

Exploring The Role Of Skill Development Programs In Women's Economic Empowerment In Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The status of women in society is a key factor in national progress. Today, women's empowerment has become one of the most significant concerns in India. In the present era, women are not only competing with men but also excelling alongside them in various fields. Skill development plays a vital role in promoting educational progress. Women who participate in such programs are more inclined to pursue higher education and continuous skill enhancement. This process not only improves their employability but also equips them with the knowledge and confidence to engage in household and community decision-making. Beyond economic and educational benefits, skill development initiatives nurture social empowerment by enabling women to challenge traditional gender roles and contribute actively to their families and communities. These programs aim to create awareness among women about their rights, strengths, and self-efficacy through structured skill development. The present study, descriptive in nature and based primarily on secondary data, examines the concept of economic empowerment of women through skill development.

Key words: Self-efficacy, women Empowerment, Economic Development, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Women in India today actively participate in diverse fields such as education, sports, politics, media, arts and culture, administration, and science and technology. However, their status remains closely linked to family relations, which are considered highly significant in Indian society. In rural India, women play a vital role in agriculture and allied industries, where they constitute nearly 89.5% of the workforce. In overall farm production, their contribution is estimated to range between 55% and 66% of total labor. Skill development, therefore, becomes essential for identifying gaps, building capabilities, and enhancing competencies. It is important to note that one's skills largely determine the capacity to transform ideas into productive and innovative outcomes.

Women's empowerment has long been a focal point of development, social progress, and gender equality. Across the globe, societies acknowledge that empowering women is not only a matter of justice but also a key driver of economic growth and social stability. This understanding arises from the recognition that women's active participation in the workforce and their effective contributions to families and communities significantly influence a nation's development path. In emerging economies like India, skill development stands out as one of the most crucial avenues for achieving women's empowerment

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the Impact of economic women and skill development in Tamilnadu.
- To identify the challenges in implementing skill development programme and policy implication in Tamilnadu

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Kaur and Singh (2017)** Kaur and Singh conducted a comprehensive study on the impact of entrepreneurship development programs on women empowerment in India. They found that such programs have significantly contributed to enhancing women's economic independence and decision-making power. Through skill development, access to resources, and mentorship provided by these programs, women entrepreneurs were able to establish and sustain their businesses effectively. Moreover, the study highlighted that women's participation in entrepreneurship positively influences societal attitudes towards gender roles and empowers women to challenge traditional norms..

- **Shailendra Kumar Gupta (2016)** refers that women are happy to proceed with business and enhance in the nation's development. Their job is being apparent and measures are taken to develop women business enterprise. Skill improvement will be the key factor for engaging the ladies.
- **Gopikala K (2014)** denotes that, whatever the way of life of women is higher they give equivalent weightage for all the highlighted feature or traits considered as women strengthening. Also, the most significant components to be considered by the chiefs by presenting unique approach for engaging women. Henceforth the dimension of financial balance and freedom are the genuine pointers for the estimating the status of women in any general public.
- **Sambu Charity Chepchirchir (2013)** states that, by taking an interest in social help group there was an improved self-monetary strengthening regarding funds, access to credit and trainings. This has created the urge of saving in the minds of women.
- **Ayesha Riaz, Aisha Siddique, FarahaRiaz&Nazia Malik (2014)** states that, the examination further determines the qualities, shortcomings and suggestions for the improvement of Skill Development Training. Ayesha Riaz, Aisha Siddique, FarahaRiaz&Nazia Malik (2014) states that, though the Skill Development Training contributed a great deal in engaging women, still their effect on salary age is at attractive dimension. Need situated trainings, chances of business and arrangement of little venture is required for strengthening of women.

WOMEN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development is a crucial driver of progress as it enhances efficiency, employability, and opportunities for growth. It serves as a bridge between employment and the workforce. In the present context, the revival of entrepreneurship has become a pressing need, requiring substantial efforts to build a skilled labor force capable of fostering economic prosperity. Women entrepreneurs, in particular, must be nurtured with the right skills, entrepreneurial qualities, and competencies to adapt to changing trends, analyze global markets, and sustain themselves in the competitive economic environment. Ultimately, skill enhancement will remain a key factor in empowering women to actively participate and thrive in the socio-economic landscape.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample for this study consists of 120 women from Tamil Nadu, selected to explore their experiences, challenges, and opportunities in economic development. This sample size was determined to ensure diversity and representativeness, covering women engaged in skill development across different sectors, regions, and backgrounds within the state.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN

Skill development improves yield, quality, assorted variety and world related security and improves wellbeing, accordingly expanding wages and natural ability of poor people.

- **Absence of family support**

First and foremost women lack support from her family. She is been restricted by their family based on all customs and practices. She needs family support to prove herself in the society. Too much challenge for gender bias, family issues and long working hours early relationships and orthodox customs, don't enable them to stand freely in their profession way.

- **Culture and customs**

The culture and customs practiced in our society has framed many rules and regulations for women. Men have been exempted from this. The cultural practices like marriage, No night shifts works, etc., are restricting women from their dreams.

- **Discrimination at workplace**

The place of work is the third phase of environment where women actually wants herself to be proven. But even there she has to face a lot of discrimination in pay, promotion, transfer etc., not only this; women are even abused at the work place. Much subsequent to finding a new line of work, numerous ladies are paid less when contrasted with men.

- **Lack of training and skill development**

A woman needs lot of training and skills to prove her in the society. She has to develop herself in terms of communication skills, accounting skills, technical skills, management skills and should also concentrate in her personality development.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT WOMEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Gender inequality
- ✓ Educational status
- ✓ Cultural factor
- ✓ Religion factor
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Limited mobility
- ✓ Lack of financial support

The above socio-economic factor affects the development of the women in their empowerment. Social factor is customs and practices of man centric social orders fill in as incredible obstruction to women empowerment. There are social practices that advance sexual orientation based violence and these demonstrations of brutality are generally aimed at women.

The societies, acquired custom keeps ladies from acquiring land both from their dads or spouses consequently constraining their entrance to guarantee and beneficial chances. In some societies, women are not allowed to migrate frequently from their places.

Women's drive is now gradually observed as a sign of expansion and women's empowerment, as huge numbers of distinct women travel to work or for education in other states. Inner movement of women, mostly of those engaged in worldwide supply chains, raises plentiful queries about the influence of India's existing progressive path on the lives of untrained, young, migrant women.

These factors automatically results in the lack of skill development on women. When women are refused to get their basic support from the society they are been demotivated and suppressed in the man centric society.

SEVERAL INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT.

• Long Term Skill Development Training via Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs):

Over this training scheme 18 National Skill Training Institutes (for Women) are conveying skill training entirely for women. Women's have been trained in several schemes and institutes like National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS), Craft Instructors' Training Scheme (CITS) in numerous fields such as Office Management, Electronics, Fashion Design & Technology, Computer Aided Embroidery & Designing etc.,

• Short Term Skill Development Training

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojan struggles to stimulate increased contribution of women in the labor force over suitable skilling. Though women rule areas such as Clothing, Magnificence & Wellness and Healthcare, there is major occurrence in non-conventional parts such as in Computer electronic engineering and Hardware, with a great total of woman admissions (1.03 lakh) beneath the Ground Expert - Computing profession part in this sector.

• Special Women-Centric Projects

NSDC, over its training associates such as Mann Deshi Foundation, Shri Mahila Sewa Sahkari Bank Limited and Sri Sarada Math Rasik Bhita are working utterly on skill development of women, mainly in rural areas. Partnerships with Private & Non-Government Organizations to boost skill development: Under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojan project, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham is aiming distant villages to raise women empowerment through skill development and construction of professional chances.

• Future jobs and industry-oriented courses

There stand almost 450 work roles which are focused on the way to skill training of women. Skill India is boosting contribution of women in new-age work roles associated to Business 4.0 such as Artificial Intelligence, 3D printing, Data Analytics etc. and has observed enlarged contribution of women in tough skills like welding, automobile mechanics etc.

Challenges in implementation of Skill Development Programmes in India

The goal of skill development, especially for women, is to improve the quality of the work they do in order to improve their performance as workers as well as to prepare them for the workforce (Nikita and Tauffiqu, 2015). A few of the main issues that must be resolved in order to create an environment that supports women's skill

development in the workforce are as follows ▪ The vast number of women who require training, as only 2% of the workforce is currently formally trained. ▪ There are deficiencies in the technical and vocational employment training (TVET) in India ▪ Inadequate infrastructure, a severe scarcity of skilled female workers, and subpar training. ▪ Injustice in women's access to TVET and a lack of systems to assess and certify quality. Women's access to formal sector training is restricted due to low educational attainment of potential trainees. Neglecting to acknowledge possible female trainees' past education. Training women entails a relatively high opportunity cost of learning.

DATA ANALYSIS

H0: Women do not believe that impact of Skill Development Program provides Economic Empowerment of Women.

TABLE I ONE-SAMPLE TEST

Test Value = 3						
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Impact Skills Development	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower Upper	Lower Upper
	19.649	138	0.031	-1.135	-0.117	0.113

Interpretation: The null hypothesis is not accepted. The significance value is 0.031, which is significantly lower than the normal threshold of 0.05. As a result, Women believe that that impact of Skill Development Program provides Economic Empowerment of Women.

H0: Women do not believe that Skill development effectively addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by women Empowerment

TABLE 2 ONE-SAMPLE TEST

Test Value = 3						
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Impact Skills Development	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower Upper	Lower Upper
Overcoming challenges through women Empowerment	20.636	139	0.149	1.605	-6.684	-6.434

Interpretation: It can be seen from the preceding table that the significance value is 0.149, which is significantly lower than the standard value of 0.05. Because of this, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be deduced that believe that Skill development effectively addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by women Empowerment.

H0: There is no significant association between demographic profile of the Skill development and their women Empowerment

TABLE III DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Variable- 1	Variable-2	Pearson Chi-Square	P Value	Decision
	Impact of Skills Development Program provides through Women Empowerment	5.28	0.013	

Age	Skill Development effectively addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by Women Empowerment	6.632	0.005	Thereis Significant Association
	Skill Development Program Provides through Women Empowerment in Economic Development.	7.221	0.000	
Education	Impact of Skills Development Program provides through Women Empowerment	10.218	0.035	
	Skill Development effectively addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by Women Empowerment	12.675	0.022	
	Skill Development Program Provides through Women Empowerment in Economic Development.	12.793	0.028	
Years of Experience	Impact of Skills Development Program provides through Women Empowerment	14.688	0.000	
	Skill Development effectively addressed the specific needs and challenges faced by Women Empowerment	15.567	0.023	
	Skill Development Program Provides through Women Empowerment in Economic Development.	15.626	0.000	

Interpretation: It can be seen from the preceding table that the significance value is 0.015, which is significantly lower than the standard value of 0.05. Because of this, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that impact of skill development enhanced confidence and self-efficacy as a woman empowerment

DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment is firmly rooted in the globally recognized goals of equality, development, and peace for all. Economic empowerment of women is closely linked to poverty reduction, as women play a vital role in ensuring the social and economic well-being of their families. The very concept of women's empowerment has emerged from decades of critical debates and activism, particularly those led by feminist movements across the world, including the contributions of Third World feminists. A defining aspect of empowerment lies in the word 'power,' signifying the process of challenging existing power structures and gaining greater control over resources and decision-making. Over time, women have moved beyond the domestic sphere and entered professional domains, participating in both organized and unorganized sectors, many of which were traditionally male-dominated. However, despite these advances, progress remains unsatisfactory. According to the 2011 Census, women accounted for 586.47 million, or 48.5% of India's population, yet their contribution to the national GDP stands at only 17%. This gap highlights the need for greater focus on capacity building. Skill development is not an end in itself but a means to achieve broader goals. Education, in particular, serves as a cornerstone for skill development and stands as a crucial milestone in the journey toward women's empowerment. Skill development enables women to seize opportunities, challenge traditional roles, and transform their livelihoods. This perspective was strongly supported during the International Conference of 1994, which emphasized that education is one of the most powerful tools for empowering women. By equipping them with knowledge, skills, and self-confidence, education allows women to participate meaningfully in the development process. Thus, educating women benefits not only the individual but society as a whole, having a greater impact on poverty reduction and overall development than men's education. Globalization and liberalization have introduced new technologies and rapidly changing markets, creating a demand for multi-skilling. However, from a wage perspective, female workers are often categorized as "low-skilled" or "unskilled." This classification undermines their real capabilities. For instance, women in forest

areas possess traditional knowledge of identifying specific herbal plants used in Ayurveda medicine, yet this skill is rarely recognized. Similarly, when women's embroidery work is sold in local markets, it is undervalued, but when marketed in high-end shopping malls, it commands much higher recognition and value. This disparity reflects the lack of acknowledgment of women's traditional and acquired skills, often leading to unemployment despite their expertise. To integrate women more effectively into economic activities, wage discrimination between male and female workers must be eliminated. Furthermore, specialized training programs in communication, entrepreneurship, leadership, and technology-oriented skills are essential to enhance women's employability and strengthen their empowerment.

Improvement in education, technical training and practices should be done to uplift the skills of women. Gender discrimination continues to play a significant role in limiting women's opportunities. At every stage of advancement—whether in the workplace, education, or social life—women are compelled to confront various forms of bias and inequality. Limited access to higher and technical education further restricts their participation in specialized fields, creating a major barrier to their full integration into the workforce in developing countries. Enhancing women's participation in the labor force is essential, not only for improving their socio-economic status but also for fostering self-reliance and recognition within the community. In particular, women in semi-urban areas engaged in small-scale enterprises should be encouraged and supported. For skill development to act as a driver of productivity, improvements are required in the quality, relevance, and accessibility of training across all sectors. As India moves toward a knowledge-based economy, it becomes increasingly important to focus on developing skills aligned with the changing economic environment. Women, if given equal opportunities and the right skills, are fully capable of succeeding in this transition. The Indian economy is shifting from being predominantly agrarian to a more diversified manufacturing and service-based economy, thereby increasing the demand for a skilled workforce. To meet this need, government bodies and NGOs must provide continuous training for women, particularly from socially disadvantaged groups, enabling them to upgrade their skills and adapt to new technologies. Globalization and liberalization, coupled with rapidly changing markets, often render existing skills obsolete, making regular skill enhancement inevitable. Those who proactively embrace change and update their competencies will be better equipped to survive in an increasingly competitive world. Policies, especially in the field of information technology, should be designed to be women-friendly, fostering knowledge and skills among young women in areas such as software and hardware, with special attention to rural regions. The broader strategy must emphasize speed, scalability, capacity building, collaboration, and productivity. This vision can be realized by empowering women and youth to become self-reliant, supported by labor-intensive initiatives that create sustainable pathways for economic participation.

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