



IMPACT OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Since ancient time our nation is known for its high values towards the women's dignity and empowerment. The greatest witness of such cherished values can be cited from our pious Vedas where we say with pride and honour that “**Yatra Naryastu Pujyante Tatra Ramante Devta**” which means that even God from heaven lives at that place where women are respected and treated with honour. But gradually as the time passed and our nation faced many raids and invasions, the status of women degraded. After independence the biggest motive in front of our nation builders and patriots was to uplift the status of half of our population socially, economically and politically in order to achieve the effective and true development of our nation. In this regard there were many hurdles in the form of vicious circle of socio-political and gender based discrimination. So, skilling of women folk for development of awareness and confidence was considered as a very effective weapon so that they can face their home and profession in a better way. The basic aim of women empowerment is development of their skill so that their overall personality can be well groomed and their status in society can be uplifted. In view of the above, education of women is considered as very effective in women empowerment and their skill development. It is true that our government and various NGOs have started many skill development programmes for women so that their chances of employment generation can be developed and the dream of their empowerment for betterment of society can be made true. As a result of this many women have entered in various male dominated fields. But still we cannot say that their status is satisfactory as many barriers and discrepancies come in front of their empowerment and further development. So, it is the duty of everyone to play their part so that status of half of our population can be improved and they can breathe freely with pride and dignity.

Keywords: Ancient, Vedas, Empowerment, Skill Development, Dignity, Workplace etc.



Introduction: It is said that any society can flourish and develop in true meaning only when half of our population become empowered and live with dignity. But it is really an irony that even after so many years of independence and various government welfare measures the women folk in our country are forced to survive like a second grade citizen and face many kinds of discrimination and gender inequalities at every stage of their life. The development of skill through various vocational training programmes can be proved as a very effective tool in enhancing the overall status of women. It is a key to improve and develop the household productivity, enhancement in employment generation and increasing various possibilities of income so that their livelihoods can be upgraded. The empowerment of women is possible only when their skill and a sense of confidence can be developed so that they can independently handle their lives emotionally, financially and psychologically.

The empowerment of women mostly depends on the financial stability and it gives them courage and confidence to face various challenges and hurdles of life. In this regard, imparting of education can be proved as very powerful and effective tool in development and empowerment of women. But most of the girls in rural and suburban areas have to leave their basic education due to many social and economic hurdles such as poverty, social and family pressure, responsibility to take care of household and their younger siblings etc. Further, the condition of government schools in which rural and economically backward children go for education are unable to provide quality education and they can be termed as substandard. Our society which is known for its orthodox and highly conservative nature also plays a very crucial role in hindering the education of women and in this way still a very big portion of our population is suffering from the menace of illiteracy which further leads their exploitation and discrimination.

It is a fact that our government machinery is formulating and implementing various measures and have started many skill development programmes in order to enhance the participation of women so that their contribution towards the development of society and ultimately nation can be ensured in a better way. In this regard, National Policy for Skill development and Entrepreneurship has played a very effective role in training of more than 14 lakh women to develop various skills and helped in generation of a very reliable source of income. Such programmes in few last decades have helped the women folk in our country to contribute towards various social and economic activities. But still we have a long way to cover



to fulfill the dream of our nation builders who dreamt of an egalitarian society where every citizen can work towards the welfare and upliftment of our nation.

The true meaning of Women Empowerment can be understood in terms of freedom and liberty to live in an atmosphere of dignity and equality. Broadly it can be said that they should have freedom to make their own decisions without any interference. We all have to work in such a direction where we can ensure a confident smile on the face of women which ultimately certify their empowerment. So, the need to develop skill in women folk which can be considered as a bridge between job and workforce is of utmost requirement. It is a bitter truth that our women folk have to face many barriers since their birth which hinders their access of skill development and further productive employment. Therefore, there should be an effort which can create a skilled workforce to ensure our economic prosperity. For our women folk, the basic aim is not just creation of employment opportunities for them but also to enhance their performance so that their quality of work can be improved. It can be said that we have to cover a long distance to materialize our vision and dream in this direction.

Development of skill for women: In our country, women are contributing their part in almost every area which may be sports, science & technology, defence, medical, education, service sector or politics. In India, the total proportion of women workers contributes a significant portion of total working force. It is significant to note that majority of women are contributing their part in informal sector doing unskilled work. The unskilled women working force are forced to work in low wages as compared to their male counterpart and also they are prone to many kinds of exploitation at various stages. There is a dire need to develop a sense of motivation in them so that they can earn better and further their livelihood can be enhanced. This will definitely pave the path of moving ahead with quality and becoming self-independent. Various kinds of skill development measures are going on and their aim is to ensure the empowerment of women by developing the qualities such as language development & communication skill, personality development, leadership skills, basic computing skills and managerial skills etc.

In this direction, our government has passed its national policy which aims at “women empowerment” ensuring the all-round development of women folk. Few states in our country like Maharashtra has launched its ambitious programme for women empowerment which create employment and impart various kinds of skill training such as embroidery, tailoring,



making of decoration items etc. It is now a well proved fact that various missions launched by our honourable PM **Sri Narendra Modi** like “**Skill India**” and “**Make in India**” can become a success only when half of our population will work hand-in-hand. Further, the government machinery has started many skill development programmes both at the central and state level and these programmes have been proved very beneficial in the socio-economic development of women in our country. Some of the skill development programmes are appended below:

(01.) **Skill India Mission:** In July 2015, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched this scheme which basically involves many skills training programme especially for women. The main aim behind the launch of this scheme is to ensure increase of income earning capacity and financial security which will further determine enhancement in livelihood.

(02.) **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS):** In this scheme, there is a provision that women workers will get priority and it is ensured that at least one-third of total work force will be women workers so that their socio-economic status can be uplifted.

(03.) **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY):** As per this scheme it has been provisioned that around 50% of group should be exclusively for women workers in each block. This scheme is having main aim to encourage women towards self-reliance by creating bank credits, subsidies and various other funds. It is very beneficial scheme towards empowerment of women and making them an active partner in various developmental processes of society and ultimately our nation.

(04.) **Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARSWP):** Under this scheme, women are given training to use and maintain hand pumps for drinking water. In addition they are allowed to participate in various activities like sites selection which is meant for hand pump etc.

(05.) **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** In this scheme Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) makes provision to impart skill development training and it brings large number of youth including women in order to enhance their various employment opportunities. In addition, monetary rewards and certificates are given to the trainees who successfully complete their training.

(06.) **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme:** This scheme was launched in the year 2015 with an initial funding of Rs. 100 Crore. The basic aim behind this scheme was



to reduce various kinds of exploitation towards women, decreasing sex ratio and to empower women through skill development.

Problems and hurdles being faced by Women: It is really an amazing fact that in our country where even rivers and cows are considered as Goddess, but the woman faces many hurdles and challenges in her life at every stage. Even after formulation and implementation of various schemes and programmes, the women folk are still waiting for that fateful day where they can truly breathe with freedom and live with honour and dignity. The problems and hurdles starts from our household where discrimination starts with the preference of male child. Such condition continues everywhere, be it school or colleges and workplaces where women have to face various psychological, physical and other kinds of exploitation and harassments. Even after being trained through various skill development schemes it is very difficult for them to get job in our gender biased and orthodox society. The issues of early marriages and traditional protocols add further hindrance in their path and even after getting job the women are paid less than their male counterparts. Further, the issue of safety and security pulls back women from their path of independence and success. The various kinds of hurdles and problems being faced by women can be understood by the points which are appended below:

(01.) **Lack of education:** In our country the problem of illiteracy is one of the biggest hurdles in front of empowerment of women. Due to illiteracy the women folk are not able to come forward and reap the benefits of various government welfare skill development schemes and their status remains backward. The opportunity for acquisition of higher level skills for upgradation of their status is only possible if there is literacy and awareness. So, we have to work in this direction in order to get the true benefits of skill development schemes.

(02.) **Orthodox family background:** The traditional society is known for its orthodox vision which always perceives women folk as weak and inferior. Therefore, the family support which is very much required for moral support is not available for half of our population. As a result, search for their share of sky remains an unfulfilled dream.

(03.) **Sexual harassment at work place:** The menace of sexual harassment at work place is also one of the biggest hurdles which hinder the productivity of women workers. Even after so many regulatory laws which prohibit the sexual harassment, it has now become very common. Due to this, women workers refrain themselves from stepping



outside to work and thus their overall socio-economic development gets hindered very badly.

(04.) **Problem of dual responsibility:** A women has to play many roles in her life and for a working woman it is very difficult to maintain a balance and adjust between home and workplace. Due to this problem of dual responsibility the women has to sacrifice her working career for the sake of her family life.

(05.) **Wage discrimination:** It is a common issue in our country that even after same training, educational qualification and work, the women are discriminated in wage in comparison to their male counterparts. Just because of our age old traditional and orthodox belief that women are inferior and weak in performing the work with quality, they are discriminated.

(06.) **Inadequate Finance and infrastructure:** Due to inadequacy of appropriate infrastructure the new coming women do not get sufficient training and so their quality of work gets adversely affected. In addition, lack of proper financial facilities also affects the ambition of establishing self-business of women. As a result it poses a negative impact on the socio-economic independence of women in our country.

Suggestions: It is a well-known fact that for all round socio-economic development of our society and ultimately country, the empowerment of women is very much required. The empowerment and upliftment of women is only possible when their economic, educational, political and legal upliftment is ensured. There is a dire need of creating such an atmosphere which is based on respect, purity, dignity and equal rights for our mothers and sisters. It is true that creation of such an egalitarian society can be considered as very difficult or utopian but if we all concentrate our efforts in such a direction which is only aimed for liberation of women from all kinds of evil then such dreams can be fulfilled. As it is a well-known fact that our country is heading towards the “Knowledge economy”, so it is very much pertinent that there should be an advancement of the skills which is only possible when we follow an efficient skill development system. Some of the important measures which can be applied in order to enhance the skill development in women so that their overall growth and personality can be driven in a positive direction are appended below:

(01.) **Increasing seats in parliament:** The real socio-economic development of women in our country is only possible when effective and practical policies in favour of



women are formulated and further implemented. It can be ensured when there is good representation of women leaders in Parliament. So, it is of utmost requirement that number of seats for women parliamentarians should be increased.

(02.) **Skill building programmes:** The empowerment and upgradation in status of women can be ensured when skill development programmes will be effectively observed at the grass root level i.e. rural and backward areas. The worst victim of exploitation and harassment are rural women who are unaware of their basic rights, rules and regulations because of their illiteracy. So, the skill development training institutes should be expanded to remote areas and it can be used as employment generation and sustainable development.

(03.) **Digital Platforms:** Digital platforms can be effectively used in increasing awareness and skill development programmes for women folk so that their overall development can be ensured.

(04.) **Increasing financial and infrastructural facilities:** The enhancement in financial facilities to start the own business of women will be proved as a boon for development of women. In addition, the increase in infrastructural facilities like training, skill development programmes, and evening educational classes for women can be very crucial in women empowerment in our country.

Conclusion: It is said that condition of any nation can be assessed by looking at the status of women. After independence when our nation was suffering from many social, economic and other related problems, it was the biggest ambition of our nation makers to develop a nation which is based on equality without any kind of discrimination. Our constitution was framed with this noble and pious idea that every citizen of our nation will contribute his or her part towards the development of nation with full dignity and honour. But somewhere we failed to cherish the dream of our nation builders and as a result even after seven decades of our independence we are unable to give an atmosphere of freedom, equality and respect to our own mothers and sisters. There is no doubt that our government machinery and various other NGOs are working in this direction with full vigour but the result is still not satisfactory as even in our own home we discriminate our own girl children. It is only our orthodox and traditional mentality that we consider women as inferior and second grade citizen. So, it is the duty of all of us to ensure women empowerment and development. The economic, social and political factors are very crucial in determining the true empowerment of women folk. With the gradual passage of time and positive development in attitude, women have



entered in various fields including male dominated areas, but the statistical data of female contribution is far behind which is just 17% of the total GDP. The development of skill is not an end in itself but it is a means to fulfill another end. Education can be considered as a very powerful weapon to eradicate various menaces against women folk and to give them empowerment, courage to face challenges willingly and live with pride and honour. Now, the time has come to stand together and do something which can bring our women in main stream line. And there is no doubt that the day is not far away from us when we Indians will achieve this noble and pious goal.

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