

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Women participation and empowerment are fundamental women's rights to enabling women to have control over their lives and put forth influence in society. Women often face discrimination and gender inequalities, with some women experiencing multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as background or caste. Skills development through vocational training along with various measures such as Pradhan Mantri Kausal Vikas Yojna, National Skills Development Corporation, National Skills Development Mission. Ministry of Labor and Employment has taken a number of initiatives in the field of skill development and employment. For instance, training of trainers, Vocational Training for girls is being conducted by Advanced Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes run by the Ministry. Vocational Education and training are essential mechanism of any strategy to improve farm and non farm productivity that improves rural incomes. Skill is the bridge between job and workforce. Women of ten have different training needs than men, since the yare more likely to work as contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, home-based micro entrepreneurs, or low-paid seasonal laborers, in addition to handling their domestic work and care responsibilities. Skills development is a key to improving house hold productivity, employability and income-earning opportunities for women and also for enhancing sustainable rural development and livelihoods. Skilling India is one of the most important national agendas. In addition to its core focus areas, the Skill India initiative must also focus on skilling women for different job roles, if we want to achieve gender equality in economic participation.

KeyWords: women participation, skill, vocational, Development, Training.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women so that women can improve their livelihood. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and Programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development and then from Eighth Five Year Plan emphasis was shifted from development to empowerment. Declaring 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti), the Government of India (GoI) passed the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women which has the goal to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched by the GOI with the aim to strengthen generally processes that promote all-round development of women. It has the mandate to strengthen the inter-sector convergence; facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments. One of the key strategies of NMEW is - investment in skill and entrepreneurship development, microcredit, vocational training and SHG development for economic empowerment of women. This finely conveys that mere imparting literacy would not be sufficient; the women need vocational training or skills also to be able to stand on their feet and be the earning members of the family. Women have been taking increasing interest in recent years in income generating activities, self-employment and entrepreneurship that also lead to property rights, political representation, social equality, personal right, family development, market development, community development and at last the nation development.

NMEW

The program will provide livelihood training programs and educational workshops to 400 women and 200 female children in India: in the states of Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Three READ Centers are participating in the one-year pilot program, and READ India also set up the fourth location for this program: a new Womens Resource Center in Bihar. NMEW has also created a unique initiative called Nari Ki Chaupal, to establish spaces for community groups, civil society organizations, and women from various communities to come together, reflect, and create dialogue. All READ Center have a womens resource section a natural space for Nari Ki Chaupal. The trainings and workshops run at all four sites from May to October 2014. A Master Training program was conducted in April at the READ Model Center to teach coordinators the skills they need to lead these classes and workshops.

GENDER EQUALITY

Skill India is one of the most important national agenda. In addition to its core focus areas, the Skill India initiative must also focus on skill women for different job roles, if we want to achieve gender equality in economic participation. Over the past few years, the number of women entering the job market has been consistently growing. Career-centricity among

women is at an all-time high. In rural areas too, vocational education initiatives are ensuring women to have a career of their choice. No doubt there are a lot of challenges, such as literacy rate. According to 2011 Census, there is wide gender in congruence in literacy rate in India: 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. There are many reasons for gender inequality in society and, alongwith other measures, it is imperative to take corrective steps to improve economic participation of women in a big way. Such a change cannot happen overnight. A lot of steps at different levels are necessary to bring about desired changes. While it is important to have proper policies in place to increase women's economic participation, it is also necessary to open up skill development opportunities for women in different sectors to make them job-ready.

WOMEN EDUCATION

One of the root causes for dismal growth in women education is the attitude of parents towards them, along with poverty. However, the good news is that this is changing by the time. As compared to a decade ago, women participation in, say, organized manufacturing labour force has increased. Like wise is the case with women contribution in small-scale industries. Vocational training in the fields of stitching and other embroidery work has led to the creation of thousands of jobs for women. Now, skill development initiatives at the moment are focusing more on young women in the age group of 16 to 20 years. This means we are neglecting a large group of women who are home makers and who may be keen to enter the world of work. They can be brought into active workforce with appropriate skill training. Many women choose to be home makers because of the responsibility of taking care of young children. But when they cross that stage when children grow up and are relatively free and can easily start working. However, at this stage, the confidence to start working is generally low; such women may also lack the skills that are needed in a never-changing job-market. Depending upon their basic qualification, a variety of skill development courses of appropriate durations can be made available to make them job-ready or ready for self-employment.

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO

Since coordinated and convergent efforts are needed to ensure survival, protection and empowerment of the girl child, Government has announced Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative. Empowering the girl child through education and creating an enabling environment that provides equal access to education, health, employment/skill development etc. is another critical component.

Objectives of Skill Development Policy

Skill development for employability will be used as an agent of change in promoting women employment. Women face a multitude of barriers in accessing skills and productive employment, remaining on the job due to effect of globalization or otherwise and advancing to higher level jobs, as well as returning to the labour market after a period of absence spent, for example, in raising children.

- a. A policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to provide equal access for women to skill development and employment.
- b. This policy will aim to raise women participation to at least 30% by the end of the 11th five year Plan.
- c. Proactive measures that overcome barriers and facilitate participation, such as hostels for women, scholarships, transport, training materials and loans, will be made available on a large scale.
- d. The Women Vocational Training Program will be expanded and the institutional network providing training facilities exclusively for women, so that they can obtain skills with high wage and self-employment potential will be greatly expanded.
- e. In order to promote skills and employability of women, the sectors which employ a large number of women will be identified. These may include construction based traditional crafts or piece rate work, financial and health service as well as agricultural sectors.
- f. Gender stereotyping in vocational courses will be eliminated to encourage women participation in non-traditional occupations, including existing and emerging technological fields.
- g. Skill development for self-employment will be an important component in these skill development efforts in rural areas. Post-training support, including mentoring for access to markets, credit and appropriate technologies, is an important part of skill development strategy for self-employment.
- h. Training modules will incorporate specific needs of target groups, e.g. literacy, the level of education and the local language. The delivery of training will be flexible in terms of hours and duration to encourage participation, particularly among women.
- i. In general, there is a regional imbalance in training opportunities and some parts of the country are quite deficient in skill development institutions. In order to provide more equitable access across the country, special efforts will be mounted to establish training facilities in deficient regions.

NEED OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL WOMEN IN INDIA

Women used to command a cute power and importance in our ancient culture. The proof of this fact can be found in all the scriptures and even our mythological stories. We worship Goddess Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and many others. That shows how Indian civilization had revered the female form. Things have not remained the same in last few decades or even centuries. The social fabric has acquired completely new dimensions. The women are considered less powerful and important than men (Meenakshi et al. 2013). About 64 percent of rural males and 45 percent of rural females were literate. But, when vocational skills are considered, only about 10 per cent of male and 6.3 per cent of female workers possessed marketable skills (NSSO, Report No. 517). A multi-faceted approach, which includes literacy, hygiene and moral training, and skills training to improve their productivity, can give rural women the tools to help uplift their communities. The training and skill development among rural women would be mainly pertaining to farm forestry, papad making, sewing, cooking, sanitary pads making and so on. Women in rural India often face abusive situations related to domestic violence, physical and mental torture, wife-beating, sexual abuse, and so forth. It is also realized that women face resistance in participating in training programmes due to sharing of responsibilities at family level. They also face barriers due to bias and discriminatory behavior prevailing in society.

Our country is one of the few countries in the world where the working age population will be far in excess of those who will no longer be able to work. In 2020, the average Indian will only be 29 years old, compared with 37 in China and the US, 45 in West Europe and 48 in Japan. Therefore, when developed countries will be struggling with shrinking domestic Demands and manpower shortages. As compared to western economies where there is a burden of an ageing population, India has a demographic dividend. This demographic dividend means that as compared to other large developing and developed countries, India has a higher proportion of working age population vis-à-vis sent repopulation (Krishnamurthi and Khandelwal, 2011). The National Policy on Skill Development, 2009 recognizing this opportunity, had set a target of 500 million people by 2022. India lags far behind in imparting skill training as compared to the countries. Only 10% of the total work forces in the country receive some kind of skill training (2% with formal training and 8% within formal training). Further, 80% of the entrants into the work force do not have the opportunity for skill training (ILO, 2011).

Talking about rural women, rural women are often concentrated in handicrafts, basic food processing and sale which are traditionally considered to be women domain. Women also show a propensity to pursue micro-enterprises and home-based farming activities (The World Bank, FAO, IFAD, 2008). Skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector are linked with poverty reduction. (Fluitman 2002). Skills development improves output, quality, diversity and occupational safety and improves health, thereby increasing incomes and livelihoods of the poor. It also helps to develop knowledge about formal sector associations, rural organizations and governance. According to human capital theory, the better educated the agricultural labor, the higher their productivity (Atchoarena, et al. 2003).

CHALLENGES OR HURDLES WHICH RURAL WOMEN FACE TO ACHIEVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT.

The main challenges faced by rural women to achieve skills are at administrative level, socio-economic background, political etc. Some of the challenges faced by rural women are as follows:-

Lack of Confidence: Due to differential socialization social norms, morals in the family rural women lack confidence, support, and decision making powers needed for the growth of an entrepreneur. Decision making power related to business activities is less due to economic dependence and domination of male headed society.

Dual Responsibility: With the dual roles as, wife and mother women unable to manage the enterprise effectively because of lack of time, concentration and overburdened personal obligations.

Finance Problem: There is no sufficient fund to execute enough programmes to meet numerous political and rural areas. The multiplicity of schemes is not adequately listed nor is there networking among agencies. As a result, clients approaching one institution are not made aware of the best option for their requirements.

Illiteracy among Rural Women: The literacy rate of women in India is found at low level compared to male population. The rural women are ignorant of new technology or unskilled. They are often unable to do research & gain the necessary training. The uneducated rural women do not have the knowledge of measurement and basic accounting.

Need of Training and Development: Indian families and society provide training to a girl to make her as a good wife rather than to uplift her as an entrepreneur she is not allowed to develop network with other businessmen, which is considered as in and bad culture.

Political Interference/ Political Patronage: Most of the contracts awarded by the Agency went to loyalists and political lackeys of the political leaders. Project locations are always influenced by political consideration and not where they are mostly needed by the poor.

Un-Cooperative Attitudes of Implementing Authority: This has become a serious constraint, of recent. Since most of these Contractors are Political Stallwarts, they can hardly complete one single project given to them according to specification and design. The projects are either executed haphazardly or unduly delayed or absolutely abandoned on the pretext of "unavailability of funds".

Insufficient Professional Personnel: The Agency executed most of its Programmes through 'contractors due to paucity of personnel especially the highly skilled and professional staff like the Economists (only one), the Accountants (only two), the Statistician (only one), and the Lawyers (none) and others. Even the few monitoring staff available has no sufficient assets to use for projects monitoring which are running for the upliftment.

Lack of infrastructure and wide spread Corruption: There are also the other problems for the rural women. Rural women lack training and advisory services on managerial and technical skills to solve production problems. Here more than 70 percent of enterprises are micro-and small enterprises but their growth and the competitiveness is greatly challenged by a lack of businessman agement, marketing and technical skills besides the overall weak infrastructure and complicated legal frameworks for business processes, especially in global online transaction context. Choudhary and Raylwar (2011) in their article entitled challenges and opportunities of entrepreneur rural women in India consider the main challenges of entrepreneur women in development of their skills as educational problems, initial capital, barriers in access to raw material, psychological barriers, insufficient aids, high defeats, lack of technical knowledge, talent and weak infrastructure.

Skills and knowledge are the engines of economic growth and social development of any country. Countries with higher and better levels of knowledge and skills respond more effectively and promptly to challenges and opportunities of globalisation. India is in transition to a knowledge based economy and its competitive edge will be determined by the abilities of its people to create, share and use knowledge more effectively. From media attention about sexual assault to an increased focus on the 33 percent of women who are illiterate, women's empowerment in India is a growing national issue. One area in which India lags behind even its neighboring countries in South Asia is in women's participation in the labor force: only 29 percent of Indian women work. When women are restricted to house work and prevented from leaving home, they can't contribute to the family income, making it difficult for families to escape the cycle of poverty. To address the issues faced by women in India, READ Global has conducted women's empowerment programming.

CONCLUSION

Women are not less than men in any perspective. They compete men in every field of work whether it may be pilot, loco pilots, engineers, doctors, labour, etc. Irrespective of gender discrimination equal opportunities and training is to be provided to women to make them and our countrys economy more efficient. Skill development through vocational training will be very effective to women especially in case of rural women who perform traditional crafts or manual labour work. Government of India has provided effective measures to promote and provide vocational training to women. Skill development through vocational training is must because it enhances the economic empowerment of women. The women's vocational training programme at ministry of labour & employment, directorate general of employment and training, was designed and launched in 1977. The programme attempts to promote the women employment in industry (mainly organized sector) as semi-skilled/skilled & highly skilled workers by increasing their participation in skill training facilities under Craftsmen Training Scheme and Craft Instructors Training Scheme. Programme also offers higher skill training for the Instructors of various skill training organizations. Specifically, women should be targeted by explaining how inculcating income-generating skills and activities within them would subsequently lead to improving their social and economic status. Therefore there is a need on the part of the government and civil society to enable improvement in the quality of life of such vulnerable sections of the Indian population. To achieve these objective women exclusive institutes have been setup. As it is well said by **Bringham Young**, You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation.

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