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The Impact of Skill Development on Women Empowerment

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Abstract

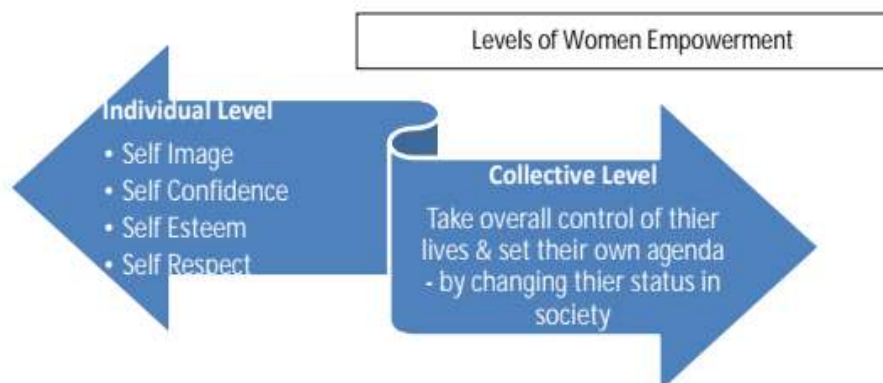
Women empowerment is one of the biggest tools for 'effective development' of any country. It means freedom of women from the vicious circle of social, political, economic and gender-based discrimination. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them – is a central issue. It is essential for them to be skilled in order to be able to better serve their families at home as well as professionally. Skill development not only creates employment opportunities but also empowers them. 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. This paper clearly highlights the impact of skill development on women empowerment. The basic need for empowering women is to instill the required skills and abilities in order to shape up their overall personality & raise their status within the society.

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Skill Development, Inclusive Growth.*

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. Women are not only managing their families but are also playing an important role in the development of entire society. 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 main aspect of empowerment is to give a sense of internal strength to them - to control their lives. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment. Women empowerment can be measured on the basis of two levels – Individual & Collective (as mentioned in chart)



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. Looking at the importance of the role women play in the development of a nation, one can sense that there is a long way to go in that direction.

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. It is observed, that the concept of training and skill development needs to move beyond imparting technical and managerial skills, with more focus on literacy, numeracy, political & life skills.

Some skills that training institutes must impart to women empowerment are:

- Communication skills
- Business etiquettes
- Language development
- Personality development
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Basic accounting skills
- Basic computer skills

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.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unni, Jeemol & Uma (2004) have observed that there is a need not only to bring change in status & image of women but also in the attitude of society towards them. There is a demand to create awareness among the rural women who are unemployed to gain self-esteem & confidence. **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 proposed study mainly is descriptive in nature. The research 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. This paper primarily focuses on the role of skill development in women empowerment.

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 after Getting Proper Skills

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

The various field in which women can gain skills for better empowerment are:

∑ Banking and financial services	∑ Media industry
∑ Telecom industry	∑ Information technology
∑ Management	∑ Pharmaceuticals
∑ Hospitality industry	∑ Travel and tourism
∑ Electronics	∑ Child care

CONCLUSION

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.

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