



# THINK LABOR

To keep up with everything skilling and employment

## Invisible Entrepreneurs

**Originally published:** Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE), an initiative of LEAD at Krea University.

### Introduction

This report is an attempt at understanding the landscape of market linkages for women-led home-based businesses, emergence of which are results of the gender specific barriers faced by women in labour force participation. This study is conducted for handicraft and handloom enterprises of India and 800 home-based women entrepreneurs across Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu were surveyed to capture the key market access constraints and identify the models with best practices. Being a promising source for employment generation through growth, the handicraft and handloom sectors in India are highly fragmented, unorganized, and informal and found to be dominated by women-led enterprises and still hindered by serious problems like lack of worker rights, opportunities of growth, access to credit products, and proper access to markets due to restricted mobility. There is tremendous scope to formalize these women-led home-based businesses which in turn will contribute towards economic development.



and how i have started and what inspired me work upon it

### Key Highlights

- Time and mobility remain barriers to expanding business and honing entrepreneurial skills for the women entrepreneurs.
- Home-based businesses in handicrafts and handloom are respectable alternatives for women to earn a livelihood by overcoming constraints of time, mobility, literacy, and other factors that inhibit her participation in the formal labour force, but the same constraints eventually impede her business' growth potential rendering her invisible
- The home-based entrepreneurs are less informed about the schemes and different social security nets rolled out by the government due to lack of direct interaction with market players and open communication channel.
- Most home-based female entrepreneurs are solo entrepreneurs who do not have employees on a regular or temporary basis.
- Direct market accessibility for women-led home-base businesses is limited given their constraints and are dependent on market linkage via intermediaries – collective enterprises or private company.
- Business outcomes are best for women who run piece-rate businesses but are also members of seasoned collective enterprises such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and cooperative societies.
- Female home-based entrepreneurs exhibit strong entrepreneurial aspirations. However, there is a trade-off between developing entrepreneurial skills versus market access via an intermediary
- The study has recommended two approaches for designing policy interventions- facilitative and enabling ecosystem for home-based enterprises and addressing women entrepreneurs by segmenting according to their nuanced needs and strengths rather than approaching as a singular segment.
- Finally, this study has proposed a 'Business Readiness Scorecard for Women (WBRS)' framework to diagnose targeted interventions based on economic as well as social, cultural, and behavioral parameters.

**Read more:** [https://iwwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IWWAGE\\_LEAD\\_report.pdf](https://iwwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IWWAGE_LEAD_report.pdf)

**Author:** Priyanka Bezbaruah, PILOT at Pratham