

Investing in Future : the Role of Women's Skill Development Programs in enhancing the Employability of Higher Education Girl Students

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in the workforce has been gaining increasing attention worldwide. Women have made significant strides in achieving equal rights and opportunities in various fields, including education and employment. However, despite these achievements, women continue to face various barriers to employment, such as gender bias, wage gaps, and limited access to training and skill development programs. The Government bodies have designed a group of schemes and projects especially for women and girls to help them to meet their life goals and bring women empowerment in the society. These programs aim to provide women with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the workforce, especially in industries that have traditionally been male-dominated. The abstract of this study would likely focus on the impact of such programs on the employment outcomes of female college students. It may examine the effectiveness of these programs in improving their skills, knowledge, and self-confidence, and explore how these factors influence their ability to find employment. The study could also look at the types of skills and training that are most in demand in the labor market, and how these programs can be tailored to meet the needs of specific industries. Overall, the abstract would aim to provide insight into how women's skill development programs can help college girl students overcome barriers to employment and achieve greater success in their careers.

Keywords: Women empowerment, skill development, employment, workforce.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of women in the workforce has been gaining increasing attention worldwide. Women have made significant strides in achieving equal rights and opportunities in various fields, including education and employment. However, despite these achievements, women continue to face various barriers to employment, such as gender bias, wage gaps, and limited access to training and skill development programs. Investing in women's skill development programs is an essential strategy to overcome these barriers and enhance the employability of college girl students. These programs can equip female students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to succeed in the changing demands of the future job market. As the world becomes increasingly digitized, there is a growing need for employees with advanced digital literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. This study aims to investigate the importance of investing in women's skill development programs to enhance the employability of college girl students in the

future. The research explores the specific skills, knowledge, and competencies that are crucial for employability in the future and how women's skill development programs can meet these demands.

Overall, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the importance of investing in women's skill development programs to prepare college girl students for the changing demands of the future job market. The findings of this study could inform the development of policies and programs that promote gender equality and empower women to achieve greater success in their careers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowerment

An essential perspective on power is that it enables individuals to make decisions, while being disempowered implies a lack of options or the inability to make choices. Kabeer's (1999) most accepted definition, defines empowerment as the increase in human ability to make deliberate and strategic life selections and choices (major decisions for instance choice of living and who to marry or not) in an environment where the ability was before denied to them.

Whereas Robert Adams (2003) defines it as the means through which individuals, groups, societies become capable to take control over their surroundings and their personal goals; thus being competent to work towards not helping themselves but also others to maximize the standard and quality of their living.

Women Empowerment

Empowerment of women is all about rights and equitable societies and therefore Women Empowerment is defined by Kellera & Mbewea (1991). Batliwala (1994) states that women's empowerment is therefore a process, and an outcome of the process, through which women mostly challenge existing power relation and gain more control over the sources of power (material and knowledgeable resources and the thought that governs the social relation both in public and private life). Batliwala (1994) has not discussed about any strategies or policies for the women on how changes should be facilitated within the family circle or institutions to help and support women in challenging the patriarchal family relations. Kabeer (2001) sees women as key agent of Feminist social change therefore empowering women is a process for developing agents of social change and perceives three dimensions to empowerment which are resources, agency and achievements.

For Kabeer (2001), agency means motivation and purpose that the individuals bring to their own activity, their own sense of agency and the power within. Power of within can be generated when being enabled through development programs in order to facilitate empowerment and appreciate women to analyze problems and issues, be able to make decisions by being aware of their right to make it and learn experientially. Achievements are results and outcomes for people applying their own agency and resources and in return rise their resources available and sense of agency.

The whole statement identifies that for empowerment it is necessary to occur across various domain such as women's community, society especially in the education sector.

Women Empowerment in India

In India, women empowerment has become an important issue in recent years. While there have been some positive developments, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed.

Some of the key areas where women empowerment is needed in India include:

1. **Education:** Despite progress, there are still significant gender disparities in access to education in India. Empowering women through education can help them to break out of cycles of poverty, improve their health and wellbeing, and increase their economic opportunities.
2. **Employment:** Women in India face significant barriers to employment, including discrimination, harassment, and limited access to opportunities. Empowering women in the workforce can help to increase their economic independence and improve their social status.
3. **Political participation:** Although women have made progress in political representation in recent years, they are still underrepresented at all levels of government in India. Empowering women in politics can help to ensure that their voices are heard and that policies are responsive to their needs.
4. **Health:** Women in India face significant health challenges, including maternal mortality, malnutrition, and limited access to healthcare. Empowering women to take control of their health can help to improve outcomes for themselves and their families

Women Empowerment in Kerala

Kerala, a state located in southern India, has made significant strides in women empowerment in recent years. Here are some of the key developments:

1. **Education:** Kerala has one of the highest literacy rates in India, and this has been achieved through a strong focus on education, including for girls. The state government has implemented several programs to promote girls' education, including free education for girls up to the high school level, and a scheme to provide bicycles to girls to help them travel to school.
2. **Political participation:** Kerala has a strong tradition of women's participation in politics, with several women holding key positions in the state government. In 2021, K.K. Shailaja, a woman politician, was widely praised for her handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in the state.
3. **Empowerment through entrepreneurship:** Kerala has also seen a rise in women entrepreneurs in recent years. The state government has implemented several schemes to promote women's entrepreneurship, including providing loans and training.
4. **Women's safety:** While there is still work to be done, Kerala has implemented several measures to ensure women's safety, including setting up a women's helpline, introducing gender-sensitization training for police, and implementing strict laws against sexual harassment and violence against women.

Empowerment of Youth

Empowerment of young people is crucial for building a sustainable future and ensuring their full participation in society. Here are some ways in which young people can be empowered:

1. **Education:** Access to education and skills training is critical to young people's empowerment. It enables them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to achieve their goals and participate in the economy.
2. **Employment:** Young people need access to decent work and employment opportunities to be able to achieve their full potential. This can be achieved through initiatives such as youth entrepreneurship programs and job training schemes.
3. **Civic engagement:** Young people need to be actively engaged in their communities and have a voice in decision-making processes. This can be achieved through youth-led initiatives, such as youth councils, which provide opportunities for young people to express their views and ideas.

4. **Technology:** Technology can be a powerful tool for young people's empowerment. It can provide access to information, education, and employment opportunities, as well as enabling them to connect with others and express themselves.
5. **Mental health:** Supporting young people's mental health is also critical to their empowerment. Providing access to mental health services and creating supportive environments that promote positive mental health can help young people to build resilience and achieve their goals.

Empowering girl students is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Gender Equality:** Empowering girl students promotes gender equality and helps to break down the social and cultural barriers that limit their potential.
2. **Education:** Providing access to education is crucial for empowering girl students. Education can help them to develop their knowledge, skills, and self-confidence, and enable them to participate fully in all aspects of society.
3. **Health:** Empowering girl students involves providing them with education about their health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health. This can help to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy and other health issues that disproportionately affect girls.
4. **Economic Opportunity:** Empowering girl students economically can help them to become financially independent and contribute to their families and communities. This includes providing them with skills and training that can help them to enter the workforce or become entrepreneurs.
5. **Leadership:** Empowering girl students can help to develop the next generation of women leaders. By providing them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills and encouraging them to take on leadership roles, we can help to create a more equitable and just society.

III. OBJECTIVE

To study the relevance of skill development initiatives and their impact on the employability.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will focus on the Kerala State Women Development Corporation initiatives taken for skilling the higher education girl students.

- Women Cell
- REACH

Women Cell

KSWDC Initiative.

- The objective of the Women Cell is to intellectually enrich and uplift women students.
- To provide training for women so that they become empowered in their young age thereby making them self- sustainable in the society.
- To equip the students to the maximum for the betterment of the society.
 - Financial Assistance
 - Training Programs
 - Awareness Programs

REACH

- Resource Enhancement Academy for Career Heights, a finishing school initiative of the Kerala State Women's Development Corporation
- To bridge the gap between acquired skills and required skills.
- Students are given intensive training in life skills, body language, image development, communication skills, attitude, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, personal grooming and employability skills for sustenance and self employment.
- Placement assistance on successful completion of the training program for eligible trainees.
- Age group 18 -35 years

Need of Skilling**Periodic Labour Force Survey 2021-22**

Ratio	Male	Female
Worker Population Rate (WPR)	73.8	31.7
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	77.2	32.8
Unemployed Rate (UR)	7.1	12.8

According to the economic review of state planning board, the skill development capacity of Kerala is 1.5 to 2 lakh skilled man-power per year. But the existing capacity of skill training institutions in Kerala still falls below the international standard. With the objective of skilling the young workforce of Kerala and elevating their skills to global standards for employment in India and abroad, the Government of Kerala has set up different skill training initiatives.

All industry fraternity believes that the skilling process is a government mandate or it should be a social initiative. Expects skilled resources to be made available when they are in demand of a work force. Unskilled resources reduces productivity and skilling cost reduces profit.

Constrains

- Financial constraints
- Limited availability of programs
- Limited range of programs
- Limited relevance
- Lack of awareness
- Expectation gaps

V. FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

Skill development through education can improve the employability of college girls and government has a vital role in improving the quality of workforce according to the growing demand of industries and thus can make the women an inevitable part of the economy.

Skill development initiative focusing on specific needs and challenges faced by growing entrepreneurs is the key to promote self-employment among the Indian women.

Suggestion: REACH program can be executed through college women cells to improve the participation and outcome.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research study evaluates impact of employment and education on women empowerment in the college girls of Higher Education Institutions. The findings indicate that there is a positive relationship between education and women's empowerment. Education helps women be aware of her rights and have contribution to society, get employment in formal sectors, reduce poverty and help in household expenditure. Well educated women better utilize resources for a sustainable positive change in the society. Only education can breakdown the barriers and hurdles.

Hence for women empowerment the major key factors are education and employment which must be supported by the government by introducing such schemes and projects for girl students especially in the higher education.

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