

EMPOWERING THE DIGITAL GENERATION: THE SYNERGY OF FEMALE TEACHERS' SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

Teachers must swiftly adapt to this novel environment if they are to succeed in the rapidly evolving educational environment brought about by the technological era. The digital generation is being supported by female teachers who are equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the twenty-first century. However, this position comes with a variety of risks and challenges, and the success of this trip greatly depends on how effectively their skills complement one another. The mutually reinforcing link between individual abilities and professional progress is obvious in the educational setting, where teachers not only impart knowledge but also act as role models for pupils on the benefits of lifelong learning and flexibility in the digital world. In the digital era, female teachers may become more than just technically skilled professionals. As they incorporate new instructional technologies, these teachers are always looking for methods to enhance their procedures. They work together, attend conferences, and pursue higher degrees. In this dynamic context, academic progress is being fueled by the skills and professional growth of female teachers. Their desire to develop as teachers and stay current with technology not only benefits their students but also positions them as experts in the field of education. By empowering ourselves as well as our students, female teachers are setting an example for the current generation of users of digital technology. Future generations' access to education will be impacted indefinitely by this development and ingenuity. The current study is based on experiences of contemporary women that effectively guided their professional development and skill development during the 21st century.

Keywords

Skills Development, Professional Development, and Female Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, education has a greater responsibility in empowering women. According to Lehman (1992), there were societal, political, and economic barriers throughout the eighteenth century that prevented women from pursuing employment in accounting. Over time, there have been changes in how teachers learn and advance their careers. Education is the most powerful strategy for improving women's status in society. Unfortunately, the majority of women in our nation are uneducated, underdeveloped, frail, and exploited. Education is essential for women as they face discrimination in several areas. It is considered a crucial step towards women's advancement, as it empowers them to overcome obstacles, challenge their established roles, and transform their lives. The development of one's abilities and professional growth must go hand in hand. The educational system of India plays a significant role in shaping the country's future, and educators, teachers, and professors are leading this revolution. Female teachers have a critical role to play in this noble profession as they are comparatively accepted and respected, especially in India. The quality of education depends heavily on the teacher's proficiency. It entails educational

innovation, digital competence, and a commitment to supporting students' growth in problem-solving, analytical, and creative thinking abilities.

It is crucial to have highly skilled teachers who are up-to-date with the latest advancements in technology, abilities, and expertise to educate students in the 21st century. By learning new skills, teachers can provide better support both at home and at work. Skill development not only creates job opportunities but also contributes to professional growth. In the case of women, learning new skills can help increase productivity by improving the quality of their work. Empowering women through education is a critical issue, especially in countries like India, where women's empowerment has been a hot topic.

According to Ahmed (2016) and Ali et al. (2020), skill development is a well-established process that aims to impart knowledge, expertise, and guidance to enhance the recipient's ability, efficiency, and output or to help them achieve a required level of proficiency.

Additionally, professional development for teachers refers to the process by which teachers acquire and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills. It plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning and achievement. However, several structural issues such as limited resources, time constraints, lack of outside assistance, and excessive responsibilities, among others, can hinder effective professional development. According to Rao and Namamba (2017) and URT (2017), both formal and informal educational experiences that enhance teachers' professional knowledge and skills are vital for their growth and development. According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) pg.2 professional growth as organized professional learning that positively influences teachers' knowledge and practices, ultimately leading to improved student learning experiences. Along with Skill development is essential for a region to utilize its human resources to the fullest. By providing technical or vocational education to current or future workers, they can acquire desirable abilities that meet the demands of the job market. However, it is crucial to ensure that women are given equal opportunities to participate in such programs. A supportive environment must be provided to guarantee their participation in ongoing development initiatives.

Continuing professional development is vital for teachers to improve their skills and enhance their students' learning experience. Women teachers, in particular, must be motivated to keep sharpening their professional talents, both inside and outside the classroom. In this continuation, The National Education Policy 2020 aims 'to promote teacher's academic and career development by providing them with ongoing opportunities for professional growth. This will include exposure to innovations and advancements related to their line of work through various modes such as online courses, workshops, and seminars. The policy also encourages every teacher to engage in at least 50 hours of CPD annually to cultivate a comprehensive temperament'.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Compared to previous eras, women's roles have significantly transformed in the 21st century. They are now taking on diverse responsibilities across different aspects of life. In recent times, women have achieved notable positions and accomplishments. Thanks to significant educational advances, women now pursue higher education at equal or higher rates than men. Women are increasingly participating in fields such as science, engineering, technology, and mathematics. They are also taking up key positions in various industries, academia, politics, and non-profit organizations. The number of women-owned businesses is also growing, leading to increased creativity and employment opportunities. Despite all these achievements, women still play essential roles as caregivers in their families. They balance their professional and personal lives with their responsibilities as mothers, caregivers, and homemakers. Women are also leading organizations in politics and society that advocate for issues such as racial justice, individual rights, climate change, and equal rights for women, also they are making significant contributions to literature, music, cinema, and other creative industries, driving change at local, national, and global levels. Women

empowerment is the process of allowing women to exercise their rights and make decisions in social, economic, and political domains. It aims to create an equal playing field where women are given the opportunity, resources, and support required to participate equally in society. The benefits of women's empowerment extend beyond social fairness and human rights to wider societal advancement. Empowered women can positively influence their households, communities, and countries, resulting in more significant social and economic growth. To achieve this, we must work continuously to make sure women can realize their full potential and exercise their capacities. It requires collective efforts from people, communities, administrations, and organizations.

Women have played a significant role in education across cultures and periods. In India, teaching has been considered an eminent occupation since ancient times, and women have contributed immensely to this field. Women have worked as instructors and facilitators in elementary and higher education, passing on their knowledge and experience to their students. As mothers, women have also taken on a maternal role in schools, nurturing the youngest learners in secure and supportive environments.

Women who work as teachers prioritize their own professional growth by attending conferences, pursuing graduate degrees, and keeping up with educational best practices. Their contribution to education has had a significant impact on society and communities. 'Empowerment of teachers is an interpersonal procedure that provides individuals with control over their own behavior. It also gives them the confidence to handle problems and complete tasks effectively'. 'An individual who feels empowered has the ability and capacity to act effectively and manage problems. In this study, teacher empowerment refers to their ability to take responsibility for their personal and professional growth and their capacity to tackle their challenges', Hackman., et. al., (2013)pg.2.

DIGITAL GENERATION

The phrase "Digital Generation" describes a group of people who were raised at a time when digital technology was widely used and integrated into many facets of life, especially during their formative years. The ease and familiarity this generation has with digital gadgets, the internet, and digital communication tools are frequently attributed to them. As a result of their early exposure to digital technology, members of the Digital Generation are regarded as digital natives. Compared to earlier generations, adolescents are frequently more skilled at utilizing digital gadgets and understanding online environments. There is no unified date range for the current generation, despite the fact that it has been frequently employed to refer to people who were born in the present. Furthermore, demographic divisions might cross upside down and not everyone in the same age range will be equally proficient when it comes to or experienced with computer technology.

Technology-Driven: The generation that follows has been greatly influenced by technology in many facets of its existence, especially employment, interaction, enjoyment, and learning. They are used to using technology to find answers to questions, get information, and interact with people.

Internet-savvy: The Digital Generation is renowned for its internet-based research and evaluation capacity. They frequently possess strong skills in the use of search engines as well as social media for social engagement, conversations, and investigation.

Comfort with Multiple Devices & Social Media Use: The younger generation is at ease utilizing a range of digital devices, such as mobile phones, computers, tablets, and connected watches. They are also at ease using social media. They move between these gadgets with ease to carry out various duties. The lifestyles of the Digital Generation are significantly influenced by social media. People interact with online groups, connect with other individuals, and contribute their experiences via platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and other people.

IMPORTANCE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR FEMALE TEACHERS

Regarding female teachers to succeed in their duties and deliver excellent instruction in today's changing educational environment, developing abilities is vital. The following are the main skill areas that are crucial for the professional growth of female teachers. Knowledge of technology and e-learning resources is essential in the digital era. For this, effective teaching and engaging learners, female teachers must feel comfortable using computers, educational software, and internet resources. They should be able to build strong relationships with their students and communicate complex topics effectively. Compassion, attentive listening, and good pronunciation are desirable traits for teachers to possess. Teachers must continuously strive to improve their instructional tactics, classroom management, and teaching techniques. It is crucial to keep learning about efficient teaching methods, curriculum development, and examination procedures. In order for educational programs to be successful, teachers must be able to adapt their methods to meet the different needs of their pupils, including those with various learning styles and aptitudes. An effective classroom management technique creates a positive and respectful environment for learning. Female teachers should be proficient in managing student behavior and resolving conflicts when they arise. It is important to teach students how to think strategically and solve problems independently. Female educators should encourage imagination, curiosity, and critical thinking. Collaborative skills are required to engage with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders to improve student outcomes and promote a nurturing educational environment.

Being able to identify, control, and manage your emotions and those of your students can lead to better communication and effective conflict resolution.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE TEACHERS

As the needs of students and the educational landscape continue to evolve, it is essential for teachers to engage in constant learning, skill improvement, and personal growth. This is especially important for female teachers who wish to advance in their careers and develop professionally. Therefore, professional development is a crucial aspect of their growth and progress. Female teachers have the potential to enhance their classroom practices and improve student learning outcomes through the use of effective teaching approaches, instructional strategies, and curriculum development. In order to create inclusive and equitable classrooms and effectively educate diverse student groups, including those with disabilities and from different cultural backgrounds, adequate training is crucial. Female educators considering a career in education may benefit greatly from training that covers these areas.

The autonomy of women is crucial in economic, social, educational, political, and legal spheres for the development of society. Women are capable of managing if they are given equal opportunities, fair treatment, respect, and decency. It only takes a concentrated effort to free women from all forms of wickedness. As India transitions more and more towards an 'expertise economy', it is essential to focus on skill development that is relevant to the present economic climate. The population expansion dividend can be controlled effectively through an efficient skill development system. Research suggests that Women's self-esteem plays a significant role in the development of their abilities and jobs, where culture places a high value on education, female teachers can make a significant difference, so, effective professional development depends on female teachers' leadership and ensuring teacher-driven, and especially and most importantly self-driven processes in their skill advancement. In India, Rural and urban women's advancements can be categorized into two groups, both of which have weak social and cultural backgrounds in general. It is unfortunate that the advancement of women in the fields of finance, accounting, and other professions still faces discrimination. However, many remarkable women have made significant contributions to their lives and accomplished amazing feats by working alone. They provide motivation and inspiration for modern women. Women have the ability to perform tasks that males can do. Therefore,

opportunities must be provided to close the gap, although society is gradually moving. In the digital age, female teachers in the educational sector must give their best effort.

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