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Big Markets, Bigger Dreams How 'Womaniya' is Changing the Game

Are you a woman looking to start a business of your own? Or perhaps you already run a small enterprise or are part of a Self-Help Group, wondering how to reach more customers beyond your local area? If so, you need to know the following facts:

- The Government has created easier pathways for women to connect directly with one of the largest buyers in the country: the Government itself.
- Launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Womaniya initiative aims to make public procurement more inclusive by enabling women entrepreneurs—especially those from micro and small enterprises and SHGs—to access the formal government marketplace.
- By addressing challenges such as limited market access, low visibility and dependence on intermediaries, the initiative uses digital tools and simplified processes to make participation easier and more transparent.
- At the heart of this effort is the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), an online platform where government departments procure goods and services.
- Womaniya builds on this platform by providing a more accessible and supportive entry point for women entrepreneurs, helping them connect directly with government buyers and expand their businesses with confidence.

From Local Efforts to National Reach

Across India, lakhs of women are already running small but meaningful businesses. Some are weaving beautiful handloom textiles, others are creating handicrafts, décor items and practical products used in everyday life across households and establishments. Many of these women are part of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), where they come together not just to save money, but to support each other and grow as entrepreneurs.

Today, more than 11 crore women are connected through nearly 95 lakh SHGs. That is a huge network of skill, creativity and hard work. Yet, for a

WOMANIYA ON GeM

Driving the 3% procurement mandate for women-led MSEs

Dedicated filters for enhanced marketplace visibility

Exclusive opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the B2G ecosystem

long time, most of these products remained limited to local markets—village haats, nearby towns or small exhibitions. The challenge was never about quality or effort, but about reaching the right buyers at the right scale.

This is exactly where Womaniya makes a difference. By bringing women entrepreneurs onto the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), the initiative opens up a much larger marketplace. Instead of depending only on local demand, women can now showcase their products to government departments across the country.

In simple terms, a product made in a small village can now find a buyer sitting in a government office hundreds of kilometres away. This shift - from local selling to national-level access - not only increases income opportunities but also gives women entrepreneurs greater confidence to expand and improve their businesses.

SWAYATT: Expanding Opportunities through Inclusive Procurement

Womaniya is part of the SWAYATT (Startups, Women and Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions) initiative under the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) that aims to

support startups, young entrepreneurs, women-led enterprises, micro and small businesses, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and other under-represented sections.

The idea is simple: make it easier for these groups to do business with the Government. This is achieved by reducing entry barriers, simplifying processes and providing training and support so that even first-time sellers can confidently participate.

Within this broader vision, Womaniya serves as a dedicated initiative for women entrepreneurs. It builds on the goals of SWAYATT by creating a more supportive and accessible space for women-led enterprises to connect with government buyers.

A Wide Range of Opportunities

One of the most practical aspects of Womaniya is that it builds on what women are already doing well.

Across the country, women entrepreneurs have developed strong skills in certain areas over the years - often rooted in local traditions, community knowledge and everyday needs. Womaniya recognises this and focuses on product categories where women already have both experience and confidence.

These include handicrafts, handloom textiles, grocery and pantry items,

office accessories and personal care products. What makes this approach effective is that women do not have to start from scratch or shift to unfamiliar industries. Instead, they can take what they are already producing and present it to a much larger market.

The Government e-Marketplace platform further supports this by organising these products into clearly defined categories. So, when a government department is looking to procure, say, office supplies or handloom items, it can easily find relevant products listed under Womaniya.

This structured approach also helps standardise listings, improve product presentation and build trust. Over time, it encourages women entrepreneurs to maintain quality, scale up production and think of their work not just as a small activity, but as a growing business with national reach.



Building Skills and Confidence

For many women, especially those starting out for the first time, using an online platform can feel a bit confusing at the beginning. Simple questions like *how to upload a product, how to decide the right price, or what buyers are looking for* often come up. To make this journey easier, regular training sessions, workshops and outreach programmes are organised across the country.

These sessions are designed to be simple and practical. Women are guided step by step on how to use the Government e-Marketplace, how to list and present their products properly, and how to meet quality standards expected by buyers.

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