

Skill Development For Livelihoods Among Poor Families In Urban Resettlements- Gender Based Issues And Challenges

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Abstract

Displacement, poverty, and gender inequality all interact in complicated ways to impact the livelihoods of disadvantaged women in urban resettlements. Examining the effects of traditional livelihood loss, social network disruption, and resource scarcity on poor urban communities and the resettled people, this study aims to shed light on their socio-economic circumstances and need for skill development in resettlement zones. The study concludes with policy recommendations for resettlement contexts that aim to improve the lives of marginalized and resettled urban people through skill development. These policies should be gender-sensitive and work to increase economic opportunities for women, decrease their vulnerability to structural barriers, and increase their participation in decision-making. More inclusive and fair resettlement methods can be developed if the study's goal of identifying the specific difficulties experienced by these women can be fulfilled.

Keywords: *Skill Development, Marginalized Urban community, Government policy, Resettlements.*

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and displacement due to resettlement initiatives have become increasingly prevalent in developing countries, significantly impacting the lives of women in these communities. Women in urban resettlement colonies often face unique challenges, including limited access to education, employment, and healthcare. Women in these areas often don't have much luck getting their hands on financial resources like credit and savings, which limits their ability to invest in income-generating activities or improve their living conditions. Fortunately, there are social services that can help, like microfinance programs or women's empowerment initiatives, if needed (Sharma, et al., 2023). Moreover, societal norms and patriarchal structures restrict their participation in economic activities, exacerbating their vulnerability and dependency. Women nevertheless face significant barriers to claiming their rights, including a lack of social capital, knowledge of the law, and financial means, even when they are officially included. This has repercussions for their economic autonomy and keeps them mired in poverty and marginalization. Labour force participation rates for women aged 25-54 in 2022 was 61.4 per cent compared to 90.6 per cent for men. Women in the same age group with at least one child under six experience a “motherhood penalty” as the gap widens from 29.2 per cent to 42.6 per cent, with female participation at 53.1 per cent and male participation at 95.7 per cent (ILOSTAT,2024).

Since Skill development has emerged as a crucial strategy to enhance the socio-economic prospects of poor and marginalized women in urban communities, this study aims to investigate the role of skill development initiatives in empowering women in urban resettlement areas. Specifically, it seeks to examine the impact of skill development programs on women's economic independence, decision-making power, and overall well-being. By exploring the intersectionality of gender, urbanization, and poverty, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on effective strategies for promoting women's empowerment and inclusive urban development. In 2015, the National Policy for Skill Development set a target to skill 402.87 million adults by 2022. The challenge is daunting after all, only 4.69 percent of India's total

workforce has undergone any formal skills training. Other countries have far higher proportions of their populations undergoing skills training: 68 percent in the UK; 75 percent in Germany; 52 percent in the US; 80 percent in Japan; and 96 percent in South Korea. In India, the skilling of women is a far greater challenge than skilling men owing to the nature of women's work. (World bank, 2020) Most women in India are employed in low-skill and low-paying work, with neither social protection nor job security. Their economic contribution is all but made invisible. This study will focus on the livelihoods of women in resettlements in Perumbakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. and this research will provide insights into the effectiveness of skill development initiatives in enhancing women's agency, entrepreneurship, and economic resilience.

Issues and Challenges in Skill Development of Resettled Poor People in Urban India

Female labour force participation is 22.8 percent, compared to a significantly greater 56.8 percent for men, according to data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (2019–20). [1] Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2020 and has further reduced the number of women working in the nation, the poll was carried out. The percentage of women in the workforce fell to 16.9% after the first year of the pandemic, according to data from PLFS for the quarter ending in March 2021, while the percentage for men stayed mostly same. According to Sunaina (2022), women's participation in skill-building programs and employment opportunities has not kept pace with expectations. These programs must take societal norms and gender equality into consideration while designing them in order to be successful.

Women's empowerment and their work force participation are their fundamental rights which enable them to have control over their lives and in continuation mark their influence in the society.

Despite India's growing GDP at around 7% Female Labour Force Participation is going down i.e. 34% to 27%. Moreover, the female-male wage gap has also been stagnant on 50% (HDR, 2018). Hence, the **Skill Development** becomes a key to improve their household capacity, autonomy and employability. Income earning opportunities also enhances their sustainable livelihood and development in a long run. Above all, Limited access to education and training, Social and cultural barriers to participation, Gender-based occupational segregation, Lack of childcare support. Limited financial resources and autonomy, Stereotyping and bias in skill development programs, Limited representation in decision-making processes are the major reasons found in the results of the primary data collected from the 273 respondents from the families who were resettled after 2015 floods by the Cooum River Restoration Project, in Chennai.

The urban poor in India face significant challenges in accessing skill development opportunities, hindering their socio-economic mobility. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2017-18 data, 54.4% of urban poor youth (aged 15-29) have not received any vocational training, compared to 34.6% of their non-poor counterparts. Furthermore, a survey by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (2019) revealed that only 12.5% of urban poor women and 21.1% of urban poor men have received formal skill training. This skills gap is exacerbated by limited access to quality education, with 23.6% of urban poor youth lacking basic literacy skills (NSSO, 2017-18). The consequences are stark: 43.1% of urban poor households rely on informal, low-wage employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty (NSSO, 2017-18). Bridging this skill development gap is crucial to empowering urban poor communities and fostering inclusive urban growth. Based on the primary data collected from the following are the gender based response for the lack of skill development.

Table.No.1 Lack of skills for financial development

Response	Male		Female	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents (n=373)	Percentage
Yes	21	17.07	46	18.4
No	102	82.9	204	81.6
Total	123	100	250	100

"According to table.1, 17.07% of male respondents and 18.4% of female respondents reported receiving support for their financial development. This finding underscores the critical role women play in a nation's socio-economic progress, as extensively documented in global research. To harness this potential, it is imperative that governments, NGOs, and private sector organizations (through CSR initiatives) prioritize the skilling and upskilling of women, particularly those in resettled communities, to foster inclusive and sustainable development."

Table.No.2. Self-employment after Resettlement.

Response	Male		Female	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents (n=373)	Percentage
Yes	11	2.9	20	5.4
No	112	30	230	61.7
Total	123	100.0	250	100

According to Table 2, a remarkably small proportion of respondents ventured into self-employment. Specifically, merely 2.9% (n=4) of the 123 male respondents and 5.4% (n=13) of the 250 female respondents opened a new petty shop or business. This finding supports the earlier observation that their daily wage labor orientation hinders proactive self-employment endeavors.

Table.No.3. Gender and Skill training

Response	Male		Female	
	No. of Respondents (N=123)	Percentage	No. of Respondents (n=250)	Percentage
Attended Skill Training	23	6.2	33	8.8
Not Attended Skill Training	100	26.8	217	58.2
Total	123	33.0	250	67.0

Table 3 highlights the underutilization of skill training programs among respondents. With only 6.2% of males and 8.8% of females participating, the data suggests a missed opportunity for enhancing employability. Furthermore, the training programs' narrow focus on tailoring, embroidery, life skills, and soft skills may not adequately address the vocational needs of women.

Table.No.4. Membership in Social Groups for Self Development

Social Identity	Response	No. of Respondents (n=373)	Percentage
Member in Social Groups/Associations	Yes	40	10.7
	No	333	89.3
Member in Self Help Groups	Yes	47	12.6
	No	326	87.4

Table 4 portrays the details on the prevalence of social identity of the respondents. A minimal 10.7 percent had membership in groups and associations and 12.6 percent are members of Self-help groups. A high majority of 87.4 percent of them were not a member of any such social group. This shows that the Self-help Group system which is very successful influential factor in the Socio-Economic development of the people especially women, was not active or appropriately functioning in the area. The Women, Men and youth categories of the people require active participation in SHGs and other such social groups.

DISCUSSION

The tables above portrays the "Women in urban resettlement areas face formidable challenges in accessing gainful employment and economic empowerment due to limited education, skills, and social mobility. Traditional gender roles and societal norms often restrict their participation in the formal workforce, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependence. Skill India mission was which launched in July 2015 by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and since then it has transformed lives of over 35.36 lakh women through empowering them for better and secured livelihood through skill training. Since then lakhs of women underwent skill-based training and have improved their lives. However, the rapid urbanization and resettlement processes have disrupted traditional livelihoods, exacerbating vulnerabilities. Skill development initiatives tailored to their needs can bridge this gap. By acquiring market-relevant skills, women can enhance their employability, entrepreneurship, and financial independence. This, in turn, fosters confidence, self-reliance, and social mobility, ultimately contributing to more equitable and sustainable urban communities. Therefore, investing in skill development programs for men and women in urban resettlement areas is crucial for promoting gender equality, poverty reduction, and inclusive urban growth. The Indian government has launched various skill development initiatives, but despite these efforts, there are still significant challenges to overcome. The major reasons for malfunction are Lack of Conceptual Clarity, Insufficient Infrastructure, Inadequate training facilities, equipment, and resources hinder the quality of training, Limited Reach- Mismatch between Skills and Industry Needs, Inadequate Funding etc.

However the above challenges can be surmounted by –

- a. Improved Program Design: Clear objectives, industry involvement, and regular evaluation can enhance effectiveness.
- b. Investment in Infrastructure: Upgrading training facilities and equipment is essential for quality training
- c. Targeted Outreach: Special focus on marginalized communities especially women can ensure inclusive development
- d. Industry Partnerships: Collaborations with industries can ensure training aligns with market needs
- e. Increased Funding: Adequate funding can support scale, quality, and sustainability of initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of skill development initiatives in urban resettlement areas highlights the pressing need for effective strategies to empower marginalized communities, particularly women. Despite government efforts, challenges persist due to inadequate infrastructure, limited reach, and mismatch between skills and industry needs. To truly transform India's workforce, it's crucial to address these challenges and implement targeted solutions. By doing so, the government can unlock the potential of its skill development initiatives and empower millions of Indians. By tailor skill development programs to address specific community needs, Investing in infrastructure and technology-enhanced training, Foster industry partnerships for job placement and entrepreneurship, Ensuring gender-sensitive program design and implementation, Research on effective skill development models for urban resettlement areas, Policy reforms to promote inclusive and sustainable urban development, Scaling successful initiatives through public-private partnerships, stakeholders can work together to create impactful skill development initiatives, empowering marginalized communities and fostering inclusive urban growth.

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