



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

Ms. Musharraf Jahan

*Assistant Professor, Centre of Continuing & Adult Education and Extension
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India)*

Abstract

The Vocational education and training are essential mechanism of any strategy to improve the condition of women. Skill is the bridge between job and workforce. Women often have different training needs than men, since they are more likely to work as contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, home based micro entrepreneurs, or low paid seasonal labourers, in addition to handling their domestic work and care responsibilities. Skills development is a key to improving household productivity, employability and income earning opportunities for women and also for enhancing sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Skill development is important because of its contribution to enhance productivity at the individual, industry and also national levels because of the complementarities that exist between physical capital and human capital on the one hand and between technology and human capital on the other. This research paper deals with skill development for empowering women through analyzing the several governments' schemes such as vocational training through PM KausalVikasYojna, National Skills Development Programmes and number of initiatives in the field of skill development and employment concerning women empowerment.

Keywords: *Women, Empowerment, Skill, Development*



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction

Skills and knowledge are the motivating factors of the economic growth and community development of any country. They have become even more important in this increasing pace of globalization. India is among the young countries in the world with the proportion of work force in the age group of 15-59 years. However, present status shows that only 2% of the total employees in India have undergone skills development training. India can become the worldwide sourcing hub for the skilled employees¹.

Over the years the flow of benefits to women in various sectors is continued. We have been able to achieve the status of women in Indian society. The pillars of women empowerment essentially consist of literacy, education, better health facilities, political representation and financial security including opportunities for self-employment to become self-reliant. All these are dependent on making women aware about their rights, making them feel proud of

¹ FICCI Report, 2010

being women, creating a conducive atmosphere and giving them opportunities to live the life of dignity. Whenever, the Indian women have been given a conducive environment and appropriate facilities they have always been successful and have become engineers, doctors, administrators, industrialists, member of the police force and armed forces and even astronauts² (Khan 2012).

Defining the Women Empowerment

The term empowerment of women is an important popular concept among political spectrum. Empowerment through the expansion of the civil, political and social rights of citizens is a laborious and unexciting process. Empowerment is only effective answer to oppression, exploitation, injustice and other maladies of society. The idea of empowerment contains exciting possibilities. It is a wide term with no specific meaning. The term is very vague and is more a context driven rather than theory driven. It is about social transformation.

It seems necessary to discuss the terms women empowerment and gender equality which are not synonymous. One can consider gender equality as a provision of equal status for both men and women in term of opportunity and their patronage. Whereas, women empowerment denotes the act of enabling the suppressed gender to utilize the existing resources without having to perceive it as threat against the already existing gender inequality but to enhance the existing quality of life. This is no denying of the fact that with the advancement in the sphere of science and technology and communication and mass media, there has been a significant improvement in the standard of living of mankind. However, this does not rule out the miseries caused to women in different walks of life.

In independent India, there has been an improvement in gender equality because of the various laws passed in favour of women with the intervention of various women's organizations at national and international level. Gender issues have become central to the policy arena. There is a paradigm shift in the gender issues after 1994. The 1994 international conference on population and development placed issues of gender at the center of discussion (UNO 1995).

The women empowerment is not self propelled action which can be attained by their personal efforts alone. It is a two-way process in which the culturally defined notions of feminist and masculinity relationship have to be changed. It is an educational process by which both males and females remove the hierarchical relationship that prevail and made coordinated efforts to

² Khan, N.A., *Women Empowerment: Problems and Prospects*, VL Media Solution, New Delhi, 2012, pp. Intro. Copyright © 2017, *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*

make women feel good about them. Empowerment is essentially an effort to cultivate empathy, emotions, passions and values through which gender equality is built up gradually.

Gender and Labour

The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among individual classes and communities. Empowerment appears to be an alternative path for dismantling the old structure and putting new one in this place. Empowerment is to change the society through re-arrangement of the power. So there is a need for empowerment through civic, political and social right of citizens³.

Social, economic and political empowerment of women is central to considerations of personal independence and self-esteem. To this end, employment and entrepreneur opportunities would go a long way in making women self-reliant. To end discrimination against women in the field of employment and to realize their rights to work, women should be given the right to employment opportunities, the free choice of profession, job security, equal remuneration, the right to compensation in respect of domestic work, the right of protection of health and safe working condition especially in safeguarding the function of reproduction and special protection in times of pregnancy. The non-creation of congenial atmosphere at the workplace many times discourage women from pursuing employment. This is mainly reflected in the status of women in employment.

The economic empowerment of women and providing of suitable working conditions including her protection from all forms of discrimination and harassment has become a matter of concern at the national and international levels. This is very much reflected in the Convention on the Elimination of All form of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW) Beijing Declaration and other documents. It is in this context various initiatives have been taken by the Government in the form of legislative and policy formulations for the protection of women and their promotion in various spheres including employment and decision making. The constitution of India provides for equal opportunity for all (article 14) and mandates the states to take special measure to empower women (article 15 (3)), more especially article 16 provides for equality of opportunity in matters of public employment⁴.

An estimate by the World Bank shows that 90% of the women working in the informal sector are not included in the official statistics and their work is undocumented and considered as disguised wage work, unskilled, low paying and do not provide benefits to the workers.

³ N.A. Khan, *Women Empowerment: Problems and Prospects*, VL Media Solution, New Delhi, 2012

⁴ Basu, Chandra, Agnes, *Women and Law in India*, Oxford University Press, India, 2003

Statistics show that vast majority of Indians work in Agriculture where 55% of the population is female agricultural workers and 30% of the men are labourers and not cultivators. Women's economic participation can be mentioned in the field of production of goods and services accounted in the national income statistics. However, female work participation has always been low at 26% compared to 52% of men. The problem is that women have always been at work; only the definitions of work and work plan have never been defined or realistic to include their contribution to the economy and the society.

Skill Development of Women

Other than general education, skill formation efforts consist of vocational education and training and sector specific programmes for better employability in industry. The national policy for skill development and entrepreneurship, 2015 aims to bring the world of education and training closer to the world of work so as to enable them together build a strong India. It provides clarity and coherence on how skill development efforts across the country can be aligned within the existing institutional arrangements. The policy links skill development to improved employability and productivity.

National Policy on Skill Development explains that in order to improve the productivity of the economy, participation of women in labour force needs to be improved. Economic growth and development of the nation is determined by human, physical and financial resources. It is general observation that poverty can be reduced through skill development of human resources. A report of the World Bank also reiterate that acquiring new skills can boost income by 21% and training programmes boost the employment rate of women more than men, although they end up earning 20% less than their male counterparts⁵.

Women contribution and empowerment are basic women's rights to facilitate women to have control over their lives. The '*Women Empowerment through skill development*' authored by Amita Saxena⁶ highlighted the importance of skill development of women and reiterated that through knowledge and skill development women can be empowered and can improve her socio-economic status. She has highlighted the emerging areas of women participation such as women empowerment and disaster management, community radio, personality development, literary creation, humanistic feelings, women and environment etc. empowering women has been seen in Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana also as she explained in her writings as financial inclusion of women.

⁵ World Bank Report, 2014

⁶Saxena, Amita (2015), '*Women Empowerment Through Skill Development*', Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi

Rameshwari Pandya's *Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in India* also explained the empowerment of women through skill India programme. Skill development and entrepreneurship are complementary to each other. She explained that skill is used in the literature to refer to a wide range of attributes and to that extent there is no clear definition of a skilled worker. In particular terms, the term used is marketable skill which commonly refers to any ability that has a market value. i.e. which has the potential of being utilized for generating income/employment.

Gopinath writes in *Wellness, Skill Development and Women Empowerment* that a holistic development of the nation can only be possible by the upliftment of women through entrepreneurial skills and self-help groups, women's wellness including sexual health and recent approaches that supplement women with economic power⁸.

Initiatives of Government of India

There are several skill development programmes initiated by the government of India for empowering the women. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship have been implementing these schemes to achieve women empowerment through skill development. A Skill India Mission is also launched with this aims to empower women which have long term skill development training via industrial training institutes; short term skill development training; recognition of prior learning; apprenticeship training; policy interventions; special women centric projects; partnership with private and NGO to boost skill development; projects in Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kaushal Kendra; future jobs and industry oriented courses; entrepreneurial initiatives etc. linkage of skill India and Mudra Yojana has been achieved. Since, women comprise about 78% of the beneficiaries of Mudra Yojana. This linkage will further give boost to aspiring women entrepreneurs⁹.

Government of India has opened National Skill Training Institutes exclusively for women which provides basic training to women under National Apprenticeship scheme under craftsmen training and craft instructors' training scheme in several areas such as office management, designing and technology, computer training etc. Programmes under the Skill India Mission are designed to not only train women in relevant skills that are sought by

⁷ Pandya Rameshwari, *Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in India*, New Century Publications, New Delhi, 2016

⁸ Gopinath, T, Sindhu K.K., *Wellness, Skill Development and Women Empowerment*, Shipra Publications, New Delhi, 2019

⁹ NSN, *Skill India mission empowers women with 10 initiatives in skill development and entrepreneurship*, March 9, 2019, Government News

employers but they are also sensitive to their needs by providing safe transport, flexible schedules and child care support. Apparel, Beauty and Wellness and healthcare are the dominated sector by women. The formal certificate course is giving them a means to earn better livelihood. Apprenticeship Act of 1961 providing the opportunity to the women for apprenticeship. Skill India through NSDC is conducting focused pilot programme with UNDP and Society of Development Alternatives to benefit women. The Pradhan Mantri Skill Development Scheme is working in the field of women empowerment through trainings such as self employed tailor, Beauty Therapist, Customer Care Executive, Hair Stylist, Yoga Trainer etc. Ministry of Skill Development is committed to facilitate growth of women entrepreneurs in the country. The Ministry has designed EDP for the rural women with the objectives to inculcate entrepreneurial values, attitude and motivation among the rural women to take up challenges to set up an enterprise.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that technology is improving the status of women in our country. Women have a great opportunity to find new job by using advance technology. They are entering in new professions and occupations both in public and private sectors. In recent years, they have also entered in the field of pediatrics, surgery, medicine, pathology, radiology, anesthesia etc. A change in this trend is necessary not only in the interest of women in various professions but also to make them more confident.

We can say that, there is hardly any field in which women are not actively involved. Their busy schedule is enough to make a honey-bee buzz with wonder. Today it is well established fact that women are equally capable of performing their role as their male counterparts. Therefore, what is required most for empowerment of women, is the change in the mind set not only for women, but also of men along with greater social acceptance of gender parity and women's rights.

Women must learn machine design and also practice in mechine workshops, lack of women technicians create a huge scope in mechanical industries for women. Creative women can themselves put up household industries for handicraft, artistic and designed products. Empowering of women can be through the skills of learning tailoring, finishing cloths, this will put them in textile industries.

The Skill India Mission should have partnership with Government initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission and Smart City Mission etc. which would be highly benefiting to empowering the women ensuring a steady flow of skilled

workforce. These schemes are also creating job opportunities particularly for women like caregiver, midwives, nurses, diabetes educators etc. In a collaborative action, the training of women facilitates the possibility of setting up their own business. There should be emphasis on creating job opportunities for women through mobile training units on local need based training to accommodate women.

References

- Annual Report of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Government of India, Progressing Towards An Empowered India, 2017-18*
- Anuradha R. Vijayaetc (2013), *Empowerment of Rural Women Through Vocational education and Training, Conflux Journal of Education, ISSN 2320-9305 Vol.1, Issue,2, July 2013*
- Basu, Chandra, Agnes (2003), *Women and Law in India, Oxford University Press, India*
- Chorine, Christine, Mihir Desai, Colin Gonsalves (1999). *Women and Law, vol. I & II, Socio- legal Information Centre, Bombay*
- Combat Law (2003). *The Human Rights Magazine, Special number on Violence against Women, September-October*
- Daphne, Jayasinghe (2014), *Gender and Development, Oxfam, London*
- Deida David (2017), *The Way of the Superior Man: A spiritual Guide to Mastering the Challenges of Women, Work, and Sexual Desire (20th Anniversary Edition), Sounds True, Reprint Edition, 2017*
- Dhruba, H, (2011), *Women Empowerment in India: A brief Discussion, International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration, Research India Publications 1 (3), pp. 199-202.*
- Gopinath, T, Sindhu K.K. (2019), *Wellness, Skill Development and Women Empowerment, Shipra Publications, New Delhi*
- Khan, N.A. (2012), *Women Empowerment: Problems and Prospects, VL Media Solution, New Delhi*
- Nair, Meera (2003). *The Seamier Side of Office Life- his Woman's Day Let's Do Away With the Groping, Lecherous Advances Made by Male Colleagues at the workplace, The Indian Express, March 6-12*
- NSDC (2012), *NSDC study on challenges in skill development eco system-2012*
- NSN (2019), *Skill India mission empowers women with 10 initiatives in skill development and entrepreneurship, March 9, 2019, Government News*
- Pandya Rameshwari (2016), *Skill Development and Enterpreneurship in India, New Century Publications, New Delhi*
- Patel, Vibhuti (2002). *Women's Challenges of the New Millennium, Gyan Publications, Delhi*
- Saxena, Amita (2015), *'Women Empowerment Through Skill Development', Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi*
- Sudha G.S. (2007), *Dynamics of Business Entrepreneurship, First Edition, Deepak Parnami, RBSA Publishers, Jaipur*
- Vijay Kumar A., Jayachitra,S (2013), *Women Entrepreneurship in India-Emerging Issues and Challenges, International Journal of Development Research, Vol.3, issue,4.*
- Yadav Neha (2017), *Empowerment of Rural Women Through Small Scale Skill Based Entrepreneurial Units, PhD Thesis submitted Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed University), Dayalbagh, Agra*