

IMPACT OF NAMO DRONE DIDI SCHEME ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GOVERNMENT BRANDING

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ABSTRACT

The Nammo Drone Didi Scheme is a recent government initiative launched to promote women empowerment through the use of drone technology in agriculture. Under this scheme, women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are trained to operate agricultural drones and provide spraying services to farmers. This paper studies the scheme from the perspective of employer branding and performance outcomes. In this context, the government acts like an employer that builds trust, provides training, and supports women financially. The study is based completely on secondary data collected from government reports, journal articles, and institutional publications such as the Press Information Bureau and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. The findings show that the scheme has increased income levels of beneficiaries, reduced farm input costs, and improved confidence among rural women. This paper concludes that strong government branding combined with skill development can improve women's economic performance and social status.

KEYWORDS: *Nammo Drone Didi Scheme, Women Empowerment, Employer Branding, Government Support, Agricultural Drones.*

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the Government of India Introduced the Nammo Drone Didi Scheme to empower rural women with drone technology in agriculture. Under the scheme, women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are trained and financially supported to operate agricultural drones and provide spraying services to farmers. The project encourages the use of technology, income generation and the participation of women in modern agriculture.

The scheme not only has economic benefits, but is also an example of government branding, where trust, support and institutional reliability promote participation and improve outcomes. The present study investigates the effect of Nammo Drone Didi Scheme on women empowerment

and government branding with the help of secondary data like government reports, research articles and institutional publications.



Press Information Bureau (2024), *Namo Drone Didi Scheme*, Government of India: PIB, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.

Conceptual Background and Framework

Employer branding refers to the image and reputation of an organization as a desirable place to work. It represents the set of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by an employer to its employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer branding plays a significant role in attracting, motivating, and retaining employees by building trust and creating a positive organizational identity. When employees feel supported through training, career development opportunities, and recognition, their commitment and performance tend to improve. In sectors such as information technology and corporate services, employer branding has been found to enhance employee engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Government branding refers to the image and public perception created by government institutions through their policies, welfare schemes, and service delivery systems (Waeraas, A., & Maor, M. (2015). Unlike corporate branding, government branding focuses on building public trust, transparency, and legitimacy. When the government launches a scheme with clear communication, financial assistance, and structured training mechanisms, it strengthens its institutional image and increases citizen participation. A strong government brand reduces

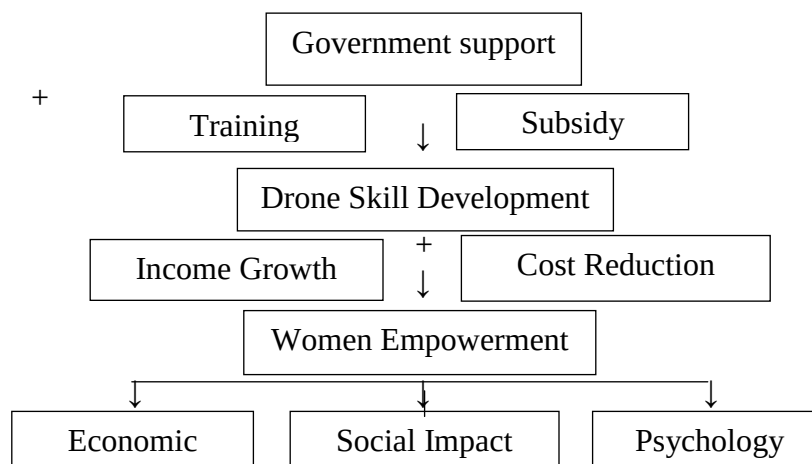
uncertainty among beneficiaries and enhances confidence in public programs (Melewar & Skinner, 2018).

In the context of the Namo Drone Didi Scheme, official press releases issued by the Press Information Bureau (2023) and operational guidelines published by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (2023) demonstrate structured implementation, subsidy transparency, and training frameworks, which contribute to building public trust and credibility. Such institutional communication strengthens the perception of reliability and accountability in government-led initiatives.

There is a close relationship between employer branding and government branding. In employer branding, a private organization builds its image to attract and motivate employees. In government branding, the state builds its image to encourage citizens to participate in development programs. In both cases, trust, support, and reputation influence performance outcomes. The main difference is that employer branding usually operates in the corporate sector, while government branding operates in the public sector. However, the psychological process remains similar — strong institutional image leads to higher engagement and better performance.

The Namo Drone Didi Scheme is a clear example of this relationship. Under this scheme, rural women from Self-Help Groups are trained to operate agricultural drones with financial assistance and technical support. The government, through this initiative, acts like an employer by providing training, subsidy, and institutional backing. Because the scheme is backed by trusted institutions like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, women feel confident in adopting new technology. This confidence improves their work performance, income levels, and social recognition.

Therefore, it can be said that the Drone Didi Scheme represents a form of public sector employer branding. The government builds a strong support system, and as a result, beneficiaries show improved economic and social performance. This conceptual linkage helps in extending employer branding theory beyond corporate settings into public welfare programs.



The conceptual framework shows how government support through training and subsidy leads to skill development, income generation, women empowerment, and ultimately economic, social, and psychological benefits while strengthening government branding

Component	Summary
Government Support	Subsidy, policy support, institutional guidance
Training and Subsidy	Drone training and financial assistance
Skill Development	Technical knowledge and drone operation skills
Income Growth	Additional income through drone services
Cost Reduction	Lower labour and pesticide application costs
Women Empowerment	Economic independence and social recognition
Government Branding	increased trust and participation in government schemes

Government Support

Government support refers to financial assistance, policy backing, and institutional guidance provided by the Government of India for the successful implementation of the Namo Drone Didi Scheme. The government allocated ₹1,261 crore for distributing drones to 15,000 Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and provided training, monitoring, and implementation support through the DAY-NRLM framework. Such support helps build trust among beneficiaries and encourages women to participate in technology-based agricultural activities. Government support serves as the foundation of the scheme because it enables training, subsidy provision, and large-scale implementation.

Training and Subsidy

Training and subsidy refer to the technical and financial support provided under the Namo Drone Didi Scheme. Selected women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) receive professional drone pilot training from recognized institutions, enabling them to operate and maintain agricultural drones effectively. In addition, the Government of India provides up to 80% subsidy on drones, making the technology affordable for rural women. This combination of skill development and financial assistance reduces entry barriers and encourages greater participation in agri-technology services.

Drone Skill Development

Drone skill development refers to the acquisition of technical knowledge and practical skills required to operate agricultural drones effectively. Through structured training, women learn drone operation, maintenance, safety procedures, and agricultural applications. These skills enable them to provide drone-based services in farming activities and adopt modern agricultural technologies. As a result, rural women transform from traditional farm workers into skilled agri-technology service providers, enhancing their technical competence and income-generating capacity.

Income Growth and Cost Reduction

Income growth and cost reduction refer to the financial benefits generated through the use of drone technology in agriculture. Trained Drone Didis earn income by providing drone-based spraying and monitoring services to farmers, creating new livelihood opportunities. At the same time, farmers benefit from reduced labour costs, lower chemical wastage, and faster agricultural operations. Thus, drone technology improves economic efficiency for both rural women and farmers, making it an important link between skill development and women empowerment.

Women Empowerment

Women empowerment refers to the improvement in economic independence, decision-making authority, social recognition, and self-confidence among women. Under the Namo Drone Didi Scheme, women gain technical skills and income-generating opportunities through drone-based agricultural services. These opportunities enhance their financial position, increase their participation in family and community decisions, and strengthen their confidence. Therefore, women empowerment represents the ultimate outcome of the conceptual framework, where skill development and income growth lead to long-term social transformation.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment refers to the improvement in women's financial condition through access to income and productive resources. Under the Namo Drone Didi Scheme, women earn income by providing drone-based agricultural services, creating new livelihood opportunities. Increased earnings improve household financial security, encourage savings through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and promote economic independence.

Social Empowerment

Social empowerment refers to the enhancement of women's social status, recognition, and participation in community activities. Through the scheme, women gain recognition as "Drone Didis" and become active participants in agricultural programs and public events. This increased visibility helps reduce traditional gender barriers and strengthens their position within society.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment refers to the development of self-confidence, self-esteem, and a positive attitude towards technology and innovation. Training and successful operation of drones enable women to overcome traditional limitations and develop confidence in handling modern technology. As a result, they become more motivated, independent, and willing to take leadership roles in their communities.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand the role of government support in improving women's economic performance.
2. To examine the income and cost benefits of the Drone Didi scheme.
3. To analyse how training and branding influence women's confidence and productivity.
4. To study the financial viability of drone services in rural areas.

Methodology:

This study is based entirely on secondary data and follows a descriptive research design. All information has been collected from already published sources such as government reports, official guidelines of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, press releases from the Press Information Bureau, case studies of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and relevant research articles published between 2010 and 2026. The data was gathered from official websites and journals.

Literature Review

1. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (2026)

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (2026) presented a case study titled “Drone Didi of Ayodhya.” The study showed how a rural woman successfully operated drone spraying services and increased her income. It highlighted marketing skills, technical training, and institutional support as key performance drivers.

2. Press Information Bureau (2025)

The Press Information Bureau (2025) reported that more than 1,000 drones were distributed under the scheme. The report discussed transportation and maintenance challenges but confirmed positive economic outcomes for SHGs.

3. Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (2025–26)

The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare provided official guidelines for the Namo Drone Didi Scheme. The report explained the 80% subsidy structure and training framework, showing strong institutional branding and support

4. Kumar & Rani (2025)

Their study in the *International Journal of Engineering Science* found a 140% increase in income among beneficiaries and a 40% reduction in farming costs. The study concluded that drone services are financially sustainable in rural areas.

5. Sharma (2025)

Published in *Vigyan Varta*, this article emphasized the importance of 15-day structured training through Krishi Vigyan Kendras. It showed that technical confidence improved women’s service quality.

6. Singh et al. (2025)

This study in *IJFMR* analyzed farmers’ awareness and acceptance of UAV technology. The findings suggested that higher acceptance increases business viability for women drone operators.

7. World Bank (2024)

The World Bank (2024) reported that digital agriculture tools improve productivity and rural income when supported by policy intervention.

8. Food and Agriculture Organization (2024)

The Food and Agriculture Organization (2024) highlighted that drone spraying reduces fertilizer and pesticide wastage by 10–30%, improving agricultural efficiency.

9. KPMG (2024)

The KPMG reported that agri-drone services in India show a benefit-cost ratio of around 2.5:1, indicating strong financial returns.

10. Deloitte (2023)

The Deloitte (2023) found that branding and institutional trust encourage women to participate in technology-driven roles.

11. NITI Aayog (2023)

The NITI Aayog emphasized women-led development as a national priority and highlighted technology inclusion as a key growth factor.

12. NABARD (2022)

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development reviewed SHG performance and found that skill-based initiatives significantly improve rural women's income levels.

13. Srivastava (2018)

This study discussed the impact of Self-Help Groups on rural women's empowerment and concluded that economic independence improves social recognition.

14. Lievens (2013)

Lievens explained how employer branding influences employee motivation and performance. The theory supports the idea that institutional branding improves work outcomes.

15. Edwards (2010)

Edwards discussed the relationship between HR practices and employer branding, stating that structured support systems enhance productivity.

Discussion-

The Namo Drone Didi Scheme was launched by the Government of India in November 2023 with the objective of empowering rural women and promoting the use of modern technology in agriculture. The scheme aims to provide agricultural drones to Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), enabling them to offer services such as pesticide spraying, fertilizer application, and crop monitoring. Through financial support, training, and institutional guidance, the scheme creates opportunities for women to participate in technology-driven agricultural activities.

The implementation of the scheme has shown encouraging results across several states. A large number of women have been trained as drone pilots and service providers, while drones have been distributed to selected SHGs to support agricultural operations. The adoption of drone technology has improved the efficiency of farming activities by reducing time, labour requirements, and excessive use of agricultural inputs.

The scheme has also generated new income opportunities for rural women. Several Drone Didi have successfully earned income by providing drone-based agricultural services to farmers. For example, reports indicate that groups of Drone Didi in Varanasi earned substantial income through spraying services across thousands of acres of agricultural land. Similar success stories have been reported from different parts of the country, demonstrating the economic potential of drone-enabled agriculture.

Apart from economic benefits, the scheme has contributed to social and technological transformation. Women who were previously engaged in traditional agricultural activities are now recognized as skilled technology service providers. Their increased participation in agricultural decision-making, community activities, and technology adoption reflects a positive shift in their social status and confidence.

Overall, the Namo Drone Didi Scheme demonstrates how government support, technological training, and financial assistance can work together to promote women empowerment and

agricultural modernization. The scheme not only improves farming efficiency but also creates sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural women, thereby contributing to inclusive rural development.

Benefits and Findings-

The findings of the study shows that the Namo Drone Didi Scheme has generated economic, social, environmental, and psychological benefits for rural women and farming communities.

Economic Benefits: The scheme has generated more income generation opportunities for the women beneficiaries by helping them to provide drone based agricultural services. Meanwhile, farmers enjoy lower labour needs, reduced operational costs and more efficient pesticide and fertiliser application. Also existing studies reported promising benefit–cost ratios which show the economic potential of drone-supported agriculture.

Social Benefits: Active participation in drone-based farming methods has uplifted the social status of women who receive benefits. Women are increasingly recognized in their families and communities and have become active in local development activities. The scheme has also promoted leadership and community involvement among rural women.

Environmental Benefits: The use of drone technology supports sustainable agricultural practices by applying fertilizers and pesticides correctly and accurately. This reduces chemical waste, minimizes environmental damage, and promotes resource-efficient farming practices.

Psychological Benefits: The scheme has improved the confidence, self-worth, and decision making skills of the women who received benefits. This shift from traditional agricultural roles to providers of technology-based services improved their identity and sense of empowerment.

Government Branding

The findings indicate that government branding played a significant role in the successful implementation of the Namo Drone Didi Scheme. The credibility of government institutions, availability of certified training, and provision of financial subsidies increased trust among beneficiaries and encouraged greater participation. The association of the scheme with established government agencies reduced perceived risks and improved acceptance of drone technology among rural women.

The study further suggests that strong government support enhanced programme effectiveness by promoting awareness, skill development, and technology adoption. Similar to employer branding in the corporate sector, government branding influenced beneficiary engagement and participation through trust, credibility, and institutional reputation. Therefore, government branding emerged as an important factor contributing to the success of the scheme and the empowerment of rural women.

The positive economic, social, and psychological outcomes experienced by the beneficiaries further strengthened trust in government initiatives. Increased income opportunities, enhanced social recognition, and improved self-confidence created a favourable perception of the scheme among rural women and farming communities. As a result, the successful implementation of the Namo Drone Didi Scheme reinforced government branding and enhanced the credibility of government institutions.



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CONCLUSION

The Namo Drone Didi Scheme is not only a technology program but also a women empowerment initiative. This study shows that when the government builds a strong support system, it creates trust similar to employer branding in corporate sectors. As a result, women improve their performance, income, and social standing.

The scheme demonstrates that branding, training, and financial support together can transform rural women into tech-based entrepreneurs. Such models can be extended to other sectors, including IT, where employer branding directly impacts employee performance.

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