



9th National CSR Summit-2021

"Gender Equal Ecosystem in Entrepreneurship and Skill Development: Role of Corporate Social Responsibility"

Overview Note:

World's largest democracy and youngest country with demographic dividends, India has a rich culture, tradition and ability to innovate and transform with women and men, boys and girls enthusiastically participating in all the spheres of life. However, there are certain challenges they cope up with in registering robust and lasting successes in the area of livelihoods, running own businesses or in venturing out into entrepreneurial ventures.

Over decades, need for digital transformation has evolved the entrepreneurial ecosystems with support from key stakeholders through finance, capacity enhancement and various government led schemes. Such efforts though have been helpful yet these have not yet been either fully leveraged or missed the targets, impacting a large number of micropreneurs especially the women whose levels and degree of participation in business ownerships have remained limited despite best intentions.

While building on the need for women participation, and their empowerment through entrepreneurship and skill development, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation highlights that only 14 percent of entrepreneurs are women presenting both opportunities and challenges before stakeholders including private sector, government and civil society organizations including academic institutions and training schools. Lower levels of participation of women in entrepreneurial ventures has also not led to scale and impact both on local economies and national development expansion and widened institutional lag in women empowerment initiatives, which among other issues, has also kept women from being able to access technology, skills, finance and abilities to learn.

It is in this context; more efforts are needed through targeted, inter-agency and multi modal manner with definitive local and national plans, in covering a large number of women within existing entrepreneurship ecosystem while continuing to work on new initiatives catering to specific needs and aspirations of women. It is evidenced through analysis that, among others, women potentially need specific skills needed to be imparted in not only bringing them with existing schemes and ecosystems but also in mainstreaming them into national development.

Need assessment analysis suggests that a bundled approach in respect of women training, skill development and empowerment generally is productive and can be affected by identified skill sets, combing features of basic education that cuts through improvement skills passed through training, capacity development and finance support including through evolving supply chains and market identification efforts.

1. Basic literacy and education
2. Digital literacy
3. Financial literacy (digital and conventional)
4. Domain knowledge
5. Business skills (leadership and organizational)

Covid-19 pandemic in India, like everywhere else, has presented some lessons too while being deadly, and disruptive. It also forced the world to work around alternative models and ways of work bringing more than 70 per cent of the professional tasks on line or into a virtual space. Digital dependency has been the saving factor for everyone including entrepreneurs depend digitally for running their businesses- both safely and productively. The role of government of India through facilitation and policy framework has been effective and efficient in being able to address challenges of technology facilitation, infusion, work from home policies and upending business supply chains to help and support entrepreneurs. Many opportunities as a result occurred and have well been leveraged including by women entrepreneurs both in rural and urban areas in the country.

In efforts to further support women entrepreneurs during the Covid-19 pandemic, MSME, in July, 2020, launched an exclusive portal for women entrepreneurs to help them financially through an online "Udyami Mitra" Scheme at zerocost registration facility.

India currently has circa 16 million women entrepreneurs (women owned enterprises), some 20 percent of all enterprises in the country with a need for more such. While efforts to mainstream women entrepreneurs are being undertaken and made in right earnest, women's socio-economic role goes unrecognized as most women work as unpaid caregivers, household managers or in other home-based positions and such a scenario presents an urgent need to capture this data and be accounted for policy planning and making specific to the women's role in economic development in the country. Sectors such as agriculture that has one of the highest involvement of women work force need satellite accounting as a part of national development approach.

According to World Bank estimates, 75 percent of working age women (35 percent of India's working age population) currently do not have paid work. Only 59 percent of women have access to mobile phones with an abysmally low internet penetration rate of 19 percent with only 35 percent of women actively using their bank accounts. In agriculture agrarian economy, women represent 42 percent of the agricultural labour force in India, while owning just 20 percent of farm land. (Google, Bain & Company Report 2020, Women Entrepreneurship in India). This situation correction calls out for addressing complex set of policy issues that range from inheritance laws to ownership issues but would potentially be a pivot to national development while mainstreaming women throughout supply chains in addition to heal them earn more non-farm income that they could spend on social and economic activities, finally helping the national economy to grow.

It is in this background that the Summit would proposes to deliberate key issues, opportunities, challenges and paths forward in developing solutions in direction of gender inclusivity, women empowerment, capacity building and training, skill development, technology and larger policy issues on how women could be mainstreamed into national development through their entrepreneurship in digital age within the national framework of corporate social responsibility.

