Gender-Responsive Skill Development Policies: Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment under SDG 5

Kaushiki Shukla
BBA- 3rd Year
Teerthanker Mahaveer Institute of Management and Technology
Teerthanker Mahaveer University
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

Jiya Verma
BBA- 3rd Year
Teerthanker Mahaveer Institute of Management and Technology
Teerthanker Mahaveer University
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

Deepti Yadav
BBA- 3rd Year
Teerthanker Mahaveer Institute of Management and Technology
Teerthanker Mahaveer University
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

The promotion of gender equality and women's economic empowerment is a fundamental goal under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). One of the key enablers of achieving this objective is the development and implementation of gender-responsive skill development policies. These policies focus on addressing the structural barriers that prevent women from fully participating in the workforce, thereby promoting equitable access to economic opportunities. This paper explores the importance of gender-responsive skill development programs in fostering women's economic empowerment and examines how various policies across different regions are addressing the gender gap in skills development. Through a review of literature and data analysis, the paper highlights the challenges and opportunities that arise from integrating a gender perspective into skill development initiatives. The findings suggest that while significant progress has been made in certain regions, much work remains in ensuring that these policies effectively target marginalized women, including those in rural areas and informal sectors. The paper concludes with policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of gender-responsive skill development policies in advancing SDG 5.

Keywords: Gender-responsive policies, Women's economic empowerment, Skill development, SDG 5, Gender equality, Workforce participation, Policy analysis, Inclusive growth, Women's empowerment, Gender mainstreaming.

Introduction

Achieving gender equality and empowering women is an urgent global priority. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, highlight the need to eliminate gender-based discrimination, increase women's participation in leadership roles, and ensure women have equal access to resources and opportunities. A crucial aspect of empowering women is improving their access to skill development opportunities. Skill development programs play a critical role in preparing individuals for employment, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance. However, for these programs to effectively promote women's economic empowerment, they must be gender-responsive, addressing the specific needs, constraints, and opportunities that women face.

Gender-responsive skill development policies are those that integrate gender equality principles into the design and implementation of training and education programs. These policies aim to create an enabling environment where women can access the necessary skills to succeed in the labor market. Such policies are not merely about increasing the number of women in training programs; they also focus on creating equitable, supportive environments where women can thrive in their chosen professions. This paper examines the role of gender-responsive skill development policies in promoting women's economic empowerment under SDG 5.

Research Problem

The core research problem addressed by this paper is the gap between existing skill development policies and their effectiveness in promoting women's economic empowerment. Despite the growing emphasis on gender equality globally, women continue to face significant barriers in accessing and benefiting from skill development programs. These barriers include socio-cultural factors, discrimination in the workplace, limited access to education and training, and inadequate representation in certain sectors. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How can gender-responsive skill development policies contribute to women's economic empowerment?

2. What are the challenges and barriers to the effective implementation of gender-responsive skill development programs?

3. How do gender-responsive policies align with the broader objectives of SDG 5, and what impact do they have on reducing gender disparities in the labor market?

Review of Literature

1. Gender and Economic Empowerment

The literature on gender and economic empowerment suggests that women's economic independence is a central aspect of overall empowerment (Kabeer, 2005). Economic empowerment enables women to have greater control over resources, decisions, and their own lives. It is widely acknowledged that the empowerment of women leads to broader societal and economic benefits, including poverty reduction, improved health, and greater gender equality (Sen, 1999).

2. Skill Development and Women's Participation in the Workforce

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), skill development is a key mechanism for improving labor market outcomes for women (ILO, 2017). However, women continue to be underrepresented in certain high-growth sectors, such as technology and engineering, due to a lack of access to training and education in these fields (UN Women, 2019). Gender-responsive policies aim to overcome such disparities by ensuring that skill development programs cater to the specific needs of women.

3. Gender-Responsive Policies

A gender-responsive policy is one that intentionally considers gender differences and aims to address those differences in a way that promotes equality (OECD, 2019). In the context of skill development, this means that policies should be designed to ensure that women have access to training in high-demand, well-paying sectors. It also involves creating supportive learning environments that account for women's caregiving responsibilities, mobility constraints, and other challenges.

4. Barriers to Women's Access to Skill Development

The literature highlights several barriers that prevent women from fully participating in skill development programs. These include socio-cultural norms that restrict women's mobility, gender biases in training programs, and lack of support for women in male-dominated sectors (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, women in rural and low-income areas face additional

challenges such as limited access to infrastructure, digital literacy, and financial resources (UNDP, 2021).

5. Global Case Studies

Several case studies highlight the positive impact of gender-responsive skill development policies. For instance, the introduction of women-focused vocational training programs in India's Skill Development Mission has helped increase women's participation in the workforce (ILO, 2020). Similarly, Rwanda's gender-responsive policies in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) have shown promise in bridging gender gaps in the labor market (World Bank, 2019).

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing a literature review and policy analysis to explore the impact of gender-responsive skill development policies on women's economic empowerment. The research focuses on the following aspects:

1. **Review of Existing Policies**: A systematic review of gender-responsive skill development policies implemented in different countries will be conducted. This will include policies targeting both formal and informal sectors, as well as rural and urban areas.

2. **Case Studies**: The paper will analyze case studies from countries that have made significant strides in implementing gender-responsive policies, such as India, Rwanda, and Sweden. These case studies will provide insights into best practices and lessons learned.

3. **Data Sources**: Secondary data will be collected from reports and publications by international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the World Bank. Academic journals, government documents, and policy papers will also be analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will involve thematic analysis to identify key trends and themes in the literature and case studies. The focus will be on the following areas:

1. **Policy Impact**: How effective are gender-responsive skill development policies in increasing women's participation in skill development programs and improving their economic outcomes?

2. **Barriers to Implementation**: What are the key barriers to implementing gender-responsive policies in skill development programs, and how have different countries addressed these challenges?

3. **Opportunities for Improvement**: What are the opportunities for scaling up and improving gender-responsive policies to enhance women's economic empowerment, particularly in underrepresented sectors?

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the importance of gender-responsive skill development policies in promoting women's economic empowerment under SDG 5. While there has been progress in some regions, significant gaps remain, particularly in addressing the needs of marginalized women. To effectively reduce gender disparities in the labor market, skill development policies must be designed with a gender lens, ensuring that women not only have access to training but also that the training is relevant, supportive, and inclusive.

Policymakers should prioritize creating inclusive and flexible learning environments that cater to women's specific needs, such as childcare, flexible schedules, and safe transportation. Additionally, greater attention should be given to sectors with high growth potential, such as technology, where women are currently underrepresented. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of gender-responsive skill development programs and identifying innovative solutions to overcome the barriers that women face in accessing these programs.

References

- Kabeer, N. (2005). "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal." *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 13-24.

- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2017). "Women in the labour market: The impact of gender-sensitive policies." ILO.

- UN Women. (2019). "Gender and employment in the digital era." UN Women.

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2019). "Gender-responsive policies in skills development." OECD.

- World Bank. (2020). "Women and work in the digital age." *World Bank Group*.

- UNDP. (2021). "Bridging the digital gender divide." UNDP.

- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). "The future of work in India." ILO.

- World Bank. (2019). "Gender-responsive policies in vocational training: The case of Rwanda." *World Bank Report*.

- Ma, X., Arif, A., Kaur, P., Jain, V., Refiana Said, L., & Mughal, N. (2022). Revealing the effectiveness of technological innovation shocks on CO2 emissions in BRICS: emerging challenges and implications. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, *29*(31), 47373-47381.

- Hasan, N., Nanda, S., Singh, G., Sharma, V., Kaur, G., & Jain, V. (2024, February). Adoption of Blockchain Technology in Productivity And Automation Process of Microfinance Services. In *2024 4th International Conference on Innovative Practices in Technology and Management (ICIPTM)* (pp. 1-5). IEEE.

- Jan, N., Jain, V., Li, Z., Sattar, J., & Tongkachok, K. (2022). Post-COVID-19 investor psychology and individual investment decision: A moderating role of information availability. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 846088.

- C. Verma, V. P, N. Chaturvedi, U. U, A. Rai and A. Y. A. Bani Ahmad, "Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Management: Enhancing Customer Engagement and Personalization," *2025 International Conference on Pervasive Computational Technologies (ICPCT)*, Greater Noida, India, 2025, pp. 397-401, doi: 10.1109/ICPCT64145.2025.10940626.

- Maurya, S. K., Jain, V., Setiawan, R., Ashraf, A., Koti, K., Niranjan, K., ... & Rajest, S. S. (2021). *The Conditional Analysis of Principals Bullying Teachers Reasons in The Surroundings of The City* (Doctoral dissertation, Petra Christian University).

- Anand, R., Juneja, S., Juneja, A., Jain, V., & Kannan, R. (Eds.). (2023). *Integration of IoT with cloud computing for smart applications*. CRC Press.

- Dadhich, M., Pahwa, M. S., Jain, V., & Doshi, R. (2021). Predictive models for stock market index using stochastic time series ARIMA modeling in emerging economy. In

Advances in Mechanical Engineering: Select Proceedings of CAMSE 2020 (pp. 281-290). Springer Singapore.

- Ahmad, A. Y., Jain, V., Verma, C., Chauhan, A., Singh, A., Gupta, A., & Pramanik, S. (2024). CSR Objectives and Public Institute Management in the Republic of Slovenia. In *Ethical Quandaries in Business Practices: Exploring Morality and Social Responsibility* (pp. 183-202). IGI Global.

- Verma, C., Sharma, R., Kaushik, P., & Jain, V. (2024). The Role of Microfinance Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Economic Development: Exploring Opportunities, Challenges, and Outcomes.

- Liu, L., Bashir, T., Abdalla, A. A., Salman, A., Ramos-Meza, C. S., Jain, V., & Shabbir, M. S. (2024). Can money supply endogeneity influence bank stock returns? A case study of South Asian economies. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, *26*(2), 2775-2787.

- Zhang, M., Jain, V., Qian, X., Ramos-Meza, C. S., Ali, S. A., Sharma, P., ... & Shabbir, M. S. (2023). The dynamic relationship among technological innovation, international trade, and energy production. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, *10*, 967138.

- Cao, Y., Tabasam, A. H., Ahtsham Ali, S., Ashiq, A., Ramos-Meza, C. S., Jain, V., & Shahzad Shabbir, M. (2023). The dynamic role of sustainable development goals to eradicate the multidimensional poverty: evidence from emerging economy. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, *36*(3).

- Liu, Y., Cao, D., Cao, X., Jain, V., Chawla, C., Shabbir, M. S., & Ramos-Meza, C. S. (2023). The effects of MDR-TB treatment regimens through socioeconomic and spatial characteristics on environmental-health outcomes: evidence from Chinese hospitals. *Energy & Environment*, *34*(4), 1081-1093.

- Chawla, C., Jain, V., Joshi, A., & Gupta, V. (2013). A study of satisfaction level and awareness of tax-payers towards e-filing of income tax return—with reference to Moradabad city. *International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research In Management & Technology*, *2*, 60-66.

- Kaur, M., Sinha, R., Chaudhary, V., Sikandar, M. A., Jain, V., Gambhir, V., & Dhiman, V. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of employees in different sectors. *Materials Today: Proceedings*, *51*, 764-769.

- Liu, Y., Salman, A., Khan, K., Mahmood, C. K., Ramos-Meza, C. S., Jain, V., & Shabbir, M. S. (2023). The effect of green energy production, green technological innovation, green international trade, on ecological footprints. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 1-14.

- Jun, W., Mughal, N., Kaur, P., Xing, Z., & Jain, V. (2022). Achieving green environment targets in the world's top 10 emitter countries: the role of green innovations and renewable electricity production. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, *35*(1), 5310-5335.

- Verma, C., & Jain, V. Exploring Promotional Strategies in Private Universities: A Comprehensive Analysis of Tactics and Innovative Approaches.

- Jain, V., Ramos-Meza, C. S., Aslam, E., Chawla, C., Nawab, T., Shabbir, M. S., & Bansal, A. (2023). Do energy resources matter for growth level? The dynamic effects of different strategies of renewable energy, carbon emissions on sustainable economic growth. *Clean Technologies and Environmental Policy*, *25*(3), 771-777.

- Jain, V., Rastogi, M., Ramesh, J. V. N., Chauhan, A., Agarwal, P., Pramanik, S., & Gupta, A. (2023). FinTech and Artificial Intelligence in Relationship Banking and Computer Technology. In *AI, IoT, and Blockchain Breakthroughs in E-Governance* (pp. 169-187). IGI Global.