

Empowering Women Through Capacity Building At Workplace: A Study Of Manufacturing Micro And Small Scale Enterprises

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Abstract:

Gender equality and women empowerment are prerequisite in accomplishing sustainable development goals 2030, laid down by the United Nations Development Programme. The organisation laid eight targets with respect to the empowerment of girls and women. Achieving women empowerment at household and at workplace acts as, a pre take off stage in order to meet the targets of SDGs. Wherein, capacity building serves as a powerful instrument in speeding up the process of women empowerment at workplace. This in turn, opens up plethora of opportunities available to women and further enhances their decision making ability. Majority of women working in micro and small scale enterprises are devoid of the benefits as promised by SDG's. The trainings so given at workplace help them to stand out in comparison to men at workplace and they gain access to various capabilities in transition. The paper, therefore, focuses on the agenda of women empowerment through capacity building in micro and small scale enterprises. Multinomial logistic regression is used to evaluate the relationship between skill development and women empowerment in micro and small scale enterprises. Primary data from 150 women has been collected in this regard, from manufacturing industries belonging to micro and small scale group. The major findings of the paper focuses on decision making power at workplace, freedom to express ideas at workplace, training given and income increased thereafter.

Keywords: *Capacity building, Sustainable development goals, women empowerment, micro and small scale enterprises, Training*

I. Introduction:

Decent work, economic growth and Gender equality, the two SDG's laid down by the United Nations, unfolds various aspects of employability and economic progress of a nation. Despite the sluggish recovery all over the globe, India has said to achieve strong economic growth in the last five years (International Monetary Fund). In order to sustain this economic growth, India must ensure that the increasing employability and human development targets are met from time to time. India has a labour force of 475 million, where, female have a meagre share of only 27% in the labour force (World Bank, 2017). Achieving gender equality, ensuring paid work and empowering all women and girls, has been a key agenda for Sustainable development goals 2030 (UN Economic and Social Council, 2017). Out of the seventeen goals laid down the United Nations, women's empowerment and equality is said to be one of the fundamental goal, ensuring sustainable and inclusive development. In short, all the Sustainable Goals depend upon the achievement of goal 5, that is, gender equality (UN Economic and Social Council, Report of the Secretary General, 2017).

Women have a share of 49% in the population base, which accounts to nearly half of the population (Census of India, 2011). The exclusion of women from various economic activities dampens the growth rate of the nation, and further prevents the society to prosper. Equal access to economic work, decision making, opportunities, resources and assets, education, not only promotes women equality but also benefit humanity at large. By investing in women empowerment, the country is not only fulfilling the targets of gender equality but also making gains in poverty reduction and speeding up the process of economic progress and growth (UN, India, 2017). To further fuel up the process of women empowerment and economic growth, capacity building works as a real building bloc in order to achieve these twin objects of any society. Skill development balances the demand and supply mismatch of skilled persons, the National Skill Development Corporation (NDC) does this job, by initiating on the job training programmes. Skill development is one of the most powerful actor of any country in today's era, as skilled workforces adds up to dynamism and efficiency at work. The government of India's National skill development mission and Deendayal Upadhyaya Antodaya Yojna, are some of the flagship programmes for strengthening the skilled labour force of the country.

II. Women Empowerment and Capacity Building:

The slogan, women empowerment, is perceived as a fundamental instrument for sustainable development, in recent era. Empowerment of women, is a multidimensional process, linked at micro, meso and macro levels (Narayan, 2005), which enables women to realise

their agency and opportunity structure indicators. These indicators are majorly defined as the ability to make decisions and utilise the opportunities available at their disposal. The expansion in ability of the people to make decisions and life choices, in an environment where ability was denied to them, is the real essence of empowerment (Kabeer,1999). Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of women to make choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes (World Bank, 2008).

Women empowerment, is not merely taking control over decision held by men, rather it is transforming the nature of control into equality. The experiences and factors such as work, family, social and cultural environments, that women negotiate in their daily life, can be a deciding factor of self-empowerment of women. Women's perception of their empowerment results from their experiences which they encounter in day to day life (Zentgraf, 2002). Household and workplace empowerment are the key main entities which shape the entire process of women empowerment. A working lady can be a lot more empowered at her home and not at her workplace, and vice versa. Henceforth, looking at the attributes of workplace and household empowerment and analysing them further can lead to a very strong premise of "being empowered". The role played by any organisation in empowering its women, is far more inclusive and extensive than the role played by household members. The importance of paid employment has been argued by many feminist researchers, highlighting the concern for equal pay, opportunities for promotion, training and progression (Pearson, 2004). Reconceptualising the intra household bargaining position of women, has brought new results, wherein, earning capacity of women automatically translates into their autonomy and empowerment (Sen, 1990).

Capacity building or skill development works in the favour of women, not only by preparing them for work but also by enhancing their present quality of work, which in turn, balances the autonomy at workplace and at intra workplace. In the past two decades, strengthening women's skills has been a key topic of discussion around the globe. Building capacities for women, allow them to participate and to contribute to the development of the country. Lack of proper training in organisation, leads to wastage of work and unequal pay. Women's lack of skills explain the phenomenon of poorer paid jobs and casual forms of paid work (Kabeer, 2015). In order to harness the depleting condition of women at workplace, Government of India has taken various schemes to strengthen the skill development domain. The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 visualises skill development as a vehicle of women empowerment. The Skill Development Initiatives Schemes under Directorate General of Employment and Training developed over 10,000 training providers under which 12.6 women have availed benefits (Swanti Initiative, 2015). Capacity building strengthens up the process of women empowerment, by facilitating women to excel in decision making process and along with widening up of their knowledge domain.

With over 360 million youth, India has a major advantage of demographic dividend, wherein women form a crucial part of the segment. In order to harness the demographic dividend, the country needs to focus on skill set possessed by workforce. Skilled labour force accounts for economic growth by expanding the production frontier and economic development by outsourcing the skilled force. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a strong training and skill development base to keep up with the targets of employability and growth.

III. Micro and Small scale enterprises:

India has seen a rapid growth of industries in the past two decades, with major contribution from manufacturing and service sector. The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector, has played a significant role in the economic progress of the nation, through innovation, employment generation and diversification. The three main objective of micro and small scale enterprises are income generation, employment creation and capacity building (Fourth All India Census of MSMEs, 2006). Micro and small scale enterprises, are leading entities for strengthening the level of economic empowerment of women. The enterprises have opened up surplus opportunities for women. Around 94.94% of employment opportunities are provided by micro enterprises and 4.89% by small scale enterprises. Where out of 93%, around 21% of the employment opportunities is given to females in micro and small scale enterprises (Annual report, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2015-2016).

One of the major role played by these enterprises is capacity building, which is formulated by on the job training programmes and skill upgradation schemes. The Micro and Small scale enterprises render various services one of the main being, developing human resource through training and skill upgradation. Technology centres provide various skilled manpower in areas of manufacturing. Major schemes adopted by the enterprises to strengthen the domain of skill development are ASPIRE and MSE-CDP.

The scheme ASPIRE aims at creation of new jobs, unemployment reduction, grassroot economic development and innovation to strengthen competitiveness. MSE-CDP is a scheme for enhancing productivity and competitiveness as well as capacity building of Micro and Small Scale enterprises.

Major schemes for women include; Gender Budgeting Scheme, which promotes women's equality and empowerment and facilitates capacity building and training. Support To Training and Empowerment (STEP) is another programme for women, which aims at self-reliance and empowerment of women by enhancing the productivity and enabling them to take income generation activities and further provides training for skill upgradation.

The MSMEs have created women owned schemes relating to skill upgradation, training and capacity building, but lack of awareness and limited outreach has led the impact limited. The distinctive role played by micro and small enterprises in supporting women at grass root level is still unexplored in India. There is complete lack of data in the segment of MSME's which in turn leads to lack of awareness about the proficiency of these enterprises.

IV. Research Problem:

The extensive role played by micro and small scale enterprises, is yet to be explored, in lieu with the process of women empowerment, with the key main objective of capacity building. Insufficiency of data and limited outreach of organised sector has further added to the difficulties of conducting research. Various studies have been made with respect to women owned Micro and small scale enterprises, prospects and challenges involved. But, no serious attempt has been made to study the empowerment status of women "who are employed" by these micro and small scale enterprises. Micro and Small scale enterprises has two main sectors. viz, manufacturing sector and service sector. Wherein, manufacturing sector is the backbone of Indian economy, with a growth rate of 7.7 percent in FY17, the textile industry under the manufacturing sector adds up to 10 percent of the production. The Indian textile industry has a net worth of \$120 billion, and is expected to reach \$230 billion by 2020. Textile industry contributes 4 percent of share to GDP and accounts for 15 percent of total exports. Therefore, the textile industry is of substantial importance to the country.

The employment opportunities are not adequate for women in state as compared to men in manufacturing enterprises. The ratio of women to men working in textile industries in NCR is 10:90, thus limiting the resources available to women. Work of women is constrained to piece checking, dyeing, painting, the other production work such as of designing is mostly handled by men. The need of training through capacity building is a crucial aspect in widening up the work profile of women employed in textile manufacturing industries.

V. Objective:

The main aim of the paper is to study the effect of capacity building on women empowerment of women working in textile industry of micro and small scale enterprises.

VI. Methodology:

The study is empirical in nature and is based on both primary as well as secondary data sources. The primary data was collected through questionnaire, structured interview and focused group interview. Secondary data sources were gathered from research papers, government websites, survey and annual reports. Systematic random sampling and snowball sampling technique was used to select the micro and small scale enterprises in the area of NCR. Primary data of 150 women were collected from different micro and small scale enterprises working in manufacturing textile sector under different work profiles.

6.1 Model Specification:

The issue to be analysed in the paper, is to whether, skill development leads to women empowerment or not. Skill development is measured through proxy variables, (1) giving on the job training to the women working in micro and small scale industries, (2) whether the training so acquired has helped them raise their income or not. The socio economic indicators used are (1) age (2) income level of the respondents (3) education level. The indicators of skill development and socio economic status are treated as independent variables. Women empowerment is our dependent variable, which is measured through proxy variables (1) Decision making at workplace (2) Freedom to express ideas at workplace. The decision making power at workplace imbibes a sense of independency and gives women access to resources at workplace and at household.

Multinomial Logistic regression was used to examine the empowerment status of women working in manufacturing textile micro and small scale enterprises. Multinomial logistic regression applies when there is a single dichotomous dependent variable or outcome and more than one independent variables than can be categorical or continuous in nature.

The multinomial logit model (Greene, 2003) is specified below:

$$P[Y_i = j] = \frac{e^{\beta_j x_i}}{\sum_{k=1}^4 e^{\beta_k x_i}}; j = 0, 1, 2 \dots \dots$$

where, j=0,1,2 refers to women empowerment based on decision making power at workplace and freedom to express ideas at workplace. The estimated equations provide a set of probabilities for j+1 choice for a decision maker with characteristics xi.

6.2 Model 1:

In the first model, the dependent variable, the proxy for women empowerment that is decision making at workplace is tested, against the explanatory variables of skill development and socio economic characteristics. The estimated model 1 is as follows:

$$D_{ij} = \alpha + C_{ij}\beta + E_{ij}\gamma + S_{ij}\delta + \theta_{ij}$$

D_{ij} = It is the probability of say in decision making at workplace. It tells us the decision making power of women working in micro and small scale enterprises

β , γ and δ , represent a set of marginal estimates for the corresponding set of explanatory variables viz., C, E and S.

C_{ij} is a vector of capacity building or skill development characteristics such as imparting training to women working in the organisation, whether the training has helped in raising income of those women working.

E_{ij} is a vector of socio economic characteristics of women who are working in micro and small scale enterprises studied, these characteristics are age, income level and education level.

S_{ij} represent marginal effects of several interaction terms

θ_{ij} is the random error term assumed to be independently and identically distributed with constant variance.

6.3 Model 2:

In the second model, the proxy for women empowerment that is , freedom to express ideas is tested against the explanatory variables of skill development and socio economic characteristics. The estimated model 2 is as follows:

$$I_{ij} = \alpha + C_{ij}\beta + E_{ij}\gamma + S_{ij}\delta + \theta_{ij}$$

I_{ij} = It is the probability of expressing ideas at workplace. It tells us whether there is any freedom to express ideas at workplace by the women who are employed there.

β , γ and δ , represent a set of marginal estimates for the corresponding set of explanatory variables viz., C, E and S.

C_{ij} is a vector of capacity building or skill development characteristics such as imparting training to women working in the organisation, whether the training has helped in raising income of those women working.

E_{ij} is a vector of socio economic characteristics of women who are working in micro and small scale enterprises studied, these characteristics are age, income level and education level.

S_{ij} represent marginal effects of several interaction terms

θ_{ij} is the random error term assumed to be independently and identically distributed with constant variance.

If in the present analysis the respondent (women employed in micro and small scale enterprises) is perceived as being “empowered”, that is she has a say in decision making at her workplace, the value given is “1” and if she records that she has no power in making decision at her workplace regarding her work, then the value given is “0”, which represents the quote “not empowered”. Similarly, if she has freedom to express her ideas at her workplace, the value given is “1”, and it represents the quote that women working in micro and small scale enterprises are “empowered”. However, if she records that she has no freedom of expression of her ideas, the value given is “0”, representing that women are “not empowered”.

VII.Data Analysis:

Table 1: Odds ratio calculated for indicators of women empowerment viz, Decision making at workplace and freedom to express ideas at workplace

Explanatory Variables	Decision Making at workplace	Ideas expressing at workplace
Age		
20-30	-16.69409***	-14.96544***
30-40	-16.8717***	-15.29748***
40-50	-16.78593***	-15.11969***
50 & above	1.2745***	-4.3409***
Education level		

7 th class	.492308	1.046854
8 th class	1.265294	1.963429
9 th class	.3100585	.4593682
10 th class	.3100585	.4593682
11 th class	-13.57206***	-12.67774
12 th class	.492308	.2363281
Under-Graduation	.492308	.9515842
Post-Graduation	.492308	.641591
Income Level		
5000-10000	.2037858	-.3465669
10000-15000	-.3679321	-.6566705
15000-20000	1.350819	16.9899***
20000-25000	-.1542321*	-.2512726
25000-30000	15.65796***	16.9899***
30000 & above	.5963274	1.098443
Training Received	-.9120872	-1.098797
Training raised income	.0525408*	-.0340057*

***, **, * represent degree of confidence at 99%, 95% and 90% interval

Table 1 shows the coefficients estimate of various explanatory variables when the respondent has a say in decision making at workplace and has freedom to express ideas at workplace.

Age related odds with reference to base are represented as our first explanatory variable. Age has a significant effect on decision making at workplace. The results show that the odds ratio of women having a say in decision making at workplace are significantly negative at first but becomes significantly positive at later stages. Therefore, as age increases the odds ratio of women having decision making power at workplace vis a vis not having decision making power at workplace increases and is significant.

Education level of the respondents show a positive odds ratio but are not significant. As a woman acquires more education the odds in favour of making decisions at workplace also increases. It can be seen from the table that as education level rises the odds ratio of having decision making power at workplace vis a vis not having decision making power at workplace increases but is not significant.

The odds ratio in favour of having decision making power in relation to income level is positive and significant in the income bracket of Rs.25,000-30,000. The results show that the odds ratio of women having decision making power with more income level vis a vis not having decision making power increases but is significant up to a certain income level.

The training given by workplace to the employed women, show that odds ratio of having decision making power vis a vis not having decision making power is negative or decreases and is not significant. The training is given only once in most number of cases, which does not lead to skill upgradation from time to time, resulting in deterioration of skills, the results hence show a stark reality.

Imparting of training raises the income level of the persons also, apart from just upgrading their skills. The odds ratio of having decision making power at workplace vis a vis not having decision making power at workplace increase with increase in income level on account of training received and is significant.

The table 1 also shows, results of dependent variable, freedom to express ideas at workplace in association with the explanatory variables. Women having freedom to express their ideas for the work profile they are engaged in, encourages them to work more efficiently and bring in new ideas and this in transition promotes healthy work environment.

Age related odds with reference to base are represented in the table. Age has a significant effect on freedom to express ideas at workplace. But, the odds ratio of having freedom to express ideas at workplace vis a vis not having any freedom to express ideas are negative. Therefore, women having higher ages (50 & above) are more likely to express themselves at the workplace than the women of low age.

Education level is considered to be as an important determinant of women empowerment and skill development. The odds ratio tell us that as the education level increases the odds of having freedom to express ideas at workplace vis a vis not having any freedom to express ideas at workplace increases and is positive, however not significant. Women who have attained senior secondary degree and are graduated are more likely to express their ideas at workplace than the women having low education level.

Higher the income higher are odds ratio in favour of expressing ideas at workplace. Income level in the bracket of Rs.15,000-20,000 and Rs.25,000-30,000 significant. Hence women having an income level of Rs.15,000 and more per month are more likely to have

freedom to express ideas at workplace than women having lower income level. Therefore, the odds ratio of having freedom to express ideas at workplace vis a vis not having freedom to express ideas at workplace increases and is significant.

The odds ratio of having freedom to express ideas vis a vis not having any freedom to express ideas at workplace is negative with training received and the income level increased with the help of training. Although, the training which has helped in raising the income level has a significant effect on the dependent variable. The results show that the respondents who have received training are more likely to express themselves at workplace than the respondent whose income level has increased after getting training.

VIII. Findings:

The study was designed to measure women's empowerment in manufacturing textile micro and small scale enterprises, in the area of National Capital Region. Using the indicators of decision making, skill development and socio economic characteristics, the association between women empowerment and capacity building was tested, bringing out various probabilities. The term "empowerment" was conceptualised in terms of power, ability, agency and resources (Kabeer, 2003; Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

It was hypothesized that variables relating to women empowerment at workplace (decision making at workplace and freedom to express ideas at workplace) have a positive association with empowerment status of women, while the variables for the setting of empowerment or the explanatory variables (age, education level, income level, skill development indicators) had either positive or negative association with empowerment status of women employed in micro and small scale industries. For example, women in early age of 10-20 were expected to be negatively associated with women's empowerment while women in the later stages of their age limit of 50 & above were positively associated with their empowerment profile.

The results from the study show that older women are more likely to be empowered (1.2745) than the younger women (-16.69409). Decision making power at work place was found to be high among older women compared to younger women. Similarly, the result show that the older women (-4.309) have more freedom to express their ideas at work place related to their work profile compare to younger women (-14.965). A possible explanation for these results can be boiled down to the experience possessed by older women. Women with higher age tend to have spent more years of their life working, which can be positively associated with their say in decision making matters at work place, confined to their respective work profile such as dyeing, painting, handpicking etc.

Women with higher education level were more likely to be empowered. The results reveal women's education level were positively associated with their empowerment level. Women having completed their graduation and post-graduation degree had higher decision making power (0.4923) and freedom in expressing their ideas (0.6415) compared to women having completed their primary and secondary level degree.

Higher the income level of the respondents, higher is their empowerment status. Women having income level of Rs.15,000 and above per month had greater say in decision making at work place (0.5963) and had greater freedom in expressing their ideas at work place (1.098). The result are consistent with various studies viz (kabeer, 2003; Allen dorf, 2012; Hasan, 2013; torri, 2014) higher income status of women who are employed give them greater control of their agency indicators. Income generation activities are said to be positively associated with empowerment status of women. Access to paid work, gives them access to resources, assets, greater control over one's decision matters of household and at work.

Unlike our expectation, the relationship between training received and women empowerment was found to be insignificant. The possible reason could be related to the duration or intervals of training received. Major number of respondents reported that they have received training only once. Training not given at regular intervals does not lead to skill upgradation to a greater extent. While 15% of the respondents also reported that they haven't received training at all, making it a valid reason for no association between women empowerment and skill development.

Whereas, the indicators of skill development, that is, income risen due to training has shown positive relationship with decision making power at workplace. The odds ratio of women having greater decision making whose income has risen on account of training increase.

The results therefore, reveal that there is positive association between socio economic characteristics of women employed in textile manufacturing micro and small scale enterprises and their empowerment status. Relating to indicators of skill development, training received by the respondents have shown mixed results of association whereas, the income risen due to the training so received has significant relationship with decision making power at workplace.

IX. Conclusion:

The most fundamental finding of the study is that the age, education level, income level and increased income due to training received had odds ratio of women having more decision making power and more freedom to express their ideas at workplace. The study also revealed that the socio economic characteristics have high explanatory power for deciding on the empowerment status of women employed in micro and small scale industries.

Consolidating the findings, it can be suggested that providing women with education, giving them access to paid work, women's active participation in income generation activities, providing them adequate training can alter the empowerment status of women positively. The empowerment status, so influenced leads to inclusive development of the members of the society and of nation as a whole. The respondents whose income has increased due to training received has left them more motivated and independent in taking decision at workplace and at household, thereof.

The main limitation of the study is the paucity of data as ratio of women to men in textile manufacturing enterprises is much more lower, therefore, a robust approach could not be followed. The data relating to organised sector of micro and small scale enterprises is not readily available in annual and survey reports, which adds to the difficulty of conducting field survey. Another major limitation of the study can be related to the education level and income level, majority of the respondents were 7th grade pass and had income level of below Rs. 5000, which makes it much more difficult to gather information relating to their empowerment profile. To strengthen the research base of the country much more detailed annual and survey reports are needed especially relating to Micro, Small and Medium enterprises, which is a budding sector in India.

The two main policy implication which can be brought out by the findings are (1) Government must bring in schemes that work as a strong mechanism towards empowering women in minor occupations in the organised sector. Wherein, textile manufacturing industry is the backbone of Indian economy, having surplus share in exports and GDP of the nation. The national organisations, official and stakeholders must take a step towards the effectiveness and inclusiveness of this sector, (2) Providing on the job training at regular intervals must be a vigorous exercise which should be undertaken by the organisations in order to shore up their skilled workforce.

More studies need to be carried out which test the empowerment status of women who are employed in the organised sector, especially in the MSME sector. the workplace empowerment agenda has received much less attention in India, therefore, research must be made in order to measure women empowerment at workplace, and henceforth, linking indicators of workplace to indicators of household and drawing a connection between the two.

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