

Catalyzing Local Enterprise: Evaluating the Impact of PMEGP and ODOP on Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Firozabad

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Abstract

This study investigates the transformative impact of two flagship government schemes—the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and One District One Product (ODOP)—on entrepreneurship development in the industrially significant district of Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh. Known for its artisanal glass and bangle industry, Firozabad faces a mix of legacy challenges including informality, weak financial linkages, outdated technology, and limited global branding. Using mixed-method analysis including field surveys, stakeholder interviews, and secondary data from MSME Ministry and KVIC, the study evaluates how these schemes have enabled micro and small entrepreneurs—particularly first-generation business owners, artisans, and women—to access formal finance, improve production capabilities, and enter wider markets. PMEGP has promoted capital formation and self-employment, while ODOP has emphasized product identity, cluster development, and market integration. Despite notable success in enterprise creation and income generation, challenges remain in sustainability, scalability, digital literacy, and post-loan monitoring. The study offers policy suggestions to align these schemes with broader sustainable development goals and rural industrialization.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Development, PMEGP, ODOP, Firozabad, MSME Growth, Government Schemes

I. Introduction:

Contextualizing Entrepreneurship and Government Intervention

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as the cornerstone of economic growth, innovation, employment generation, and social transformation. In modern developmental paradigms, especially in emerging economies like India, entrepreneurship is increasingly being viewed not only as an economic activity but also as a vehicle for achieving inclusive development, regional equity, and sustainable livelihoods. The critical role that entrepreneurship plays in enhancing productivity, fostering technological innovation, and facilitating the optimal utilization of local resources underscores its significance across diverse socio-economic contexts. However, the true potential of entrepreneurship often remains untapped in semi-urban and rural regions, primarily due to systemic barriers such as inadequate financial infrastructure, regulatory hurdles, poor access to markets, and socio-cultural constraints. Recognizing these impediments, the Government of India has progressively adopted a proactive stance in enabling entrepreneurship through policy frameworks, credit facilitation, skill development programs, and sector-specific schemes. Two of the most impactful initiatives in this regard are the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** and the **One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme, both of which aim to empower small and micro entrepreneurs, foster local innovation, and integrate traditional industries into mainstream economic circuits.

In this framework, the district of **Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh** offers a pertinent case study to examine how such interventions influence entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. Often referred to as the 'City of Glass,' Firozabad is globally renowned for its traditional glass and bangle industry, which dates back several centuries and employs thousands of artisans. Despite its rich artisanal heritage and skilled labor base, the region has historically suffered from chronic underdevelopment, informality, technological stagnation, and lack of institutional support. The enterprises in Firozabad, largely family-run and informally organized, struggled to access formal credit mechanisms and remained excluded from growth-oriented ecosystems. Moreover, these micro-enterprises faced structural constraints in terms of inadequate branding, weak supply chains, absence of standardized production techniques, and limited exposure to external markets. These challenges not only limited the scalability of businesses but also led to significant income and opportunity disparities within the population. For years, the socio-economic potential of this industrious district remained underutilized, as existing economic policies failed to address its specific entrepreneurial needs.

The **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)**, launched in 2008 and implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) through Khadi and Village

Industries Commission (KVIC), seeks to bridge this very gap by supporting micro-enterprises in both urban and rural settings. With an emphasis on first-generation entrepreneurs and the provision of subsidy-linked credit assistance, PMEGP addresses the critical issue of financial inclusion and business incubation. The scheme's relevance to Firozabad lies in its potential to convert traditional craft knowledge into viable business enterprises by reducing capital constraints and enhancing enterprise sustainability. PMEGP's focus on job creation, local resource utilization, and decentralized manufacturing makes it an ideal fit for regions like Firozabad where the informal economy dominates and the scope for home-based or cluster-based production remains immense.

Parallely, the **One District One Product (ODOP)** initiative, conceptualized by the Government of Uttar Pradesh and later mainstreamed nationally, aligns with the goal of nurturing localized entrepreneurial ecosystems by focusing on indigenous industries and unique products. In the case of Firozabad, the ODOP scheme has identified **glassware and bangles** as the district's core product, thereby anchoring government support, market linkages, and capacity-building programs around this traditional strength. ODOP not only celebrates the cultural heritage embedded in these local crafts but also seeks to modernize production, enhance value addition, and integrate small producers with national and global value chains. By promoting skill enhancement, improving branding and packaging standards, and facilitating participation in trade fairs and e-commerce platforms, ODOP creates a holistic ecosystem for entrepreneurial growth. This scheme, therefore, serves as a complementary intervention to PMEGP by focusing on market access, branding, and visibility while PMEGP handles capital support and initial enterprise setup.

The intersection of these two schemes has led to a unique convergence of **financial, infrastructural, and marketing support** for entrepreneurs in Firozabad. The synergy between credit provision through PMEGP and product-specific market promotion through ODOP provides a dual thrust to entrepreneurship development, allowing micro and small businesses to overcome multiple layers of constraints. Moreover, these schemes have special provisions for women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), minorities, and other vulnerable sections of society—thus aligning with the larger goal of inclusive development and social justice. In Firozabad, where a significant portion of the glass industry's workforce comprises women and marginalized groups engaged in home-based manufacturing or artisanal labor, the targeted support provided by these schemes has had a pronounced impact on gender empowerment and economic participation. Women who previously worked in subordinate roles have increasingly transitioned into business ownership and management, creating ripple effects in terms of social mobility and income security.

What makes the case of Firozabad particularly noteworthy is the district's ability to **leverage its historical and cultural capital** to adapt to contemporary economic models. In doing so, it exemplifies the potential for localized, traditional industries to achieve modernization and commercial viability without losing their artisanal essence. The glassware industry, once marred by health hazards, poor working conditions, and informal structures, is gradually witnessing a transformation in production norms, enterprise registration, and quality assurance, largely owing to the intervention of structured government schemes. Furthermore, institutions such as District Industries Centres (DICs), MSME Development Institutes, and training partners under the Ministry of Skill Development have played an instrumental role in this transition by facilitating awareness drives, providing technical training, and aiding entrepreneurs in accessing government benefits.

The broader policy framework within which these schemes operate also reflects India's shift toward **cluster-based industrial development**, grassroots entrepreneurship, and MSME-centric economic models. National initiatives such as the Startup India campaign, Stand-Up India, Make in India, and Digital India have further catalyzed the growth of small businesses by offering tax benefits, digital infrastructure, and regulatory easing. In alignment with these goals, PMEGP and ODOP have functioned as implementation-oriented mechanisms to translate policy vision into ground-level outcomes. Their impact on districts like Firozabad is not merely confined to economic indicators but also includes qualitative improvements in entrepreneurial confidence, innovation culture, and market orientation. With increasing emphasis on local value chains, sustainability, and rural-urban economic integration, such interventions are reshaping India's entrepreneurship landscape in fundamental ways.

It is also crucial to highlight the **resilience-building dimension** of these schemes, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, which had devastating impacts on informal workers and small businesses. In the post-pandemic recovery phase, PMEGP loans provided a vital lifeline to distressed entrepreneurs, enabling them to restart operations, retain labor, and restructure business models. ODOP played a key role in reviving market demand by promoting digital sales, organizing virtual expos, and facilitating logistics support. These timely interventions prevented a large-scale collapse of micro-enterprises and ensured continuity in employment, particularly in economically vulnerable regions like Firozabad. The government's adaptive use of technology, e-portals, and digital subsidy disbursement further enhanced the schemes' transparency and accessibility. However, the efficacy of such programs must also be evaluated against real-world implementation challenges. Bottlenecks such as delayed loan approvals, bureaucratic inertia, lack of coordination among implementing agencies, and limited beneficiary awareness continue to pose hurdles in maximizing impact. Moreover, the absence of structured monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the district level often leads to inefficient targeting and suboptimal

resource allocation. To address these gaps, there is a need for **data-driven governance**, third-party audits, and community-level feedback mechanisms that can improve program design and delivery. Enhancing the role of local governance institutions, industrial associations, and civil society can further strengthen outreach and accountability.

The journey of entrepreneurship development in Firozabad—powered by strategic government interventions such as PMEGP and ODOP—offers valuable insights into the dynamics of localized industrial transformation, inclusive economic participation, and policy effectiveness. These schemes have collectively enabled the reconfiguration of traditional artisanal industries into modern economic entities, provided upward mobility to marginalized communities, and catalyzed job creation in a region previously constrained by informality and underdevelopment. As India continues to pursue its ambition of becoming a \$5 trillion economy with a strong focus on MSME-led growth, the lessons from Firozabad underline the importance of integrated, region-specific policy solutions that combine financial assistance with capacity-building, innovation, and market integration. The intersection of tradition and modernity, when facilitated by coherent public policy, can not only revive heritage industries but also create vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems that are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

II. Evolution of Entrepreneurship in Firozabad

The city of **Firozabad**, located in western Uttar Pradesh, is synonymous with India's traditional glassware and bangle industry. As one of the oldest artisanal clusters in the country, Firozabad's industrial trajectory offers a rich narrative of indigenous enterprise, cultural continuity, and economic resilience. Historically, entrepreneurship in Firozabad has been rooted in **family-owned enterprises, caste-based occupational traditions, and informal artisanal practices**, which, although rich in skill and heritage, lacked integration with the formal economy. The evolution of entrepreneurship in the district reflects a gradual, and often inconsistent, transformation shaped by structural constraints, market dynamics, technological stagnation, and more recently, by proactive government intervention.

2.1 Traditional Foundations: Craft, Culture, and Informality

Firozabad's entrepreneurial identity is deeply intertwined with its glass and bangle industry, which dates back to the Mughal era and was further institutionalized during the colonial period. The concentration of artisans, the availability of silica-rich sand, and access to raw materials created a favorable environment for the growth of glass-based handicrafts. Entrepreneurship during this phase was largely **informal, hereditary, and skill-based**, with the knowledge of glassmaking passed down through generations within particular communities such as Muslims, Jains, and certain Hindu castes like the Kumhars. The production units operated as household or kutir udyog enterprises, characterized by **manual labor, low-capital intensity, and dependence on middlemen** for marketing and distribution. Despite being labor-intensive and vibrant in terms of artisanal diversity, this phase of entrepreneurship was marked by **limited scalability, weak institutional linkages, and absence of formal credit support**. Market access was fragmented, with products sold through local mandis or urban retailers. The absence of branding, standardization, or modern packaging restricted access to national or international markets. Thus, while Firozabad had an organic base for entrepreneurship, it remained trapped in a cycle of **subsistence-level production and low returns**, exacerbated by exploitative supply chains and lack of technical upgradation.

2.2 Challenges to Traditional Entrepreneurship

By the late 20th century, the limitations of the traditional entrepreneurial model in Firozabad became increasingly apparent. Key among these challenges was the **lack of modernization and technology adoption**. Most glass furnaces continued to use coal and wood-fired processes, which were not only inefficient and environmentally harmful but also posed serious health hazards to workers. The **absence of modern kiln technology, quality control mechanisms, and energy-efficient equipment** further constrained productivity and product consistency. Moreover, the **absence of financial literacy and credit access** left most artisans dependent on informal moneylenders, often resulting in debt traps. In addition to technological stagnation, **institutional neglect** posed a major hurdle. Despite the glass industry's significance to the local economy, it received minimal policy attention. Artisans lacked exposure to government schemes, vocational training, or industry networks. The educational backwardness of the region further limited the development of managerial and marketing skills among entrepreneurs. As a result, the younger generation often hesitated to continue in the family trade, leading to a gradual erosion of traditional skills and intergenerational continuity. Environmental regulations in the early 2000s, especially concerning pollution and carbon emissions, also hit the industry hard. Many small-scale units that operated in densely populated neighborhoods were forced to shut down or relocate due to environmental non-compliance. This led to a phase of **industrial displacement and de-industrialization**, which further discouraged entrepreneurship. While some units managed to adapt by investing in cleaner technologies, many others lacked the capital and institutional support to survive.

2.3 State Intervention and Policy Realignment

The entrepreneurial scenario in Firozabad began to witness a gradual revival with the government's shift in focus toward **inclusive development and MSME-led growth**. Recognizing the socio-economic potential of traditional clusters, the **Ministry of MSME**, along with **state industrial departments**, began targeting backward regions like Firozabad through cluster development programs and entrepreneurship support schemes. This shift was complemented by the emergence of policies like the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** and the **One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme, both of which prioritized decentralized production, local value addition, and micro-enterprise promotion. The **PMEGP scheme**, in particular, provided a significant breakthrough by offering **collateral-free loans with subsidy components** for new entrepreneurs. For the first time, artisans and workers with minimal capital but adequate skills were able to transition into small-scale entrepreneurs. The scheme's focus on first-generation entrepreneurs also encouraged youth and women to explore self-employment as a viable livelihood option. In Firozabad, numerous micro-enterprises were established under PMEGP in the areas of **glass cutting, decorative ware production, packaging, engraving, and lamp manufacturing**. The presence of KVIC and District Industries Centres (DICs) facilitated the process of project identification, bank linkage, and monitoring. Simultaneously, the **ODOP initiative** provided a targeted policy focus by designating **glassware and bangles as the core district product**. This recognition led to a cascade of benefits: district-specific branding, design innovation, capacity-building workshops, financial grants for packaging and branding, and dedicated stalls in national and international trade expos. ODOP helped reorient local entrepreneurship from subsistence production to market competitiveness. Through partnerships with **e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart**, ODOP also opened up digital market channels for Firozabad-based producers, enabling wider consumer reach.

2.4 Transformation Through Cluster Development and Skill Building

Government policies post-2015 saw a renewed push for **cluster-based industrialization**, with Firozabad receiving assistance under the **Micro and Small Enterprises – Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP)**. This led to the establishment of **common facility centers, design hubs, and technology upgrade labs**, enabling entrepreneurs to access shared infrastructure. Such initiatives enhanced productivity, improved quality standards, and facilitated economies of scale. Notably, cluster development also fostered collaboration among entrepreneurs, transforming the competitive landscape into a more cooperative ecosystem. Additionally, **skill development** emerged as a critical enabler of entrepreneurship. Under the aegis of schemes like **Skill India Mission, PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana**, and training programs by MSME Tool Rooms, young artisans and aspiring entrepreneurs were trained in glass molding, computer-aided design, inventory management, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship development. The infusion of soft and technical skills helped bridge the generational gap and professionalize traditional vocations. Firozabad saw the rise of **women-led SHGs, cooperatives, and artisan groups** that began producing not just traditional bangles, but also **home décor, eco-friendly products, and customized corporate gifts** from glass.

2.5 New-Age Entrepreneurs and Emerging Enterprises

The entrepreneurial base in Firozabad has gradually diversified over the past decade. Unlike earlier times, when entrepreneurship was confined to hereditary professions, **a new breed of entrepreneurs**—many of them educated and digitally literate—have begun to redefine the scope and scale of enterprise. These new-age entrepreneurs are more open to **innovation, design experimentation, branding, and quality certifications**. Many have adopted **e-commerce, social media marketing, and online order fulfillment models**, expanding their clientele across cities and even overseas. Startups focusing on **glass recycling, sustainable glass products, and eco-conscious innovations** are also emerging. Moreover, there has been increased participation of women and youth, who were earlier excluded from the mainstream industry. Initiatives by **Women Entrepreneurship Platforms (WEP), NGOs, and government agencies** have helped in training women artisans, creating common workspaces, and facilitating microfinance. Today, several women in Firozabad operate successful micro-enterprises in decorative bangles, gift packaging, and glass jewelry. They not only contribute to household incomes but also represent a silent yet significant transformation in gender dynamics and social inclusion.

2.6 Role of Local Institutions and Industry Networks

The **District Industries Centre (DIC)** in Firozabad, along with industry associations like the **Firozabad Glass Manufacturers Association**, has played a facilitative role in mentoring entrepreneurs, providing market intelligence, and coordinating with banks and government departments. These institutions have also been instrumental in resolving grievances, facilitating export certifications, and organizing local exhibitions. The **tie-up with National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** and other export promotion councils has further expanded export potential for local glassware and opened up new global markets. Incubators and design centers funded by the **MSME Ministry** have been critical in driving innovation and improving product aesthetics. Entrepreneurial support through **Udyam registration, subsidized electricity, interest subvention schemes**, and

MSME Sampark portals have also improved the ease of doing business. These interventions collectively represent a shift from fragmented, isolated entrepreneurship toward a more organized, institutionalized, and knowledge-based entrepreneurial environment.

2.7 Challenges in the Contemporary Landscape

Despite these positive transformations, challenges persist. Many entrepreneurs in Firozabad still operate in semi-formal or informal setups and remain unaware of the full range of government benefits. Delays in PMEGP loan disbursement, inconsistencies in bank cooperation, and bureaucratic complexities often dissuade new entrants. While ODOP has improved branding, mass-scale marketing remains limited due to infrastructural and logistic bottlenecks. Furthermore, poor urban planning, environmental concerns, and lack of waste disposal systems continue to impact industry growth. Another key concern is the **gap between traditional and modern entrepreneurship**. While legacy artisans struggle with digital literacy and formalization, tech-savvy entrepreneurs face challenges in building networks and understanding craft traditions. Bridging this gap through **intergenerational mentorship, hybrid business models**, and policy convergence is necessary to ensure sustainability. Additionally, more targeted efforts are needed to support **micro-enterprises in product diversification, export readiness, and compliance** with international standards.

2.8 Looking Forward: Toward a Resilient and Inclusive Ecosystem

Firozabad stands at a critical juncture in its entrepreneurial evolution. With supportive policies, institutional backing, and community engagement, the city has the potential to become a **model for traditional-industrial revival** in India. Future strategies must focus on deepening market integration, fostering design-driven innovation, and building circular economy practices in the glass sector. Strengthening the implementation of schemes like PMEGP and ODOP through **transparency, digital tools, monitoring frameworks, and capacity building** will be essential. Moreover, there is a pressing need to adopt a **multi-stakeholder approach** involving government, academia, industry bodies, and civil society to sustain entrepreneurial momentum. Educational institutions can contribute through innovation labs, incubation centers, and live projects. Social enterprises and CSR arms of corporations can support artisan collectives. Local governance bodies must play a proactive role in industrial zoning, pollution control, and infrastructure creation.

III. PMEGP: A Catalyst for Micro and Small Enterprises

Entrepreneurship, particularly at the grassroots level, often faces formidable barriers related to lack of capital, institutional support, and creditworthiness. Recognizing the need to address these constraints, the Government of India launched the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** in 2008 with the explicit objective of promoting **self-employment opportunities through micro-enterprise creation**. The scheme is implemented at the national level by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** and operates through a decentralized network involving **State KVIC Directorates, District Industries Centres (DICs), Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs)**, and commercial banks. Designed to target both rural and urban areas, PMEGP combines a unique mix of **subsidy-linked finance, first-time entrepreneurship support, and inclusive development**, making it a key catalyst for regions such as **Firozabad**, where traditional industries exist alongside rising unemployment and informal economic arrangements. Firozabad, renowned for its glassware and bangle-making legacy, presents a fertile ground for entrepreneurship but is equally marred by challenges such as **informal labor, credit constraints, outdated technologies, and inadequate infrastructure**. Within this context, PMEGP has emerged as a transformative instrument. It facilitates the establishment of **new micro-enterprises** by providing **bank-financed loans of up to ₹25 lakh** for manufacturing and ₹10 lakh for service-sector units, with **margin money subsidies ranging from 15% to 35%** based on the beneficiary's location and social category. What distinguishes PMEGP from other credit schemes is its **focus on first-generation entrepreneurs**, especially from **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), women, minorities**, and differently-abled groups, thereby democratizing access to economic opportunity.

In Firozabad, the implementation of PMEGP has had a **visible socio-economic impact**. With its long-standing tradition of micro-units centered around **glass bangles, utensils, and handcrafted home décor**, the district has leveraged PMEGP support to **formalize and expand** production operations. The **DIC Firozabad**, in collaboration with local KVIC offices and partnering banks, has facilitated project appraisals, conducted entrepreneurship development programs (EDPs), and extended handholding support to applicants. According to data from the **Ministry of MSME**, hundreds of PMEGP-supported units have been sanctioned in the district, particularly in clusters such as **Sadar, Jasrana, Shikohabad, and Tundla**, resulting in the **direct employment of thousands of artisans and semi-skilled laborers**. An important outcome of PMEGP implementation in Firozabad has been the **shift from informal to semi-formal enterprise structures**. Before PMEGP, many artisans operated on a small scale, often from their homes or rented spaces, with negligible registration, poor

financial records, and no access to formal credit. The PMEGP framework, which mandates Udyam registration, GST compliance, and the submission of detailed project reports, has nudged entrepreneurs toward **formalization and better business practices**. This formalization not only enhances access to secondary benefits like **government procurement, quality certification, and marketing assistance** but also empowers entrepreneurs to participate in digital marketplaces and export promotion schemes.

Equally significant has been the **diversification of entrepreneurial profiles** in Firozabad due to PMEGP. Earlier, entrepreneurship in the region was largely male-dominated and confined to caste- and kin-based networks. However, with targeted outreach programs and **reserved subsidies for women, SC/ST, and minority applicants**, the scheme has encouraged **a more inclusive and representative entrepreneurial landscape**. Women, in particular, have emerged as notable beneficiaries of the scheme, venturing into **glass jewelry, packaging solutions, gift items, and eco-friendly handicrafts**. Women-led self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperative societies have used PMEGP funds to establish small workshops, acquire tools and raw materials, and train local girls in glass art and finishing. Another crucial area where PMEGP has made an impact is in **technological upgradation**. Traditional glass production in Firozabad is often labor-intensive and manually operated. Many PMEGP-funded units have utilized the sanctioned capital to purchase **semi-automated glass cutting machines, gas-based furnaces, sandblasting equipment, and polishing tools**—thereby improving productivity, reducing health hazards, and minimizing environmental emissions. Entrepreneurs are now able to cater to niche markets such as **customized corporate gifts, eco-friendly décor items, and luxury bangle collections**, which fetch higher margins and open up new customer segments. Technology adoption, in turn, has led to **greater employment elasticity**, where small enterprises hire not just artisans but also designers, technicians, and digital marketers.

The scheme has also contributed to **regional employment generation** by creating a ripple effect along the value chain. PMEGP-supported enterprises have boosted demand for **raw material suppliers, packaging vendors, logistics operators, and retailers**, thereby reinforcing ancillary industries in the region. As the scale and sophistication of these micro-enterprises improve, they also absorb **skilled and semi-skilled labor** from neighboring rural areas, helping to reduce **rural-urban migration pressures**. In several success stories documented by the MSME Ministry and KVIC, youth who were once daily wage workers have transitioned into employers under PMEGP, hiring 4–10 workers and mentoring others in setting up their own ventures. Training and capacity-building are integral to the PMEGP framework, and Firozabad's beneficiaries have benefited from mandatory **Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs)**. These 10-day training programs, delivered through **KVIC-accredited institutions**, cover essential business functions such as **financial management, marketing strategies, record-keeping, working capital management, and digital literacy**. For many first-time entrepreneurs in Firozabad who come from non-business backgrounds, these trainings have provided the foundational knowledge and confidence needed to operate in competitive markets. Moreover, follow-up workshops and mentoring by KVIC field officers have ensured that entrepreneurs remain compliant with project parameters and continuously improve operations.

One of the persistent concerns in MSME financing across India is the **limited reach of formal banking** and the reluctance of banks to finance first-time borrowers. In this context, PMEGP's structured convergence with banks—backed by **credit guarantees, margin money subsidies, and KVIC verification**—has significantly improved trust and uptake. Firozabad's local banks have streamlined application processes by designating **PMEGP nodal officers**, enabling quicker disbursement and better grievance redressal. The digitalization of PMEGP applications via the **e-Tracking System** has also brought transparency and accountability, allowing entrepreneurs to monitor application status and subsidy release. Despite its multiple achievements, PMEGP's implementation in Firozabad is not without challenges. One major issue is the **asymmetry in awareness and information dissemination**. Many eligible artisans, especially those in marginalized communities or remote villages, remain unaware of the scheme or are intimidated by the procedural requirements. Additionally, some beneficiaries have faced **delays in loan disbursement, rejections from banks citing poor credit scores**, and difficulties in preparing viable project reports. The lack of **post-loan support and monitoring mechanisms** has also led to cases of underperformance or enterprise closure. Addressing these bottlenecks will require **greater inter-departmental coordination, digital literacy drives, and localized support centers**.

Another area requiring attention is **market access and product development**. While PMEGP enables production capacity, many entrepreneurs struggle with demand generation, branding, and quality control. To maximize scheme outcomes, linkages with **marketing platforms, buyer-seller meets, ODOP branding, and e-commerce partnerships** should be institutionalized. Firozabad's entrepreneurs must also be supported in complying with **international product standards**, especially as demand for sustainable and ethically produced handicrafts rises globally. KVIC and MSME departments can work with **design institutes, export councils**, and industry chambers to bridge this gap and enhance competitiveness. Looking forward, PMEGP holds the potential to **transition Firozabad's micro-entrepreneurs into sustainable, scalable, and socially impactful enterprises**. The integration of PMEGP with complementary schemes such as **MUDRA Yojana, Stand-Up India, Startup India, ODOP, and MSME Champions portal** can create a synergistic policy environment. For instance, a

PMEGP-funded unit can benefit from MUDRA loans for working capital, ODOP branding for market visibility, and MSME Sampark for mentorship. Such convergence would create **entrepreneurial value chains** that are not only economically viable but also inclusive and resilient.

The PMEGP's role in **economic democratization**—empowering individuals with limited means to become business owners—is especially critical in the post-pandemic recovery phase. As Firozabad reconfigures its industrial ecosystem to meet modern expectations and sustainable norms, PMEGP can act as the cornerstone of **local economic renewal**, skill development, and youth engagement. With regular policy review, increased budgetary allocations, and capacity enhancement of implementing agencies, PMEGP can continue to unlock entrepreneurial potential across tiers of society, preserving the legacy of Firozabad's glass craftsmanship while ushering in a new era of innovation and enterprise.

IV. ODOP: Strengthening Indigenous Products and Branding

The One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, launched by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in 2018 and later incorporated into the central government's broader vision for MSME support, represents a paradigm shift in regional development strategy. The initiative seeks to promote indigenous industries by identifying and supporting one distinct product from each district, thereby enhancing regional competitiveness, preserving traditional craftsmanship, and stimulating economic activity. In the case of **Firozabad**, the ODOP initiative has provided renewed visibility and structural support to the city's globally renowned **glass and bangle industry**, which has historically been a cornerstone of its local economy yet faced a host of systemic challenges in the post-liberalization era. The implementation of ODOP in Firozabad has led to targeted interventions in areas such as **branding, packaging, infrastructure development, skills enhancement, and marketing**, with far-reaching implications for entrepreneurship development.

Firozabad's glassware sector has a deep-rooted cultural and economic heritage, yet over time, it has been characterized by informal operations, health and environmental hazards, low margins, and stagnant market access. Artisans and small-scale manufacturers have struggled with inadequate exposure to modern retail, export markets, and competitive branding mechanisms. Against this background, the **ODOP initiative's emphasis on cluster-based development** has been particularly instrumental. By recognizing **glass bangles and decorative glass items** as the district's flagship products, ODOP has successfully focused policy attention and resource allocation toward revitalizing this craft-based industry. Through the development of **Common Facility Centres (CFCs)**, ODOP has introduced shared access to modern tools, design labs, quality testing units, and environmentally sustainable furnaces, thereby reducing production costs and improving standardization for micro and small enterprises. A critical intervention under ODOP in Firozabad has been the **formal identification and mapping of artisan clusters**, which has enabled planners to tailor support according to local needs. Through detailed surveys conducted by the District Industries Centre (DIC) and Directorate of Industries, the state government identified key clusters in areas such as **Mohalla Mirza, Dholpura, Ramgarh, and Sarai Sita Ram**, where hundreds of families are engaged in bangle-making and related processes. ODOP interventions in these clusters have included **skill upgradation workshops**, training in **digital design software, health and safety standards, and financial literacy**, thus professionalizing the sector and increasing its sustainability.

One of the most visible impacts of ODOP has been the improvement in **product branding and packaging**, traditionally overlooked in the Firozabad glass sector. ODOP provides assistance to entrepreneurs for **logo creation, packaging innovation, labelling, and geographical indication (GI) registration**, thus transforming artisanal products into value-added commercial commodities. For instance, a traditionally handcrafted glass bangle now comes with export-ready packaging and a certified tag that highlights its local origin, artisan history, and unique aesthetic. This not only enhances marketability but also builds **emotional and cultural value among buyers**, especially in niche domestic and international markets that seek authentic, handcrafted products. Another major boost to entrepreneurship under ODOP comes from enhanced **market access and e-commerce integration**. The scheme has facilitated participation of Firozabad entrepreneurs in **national and international trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, and export promotion councils**. Entrepreneurs have showcased their products in major exhibitions such as the **India International Trade Fair (IITF), Surajkund Mela, and UP International Trade Show**. These platforms have helped entrepreneurs connect directly with buyers, secure orders, and gain market insights. In addition, ODOP has supported the onboarding of local enterprises onto **digital commerce platforms like Amazon Karigar, Flipkart Samarth, and GeM (Government e-Marketplace)**. This digital push has provided a lifeline for small businesses, particularly during the COVID-19 lockdowns, by ensuring continuity in operations and expanding customer reach.

Infrastructure development has also been a focal area under ODOP. Firozabad's glass sector has historically suffered due to **outdated furnaces, erratic power supply, poor waste disposal mechanisms, and unsafe working conditions**. ODOP funding has been channelled into **modernizing industrial clusters** with eco-friendly furnaces, **solar lighting, rainwater harvesting units, and pollution control equipment**, in collaboration with the Ministry of MSME and the Department of Environment. This has not only improved the efficiency of

operations but also **enhanced occupational health and environmental sustainability**, aligning traditional industries with contemporary compliance norms. Furthermore, upgraded infrastructure has enabled entrepreneurs to meet **quality and safety certifications** required for exports, which were previously inaccessible to most small-scale units. The ODOP initiative has also prioritized **skill development and entrepreneurship training**. The **Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)** has partnered with Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), National Institute of Design (NID), and other vocational institutions to train artisans and entrepreneurs in **product design, quality management, cost control, and digital marketing**. These interventions are particularly beneficial for **young entrepreneurs and women artisans**, who now have access to modern tools and learning platforms, bridging the generational and technological gaps in entrepreneurship. Importantly, ODOP has also facilitated **credit linkage through Mudra loans**, PMEGP, and state-level MSME finance schemes, ensuring that trained entrepreneurs can also access working capital and fixed asset investments.

Firozabad's integration into ODOP has also fostered **collaborative enterprise models**. Many artisans and small units have come together to form **producer collectives, cooperatives, and self-help groups**, thereby enhancing bargaining power and reducing per-unit costs. These collectives have been especially effective in **bulk procurement of raw materials, group marketing, and shared use of digital infrastructure**. Moreover, the formation of **ODOP marketing cells** at the district level has further facilitated communication between producers, buyers, and policymakers. These cells regularly conduct feedback sessions, marketing workshops, and grievance redressal meetings, strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem through active stakeholder engagement. The ODOP initiative has also had a significant **social impact** in Firozabad. By promoting home-based production and women-led enterprises, it has created new avenues for **female economic participation** in a region where social norms often restrict women's mobility and financial independence. Many women in Firozabad now operate small glasswork units from home or within community clusters, earning independent incomes and contributing to household resilience. ODOP has also encouraged the transfer of artisanal skills across generations by making glassmaking economically viable again, which had been witnessing youth attrition due to poor returns and job insecurity.

Despite these gains, the implementation of ODOP in Firozabad is not without limitations. One recurring issue is the **gap between product promotion and market consolidation**. While initial branding and exposure have improved, many entrepreneurs continue to face **challenges in fulfilling bulk orders, maintaining product consistency, and scaling operations**. These gaps stem from limited managerial experience, lack of access to advanced production techniques, and constraints in warehousing and logistics. Furthermore, although ODOP has built linkages with e-commerce platforms, many entrepreneurs lack the digital literacy or inventory systems needed to operate smoothly in online retail. To overcome these hurdles, ODOP must intensify its efforts in **digital onboarding, mentorship programs, and last-mile delivery infrastructure**. Another area that requires strategic focus is **intellectual property rights (IPR) and product innovation**. While Firozabad's glass products have rich aesthetic and cultural value, few units have access to **design patents, trademarks, or innovation grants**. The creation of a district-level **Design and Innovation Hub** under ODOP could nurture young designers and artisans, providing them with the resources to experiment with form, function, and utility. Such a hub could also act as a research center for sustainable materials, heat-efficient furnaces, and green packaging, making Firozabad's glass industry more aligned with international trends and eco-conscious consumer preferences.

Looking ahead, the sustainability of ODOP's impact in Firozabad will depend on its ability to evolve from a **government-led initiative to a self-propelling ecosystem**. This would require **capacity-building at the institutional level**, especially within DICs, KVIC offices, and cluster management agencies. It also calls for **greater private sector participation**, particularly in mentorship, export facilitation, and CSR investments in cluster development. Partnerships with academic institutions, design schools, and incubators can further enrich the entrepreneurial landscape, enabling Firozabad's artisans to transition into **design-led, market-driven enterprises**. Finally, there is a need for **robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** to assess ODOP's impact over time. Periodic surveys, outcome-based KPIs, and real-time data dashboards can help identify gaps and replicate best practices across other ODOP districts. Firozabad's success story in glass bangles and decorative glass can serve as a **blueprint for other traditional industries** seeking modernization through entrepreneurship. The convergence of ODOP with schemes such as PMEGP, SFURTI, and the MSME Champions portal can further amplify these outcomes, making ODOP a cornerstone in India's vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (Self-Reliant India).

V. Synergistic Impact: Convergence of Schemes and Institutional Support

The combined impact of PMEGP and ODOP in Firozabad lies in their **complementary design and implementation**. While PMEGP focuses on enabling capital infusion and enterprise establishment, ODOP addresses post-setup challenges such as branding, skill upgradation, and market access. The synergy between financial and non-financial support mechanisms has created a fertile ground for entrepreneurial growth. Various state and central government departments, including MSME-DI (Development Institute), KVIC, SIDBI, and

NABARD, have collaborated to ensure seamless integration of these schemes. Local trade bodies and industry associations have also played a role in disseminating information, mentoring, and facilitating compliance for new entrepreneurs. This ecosystemic approach has not only increased the survival rate of startups but also fostered innovation in traditional crafts, transitioning them into scalable business ventures.

VI. Women and Marginalized Entrepreneurs: Inclusive Economic Participation

An important dimension of these schemes is their focus on inclusivity. PMEGP offers higher subsidies for women, SC/ST, and minority entrepreneurs, encouraging greater participation of historically excluded groups. In Firozabad, where a significant proportion of glasswork is carried out by women artisans—often from Muslim and Dalit backgrounds—this has empowered them economically and socially. Many women have transitioned from wage labor to enterprise ownership, setting up home-based or small-scale production units. Similarly, ODOP has integrated women-centric skill development modules and facilitated their participation in trade fairs and exhibitions. This has transformed traditional gender roles, led to household income diversification, and enhanced decision-making capacities among women. The schemes have thus played a dual role—stimulating entrepreneurship and advancing gender and social equity.

VII. Employment Generation and Skill Enhancement

The entrepreneurial surge spurred by PMEGP and ODOP has had a direct impact on employment generation in Firozabad. The decentralized nature of micro-enterprises enables them to absorb semi-skilled and unskilled labor, which is abundant in the region. Training programs organized under these schemes—covering business planning, financial literacy, product innovation, and digital marketing—have upgraded the skill base of local youth and artisans. The establishment of CFCs under ODOP has made advanced machinery and design labs accessible, reducing production costs and increasing output quality. In turn, this has led to enhanced productivity, job creation, and income stabilization in a district where seasonal unemployment and informal jobs were dominant.

VIII. Challenges and Gaps in Implementation

Despite notable progress, the implementation of PMEGP and ODOP in Firozabad is not without challenges. Procedural delays in loan sanctioning, complex documentation, limited digital literacy, and lack of awareness among potential beneficiaries continue to impede the full potential of these schemes. Many micro-entrepreneurs face difficulties in navigating regulatory compliance, quality certification, and export norms. Moreover, weak inter-departmental coordination, inadequate follow-up support post-establishment, and infrastructural bottlenecks such as power supply and transportation also act as constraints. In the case of ODOP, while branding support exists, there remains a gap in demand forecasting, global supply chain integration, and access to modern retail platforms for smaller players. Addressing these issues requires more streamlined policy implementation, digital handholding, and district-level monitoring mechanisms.

IX. Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Impact

To maximize the impact of PMEGP and ODOP on entrepreneurship in Firozabad, several policy recommendations can be proposed. First, **capacity-building workshops** on scheme guidelines, financial management, and digital tools should be conducted at block and village levels. Second, the **establishment of incubation centers** in partnership with academic institutions can support innovation and mentorship. Third, **credit facilitation cells** should be strengthened within DICs to reduce procedural delays and enhance transparency. Fourth, **market intelligence and export readiness training** should be expanded to help entrepreneurs tap into national and international markets. Finally, a **comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system**, using digital dashboards and real-time feedback from beneficiaries, can help track progress and rectify implementation lags. These interventions, if executed efficiently, could deepen the entrepreneurial culture in Firozabad and serve as a replicable model for other districts with traditional industries.

X. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the **transformative potential** of government interventions like **PMEGP** and **ODOP** in promoting **entrepreneurship in traditional industrial clusters** such as Firozabad. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme has emerged as a significant enabler for **first-time entrepreneurs**, especially those lacking collateral or prior business history. By offering financial assistance in the form of subsidies and credit support, PMEGP has **democratized entrepreneurship**, allowing local artisans and marginalized individuals to formalize micro-enterprises across sectors like glassmaking, handicrafts, and utensil manufacturing. This has led to a notable increase in self-employment, income diversification, and asset creation. On the other hand, the ODOP initiative has focused on **revitalizing district-specific heritage industries** through cluster-based development and capacity enhancement. Firozabad's selection under ODOP for its glass

bangles and decorative glassware has resulted in **institutional support** in the form of **skill training, common facility centers, marketing platforms, and e-commerce onboarding**. The initiative has effectively bridged gaps between traditional artisans and modern markets, enhancing product visibility and price realization. By integrating branding, packaging, quality certification, and trade exposure, ODOP has elevated Firozabad's indigenous crafts into competitive commercial ventures.

Together, PMEGP and ODOP have triggered **structural transformations** in the local economy by creating sustainable employment opportunities, promoting women's economic participation, and reducing rural-to-urban migration. The schemes have helped develop **entrepreneurial ecosystems** rooted in local culture and knowledge systems while adapting to national and global market trends. The formation of self-help groups, cooperatives, and artisan collectives has further contributed to **community-based entrepreneurship**, enabling economies of scale and collective bargaining. Despite these achievements, the research highlights several **policy and implementation challenges**. Many entrepreneurs continue to face bottlenecks in **scaling operations, accessing working capital, upgrading technology, and navigating regulatory compliance**. In PMEGP, delays in fund disbursement and complex documentation deter beneficiaries, while in ODOP, infrastructural inadequacies, inconsistent training quality, and limited digital literacy constrain sustained growth. The lack of **robust data analytics and monitoring frameworks** also limits the ability to track scheme effectiveness over time.

To maximize impact, the study recommends a **convergent policy approach** that integrates PMEGP, ODOP, Mudra loans, Startup India, and Make in India into a **comprehensive entrepreneurship framework**. This should be supported by **digital infrastructure, mentorship networks, design hubs, and innovation labs**. Special focus must be placed on **gender-sensitive policies, sustainable production practices, and export facilitation**, particularly in labor-intensive clusters like Firozabad. Furthermore, partnerships between **state institutions, private enterprises, academic bodies, and global platforms** can help transform traditional enterprises into **globally competitive, resilient business models**. PMEGP and ODOP are **instrumental levers for inclusive economic growth**, capable of turning local potential into national economic assets. Their success in Firozabad illustrates how **place-based policy frameworks** can empower grassroots entrepreneurship, preserve cultural heritage, and drive regional development in India's transition toward a **self-reliant economy**.

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