



Empowering Women through Skill Development: A Catalyst for Social and Economic Progress

*Ms. Vinita Arya**

Abstract

Empowering women has emerged as a global imperative with profound implications for social equality and economic growth. This research paper explores the transformative potential of skill development programs as a strategic tool to promote women's empowerment, with a focus on their impact on personal, economic, and societal dimensions. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing skill development programs, this paper evaluates their effectiveness in empowering women across various sectors and regions. The study based on secondary data covers only the Indian informal sector. In conclusion, this paper finds that skills development programs are powerful tools to promote women's empowerment on many fronts. It underlines the role of governments, NGOs and private sector organizations in promoting an enabling environment for such programmes.

Key words: women empowerment, skill development, Economic development, gender equality, Training

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women Refers to improving the social, political and economic status of women. Skill development is an indispensable tool to increase women's productivity, earning opportunities and employability. Skill and knowledge are the vital components for economic and social development of the country. Empowering women through skill development is a crucial strategy for promoting gender equality and women's economic independence. It involves providing women with the knowledge, training, and resources they need to acquire new skills or enhance existing ones, ultimately enabling them to participate more effectively in the workforce and contribute to them

* Research Scholar, Department of E.A.F.M., University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

communities. Here are some key points to consider when discussing the empowerment of women through skill development:

- **Access to Education and Training:** Access to quality education and training programs is fundamental for women to acquire skills. Governments, NGOs, and private organizations can play a significant role in ensuring that women have equal access to these opportunities.
- **Skill Diversity:** Skill development should encompass a wide range of skills, including both traditional and non-traditional fields. Encouraging women to explore diverse career paths helps break down gender stereotypes and barriers.
- **Tailored Programs:** Designing skill development programs that are specifically tailored to the needs and interests of women is essential. These programs should consider the unique challenges and responsibilities that women may face, such as caregiving and household duties.
- **Financial Literacy:** Alongside technical skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurship training can empower women to manage their finances effectively, start their own businesses, and become financially independent.

Empowering women through skill development not only benefits individual women but also contributes to economic growth and social progress. By breaking down gender barriers and promoting equal opportunities, societies can harness the full potential of women, resulting in a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Following skill development Initiatives have undertaken by Government for Women empowerment

Various skill development schemes and programs initiated by Government to empower and support women in acquiring new skills. These initiatives aim to enhance economic opportunities, promote gender equality, and address the unique challenges women may face.

- 1. Long term Skill Development Training via Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs):** There are 18 National Skill Training Institutes are imparting skill training entirely for women. Batches have been started under National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) to provide basic/theoretical training to women. In this programme, main focus is laid on women enrollment. Admissions increased by 97% in 2018 as compared to 2014.

- 2. Short term skill development training:** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), the flagship program of the Ministry aims to promote increased participation of women in the workforce through suitable skilling. Under PMKVY programme, 50% (out of the total 56 lakh) of the candidates enrolled and trained are women who have benefited from the scheme.
- 3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** The process typically involves assessing an individual's existing skills and knowledge against established criteria or standards for a specific qualification or certification. More than 4 lakh women candidates have been placed under different skill areas and this helps in earning better livelihood.
- 4. Vocational Training Programs:** These programs offer training in various vocational skills, such as sewing, cooking, beauty services, and handicrafts, to help women gain employment or start their businesses.
- 5. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Programs:** Numerous NGOs run skill development programs for women, focusing on various aspects such as health, agriculture, and crafts.
- 6. Gender Sensitization Workshops:** These workshops aim to sensitize both women and men to issues related to gender equality, which can contribute to a more inclusive environment for women to develop and utilize their skills.

Present Scenerio of Skill Development Programmes on Empowering Women

- Through a wide network of 15,042 it is, spanning the country, over 22.82 Lakh candidates have been enrolled (in the trades of one year and two-year Duration) and special focus is laid on enrolment of women.
- Skill India through NSDC, is conducting focused pilot program with UNDP and Society of Development Alternatives (DA), to benefit more than 50,000 Women in 7 states/UTs over a duration of 15 months.
- Recently, more than 6000 training targets have been allocated to train Women in 4 PMMKs. Trainings are Being conducted for Self Employed Tailor, Beauty Therapist, Customer Care Executive, Hair Stylist, Yoga Trainer etc.
- Women's participation in skills training programmes :-

Schemes	No. Of Male Candidates Trained	No. Of Female Candidates Trained
Pradhan Mantri KaushalVikas Yojana (Data from 2016 toNovember 2021)	6,437,213	4,830,646
Jan Shikshan Sansthan(Data from 2018-19 to 2021-22)	154,359	800,269
National ApprenticeshipPromotion Scheme (Data from 2018-19 to 2021-22)	301,556	61,842
Craftsmanship TrainingScheme (Data from 2018-2021)	3,937,114	530,406
Craft Instructor TrainingScheme (Data from 2020-21)	3,394	6,111

Source: information shared by Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on 6 December 2021in Lok Sabha

- The Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY), a placement-linked skills development programme for rural youth implemented By the Ministry of Rural Development, provides for a 33-percent reservation for women.

Challenges

Women often face various challenges when trying to acquire skills, including:

- Gender Stereotypes
- Limited Access to Education
- Lack of Role Models
- Family Responsibilities
- Financial Barriers
- Hostile Work Environments
- Cultural and Societal Norms

Conclusion

Various governments both central and state have made several efforts to uplift women workers in the informal sector through several innovative programme. These several Schemes help women to develop the quality of skills, up skilling and re skilling in various areas through training programme which is automatically increase the personality development and overall

development among the women. The paper concludes that skill development programmes play a vital role in enhancing the economic and social empowerment of women. By equipping women with relevant skills, they gain greater access to employment opportunities, income generation, and improved self-esteem. Additionally, such programs contribute to gender equality and sustainable development. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on factors like accessibility, quality of training, and addressing societal barriers. Further research and investment in skill development for women are essential to maximize their empowerment potential.

Suggestions

- Develop sustainable funding models for skill development programs to ensure their long-term viability and impact and continuously assess the impact of skill development programs through regular monitoring and evaluation. Collect feedback from participants to make improvements and measure success.
- Make sure the skill development programs are easily accessible to women, considering factors like location, transportation, and childcare. Online courses and remote learning options can also be useful in this regard.
- Connect women with successful mentors and role models who can inspire and guide them. Mentorship programs can provide valuable insights and support for skill development and career growth.
- Foster a supportive ecosystem that encourages women to enter male-dominated fields or industries. Challenge stereotypes and biases that may discourage women from pursuing certain careers.
- Raise awareness about the importance of women's empowerment through skill development.
- Ensure that women have access to resources such as loans, grants, and microfinance to start their own businesses or invest in their careers.

By implementing these strategies, societies can empower women through skill development, ultimately leading to greater gender equality and economic empowerment.

References

- [1] <https://agrilinks.org/post/womens-empowerment-through-skills-development-small-revolutions-bring-big-changes>
- [2] <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1907T44.pdf>
- [3] <https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-india-blogs/skill-development-prerequisite-women-empowerment>
- [4] Vyas, A. (2018). The impact of skill development on women empowerment. *International Journal for Advance Research and Development*, 3(1), 8-11.
- [5] <https://msde.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-20/Women%20get%20a%20special%20focus%20under%20Skill%20India%20Mission.pdf>
- [6] <https://www.nationalskillsnetwork.in/skill-india-women-initiatives/>
- [7] Arora, R. A. J. N. I., & Chhadwani, M. (2019). Analysing the impact of skill India as a tool for reshaping Indian economy. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 6(1), 392-396.
- [8] <https://eprajournals.com/IJSR/article/3268/download>
- [9] https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ORF_IssueBrief_529_Skilling-Women.pdf