



Decade of Change: How PMJDY Empowered Women Financially

29.56 Crore Accounts Opened by Women, 69% of Mudra Loans Directed to Female Borrowers

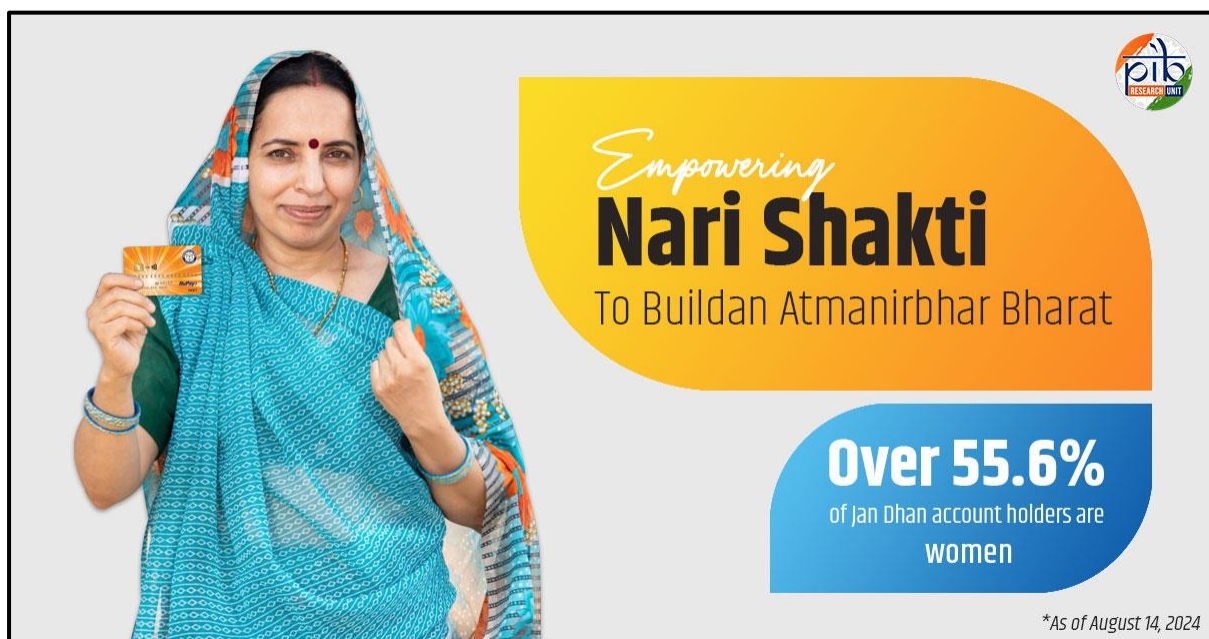
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As India celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), it's a moment to reflect on a decade that has revolutionized financial inclusion, especially for women. Launched in 2014, PMJDY was more than just a financial scheme; it was a national mission to ensure that every Indian, no matter their economic background, had access to the formal financial system.

Over the past ten years, PMJDY has not only brought millions of previously unbanked households into the financial fold but has also emerged as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. The initiative has successfully opened 53.13 crore bank accounts, of which a remarkable 29.56 crore were opened by female beneficiaries. This widespread inclusion has created a secure platform for savings and facilitated direct benefit transfers, profoundly impacting the economic landscape for women.

Before this initiative, most women, especially those working in unorganised sectors, lacked access to formal old-age income security schemes. Their financial vulnerability was exacerbated by inconsistent incomes and limited access to social security, making them more susceptible to economic shocks. PMJDY has served as a foundation stone in bringing women under the ambit of financial inclusion, providing them with a safety net that was previously unavailable.



The impact of PMJDY on women's financial inclusion is evident in the data. The percentage of women who own and use a bank or savings account has surged from 53% in the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16) to 79% in the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21). The gap between men and women in access to financial services has been reduced from [20% in 2011 to just 6% in 2017](#), surpassing the global average of 9%. This progress is a testament to the scheme's effectiveness in empowering women and ensuring equal opportunities to participate in the formal financial system.

PMJDY has not only increased women's access to financial services but has also proven to be a vital lifeline during times of crisis. The scheme's impact was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing essential financial support to millions of women.

One of PMJDY's most significant achievements during the pandemic was its rapid response to the nationwide lockdown. Within just ten days of the lockdown, over 200 million women account holders received timely financial assistance of ₹500 per month for three months through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). This swift and efficient distribution of funds demonstrated the scheme's ability to provide critical support to vulnerable populations during great uncertainty.

Furthermore, the PMJDY has facilitated women's access to credit through complementary schemes. As of November 2023, out of the 44.46 crore loans sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), 30.64 crore (69%) were granted to women, with the average credit amount increasing from ₹39,000 in 2015-16 to ₹1 lakh in 2023-24. Additionally, under the Stand-Up India Scheme (SUPI), 2.40 lakh loans amounting to more than ₹53,600 crore have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe members for establishing greenfield ventures as of July 15, 2024.

From providing a safety net during crises to facilitating access to credit, PMJDY has played a pivotal role in breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable financial landscape for women. The scheme's success is evident in the significant increase in women's bank account ownership, the reduction in gender gaps in financial access, and the crucial support it has provided during times of hardship.

As India progresses, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana will undoubtedly remain a cornerstone of its efforts to build a more inclusive and prosperous nation. Its legacy as a catalyst for women's financial empowerment will endure for generations to come.

References:

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