SUBHADRA

Odisha's Flagship Direct Benefit Transfer for Women

Evidence Synthesis | Research Highlights | Skilling Roadmap

SCHEME AT A GLANCE

1.00 Cr +	₹20,600 Cr +	2 Lakh +
Women beneficiaries	**Total Disbursed (2024–2026)**	**CBDC transactions**
Via DBT and CBDC	Over 4 instalments	One of the highest in the country

DESIGN ARCHITECTURE

Benefits

- ‣ Eligible women within the age group of 21–60 years
- ‣ ₹10,000 per year in two instalments of ₹5,000 each.
  Payment dates: Rakhi Purnima & International Women's Day (8 March)
- ‣ Total entitlement: ₹50,000 over five years (2024–2029)
- ‣ DBT/CBDC into Aadhaar enabled, single-holder bank account

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Three major independent evaluations inform this brief:

SUBHADRA Samikhya (IIM Sambalpur)	Policy Evaluation (SBI Research)	Sarvam AI (AI Voice Bot)
Primary field survey | 22,000+ beneficiaries | All 30 districts	***Customer-level banking data | Aug 2024 – Dec 2025***	***AI-enabled voice calling platform | Beneficiary feedback at scale***
Fund utilisation, financial agency, aspirations & perceptions	75,750 beneficiaries vs. 85,588 control group accounts	Captures beneficiary perceptions, behavioural shifts & aspirations
Blended method: physical interviews at AWCs + telephonic	Methodology Used: Staggered Difference-in-Differences	Voice interactions and surveys delivered at scale across districts
Stratified sample to reflect state's social & demographic profile	Causal estimates of savings and consumption impact	Stratified sampling is used to mimic the actual distribution of the population

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATIONS

IIM SAMBALPUR STUDY- KEY FINDINGS

- Nearly **80% of funds were utilized productively,** indicating that beneficiaries are using the support to strengthen long-term economic security rather than only meeting immediate consumption needs.
  - **Primarily for livelihoods/business activities- 34%**
  - **Education and skilling- 22%**
  - **Savings or loan repayment- 22%**

- Entrepreneurship emerged as the strongest outcome, with **25.52% of beneficiaries using SUBHADRA funds for business setup**, making it the single largest category of productive investment. Among Scheduled Caste women, **business investment reached 30.25%,** reflecting strong entrepreneurial aspirations.

- The study also highlights substantial gains in women's decision-making power and confidence. **63.9% of beneficiaries reported making financial decisions independently, while 59.3% reported increased confidence in managing money**. Additionally, **65% of women reported improved financial autonomy, and an overwhelming 98% felt more financially confident and better prepared for the future**.

- The scheme has also fostered future-oriented aspirations among women**. 63.9% aspire to start or expand businesses, while 20.4% aim to create long-term assets, demonstrating a shift from subsistence-focused spending to economic advancement and asset creation**. Further, **87.19% of beneficiaries rated SUBHADRA as "Very Useful"**, reflecting exceptionally high acceptance and perceived value across Odisha.

SBI RESEARCH STUDY- KEY FINDINGS

- The study found a statistically significant improvement in the financial position of beneficiaries. Average monthly account balances increased from ₹15,146 before enrolment to ₹22,033 after enrolment, **representing an increase of ₹6,887 or approximately 45%**. This demonstrates stronger savings behaviour and improved financial resilience among women receiving SUBHADRA support.

- Consumption expenditure also increased significantly. Average monthly spending rose from ₹6,937 to ₹8,857, **an increase of ₹1,920 or about 28%, indicating enhanced purchasing power and improved household welfare**.

- SBI's analysis found that the savings of relatives (husbands, fathers and sons) of beneficiaries also increased, suggesting that SUBHADRA contributed to improving the financial status of entire households rather than only the recipient women.

- The study concludes that SUBHADRA is simultaneously functioning as a financial safety net and a source of working capital, with **25.52% of beneficiaries using funds for business creation and 35.7% using them for household needs**, thereby supporting both economic growth and family welfare.

SARVAM AI VOICE BOT STUDY- KEY FINDINGS

- **53% of respondents used the grant for business activities or working capital**, while **35% invested the entire instalments received exclusively into business activities, without diverting funds to other needs**. This reflects a high degree of entrepreneurial commitment and confidence among beneficiaries.

- The study also demonstrates growing financial agency. **78% of beneficiaries reported making spending decisions either independently or jointly with their families, with 55% taking decisions independently**, indicating increased control over financial resources.

- A strong empowerment effect was observed, **with 76% of respondents reporting that they felt positively empowered after receiving SUBHADRA assistance**. Notably, women who used the **grant for business purposes reported an even higher empowerment level of 84%, compared to 68% among non-business users**, demonstrating the transformative effect of productive investment on self-confidence and agency.

- The survey also highlighted significant demand for future growth opportunities, with **64% of beneficiaries expressing interest in skill development programmes**, particularly in agriculture, tailoring and digital skills.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND — VOICES OF CHANGE

Chandra Prabha, 45 — *Vegetable Farmer, Gajapati District*

From subsistence to sunflowers: building a diversified farm

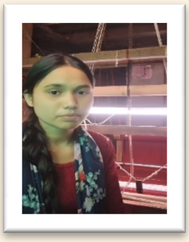
Chandra Prabha was running a small vegetable plot with limited resources when SUBHADRA support enabled her to purchase a sowing machine and invest in vegetable cultivation at scale. Starting with careful planning, she diversified steadily into sunflower cultivation and other crops through reinvestment of earnings. Her journey exemplifies disciplined, self-directed growth.

Funds Used For	Outcome	What's Next
Sowing machine + vegetable cultivation capital	Diversified into sunflower farming; stable independent livelihood	Expanding cultivation and service activities across the coming years

Anu Nanda, 22 — *Student & Saree Weaver, Sonepur*

Education and enterprise: investing in both, simultaneously

Anu Nanda, a student determined to fund her own education, balanced her studies with saree weaving. SUBHADRA support helped her buy books, continue her graduation, and invest working capital in her weaving business — simultaneously easing educational expenses for her siblings and strengthening overall family stability.



Funds Used For	Outcome	What's Next
Books, graduation fees, and saree weaving business capital	Education continuing; business growing; siblings' schooling supported	Complete graduation, pursue higher studies, and expand saree business

SKILLING STRATEGY & WAY FORWARD

The Skilling Gap — *All three evaluations identify this as the critical unfinished agenda*

63.9%
aspire to start or expand a business

12.43%
express interest in formal skill training

The Implication

A massive gap between entrepreneurial ambition and technical preparedness. Only 6.62% of funds are directed toward skill development — risking long-term business sustainability. Sarvam AI's beneficiary survey corroborates this: 64% want skill training, yet only 6.62% of funds reach it. SUBHADRA's cash must be paired with competence.

RECOMMENDED SKILLING INTERVENTIONS

Multiple departmental meetings have been held with senior officials to design a comprehensive framework for the training and skill development of Subhadra beneficiaries. Community-level events are also being planned at the Gram Panchayat level to facilitate interaction among beneficiaries, promote collective development, and foster an entrepreneurial mindset. The Women & Child Development Department is preparing to launch a state-wide skill development initiative to ensure that Subhadra evolves beyond a direct benefit transfer scheme and serves as a catalyst for enhancing the socio-economic empowerment of women across the State.

The Path Forward

SUBHADRA has demonstrated that cash transfers, when designed with precision and delivered with accountability, can catalyse financial autonomy at scale. The strongest long-term impact will come when SUBHADRA is linked with SHGs, skilling, enterprise support, and market access — evolving from a welfare initiative into a sustainable driver of women's economic leadership across Odisha.