

Role of Skill Development in Women Empowerment in India

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Abstract

Women Empowerment means giving them freedom or power to live the way they want. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge & abilities to make their own decisions. It is a dynamic & growth process for women which includes awareness, attainment & actualization of skills. For the socio-economic development of any society, women empowerment is essential. It is important for women to identify themselves with self confidence & esteem. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment. Skills development is a key to success which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between job and workforce. Today, it is considered as an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the majority of barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A large effort is needed to create a skilled workforce for creating an economic prosperity.

Key words : Women, Empowerment, Skills, Employment and workforce.

INTRODUCTION :

Women play an important role in the development of a family and society. From last few decades, they have been actively participating in various economic & social activities, but their efforts remain unrecognized. In this male-dominating society, they are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational field. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them – is a central issue. Women Empowerment means giving them freedom or power to live the way they want. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge & abilities to make their own decisions. It is a dynamic & growth process for women which includes awareness, attainment & actualization of skills. For the socio-economic development of any society, women empowerment is essential. It is important for women to identify themselves with self confidence & esteem. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment.

Skills development is a key to success which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between job and workforce. Today, it is considered as an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the majority of barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A large effort is needed to create a skilled workforce for creating an economic prosperity. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN :

Women have shown their ability in community development. Hence, it is important that women be a part of skill development. In India, women are now participating in various areas like – education, art and culture, service sector, sports, politics, media, and science and technology. They form a substantial part of the workforce - but the working percentage rate of women in the total labor force is declining. A large number of them are working in the informal sectors. This represents lack of employment opportunities and skills for women workforce. Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. They can be motivated to develop their life skills – that will give them high paying jobs with better livelihood & confidence to earn for their family. It will develop their ability & quality to move ahead and be self-dependent.

The government of India has passed the national policy for 'women empowerment' which aims to ensure overall development of women within the country. They seek to impart skills to women so that they can stand & support for themselves and gain status within society. On the other side, Maharashtra government has launched 'Skill Sakhi' for women empowerment. Their main aim is not only to create employment opportunities for women but also to empower them. They are giving skill training which involves tailoring, embroidery, knitting, and the making of home decoration items. The missions 'Skill India' & 'Make in India' shall succeed only when the women work hand-in-hand.

Vocational Training programme aim to provide skills and confidence to women from economically backward families and help them to achieve economic and social independence. Women have always been marginalized and relegated to the status of subjugated class in the Indian society. Due to lack of specific implementation of plans, local communities especially women have remained outside the scope and benefits of government schemes and programmes. Women have not actively participated in their emancipation due to their lack of economic independence and illiteracy. There is a need to address the issue by raising the status of women. The key lies in women empowerment through economic self-sufficiency and higher awareness levels on social, political and legal issues through mobilization. There is also a need to recognize and emphasize the diverse roles of women such as reproductive, productive and community management. Women should be organized and strengthened at the grass root level to end their subordination. Skills and knowledge are the engines of economic growth and social development of any country. Countries with higher and better levels of knowledge and skills respond more effectively and promptly to challenges and opportunities of globalisation. India is in transition to a knowledge based economy and its competitive edge will be determined by the abilities of its people to create, share and use knowledge more effectively.

Vocational Training programme is introduced to enhance livelihood opportunities of women who are at a disadvantageous position and have a scant exposure to technical skills and knowledge. The vocational training program for women aims to develop entrepreneurial skills among women.

It is widely recognized that the 21st Century will be driven by knowledge, and a nation's competitive advantage in the global economy will be sustained by a focused and innovative education agenda. To meet the challenges of this century, many countries around the world, and more particularly newly independent developing countries, including India, set their mind on the expansion of educational systems and made heavy investment in education. There was a growing realization that availability of educational opportunities to all sections of the society, irrespective of social status, class, caste, religion and gender, ensures nondiscriminatory distribution of educational opportunities and socio-economic and political gains accruing from it.

National Policy on Skill Development :

To have broad framework towards sustainable development of trained and skill enriched human resources in India, a National Policy on Skill Development has been formulated by the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The objective is to create a workforce empowered with improved skills, knowledge and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the dynamic Global Labour Market. It aims at increase in productivity of workforce both in the organized and the unorganized sectors, seeking increased participation of youth, women, disabled and other disadvantaged sections and to synergize efforts of various sectors and reform the present system.

The skill development initiatives will harness inclusivity and reduce divisions such as male/female, rural/urban, organized/unorganized employment and traditional/contemporary workplace. The skill development initiatives support the supply of trained workers who are adjustable dynamically to the changing demands of employment and technologies. This policy will promote excellence and will meet the requirements of knowledge economy.

It is seen, that there is a need for developing gender-responsive strategies for skill development for women—who are no less than men. Empowering women socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally is important for socio-economic development. Women are capable to manage if given opportunity. They must be treated with respect, purity, dignity and equal rights. All we need is a concentrated effort focused in the right direction that would rest only with the liberation of women from all forms of evil. As more and more India moves towards the 'knowledge economy', it becomes increasingly important for it to focus on the advancement of the skills and these skills has to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. For transforming its demographic dividend, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Review of related literature is an important research effort as it provides comprehensive understanding of what is already known about the topic. Familiarity with research work of others provides up-to-date knowledge of the latest developments, findings, recommendations, tools and loop holes of researches.

Dhruba Hazarika (2011) concluded that women are future of country's development. Empowering women will be the right approach for growth in this competitive world.

Vijaya & Lokhandha (2013) suggested that skill development will boost the women empowerment with high productivity & earnings. Skills lead to confidence among them to be more innovative.

Kittur Praveen (2014) concluded that in order to encourage women entrepreneurship, a special training course for women entrepreneurs must be started to improve their skills.

Mamta Mokta (2014) found that women need to find their own way in this male dominated society. They should be motivated for growth & empowerment by self-help groups, NGOs, government policies & micro finance institutions.

Prasanna Kumar (2014) stated that it is our need to identify the areas where women are still facing problems and are unable to access resources, institutional knowledge & basic education.

OBJECTIVES :

The basic objective of the paper is:

- To determine the impact of skill development on women empowerment.
- To suggest possible solutions for future development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The paper is mainly based on descriptive in nature. The paper done is based on secondary data. Here, the data from various research journals, websites and articles are collected in order to understand the impact of skill development on women empowerment. Some of the practices adopted by the organizations have been identified.

FINDINGS :

The study found that the government & its agency partners have undertaken various measures/initiatives for the effective implementation of the skill development system for women. Skill development has highly impacted women empowerment. It has changed the image of women workforce. The results are:

- Majority of the women have captured the market of garment making, fabric painting, zardosi work, hand embroidery, beauty parlour, etc
- They have started their small business units with good level of income.
- Employment of women in organized sector has increased by 12%.
- With employability skills, it's now easy for them to present, communicate & analyze.
- Skill development has increased number of women entrepreneurs in the country.
- It has helped them to shift from manual labours to desk jobs.

Problems Still Faced By Women :

Even after proper training, it is not easy for them to get a job – due to following reasons:

- Too much competition for gender bias, family issues & long working hours.
- Early marriages & traditional protocols, do not allow them to stand independently in their career path.
- Even after getting a job, many women are paid less as compared to males.
- Along with this, women safety is again continuous issue which pulls women back.
- Financial support to skilled women – still a big issue.

SUGGESTIONS :

India is the largest & fastest growing country, but the reality is that it still lags behind as compared to other in terms of accessibility of skills to women. Suggestions to improve the situation are:

- There is a need to improve policies for women by creating more seats for them.
- Digital platforms can be used for women empowerment.
- Empowering them through skill-building programs would give them more opportunities to earn their living and become self-reliant.
- There is a need to develop training policies from gender perspectives with understanding of local traditions & customs.

- Expand training institutes in remote areas with employment opportunities for sustainable development.

CONCLUSION :

In spite of the huge task ahead with many intrinsic in skill development landscape in India at present, it is believed that the Government of India has been adequate attention on skilling the women as per world standards. The separate ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship schemes clearly gave the priority for skill development in India. The missions - Skill India and - Make in India shall come to exercise only when all the stakeholders concerned viz. government, training institutions, industry and more importantly, the women work hand-in-hand under a structured format of design develop train assess certify and place the skilled workforce as per the industry standards and aspirations of the women concerned. Further, accelerating entrepreneurship and self-employment is also crucial for large-scale employment generation in India. Skill development initiative focusing on specific needs and challenges faced by growing entrepreneurs is the key to promote self-employment among the Indian women.

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