

RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract : The aim of skill development, particularly in case of women, is not merely to prepare them for jobs, but also to improve the performance of women workers by enhancing the quality of work in which they are engaged. The NSDC has identified a few of the major challenges, which need to be addressed for building a conducive ecosystem, of skill development for the women workforce. It is argued that the empowerment practice has to go beyond its focus on women to gender. A focus on gender would imply an emphasis on advocacy rather than simply focus on basic needs. The concept of gender will also, analysis of power relations, and enforces the idea of developing capabilities rather than simply skills. Women are seriously underrepresented in many occupations, thus, policies are needed to fight exclusions in the labour market by reducing the incidence of discriminatory practices.

With this background, it is important to ensure women empowerment in the development programmes and thereby strive to have a conducive atmosphere for their effective participation. The strategy for women empowerment programme is addressed through gender sensitization among other sections of the community, capacity building to enhance their efficiency and contribute to economic development and ensure equality and status in the society.

Keywords:

- Women Empowerment,
- Gender Sensitization,
- Leadership Skill,
- Discriminatory Practices.

INTRODUCTION

Women in India consistently lag behind the men in terms of access to education, health care, jobs etc. Apart from the economic and social inequality, women in India are victims of heinous crimes such as, dowry death, rape, molestation and immoral trafficking.

As per latest statistics;

- The female child sex ratio (0-6 yrs.) is 914 per 1000 yrs.
- Rural female literacy rate is only 58% while rural male is 78%.
- A woman employment in urban areas is only 13.9% while in rural areas is 29.9%. With the rise in poverty, many women are forced to work in very low end and low paid jobs.
- Employment of women in organised sector is less than 8%.
- Women especially in the child bearing age often deficient in nutrition due to poverty. As a result the number maternal death in India is one of the highest in the world and 87% of all pregnant women in India are anaemic.

Unless drastic measures are taken for improve female literacy, create skills and capability among

women for enabling them to stand on their own feet and care for themselves and family, it will be difficult for India to prosper as nation,

Skill and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of world of work. Potentially, the target of group of skill development comprises all those in the labour force, including those entering the labour market for the first time, those employed in organized sector and those employed in unorganized sector. India has set a target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. The current scenario of women workforce in India; one can observe the huge concentration of female workforce in favour of the informal sector. Both, women and men, whether urban or rural, are mainly unskilled compared to having some skills. There are higher number unskilled workers in rural than in urban areas, and more number of women do not have any skills, compared to men with no skills. It has been recognised that the status of the women and their contribution is not only managing their families, but also to the economic and social development of entire society. Women have shown their capacity to play a major role in community development. Hence it is important that women become part of skill development.

The aim of skill development, related to women is not just preparing them for jobs, but also improve the performance of women workers by enhancing the quality of work in which they are engaged. The empowerment practice has to go beyond its focus on women to gender. The concept of gender will also, encourage an understanding and an analysis of power relation, and enforces the idea of developing capabilities rather than simply skills.

Educating women in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children.

In India creation of awareness among men could enlist greater support for women participation in the various development programmes. In many regions, the men have taken a path contrary to tradition, to empower the women. Sensitize more men about the benefits of women empowerment particularly, with respect to development of children and enhancement of skills for income generation. Recognition of their services to the family and society could empower them further and provide equal status in the society. Integrated learning programmes for women are recommended which will not only lay emphasis on literacy but on empowering women through awareness building on social issues, bringing about attitudinal change, promoting skill training for employment, providing information on health care, nutrition and hygiene as well as on legal rights. Such programmes are beginning and must continue to be designed and structured so as to be relevant for the vast majority of women.

In India there is an urgent need for skill development as demographic dividend arises as an asset for India due to expected decline in dependency ratio in the country. The dependency ratio (ratio of dependent to working age population) of India has declined from 0.8 in 1991 to 0.73 in 2001, and is expected to further decline. Low dependency ratio gives India cost advantage and helps in improving India's competitiveness. The demographic dividend is expected to last until around 2035. Hence, India has to act now and get the training and skill development dividend, to create a global pool of skilled persons. If the demographic dividend is not turned into an opportunity now, and if India fails to deliver, this demographic dividend in about 25 Years may actually become a handicap. Besides the demographic dividend, another factor, that adds the urgency for improved skill development is the increasing number of newly educated youth, especially women, who would like to seek employment in the service sector. The education and skill development sector has not adequately responded to this emerging need, making it imperative to provide skill development and training in marketable skill and services. It is also observed, that the concept of training and skill development needs to move beyond the conventional goal of imparting technical and managerial competencies, to playing a broader role of even including basic literacy, numeracy, critical social and political awareness, awareness about gender, and enhancing life skills. Such interventions by their nature will encourage higher self-esteem among women and overall personality development. For the success of skill development, training needs to be towards developing the kind of skills women and men already know.

Empowering women and girls is not only right thing to do. It is also smart economics and vital to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity-the World Bank's twin corporate goals. Evidence shows that resources in the hands of women boost household spending in areas that benefit children. The World Bank group has made strong commitments on genders. Gender equality is also a key priority for IDA. According to World Bank gender equality can be achieved by

- Educating girls
- Increasing literacy rate among women.

- Increasing early childhood development interventions.
- Increasing women's labour force participation and strengthening labour policies affecting women.
- Improving women's access to credit, land and other resources.
- Promoting women's political right and participation.
- Expanding reproductive health program and family support policies.

(www.worldbank.org).

Under corporate responsibility Jindal Steel and Power Limited believes that gender inclusive leadership helps create a new bench mark in women development. The company organises skill development training programs regularly to upgrade their existing traditional skills. The company feels it is important to empower women. Women have right determine their own choice in life. Several women empowerment initiatives have been under taken across the area of their operation. These initiatives aim at improving literacy as well as providing training to enhance livelihood generation opportunities among women. Further the company provide women with primary help in order to start with the production facility, which would in turn help in supplementary family income through micro based micro enterprises. Awareness programme on gender purity, sexual harassment, domestic violence, legal rights are being conducted to increase awareness on such issues. Also, different skill development training programme are regularly organised to upgrade their traditional skills and simultaneously promote new skills. All this to empower women. (www.jindalsteelpower.com).

The Government has also been making efforts for creating a congenial work environment for women. For this purpose, a separate 'cell for women labour' has been set up in the Ministry to focus attention on the condition of working women and bring about an improvement therein. The cell has the following function:-

- Formulation and coordination of policies and programmes for the female labour force within the framework of national manpower and economic policies.
- Maintaining liaison with other Government agencies to secure effective implementation of the programmes in respect of women workers.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- Setting up of an Advisory Committee under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- Giving grant in aid to Non-Governmental Organisation/Voluntary Organisation to formulate and execute action oriented projects for women workers.

Moreover, a number of protective provisions have been incorporated in the various laws enacted for equality and empowerment of women, the proper enforcement of which will create an enabling environment for women workers. (www.gmvs.org.in).

CONCLUSION

To conclude it can be noted that:-

- Empowerment of women is necessary for socio-economic development.
- Increasing literacy rate among women helps in better development of children.
- Given the opportunities women can excel themselves.
- Gender equality has to be established as a crosscutting issue in international development.
- Many private sector actors have placed working with women as core objective of their business and corporate social responsibilities.
- It's a startling pair of statistics: when women are able to earn an income, they typically reinvest 90% of it back into the families and communities. And, for every year a girl stay in school, her future earning will increase exponentially.
- Since girls and women represent 50% of the world population, enabling them to participate in their local economics help broaden the employment pool.

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