



# THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Supriya Kumari

Research Scholar, Univ. Dept. of Economics, T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur

## Abstract

Women empowerment means giving them the freedom or power to live as they wish. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge and abilities to make their own decisions. Women empowerment is essential for the socio-economic development of any society. Women empowerment is an important topic currently. It inspires women to be aware of their rights and duties. Skill development is an important medium to bring self-confidence and self-reliance among women. Skill development is a powerful means of women empowerment which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between the job and the workforce. Today it is considered an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the most barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A major effort is required to prepare a skilled workforce for economic prosperity. In developing countries like India, where problems like low rate of participation in work force and gender inequality still exist, women skill development will definitely solve this problem. Therefore, the Central Government has started many schemes for the skill development of women. In this context, this article throws light on the roles and effects of skill development in women's empowerment.

**Keywords:** women, empowerment, skill development, gender discrepancies, education, employment, workforce.

## Introduction

Women empowerment is essential for the socio-economic development of any country. Because socio-economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for enhancing development efforts. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the condition of its women." According to Brigham (1801-1877), if you educate a man, you only educate that man. Educate, but if you educate women you educate a generation. In fact, women's participation and empowerment are fundamental rights of women that enable women to take control of their lives and have influence in the society. The Indian Constitution provides equal platform to both men and women. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution states that the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection by the laws within the territory of India. According to the 2011 census, women constitute 48.5 percent of the total population in India, and today India's women form a significant part of the country's workforce. But as data shows in the country, female labor force participation is 24% compared to 56.8% for men. According to the World Bank report of 29 May 2017, India ranked 120th among 131 nations in female work force. Both social and economic reasons are responsible for this situation. The status of women will definitely improve but for this, improvement in their work productivity is necessary. Therefore skilling can be put forward as a solution. Equipping women in India with employable skills is a much bigger challenge than skilling men. Because most of the women have neither social security nor job security.

It is well known that women empowerment largely depends on three factors i.e. economic, social and political identity. Women can be truly empowered only when these three factors are made positive and compatible with each other. Again, all three of these factors are correlated with skill development.

Skill development is key to improving household productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities for women and enhancing sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Considering the importance of skill development to empower women, the Government of India and social organizations have run various awareness Programmes for women, due to which the situation has improved to some extent. According to the annual report for the year ending 2017 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the total number of establishments owned and managed by women entrepreneurs was 8.05 million and 34.3 per cent of such establishments are related to agricultural activities. Women entrepreneurship can be further improved by developing life skills and promoting their entrepreneurial qualities. After all, skills are the bridge between jobs and the workforce. However, women often require different training than men because, in addition to handling their domestic work and caregiving responsibilities, they may also be contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, home-based micro-entrepreneurs, or low-paid seasonal laborers. It is also noteworthy that the main strategy for women empowerment and gender equality is to link policy and institutions at the local level. Increasing their literacy rate is the need of the hour, as women help in better development of children.

Despite all this, the government's initiative to skill women has resulted in 30 percent seats in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) being reserved for women. Exclusive National Skill Training Institutes for women provide training under two schemes; Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS) and Craft Instructor Training Scheme (CITS). Along with these, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) provides short-term skill training and about 50 percent of the candidates under PMKVY are women.

### **Women and Skill Development**

The role of women, directly and indirectly, has always been important in economic development and growth. When they did not get opportunities, they were limited to household work, raising children, etc. But with the expansion of education and skill development, they are making successful efforts to handle the work both at home and outside efficiently. For this, the Government of India has also made various rules and laws within the constitutional framework to improve women representation in various professions. Currently, most of the female workforce in India is unskilled. Skills are the bridge between jobs and workforce. Skill development is important tool to improving employment and income earning opportunities for women and enhancing sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Social outcomes are reflected in indicators of income inequality and poverty. Employment outcomes are reflected by indicators of employment rates, unemployment, out-of-school youth and earnings.

Therefore, the goal of women empowerment has to be achieved through skill development. This will ensure increased productivity and efficiency in their work participation. Today the need of the hour is that women should acquire the following skills and knowledge -

- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Decision making skills
- Time management skills
- Collective union work skills
- Creativity skills
- Flexibility and adaptability skills
- Problem solving skills
- Personality development skills
- Management skills
- Accounting skills
- Basic computer skills
- Ethics and integrity skills
- Networking skills

## Problems

There are no less problems in achieving the goal of women empowerment through skill development.

- Social problem
- Economic problem
- Political problem
- Training problems

Our Indian society is still male dominated. Issues like women's education, health, equal space etc. remain a cause for concern. Even today, the situation regarding the education rights of boys and girls remains serious, especially in rural areas. In such a situation, the goal of vocational education and skill development seems difficult, if not impossible. Not only this, there are many economic inequalities too - like women getting less salary etc. The government definitely makes efforts, but the evaluation of the skill development Programmes started by it has been ineffective. How much women have been able to benefit from skill development Programmes, how much they have become empowered – this is also a question. The percentage of our women living in rural areas is more than that of women living in urban areas. It is not easy to train them because illiteracy, poverty etc. create obstacles. It is not that government or non-government efforts are not being made, but the success rate is still not very satisfactory. The cost of skill development also sometimes hinders attainment. Lack of technical knowledge also creates problems. There is a shortage of training centers in our country, especially in rural areas.

## Suggestions

Some successful ways to retain girls and women in the workforce could be:

- The capacity of skill development Programmes should be increased.
- The mechanism for providing certification to trainers should be made flexible and new institutions for training of women trainers should be promoted.
- Better health facilities should be provided.
- Employment opportunities should be increased.
- Self employment should be encouraged.
- Training centers should be expanded.
- Women entrepreneurship should be developed.
- Women's vocational and technical education should be encouraged.
- Gender discrimination should be removed.
- Trainees should be introduced to role models in their respective fields.
- Maximum practical opportunities should be provided.
- More women from under-served populations should be given candidacy.
- A comprehensive equity plan should be developed to identify and address discriminatory practices and artificial barriers to girls' enrollment.
- Proper financial arrangements should be made for women.
- Digital platforms should be expanded.

It is true that a strong woman is one who is financially prosperous. Women will be economically prosperous only when they are educated, trained and have skill development. For this, skill knowledge should be encouraged from the very beginning in the curriculum of village and city schools. Education that provides employment and promotes skill development should be provided to children, especially girls. These girls will be empowered in the future – not only economically, but their social prestige will also increase. Women also have equal rights on skill knowledge as men.

## Government Efforts and Schemes and Women Empowerment

- National Skill Development Mission
- Skill India
- Learn and Earn - Scheme for Minorities
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Kaushal Yojana
- National Skill Development Corporation
- National Skill Development Agency
- National Rural Livelihood Mission
- Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
- Make in India

- Start-up India
- Stand-up India
- Minister Skill Development Scheme
- UDAN Programme (Ministry of Skill Development)
- Garib Nawaz Skill Development
- Youth-Skill Development Programme (Delhi Police)
- Sleeping device. Skill Development and Training Center
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Therefore, the government is encouraging skill development on a large scale. It is the government's effort to ensure that women can take advantage of these schemes and schemes as much as possible. The objective of government Programmes like 'Make in India', 'Stand Up India', 'Start-up India' is to develop skills by creating employment. So that women are empowered and can contribute to the economic development of the country.

## Conclusion

Skill development stands as a cornerstone in the empowerment of women, providing those opportunities for economic independence, breaking down gender barriers, boosting self-confidence, ensuring financial autonomy and challenging social stereotypes. As nations strive for inclusive growth, investing in women's skills development proves to be not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic path toward a more equitable and prosperous future.

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