

# Skill Development for Women: Opportunities and Challenges in Jharkhand and Across India

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## Abstract

Skill development for women in Jharkhand and across India represents a critical component in promoting gender equality and economic growth. This study explores the various opportunities available for women in skill development programs, highlighting successful initiatives and potential areas for improvement. It also examines the challenges women face, including socio-cultural barriers, access to resources, and systemic inequalities. With analysing data from various programs and interviews with stakeholders, the research provides a comprehensive overview of how skill development can be optimized to empower women and foster inclusive economic development.

**Keywords:** Skill Development, Women Empowerment, Jharkhand, Gender Equality

## INTRODUCTION

Skill development has emerged as a pivotal element in enhancing economic growth and societal progress, particularly for women in India. As the country undergoes rapid economic transformation, the need for a skilled workforce is more pressing than ever. For women, skill development not only opens doors to better employment opportunities but also empowers them to achieve financial independence and contribute meaningfully to their communities. In India, women face a range of barriers to skill acquisition, including socio-cultural norms, limited access to educational resources, and regional disparities. Despite numerous initiatives aimed at addressing these issues, challenges persist, particularly in states like Jharkhand, where socio-economic factors further complicate the landscape. The paper provides a detailed analysis of existing skill development programs in Jharkhand, highlighting both successes and areas needing improvement. With examining national programs and comparing regional differences, the book aims to present a comprehensive overview of the skill development landscape. It will address the socio-cultural barriers that hinder women's progress, assess the economic impact of skill development, and review policy frameworks. Additionally, the book will explore the role of technology and its potential to bridge gaps in skill acquisition [1-2].

### 1.1 The Skill Development Landscape in Jharkhand

Jharkhand, a state rich in natural resources but marked by socio-economic challenges, presents a unique context for skill development initiatives. While the state has made strides in addressing these challenges, the landscape of skill development remains complex, reflecting both achievements and ongoing obstacles.

### 1.2 Current Skill Development Initiatives

Jharkhand has seen the implementation of several skill development programs aimed at improving the employability of its workforce, particularly women. Government initiatives such as the **Jharkhand State Skill Development Mission (JSSDM)** focus on vocational training and job placement. These programs are designed to provide women with relevant skills in sectors like agriculture, textiles, and information technology.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** and **local enterprises** also play a crucial role. Organizations such as **PRADAN** and **Jagruti Yatra** have been instrumental in offering training and support to women, especially in rural areas. Their programs often include entrepreneurship training, which empowers women to start their own businesses and become economically independent.

### 1.3 Success Stories

Despite the challenges, there are notable success stories that underscore the potential of skill development in transforming lives. For instance, women trained by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in various trades have successfully integrated into the workforce, contributing to local economies. Adivasi women who received training in traditional crafts and agriculture have not only improved their economic status but also preserved local heritage and practices [3].

### 1.4 Challenges and Gaps

Several challenges persist in the skill development landscape of Jharkhand:

- a) **Infrastructure and Access:** Many rural and tribal areas in Jharkhand lack adequate training facilities. Limited access to quality education and vocational training centers hinders the ability of women to acquire skills.
- b) **Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Deep-seated cultural norms and gender biases often restrict women's participation in skill development programs. Societal expectations about traditional roles can limit women's engagement in training and employment opportunities.
- c) **Economic Constraints:** Financial instability can prevent women from pursuing skill development opportunities. Even when programs are available, the associated costs for transportation, materials, and time away from home can be prohibitive for many.
- d) **Skill Mismatch:** There is often a disconnect between the skills being taught and the needs of the local job market. This mismatch can result in graduates struggling to find employment that matches their training [4].

### 1.5 Policy and Strategic Recommendations

To address these challenges, a multifaceted approach is needed. Strengthening public-private partnerships can enhance resource mobilization and program effectiveness. Expanding the reach of skill development initiatives to remote areas through mobile training units and digital platforms can improve accessibility. Incorporating community-based approaches to tackle socio-cultural barriers is crucial. Engaging local leaders and influencers to advocate for women's participation in skill development programs can help shift societal attitudes. Additionally, aligning training programs with local economic needs and emerging industries can bridge the skills gap and increase employment opportunities. Jharkhand's skill development landscape reflects a blend of progress and persistent challenges. While existing programs have made significant strides, addressing the gaps and enhancing the effectiveness of these initiatives is crucial for empowering women and fostering sustainable economic growth in the state. Through continued effort and innovative solutions, Jharkhand can create a more inclusive and effective skill development ecosystem for its women [5].

### 1.6 The Skill Development Landscape Across India

India's skill development landscape is vast and diverse, shaped by a range of policies, programs, and regional disparities. As the country seeks to harness its demographic dividend, skill development has become a crucial area of focus, aiming to equip individuals with the skills necessary for economic participation and growth.

#### National Programs and Policies

India has implemented several large-scale skill development programs to address the needs of its diverse population. The **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** is one of the flagship initiatives, offering vocational training and certification across various sectors. This program aims to enhance the employability of youth by providing industry-relevant skills and bridging the gap between education and employment.

The **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** targets rural youth, focusing on improving skills and providing job opportunities in rural areas. Another significant initiative is the **National Skill Development Mission (NSDM)**, which coordinates various skill development programs and aims to create a holistic and integrated approach to skill training.

## REGIONAL VARIATIONS

India's vast geography and socio-economic diversity result in significant regional variations in skill development. While urban centers like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru benefit from advanced training facilities and numerous opportunities, rural and remote areas often face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to training programs.

States like **Kerala** and **Gujarat** have established successful skill development models through robust state-level initiatives and partnerships with industries. In contrast, states like **Bihar** and **Jharkhand** struggle with infrastructural deficits and socio-cultural barriers that impede the effectiveness of national programs [6-8].

## CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

Despite the progress made, several challenges persist across India's skill development landscape:

- a) **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Many regions, particularly rural areas, lack adequate training facilities and resources. This gap limits the reach and effectiveness of skill development programs.
- b) **Skill Mismatch:** There is often a disconnect between the skills being taught and the actual demands of the job market. This mismatch can result in underemployment and unemployment among graduates.
- c) **Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Gender biases, socio-economic constraints, and regional disparities can affect participation in skill development programs. Women and marginalized communities often face additional obstacles.
- d) **Quality of Training:** Variations in the quality of training across different programs and regions can impact the overall effectiveness of skill development initiatives.

## SUCCESSFUL MODELS AND INNOVATIONS

Several innovative approaches and successful models offer valuable lessons:

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Collaborations between government agencies, private sector companies, and educational institutions have proven effective in enhancing the quality and reach of skill development programs. The **Skill Development Centres** established in partnership with industries provide practical, hands-on training aligned with market needs.
- **Technology Integration:** Digital platforms and e-learning solutions are expanding access to skill development, particularly in remote areas. Programs like **Swayam** and **NPTEL** offer online courses that reach a broad audience.
- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Localized approaches, such as those implemented by NGOs and community organizations, can address specific regional needs and barriers. Programs tailored to local industries and practices often achieve better results.

The skill development landscape across India reflects both significant advancements and ongoing challenges. While national programs and regional initiatives contribute to a growing pool of skilled individuals, addressing infrastructure gaps, aligning training with market needs, and overcoming socio-cultural barriers are essential for maximizing the impact of these efforts. By learning from successful models and continuing to innovate, India can further enhance its skill development ecosystem and foster inclusive economic growth.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Tiwari (2017)** discussed the rise of women entrepreneurs and its societal and economic benefits. Despite comprising nearly half of India's population, women's entrepreneurial participation remained limited. The study analysed the prevalence of women entrepreneurship in India, reviewing highly cited research and sex-disaggregated databases. Women entrepreneurs faced gender-specific and neutral challenges. Entrepreneurial activity was concentrated in a few states. The study emphasized the need for policy interventions to foster an engendered environment for women entrepreneurs.

**Chaudhary (2017)** highlighted that the Indian Constitution empowered women and supported positive discrimination measures. Women often faced multiple discriminations due to factors like background or caste. Skill development was crucial for improving household productivity and employability. The study discussed various training programs aimed at women's skill development, emphasizing the need for tailored programs to enhance women's economic and social status.

**Kumari (2017)** compared social sensitivity, skills, and relations between rural and urban working women in Himachal Pradesh. The study involved 600 randomly selected subjects and used the Social Competence Scale

by Dr. VP Sharma and Shukla. Results indicated differences between rural and urban women, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve social competence and support for working women in both settings.

**Pallikadavath et al. (2016)** examined the impact of low fertility and early sterilization on women's education and skill development in South India. The study found no evidence of women resuming formal education post-sterilization. However, there was support for skill development training. The study emphasized the need for targeted skill development programs for post-sterilization women, recognizing their significance in economic and social development.

**Tewari and Malhotra (2014)** acknowledged women's increasing role in the Indian economy, recognized by economists, the government, and society. Despite facing numerous hurdles, women achieved significant growth in various fields. Improved education and skills transformed women into outgoing, extroverted leaders. The study highlighted that rural female work participation was higher than urban in many Indian cities. The paper aimed to study the outlook of women entrepreneurs in India, focusing on their work participation compared to BRICK nations, and suggested steps for promoting women entrepreneurship.

**Hundekar and Badami (2014)** assessed the communication skills of rural adolescent women across India. The study involved 1,183 young women aged 15-18+ years. An educational intervention aimed to enhance communication skills through exercises and games. Results showed significant improvements in communication abilities post-intervention. The study highlighted the importance of communication skills for accessing community resources and becoming self-reliant.

**Paul and Mir (2013)** analysed the impact of globalization on women's work in India. They found that globalization created employment opportunities but also reinforced gender discrimination and labor division. Women often faced overburden and continued subordination. The study reviewed the National Skill Development Corporation's role in addressing gender aspects and called for more inclusive and sensitive employment schemes to promote sustainable growth.

**Kumbhar (2013)** emphasized the importance of women as a human resource for economic growth. Traditional mindsets and state negligence hindered women's entrepreneurship development. Women faced various challenges, including balancing family and career, financial independence, and lack of professional education. The study called for continuous efforts to inspire and support women entrepreneurs through awareness programs and policy interventions.

**Budhwar et al. (2013)** observed that since India's independence in 1947, the percentage of women in the workforce had steadily increased. Economic reforms in the 1990s created numerous job opportunities for educated women in urban areas. Firms recognized the need for talented human resources, including women, to survive in the dynamic business environment. However, women's representation in management remained low, particularly in strategic policy-influencing roles. Despite significant contributions in social organization, politics, and administration, women were primarily seen in HR, IT, and service activities rather than production or marketing.

**Waris and Viraktamath (2013)** emphasized that gender equality was critical for achieving sustainable development with equity and growth. They pointed out that gender inequalities were prevalent in various development areas, including health, education, economic development, and public participation. Health discrimination against women was evident in the skewed sex ratio and high maternal mortality rates. Education disparities were significant, with low literacy rates and school retention for girls. Economic contributions by women were often undervalued and underpaid. The study analyzed these gender gaps and discussed strategies in the Twelfth Five Year Plan of the Indian government for women's empowerment.

**Srivastava and Srivastava (2010)** found that while rural women's employment had grown, they were largely self-employed or worked as casual labour in agriculture. Discrimination, job-typing, and low-paying jobs persisted. Higher education and asset ownership were critical for better employment outcomes. Women's autonomy, through control over land and mobility, enabled them to move into non-agricultural jobs. The paper argued for policy interventions to increase work opportunities and enhance wages for rural women workers.

**Sharma (2014)** reviewed the status of women in rural and urban India based on census data. Economic independence was seen as key to enhancing women's status. Despite government efforts, socio-cultural and economic issues persisted. Women from poorer households lacked access to health services, sanitation, and safe drinking water, affecting their health. Representation at grassroots levels had improved, but higher-level representation remained low. Literacy rates in rural areas lagged behind urban areas.

## I. Systematic Reviews with Findings

Author(s) & Year	Research Area	Location	Methodology	Findings
Tiwari (2017)	Women Entrepreneurship	India	Literature Review	Rise in women entrepreneurs; limited participation despite comprising half the population; need for policy interventions.
Chaudhary (2017)	Women Empowerment	India	Policy Analysis	Constitutional support for women; multiple discriminations; need for tailored skill development programs.
Kumari (2017)	Social Sensitivity	Himachal Pradesh	Comparative Study	Differences between rural and urban working women; need for targeted interventions to improve social competence.
Pallikadavath et al. (2016)	Fertility & Education	South India	Multilevel Modelling, Thematic Analysis	Impact of low fertility and early sterilization on education and skill development; need for targeted skill development programs.
Tewari & Malhotra (2014)	Women in Economy	India	Descriptive Analysis	Women's growing role in the economy; higher rural female work participation; steps to promote women entrepreneurship.
Hundekar & Badami (2014)	Communication Skills	India	Educational Intervention	Enhancement of communication skills in rural adolescent women through intervention; importance for self-reliance.
Paul & Mir (2013)	Globalization & Women	India	Policy Analysis	Impact of globalization on women's work; reinforced gender discrimination; need for inclusive employment schemes.
Kumbhar (2013)	Women Entrepreneurship	India	Analytical Study	Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs; need for awareness programs and policy support.
Budhwar et al. (2013)	Women in Workforce	India	Literature Review	Increase in women's workforce participation; low representation in management; need for talented human resources.
Waris & Viraktamath (2013)	Gender Equality	India	Analytical Study	Gender inequalities in health, education, and economic sectors; strategies for women's empowerment in the Twelfth Five Year Plan.
Srivastava & Srivastava (2010)	Rural Women's Employment	India	Large-scale Surveys	Growth in rural women's employment; persistent discrimination and low-paying jobs; need for policy interventions.

Sharma (2014)	Women's Status	India	Census Data Analysis	Economic independence crucial for women's status; socio-cultural and economic issues; need for improved health and literacy in rural areas.
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## SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS

Socio-cultural barriers play a significant role in shaping the skill development landscape for women in India, influencing their access to education and employment opportunities. These barriers are deeply rooted in traditional norms, gender roles, and societal expectations, which collectively impact women's participation in skill development programs.

**Traditional Gender Roles:** In many parts of India, traditional gender roles dictate that women prioritize domestic responsibilities over personal development or employment. This expectation often limits their time and energy for pursuing skill development opportunities. Cultural norms may also discourage women from engaging in certain types of training, particularly those considered unconventional for their gender, such as technical or industrial skills. This societal pressure reinforces the idea that women's roles should remain confined to the home, thereby restricting their participation in the workforce and economic activities.

**Education and Literacy Gaps:** The disparity in education and literacy rates between men and women contributes significantly to skill development challenges. In some regions, especially rural areas, girls may have lower literacy rates compared to boys due to factors like early marriage, poverty, and familial preferences for boys' education. This educational gap hampers women's ability to access and benefit from skill development programs, as foundational literacy and numeracy skills are often prerequisites for advanced training.

**Economic Constraints:** Economic barriers further exacerbate the challenges women face in skill development. For many families, the financial burden of supporting women's education and training is seen as an unnecessary expense, particularly when immediate returns are uncertain. This economic constraint is often compounded by the additional costs associated with training, such as transportation and materials, which can be prohibitive for low-income families. Consequently, women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may be unable to participate in or complete skill development programs.

**Socio-Cultural Norms and Family Support:** The level of family support and societal acceptance significantly impacts women's participation in skill development. In conservative or rural settings, women may face resistance from their families or communities when pursuing training or employment outside traditional roles. The lack of familial support or societal approval can deter women from seeking skill development opportunities or hinder their progress even when they do attempt to engage.

**Workplace Discrimination and Safety Concerns:** Even when women successfully complete skill development programs, they may encounter workplace discrimination and safety concerns that affect their employment prospects. Discrimination based on gender can result in unequal job opportunities and lower wages compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, concerns about workplace safety and harassment can deter women from pursuing careers in certain sectors, further limiting their options.

Addressing these socio-cultural barriers requires a multifaceted approach. Initiatives that promote gender equality, enhance educational opportunities for girls, and provide economic support for women's training can help mitigate these challenges. Engaging communities to shift traditional attitudes and advocating for supportive family and societal environments are also crucial steps towards empowering women and facilitating their participation in skill development programs. By tackling these barriers, India can move towards a more inclusive and equitable skill development landscape, enabling women to fully realize their potential and contribute to economic growth.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economic impact of skill development for women is profound, driving both individual and broader economic benefits. By acquiring vocational and technical skills, women enhance their employability, leading to higher income levels and financial independence. This economic empowerment not only improves their quality of life but also contributes to family well-being and community development.

On a macroeconomic scale, the integration of skilled women into the workforce stimulates economic growth and productivity. Skilled women contribute to diverse sectors, from technology to agriculture, driving innovation and efficiency. Their participation in the labour market also helps address skill shortages and supports sustainable economic development.

Moreover, skilled women are more likely to engage in entrepreneurship, creating businesses that generate employment opportunities and foster local economic activity. This entrepreneurial spirit can lead to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are crucial for economic stability.

Skill development for women yields significant economic returns by enhancing individual earning potential, contributing to overall economic growth, and fostering entrepreneurial ventures. Investing in women's skills is not only a pathway to personal empowerment but also a critical driver of broader economic progress [11].

## TECHNOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL SKILLS

In today's rapidly evolving job market, technological and digital skills have become essential for career advancement and economic success. For women, particularly in regions like Jharkhand and across India, acquiring these skills can significantly enhance employability, foster entrepreneurial opportunities, and bridge socio-economic gaps.

## IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is a fundamental component of modern skill development. It encompasses the ability to use digital tools and platforms effectively, which is increasingly vital in both professional and personal contexts. Basic digital skills include proficiency in using computers, navigating the internet, and employing common software applications. These skills enable women to access online education, participate in remote work, and manage financial transactions, thereby integrating them into the digital economy.

- **Access to Technology:** Access to technology remains a critical challenge, especially in rural and underserved areas. Limited infrastructure, such as inadequate internet connectivity and a lack of digital devices, hampers the ability of women to acquire and utilize digital skills. Addressing these barriers through initiatives that provide affordable technology and improve connectivity is essential for expanding access to digital education and opportunities.
- **Innovative Training Programs:** Several innovative programs and platforms have emerged to address these challenges. Initiatives like **Digital India** and **Skill Development for Women in Technology** offer targeted training in various digital skills, from basic computer literacy to advanced coding and data analysis. Online platforms such as **Coursera**, **Udemy**, and **edX** provide accessible courses that allow women to learn at their own pace and from remote locations. Additionally, community-based training centers and NGOs are increasingly offering localized digital literacy programs, often tailored to the specific needs of women in different regions.
- **Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation:** Technological skills also play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship. Women equipped with digital competencies are better positioned to start and run businesses, particularly in the e-commerce sector. They can leverage online platforms for marketing, sales, and customer engagement, thereby reaching a broader audience and scaling their ventures. Digital tools also facilitate access to financial services, market information, and business management resources, further supporting entrepreneurial efforts.

## CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Despite these advancements, several challenges remain. Digital literacy programs need to be more inclusive and accessible, especially for women from marginalized communities. Continuous updates to curricula and training methods are necessary to keep pace with technological advancements. Additionally, promoting digital skills requires addressing gender biases and ensuring that women have equal opportunities to engage with technology.

Incorporating technological and digital skills into skill development programs is crucial for empowering women and fostering economic growth. By improving digital literacy, enhancing access to technology, and supporting entrepreneurial ventures, women can fully participate in the digital economy. Addressing existing

challenges and investing in innovative training solutions will pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic future, where women are equipped to thrive in an increasingly digital world .

### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The analysis of skill development initiatives for women in Jharkhand and across India reveals a complex landscape of opportunities and challenges. While significant progress has been made in creating training programs and increasing participation rates, persistent barriers such as socio-cultural norms, limited access to resources, and systemic inequalities continue to hinder the full potential of these initiatives. Women in Jharkhand face unique challenges due to regional disparities, which require targeted interventions and localized solutions to address effectively.

Future work should focus on several key areas to enhance the impact of skill development programs. Firstly, there is a need for more comprehensive data collection to better understand the specific needs and challenges faced by women in different regions, particularly in underdeveloped areas like Jharkhand. This will help in designing more tailored and effective programs. Additionally, strengthening partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector can foster greater resource mobilization and innovation.

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