

# **Sustainable livelihood for women through vocational and handicraft education**

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## **Abstract**

*Promoting sustainable livelihoods for women through vocational and handicraft education is a valuable and empowering approach. By equipping women with practical skills and knowledge, they can enhance their economic prospects, contribute to their communities, and achieve greater financial independence. Women's empowerment and gender equality to reduce poverty is not a new phenomenon, but has become one of the most important issues nowadays as it gained international attention by feminist organizations for the past decades as a way of getting women's rights into international agenda development and ongoing debate on the existing paradigms. Modernization and civilization societies such as United State of America, and many European cultures are better places for women to get access to education or training that will enable them to be financial independent and decision-making participation that leads to sustainable development. This review discussed the training of women in vocational skills contributes to sustainable development. It is against these backdrops that this study is being conducted to examine the role of vocational skills training in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality to reduce poverty.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Concept of empowerment has a long history in social changes work to empower women. It does not necessarily mean academically knowledge but to impact them with vocational skills is one of the major backbones of a country's economic development, and it plays a major role in bridging the huge gender equality gap between men and women[1]. Poverty is a major problem for women and girls in Ghana especially for rural women. Female headed households are more than male-headed households, and performing better in poverty ratings as compared with males[2]. This notwithstanding, the incidence of poverty is much more among females than males. Here are some key points to consider when implementing such initiatives. There are also barriers of empowerment such as lack of information and experience, non available resources, lack of access to loans and awareness of social or legal structures available for women. Over the past three decades there has been widespread formation and organization of women movements across cultures dedicated to the fight against growing incidence of poverty, gender inequalities and other political, social and economic constraints faced by women[3]. These movements are constantly searching and probing for new ideas, models and systems desirable in their pursuit of addressing poverty conditions [4]. The findings of the study will benefit such women groups and movements. The study's finding on women empowerment can be explored by the movements. Education is a continuous phenomenon, and this notion is true because academic faculties and researchers are perpetually in search of new ideas, concepts and solutions to challenges facing humanity across the globe[5]. The findings of the study will ignite academic faculties and researchers, (particularly those preoccupied with women related issues and phenomena), to study critical areas uncovered by the study. Thus, new areas of study may be arrived at. Methodologically, this paper will rely solely on a qualitative approach and some interviews with women who have benefited from women's empowerment[6]. Here are some key points to consider when implementing such initiatives.

## **Vocational Education**

Identify the vocational skills that are in demand in the local or regional job market. This could include areas like tailoring, embroidery, pottery, jewelry making, basket weaving, or other crafts. Collaborate with vocational training institutes, NGOs, or community organizations that offer vocational education programs. Develop partnerships to design and deliver training programs tailored to the needs and aspirations of women. Ensure the vocational training programs cover not only technical skills but also entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and marketing strategies[7]. This will equip women with the knowledge and tools to start and manage

their own small businesses. Provide mentorship and support services to women during and after their training, such as guidance on business planning, access to microfinance, and networking opportunities.

### **Handicraft Education**

Preserve and promote traditional crafts by providing training and education in handicraft techniques. This can help women acquire specialized skills and enable them to produce high-quality, culturally significant handicrafts. Incorporate sustainable practices into the training, such as using eco-friendly materials, promoting waste reduction, and encouraging ethical sourcing of raw materials[8]. Facilitate market linkages for the products created by women, both domestically and internationally. This can be done through exhibitions, fairs, online platforms, or collaborations with retailers and export agencies. Explore opportunities for product diversification and innovation, encouraging women to blend traditional techniques with contemporary designs to cater to evolving market preferences[9].

### **Access to Resources**

Ensure women have access to affordable and reliable raw materials, tools, and equipment necessary for their crafts. This may involve establishing cooperative networks, bulk purchasing arrangements, or negotiating fair trade agreements. Promote sustainable supply chains by encouraging the use of locally sourced and organic materials, reducing environmental impact, and supporting fair trade principles[10]. Provide access to finance and microcredit facilities, enabling women to invest in their businesses, purchase equipment, and manage working capital effectively. Foster supportive social environments by organizing self-help groups, cooperatives, or networks where women can share knowledge, exchange experiences, and collectively address challenges.

### **Market Linkages and Marketing**

Assist women in developing branding, packaging, and marketing strategies to enhance the visibility and marketability of their products. Leverage e-commerce platforms and social media to showcase and sell women's handicraft products to a wider audience. Forge partnerships with local and international retailers, fair trade organizations, and export agencies to create sustainable market linkages and increase sales opportunities. Collaborate with tourism authorities to incorporate women's crafts into cultural tourism initiatives, such as organizing craft tours, workshops, or experiential activities[11].

### **Policy and Advocacy**

Advocate for policies and regulations that support women's vocational and handicraft initiatives, such as providing incentives, subsidies, or tax breaks for women-owned enterprises or craft-based businesses. Encourage gender-responsive and inclusive training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women, such as providing childcare facilities or flexible training schedules. Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment through vocational and handicraft education[12]. By focusing on vocational and handicraft education, women can develop sustainable livelihoods, preserve cultural heritage, and contribute to the economic and social development of their communities[13].

### **Women's empowerment**

women empowerment as a concept is defined as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. Further, Kabeer (2005) suggested that the concept of empowerment can be achieved through three interrelated fields which are: Agency, Resources and Achievement. Agency represents the processes by which choices are made and put into use; Resources are medium by which agency is exercised and Achievement is the outcome of the agency[14]. Women's empowerment can also be seen as an important process in reaching gender equality, which is understood to mean that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will depend on whether they are born male or female. The first is structural Intersectionality which occurs when social structures create and organize different social groups such as gender, race, class, sexism and interact to produce effects that may not be intended. Structural Intersectionality is when the location of black women at the intersection of race and gender makes their actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reforms qualitatively different than that of white women. The second dimension is political Intersectionality[15]. According to Kemberle Crenshaw, it refers to the conflicting systems which separate women of color and women into two subordinate groups. It denotes the failure of the political system to address the peculiar needs of women of color due to exclusion of the intersection of race and gender that places priority on the interest of people with color and women. Kemberle Crenshaw argues that women of color suffer double agony of racial and gender biases, as compared to white women and men of color who suffer only gender bias and racial bias respectfully[16].

## NGOs and sustainable development

Sustainable development consists of three main core pillars which are economic development, social development and environmental protection. These 17 common drivers goals and its targets are used to identify the challenges facing developmental goals. Sustainable Development Goals number 5 seeks to address gender equality and women's empowerment to ensure equal access opportunities for women in political, environmental, economic and social life also this decision- making inclusion equality for women is integral to attaining all the sustainable goals[17].

## Resources

Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised. They are distributed through the various institutions and relationships in a society. In institutions, certain actors have a privileged position over others concerning how rules, norms, and conventions are interpreted, as well as how they are put into effect. Heads of households, chiefs of tribes, directors of firms, managers of organizations, and elites within a community all have decision-making authority in particular institutions by virtue of their position[18-20]. The way in which resources are distributed thus depends on the ability to define priorities and enforce claims. Equally importantly, it defines the terms on which resources are made available. If a woman's primary form of access to resources is as a dependent member of the family, her capacity to make strategic choices is likely to be limited[21].

## II. Conclusion

This study was purposely undertaken to examine the role of vocational skills in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality to reduce poverty for sustainable development in Ghana. In this respect of comprehensive review of the related literature was carried out to gain clearer understanding of existed body of knowledge of the subject matter[22-24]. In addition data was collected from selected interviewees from four communities in the district for the purpose of critical analysis and in conformity with the stated research methodology for the study[25]. The study found that women's empowerment directly contributes to gender equality culminating in reduction of poverty conditions faced women with vocation in the district. Additionally, the study found that vocational skills training is a crucial tool for women's empowerment and gender equality, and also contributes to poverty reduction among women with vocation in the district[26-29]. They have access to the right to decision making in their families, and economic freedom and independence which make them capable of providing personal needs for themselves and other family members. This affirms that vocational skills training has helped to achieve sustainable development goal five which primarily focuses on achievement of women empowerment and gender equality.

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