

The revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) 3.0 will be a one-stop shop for all women's entrepreneurial needs

Charting the Way forward to onboard 250,000 women entrepreneurs in the next 3 years

New Delhi, Dec 12, 2022 –The design thinking workshop for the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) 3.0 was held on December 10th 2022 at Ambedkar Bhawan.

WEP is designed to cater to the unmet needs of prospective and existing women entrepreneurs across the entire spectrum. It is a unique aggregator platform with public private partnership to address information asymmetry and diverse requirements for women entrepreneurs' pan-India.

As an aggregator platform, WEP hosts information and services relevant to women entrepreneurs. it enables key partnerships to bring crucial content, workshops, campaigns and other avenues of learning and growth to its users from trailblazers in the industry. Through its partnerships, services are provided in 6 main focus areas:

- Community and Networking
- Funding and Financial Assistance
- Incubation and Acceleration
- Compliance and Tax Assistance
- Entrepreneur Skilling and Mentorship
- Marketing Assistance

On the occasion, **Ms Anna Roy, Sr. Adviser, Niti Aayog & Mission Director of WEP**, said, "Women entrepreneurs account for just 13.76% of the total entrepreneurs in India are women – a mere 8.05 million out of the total 58.5 million entrepreneurs. Women Entrepreneurship Platform intends to address the existence of information asymmetry and help resolve the fragmentation of the resources. To achieve this, we need to hear from our stakeholders on what can be done to improve the platform. We want to chart the way forward for the platform together."

Several women entrepreneurs shared their experiences of being entrepreneurs in a man's world and their expectations from WEP 3.0. Many endorsed the view that access to peers via WEP's Community module is equally important as access to credit or information.

Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, delivering his valedictory address, stated that, “At the UN we do recognize the fundamental importance of investing in women’s empowerment and gender equality as the single greater return on investment. All need to ensure that women have full access to human rights, and the full ability to create livelihoods and aspirations they have and them having the ability to do is beneficial for all of us. It is in this context that WEP 3.0 is such a fantastic tool to precisely unlock and break down these barriers that exist for women entrepreneurs and for their empowerment.”

The details of the Platform, including the future initiatives were presented by Sonal Jaitly of Microsave, who spoke on the importance of access to finance for women and the need for compliance and mentorship; Ayesha Chaudhary, who is a consultant with the World Bank spoke about innovation and research in the tech space; Suhela Khan, Country Programme Manager- Women’s Economic Empowerment, UN Women elaborated the challenges in access to market for women entrepreneurs; Manu Shukla, Head, Government Transformation (India & South Asia), Amazon Web Services spoke about the importance of platform development to enable women entrepreneurs; Shivani Mallik from Pay It Forward – India 2047 (PIF) spoke about the future roadmap for WEP.

Shivani Karkal, Director, Square Panda presented a live demo of the revamped WEP platform features like Smart Matchmaking while Ashish Jhalani, President, Square Panda spoke about his vision for incorporating the inputs received during the workshop.

Also present on the occasion were Harish Krishnan, Managing Director & Chief Policy Officer, Cisco India & SAARC; Bavleen Kaur, Additional Director, FICCI; Amrita Sabnavis, Chief Strategy Officer, Mann Deshi Foundation; Shashi Singh, Chairperson of Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs of India (CWEI); Mukesh Mohan Gupta, President, Chamber of Indian Micro Small and Medium Enterprises; Aditi Bhutia Madan, Founder Director, BluePine Foods Private Limited; and Rita Tage, Founder, Naara Aaba.

GAME as the Project Management Unit (PMU) will over the next three years manage the platform end-to-end and will also be in charge of developing, operating and maintaining the portal. In their role as the PMU for WEP 3.0, GAME conducted the entire workshop for the stakeholders and other members of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

WEP is built on three pillars- Iccha Shakti, Gyaan Shakti & Karma Shakti:

1. Iccha Shakti – motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their business

2. Gyaan Shakti – providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to foster entrepreneurship
3. Karma Shakti – providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting and scaling up businesses

In the next three years, this platform aims to engage 250,000 women and onboard 500 partners and 200+ capacity-building events (online and offline).