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Pratham

Indian Skilling Ecosystem

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Introduction:

In India, significant investments have been made in the skilling ecosystem, with the establishment of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Enterprises (MSDE) to position the country as a global skill capital. However, the flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), achieved only 3% of its target by 2023. Low female labor force participation persists, with women desiring skills to enter the workforce. Skilling programs have shown potential in increasing female labor force participation and improving job quality. To maximize this impact, challenges faced by women in accessing training centers and employment opportunities, including mobility constraints and gender disparities in job placement, need to be addressed. This brief explores these challenges and gaps in the transition from skilling to employment.

Key Findings:

Indian Skilling Landscape

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) initiated the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (NPSDE) in 2015, promoting collaboration among government, industry, and academia. While it includes provisions for women, the absence of gender budgeting hampers its effectiveness. Establishing women-centric centers with adequate infrastructure could further enhance female participation and empowerment.

- NSDF, established in 2009, raises funds for skill development from government and non-governmental sectors, totaling INR 5,029.63 crores by March 2021.
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a 2008 public-private partnership, enhances skill development through training centers (ITIs) in India. Gender diversity remains a challenge, with only 6.6% female admissions in 2021.
- Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), under NSDC, establish standards, train trainers, and certify in alignment with National Occupational Standards. They adapt programs to industry needs, including emerging technologies. Efforts for gender inclusion face challenges, highlighting the importance of industry-aligned skills without gender stereotypes.
- The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) oversees skill development entities but lacks gender-inclusive data and safety protocols, hindering women's participation and safety in vocational training.
- The National Skill Quality Framework (NSQF) categorizes beneficiaries based on competencies, ensuring consistent standards across skill development programs. NSQC, with diverse representation, approves this framework.

- The Directorate General of Training (DGT) oversees vocational training, including programs for women. It formulates policies, sets standards, and organizes specialized training in established institutes, prioritizing gender-inclusive vocational education.

Key Skilling Programms

Numerous ministries like Rural Development, Minority Affairs, MeitY, and Home Affairs offer diverse skill development initiatives, including digital training for youth and officials. However, gender-disaggregated data in these programs is lacking. Some notable initiatives include [list of specific skill development programs can be added here].

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) offers industry-relevant skill training with components like Short Term Training, Recognition of Prior Learning, and Special Projects. The program, launched in 2016, prioritizes marginalized groups and women, with 43% female participation, showing women's strong performance across age groups.
- Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), under MSDE, enhances skills for illiterate individuals, promotes traditional skills, self-employment, and financial access. Despite being non-women-centric, 85% of beneficiaries are women.
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya - Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) by the Ministry of Rural Development trains rural youth, ensuring 70% placement, with special focus on women, providing age relaxation and promoting employment in various sectors.
- The National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under MeitY implements capacity building schemes, offering structured training programs, including an Online Post Graduate Diploma in cyber law, cybercrime investigation, and digital forensics, empowering officials to handle cybercrime cases effectively.
- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under MeitY offers diverse Post Graduate Diploma courses in fields like software development, artificial intelligence, and data science, creating skilled manpower for research and IT industry, accessible through various training centers nationwide.
- Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) portal offers non-formal courses in information security aligned with NSQF, providing Diplomas, Post Graduate Diplomas, and Certificates, along with short-term training. It caters to diverse users, connecting them with career fairs, internships, and industry professionals.
- A MeitY and NASSCOM initiative provides courses in data science, machine learning, and information security aligned with NOS and NSQF.

Challenges Faced By Women in Skill Development Programmes

Despite efforts to address challenges in the ecosystem, evidence shows women encounter obstacles from skill program enrollment to job transition. Challenges persist, hindering their progress in the skill development journey.

- Women often choose gender normative trades due to lack of information or counseling. Engineering and manufacturing courses create challenges in male-dominated environments, leading to differential treatment. Courses like beauty & wellness, healthcare, and IT-ITeS have higher female participation, while construction, automotive, and power courses see lower numbers (Skill India, 2022).
- Around 1.45% of female candidates in PMKVY's STT course drop out, while overall ITI dropout rate for enrolled females is 20%. Reasons include marriage, mobility constraints, personal issues, lack of accommodation, and safety concerns (Skill India, 2022; Ernst & Young, 2019).

- A study reveals 40% of female trainees secure employment, compared to 85% of males. Migration plays a crucial role, with job location affecting acceptance rates, discouraging women from work (Prillaman et al., 2017).
- Operational barriers at ITIs, highlighted by Ernst & Young, include low instructor-trainee ratio, inadequate equipment, limited teaching materials in vernacular languages, and lack of proper career guidance. Women often face course recommendations based on seat availability, neglecting individual aptitude assessments.
- Limited business partnerships at the state level hinder alignment between skill courses and labor market needs. Employers' biases, like late hours and heavy machinery, favor men, reinforcing gender norms in occupational choices (Just Jobs Network, 2022).
- Post-placement challenges for women include lack of assistance with accommodation, banking, and government benefits, hindering job retention. A World Bank study shows improved employability, rising from 26% to 28% for women after training, with a 7% increase overall, especially benefiting women (2015).

Conclusion

Despite the acknowledgment that skill development can empower women in the labor force, these brief highlights the complex challenges they face when trying to access suitable skill programs. These challenges range from limited course options to difficulties retaining jobs due to inadequate post-placement support. Although special provisions exist, their implementation remains constrained. Furthermore, the lack of high-quality, gender-disaggregated data makes it challenging to assess the impact of these programs on women's labor force participation. A way forward involves fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to improve skill development for young women, creating a truly enabling skilling ecosystem with effective implementation.

Read More: Indian Skilling Ecosystem

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