

NITI Aayog



# WEP of NITI Aayog Partners With India's Largest Convenience Retail Chain New Shop to Empower Women Retail Business Owners

## Launches 'EmpowHER Biz' to Boost Women Entrepreneurship in Retail

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The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog, launched **EmpowHER Biz – Sapno Ki Udaan** in partnership with New Shop, India's largest 24/7 convenience retail chain under its Award to Reward (ATR) program. This initiative aims to empower women entrepreneurs by equipping them with the skills and resources needed to succeed in the organized retail sector. EmpowHER Biz will offer mentorship and comprehensive training, covering retail management, digital tools, financial literacy and business development to aspiring women entrepreneurs. Through this collaboration with New Shop, WEP aims to create a robust retail ecosystem that empowers women entrepreneurs and drives sustainable growth in the sector.

Under the initiative, fifty participants aged 18–35, will be selected through an online application process based on specific criteria. Top twenty of these participants will receive a 100% waiver on New Shop franchise fees, empowering them to own and operate their retail businesses with significantly reduced barriers to entry. The program is being launched for women from Delhi NCR, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.

WEP, incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform, transitioned into a public-private partnership in 2022. WEP aims at empowering women entrepreneurs by overcoming information asymmetry and providing continuum of support across different pillars- Access to Finance; Market Linkages; Training and Skilling; Mentoring & Networking; Compliance & Legal Assistance and Business Development Services. With over 30 public and private sector partners, WEP fosters collaboration to develop scalable and impactful programs that benefit women entrepreneurs. Since 2023, the 'Award to Reward' initiative under WEP offers a plug and play framework for stakeholders to develop impactful programs.

New Shop operates a network of over 200 round-the-clock convenience retail stores located in high-density neighborhoods, highways, and gas stations, with plans to expand to mass transit hubs such as airports and railway stations. Currently present in 35 cities across 18 states, New Shop is committed to empowering over 10,000 entrepreneurs in India by 2030 as it continues to grow its footprint nationwide through a franchising model.

“EmpowHER Biz is our largest Award to Reward (ATR) collaboration to date. Aspiring women entrepreneurs often face multiple challenges, including societal biases, limited access to financing, credible networks, and mentorship, all of which hinder their potential in business. Through this partnership with New Shop, we aim to help women overcome these obstacles and build a strong foundation for their entrepreneurial journey”, said Ms. Anna Roy, Principal Economic Adviser, NITI Aayog and Mission Director, WEP.

“New Shop is committed to empowering young and first-time entrepreneurs in the retail sector. Through this collaboration with WEP, we aim to democratize retail ownership and create a lasting impact on the entrepreneurial journeys of these women—whether by providing valuable training and mentorship, financial support, or the opportunity to join the New Shop franchising ecosystem,” said Aastha Almast, Co-founder of New Shop.

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