



HER कहानियाँ

Stories of Women who Dared to Dream



INTRODUCTION

The Government of India aspires to make India a \$30 trillion economy by 2047, the centenary year of the country's independence. To achieve this goal, it is integral to address the gap of nearly 145 million 'missing women' from the workforce, according to a report of Magic Bus India Foundation and Bain & Company published in 2024.

In rural areas, factors like limited job opportunities and higher dropout rates, with women primarily engaged in unstable and low-income work, contribute to low FLFPR. A differential approach is needed to address the root causes of low FLFPR among rural segments of women.

Magic Bus, a leading NGO in the space of education and skilling, runs the Rural Livelihood Programme to give wings to aspiring entrepreneurs from rural areas. The programme aims to build women's life skills and leadership skills to successfully start and run enterprises.

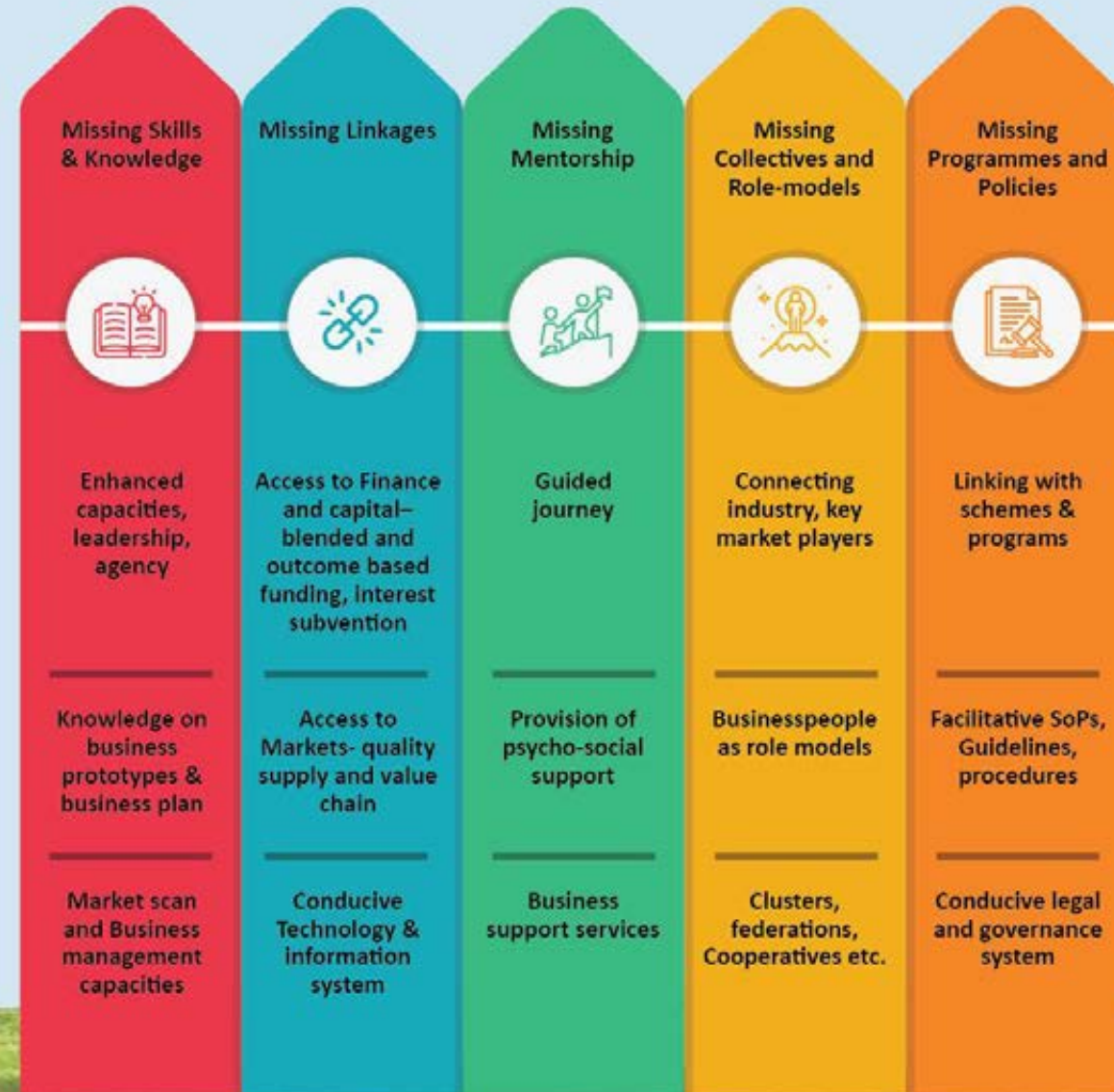
Women entrepreneurs have successfully graduated through the programme, with 80% of them having set up their business after undergoing intensive training, market research activities, mentoring sessions, and peer networking.

The journey of these women leaders has been path breaking. These leaders have shown a true entrepreneurial spirit along the way, displaying resilience, innovation, self-starter attitude, and leadership.

**EVERY WOMAN SKILLED,
EVERY OPPORTUNITY GIVEN,
POWERS INDIA'S GROWTH**



PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS



PRELUDE

India's road to progress is spearheaded by women driving change. This book brings together the journeys of nine ambitious women who dared to dream and chart their path toward financial independence.

With training, mentorship, and support from Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme, they built critical life skills, financial awareness, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills to launch and grow their enterprises.

The stories in this book show the immense possibilities that emerge when opportunity meets guidance and effort. They remind us that meaningful change often begins with self-belief and consistent action.

Each woman featured here represents progress toward India's vision of a Viksit Bharat, where women contribute actively to community, social and economic development.

Let's turn the page and step into Her Kahaniya.



SEWING THREADS OF COURAGE

At twenty, Khursheeda from Kishangarh, Rajasthan married Moin Ahmed, believing their love and hard work would build a secure future.



Moin, a B.Ed. student and daily wage labourer, struggled to find stable employment. Their joy grew with the birth of their daughter, Simran, and son, Babar, but life soon turned harsh. Failing to secure a government teaching job, Moin sank into alcoholism, and their home became a place of conflict. In 2012, unable to bear the abuse, Khursheeda left with her daughter, separated from her son, and started anew.

For seven years, she survived through cleaning, stitching, and daily labour. When her finances collapsed in 2018, she returned to her parental home. Learning tailoring from her father, she stitched to earn a living while working under NREGA. But when Simran developed a severe skin condition needing expensive treatment, survival became a daily struggle. Family tensions grew, and Khursheeda once again found herself unwelcome.

In 2022, her in-laws persuaded her to reunite with Moin and take a loan of ₹1.35 lakh to send him abroad for work. The broker turned out to be a fraud, leaving her with debt and betrayal. Abandoned again, she returned to her father's home in 2024 with little hope.

Everything changed in 2025 when she joined Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme. The training helped her turn her tailoring skill into a small business. With a motorized sewing machine and renewed confidence, she opened her own shop, earning enough to cover rent, medical expenses, and loan repayments.

Today, Khursheeda stands tall, rebuilding her life stitch by stitch. As she says, "A mother never loses her fight. She stitches together broken dreams until they turn into a future she can be proud of."



Overcoming domestic abuse and financial loss, Khursheeda turned her tailoring skills into a sustainable business of her own. Her journey reflects the resilience of women who rebuild from scratch and stitch together the fabric of India's progress.

SOWING HEALTH AND HOPE

Savitaben's life was defined by limitations. Married young and educated only till the seventh grade, she managed her home in Jamnapada Faliya, Gujarat, while her husband struggled to keep his small kirana shop running. Supporting six family members on ₹2.5 lakh a year meant every rupee mattered. Dreams felt like a luxury she could not afford.



Her world began to shift when she was introduced to Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme. The leadership and life skills sessions helped her communicate, plan, and take initiative. For the first time, she found the courage to look beyond her household responsibilities. Listening to discussions about health and nutrition in her village, she realised that poor diets were silently affecting adolescent girls, including her own daughters.

With determination, Savitaben started distributing vegetable seed kits to families, encouraging them to grow their own food. Partnering with local leaders, she helped organise a community health camp, making healthcare accessible to those who could not afford to travel long distances. These small steps made her village look up to her as a problem solver.

With the support of Magic Bus, she started Rayat Desi Murgha Farm with just 50 chickens. The journey was far from easy. Feed was costly, diseases were frequent, and profits were slow to come. But she refused to give up.

Her persistence paid off as her farm began supplying fresh poultry to nearby markets. The modest income that followed eased her husband's burden and gave her the confidence to expand. Women in her community began seeking her advice, eager to start their own ventures.

Savitaben's journey is as much about building a livelihood as it is about rediscovering purpose, claiming self-worth, and proving that empowerment begins the moment a woman believes she can.



Savitaben started a small poultry venture and spearheaded health awareness in her village. Her entrepreneurial journey inspires women in her community to build financial independence and shape stronger futures.

BUILDING A STORE OF STRENGTH

In Jambhivali village of Bhiwandi tehsil, Maharashtra, Chetana once led a stable life in Bhayandar, managing a store while her husband worked at a diamond firm. But when both lost their jobs, their financial cushion disappeared overnight. Returning to their native village, they faced the uncertainty of sustaining six family members on dwindling savings.



Determined to rebuild from scratch, Chetana opened Truptesh Pooja Bhandar, a small shop selling devotional items. While festive seasons brought hope, the rest of the year was a struggle. Trainings through Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme taught her business planning and customer management.

Applying what she learnt, she diversified her store, introducing saris, jewellery, cutlery, and even seasonal goods like sugarcane juice. Each addition reflected her sharp understanding of customer needs. Soon, her shop transformed into a convenient one-stop store in the market. Her monthly income rose, bringing stability to her family's life.

When three of her family members fell ill, the store became their only source of income. Chetana adapted swiftly, rotating stock to suit the festive calendar and improving sales. Her courage made her a role model in Ambadi Market, where customers respected her for her fairness and reliability.

As her business grew, she began guiding other women entrepreneurs through their business challenges. What began as survival gradually became her calling to empower others as she had been empowered.

Chetana now dreams of expanding her shop further, improving inventory management, and giving her children a future free from financial insecurity. Her journey reflects the strength of women who rebuild from the ground up, aiming for the sky.



After losing her job, Chetana rebuilt her livelihood through skilling. Her rise from setback to stability reflects women turning resilience into income security and strengthening India's economic fabric from its villages upward.

SPICING UP SUCCESS

Vidya, a homemaker from Vafepada village in Shahpur, Maharashtra, spent years balancing her roles as a mother, daughter-in-law, and farmer's wife. With six family members depending on her, every day revolved around chores, childcare, and farm work. A 12th pass student who once dreamt of higher studies, Vidya had quietly set her ambitions aside after marriage. Her only indulgence was cooking, especially creating spice blends that her family adored. Yet, she never imagined that her kitchen experiments could one day become her livelihood.



Self-doubt was her biggest barrier. Could she really start something of her own? Did she have the knowledge or confidence to manage a business? For a long time, these questions kept her dreams out of reach. That began to change when she joined Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme in her village. Though hesitant at first, Vidya gradually stepped into a leadership role, gathering 20 other women and offering her terrace as a space for training.

Each session fuelled her confidence. She began to understand concepts like variable costs, profit margins, and branding. Her turning point came during a visit to the spice manufacturing unit of Mrs. Poonam Patil, a Magic Bus alumna who had built a successful business from scratch. Watching another woman succeed made Vidya believe she could too.

Drawing inspiration from that visit, she launched her own venture, Suhasini Masale, named after her mother-in-law. With guidance from Magic Bus, she partnered with the Shahapur Women Farmers Producer Company to distribute her products.

Today, Suhasini Masale has become a household name in her area, known for its authentic flavours and home-ground freshness. Vidya's earnings have given her economic independence and changed how her family sees her. Alongside being a homemaker, she is a business owner, a community leader, and an inspiration for countless women who dream but hesitate to take the first step.



Vidya turned her passion for homemade spices into a growing local brand, gaining financial independence and a new identity. Her journey celebrates women who build economic strength from the ground up.

PRINTING PRIDE AND PROGRESS

Hailing from Valsad in Gujarat, Visakhaben lived a life of hardship. A mother of three from a Scheduled Tribe community, she looked after her family alongside handling financial strain, surviving on the earnings of her husband's small printing shop.

The leadership and communication training of Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme changed her trajectory. For the first time, she learnt to articulate her ideas, express opinions, and mobilise others. These newfound skills gave her the courage to look beyond the walls of her home. When she noticed poor waste disposal practices in her neighbourhood, she organised meetings, led a signature campaign, and distributed garbage bins to promote cleaner surroundings. Her success in this initiative ignited a visionary belief. If she could drive change in her community, she could transform her business too.

She returned to her printing unit, V-Printers, with fresh determination. Drawing on her training in business management and customer engagement, she explored new opportunities. With seed capital from Magic Bus, she invested in a book-cutting machine and screen-printing materials. Expanding her services to include invitation cards, bookbinding, and visiting cards, she positioned V-Printers as the go-to shop for nearby villages.

Her commitment to quality and creativity soon earned her loyal customers. The business grew, giving her family stability and restoring her confidence as an equal partner in their success. More importantly, she became a visible leader who could influence others through her example.

Today, Visakhaben's success goes beyond financial progress. She mentors women who aspire to start small ventures and continues advocating for cleanliness and sustainability in her village. Her story shows that empowerment begins when women find the courage to print their own path forward.



With new skills, Visakhaben stepped forward to grow her family's earnings and expand her husband's business. Her journey reflects women moving into leadership, reshaping community standards, and contributing to a self-reliant India.

YUKTA MASALA – THE FLAVOUR OF ENTERPRISE

In Anklas village of Umbergaon taluka, Gujarat, Yuktaben Lalitbhai Rathod's life revolved around her family and the challenge of making ends meet. With an annual household income of ₹80,000, she often worried about providing for her children and ensuring their education. Social barriers and limited opportunities made the idea of financial independence seem far-fetched. Yet, beneath her quiet determination was an unspoken dream of creating something of her own.



Through the life skills and leadership sessions of Rural Livelihood Programme, Yuktaben discovered a new sense of confidence. The training helped her understand market research, community issues, and financial planning. When she identified that villagers had to travel long distances to buy quality spices, she saw not just a gap, but a chance to make a difference.

With guidance and seed support from Magic Bus, she developed a simple but ambitious plan of launching her own spice brand. After months of research, testing, and community feedback, Yukta Masala was born in 2024. Starting small, she set up a home-based packaging unit and sourced authentic spices at fair prices. Each packet she packed symbolised a step toward her independence.

Her brand's focus on purity and affordability quickly won hearts. Soon, Yukta Masala became a household name in her village, with steady orders during weddings and festivals. This milestone brought both income stability and newfound respect within her community.

Beyond business, Yuktaben has taken the lead in village clean-up drives and waste management campaigns, motivating other women to step forward. Her journey is no longer just about earning; it's about inspiring. She now dreams of setting up a larger packaging unit and expanding Yukta Masala across nearby districts. Her story is proof that courage, when guided by opportunity, can truly change lives.



Yuktaben spotted a gap in access to quality spices and built a steady income through it.

Her journey reflects women turning everyday needs into a local enterprise, strengthening family security and contributing to economic growth.

A BEACON OF SUCCESS IN POULTRY FARMING

Geeta, from Pargaon in Maharashtra, aspired for a better future despite limited opportunities. She started small, raising a few chickens in her backyard to support her family.



The leadership and entrepreneurship training of Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme gave her the skills to build structure around her vision. She learned how to plan operations, maintain flock health, and manage finances effectively. What began as a small poultry setup soon grew into a stable and profitable business. Her success not only improved her family's income but also inspired others in her community to explore similar ventures.

However, Geeta's ambition was never limited to her own growth. She wanted her entire village to progress. Observing how unlit roads made evening travel unsafe, she took the initiative to address it. Mobilising residents, coordinating with local authorities, and ensuring accountability, she successfully led a project to install streetlights across Pargaon.

The change was immediate. The roads that were once deserted after dusk now saw children playing and women walking home safely. Her leadership in both business and community welfare earned her immense respect and positioned her as a role model for others.

Geeta credits her growth to the power of skills like communication and problem-solving that helped her navigate challenges, influence others, and find creative solutions. Today, her poultry enterprise continues to thrive, and her confidence as a community leader continues to grow.

From a small backyard setup to leading a village-wide transformation, Geeta's story reflects the essence of empowered leadership and its impact in transforming communities.



Geeta grew a backyard poultry idea into a successful enterprise. Her leadership skills led her village to safer, well-lit streets. Her journey is a testament to skilled and confident women driving India's development.

BRIDGING DREAMS WITH DETERMINATION

In Dabhad village of Bhiwandi, Maharashtra, Swapnali grew up believing that education could transform lives. Her family's limited income, just enough to support six members, made her dreams of higher studies seem distant. Yet, she refused to let her circumstances define her. While tutoring students at a local computer centre, she realised how many young people in her village had to travel long distances for digital education. That spark of awareness became her mission.

As a youth leader trained under the Rural Livelihood Programme of Magic Bus, Swapnali learned how to plan, communicate, and lead initiatives that address real community challenges. She channelled this learning into launching her own computer training centre in 2019, equipped with a few desktops and laptops. The centre quickly gained traction, offering local youth a chance to learn essential digital skills without leaving their village.

But her journey wasn't without obstacles. When the pandemic struck, financial instability forced her to shut down temporarily. Refusing to give up, Swapnali adapted by diversifying her income, selling household goods and managing small retail ventures to support her family. The crisis taught her resilience and the importance of adaptability in business.

When normalcy returned, she reopened her computer institute, stronger and more structured than before. With improved systems, updated curriculum, and renewed confidence, her centre began flourishing again. Today, it provides steady income, supports her B.Sc. studies, and helps fund her brother's education. More importantly, it has empowered hundreds of youth in her community with the digital skills they need to succeed.

Swapnali's vision extends beyond personal success. She mentors other women, encouraging them to build sustainable careers. Her story reflects the power of leadership and purpose-driven change, proving that when one woman rises, her entire community follows.



Swapnali turned a simple tutoring role into a massive digital learning centre for youth, overcoming setbacks. Her journey reflects the strength of determined women who open doors to opportunity, nurture local talent, and foster digital inclusion in India.

STITCHING A FUTURE, ONE SALE AT A TIME

In the lanes of Ankla village in Gujarat, Ritaben's days once began before sunrise and ended long after sunset. Her time was divided between caring for her two children, managing household chores, and helping her husband, a tailor, earn a living. Together, they made just enough to survive, with an annual income of ₹1,90,000 barely covering their needs.



Early marriage had cut short her education, and financial stress made her dreams seem impossible. Magic Bus' Rural Livelihood Programme helped her build confidence, financial literacy, and business skills, opening her eyes to what could be achieved with structure and discipline.

Inspired to make a difference, she first took charge of waste management, a neglected problem in her neighbourhood. She mobilised other women, organised a cleanliness drive, and ensured dustbins were placed around the locality. The initiative made her realise something powerful: she had the ability to lead and inspire change.

Ritaben turned this confidence towards her small home-based grocery store. Earlier, the shop had a few basic items and very few customers. Through training in market research and customer engagement, she learnt to analyse local needs and price products smartly. With seed support from Magic Bus, she expanded her store's range to include stationery, household essentials, and daily-use products.

As customers began trusting her shop, she reinvested profits to grow her stock. Her business became a reliable fixture in the community.

Her store not only supports her family's needs but also funds her children's education. Neighbours who once saw her as a quiet homemaker now see a confident entrepreneur who leads by example. Ritaben's story is one of perseverance, growth, and faith in oneself.



Early marriage and financial strain once limited Ritaben's world, but training gave her the confidence to expand her grocery store. Her journey shows a woman earning steadily and shaping a future on her own terms.

VARSHA'S VEGETABLE VENTURE

As a young girl from Pisarva in Maharashtra, Varsha was forced to discontinue her studies in the 11th grade due to financial hardship. After marriage, she balanced household responsibilities and agricultural work. With her husband's support, she completed her 12th grade, a small but significant step toward building something of her own.



Her turning point came when she joined livelihood and leadership training sessions organised by Magic Bus under the Rural Livelihood Programme. The exposure to business planning and communication skills helped her rediscover her entrepreneurial spirit. A market survey conducted during the training revealed that local farmers struggled to sell their vegetables at fair prices. They either travelled long distances to Pune's market or sold their produce cheaply within the village.

Varsha saw a gap and an opportunity. She proposed a simple solution of buying vegetables from farmers at the same rate offered in Pune, saving them travel time and costs while ensuring steady supply for the city market. Her familiarity and credibility within the community built trust quickly, and farmers began supplying directly to her.

In February 2025, she officially launched her vegetable distribution business. Within the first month, her business began generating profits and recognition. She managed transportation, pricing, and coordination herself, ensuring both farmers and buyers benefited. The success not only improved her family's financial situation but also created a ripple of confidence among other women in her village who looked up to her as a beacon of hope.

Today, Varsha continues to expand her operations, planning to cover nearby villages and formalise her network of local suppliers. Her journey reflects how practical thinking and persistence can turn challenges into pathways for dignity.



Varsha transformed local market barriers into a thriving supply chain, proving how skilling and opportunity enable women to build stronger livelihoods and power India's economic growth.



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