



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435(Online) Volume 15, Issue 01, January 2026)

Exploring Women's Empowerment in India through Industry, Skills, Employment, and Entrepreneurship

Dr. Anubhuti Sharma¹, Dr. Sr. Alice Thomas²

¹Associate Professor, ²Principal, St. Paul Institute of Professional Studies, Indore, India

Abstract-- This paper examines the multifaceted role of women in India's evolving socio-economic landscape, with a focus on their participation in industry, skill development, employment, and entrepreneurship. Women's empowerment, a crucial driver of inclusive development, has gained momentum in India over recent decades, yet significant challenges remain. This study delves into the structural and socio-cultural barriers that hinder women's full participation in these areas, while also highlighting initiatives aimed at bridging these gaps.

The research evaluates government programs, private sector efforts, and grassroots movements that have promoted skill development and entrepreneurial ventures among women, especially in rural and semi-urban regions. It further explores how increasing female participation in industry and the labour market impacts economic growth and societal transformation. Special emphasis is placed on skill-building programs and entrepreneurship as tools for economic empowerment, autonomy, and gender equality.

Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, this paper identifies key trends, barriers, and opportunities that shape women's employment and entrepreneurial journeys in India. The findings suggest that while there has been progress, sustained efforts in education, policy-making, and societal change are essential to create an environment where women can thrive as equal contributors to the nation's growth. This paper calls for a holistic approach that integrates skill development, gender-sensitive employment policies, and support for women-led enterprises to foster long-term empowerment and economic resilience.

Keywords-- Women's empowerment, Skill development, Female entrepreneurship, Women in industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment has emerged as a crucial driver of economic growth and social progress worldwide. In India, the participation of women in industry, skill development, employment, and entrepreneurship has witnessed considerable growth over the years. However, despite various government initiatives, private sector contributions, and grassroots efforts, gender disparities persist, limiting women's access to economic opportunities.

Empowering women through skills and entrepreneurship not only enhances their economic independence but also contributes significantly to national development. Industries that promote gender-inclusive employment and entrepreneurship foster innovation, productivity, and social equity.

However, cultural norms, structural barriers, and inadequate policy implementation continue to hinder women's full participation in these domains.

This study explores the role of skill development, employment policies, and entrepreneurial initiatives in fostering women's empowerment in India. It examines key barriers restricting women's progress and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions aimed at bridging gender gaps in industry and the labor market. By identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities, this research aims to provide insights into strategies that can drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth through women's active participation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have explored the relationship between women's empowerment and their involvement in industry, employment, and entrepreneurship. Existing literature highlights that women's economic participation is linked to higher household incomes, improved education outcomes for children, and overall economic resilience (Kabeer, 2005).

Women in Industry and Employment

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) reports that India's female labor force participation rate remains low compared to global standards, with cultural and structural barriers playing a significant role. Studies by Deshpande and Kabeer (2019) indicate that social norms, workplace discrimination, and lack of childcare support limit women's employment opportunities in formal sectors.

Government initiatives such as the **Maternity Benefit Act (2017)** and **gender inclusion policies in corporate sectors** have attempted to create an enabling environment for women in the workforce. However, research by Ghosh (2021) suggests that policy implementation remains inconsistent, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Skill Development and Women's Entrepreneurship

Skill development is a key enabler of women's empowerment. Programs such as **Skill India Mission** and **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** aim to equip women with industry-relevant skills. According to a study by Agarwal (2018), skill training has led to improved employability, yet a gender divide persists due to factors such as mobility restrictions and safety concerns.

Entrepreneurship serves as a pathway for women to achieve financial independence and leadership roles. Research by Sharma and Gupta (2020) highlights that women-led enterprises contribute significantly to India's MSME sector, yet face challenges such as limited access to finance, lack of mentorship, and market linkages. Initiatives like **Mudra Yojana** and **Stand-Up India** have been instrumental in supporting women entrepreneurs, but studies (Sen & Basu, 2021) indicate that awareness and accessibility remain issues.

Barriers to Women's Empowerment

Literature consistently identifies socio-cultural constraints, lack of financial literacy, gender bias in industries, and insufficient policy execution as primary barriers to women's full economic participation (Kumar, 2017). A comprehensive approach integrating education, gender-sensitive policies, and economic support mechanisms is necessary to bridge these gaps.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both **quantitative and qualitative** analysis to explore the role of industry, skill development, employment, and entrepreneurship in women's empowerment in India. The research aims to identify key barriers, trends, and opportunities that influence women's participation in these areas.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study is based on **54 responses** collected from women engaged in various sectors, including industry, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. A **purposive sampling** method was used to ensure that the participants had relevant experience in employment, skill development programs, or entrepreneurial ventures.

IV. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

1. Primary Data:

- A structured questionnaire was designed to gather responses from women across different professional backgrounds.
- The survey included both **closed-ended questions** (using Likert scales) and **open-ended questions** to capture qualitative insights.
- Key aspects covered in the questionnaire:
 - Access to skill development programs
 - Employment opportunities and workplace challenges

- Entrepreneurial experiences and financial accessibility
- Socio-cultural barriers to economic participation

2. Secondary Data:

- A review of existing literature, including reports from **government agencies (e.g., Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, NITI Aayog), research papers, and case studies**, was conducted to complement the survey findings.

V. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

- *Quantitative Analysis:*
 - Descriptive statistics (percentages, mean, and standard deviation) were used to analyze the survey data.
 - Inferential statistics (chi-square test, correlation analysis) were employed to examine relationships between skill development, employment, and entrepreneurship.
- *Qualitative Analysis:*
 - Open-ended responses were analyzed using **thematic analysis** to identify recurring themes related to barriers and success factors in women's empowerment.

Ethical Considerations

- Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and **informed consent** was obtained before data collection.
- Anonymity and confidentiality of responses were maintained.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size of **54 responses** may not fully represent the diverse experiences of women across India.
- Responses may be influenced by **self-reporting bias** and **regional differences** in opportunities and challenges.

VI. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the impact of skill development programs and entrepreneurship initiatives on women's economic empowerment in India.
2. To identify the key structural and socio-cultural barriers that hinder women's participation in industry, employment, and entrepreneurship.



VII. HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant association between industry participation and the perception of equal opportunities for women in the sector.

H11: There is a significant association between industry participation and the perception of equal opportunities for women in the sector.

H02: There is no significant association between participation in skill development programs and the perception of employability or entrepreneurial capacity.

H12: There is a significant association between participation in skill development programs and the perception of employability or entrepreneurial capacity.

H03: There is no significant correlation between participation in skill development programs and perception of career advancement.

H13: There is a significant correlation between participation in skill development programs and perception of career advancement.

Analysis and Interpretation:

H01: There is no significant association between industry participation and the perception of equal opportunities for women in the sector.

H11: There is a significant association between industry participation and the perception of equal opportunities for women in the sector.

Chi-Square Test: Industry Participation vs. Perception of Equal Opportunities

Test	Chi-Square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Industry Participation vs. Equal Opportunities	38.29	9.88×10^{-7}	Significant association between industry participation and perception of equal opportunities for women

Interpretation: Since the **p-value** (9.88×10^{-7}) is much lower than the standard significance level (**0.05**), we **reject the null hypothesis** and conclude that there is a strong relationship between industry participation and perception of equal opportunities.

H02: There is no significant association between participation in skill development programs and the perception of employability or entrepreneurial capacity.

H12: There is a significant association between participation in skill development programs and the perception of employability or entrepreneurial capacity.

Chi-Square Test: Skill Development vs. Perceived Employability

Test	Chi-Square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Skill Development vs. Employability	27.15	1.86×10^{-5}	Significant association between skill development participation and perception of employability improvement

Interpretation: Since the **p-value** (1.86×10^{-5}) is much lower than the standard significance level (**0.05**), we **reject the null hypothesis** and conclude that participation in skill development programs significantly influences the perception of employability.

H03: There is no significant correlation between participation in skill development programs and perception of career advancement.

H13: There is a significant correlation between participation in skill development programs and perception of career advancement.



Spearman Correlation: Skill Development vs. Career Advancement Perception

Test	Spearman Correlation	p-value	Interpretation
Skill Development vs. Career Advancement	0.235	0.087	Weak positive correlation, but not statistically significant

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.087) is greater than the standard significance level (0.05), we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a weak positive correlation between skill development and career advancement perception, but it is not statistically significant. Other factors (such as workplace policies, industry culture, or individual experiences) may play a more significant role in career advancement perception.

VIII. FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation & Gender Equality Perception:

- The Chi-Square test indicates a significant association between women’s industry participation and their perception of equal opportunities in the sector.
- Women working in industries are more aware of gender disparities and challenges compared to those not employed.

2. Skill Development & Employability Perception:

- The Chi-Square test shows a strong relationship between participation in skill development programs and perceived employability or entrepreneurial capacity.
- Women who have undergone skill development training believe these programs positively impact their career opportunities.

3. Skill Development & Career Advancement Perception:

- The Spearman correlation test suggests a weak positive correlation between skill development participation and career advancement perception, but the result is not statistically significant.
- This indicates that while skill development is beneficial, other factors like workplace policies, industry norms, and socio-cultural barriers also influence career progression.

IX. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the **critical role of industry participation and skill development programs** in empowering women in India.

While government initiatives, private sector involvement, and grassroots movements have contributed to progress, **significant barriers** still hinder women’s full participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship.

- **Women who work in industries** are more likely to recognize gender-based inequalities.
- **Skill development programs** significantly enhance women’s perception of employability but do not directly guarantee career advancement.
- **Additional systemic changes** in policy, workplace culture, and societal attitudes are necessary to ensure long-term empowerment.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhancing Industry Inclusivity:

- Companies should implement gender-sensitive policies, such as equal pay, leadership opportunities, and anti-discrimination measures.
- Government incentives for industries promoting women’s workforce participation should be expanded.

2. Strengthening Skill Development Programs:

- Programs should focus not only on technical skills but also on soft skills, leadership, and business management to prepare women for career growth.
- More targeted training for rural and semi-urban women can bridge the urban-rural divide in employment opportunities.

3. Career Advancement Support:

- Mentorship programs connecting industry professionals with aspiring women can help bridge the confidence and networking gap.
- Organizations should introduce structured career growth paths for women to encourage long-term workforce participation.

4. Encouraging Women’s Entrepreneurship:

- Access to financial support, investment opportunities, and micro-loans should be simplified for women entrepreneurs.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435(Online) Volume 15, Issue 01, January 2026)

- Women-led business incubators and peer support networks can create an ecosystem of collaboration and innovation.

5. Societal and Policy-Level Interventions:

- Awareness campaigns challenging gender norms can encourage families and communities to support women's careers.
- Policymakers should strengthen existing laws on workplace safety, maternity benefits, and equal pay to eliminate structural barriers.

INFERENCES:

- [1] Government of India (2021). Economic Survey 2020-21, Ministry of Finance. Retrieved from <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>
- [2] World Bank (2020). Women, Business, and the Law 2020: Measuring Gender Equality. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- [3] ILO (2019). Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

- [4] NITI Aayog (2018). Strategy for New India @75. Government of India.
- [5] McKinsey Global Institute (2018). The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in India. McKinsey & Company.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- [6] Kabeer, N. (2019). "Women's Empowerment and Economic Development: A Feminist Critique of Storytelling Practices." *Development and Change*, 50(2), 355-373.
- [7] Deshpande, A. (2020). "The COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown: First-Order Effects on Gender Gaps in Employment and Domestic Work in India." *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63, 49-53.
- [8] Chaudhary, R., & Verick, S. (2019). "Female Labour Force Participation in India: Why is it Declining?" ILO Employment Working Paper Series.

CONFERENCE PAPERS & WEBSITES

- [9] UNDP India (2021). Women's Economic Empowerment in India: A Review of Progress and Gaps. Retrieved from <https://www.in.undp.org>
- [10] FICCI & FLO (2020). Empowering the Indian Woman: Women Entrepreneurship in India. Retrieved from <https://www.ficciflo.com>