

Role of Education in Women Skill Development: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract: In the present era of modernisation it is unfortunate to write, our country that has marched on the path of development is still incapable of taking its women folk on the same path. The creator has created both the sexes to perform equally in the world, but our ego and false concept of authority as being men had always discriminated women. Women are having a high level of intellect, sensible, and independent thinking and are in no way inferior to men. The meaning of skill development of women is to inspire women with courage and confidence without any break from the limited beliefs, religious conditions that have traditionally kept women away to express themselves. The real power of women for developing their skills is “Education”; education plays a fundamental role and gives self-confidence to women. In fact education has the command to empower every one; skills are the important channels through which power of education can be felt. With the help of education, women updated their information and get connected to the current matter for the current needs. For political, social, economical, and spiritual development of the society and nation as a whole, women literacy is must. It has been rightly mentioned that when a man is educated then only one person is educated but when a woman is educated then the whole family is educated. Hence when every woman is educated, the whole nation gets educated and tastes its benefits in the form of development. The main aim of the paper is to highlight some of the major initiatives of the government for empowering women through skill development, and we have also provided with some of the suitable suggestions that can prove fruitful in this respect.

Key Words: Modernization, development, channels, traditionally

I. INTRODUCTION

For a healthy and a sound society and to achieve sustainable socio economic development, it is necessary that the gender conflict that prevails in our society should be resolved. Resolving the gender barriers can bring significant development in economic, political, and social spheres of society. The development and emancipation of women in today's modern society gives an idea of the state in terms of the stage of culture they have reached as a nation. It is a universally accepted fact that a society by keeping its women (that forms half of its population) away from developmental works cannot progress equally in all spheres. It is almost impossible to generate a healthier family and a productive generation without the full sport of Women. It is also evident that the societies where women are empowered and are not restricted only to house hold chores have achieved sufficient developments in every sphere of life. Education is the single most instruments of empowering women. Besides this the education of girls has varied benefits to the family and the whole community, e.g. It has been found that women with secondary education or higher have an average of 3 children while those with no education have an average of 7 children (UNESCO 2010). Women with higher levels of education have lower fertility rates, better nutrition and use of health care for themselves and their children (Vos, 1996). Girls who

receive an education are more likely to marry later and have smaller, healthier families (Girman, 2012). In Indonesia, child vaccination rates are 19 percent when mothers have no education. This figure increases to 68 percent when mothers have at least secondary school education (UNESCO). A single year of primary school has been shown to increase women's wages later in life by 10 percent to 20 percent, while the returns to female secondary education are between 15 percent and 25 percent (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2004). Mothers with secondary education are twice as likely to give birth more safely in health facilities as those with no education (UNESCO 2010). Mothers are willing to make every sacrifice for their children and some are willing to risk anything for their children's education because they recognize the importance of education (Magaji, 2014). In addition, an educated mother's greater influence in household negotiations may allow hereto-secure more resources for her children (Benedicta, 2011) Educating women as members of society helps them to exercise their rights and obligations. It helps them to make more informed decisions in terms of political participation and life choices. (Magaji, 2012),

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are;

- To analyse the status of women literacy in India.
- To analyse critically various initiatives of Indian government for women upliftment through skill development.

III. METHODOLOGY

The paper is based both on primary and secondary source of data. The data has been collected from books, journals, internet, and other related government departments.

Women Empowerment through Education

India is committed to emerge as one of the most developed nation by 2025 on every front. According to a Mckinsey Global Institute study, India could boost its GDP by \$2.9 trillion by 2025, if female workforce participation rate is improved by 10 percentage points. This would be equivalent in bringing 68 million more women into the non-farm labour force. It sounds good to hear, but it is equally true that it will be only a dream that cannot be achieved unless women participation is involved. In order to make women cooperate and to bring them in development, it is necessary that they should be educated. An educated woman is a real asset to society. An educated woman gives rise to a healthier generation which in turn leads to growth. But the census report provides a grim picture of women literacy in India. In order to enhance the literacy rate of women particularly women, minorities and other backward sections of the society, the govt has implemented various policies and schemes from time to time like, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Scheme, Saakshar Bharat, Jan Shiksha Sanstans (JSSs), Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, National Monitoring Committee on Minorities' Education (NMCME) and they have shown good results. It can be clearly depicted from the table below.

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1011	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.19	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24	34.4	13
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76	54
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Though it can be seen that women had made remarkable increase in literacy during last decades, but women at present are confronted with varied challenges. In order to

empower women the following challenges should be addressed.

- To eliminate illiteracy;
- To develop self-esteem and self-confidence;
- To have knowledge about their bodies and sexuality;
- To have the ability to make their own decisions and negotiate;
- To raise the women's awareness of their civil rights;
- To provide skills for income generation;
- To make their participation in community/ society more effective; and
- To prepare them to be good women leaders.

In order to enhance the socio economic status of women and to empower them financially the govt had started many schemes like,

- **Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA):** A comprehensive scheme for the holistic development of adolescent girls called 'Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls' (RGSEAG). It is a centrally sponsored program of Government of India initiated on April 1, 2011 under Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). The scheme aims at an all-round development of adolescent girls (AGs) of 11–18 years by making them self reliant by facilitating access to learning, health and nutrition through various interventions such as health, education, vocational training, etc.
- **Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** The scheme was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. The scheme aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills for employment on a self-sustainable basis and income generation for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban women especially those in SC/ST households and families below poverty line. The key strategies include training for skill development, mobilising women in viable groups, arranging for marketing linkages and access to credit. The scheme also provides for enabling support services in the form of health checkups, child-care, legal & health literacy, elementary education and gender sensitisation
- **Working Women's Hostel (WWH):** The scheme envisages provision of safe and affordable hostel accommodation to working, single working woman, women working at places away from their hometown and for women being trained for employment. Since its inception in 1972–73, 902 working women hostels have been sanctioned under the scheme all over the country benefiting about 67,284 working women.
- **Women Empowerment and Livelihood Programme in Mid-Gangetic Plains (Priyadarshini):** From the year 2011, the Ministry is administering IFAD assisted

pilot project, Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme in 13 blocks spread over five districts in Uttar Pradesh and two districts in Bihar. The Programme aims at holistic empowerment (economic and social) of vulnerable groups of women and adolescent girls in the project area through formation of women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) and promotion of improved livelihood opportunities. Over 1,00,000 households are to be covered under the project and 7,200 SHGs will be formed during the project period ending 2016–17. Though the focus of project is on livelihood enhancement, the beneficiaries will be empowered to address their political, legal and health problems issues through rigorous capacity building.

➤ **Swadhar (Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances):** This scheme was launched by the Ministry during the year 2001-02 for the benefit of women in difficult circumstances with the following objectives:

- To provide primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalised women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support;
- To provide emotional support and counselling to rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness etc.
- To arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for women/girls in need; and
- To provide for help line or other facilities to such women in distress.

➤ **Family Counselling Centers (FCCs):** The Family Counselling Centre programme was introduced in 1983 due to increasing violence against women specially dowry related cases. The centres provide counselling, referral and rehabilitative services to women and girls who are victims of atrocities, family maladjustments and social ostracism. Through the centres, crisis intervention and trauma counselling is also provided in case of natural or manmade disasters. Public opinion on social issues affecting status of women is mobilised through this programme and awareness is created on welfare and development schemes being implemented by the Government.

➤ **Awareness Generation Programme (AGP):** The Awareness Generation Programme (AGP) Scheme aims to empower women by providing knowledge on issues ranging from health/nutrition to constitutional rights by providing information through organising awareness generation camp and to ensure their participation in development process and decision making. The scheme was reformulated in 1986-87. Under the AGP scheme, camps are organised throughout the country which provide a platform for women to come together to exchange their experiences and their ideas. Its main aim is to identify the needs of rural and poor women and to increase

women's active participation in development and other allied programmes. Issues such as status of women, women & law, women & health, community health and hygiene, technology for women, environment and economy are being taken up in the camps with special focus on local burning issues/problems like female foeticide, domestic violence, trafficking, drug addiction and low sex ratio, etc.

➤ **Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women (CCE):** The scheme of Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women was initiated by CSWB to cater to the needs of adult girls/women who were drop outs from formal schools. The main focus of the scheme is to ensure that contents of the course are need based and modified according to local requirement and simultaneously targeting various stages of educational levels of middle/high school and matric/secondary level courses for adult girls/women above the age of 15 years who could not join mainstream education.

➤ **Integrated Scheme for Women's Empowerment (ISWE):** The Integrated Scheme for Women's Empowerment is a pilot project for North East, designed to address the socio-economic need of the region for empowerment of women and development of children with the following objectives:

- Mobilising community action.
- Converging available services and resources in the area.
- To address the felt needs of the area.
- Income Generation through feasible and sustainable activities for women.
- Provide support services for health awareness, Career Counselling Centers, vocational training to prevent child trafficking, drug de-addiction.

➤ **Gender Budgeting Scheme (GBS):** Gender Budgeting Scheme is not an accounting exercise but an ongoing process to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men. It entails maintaining a gender perspective at various stages like programme/policy formulation, assessment of needs of target groups, review of existing policies and guidelines, allocation of resources, implementation of programmes, impact assessment, reprioritisation of resources, etc. A gender responsive budget is the culmination of this process. Gender Budgeting involves dissection of the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impacts and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. It does not seek to create a separate budget but to provide affirmative action to address the specific needs of women. It goes beyond allocation of resources for women, to cover tracking the utilisation of allocated resources, impact analysis and beneficiary incidence

analysis of public expenditure and policy from a gender perspective.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education is a constitutional right of every person. It minimises inequality and plays an important role for overall development of a person. Education is important for everyone, but it is more important to weaker sections particularly women because it provides them with security to fight injustice, oppression, dominance, poverty, and provides them opportunities in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. For marching on the path of development, the govt in collaboration with various NGO's has imitated numerous programmes and schemes to empower women through education and skill development, but in spite of all these measures still a lot has to be done. A few measures have been provided which if followed, can prove fruitful in the near future;

- To enhance the socio economic conditions of women focus should be given to improvements in access to education and training for girls, including the provision of services, such as transport, hostels, scholarships, and other incentives to encourage women to enrol for education and training.
- The skill development programmes should be run only by one ministry in order for achieving better results.
- The schemes that are old or those schemes that had not proved much beneficial should be improved. New schemes should be formed instead that can meet the demand of modern day employment requirements.
- The number of ITIs established by govt should be increased and their infrastructure should be expanded. Separate ITI institutions should be established for girls particularly in rural areas.
- More provisions should be made to provide vocational training particularly in girl schools so that more and more girls are benefitted. High quality training should be provided that can match the market standards in terms of quality and the type of skill required.
- In order to make the schemes successful it is necessary to evaluate the progress and quality of training provided through these schemes and also to check discrepancies, whether it is between the needs of the trainees and the nature of training provided, or between the kind of skill being imparted and the demand from the local industry.

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