

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract : *This paper aims to throw light on status of women empowerment in the context of technology. Women Empowerment and effective role of technology can make difference in the status of women empowerment in India. Few success studies are discussed in this paper to motivate other women. Schemes for women empowerment by Government of India are mentioned here.*

Keywords: *Technology, Women Empowerment*

Introduction :

Women are the crucial part of Indian economy and social system of India. They are actively involved in education, sports, politics and any other field but the rate of women empowerment is not as per the expectations compared to developed countries. The situation is changing slowly and it will take lot of time for involvement of women in all fields, especially finance, politics, IT sector etc. Technology play a very important role in women empowerment in 21st Century. Technology can help to reach the goals that are set in entrepreneurship activities by women.

Importance of Technology :

Technology has advanced into many areas of our lives include making information more accessible, improving communication, changing transportation etc. The world is becoming a much better place with advance in technology and women played important roles in information technology sector, but the ratio of men compared to that of women in this sector is probably 80-20%. Technology is the engine that continues to spur the growth of most startups across sectors in India. Hence, women should learn advanced technology to get into many innovative and new fields for entrepreneurship development.

Importance of Information Technology for Women Empowerment :

Information technology is very useful for women in the following areas.

Social Empowerment :

1. New knowledge and information can be gained and use effectively.
2. Awareness and understanding of issues.
3. Skills, abilities and competence.
4. Support, friendship and inspiration.
5. Participating in group activities with other women.

Political Empowerment

1. Participating in policy making.
2. Taking action to change your life or your community.
3. Networking and lobbying.
4. Changing stereotypes about rural women.

Psychological Empowerment

1. Self - confidence and self- esteem.
2. Feeling more valued and respected.
3. Motivation, interest and enthusiasm.
4. Freedom to do things or express yourself.
5. Feelings of belonging wellbeing and happiness.

Though technology can be very useful for women empowerment ,there is a huge gap between understanding use of technology,learning the advanced technology and women empowerment.

Gap between Women and Digital Technology

Lack of relevant knowledge and skills in using digital tools are among the main reasons for the digital gender divide worldwide.Sociocultural perceptions are often reported among the top barriers for women in owning and using a mobile phone, especially in rural zones of developing countries.In India, for instance, around 12% of women would not use the Internet because of negative social perception, and 8% of women don't use it due to the lack of acceptance by family members (Intel and Dalberg, 2012).Social-cultural perceptions and stereotypes also play a role in determining a different facet of the gender divide.

The under-representation of women in senior roles within digital companies and in ICT fields :

Many studies shows that women, globally have less understanding of technology, fewer digital skills, less presence on online platforms and are less likely to own mobile or technological devices. Hence, it is the need of the hour to learn technology effectively by women particularly by rural women .There are many hurdles to women's and girls' digital literacy include access and affordability challenges, lack of education, and socio-cultural norms, less importance is given to them and all these issues needs to be taken care of prominently.It is found that women on average globally are 26 percent less likely than men to have a smart phone.

The Past and Present :**“Women at work”**

It was considered a basic phrase for women who were at work while in the home.

Decades ago, women were entirely meant to stay at home working, and the working meant taking care of the household chores, husband, family, children, and in-laws.

This has been the scenario for the past many years until there was a revolution. In this gender-biased community, women were barely allowed to work and even if they did, they had to face severe criticism from the society, workplace and including their families.

With the advent of computers and internet, the lives of women started witnessing a transition. Gradually, there was a significant development in the society with an increase in the literacy rate of women and employment. Eventually, women became capable of leading and working equally with men in every field. The society, however, was not fully convinced to let women lead though, as gender discrimination was clinching in every inch of the world. Despite the challenges, few women have made their way to the top standing as an example to other women to follow their dreams. “The world is a place for both men and women and not just men alone”, they proved it.

The Present....

The pace at which technology is getting advanced these days there is no denying fact that the impact of technology today is huge. The advancements in technology have greatly influenced the various fields of Healthcare, Education, Communication, Manufacturing, Banking, etc. For instance, technological improvements in health care have given a chance to doctors to treat their patients in a virtual environment using video conferencing as a medium. Many women are now in the field of sciences, offering their services to the nation. Technology has made it possible for women to communicate with people all over the world through email, instant messaging, Skype, social media, etc. It has enabled women to strengthen relationships between friends, relatives, and colleagues. It has further made them globalize their business standards and streamline their business processes. When considering the women in the past to the trending age, there can be seen a huge transformation in the lives of women.

The manifestation that took place is considered to be just the beginning as there is much more to achieve. Many women CEOs in India, Chanda Kocchar, Ekta Kapoor, Vinita Bali, Renu Sud, Nita Ambani, Preetha Reddy, and others, are all a part of this wonderful transformation. Not only them, entrepreneurs, sportswomen, media celebrities, journalists, women in government services, etc., prove that transformation has indeed manifested in a new era of successful women.

Science and Technology and Innovation (STI) :

Science and technology is not inherently pick, or about gadgets or toys. It is about our everyday. STI has the power to disrupt and shift paths as it increasingly influences all aspects of life today, from economic opportunity in STI sectors and the application of STI solutions within other productive sectors, including to help women grow business and social enterprise, to opportunity for greatly improving health outcomes (including sexual and reproductive health), energy, environment and natural resource management, and infrastructure development. There are many opportunities, particularly through information and

communication technology, to enhance education, learning opportunities and skill development, for engagement with youth, for political participation and for women and girls to advocate for their interests, rights and social transformation. Women should be sensitized for this through proper training.

Sustainable Development Goals - GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY

This Sustainable Development Goal emphasize on gender equality, Empowering women and girls. Achieving the SDGs is impossible without empowering Indian women.

Not a single country has yet achieved full equality, and the worst gender-based injustices and crimes continue to be common and widespread.

Success Stories of sustainable development and women empowerment :

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), together with the Department of Biotechnology of India's Ministry of Science and Technology, are training women farmer leaders on advanced rice production and soft skills to help boost food security in India. The training programme developed women's technical and functional capacities in the following areas:

Technology – mechanization in rice and advances in rice production technology.

Knowledge access and decision support – information and communication technology (ICT) tools.

Sustainable businesses for women entrepreneurs in rice farming – nursery businesses
Service provision models for machines .

Management and leadership – rice and seed production planning and financial management, and models for management and leadership. Famous women in India who are excel in their fields and became role model for other women.

1. Tessy Thomas, known as the 'Missile Woman' of India.
2. Ritu Karidhal - As Mission Director of the Chandrayaan-2 mission called '**Rocket Woman of India**'.
3. Muthayya Vanitha is the Project Director of Chandrayaan-2.
4. Gagandeep Kang, a virologist and scientist, is known for her interdisciplinary research in transmission, development, and prevention of enteric infections and their sequelae in children in India.
5. The '**polar woman of ISRO**', Mangala Mani is ISRO's first woman scientist to spend more than a year in the icy landscape of Antarctica.
6. Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan technology is onboard NASA's New Horizon mission, which is probing Pluto.
7. Chandrima is a biologist and the first ever woman president of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA).

Some Facts about Women Empowerment :

Women in science from being a minority are now occupying the most important positions, in realms one thought were unachievable before. From winning Nobel Prizes to heading NASA, women scientists have impressed their names in history.

- India's IT sector is recruiting more women and giving them leadership roles: Nasscom The industry body found that gender-inclusive HR policies like flexi-work hours, work-from-home, parental leaves, anti-harassment policies, and so on have contributed to this trend.
- Women accounted for almost 70% of the workforce in tourism and hospitality sector in the world.
- Despite that supremacy, the women in the industry are underpaid, under-utilised and under-represented in the industry.
- They hold less than 40% of all managerial and supervisory positions.
- Women hold only 20% of the general managerial positions and the percentage of women in the boardrooms of publicly listed hospitality companies are less than 8%.

Success story of, 'Mushroom Lady of Bihar'

- **Anita Devi**, better known now as the "Mushroom lady of Bihar," has come a long way. She has transformed entire villages in Bihar. She started growing mushrooms in 2010 out of desperation to earn for her family to running her "Madhopur Farmer's Producers Company." Facing other villagers' ridicule, she has now helped many other women earn their livelihood through mushroom cultivation. She works with many NGOs and SHG's to help the women across the state of Bihar. She has changed not only the fortunes of her family but also other women in her village and surrounding towns.
- **Ekta Jaju** aimed to build a sustainable, organic, and resilient community, and started ONGanic Food in 2012. She pushed the farmers to switch to organic farming. The company currently works with more than 300 farmers and aims to reach 10,000 farmers by 2025. This woman helped farmers in the Nadia district of West Bengal to get profits from organic farming in a way that is financially sustainable and scalable while keeping the farmers' interest in mind.
- **Chandra Subrahmaniam** is a single mother, Cultivator, retailer from a small village Shivgangai Tamil Nadu, India.

Women Empowerment Schemes in India

1. Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao Scheme
2. One Stop Centre Scheme
3. Women helpline scheme
4. Working Women's Hostel (WWH)
5. SWADHAR Gruh Scheme
6. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme

7. 7 . Pradhan Mantri Mantru Vandana Yojana
8. Mahila e-Haat
9. Mahila police volunteers
10. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)
11. Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme
12. Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)
13. Nand-Ghar Yojana
14. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
15. Maternity Benefit Program
16. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
17. 17.e- Samvad portal
18. Nari Web Portal
19. She-Box Portal
20. New Draft National Policy
21. Nari Shakti Puruskars.

Conclusion

Women Empowerment is a crucial issue which need to handle carefully. Empowered women can help in the economics of the country .Hence, both urban and rural women should get various training for their capacity building. Though there are many schemes announced for women empowerment ,but very few women are aware of it. Hence, proper training is needed .

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