

Women Role and Relevance in Skill Based Education

Shashi Sharma

*Assistant Professor, P. G. Department of Commerce, A. S. College, Khanna (PB),
India.*

Abstract

This study explores challenges and opportunities for the empowerment of women through education . Based on an analysis of the existing research ,the study shows how various factors like poverty, gender stereotypes and institutional cultures impact upon educational outcomes . Consequently, a more equitable distribution of educational resources , gender sensitive institutional cultures and practices, and challenging social norms and expectations of men and women are needed. Greater access to the labour market, better earnings, and personal empowerment will be the return . The challenge for policy makers is finding the right policy mix and the political will to address the complex factors that affect women's and girls' empowerment through education. So, by extending women's visibility and their self - sustaining ability, Higher Education must train them to become leaders with decision- making capacities to achieve the best for themselves and the country.

Keywords: globalization, women, India, culture, family, household, social change, community.

Introduction

Education is a basic requirement and a fundamental right for the citizens of a free nation. It is also of increasing strategic importance in the new environment of knowledge and information technology based globalized economy. Women are the indispensable part of a society. Their education influence the coming generation .The development of future generation mainly depends upon the education of women section .So the education of women is realized to be the most essential part for the development of the society. It can help every woman to educate their children to be good manager of the family as well as the active member of the society. The children learn their manners and behavior at home and mostly mothers are responsible for cultivating good behavior in their children .Every

educated woman can run her house well and make it a paradise on earth .Every educated woman can think well about her future and her aim in life and then choose the appropriate subject which will be useful to her throughout the life. In a democratic system the position of women is equal with that of men .Nowadays women are also conscious about their rights and obligations. The Indian National Policy of Education recognizes this when it states 'Wider women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, breaking gender stereotypes, will ensure better financial stability for women and lead to national development.

1. Women's Role in Education

There is a common threat in advancing society to the benefit of women education. Why are women so important to education? Whether in developed or developing countries, in urban or in rural life styles, ultimately an educated woman serves a better and more equal society, with a ripple effect positively impacting the future. Yet, there are countries where access to (higher) education for women is limited to inferior curricula , rooted in gender stereotypes . A recent article in the financial times reflected on the minority of women on MBA courses, stating that traditional explanations have pointed to the desire to start a family but that similar courses focusing on sustainability or social enterprise are attracting more women. An education system needs to allow for all women to take up or to resume studying . It needs to be widely accessible and, therefore, some modifications are much needed.

2. Women's Empowerment

Gender discrimination has been a major obstacle in granting equal opportunity for women in Skill base Education. It has been identified as a crucial category and deserves attention in the education-equality paradigm. Today, women's education has become an issue of debate within which it is now necessary to shift the focus from women's intellectual development to women's autonomy in decision-making, freedom of expression and control over resources. Empowerment is the manifestation of a redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology, transforming the institutions that reinforce or perpetuate gender discrimination. The parameters of empowerment have been identified as

1. Developing ability for critical thinking;
2. Fostering decision-making and action through collective processes;
3. Ensuring equal participation in developmental processes;
4. Enhancing self-esteem and self confidence in women.

The time has arrived to realize the relevance, in a rapidly developing country like India, of education for leadership-building, especially for women –something which can be achieved only through Higher Education.

3. Concerns and Directions of Skill Based Education

Education is an end in itself as well as a means of realizing other desirable ends. In our world of unpredictable social and technological changes, education has taken on a particular significance as a means of understanding and coping with such complexities. The knowledge explosion, supported by tools of information and communication technologies, is a driving force of the Indian economy, facilitating a better quality of life. Thus Indian Skill Base Education needs to reorient itself to become more vibrant, competitive, meaningful and purposive. In the emerging global environment, women are required to develop a more skilled approach to cope with the rapid multiple changing environments. If Skill Base Education is to thrive within contemporary realities, then there needs to be a shift from exclusive reliance on a masculine-orientated curriculum to a more developed market-oriented content that is comprehensively suited to the entire population. Skill base education is a means to achieve vertical mobility which can counteract the deep divisions that exist in society.

4. Integration of Women in Development

Since access to education allows each person the opportunity to gain an understanding of self as well as of society and its resources, equal educational opportunities should be available to both men and women. Equality and social access became major goals of Skill base Education in post-independence India. In 1948-49 the University Education Commission commented that colleges should be established that would serve both men and women simultaneously for Skill Base Education but, nonetheless, gender inequalities in

access to Skill Base Education have continued through decades. The target of Skill Base Education is to provide women's access to vocational, technical, professional education and emergent technologies. Identification of skills and occupations suitable for women should be based on the employment potential of women.

Over the years, these four challenges have been faced by Skill Base Education:

1. To introduce more disciplines and diversity;
2. To satisfy the social demands for new options;
3. To enable enrolment of women for purposes of productivity and of empowerment

The questions that we need to explore are (a) Will Skill Base Education institutions and their leaders respond to the required changes? (b) What measures are to be devised to exploit women's potential and promote their subsequent empowerment?

5. The Redefined View of Skill Base Education

Traditional concepts acknowledge Skill base Education as an instrument of personal development, by expanding an individual's intellectual horizons, interests and potential for empowerment and a better quality of life. It has also been taken to be a vehicle of social engineering that conforms people to social values. Theodore Schultz and Mary Backer emphasized the role of Skill Base Education in the transformation of human beings to human capital.

With the unveiling of economic reform policies, the role of Skill Base Education is being reinterpreted and redefined. Market-promoting policies are posing a challenge to Skill Base Education, and are being considered as both a driving force of economic development and the focal point of learning in a society.

Skill Base Education has assumed responsibility for transmitting accumulated knowledge both cultural and scientific. The effect of innovation and technological progress will increasingly demand competencies and pose challenges requiring more dynamism in the course content. Skill Base Education needs to be reoriented to increase women's access to

traditionally male dominated courses and equip them to take up entrepreneurial management and leadership roles and responsibilities.

The three specific needs related to women and Skill Base Education are:

- Recognition of women as an essential human resource base of each country;
- A strong commitment to equip women with the necessary range of managerial skills empowering them in their decision making role;
- Institution of a feminine leadership model suited to the needs of social development across all sectors.

5.1 Role of Universities: Empowering Agents of Skill Base Education

To be effective agents of empowerment through Skill Base Education, universities need to give attention to:

- Mass motivation and mobilization - dissemination of information through newsletters and other social agencies;
- Literacy Promotion: preparation of training packages and development of learning materials;
- Techno-pedagogic inputs: Preparation of data based information and transference of matter into technological display;
- Network Culture: monitor activities related to women's studies and women's movements and recommend better implementation.
- Women and Research: The University Grants Committee has agreed to provide part-time research associate ships to 100 girls every year
- Special access for women: Women students from scheduled caste and tribes in India will be eligible for Government schemes of scholarship, coaching assistance and remedial classes

5.2 Globalization and Challenges of The Century

Globalization has effected changes in educational systems owing to the introduction and exercise of technological and communication developments. Twenty-first century India is facing a number of challenges in the field of education. Adjustment to social demands for new options in Skill Base Education and for removal of gender barriers is creating pressures on educational leaders. Skill Base Education is finding it difficult to meet the challenges of a knowledge explosion, uneven growth and inequities in policies. As a consequence, there is a fall in standards, posing a serious threat to India's national development. Strategies to provide management training and research work for women are the areas which Skill Base Education needs to address to promote women's advancement and empowerment. Evidence of a paradigm shift from pure industrialization to an information-based society is present. From a gender perspective, the questions that arise are:

- a) Does the curriculum content promote research and gender equality?
- b) Does the learning environment foster assertiveness and empowerment in girls
- c) How will the education system foster sensitization of members towards girls' Higher Education and empowerment?
- d) Will limited participation in humanities and social sciences help women and society?
- e) Will Skill Base Education help women's transition from emancipation to empowerment?

5.3 Diversity and Dynamism in The Skill Base Education Curriculum

A restructured curriculum envisaging skill-based, gender-sensitized schemes and guidance services facilitating employment is the responsibility of Skill Base Education.

To keep abreast of social conditions, social surveys need to check:

- a) The reasons responsible for the poor utilization and participation in the technological advance by women? and
- b) What measures need to be implemented for women to make use of technological improvements?

The lack of educational and training facilities for studying science and the type of employment available for women holds them back. Thus one of the thrust areas of Skill Base Education is to include technology studies to help women's development in research and employment. Academic policy designing must include the enrolment of more women to ensure 'Productivity Ethics' - to increase women's productivity is imperative. Mass communication is therefore becoming increasingly significant as a University course. In India, a technological course for women is prevalent whereby financial assistance is provided to initiate engineering and technology for a period of five years along with training women faculty managers and administrators. To invite participation of women in science and research, fellowships and projects are being given to women to seek affiliation in the local laboratories close to their residences. The funding of courses on science, vocational and professional degrees is made mandatory in women's colleges.

5.4 Technical Education and Human Resource Development

Being the apex of the educational pyramid, Skill Base Education takes responsibility for providing people with an ability to reflect on the critical, social, economic and cultural issues of a nation. Today, technical education is a significant component of Human Resource Development within which women must be included. Preparation of women as part of human capital, having a great potential for adding value to products and services, is being improved by modernization, promoting institutions-industry interaction, and training women to meet the emerging challenges of science and technology. For this, women are being trained for research, consultancy management and implementation of policies to suit the needs of the industrial society. The UNESCO taskforce commented 'without improved human capital, countries will inevitably fall behind and experience intellectual and economic marginalization and isolation'. In cognizance of this, interdisciplinary and relevant curriculum content with an unbiased open door admission policy for women at par with men is the recent strategy of Skill Base Education.

6. Skill Base Education: Vocational Guidance and Self Employment for Women in India

In India, career guidance and counseling courses in women's colleges are responding to social and market demands with a healthy amalgam of tradition and modernity. With a view to controlling unemployment and increasing women's self-employment, counseling courses, career fairs, exhibitions and seminars are organized to disseminate information, cultivate the required skills and enable women to be productively employed to serve society with dignity. Women are developing self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of financial security by way of skill cultivation to be entrepreneurs.

A recent shift to provide more options better suited to women is visible in Indian Skill Base Education. Courses such as Computer Science, Electronics, Information Technology, Home Science, Law and Governance, Molecular Medicine are significant inclusions in the curriculum. Courses in Fashion Designing, Clinical Nutrients and Dietetics, Nursing and Business Administration are also present. Personality development and spoken English classes, commercial and secretarial practice, Media careers, Public Relations, Advertising, Garment Technology, Hotel and Catering studies are offered as certified courses.

Unconventional course inclusions that exploit the creative potentialities of a candidate like event management, puppetry workshops, television script writing, and aviation law are now available to women students. The Indian Business School, in liaison with Goldman Sachs of USA, has introduced a specialized MBA management degree for women. These new courses aim to provide women students with hands on training building competency to access jobs against competition. In addition to these, the Life Insurance Corporation of India conducts a three month crash course to train those women who need financial assistance for healthy survival.

6.1 Strategies of Empowerment: Skill Base Education and the Indian Perspective

The Indian National Policy on Education (NPE) is a landmark in the approach to women's education when it proclaims: 'The Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators'. The programme implementation explains women's empowerment through

collective reflection and decision-making. For this Skill Base Education needs to take responsibility for:

- Cultivation of positive self-image and self-confidence;
- Developing capacity for critical thinking;
- Achieving group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action;
- Providing women's centers in Agricultural and Home Science Colleges;
- Providing Continuing Education and Correspondence Centers for organizing vocational and literary skills;
- Revamping the Industrial Training Institutes in terms of diversification of trades and courses, keeping in view the job potential, facilities for vocational counseling, imparting information about credit, banking, entrepreneurial development and access to women's technical education;
- Providing Women's Studies Research centers to identify issues and areas and organize seminars and workshops to discuss and analyze women-related issues and disseminate information and encourage interaction with students and the general public through the media';
- Providing classes on legal literacy, programmes for women's socio- economic development delivered via media, adult education and information and training support; Meeting the expenses of skill base education for the rural, backward sections with incentives like scholarships and frees places;
- Meeting the requirement of achieving full integration of women within the democratic and developmental efforts of the country.

Curricular reform should include compulsory exposure to and engagement with different kinds of work in the form of summer jobs or internships, according to the circumstances and needs of the female population. Training must include manual and technical exposure to master operational techniques. Evaluation must project an analytical study to check the

extent to which women have become capable of applying themselves and being problem solvers.

6.2 Gender Fair Education

The main challenge to women's Skill Base Education is to provide gender-fair education to all citizens. Gender-fair education involves an aggressive move away from emphasis on separate and complementary spheres for men and women and on gender-stereotyped careers to expanded options and outcomes. The attainment of equality, rights, and empowerment should not be accidental or simply an offshoot of a good education but rather an explicit, overarching goal in a healthy social environment.

Some major instruments of gender-fair education are :

- affirmative action and quota systems, aggressive recruitment of female faculty and administrators, reform programs to remove bias from curricula and teaching materials, gender-sensitivity training for teachers and counselors, a review of policies and procedures for possible gender bias, and active recruitment of women into nontraditional fields of study;
- identification and projection of role models among faculty, administrators, and alumnae; systematic inclusion of women among speakers and resource persons;
- gender studies programs that are platforms for awareness generation in addition to offering courses that involve research, design and conduct training programs and establish links with women's nongovernmental organizations and activists for women's empowerment;
- The challenge of gender-fair women's Skill Base Education should be the transformation of women's lives as well as the transformation of society itself.

6.3 Impact Of Skill Base Education In India: The Road To Comprehensive Development

The focused goal of Indian Skill Based Education is to acquire, generate, supplement and transmit knowledge that builds up leadership qualities. It has already to some extent empowered women to compete better, perform with precision and efficiency and achieve

excellence in multi-tasking. Empowered women challenge men in their workplace and are visible in all forms of powerful corporate positions. Politically and economically women are now in a more commanding situation than fifty years ago. Indian women have made their presence felt in industry, technology, literature, art, banking, insurance and pharmaceutical centers. Educated women are also there in international business and administrative roles. Women's instinctive approach, which encompasses humane concerns, finds its reflection in their ability to combine justice with compassion, concern with rationality. Our vision of a better India free from multiple maladies can only be achieved when educated empowered women take up the mantle of responsibility and commit themselves to restructuring and advancing the development of India.

Conclusion

Skill Based Education of women plays a crucial role in releasing their energy and creativity and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the present world. In acknowledging them as potential human resources, investment must be made in developing their capacity in terms of education, skill development, and technology transfers through technical training. Special emphasis needs to be given to Research and Development of appropriate scaled-down occupations engaging women in large proportions. Illiteracy and cultural barriers need to be removed without any further delay. For women to make personal strides forward, a synergy of effort, concentration, planning and cohesive functioning at the Skill Base Education level will create possibilities of a different future. By extending women's visibility and their self-sustaining ability, Skill Base Education must train them to become leaders with decision-making capacities to achieve the best for themselves and the country.

REFERENCES

1. Boler, T. and Aggleton, P (2005). *Life skills Education for HIV Prevention: A Critical Analysis*. London: Save the Children and ActionAid International
2. World Health Organization. (1999) *Partners in Life Skills Education: Conclusions from a United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting*. Geneva: WHO, Department of Mental Health.
3. ILO. (2002) *ABC of Women Worker's Right and Gender Equality*. Geneva: ILO.

4. Khalid, H. S. and Mujahid-Mukhtar, E. (2002) *The Future of Girls' Education In Pakistan: A Study on Policy Measures and Other Factors Determining Girls' Education*. Islamabad: UNESCO.
5. Leu, E. (2005) *The Role of Teachers, Schools and Communities in Quality Education: A Review of the Literature*. Washington, DC.: Global Education Center, Academy for Educational Development