

## **SKILLS ACQUISITION AND BASIC LITERACY AS TOOLS FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN ENUGU STATE**

*Mmuozoba Ifeoma*

Department of Adult and  
Continuing Education Faculty of  
Education, Enugu State University  
of Science and Technology

**Email:**

*ifeoma.mmuozoba@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

This paper focused on skills acquisition and basic literacy as tools for women and youth empowerment. The paper discussed women, youths, women empowerment. The study further expatiated on dimensions of women's empowerment, benefits and significance of women's empowerment, strategies for women's empowerment, skills acquisition, importance of skills acquisition for women, skills acquisition for youths, impact of basic literacy on women empowerment, 'barriers and challenges that hinder women and youths from acquiring skills and basic literacy, best practices, interventions, and policies that have successfully promoted skills acquisition and basic literacy among women and youths, conclusion was drawn and some recommendations were made.

**Keyword:** Skill acquisition, women and youth, Empowerment, basic literacy.

### **Introduction**

In societies across the globe, women's empowerment has become a critical objective for fostering social progress and sustainable development. Recognizing women's rights, providing equal opportunities, and enabling their active participation in various domains are essential for achieving gender equality. A key aspect of women's empowerment lies in equipping them, with the necessary skills and basic literacy, as these serve as vital tools for their economic, social, and political advancement.

Throughout history, women have faced systemic barriers and discrimination, impeding their access to education and hindering their ability to acquire essential skills. Gender-based disparities persist in many societies, where women often encounter limited educational opportunities, restricted access to vocational training, and a lack of resources to

enhance their skill sets. This skills gap, coupled with low levels of basic literacy, further exacerbates gender inequalities, perpetuating the cycle of women's disempowerment (Duflo, 2012).

Women empowerment is a critical global issue that aims to improve the social, economic, and political status of women in society. It involves providing women with equal opportunities, resources, and rights, enabling them to participate actively in all sphere of life. While progress has been made in many areas, there are still significant disparities between men and women in various parts of the world, particularly concerning education and literacy.

Acquiring skills and basic literacy is fundamental for women's empowerment. Education is a powerful tool that enables women to challenge traditional gender roles, break free from cycles of poverty, and

make informed decisions about their lives. It equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue their goals, engage in economic activities, and participate in decision-making processes.

However, women, especially in developing countries and marginalized communities, face numerous barriers to acquiring skills and basic literacy. These barriers include social norms and cultural practices that prioritize boys' education, limited access to quality education, lack of infrastructure and resources, early marriage, gender-based violence, and discriminatory policies and attitudes.

The impact of these barriers is far-reaching. Illiteracy and limited skills restrict women's economic opportunities, making them more vulnerable to exploitation, low-paying jobs, and economic dependence. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hampers their ability to provide for their families. Additionally, without basic literacy skills, women face challenges in accessing vital information, healthcare services, and participating in civic and political processes.

Addressing the issue of skills acquisition and basic literacy for women empowerment requires comprehensive strategies and interventions. It involves improving access to quality education, reducing gender-based discrimination and violence, promoting gender-sensitive curricula, providing vocational training, and creating supportive environments that encourage women's participation in learning.

Numerous organizations, governments, and grassroots movements have been working towards empowering women through skills acquisition and basic literacy. Efforts are being made to enhance girls' enrollment and retention in schools, promote adult literacy programs, offer vocational and technical training, and provide support systems to

ensure women can continue their education despite various challenges.

By investing in skills acquisition and basic literacy for women, societies can unlock the potential of half their population. Empowered women can contribute to economic growth, foster social development, and drive positive change in their communities. Moreover, they become better equipped to advocate for their rights, challenge gender inequalities, and participate in decision-making processes, leading to a more equitable and inclusive society.

The absence of skills acquisition and basic literacy among women poses significant challenges to their empowerment and overall well-being. Without the requisite knowledge and competencies, women are frequently confined to low-paying jobs, experience limited career advancement opportunities, and face diminished economic independence. Furthermore, their ability to actively engage in decision-making processes and advocate for their rights is compromised. Consequently, addressing this issue becomes imperative to create an inclusive and equitable society. –“o

The issue at hand is the limited skills acquisition and basic literacy among women, which acts as a significant barrier to their empowerment. Despite progress in women's rights and gender equality, numerous challenges hinder women from accessing quality education and acquiring essential skills, thereby perpetuating gender disparities and inhibiting their full participation in social, economics, and political spheres.

### **Women**

The concept of women refers to the understanding and perception of females in society, encompassing their roles, rights, experiences, and characteristics. Women, as a distinct gender category, have historically been subject to various social, cultural, and legal frameworks that have shaped their position and status in different societies.

The concept of women has evolved significantly over time. In many societies, women were traditionally assigned specific roles, such as caregivers, homemakers, and child bearers, while men were associated with roles related to work, leadership, and public life. However, gender roles and expectations have changed and continue to change, allowing women to pursue diverse paths and roles in society (Sydenham, 2009k-

The concept of women also includes the recognition of women's rights and the ongoing struggle for gender equality. Over the years, women have fought for their rights in various areas, including suffrage, education, employment, and reproductive rights. Achievements in these areas have led to significant advancements in women's empowerment and the recognition of their contributions to society (Sokefun, 2010)

It is important to note that the concept of women is not fixed or universal, as different cultures, societies, and historical contexts shape the understanding and treatment of women. The concept of women is inclusive of diverse identities, such as transgender women, non-binary individuals, and those who may not conform to traditional gender norms. Recognizing and respecting this diversity is crucial in fostering an inclusive and equitable society (Sumitra, 2017).

According to Oxford English Dictionary (2010) Women are individuals who identify as female or are assigned female at birth. The term "women" refers to the gender category that encompasses those who identify, live, or are socially recognized as females, typically based on biological and self-identified gender characteristics.

Nigeria, the National Population Census (NPC) (2006) stated that women formed 48.7% of the entire population in Nigeria. Many of these women are illiterates, poverty ridden, and disadvantaged socially, politically and culturally. Therefore, there is

need to improve their standard educationally because the implication of the above statement on the level of women illiteracy in Nigeria is that, they are bound to be backward compared to the men. Hence, if women must break these barriers, they need to be educated so that they can be able to exhibit power over economic, social, psychological effect, political and cultural situations to enable them have knowledge and capacity to transform the world. The knowledge gained by women if put into action will help in liberating people from shackles of poverty, hunger and other vices that hinders one's proper existence on earth (Yusuf 2013).

Women are known for their contributions in development in developing countries' economy, yet their vital contributions to society is overlooked, under estimated or ignored by economic planners and policy makers. Breaking the barriers means that they would need to be empowered educationally, economically, socially, psychologically and culturally. It is the only way they can possess the knowledge to transform the world to their advantage (Mandal, 2013). In line with this, successive governments in Nigeria have been showing commitment to provide functional education for women through establishment of various women education and vocational centres (Omoruyi and Orsanye, 2015) such as women education unit, in the Ministry of Education, but some of the units are not really effective to the Level of bringing women education to limelight in Nigeria. To move further in this study, there is need to research into women empowerment.

### **Overview of women empowerment**

Women empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their lives, access to resources, and the ability to make decisions that impact their well-being and that of their communities. It encompasses social, economic, and political dimensions, aiming to address gender

inequalities, promote gender justice, and ensure equal rights and opportunities for women United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) (2010). Women's empowerment is a critical concept that encompasses the social, economic, and political advancements of women, aiming to address gender inequalities and ensure equal rights and opportunities. This overview provides a comprehensive understanding of women's empowerment, exploring its definition, dimensions, and significance (Richa, 2014).

Women's empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their lives, access to resources, and the ability to make decisions that impact their well-being and that of their communities.

### **Dimensions of Women's Empowerment**

**Social Empowerment:** Social empowerment focuses on challenging social norms and gender roles, promoting gender equality, and ensuring women's participation and representation in decision-making processes. It involves addressing issues such as gender-based violence, discrimination, and harmful cultural practices that limit women's agency and autonomy.

**Social Empowerment** refers to the enabling force that strengthens women's social relations and their position in social structures. Social empowerment addresses the social discriminations existing in the society based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. The term empowerment is defined as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important. This is possible through adult literacy programmes (Olayinka, 2018).

**Economic empowerment** emphasizes women's access to economic resources, financial independence, and employment opportunities. It

involves providing equal access to education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programs to enhance women's economic capabilities and reduce gender disparities in income generation. Economic empowerment of women refers to the ability of women to have control over economic resources, access to opportunities, and the power to make economic decisions. It encompasses efforts to reduce gender-based economic inequalities and create an environment where women can fully participate in and benefit from economic activities. Economic empowerment involves promoting women's equal participation in the workforce, including access to decent work, fair wages, and opportunities for skill development and career advancement (Ibrahim, 2001).

**Financial Inclusion:** Economic empowerment includes improving women's access to financial services, such as banking, savings, credit, and insurance, to enhance their financial security and entrepreneurial activities.

**Gender-Responsive Economic Policies:** Economic empowerment involves developing and implementing gender-responsive economic policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women, such as promoting women's access to education, land ownership, and technology (Ibrahim, 2001).

**Political Empowerment:** Political empowerment aims to increase women's representation in political institutions and decision-making positions. It focuses on removing barriers that hinder women's political participation, such as discriminatory laws, lack of access to information and resources, and gender biases. Political empowerment ensures that women have a voice in shaping policies and laws that affect their lives (Paxton, Pamela and Melanie Hughes, 2007).

**Political empowerment** of women refers to the equal participation and representation of women in political decision-making processes, institutions, and

leadership roles. It involves creating an environment where women have the opportunity to contribute to policymaking, hold public office, and influence political agendas (Paxton, Pamela and Melanie Hughes, 2007)

### **Benefits and Significance of Women's Empowerment**

**Gender Equality:** Women's empowerment is crucial for achieving gender equality. It challenges the prevailing patriarchal structures and norms that perpetuate gender disparities and discrimination. By empowering women, societies can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive environment where all individuals have equal rights and opportunities.

**Socioeconomic Development:** Women's empowerment has a positive impact on socioeconomic development. When women are empowered, they contribute to economic growth through increased labor force participation, entrepreneurship, and income generation. Moreover, empowered women invest in the education and well-being of their families, leading to better health and education outcomes for future generations.

### **Strategies for Women's Empowerment**

**Education and Skill Development:** Access to quality education and skill development programs is a fundamental component of women's empowerment. By providing girls and women with educational opportunities, they acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to participate fully in society, make informed decisions, and pursue economic independence.

**Legal and Policy Reforms:** Legal and policy reforms play a vital role in promoting women's empowerment. By enacting and enforcing laws that protect women's rights, address gender-based violence, and ensure equal opportunities, governments can create an enabling environment for women to thrive. Policy interventions should also

focus on gender-responsive budgeting and targeted support for marginalized women.

Women's empowerment is a multifaceted concept that encompasses social, economic, and political dimensions. It is essential for achieving gender equality, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable development. By addressing the structural barriers and promoting inclusive policies and programmes societies can create a more equitable and just environment for women to thrive.

**Future Outlook:** The journey towards women's empowerment is ongoing, and concerted efforts are needed at individual, community, and institutional levels. Continued research, advocacy, and collaborations are crucial to identify effective strategies, monitor progress, and ensure the sustainability of women's empowerment initiatives. By empowering women, we can build a more prosperous, inclusive, and equitable world for all (Richa, 2014).

### **Importance of skills acquisition for women**

Skills acquisition is of great importance for women for several reasons:

**Economic Empowerment:** Skills acquisition equips women with the necessary knowledge and abilities to engage in income-generating activities. It enables women to secure better job opportunities, start their own businesses, and become financially independent. This economic empowerment enhances their economic status, reduces poverty, and contributes to overall household and community development.

**Increased Employment Opportunities:** Acquiring skills expands the range of employment opportunities available to women. It helps them overcome occupational segregation and enter fields traditionally dominated by men. By gaining specialized skills, women can pursue careers in sectors such as technology, engineering, finance, and



entrepreneurship, where they may have been underrepresented before,

**Closing the Gender Wage Gap:** The gender wage gap is a persistent issue in many societies. By acquiring valuable skills, women can demonstrate their competence and negotiate better wages and benefits. This can help to narrow the gender wage gap and ensure fair compensation for their work.

**Entrepreneurship and Business Ownership:** Skills acquisition fosters entrepreneurial spirit and enables women to establish and manage their own businesses. Entrepreneurship provides women with autonomy, flexibility, and the potential for financial success. It also creates employment opportunities for others and contributes to economic growth.

**Personal Development and Self-Confidence:** Skills acquisition enhances personal development and self-confidence among women. Learning new skills and mastering them boosts self-esteem, empowers women to take on challenges, and expands their horizons. It equips them with problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, and adaptability, which are valuable traits in various aspects of life.

**Leadership and Empowerment:** Acquiring skills equips women with the knowledge and expertise needed to assume leadership positions. By enhancing their leadership skills, women can actively participate in decision-making processes, contribute to policy development, and advocate for gender equality and women's rights. Skilled women can become role models and mentors, inspiring and empowering other women and girls.

### **Youths**

Youths typically refer to individuals in the age group between adolescence and adulthood. The exact age range may vary depending on cultural, legal, or institutional definitions, but it generally encompasses individuals in their late teens and twenties. The youth stage is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. It is a time when

individuals undergo physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes as they develop their identities and make decisions about their future. Many youths are engaged in education or vocational training to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for their personal growth and future careers. Access to quality education and skills development opportunities is crucial for their overall development: Youth unemployment is a significant challenge in many regions. Creating job opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship among youths is important for economic growth and social stability. It can also foster innovation and creativity. Young people have the potential to be active contributors to society. Their involvement in social, civic, and political activities helps shape their communities and can lead to positive changes in society. Youth engagement is crucial for sustainable development and democratic processes. Youth face various challenges, including limited access to resources, inequality, social exclusion, and vulnerability to poverty, violence, and health risks. However, they also possess unique perspectives, energy, and potential that can be harnessed for positive development. Empowering youth involves providing them with the necessary support, opportunities, and resources to enhance their capabilities, confidence, and participation in society. It includes promoting education, employment, entrepreneurship, health, civic engagement, and participation in decision-making processes. There are numerous youth-led organizations and movements that advocate for youth rights, amplify their voices, and address issues affecting their well-being. These organizations play a crucial role in mobilizing and empowering young people to make decisions, and actively participate in their communities. It aims to enable young people to reach their full potential and become agents of positive change in society. Access to quality education and skill development programs is

essential for empowering youth. It equips them with the knowledge and competencies needed for personal growth, employment, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship. Providing young people with access to decent work, job training, internships, and entrepreneurship support helps them secure economic independence, overcome poverty, and contribute to economic development. Encouraging young people to engage in civic activities, community service, and decision making processes empowers them to voice their opinions, contribute to social change, and shape policies that affect their lives.

Developing leadership skills and providing mentorship opportunities for youth helps build their self-confidence, resilience, and ability to take on leadership roles. Mentors can guide and support young people in their personal and professional development. Promoting youth health and well-being is crucial for empowerment. This includes access to quality healthcare, sexual and reproductive health education, mental health support, and addressing substance abuse and other risk factors. Ensuring young people have access to information, digital literacy, and technology helps bridge the digital divide and empowers them to connect, learn, and participate in the digital age. Providing platforms for young people to contribute to policy development, implementation, and evaluation enables their voices to be heard and their perspectives to be taken into account. Supporting youth-led organizations and networks allows young people to collaborate, share experiences, advocate for their rights, and amplify their collective voice.

Empowering youth is not only important for their individual development but also for building inclusive and sustainable societies. It fosters intergenerational dialogue, innovation, and social cohesion. Governments, civil society, educational institutions, and communities all have a role to play

in creating an enabling environment for youth empowerment (Chaudhary and Nepal 2016).

### **Skills acquisition**

Skills acquisition refers to the process of acquiring new knowledge, abilities, and competencies through training, education, and practical experience. It involves learning and developing specific skills that are relevant to a particular field or area of interest. Skills acquisition is essential for personal and professional growth, as it enables individuals to perform tasks effectively, adapt to changing circumstances, and meet the demands of their chosen endeavors. Skills acquisition often begins with formal or informal learning opportunities. It may involve enrolling in educational programs, attending workshops or seminars, participating in on-the-job training, or pursuing self-study through online resources and tutorials. Learning platforms and vocational institutions offer structured training programs to develop specific skills (Malhotra and Mather, 2016).

Skills acquisition goes beyond theoretical knowledge. It requires practical application and hands-on experience to develop proficiency. Engaging in real-world scenarios, projects, internships, or apprenticeships allows individuals to apply their knowledge, practice their skills, and gain practical insights into their chosen field (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, Koch-Schulte, 2000).

Skills acquisition encompasses both technical skills and soft skills. Technical skills are specific abilities related to a particular job or industry, such as coding, graphic design, project management, or mechanical expertise. Soft skills, on the other hand, are interpersonal and transferable skills that are valuable in any professional setting, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and critical thinking (Sethuramam and Lansdown, 1997).

Skills acquisition is an ongoing process. As technologies and industries evolve, individuals need to continuously update their skills and adapt to changing circumstances. Lifelong learning and a growth mindset are crucial for staying relevant and competitive in today's dynamic job market (Sydenham, 2009).

Acquiring new skills enhances career prospects and employability. Employers often seek candidates who possess relevant skills and can contribute immediately to their organizations. Having a diverse skill set opens up opportunities for career advancement, increased job satisfaction, and higher earning potential. Skills acquisition plays a vital role in entrepreneurship and innovation. Acquiring business, marketing, financial, and leadership skills enables individuals to start and manage their own ventures. It fosters innovation by equipping individuals with the knowledge and abilities to develop creative solutions and bring new ideas to life. Skills acquisition is not solely focused on professional growth but also contributes to personal development. It cultivates self-confidence, self-awareness, and sense of accomplishment. Learning new skills can broaden horizons, expand interests, and provide a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

Skills acquisition is a continuous process of learning, developing, and refining abilities relevant to one's chosen field. It enhances employability, career advancement, and personal growth, while also fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Acquiring new skills is essential in today's rapidly changing world to meet the demands of various industries and pursue fulfilling and successful careers.

### **Skills acquisition for youths**

Skills acquisition for youths is of great importance as it equips young people with the knowledge, abilities, and competencies necessary to navigate the challenges of the modern world and succeed in their

personal and professional lives. Here are some key reasons why skills acquisition is crucial for youths:

**Employability:** Acquiring relevant skills enhances youths' employability prospects. The job market is competitive, and employers often look for candidates with specific skills. Developing a diverse set of technical, vocational, or professional skills increases the chances of securing meaningful employment and pursuing successful careers.

**Economic Independence:** Skills acquisition empowers youths to become economically independent. By gaining marketable skills, young people can secure stable employment, start their own businesses, or engage in freelance work. This financial independence enables them to support themselves, contribute to their families and communities, and break the cycle of poverty.

**Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Skills acquisition fosters entrepreneurial spirit and encourages youths to explore their creative potential. It equips them with the knowledge and tools to start and manage businesses, identify opportunities, and develop innovative solutions to societal challenges. Entrepreneurship nurtures leadership skills, self-reliance, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

**Personal Development:** Acquiring skills goes beyond professional growth; it also contributes to personal development. Skills acquisition enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork abilities. It builds self-confidence, resilience, and adaptability, enabling young people to overcome obstacles, make informed decisions, and pursue their passions.

**Social Integration and Empowerment:** Skills acquisition promotes social integration and empowerment among youths. It provides them with a sense of purpose, belonging, and social connection. Engaging in skill-building activities, training programs, and vocational education enhances social



interaction, exposes young people to diverse perspectives, and fosters a sense of community.

**Lifelong Learning:** Skills acquisition instills a lifelong learning mindset in youths. It encourages them to embrace continuous learning, stay updated with industry trends, and adapt to evolving technologies. The ability to learn and acquire new skills throughout life is essential for staying competitive, adapting to changing job markets, and seizing emerging opportunities.

**Leadership and Civic Engagement:** Skills acquisition enables youths to become effective leaders and active citizens in their communities. By developing communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, young people can take on leadership roles, engage in community development initiatives, and contribute to social change. They can advocate for their rights, voice their opinions, and participate in decision-making processes.

### **Impact of basic literacy on women's empowerment**

Basic literacy has a profound impact on women and youth empowerment. **Access to Information and Knowledge:** Basic literacy enables women and youth to access information, knowledge, and educational resources. It allows them to read books, newspapers, and online content, enhancing their awareness of the world, current events, and diverse perspectives. Access to information empowers individuals to make informed decisions, engage in critical thinking, and expand their horizons. Basic literacy forms the foundation for further education and skill development. It equips women and youth with the fundamental reading, writing, and numeracy skills necessary to pursue higher education, vocational training, and specialized skill acquisition. Education opens doors to better job opportunities, economic independence, and personal growth.

Basic literacy plays a crucial role in women's and youth's economic empowerment. It enables them to

participate in the labor market, access higher-paying jobs, and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Literacy equips individuals with the skills needed to manage finances, understand contracts, and navigate business environments. It enhances their ability to secure stable employment, negotiate fair wages, and contribute to economic growth (Sokefun, 2010).

Basic literacy has significant implications for health and well-being. It allows women and youth to access and understand health information, make informed decisions about their own well-being, and navigate healthcare systems. Literacy enhances their understanding of nutrition, disease prevention, reproductive health, and hygiene practices. It empowers individuals to advocate for their health rights and make choices that positively impact their well-being (Sokefun, 2010).

Basic literacy empowers women and youth to actively participate in decision-making processes. It enables them to understand policies, laws, and regulations that affect their lives and communities. Literacy gives individuals the ability to voice their opinions, engage in civic activities, and contribute to social and political discussions. It helps them advocate for their rights and challenge gender and social norms that may limit their empowerment (Richa, 20).

Basic literacy contributes to personal and social development. It enhances self-confidence, self-expression, and critical thinking skills. Literate individuals can communicate effectively, articulate their thoughts, and engage in meaningful interactions. It fosters social integration, strengthens social networks, and promotes community engagement.

### **Barriers and challenges that hinder women and youths from acquiring skills and basic literacy.**

There are several barriers and challenges that hinder women and youths from acquiring skills and basic

literacy. These challenges vary across different contexts, but some common barriers include:

1. **Limited Access to Education:** Many women and youths face limited access to quality education, including formal schooling and adult literacy programs. Factors such as poverty, geographic location, cultural norms, and discrimination can restrict their access to educational opportunities.
2. **Gender Inequality and Discrimination:** Deep-rooted gender inequalities and discriminatory practices can prevent women and girls from pursuing education and skill development. Traditional gender roles, early marriage, societal expectations, and biases against female education create significant barriers to their empowerment.
3. **Economic Constraints:** Economic constraints, including poverty and financial limitations, can hinder women and youths from accessing education and skill acquisition programs. The costs associated with education, training fees, transportation, and study materials can be prohibitive for those with limited financial resources.
4. **Lack of Role Models and Mentors:** The absence of female role models and mentors in certain fields or communities can discourage women and girls from pursuing education and skill development. The lack of relatable examples and guidance can limit their aspirations and hinder their motivation to acquire new skills.
5. **Social and Cultural Norms:** Societal and cultural norms can impose restrictions on women's and youths' access to education and skill acquisition. Cultural beliefs, stereotypes, and expectations may discourage women and girls from pursuing certain fields or limit their mobility and opportunities for learning.
6. **Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources:** Insufficient educational infrastructure, including schools, libraries, and training centers, can limit access to quality education and skill development

opportunities. Lack of proper learning materials, technology, and internet connectivity further hinders their ability to acquire skills and access educational resources.

### **Best practices, interventions, and policies that have successfully promoted skills acquisition and basic literacy among women and youths**

Several best practices, interventions, and policies have been successful in promoting skills acquisition and basic literacy among women and youths:

1. **Gender-Sensitive Education Policies:** Developing and implementing gender-sensitive education policies is crucial for promoting skills acquisition and basic literacy among women and girls. These policies should focus on eliminating gender disparities in access to education, addressing cultural and social barriers, and providing targeted support to ensure equal opportunities for all.
2. **Non-Formal Education Programs:** Non-formal education programs play a significant role in promoting skills acquisition and basic literacy, particularly for marginalized women and youths. These programs are flexible, accessible, and tailored to the specific needs of the learners. They can include vocational training, adult literacy classes, life skills programs, and entrepreneurship training.
3. **Targeted Scholarships and Financial Support:** Providing targeted scholarships and financial support for women and youths from disadvantaged backgrounds helps remove financial barriers to education and skills acquisition. Scholarships can cover tuition fees, learning materials, transportation costs, and other expenses, making education and skill development more accessible.
4. **Community-Based Initiatives:** Community-based initiatives that engage local communities and stakeholders have proven effective in promoting skills acquisition and basic literacy. These initiatives involve partnerships between schools, community organizations, and local leaders to create learning

opportunities, raise awareness, and provide support systems for women and youths.

5. Mentoring and Role Model Programs: Mentoring and role model programs are instrumental in inspiring and guiding women and youths in their educational and skill development journeys. Pairing learners with mentors or connecting them with successful role models from their communities can provide guidance, motivation, and support to overcome barriers and achieve their educational goals.

## Conclusion

This review examines the role of skills acquisition and basic literacy in promoting women and youth empowerment. It provides a summary of key findings and insights from existing research and literature in this area. The review emphasizes the transformative potential of skills acquisition and basic literacy in enhancing the socioeconomic status and overall empowerment of women and youth.

1. Importance of Skills Acquisition: Skills acquisition programs play a crucial role in empowering women and youth by providing them with relevant and marketable skills. These programs enhance their employability, income-earning potential, and economic independence. Skills acquisition equips individuals with the necessary competencies to succeed in various sectors and occupations, fostering self-confidence and personal growth.

2. Basic Literacy as a Foundation: Basic literacy serves as a fundamental foundation for women's and youth empowerment. It enables them to access information, engage in critical thinking, and participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres. Basic literacy skills facilitate lifelong learning, enhance communication abilities, and empower individuals to make informed decisions.

3. Economic Empowerment: Skills acquisition and basic literacy are key drivers of economic

empowerment for women and youth. By gaining marketable skills and improving their literacy levels, individuals can secure better job opportunities, negotiate higher wages, and participate in entrepreneurship. Economic empowerment enhances financial stability, reduces poverty, and contributes to overall socioeconomic development.

4. Social Empowerment: Skills acquisition and basic literacy also have a significant impact on social empowerment. They enable women and youth to engage actively in their communities, participate in civic life, and exercise their rights. Enhanced skills and literacy levels empower individuals to advocate for themselves, challenge social norms, and promote gender equality and social inclusion.

5. Holistic Empowerment: Skills acquisition and basic literacy contribute to holistic empowerment, encompassing economic, social, and personal dimensions. They promote self-esteem, self-reliance, and personal agency. Empowered women and youth are more likely to engage in decision-making processes, pursue further education, and take on leadership roles,

## REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Batliwala, S. (2007). *Taking the Power Forward: Women's Visions and Strategies for the Twenty-First Century*. *Development*, 500, 29-36.
- Chaudhary, P., & Nepal, B. (2016). *Women Empowerment through Education*. *Social Inclusion*, 4(3), 48-56.
- Duflo, E. (2012). Women Empowerment and Economic Development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4), t051-t079.

- Ibrahim, S. (2001). *The Power of Empowerment: Women's Partnership in Local Government in Egypt*. *Gender and Development*, 9(1), 20-26.
- Kabeer, N. (1999). *Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment*. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435-464.
- Maihotra, A., & Mather, M. (2016). *Do Schooling and Work Empower Women in Developing Countries? Gender and Domestic Decisions in Sri Lanka*. *World Development*, 83, 42-59.
- Narayan, D., Patel, R., Schaffi, K., Rademacher, A., & Koch-Schulte, S. (2000). *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* Oxford University Press.
- Paxton, Pamela and Melanie Hughes. (2007). *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Richa, S. (2014). *Women's participation in electoral politics in India*. Retrieved from [www.journals.sagepub.com](http://www.journals.sagepub.com) May 2018,
- Sen, O., & Grown, C. (1987). *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*. Monthly Review Press.
- Sethuraman, S. V., & Lansdovm, G. (1997). *Promoting Girls' and Women's Education*. *Gender and Development*, 5(3), 19-28.
- Sokefun, O.A. (2010). Women development and national policy on women in Nigeria. *Multidisciplinary journal of research Development* 15 (1) 1-11. (2017). Women be given reservations in politics respectfully, retrieved from <https://www.indiaexpress.com> May (2018)
- Sydenham, E. (2009). *Women and the right to livelihoods: world social forum*. New Delhi, India.
- UNESCO. (2014). *Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000225406>
- UNESCO. (2016). *Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All*. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/O024/002457/245752E.pdf>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2019). *Gender Equality: Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-developmentgoals/gender-equality>
- United Nations Development Programme UNDP (2010). *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* - <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/gender-equality.html>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Gender Equality in Human Development: Measuring Sex Disparities in the SDGs*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Gender inequality index*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506>

United Nations Girls Education Initiative. (n.dj). *Why is Girls' Education Important?* Retrieved from <https://www.ungei.org/why-girls-education>.

United Nations Women. (2015). *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2015-2016en.pdf?la=ten&vs897>

United Nations Women. (2020). *Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/progress-of-the-worlds-women-2019-2020-report-en.pdf?la=en&vs'3136>

United Nations. (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. Retrieved from [https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015MDGReport/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015MDGReport/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf).

World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*. Retrieved from [https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/genderequality ,html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/genderequality.html).

World Bank. (2018). *Women, Business, and the Law 2018*. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29303/9781464813324>