

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF MAKE IN INDIA AND SKILL INDIA INITIATIVES ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Women's participation in industrial development is essential for inclusive economic growth. In India, despite rapid industrialization, female labor force participation remains comparatively low, particularly in the manufacturing sector. This research paper evaluates the impact of major government initiatives—Make in India and Skill India—on enhancing women's industrial participation. The study examines policy objectives, implementation outcomes, challenges, and gender-based disparities in industrial employment. The paper concludes that while these initiatives have expanded opportunities through skill development and industrial growth, targeted gender-responsive strategies are necessary to significantly increase women's representation in formal industrial sectors.

Keywords: Women's industrial participation, Make in India, Skill India, gender equality, manufacturing sector, economic growth.

1.1. Introduction

Industrial growth is a fundamental component of economic progress, contributing significantly to national income, job creation, and technological innovation. A strong industrial base enhances productivity, strengthens competitiveness, and supports long-term development. Despite women accounting for nearly half of India's total population, their representation in industrial employment remains considerably lower than that of men. This imbalance not only reflects persistent gender disparities but also constrains the country's ability to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic advancement.

To accelerate manufacturing expansion and create broader employment opportunities, the Government of India launched major initiatives such as Make in India in 2014 to promote

domestic production and attract foreign investment, followed by Skill India in 2015 to improve workforce capabilities through structured skill development and vocational training programs. In this context, the present study seeks to evaluate the extent to which these initiatives have contributed to increasing women's participation in industrial sectors across India and advancing gender inclusivity within the nation's industrial development framework.

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1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the policy framework of Make in India and Skill India.
- To analyze trends in women's participation in industrial sectors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting women's employment.
- To identify barriers and suggest policy improvements.

1.3. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research approach. This study is based on secondary data analysis. Data sources include:

- Government of India reports
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- Ministry of Labour & Employment
- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
- Published research articles and policy papers

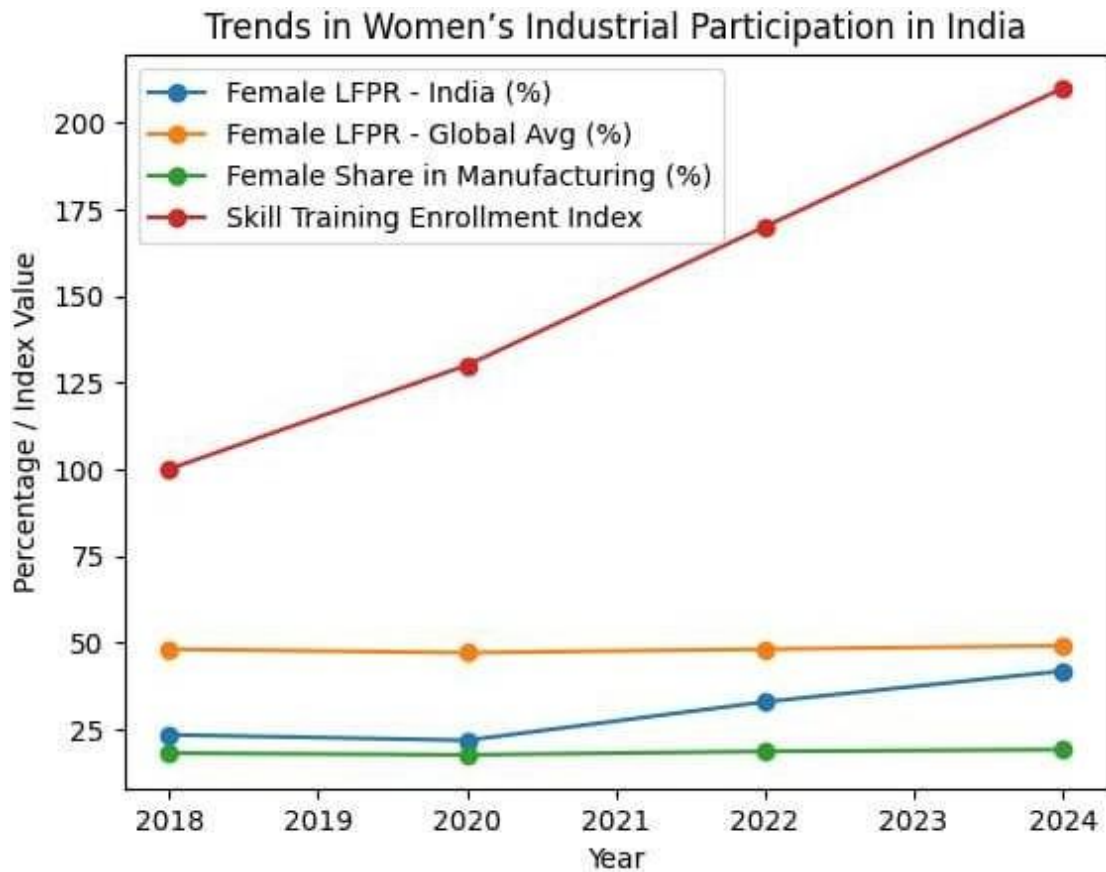
1.4. Overview of Government Policies

Make in India: Launched in 2014, Make in India was introduced with the objective of transforming India into a global manufacturing hub. The initiative aims to increase the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generate large-scale employment opportunities, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and foster industrial innovation. It identifies 25 priority sectors—including automobiles, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and defence manufacturing—to promote industrial expansion and competitiveness. Although the policy does not specifically target women, the growth and diversification of these industrial sectors have significant implications for enhancing female employment opportunities and promoting greater inclusion in the industrial workforce.

Skill India: Launched with the objective of enhancing workforce capabilities, Skill India seeks to equip millions of individuals with industry-relevant competencies to meet the evolving demands of the labor market. The mission aims to train over 400 million people through structured skill development initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and various Sector Skill Councils that design training programs aligned with specific industries. By promoting vocational education, skill certification, and placement assistance, Skill India plays a significant role in improving employability, particularly for women, by providing them with access to formal training and better employment opportunities across industrial sectors.

Trends in Women’s Industrial Participation in India

The following line graph illustrates the key trends in women’s industrial participation in India, highlighting changes in female labor force participation compared to global averages, women’s representation in manufacturing, and the growth in female enrolment in skill development programs over recent years.



- Women’s overall labor force participation rate in India remains lower than global averages.
- Female participation in manufacturing is significantly lower than in agriculture and services.
- Women are often concentrated in informal or low-paid industrial roles such as textiles and food processing.
- Participation in heavy industries and core manufacturing remains limited.

However, skill development initiatives have increased female enrolment in training programs, particularly in retail, healthcare, and small-scale industrial activities.

1.5. Impact of Make in India and Skill India on Women

- **Employment Opportunities**

The implementation of Make in India and Skill India has had a measurable influence on women’s engagement in the industrial sector. The expansion of manufacturing and allied industries has created new employment opportunities across various segments of the economy. In particular, sectors such as textiles, electronics assembly, and food processing have witnessed relatively higher participation of

women due to the nature of work and lower entry barriers. However, women's representation in large-scale, capital-intensive, and heavy industries continues to remain limited, reflecting persistent structural and skill-related challenges.

- **Skill Development**

In the area of skill development, the Skill India initiative has significantly broadened women's access to vocational education and industry-oriented training programs. Through structured certification and competency-based learning, women are better equipped to meet labor market requirements, thereby enhancing their employability and potential earning capacity. Additionally, the growing emphasis on digital and technology-based training has enabled women to explore opportunities in emerging industrial and service-linked sectors, contributing to their economic advancement.

- **Entrepreneurship Growth**

Furthermore, there has been a noticeable rise in women's participation in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Government-backed schemes and entrepreneurial support programs have encouraged women to establish and manage their own enterprises, particularly in small-scale and home-based industries. Despite this progress, women entrepreneurs continue to face constraints such as limited access to finance, restricted market linkages, and inadequate business networks. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensuring sustained and meaningful growth in women's industrial participation.

1.6. Challenges Limiting Women's Industrial Participation

- **Social norms and mobility restrictions:** Traditional gender roles and societal expectations often limit women's freedom to work in industrial settings, especially in physically demanding or male-dominated sectors.
- **Lack of access to technical and advanced industrial training:** Women frequently have fewer opportunities to acquire technical education and specialized industrial skills, which restricts their entry into high-skill and high-paying jobs.
- **Workplace safety concerns:** Inadequate safety measures, lack of secure transportation, and absence of supportive facilities discourage women from joining or continuing in industrial employment.
- **Gender wage gap:** Persistent wage disparities between men and women reduce financial incentives and reflect structural inequality within the industrial workforce.
- **Underrepresentation in Leadership Roles:** Women remain significantly underrepresented in managerial and decision-making positions, limiting their influence and career advancement within industrial organizations.

1.7. Findings of the Study

- Make in India has indirectly created industrial employment opportunities, but gender inclusion remains limited.
- Skill India has positively contributed to women's skill enhancement.
- Despite policy efforts, structural and socio-cultural barriers continue to restrict women's industrial participation.
- Targeted gender-responsive policies are required for meaningful inclusion.

1.8. Recommendations

- Introduce gender-specific employment targets within industrial policies.
- Promote women's participation in STEM and technical education.
- Provide safe transportation and childcare facilities in industrial zones.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to hire and train women.
- Strengthen financial support for women-led industrial enterprises.

1.9. Conclusion

Make in India and Skill India have significantly contributed to industrial development and skill enhancement in India. However, their impact on women's industrial participation remains moderate rather than transformative. For sustainable and inclusive industrial growth, gender mainstreaming must be integrated into policy design, implementation, and monitoring. Enhancing women's industrial participation will not only improve economic productivity but also promote social equity and national development.

1.10. References

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