

Women Livelihoods : Skill Development

The policy brief looks into the bottlenecks associated with women's livelihoods and the importance of skill development interventions to tackle the same. Policy provisions for skill development of women have also been encapsulated.

Current Scenario

Female workforce participation rate (WPR) in India stands at 31.8%, which is almost half of the male WPR at 73.2%. While north-eastern and hilly states have performed well on female WPR, with Mizoram having the highest WPR at 61.3%, the situation is worrisome in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, with WPR as low as 9% in the latter.



Top 5 States

State	Female WPR
Mizoram	61.3%
Himachal Pradesh	59.4%
Meghalaya	58.9%
Arunachal Pradesh	56.1%
Telangana	52.1%

Bottom 5 States

State	Female WPR
Punjab	9.4%
Delhi	10%
Uttar Pradesh	14%
Jammu and Kashmir	16.4%
Haryana	16.5%

Source: Labour Bureau 2013-14

According to a McKinsey Global Institute study, India could boost its GDP by \$2.9 trillion by 2025, if female workforce participation rate is improved by 10 percentage points. This would be equivalent to bringing 68 million more women into the non-farm labour force. According National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), there are over 30 lakh unemployed women in India in 2012. As on December, 2013, a total of 1.65 crore women had registered on employment exchanges. However, only 58.8 thousand women had been placed through these exchanges in the same year.

Improving participation of women in the workforce would require improvements in access and quality of education, skill development and employment opportunities available to women. The government of India is running several programs to enhance job opportunities in India- such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program (PMEGP), National Livelihoods Mission, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) along with several entrepreneurship development programs. With a pressing need to harness the demographic dividend that India enjoys, special focus has been skill development initiatives.

Skill Development and Women's Empowerment

Majority of the workforce in India is in the informal sector. Low income women workers in the informal sector, due to the irregular nature of work and little bargaining power, are amongst the most vulnerable groups in the Indian economy. The *National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015* envisions skill development as a vehicle for women's empowerment. To impart skills to women, the government has taken steps like the *Skill Development Initiative Schemes* under Directorate General of Employment and Training developing over 10,000 training providers under which 12.6 lakh woman have availed benefits. There are 402 women ITIs and 1134 women wings in ITIs, which provide training to 1,41,907 women annually (*Lok Sabha Starred Question 226*). Furthermore, vocational training schemes for women are being run by 10 Regional Vocational Training Institutes (RVTIs). The government has proposed to open 8 more. Given below are some of the policy provisions for skill development with a special focus on women.

National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015

The National Policy on Skill Development highlights that in order to improve the productivity of the economy, participation of women in the labour force needs to be improved. Below are the major takeaways from the policy.

Improving access to skill development by creating more seats for women

Gender mainstreaming of content and delivery of training

Use of digital platforms for women's empowerment

The policy provides a roadmap for skill development, including the setting up of Ministry of Skill Development and convergence of skill development initiatives of other Ministries. It also outlines various interventions that the government must take up to catalyze skill development for women. Some of the proposed interventions are enlisted below.

- The policy highlights the need to improve access to skill development for women. According to the policy, **additional training and apprenticeship seats** will be set up exclusively for women. While the skill development infrastructure in India is vast, we need to create facilities dedicated to women. This also includes increasing the pool of women trainers. As per the policy, mechanisms **to provide certification to women trainers** would be put into place. New institutes for training of women trainers will also be promoted.

- The policy mentions the need for gender mainstreaming of training. Women participation in vocational education and training is low as compared to men. In order to bridge the gap, the policy identifies the ***need for special delivery mechanisms*** such as mobile training units, flexible afternoon batches along with on local needs based training. The policy envisions ***incorporation of women related issues in the guidelines for skill training procedures***, such as issues of safe and gender sensitive training environment, employment of women trainers, equity in remuneration, and complaint redressal mechanism.
- While Digital India is gaining momentum, there is need to incorporate ICT for providing skill development solutions as well. The policy announces the ***promotion of an internet or mobile based platform for women employment***. The platform would connect skilled women and employers. It would focus on women willing to re-enter the workforce after a break and those affected by migration.

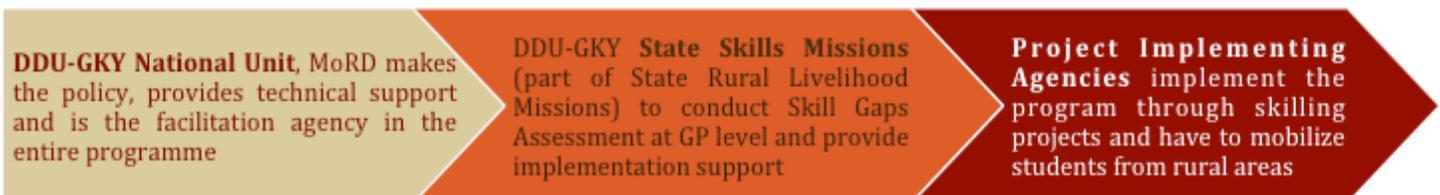
The government of India is implementing several schemes on skill development. Given below are some of the schemes which have a special focus on women's skill development

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Kaushalya Vikas Yojana (DDU-KVY)

DDU-GKY, the erstwhile Aajeevika Skills, is the skill training and placement program of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) carried out as part of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). The DDU-GKY focuses on providing high quality skill training opportunities through Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) to rural poor youth, though there is a special focus on women as mentioned below. It has an outcome-based design and the PIAs are required to place a minimum of 75 percent of those who are trained in jobs providing regular monthly wages. Also, there are special programmes for skill development under DDU-GKYH running in Jammu and Kashmir (Himayat), Left Wing Extremism Affected Districts (Roshni) and 10 percent of the programme funds are dedicated to the North-Eastern states.

The programme provides funding support for placement linked skilling projects ranging from INR 25,696 per person to over INR 1 lakh. Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have been recognized as Resource States under the scheme as they have successfully implemented skilling programmes.

DDU-GKY has a 3-tier implementation model as shown below:



The scheme has ***special focus on women*** and outlines provision to improve quality of impact amongst women beneficiaries-

- **Improving Coverage-** The scheme ***mandates that 1/3rd of the seats would be covered by women***. Gram Panchayats will have to undertake special efforts to improve participation of women under the programme

by conducting special counseling sessions. To enhance coverage, the upper age limit for women has been revised up to 45, as against 35 years.

- **Setting up of migration support centres (MSC)**- MSCs would be set up to look after the needs of the vulnerable population, specially women. They will be set up both inside the state, as well as outside the state in areas where a large number of DDUKVY trainees have been placed. Funding for this is provided to the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) which may take it up on its own or with the support of the PIA.
- **Training of trainers**- The scheme has special focus on establishing training centres with focus on women trainers. This is in line with the National Policy of Skill Development, which aims to increase the number of women trainers. Furthermore, wherever women trainers are being trained, the scheme mandates at least one women manager.
- **Post placement support**- It would be the responsibility of the PIAs to conduct post placement counselling sessions for the candidates, and specially for the women, to help them in adapting to new environment.

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

The STEP program is a Central Sector Scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development under which training is provided to poor and marginalized women in traditional trades to improve employability. The scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group 16 and above. Under the programme, grants-in-aid are provided by the central government to societies, voluntary organizations, and cooperatives providing skills in sectors ranging from agriculture to hospitality.

Training courses under STEP would primarily be of 3 months or 6 months duration, with total assistance per beneficiary at Rs 18000 and Rs 28000 respectively. The maximum number of beneficiaries per project will not exceed 200.

Key Sectors under STEP

Agriculture
Horticulture
Food Processing
Handlooms
Tailoring and Stitching
Handicrafts
Computer and IT
Gems and Jewellery
Travel and Tourism
Hospitality

Cost Item	Ceiling per beneficiary (for 3 month course)	Ceiling per beneficiary (for 6 month course)
Training	Rs 14000	Rs 20000
Food and Travel	Rs 4000	Rs 8000
Total	Rs 18000	Rs 28000

As of February, 2015, a total funding of Rs 400.21 lakhs was released under the scheme. Amongst the states, Manipur received the maximum funding under the scheme, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Assam. A total of **24,037** women beneficiaries have been impacted under the scheme.

With limited participation in the workforce, the potential of women remains untapped. Effective implementation of the envisioned skill development interventions is needed to make them key stakeholders in development.