

A Study on Vocational Education and Women Employment

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to study the effect of vocational education on women. The entire study is based on secondary sources of data. Economic participation of women will lead to economic development and social progress in every nation. In recent year women are playing an important role in the economic development. The findings suggest that the Vocational education is an important instrument for women employment and empowerment. It improves income earning opportunities, employability, household productivity for women and helpful in poverty reduction.

Key Words: Economic participation, vocational, education, empowerment, employment.

INTRODUCTION

India has a large population of youth who are entering the workforce every year. However, a significant number of them lack the skills and knowledge required for the jobs available in the market. This skills gap has led to a high rate of unemployment among youth in the country. Vocational education can help bridge this skills gap by providing women with the necessary skills and knowledge required in the job market. It can also help create a more skilled and productive workforce, leading to economic growth and development.

Today women are playing an important role in the economic development. They contribute significant proportion in gross domestic product through actively participating in industries services and in agricultural activities. The importance of women's participation in socio-economic development has emerged out of need to maximize output in growth models, to reduce population growth and to control; factors that interfere with productivity and growth. There is a direct relationship between expanded opportunities for women and improved health and learning for children, slower population growth, economic development and the easing of environmental pressures. In India between the period 2004-05 and 2009-10 there has been a decline in female employment annually at the rate of 1.72%. According to the information provided by the office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, As per Census 2011, the total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural labourers. Of the remaining female workers, 8.5 million are in household Industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers.

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So vocational education and skill training programs help women to achieve their career goals and become independent. The Women Vocational Training Programme is dedicated to planning and implementing long term policies related to women's vocational training in the country.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational Education refers to a system or course of study which prepares individuals for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities. Vocational Education is traditionally non-academic in nature and is totally related to a specific trade or occupation. It is a form of education that focuses on providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in a particular career or trade. It aims to prepare students for a career in a specific field, rather than providing them with a broad-based education like traditional academic courses.

Vedic Period

In vedic period vocational education was an inseparable part of curriculum. Parents used to impart education about their family business to their off springs. Vocational education included art, medical education, military education and education of commerce also in some vocations general education was also imparted with vocational education. For example: Kshatriyas were taught mathematic logic, knowledge of vedas, and military training. Similarly, Brahmins are imparted educational, social, and religious job with medical education.

Buddhist Period

The aim of Buddhist education was religious education. But other worldly needs were kept in consideration. In Buddhist system of education a proper place is given to vocational education. Their curriculum include medical education, handicraft, professional education, architecture painting and sculpture etc.

Muslim Period

In Islamic education system importance was given to vocational education. Handicraft and medical education had an important place in Muslim education.

Pre-Independence era

Many recommendations were made by different committees and commissions but nothing concrete was done.

Wood Despatch(1854) highlighted the importance of practical training in schools and colleges.

Hunter commission (1882) - For the first time recommended that practical subject should be introduced in the school education.

- Hartog committee (1929) - suggested for the diversion of more boys to industrial and commercial career at the end of Middle School stage. It opined for the provision of alternative courses to impart special instruction in technical and industrial schools.

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Sapru Committee (1934)

- Messer's Abbot Wood Report (1937)- suggested a complete hierarchy of vocational institutions parallel with the hierarchy of institutions imparting general education and suggested for the establishment of new type of technical institutions called 'Polytechnic'
- Gandhi's Wardha Scheme of Basic Education (1937)- The idea behind the scheme was to provide education through some form of craft or productive work. It was to relieve the child from the tyranny of purely academic and theoretical instruction and to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual work.

Sargent Report (1944)

Post- Independence era

After independence the need for vocational education was felt which led to the formation of following commissions and committees-

- The Secondary Education Commission (1953)
- Kothari Commission (1964-66)
- National Review Committee (1978)
- NPE (1986)
- NPE (2020)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPLOYMENT

Vocational education plays a pivotal role in the empowerment females by providing them with practical skills, economic independence, and a pathway to overcome gender disparities. Here's a discussion of its significance in empowering women:

Economic Independence: Vocational education equips women with employable skills, enabling them to enter the workforce and contribute to their family's income. This financial independence can significantly boost their self-esteem and decision-making power within the household, reducing their vulnerability to economic dependence on male family members.

Breaking Gender Stereotypes: Vocational education challenges traditional gender roles by encouraging women to pursue careers in fields that were once considered male-dominated. By entering non-traditional industries, women can shatter stereotypes and pave the way for others to follow, promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Improved Quality of Life: Vocational skills often lead to higher-paying jobs and better employment opportunities. With increased income, women can access better healthcare, education, and living conditions for themselves and their families, ultimately enhancing their quality of life.

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Entrepreneurship Opportunities: Vocational training can foster entrepreneurial spirit among women. They can start their own businesses or ventures, gaining financial autonomy and contributing to the local economy. Entrepreneurship also allows them to create job opportunities for others, further empowering their communities.

Enhanced Self-Confidence: As women acquire skills and knowledge through vocational education, they gain self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. This self-assurance extends to other aspects of their lives, enabling them to make informed decisions and advocate for their rights.

Increased Participation in Decision-Making: When women are economically empowered through vocational training, they are more likely to be involved in household and community decision-making processes. This participation can lead to more inclusive and equitable choices, benefiting the entire family and community.

Poverty Alleviation: Empowering women through vocational education can contribute to poverty reduction by providing them with the means to support themselves and their families. When women are financially stable, the overall economic well-being of their communities improves.

Gender Equality Advocacy: Women who undergo vocational education often become advocates for gender equality and women's rights. They can use their knowledge and experiences to promote social and policy changes that benefit women in society.

Employment opportunities- Vocational education also offers employment opportunities in rural areas and small towns, reducing the migration of females to major cities. The skills acquired through vocational training are universal, making graduates employable both locally and abroad

Vocational training offers significant benefits to women who might otherwise drop out of school or college for various reasons but still aspire to become professionals with well-paying jobs. This form of education equips them with the necessary training and information to be job-ready. Employers prefer candidates with vocational training due to their reliability and relevant work experience compared to those with only a conventional degree.

In conclusion, vocational education is a potent tool for empowering women by equipping them with practical skills, economic opportunities, and the confidence to pursue their aspirations. It contributes to breaking down gender stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and enhancing the overall well-being of women and their communities. Recognizing the role of vocational education in women's empowerment is essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

CONCLUSION

Low skill levels contribute to inequality and poverty. However, when skill development and vocational education are implemented effectively, they can reduce unemployment and underemployment, boost productivity, and elevate living standards. Assisting individuals in expanding and updating their skill sets makes economic sense. vocational education plays a vital role in promoting gender equality by providing women and girls with skills that are in demand in their

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local economies, empowering them economically and allowing them to enter the workforce.

The future of vocational education in India looks promising, with a greater focus on emerging technologies, digital learning, industry-academia collaboration, and entrepreneurship. The government's initiatives such as the Skill India Mission, along with the efforts of private sector players, are likely to create a robust and dynamic vocational education system that would meet the needs of learners, industry, and the economy. Overall, vocational education and skill development are essential for personal and economic growth. They equip students with practical skills, knowledge, and valuable life skills, enabling them to secure employment and adapt to changing work environments. Furthermore, they address the demand for skilled workers in various industries and contribute to the advancement of gender equality by expanding education and employment opportunities for all. In order for Indian women to secure employment and work toward their desired outcomes, it is imperative to enhance their mental and physical development. Equipped with the necessary skills, Indian women can build a promising future, as they represent the nation's future. It is also essential to address the challenges and gaps in the existing vocational education system

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