

Odisha govt and Facebook launches 'SheMeansBusiness' programme to train women entrepreneurs

BHUBANESWAR: [Chief minister Naveen Patnaik](#) on Thursday launched 'She Means Business' programme of Facebook for [women entrepreneurs](#) in Odisha. Under the scheme 25, 000 women entrepreneurs and self-help group (SHG) members will be given training on digital marketing skills within next one year.

"Odisha government's partnership with Facebook aimed to reduce the digital divide and empower nearly 25,000 women entrepreneurs and SHGs. It is the job of government to empower people to aspire high with the faith that their aspirations will be turned into reality," said Naveen congratulating the MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) department, the directorate of [Mission Shakti and Facebook](#) for this joint initiative.

Twenty-nine year old Neelam's has been running a Biryani stall at [Sum Hospital Square](#) in the city. Every day she prepares 200 plates of biryani and her stock finishes within a couple of hours. Now she is planning to launch her food truck Me-Ma's. "Cooking is my passion. I cook when I am happy, when I am sad, stressed or angry or anxious or excited. So I started this business and could earn my break-even in two months. Now nine persons are working under me. This training on digital marketing skills will surely help a lot to spreading my customer base and business," said Neelam.

Like Neelam around 1100 women entrepreneurs and SHG members from across Odisha attended the training session where they learnt basic nuances of digital marketing like how to start your business in Facebook, how to make it real-time business, quick response to queries and timely delivery, quality assurance and so on.

Facebook will also make a database of entrepreneurs in the state and will monitor their growth, turnover and profit after one year. While success stories among them will be highlighted to inspire others, said MSME secretary L N Gupta.

"Women entrepreneurs will get hands on training on digital marketing free of cost and they need not create their website to promote their business. The platform will also facilitate vertical integration," said Gupta.

As many as 201 million monthly active people on Facebook in India on their mobile and 57% of people on Facebook in India are connected to at least one small business. Moreover, 1.99 billion interactions generated between businesses and people in India through Facebook. Number of new women-owned small and medium business pages on Facebook in India has increased approximately six-fold in the last four years (between 2012 and 2015), official sources said.

"We see amazing examples of how digital can be the equalizer on Facebook every day. How it gives women access to new opportunities, new markets, new ideas, all from their own home. Through Facebook's #SheMeansBusiness we hope to inspire more women across the country, including here in Odisha, to take the leap - and help close the gap on that untapped opportunity for

millions more women and in turn ensure our economy remains strong and thrives," said Ankhi Das, Public policy director of Facebook-India.

Among others MSME minister Prafulla Samal, chairman [Odisha Skill Development Authority Subroto Bagchi](#), chief secretary Aditya Padhi and director of Mission Shakti Sujata Kartikeyan were present on the occasion.

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