

Opportunities and Challenges of Women Empowerment in Creating Sustainable Growth

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Abstract: The concept of women empowerment is vital for the growth of an individual as well as a group. Women constitute almost half of the population in the Indian state where this study is conducted. If all women have an opportunity for better learning and education, there would be significant economic additions and growth leading to women empowerment. Interventions and initiatives have been made to create good livelihood means leading to increase the female number in workforce. However, during the process, some vital variables restricting women participation and contribution are not well taken care of. The motivations that moved this study are meagre cognitive developments of women in formative years. They lack freedom to pursue one's ambitions and a woman's self-belief of being un-capable. The study attempts to explain the link between human development and economic growth in three obligatory areas of sanitation, education and entrepreneurship. Enablement of a woman to feel empowered is the basic drive that will motivate for new adventures. This study is undertaken at the grass root level particularly for the women entrepreneurs who have been hitherto neglected and some of them received help under the government sponsored schemes. A public-private partnership model is very much required to achieve the goals in promoting women entrepreneurship in true spirit, this study suggests. The study also emphasises the importance for creating and developing more of an egalitarian society.

Introduction

The human development and economic growth were exciting and debateable topics until United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its first human

development report in 1990 which stated that the women remain invisible in statistics and count immensely in development. India's first Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru had said that one could advocate a Nation's condition by judging the status of its women¹. The rural women constitute the beautiful vignettes for India. The metaphorical 'Waves of Feminism' prove that women have faced oppressions across Nations and there have been victories after the tough prolonged struggle (Maclaran, 2015 & Offen, 2012 & Monk *et. al.* 2003 & Lather, 1988). A historical win of feminism left a lady empowered. The latter is an impalpable concept with numerous domains. It is directly proportional to a very basic trait of self-confidence which is crucial to the development of an individual. The status of women has improved significantly with lawful amendments in terms of voting age, foetus abortion, share in paternal property and many more. But, in the 21st century as well, some women are devastated due to gender partiality, dependency, resistance to follow their own dreams and atrocious crimes. There are constant efforts by the government for the upliftment of women by extending support in terms of credit subsidy, health, education, employment and security. From an intra-personal viewpoint, the hunky-dory feelings of a woman are the same be it literate/ illiterate, different caste or creed or, even nationalities across the globe. The status of every woman differs. Eachone has their own problems, solutions, style of living, habits, workplace, relaxing-space and so on. In different countries across the globe, the oppressions' have been different for women, the timelines have been dissimilar, objectives of raising the voice varied substantially and need not to mention that the cultures too have been different. This is true even within India as well, with 29 states with amalgamated cultural cohorts. Undoubtedly, the failure, struggle and success stories of Womanhood are speckled.

In the rural parts of India, numerous women are confined to homes because of family responsibilities, lack of exposure to urban lifestyle and tutored with culinary skills. This right deprives them from education as the counterpart believes that they do not need education. Kollodge (2018), states that a nation would undergo progress in 'real' terms when the literacy rate is higher and the power of fertility becomes a choice where people control consciously, according to the report of United Nations Population Fund on reproductive. The rising population is a hindrance in numerous growth situations because of the gap between higher lifestyle demands and low supplies. To name one, it leads to limited seat availability in schools. Bearing too many children may also have ill-effects on a woman's health. Vyas (2018) writes that an 'aware' woman is a major contributor towards economic growth of a Nation. A

woman should be able to know and understand her rights and clearly demarcate between right and wrong doing(s). A 'woman's personal need' has an unclear concoction with both the facets.

The potential of an empowered woman would increase with the self-belief of one's capabilities. Subsequently, they have to be more exposed to lifestyles and skill development. Ministry of Women and Child Development released a report in 2016 i.e. National Policy for Women, stating the articulations for empowering women. The report emphasised on (i) construction, access, usage and, maintenance of toilets, (ii) investments in education sector and, (iii) promotion of skill development and entrepreneurship. The above three areas are the themes of this study which are correlated with gender-based growth. Arguably, many women do not take up day jobs as they would face the problem of unavailability of toilets. And, those who work, opt for open defecation in a safe place. The problem does not just end by constructing toilet(s). The usage, maintenance, repair and onus of cleaning them remain a major concern. The said act may not be taken into account much and as a result, open defecation starts again. The statistical figures reflect the growth history of a nation but several economy-dependent variables (in terms of women participation) are ignored. For instance, sanitation figures show the number of constructed toilets but do not reflect whether people use them for the nature's call. The statistics fail to typify on their functionalities and maintenance as well. Similarly, literacy figures show the access to education but ignore the variable of 'quality' that is being imparted.

The present study is based on field level investigation in Kaushambi, a district in Uttar Pradesh state in India. The state has a literacy rate of nearly 67% and almost 49 million uneducated females²³. During the study, visits were made in the Joint District Hospital (government establishment) in Kaushambi. It was astonishing to observe the foot-falls of pregnant ladies, the average number of deliveries and the birth of underweight children. On interactions with the paediatricians at Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, there was a case where a woman delivered seventh child. All the previous six pregnancies were a miscarriage and this child weighed 800 grams born pre-term. This was way behind a healthy baby's ideal weight of 2500 grams. The lady had several medical issues and the health had deteriorated completely. On interactions with the woman, it was revealed that woman desired to have a baby but was under tremendous pressure from husband to bear an offspring. The in-laws kept taunting the woman for not having one and looked upon as a burden. The

financial conditions of the family did not allow the woman to have much of healthy food. There lied the catch when we realised that the household income was the underlying problem where access to healthy food was concerned and, as well as the 'burden' problem as shared above. Out of the 9 infants that were seen in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, all were underweight. Time passed and soon after this incident, we encountered another incident.

There was another woman who was married at an early age of 19 years and had two children. The wife was 26 years old when her husband passed away. Mother-in-law was frail and had no say in the family. The father-in-law used to abuse the widow as financial dependency existed on the later. This ignited the feelings of a burden. The woman's situation was comparable to collateral damages. The father-in-law assured to pass on the farming lands to the kids but it did not realise and the ill-treatment continued. Moreover, the woman's younger sister was a victim of maternal mortality. The woman had no source of income and was responsible to bring up the two children. The younger sister of the woman had passed away leaving a child whose responsibility lied with this woman. Every woman could and should have her own identity. The above two incidents suggest that the financial conditions of women needed much improvements. Moreover, the thought flashed that how shall they be employed when they were confined to homes. And, the study started with purpose of providing a work-from-home opportunity, educating emphasis (door to door or via WhatsApp) and spreading hygiene awareness amongst women.

There is also a need to explore avenues for investments that would be required in the models of education and sanitation which this study explores. Therefore, a public-private partnership model may be worked upon in both, the toilet construction and smart-class making. The recommendation for entrepreneurship does not necessitate investments. Instead, it requires government's intervention specially to attract private capital under Corporate Social Responsibility where companies are bound to spend 2% of their average net profit in three years, towards social causes (tax free investment).

The study examines the intertwined concepts of empowerment, sanitation, education, skill development (overarching umbrella of human development) and economic growth. The variables are dependent on each other as well. For instance, lack of toilets in schools may deprive people from enrolment or uneducated individuals may fail to understand the cons of open defecation. Similarly, development of a skill is directly dependent on basic education which relates the need of a toilet. The programs and schemes initiated by the government to bring desired

improvements in the above areas have contributed to the spirit and involvement of women in workforce from the social parameters. This has resulted in significant empowerment to the women in Indian context.

Literature Review

Saravanakumar & Varakumari (2019) in their study reveal that women have lower authority, limited access to knowledge and restricted resource accessibility. The rural women have an extremely low empowerment when it comes to family planning. The level of participation in household decisions is inversely proportional to age. The gender-based inequalities hamper the contributions to their own family. Chakraborty *et. al.* (2019) studied and arrived at conclusion that entrepreneurship is tough for women. The authors mention of the much debated 'balance' between Personal and professional life. Psychological factors play a very important role towards the performance of an enterprise.

Schirk *et. al.* (2015) have specified that good social security would lower the eating disorders in women who are exposed to domestic violence. Schmitt *et. al.* (2018) writes that a girl's reputation as well as that of the family is damaged when a girl's personal-need-action is seen in public. In densely populated slums there may be difficulty in accessing a private toilet. Location of a toilet is a challenge but is very crucial. They also emphasise on building female-friendly toilets. According to Goyal and Gupta (2009), the people who are involved in scavenging works are looked upon as untouchable. The authors also state that the rising population, urban migration, lack of sanitation and unplanned use of natural resources are major challenges for health imbalances. Kumar & Taunk (2019) in their study concluded that the education committees of villages are irresponsible towards maintenance of school toilets. The public toilets require more awareness among public to maintain them with hygiene. They emphasise that school sanitation is vital to entire rural community sanitation. Guido *et. al.* (2018) mention that a harsh toilet training makes a child control their material possessions. Whereas, a liberal toilet training develops a child into a person who desires new materialistic things. The complete onus may not lie with toilet training but the traits of development are strongly correlated.

Marangos *et. al.* (2019) argued that a good society makes a good life and they are influential on contemporary development ethics. Sell and Minot (2018) describe that the quality of education between spouses has a deep connection with women empowerment. Household wellbeing is positively correlated to a woman's role in

decision making. The author's also give equal weight to gender-based education. Kapur (2018) rightly says that education is the reflection of prosperity. Insufficient finances and inappropriate teaching methods are reasons for poor teaching quality. There are reprimands in the education system and economic difficulties are faced by deprived people. Sharma & Sharma (2015) suggest a quality research in education and revamping of financial aid for institutions as a resourceful measure for self-sustainability of youth. Gouda *et. al.* (2013) said that improved physical facilities in private schools contribute to better learning and, hence, students from private schools perform better than the government school pass-outs. More efforts are required to bridge the gap between them. Retnakumar and Arokiasamy (2006) proved that the poor teaching quality cause the diversion of enrolments to private schools.

Fletcher *et. al.* (2017) state that for some women, societies look up to them as caregivers and caretakers of their household. Hence, they have lower workforce participation. Employers may prefer to hire a man over an equally qualified woman. The probability of work is more for women who receive vocational training. Ozsungur (2019) states that there is strong correlation between the factor's "children", "prove oneself", "innovation", "justice", "dream" and "hold on to the life by oneself", in the context of women entrepreneurship. Asibey *et. al.* (2019) rightly state that the education level of a woman and source of income have a positive relationship with the usage of a medical facility. The author also states that gaining a woman's developments is crucial for gaining competitive advantage. Moinak (2015), mentions about the huge challenge of unemployment on account of gap between the industry requirements and the quality in the labour force available. The government schemes are creating more of a mix of unskilled manpower rather than excess of skilled manpower which is the requirement.

Hilman & Abubakar (2019) have established a strong correlation between talent management, technology integration and quality culture. Mahgoub and Alsoud (2015) have mentioned that there are three facets of people for handicraft suppliers. Some folks sight it as the work of uneducated, rural and older artists, some sight the handmade objects as unpolished and idiosyncratic while some minds ponder over handicrafts to be a labour of ethnic craftsmen. Sindhani *et. al.* (2019), state that social media is extremely effective towards creating a buzz amongst businesses and also moulding the thought processes of the public. Ismail *et. al.* (2018), have proved that pay-for-performance is a strong contributor towards higher performance outputs. Rufaidah (2017) rightly states marketing capability as an under-researched topic with

reference to small and medium enterprises. The author has emphasised marketing intelligence to be a major factor of the former. Uppal (2016) mentioned the non-profit organisational sectors in India have a market form of organisational culture. Their ideal operation should make all, a beneficiary. Instead, they have a competitiveness tendency. Abdullah & Tari (2013) have stated that there is strong correlation between employee empowerment and quality improvement.

Parida & Sahney (2018), mention that children are the new opinion leaders of rural homes. Ahmad *et. al.* (2019) confirm that the status of women has improved, women should be a part of economic activity and male chauvinism has lowered which is on the road to become history soon.

Theory

The government in India has taken series of measures to improve the number of women in the workforce. This involves incentives for women, gender specific tax incentives for companies, liberalisation in return-to-work policy, minimum pays, maternity benefits, leaves, grievance resolving, access to privacy and several other gender sensitive measures. The policies should have strict compliance in the informal sector also. The support is not only evident from the government schemes but also from the budget allocations released for the year 2019-20. There is an monetary rise in allocation of 17% to Women and Child Development ministry. On the other hand, apportionment for Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (Maternity Benefit Programme) is made more than double. The allocation of Child Protection Services Program under Integrated Child Development Services has been increased by 5750 million. The apportionment of Mahila Shakti Kendra (Woman Power Centre) has risen by 350 million while that of National Creche Scheme has gone up by 200 million. The budget assigned for working women's hotel is tripled since last fiscal year. In the various areas concerning the safety of women, the apportionment has seen a boost of 100 million. The allocation for widow's homes has been increased by 70 million. The Mission for Protection and Empowerment of Women has seen a rise of 1670 million. The intensive efforts are made but there are many challenges to tackle this problem. The efforts for the upliftment of women and children are incessant but there is much scope for improvements. It is observed on account of negative-gender-approach that occurred in June, 2019 where a new-born baby girl was abandoned on the roadside, packed in a plastic bag. This happened in Georgia. It was surprising as the plastic bag was named 'India'.

Monetary support is very much needed for upliftment and better living conditions for women where focus has to be towards livelihood. It has been observed during the study that nearly 70% women of Kaushambi district are not involved in any economic activity and thus remain far off from the employment. Rural Indian women are skilled in the art of crochet as it is their pass time activity. This could be leveraged to produce economic gains. For instance, in the view of employment sector, we studied the education effects at the block (a part of village) level in Kaushambi. The check served up an uncanny vision after our visit to a government school Manjhanpur (location) in the district. A boy of fourth standard was asked about the color on a chart. It was already written 'purple' in English language. The boy replied, "baigani" (purple color in local dialect). Post this incident, it is realized that the enforcements of the institutional arrangements is lacking too much.

In the issue of menstruation, Oscar winning documentary 'Period' threw light upon the existent taboo in the Indian society. The situation at the grassroot level is even worse and unnoticed. There is a grave concern regarding disposal of the sanitary pads by the girls. The warden of a residential girls' school (located in Manjhanpur area of Kaushambi) shared a problem that they were facing. The sanitary pads are being distributed in government facilities and, they are even available at low-cost to certain low-income sections. The dustbin to dispose the pad after usage was located near the gate of the school premises. The bodyguard who stood at the gate, was a male. Hence, the young girls were shy to walk up to the dustbin and dispose the pads. As a result, the filth was being spread in the toilets and, it was a disease spreader indeed.

Dissecting the challenges further, this study was undertaken keeping in view the following broad objectives.

- (1) To evaluate the importance and needs of women in personal areas.
- (2) To assess the education and awareness arrangements for women taken up by the government.
- (3) To analyse the skill development programs in rural areas implemented to promote entrepreneurship.

Research Methodology

The interactions were conducted in the district Kaushambi of Uttar Pradesh. The study was completed in two parts, consecutively. Henry *et. al.* (2016) have performed a massive study on the novel methodological approaches. The authors have covered several research papers where certain case-study based methods are undertaken.

They argue that the methodology for feminist approaches should be of in-depth qualitative type like life history or case studies.

This research is a case-based study using naturalistic observation and, interactions went as per the flow of the conversation. The research is more focused on what statistics do not reflect about women empowerment. Apart from the rural-holding in the district, one more reason for choosing this study was to assess employment opportunities by creating new job avenues in rural districts on the lines of metro cities. In conducting this study, non-probability sampling was followed selecting a particular geographical location and pick a sample. This was purposely done to cover the focussed group as well keeping in view the objectives of the study. The time horizons for the study were both longitudinal and cross-sectional. Observation technique was used in order to understand the problems that the rural families were going through, infrastructure issues, medical and health conditions and lifestyle improvements and feeling of pride in an individual. The interactions with the incumbents, helped in understanding and identifying the performance and weaknesses.

Examples of Aspiring Women Moving Towards Empowerment

This is the case study of two unmarried sisters in the region of eastern Uttar Pradesh who had been facing financial crisis in their family and therefore chose to do commercial work. They disguised as males and worked in their family-owned makeshift barber shop. They did this as the customers were not comfortable in getting their hairstyling done through females. This incident has put-forth an evidential proof that gender discrimination is prevalent in the Indian society. They further narrated that the same group of men were comfortable and utilized the services but only after this issue raised to public. This incident is an indicator that women have the responsibility of providing financial support to their family. Due to societal customs, they may not take up such jobs outright. However, the things have been changing on the micro level and working women are accepted in rural areas too.

The Government of Kerala has an organization named 'Kudumbashree' (means 'prosperity of the family' in Malayalam language) founded in the year 1998. The motive is to eradicate poverty by female emancipation⁴. Microcredit and building entrepreneurs are the two pillars of this model for empowering women. There has been good number of studies conducted in relevance to the two economic variables. Microfinance involves microcredit for the people who are below poverty line. There exists a strong relationship between micro financing in the rural areas and the living

standard (Yogendrarajah & S.D, 2015). In very recent times, Newman *et. al.* (2017), state that the entrepreneurs are at the bottom of economic pyramid and the activity is triggered by microfinance. The female member strength of 'Kudumbashree' is 4.1 million as of January 2019, which makes it the largest women movement in the Asian continent. This marks a strong engraving on the concept on feminism. Also, women formed 650-kilometer-long-women-wall spanning across the state as a fight for gender equality⁵.

At the onset of the year 2019 on the day, women in hundreds walked through the roads of Karnataka state, demanding prohibition on the sale of liquor. They face familial as well as societal crimes due the intensifying trade of liquor. Though, the Patriarchal mindset is changing with time, many women still face oppression due the 'social evil'.

The number of women who are a part of the delivery team in the ecommerce ecosystem has doubled in December 2018 from last year to more than 40,000. The leading portal of Amazon in India had merely 20 women in 2016 and the number since stands at 800 as at the end of the year 2018. HeyDeedee is India's financial capital, Mumbai, based all women delivery startup.

Focusing on a woman's personal need, there is a lack of toilets at the police stations in Kaushambi (study area). The women complained for not having access. They are now aware of the requirement owing to the government's effort of constructing toilets and spreading awareness. The administration has decided to construct 'pink' toilets at thirteen police stations and the community toilets in villages shall have a sanitary pad vending machine. This step is taken to empower women by noting the convenience measures for them.

The human development, per se women development in precarity, needs more growth opportunities with novel interventions.

Women Empowerment through Toilet Construction on Roadside

The absence of lavatories or inappropriate usage and maintenance of existing toilets is a complex barrier to the growth of womanhood. A vast number of rural homes do not use lavatory. Even if they have once constructed in their homes, the mentality does not permit them to use it. *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* (Clean India Mission), is undoubtedly the best scheme that has been proposed and implemented by the Government to make the country open defecation free. It commenced on October 2, 2014. The government gives out targets for the construction of toilets based on

the number of households. And, households receive almost 173 US Dollar financial support from government for constructing toilets. On achieving the required target of constructed toilets, the district is said to be open defecation free. In Kaushambi district, there was a target to construct 1,81,453 toilets in the year 2019 which has been achieved successfully with the help of community participation. The number of constructed toilets was highest in the year 2017-18 (Appendix A) and lowered last financial year.

Inspiringly and commendably many constructed toilets are self-financed by underprivileged families. Evidently, older generations which were disinclined towards toilets have been realising its need now, especially for women. As of 2019, it is the twelfth district in the state to be declared as open defecation free. However, some people are reluctant about using the constructed toilets because they have grown up defecating in the open. They even use the toilet for some other purpose like store room or shop or even a kitchen⁶. This may ridicule the outlook towards the lady. Undeniably, better access to sanitation shall lower the burden of women and they would indulge in productive activities. According to the sanitation report by World Bank (2016) titled, *Consumer Research for Rural Sanitation in Uttar Pradesh*, there are pros and cons of toilet usage in the minds of the rural consumers. The people have to walk a lot through the early morning fresh air, to locate a place for defecation. This is a healthy exercise and enhances the social bondages in the society as they go together. The usage of a toilet gives a bad smell in the surroundings and is difficult to maintain cleanliness. The government is profoundly worried and trying their best in resolving the issue.

There is a non-governmental organisation named '*Sulabh International*' which has addressed the problem of sanitation very aggressively by constructing toilets. They were conferred with Stockholm Water Prize in the year 2009. The non-governmental organisation has constructed the largest bath cum toilet facility at a religious place named '*Shirdi*' in the Indian state, Maharashtra. The problem does not end just with rural areas. It exists in urban areas as well. A suitable sanitation strategy should be implemented for both rural and urban India. Cost of lack of sanitation is equivalent to 6.4% of gross domestic product every year in India (World Bank, 2010) which is a loss of 0.05 million saving per household to be open defecation free village, as per data from United Nations Children's Fund. The human development which happens via sanitation is strongly related to the economic growth.

In addition to the toilet construction that is being done in villages, we are aware that the educated and well to do families have toilets in their homes. The hotels, restaurants, hospitals, schools, offices and other institutions also have in their premises. The shopping malls have a good one. Sky is the limit for undertaking the interior designing of toilets in the posh areas. The problem begins after the construction of toilet-at-home which is not well maintained or at times used for different purposes. The open markets do not have a 'clean' public convenience. The public conveniences that are available at certain places are filthy. The people who like to travel may avoid using the filthy public conveniences. They may opt for open defecation free as well or probably 'control' during journeys. There is lack of toilets couple of kilometres down the road. The intake of fluids is lowered several hours prior to commencing a long travel time road journey. Every petrol pump and, traveller's food stop-point (*dhaba*) has the facility available with them but, as stated earlier, they are filthy.

The reasons for filth-issue have been studied previously. The poor people could access the toilet free of cost but, there would not be any surety that they would leave it clean for the next user, making them the 'disease transmitter' (Greed, 2006). This is the current problem with existing public conveniences in the year 2019. The rich people would prefer to pay and, use a clean toilet. They would be sensible enough to leave it clean for the next user (Studio10, 2018) (Goyal and Gupta, 2009). The money collected via pay-to-use model would be used to pay the salary to the cleaner and, guard. This would mean economic empowerment of a youth (could be male) and, women as the mental pain would be culminated.

The geographical spread of Kaushambi district is vast with roads of nearly 40,400 km⁷. The suggested toilet construction approach would involve huge investment and government may foster private investment by offering subsidies and ease of doing business in the state. The government of Uttar Pradesh, under the initiatives of Central government, has undertaken the work of toilet construction in the recent few years. The government has taken required initiatives to ensure that adequate arrangements are made to solve this problem. However, there are certain peculiar issues involved with the task that act as hindrances. During the course of study, it was revealed that some people only want to construct it, so that they get the money (even if they are not in the deprived category) and may not use it either. We interacted with some women in the area of study (Kaushambi). It was learnt that they are splendidly jumbled because of the varying thought processes within their peer-generation and society. For instance, women want access to a toilet, while gents

may not feel the need. Even if they start using one, the other family members with conservative approach and attitude raise objections to it. As a result, the family may be forced to suppress the demand of female members in the family for the use of toilets.

In view of the above explained reasons, a feasible option could be to construct two toilets at roadside, public convenience, per se. This arises on account of varied income class with different style of living in India. One toilet would be accessible free of cost for the poor people. And one would be accessible at a cost for the high-status people. At roadsides, a free toilet would make esteemed consumers and a pay-to-use toilet, would earn both consumers as well as customers.

The pay-to-use model of toilets is operation in European countries, United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia and, they are successful. Puducherry is an open defecation free union territory of India. It is a French colony with neat and, clean public conveniences. This emphasis that the mentality of Indians has to be taken care of when framing the policies for clean India. There is a worthwhile (less) consequence with reference to nature's call clubbed with work performance for any individual. A view-point here is that many women opt out of work schedules only because they lack access to lavatories at the destined premises. India shall foresee a sustained growth with the above explained measure as sanitation, health and, employment are directly proportional dependent variables.

Women Empowerment through Smart-class Education in Girls' Residential Schools

Imparting education to the children is the top most priority of women in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh (World Bank, 2016). As of 2019, there are 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh which hold female illiterate population of nearly 49.1 million⁸. *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (Save Girl, Educate Girl) is a movement of the Indian government launched in 2015, aimed towards improvement in the livelihood of women. Sex determination to abort the female foetus is a crime and a punishable act. With the scheme, the government is also focussed on educating children. There are residential schools in every district engaged in imparting education to girls. A school known as *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* launched is committed to improve the female rural literacy and working since 2004. This is a government run school. But, there are private owned schools as well. During the study, some of the interesting features of the education system were observed. Every individual of workable age aims for a government job

in India, irrespective of the rank and own qualification. A Master of Business Administration qualified person applies for a guard's vacancy and Doctor of Philosophy seeks a job of an assistant. People desire job security, good salary, incentives as well a regular job. The government establishments do offers the same. The recruitment is thorough as Bagchi (2015) shares the process.

In Kaushambi district, there are eight branches of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya imparting education from standard six to ten. The maximum number of students that could be enrolled in each school is hundred. This is altogether a different experiment of education. The admission to the school is based on the poverty level and there is perfect bond with girl's family to send the daughters to the school. In government run schools, the quality of education poses many questions. But economically weaker sections have no option as they cannot afford to expensive private schools. In the rural areas, the disposable income is low and the geographical spread of villages is huge (MHA, 2001). Therefore, private schools are unaffordable by the poor and they are basically meant for the people who are considered rich in the poor society. There are other problems with private schools like, girl-residential-school being Hindi-medium, poor quality of knowledge and communication etc. The district administration has initiated measures for setting up digital classrooms in the schools and also few more initiatives to improve the standards of education in government schools.

On the other side, there are many private schools which have English language in the curriculum and abstain all the students and teachers from conversing in any other language other than English. The system of teachers' selection is much different in private schools as compared to government schools where more emphasis is laid on effective communication. This makes the very difference in delivery of contents as well the quality. Of late, the government is intervening in the training and care of children in rural areas. The government implemented certain training methods and techniques as detailed out in Annexure B that are focused to rural areas. The teachers are directly involved in designing and execution of the methods and programs, they are exclusively trained for this.

The training procedures for the teachers look more on papers. Practically, there remain many gaps in the system. At the rock-bottom level somewhere, education quality is even-worse with the school-life being much improved. Undeniably, the efforts are being made by all the stakeholders. But there is dire need for much more initiatives and improvements. Previous studies have questioned the quality of

education in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, elementary education in rural India as well as the process (Das *et. al.*, 2013; Gautam *et. al.*, 2016; GOGOI & GOSWAMI, 2015), which still is crummy. In the year 2019, smart-classed are being developed in schools to ensure increase the exposure level of students. Bacha & Ilyas (2014) suggest that a different mode in teaching shall foster improvements in the quality. The use of technology shall create a cohesive learning environment for a child in a classroom setting. (this s you talking about Kasturba schools or the government schools in general //IN GENERAL. FEW WORDS HAVE BEEN ADDED)

It is an extremely positive step by the government to set up a school premises in the backward districts. But the quality of education is questionable and should be improved undoubtedly. In the Kasturba schools, the televisions are equipped with a set-top box. This is in all the eight Kasturba schools of study area. But in the Uttar Pradesh state some Kasturba schools may not be digitally equipped due to the fund manageability. The children are shown the news channels or educational videos from YouTube. Also, after installation of the audio-visual equipment, there is no guarantee that the teachers use them for their personal recreational use. There has to be surety that the teachers use the system, for the students. This is a ground level issue. Reiterating to the installation of equipment in classrooms, the teachers who would use them may not have a good command over the machines. The process of upgradation in the classroom is done but the person involved in the process (teacher here) is neglected (Saye, 1997). Indian government framed schemes and policies which focus on providing information and communications technology infrastructure. But only a few states are implementing the same as per the report titled 'Detailed Project Report for School Education' (Ministry of Human Resource Development, p.9).

The acts of setting up a school premises, ensuring enrollments, upgrading infrastructure and hiring teachers may not ensure good education and learning. There is no funding as of the year 2019 from the Uttar Pradesh government in order to make smart-classes. At the moment, objectives of setting up smart-classes is being achieved by donations, or employees contribute a share of salary for the noble cause. It has a haphazard pattern. Consideration of the modifications of the current classrooms via digital equipment and correct usage by the stakeholders shall improve the education quality. The existing good education efforts have a criticisable quality and requires modifications to reap fruits at grass-root levels amongst poor students. Construction of schools is a good step but the quality of teachers on board is questionable?

The process and quality of inducting teachers in government schools call for positive changes in the policy perspective and implementation. The government can think of changing the criterion in the selection process giving more focus to communication and other professional skills rather than totally focusing on academic achievements by the candidates aspiring to become government teachers. An applicant could be extremely qualified but, poor in communication and general awareness may not be preferred for selection as teacher, more so, in government schools. There should be a refresher course for the qualified candidate to upgrade their basic communication skills. This may help in improving the teacher's skills and talents. The lack of teacher preparation is a barrier to information and communication technology education (Byker, 2014). There is lot of initiatives to be taken up in terms of developing and grooming potential candidates, improve communication skills, creating more social awareness etc. to make the education meaningful and more effective. However, the local dialect and English language should have equal weight. The way the education is imparted, communication and subject knowledge all are very vital factors for development of a good student. Developing positive attitude is another challenge where education system could contribute a lot.

The local dialect is the Mother-tongue of every child. But in today's competitive world, the basic English language may be the success-tongue of every adult. Considering this, the government could provide funds for the installation of Information and Communication Technology infrastructure in the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalay (girl residential from I to VIII) schools in order to convert them into smart-class just to ensure smart teaching. The study material that is provided in school is of low quality (Deore *et. al.*, 2013). Central Board of Secondary Education is a national level educational board of India. Consequently, the state government may pass a general order that each class room has to have a pen-drive with educational videos of Central Board of Secondary Education pattern loaded on them, for all primary schools. For upgrading the standards of education, new technology, state of the art and upgraded reading materials need to be provided to students. The students would be shown and, then evaluated by the teachers. It should be done because use of technologies creates learning environments (Garris *et. al.*, 2002). This is a simple idea involving basic act but, it requires aggressive implementation in the schools in the rural parts of the states.

Based on the observations and findings during the study, it may be suggested that overall arrangements in the government schools, per-se. call for drastic

improvements to ensure the regularity of teachers in the schools, up gradation techniques and overall efficiency and improvements.

These are the formative years of a woman. If the youth goes out of hand then there will be a huge economic setback (Gautam *et. al.*, 2016). Hence, good education with command over both, English language and Mother-tongue would help in better understanding of the market functions and other stakeholders. This will help young female generation to grow efficiently and thus lead a superior work life. This would also enable the beneficiary open to the adaptation of novel technologies and strategies with variety of choices and options for oneself i.e. more self-development. The woman as an entrepreneur would develop sharp communication skills that will add strategic value to the area of work.

Women Empowerment through Creation of Entrepreneurs by Developing Skill-set

On April 1, 2014, the Uttar Pradesh government commenced Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission. This was a state specific launch as a part of the nationwide-scheme, known as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (Prime Minister's Skill Development Scheme). It was started with a motive to improve skills of rural youth in areas of garment making, electrical, accounting, beautician, agriculture, security, hardware, construction and many more. A brief analysis of the effectiveness of this Mission covering nearly 1.5 million population is presented in the table in Appendix C. The figures represent the number of beneficiaries. As little as 4% beneficiaries, out of total enrolled number in the year 2018-19 passed the course certification overall. This is the lowest in five years, may be the individuals have difficulty in comprehending or writing. The total beneficiaries placed under the program comprised of 19.5% of the total enrolled numbers in the same year. This is the highest since the inception. There are different reasons for not getting placed like; joining family business, opting for own ventures, family involvement, personal job preferences and so on. There might be cases where no job was available. A woman should be able take care of herself solely and may support her family in case the wage earner is incapacitated. This can be inferred as an improvement in female enrolment of 37% for education as observed. Though there is a growth in the number of beneficiaries but much more is required to be done to meet the huge gap. It is relevant to mention the true incident of *Maison d'Affie*, an overseas brand⁹ that started in 2010. It gets the apparels made from the poor people in Africa and promotes

them as a fashion brand, in Europe markets. On a parallel contour, there is a famous apparel/ fabric/ furnishings retail chain known as Fabindia, which commenced its operation in the year 1960. Their modus of operandi is to procure items from 17 communities which are companies owned by communities, across the nation. The shares are jointly held by artisans and, crafts-persons (Kripalani, 2009). The products come from the communities which are companies that are owned by the communities themselves. When customers step out of a Fabindia store, they feel content of procuring an awesome quality product and thus helping rural artisans.

A similar marketing strategy could be implemented in Uttar Pradesh where the women-made handicrafts (crafted using India's traditional art of crochet) could be promoted as fashion products. There are many initiatives taken for fostering the skills and talents of people. But there is no window yet which leverages the existing skill level of rural housewife's (stay-at-home lady). Art of crochet is the predominant hobby of rural women. The model that is suggested in this study is basis the business model that is in practice by Greenhath¹⁰. An icing on the cake would be to club these women-made handicrafts (crafted using India's traditional artform of crochet) with corporate gifting. There shall be a requirement to focus on branding the products specifically made by the rural womenfolk (employees) and, organize regular training assemblies for them to enhance their knowledge of designing items as per the tastes of the customers. Owing to their literacy and the level of understanding, there may be a need to go back to the drawing board.

There is also a need to make handicrafts tax exempted by government to promote rural entrepreneurship. There are other initiatives taken by the government to promote the artisans such as, providing them space to display and market their products in large exhibitions, fixing certain quota in government entities to procure gift items from the entrepreneurs engaged under skill development mission and so on. These measures could be further strengthened keeping in view the viability of small enterprises. Since the corporate entities have paying capacity for a bulk mandate purchase, the handicraft items could be the better option to encourage corporate gifts. The wood, copper, steel products, crochet/ knitting, plastic rope (macramé) and, cloth items (stitching) could be the items identified to be promoted by small enterprises. This will help in increasing the number of working women to larger extent. There could be a thought process transformation for customers from 'Brand loyalty' to 'Idea loyalty' viz. the idea of purchasing an item for a social benefit.

Government could amend law such that it abides corporate to spend a share of the corporate social responsibility investment in the procurement of these handmade items. The small scale (local village) industries or self-help groups should be made suppliers for corporate gifting in order to achieve benefits at a large scale. The leading brands could provide shelf-space in their showrooms to the handicrafts. Moreover, a professional touch could be given to these items through labeling and barcoding. Specialized assistance is vital for these activities and, government could intervene here to convince branded privates to help.

There are changes as reflected at the grass root level since an increase in placements is observed during the past five years but the success rate is still yet to be picked up. The achievement of 19.5% is as low to reflect the achievement. Rural homes are enrolling their female members for learning new skill sets and upgrading old skill levels as well. Apparently, the nexus of a family is to see their family members skilled so that any member could be an entrepreneur or salaried individual. The larger size of population in India implies availability of a good range of dexterous citizens.

Discussion, Managerial Implication and Conclusion

One needs to look into programs and possibilities of women empowerment with a pragmatic approach. In this study, success stories of women have been covered and discussed but empowerment has a long way to go in true spirit. Sanitation is the first and foremost factor towards the direction of women empowerment. The study finding raises many questions on access to toilet while travelling, extent of cleanliness and upkeep of public conveniences and extent of awareness among the people towards this end. There is a need to expand these facilities to both, one those who can afford to pay and use and other, who could use free, the public conveniences but maintenance under hygienic conditions is important in all the cases. In the education sector which was the second component of the study, it is observed that there is much scope for improvements and initiatives by the government for developing exclusive girls' school in districts with smart-class and state of art and environment. The study recommends an increased role of a teacher in bringing qualitative improvements in the communication and education both. On the third component of the study that focuses on skill development and job opportunities, adequate measures have been taken through various government schemes such as *Swachh Bharat Scheme*, *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* and, *Uttar Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Mission etc.*,

there could be more initiatives and approaches to achieve required goals by gearing up the efforts.

The study suggests a different approach for toilet construction and their maintenance under the public-partnership model for their long-term sustainability and efficient use. In case of education, the role of teacher assumes significance and therefore, the quality of teachers should receive prime focus of the government to make the basic education system more effective and useful. There is an opportunity to create entrepreneurs by improving and skilling the existing skills and talents of women in rural areas. Developing a strong customer base involving corporate sector would be required to help in marketing of rural products. The added focus on human and more so skill development will contribute to employment capabilities from social parameters. This is directly correlated to the economic growth. As stated by Raj (2019), it is time to consider the sayings, “The Human-rural-women-Resource is vital for the success of India” (sustainable livelihood) and “Survival of the techie-Fittest” (digital empowerment; WhatsApp usage) and, thereby, enact accordingly consequently empowering women. There is a dire need to understand the impediments which occur for rural women at ground levels (mostly esoteric) and, execute pragmatic solutions.

Notes

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1. <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=111476>
2. <https://www.ibef.org/states/uttar-pradesh.aspx>
3. <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/uttar+pradesh.html>
4. http://www.kudumbashree.org/storage//files/hz9bb_strengthening%20the%20towards%20empowerment%20w.pdf
5. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/kerala-620-km-long-womens-wall-formed-to-uphold-gender-equality/articleshow/67336779.cms>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=600DVepZe6E>
7. <http://www.uppnvd.gov.in/en/districtwiseroad?Type=RD>
8. <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/uttar+pradesh.html>
9. <https://www.maisondafie.com/the-brand>
10. <https://greenbath.com/company-profile>

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Appendix A: Toilet Construction Details in Kaushambi (UP) India

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Number of constructed toilets</i>	<i>Approximate released amount (Million)</i>
2018-19	51630	619.5
2017-18	92281	1107
2016-17	20151	241.8
2015-16	7550	90.6
2014-15	9841	118
Total	18,14,53	2176.9

Source: Panchayat Raj Department, Kaushambi (Uttar Pradesh) India

Appendix B: Teacher Training Methods in UP Districts

<i>S#</i>	<i>Type of Training</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	Five days graded learning program using Teaching Learning Material (TLM)	Two teachers per school are trained
2	'Meena manch' (training for girls) in safety and community participation	Ensure creative environment
3	'Meena manch' (training for girls) -Power Angels (More specialized)	100 girls are chosen per school
4	'Learning outcome'- Five-day program in every village	Assessment of the education that is being imparted
5	'Padhe Bharat, Badhe Bharat' (PBBB)- Teachers training program	Specialized training for skill development at initial stage
6	Teachers participation in School Management Committee (SMC)	To ensure community participation in quality education
7	Leadership program to ensure overall advancements	Scheduled for at least one teacher from one school
8	Training for English language	Applicable to faculty

Source: Basic Education Department, Kaushambi (Uttar Pradesh) India

Appendix C: Skill Development Mission in Kaushambi (UP) India

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Total Enrolled</i>	<i>Enrolled Male/Female</i>	<i>Under Training</i>	<i>Trained</i>	<i>Assessed</i>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>Placed</i>
2018-19	1427	2050	1210/ 756	816	1234	107	82	400
2017-18	2214	1830	1333/503	27	1678	1326	936	352
2016-17	3985	3632	2483/ 1149	0	3385	2982	2289	221
2015-16	1483	1357	769/ 588	0	1195	1088	812	156
2014-15	2357	1415	895/ 520	0	1286	1121	803	122

Source: Skill Development Mission Office, Kaushambi (Uttar Pradesh) India