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**THE PROSPECTS OF GOVERNMENT SPONSORED SKILL  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN ENHANCING LIVELIHOOD AMONG  
TRIBAL WOMEN: SOME OBSERVATIONS**

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**Abstract:** *Skills development is a key for stimulating sustainable development process and can make a contribution for facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Skills development is also essential to address the opportunities and challenges so as to meet new demands of changing economies and new technologies in the context of globalization. Skills development for marginalized section makes inclusive progress of the society. The inclusive growth aims to ensure that high rates of economic growth translate into improved standards of living for all citizens; especially those belong to marginalized sections and those who face discrimination on basis of their gender. To achieve inclusive development, one has to understand the skills of individuals and encourage it. Through skills development, one can achieve empowerment. The skills development can provide employment opportunities which in turn provide economic independence. The employment opportunities can be in either public sector or private sector. Skills and knowledge are key drivers of macro-economic growth and socio-economic stability. This paper discusses the Skills development initiatives taken up by the government of India by examining its positive impact and further its importance in enhancing the livelihood options of tribal people with special reference to tribal women. The paper highlights the findings of several researchers who have asserted the need for skills development and entrepreneurial activities among tribal women.*

**Key word:** Skill development, traditional knowledge, productivity, tribal women

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**Skill Development:**

Palmer (2005) opines that skills development should not be characterized by the source of education or training itself, but by the capacities that are acquired through this process. It should enable individuals in all sectors of the economy to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods and to have the capacity to further enhance and adapt their skills to meet the changing demands and opportunities in the economy and labour market. The domain of skills development is linked with a wide range of modalities of delivery, organizational and institutional mechanisms, locus of responsibility, and diversity of objectives and clientele for skills development programmes. Thus, it is broader than skills related to economic production or earning a wage. It extends to organizational and management skills, especially in relation to self-employment; life skills that makes an effective and responsible worker who derives pride and satisfaction from work; and civic and family life skills that enhance an individual's performance as a worker and as a person.

**The Skill India Programme:**

Skill India Programme is an initiative of the Government of India which has been launched to empower the youth of the country with skill sets and thereby to make them more employable and more productive in their work environment. India is a country today with 65% of its youth in the working age group. If ever there is a way to reap this demographic advantage, it has to be through skills development of the youth, so that they add not only to their personal growth, but to the country's economic growth as well.

Skill India offers courses across 40 sectors in the country, which are aligned to the standards recognised by both, the industry and the government under the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). The courses help a person focus on practical delivery of work and help him/her enhance his/her technical expertise so that he / she is ready for day one of his/her job and companies don't have to invest into training him/her for his/her job profile.

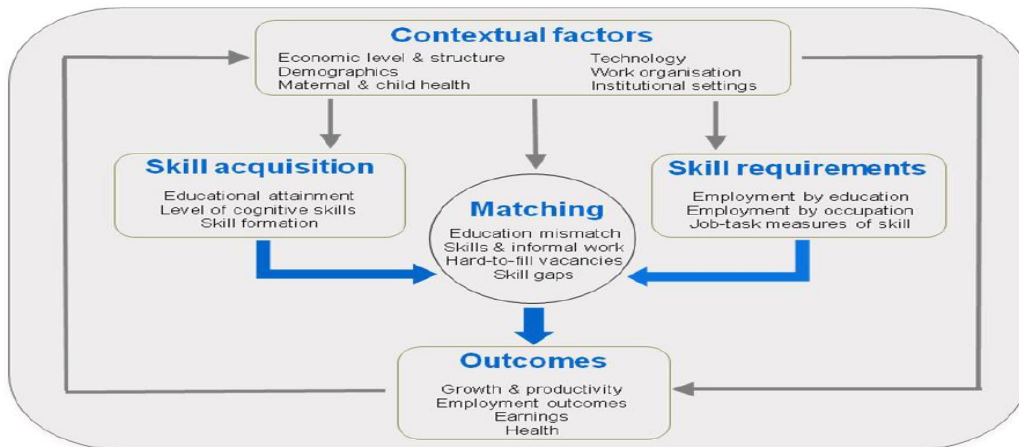
The core concept of skills development of the India's National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) is that, planned development of skills must be underpinned by a policy, which is both comprehensive as well as national in character (NSDP, 2009). The National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) was notified by the Government of India through a gazette notification dated 6th June, 2013. NSDA is an autonomous body of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, which coordinates and harmonizes the skill development efforts of the Government and the private sector to achieve the skilling targets of the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan and beyond and endeavour to bridge the social, regional, gender and economic divide, by ensuring that the skilling needs of the disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In doing so, persons from social categories like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and differently-able persons are taken care off through the various skill development programmes and also by taking affirmative action, as a part of advocacy by the NSDA. The Central Ministries and NSDC will continue to implement schemes in their remit. The NSDA is anchoring the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and facilitate in the setting up of professional certifying bodies, in addition to the existing ones. The NSDA discharges the following functions:

- It will take all the possible steps required to meet skilling targets as envisaged in the 12th Five Year Plan and beyond too. It will effectively coordinate and harmonize the right approaches to skill development among various Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments, the NSDC and the private sector. To meet the specific sector requirements, it will ensure to anchor and properly operationalize the NSQF. Taking the mantle of being the nodal agency for State Skill Development Missions. Enlisting international agencies, including multi-lateral agencies, and the companies from the private sector to raise extra-budgetary resources for skill development. Evaluate existing skill development schemes, with a view to assessing their efficacy and suggest corrective actions to make them more effective.
- To handle the creation and maintenance of a national data base which will hold information related to skills development, including development of a dynamic Labour Market Information System (LMIS).
- To take affirmative action on advocacy, protecting people and ensuring their voices are heard.
- Ensuring that the skilling needs of the disadvantaged and the marginalized groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, women and differently-able persons are taken care.
- Discharge any other functions as may be assigned to it by the Government of India.

**Conceptual Framework used in skill development programme:**

The conceptual framework (Fig: 1) shows the contextual factors and outcomes in a cyclic manner. The contextual factors are: economic, demographic, and maternal and child health, technology, work organization and institutional settings. These contextual factors have two intermediate factors called viz. skill acquisition and skill requirements. In the middle, matching of these two occupies. From this pathway outcome, in the form of growth and productivity, employment outcomes, earnings and health occur. Therefore, this model comprehensively explains the importance of socio-economic, demographic, health and educational factor in skill acquisition and skill requirements. **Source:** OECD 2013: "Indicators of Skills for Employment and Productivity: A Conceptual Framework and Approach for Low-Income Countries"

**Figure 1. Conceptual framework for indicators of skills**



**Source:** <http://www.oecd.org/g20/topics/development/indicators-of-skills-employment-and-productivity.pdf>

**The conceptual framework used for livelihood mission has been portrayed as follows:**

The conceptual framework (Fig 2) explains the livelihood services and its relation to various sectors. An institutional platform of poor is the core area in the framework. It is supported by sectors like, dedicated support institutions, human and social capitals. Overall the livelihoods of a person depend on various factors, including women empowerment status.

**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Livelihoods**



Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Govt of India.

**Studies on Impact of Skill Development:**

The objective of the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, (2015) is to meet the challenge of skilling at scale with speed and standard (quality). The national policy also provides clarity and coherence on how skill development efforts across the country can be aligned within the existing institutional arrangements. This policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity

In this very initiative, the Government of India has set a target of skilling 500 million people

by 2022. To be able to deliver this target, a structured approach involving all stakeholders is imperative. To this end, the Ministry of Labour & Employment has formulated a National Policy on Skill Development in 2009. The aim is to empower all individuals through improved skills, knowledge, nationally and internationally recognized qualifications and to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the global market.

Studies conducted on skill development and its impact on societies has revealed the positive instances of such initiatives. For instance, the study conducted by OECD (2013) reveals that skills are a key determinant of prosperity and well-being. Hence, policies on skill development need to be made with the best information available, particularly in Low Income Countries (LICs), where resources for investment in skills are severely constrained and can ill afford to be wasted. Further, Srinivasan (2013), in his study demonstrates how skills development has emerged as a national priority and a number of skill-training initiatives have been undertaken over the last four years. The author also highlights the fact that the role of international players in the Indian skills domain makes significant impact on development. Kanchan and Varshney (2015) showed skill development and various challenges involved while its implementation in India. The importance and need for skill development has been realized both in government and private sectors (FICCI, 2012). Rao and Gadela (2012) showed the need for the anti-poverty and employment generation programmes intended for the eradication of poverty in the villages in the interior areas. In this context, both governmental and nongovernmental institutional agencies have to make concentrated efforts and to implement comprehensive strategy with an optimum mix of both area and target group approaches to eradicate poverty, particularly in the villages in the interior areas.

#### **Tribes, Livelihood and requirement of skill development:**

As per 2011 census, population of tribes are 8.6% in India, among that 89.97% live in the rural areas and the rest (10.03%) are in the urban areas. Sex ratio of tribes is 990 as per census of 2011. As per sex ratio, tribal women are better in their community and therefore, the upliftment is necessary. After assessing their talent and skills, along with their interests, concerned authorities have to make efforts to provide relevant training and livelihood opportunities to them.

The development of tribal population has been a priority for the government of India, being a welfare state. Besides its welfare schemes, the government of India has been also keen on developing the entrepreneurial zeal among the tribal people in the country. Importantly, there has been an inherent issue very often encountered by the development agencies while promoting livelihood enhancement schemes and entrepreneurial activities. The issues are has been as follows:

Studies basically portray tribal people as relatively shy, lack of entrepreneurial zeal, resistant to change, lack of enthusiasm for investment aiming at profit making etc. Further, these studies also unambiguously illustrated how coercive, unplanned and imposed development initiatives have made the tribal people devoid of their traditional resources, unskilled labourers and a group of people having no bargain power. There have been ample examples also where, in the name of national development, the tribal people have been uprooted from their traditional habitat as well as alienated them from their traditional resource bases. All such situations indicate that being tribes and living in rural domain have double effect on the life of the tribal people and thus there is a need to study these societies to make livelihood development meaningful and sustainable parallel to preserving the tribal ethos. It also indicates that skill development and livelihood among the tribes must be initiated in such a way that the very basic core of tribal ethos does not get affected due to such directed and induced changes.

Speaking about the lack of and requirement to all round development among the tribal societies Anthropologists and other social scientists have opined over a period of time. Some of them

see the negative impact of unplanned and lack of socio-cultural audited development initiatives taken among tribes in India. One section of the intellectuals' opinion labels it as a negative phenomenon, causing contrast and damaging to tribal cultural heritage and creating an identity crisis. This phenomenon has been observed even during seventies and eighties by Srivastava (1971), Sachchidananda (1969), Sharma (1974), Vidyarthi (1969), Dasgupta (1982) and many more. There have been suggestions from social scientists that while initiating tribal development; one must take care of tribal ethos, their culture, environment and their psycho-social bearing and local techno-culture etc to make change process meaningful and sustainable. Social scientists like Dube (1968), Devi's (1988), Roy Burman (1988) and many more have unambiguously stated such necessities and issues long back.

Nevertheless, over a period of time, there has been categorical change in tribal societies and they have been accepting and becoming adept with the change process. Such changes can be illustrated by the findings of Sindhi (2012) who shows the cases of tribal women who are successful in empowering themselves by making use of education and training. His study reviews vocational and skill based training among the women of several tribal villages in Gujarat. Mehrota et al. (2013) explains that the challenge of skill development is vast on both quantitative and qualitative manner and it needs appropriate policy. Mehrota et al. (2014) shows that Non-agricultural employment sector should be strengthened for future employment in India. Oraon (2012) showed the livelihood changes in tribal community of Odisha.

Emphasizing the importance of gender components in development of livelihood among tribes various scholars have put forward their opinion on the basis of their studies among tribal populations across the country. It has been asserted that in view of the gap that exists in understanding the issues related to state of development among the tribal women, it is an important growing area of research which requires priority attention. Padal et al. (2013) have tried to show how it is important to link and promote the traditional Knowledge to livelihood enhancement programme along with the enhancement of skills among the Konda Dora Tribes of Visakhapatnam. The authors have inferred that these tribal people have ethno-botanical knowledge but the modernization has occupied its place. Thus, by providing modern technical know-how, people's traditional knowledge can be developed in to meaningful livelihood options. This idea gets proved when Prakasam et al. (2010) developed remote sensing Geographic Information System (GIS) for the development of tribal people in Visakhapatnam district.

The report of the Planning commission, Government of India, back in 2003 asserts that the tribal women have different kinds of jobs and responsibilities. Substantive contribution of tribal women to their economy was highlighted in the report. Recently, Tankha (2014) explained about the engendering rural livelihoods and emphasised for supporting gender responsive implementation of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). Boro (2017) studied rural women under the NRLM and its contribution to their socio-economic development, with special reference to Goreswar development block Baksa district. The Scheduled Tribe Development of the Government of Kerala, under the program Called "One family One Job" provides training and placements for tribal Youth of the state (The Hindu 20 April 2019). Marchang (2019) explained the various economic, occupational and livelihood changes of Scheduled Tribes of North-East India. This paper discusses about the employment in non-agriculture sector, which has improved largely by development, particularly education. It portrays the convergence of the livelihood system from agriculture to non-agriculture sector.

In the same lines of inquiry, one can examine the activities under the "Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission". It is a new name given to the erstwhile Aajeevika-

NRLM in 2015. This scheme is an improved version of the earlier Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana. The NRLM programme mission is to reduce poverty by enabling the poor households to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities resulting in an appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis through strong grassroots institutions (Ministry of Rural Development).

While evaluating such government sponsored schemes, scholars like Sandhya Rani (2010) finds that the different tribal groups practice their indigenous skills to bring out various products. She explained in her study related to tribal women in Jharkhand about their skills in making mats as leisure time activity. The findings of the study show that the community has never considered for the marketing of such products either through co-operatives or Self-Help Groups. The scholar feels that this has happened due to lack of skill enhancement and the lack enthusiasm and awareness about entrepreneurial activities among the tribal people. She opines that this type of skills can be encouraged through a well developed training and also by establishing a market networking for further growth. For her, it would help enhance tribal women's livelihoods and also income generation to enhance their family economic status. In the same manner, tribal communities belong to Ladakh region have their own skills in food items preservations, etc. These types of skills are mostly related to women. In this region also there is lack of encouragement for this work and it is limited to household level only (Sandhya Rani 2014).

### Conclusion:

It has been evident from the discussion made above that the skills development initiatives taken up by the government agencies have shown positive impact among the people. The skill development and livelihood schemes target for the betterment of underprivileged sections of the society. Tribal communities have been experiencing the pressure of increasing and diverse needs due to their changing socio-economic and geo-physical domain. Their self-sufficient traditional domains have been unable to provide them the goods and services they need in this changing situation. Their traditional resources as well as traditional skills are unable to equip them with the capability to enhance their livelihood as per their requirement. Thus, the tribal people, especially the tribal women are in need of enhanced and advanced skills to increase and to innovate their productivity. It is hoped that the skill development programmes targeting specially youth bring such change for their development successfully.

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