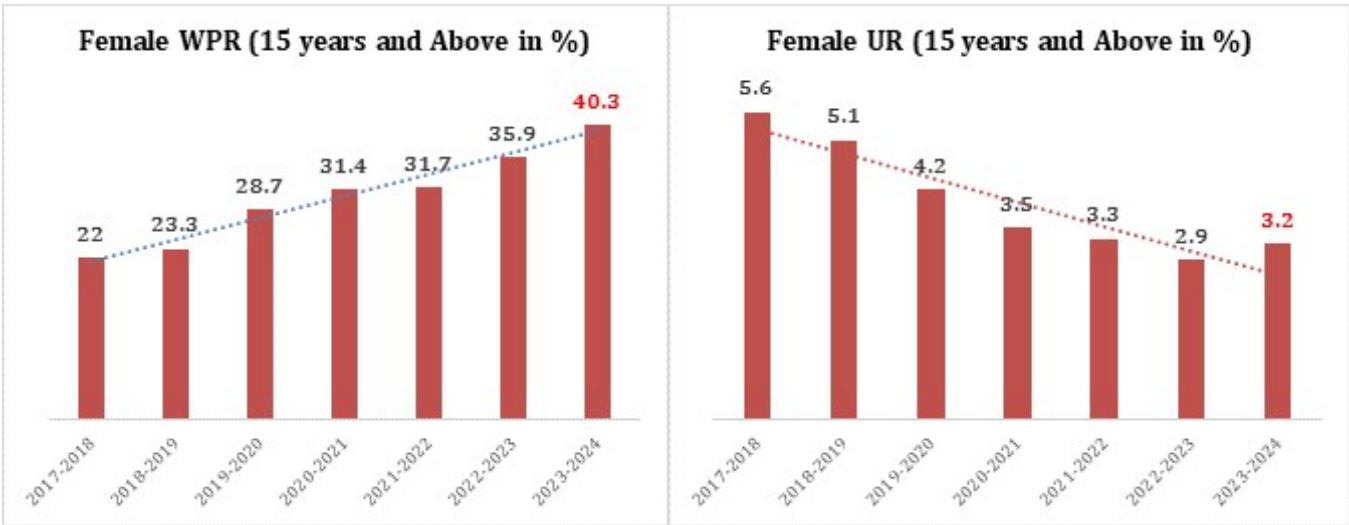
# Number of women-led MSMEs nearly doubled from 2010-11 to 2023-24, with Nari Shakti Steering India Towards Viksit Bharat

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One of the key pillars for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 is ensuring 70 percent women workforce participation in the country. Women empowerment is a key driver for national progress, and today India stands to witness a transformative shift under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Now women are no longer confined to traditional roles, they are breaking barriers and taking charge in shaping the country's economic future. From rural entrepreneurs to corporate leaders, women are leading India's march towards Viksit Bharat.

## A Significant Surge in Female Workforce Participation

India has witnessed a remarkable increase in the female workforce participation rate, PLFS data shows that the **women's employment rate (WPR) grew from 22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24**, while the **unemployment rate (UR) dropped from 5.6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24**, reflecting positive growth in employment opportunities for women. This shift is even more significant in **rural India, where female employment has grown by 96%**, while **urban areas have seen an increase of 43% in employment during the same period.**



Reports indicate that the **employability of female graduates has also increased from 42% in 2013 to 47.53% in 2024**. The **employment rate (WPR) among women with postgraduate education and above has risen from 34.5% in 2017-18 to 40% in 2023-24**.

As per **India Skills Report 2025**, nearly **55 percent of Indian graduates are expected to be globally employable in 2025**, up from 51.2 percent in 2024.

Additionally, EPFO payroll data further highlights the increasing participation of women in the formal sector. **Over the past seven years, 1.56 crore women have joined the formal workforce**. Meanwhile, **e-Shram as of August has recorded over 16.69 crore women unorganized workers' registration**, providing them access to various social welfare schemes of the Government of India.

## Bharat Shifting from Women Development to Women – Led Development

Efforts by the Government of India are contributing to growth in women entrepreneurs. At the National level, **70 central schemes across 15 Ministries** and more than **400 State-level schemes** focus on supporting female

entrepreneurship. PLFS data shows that **female self-employment grew by 30%** - from 51.9% in 2017-18 to 67.4% in 2023-24, making women truly Atmanirbhar.

**Gender budgets** have increased by **429% in the last decade**, rising from ₹0.85 lakh crore in FY 2013-14 (RE) to Rs. 4.49 lakh crore in FY 2025-26. This reflects a paradigm shift from women's development to women-led development, with a strong focus on employment, employability, entrepreneurship, and welfare.

Program like Startup India have fostered a thriving ecosystem, with **nearly 50% of DPIIT registered startups having at least one-woman director** i.e., 74,410 out of over 1.54 lakh. Today around **two crore women have become Lakhpati Didi**. Flagship programs such as Namo Drone Didi, and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – NRLM are playing also crucial role in this transformation, equipping them with resources and opportunities needed to drive sustainable progress.

Another important driver of the rise in women's self-employment is PM Mudra Yojana, which is playing a crucial role in financial inclusion, with **women receiving 68% of the total MUDRA loans** - (over 35.38 crore loans worth ₹14.72 lakh crore). Similarly, under **PM SVANidhi has empowered street vendors, around 44% beneficiaries are women under the scheme**. These initiatives are driving a new wave of economic self-reliance among women across India.

Additionally, women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have also emerged as key drivers of economic expansion, generating **over 89 lakh additional jobs for women** from FY 21 to FY 23. The **share of women-owned proprietary establishments has surged from 17.4% in 2010-11 to 26.2% in 2023-24**, and the **number of women-led MSMEs has also nearly doubled, growing from 1 crore in 2010-11 to 1.92 crore in 2023-24**, highlighting the increasing role of women in shaping India's economic future.

#### **Nari Shakti Steering India Towards Viksit Bharat**

Women are no longer just participants but the backbone of India's economic growth. Today, women are leading the march toward development, and Modi Government is committed to creating an inclusive ecosystem that empowers Nari Shakti through education, skill development, entrepreneurship, and equal workforce opportunities.

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