

**OVERCOMING BARRIERS: ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
THE SKILL INDIA PROGRAM IN MEGHALAYA**

A Dissertation submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh for the award
of the degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Public Policy,

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration

by

Brigadier Pranaya Dangwal

(Roll No 5002)

under the guidance and supervision of

Dr Gadadhara Mohapatra



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NEW DELHI

SELF DECLARATION CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the dissertation titled '**Overcoming Barriers: Enhancing Women's Participation in the Skill India Program in Meghalaya**', submitted by me for the award of Masters of Arts degree in Public Administration and Public Policy is my own work and that all the sources I have accessed or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of completed reference. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or elsewhere.

Date: March 2025

Place: New Delhi

(Pranaya Dangwal)

Brigadier

Roll Number: 5002

CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that **Brigadier Pranaya Dangwal** has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titled '**Overcoming Barriers: Enhancing Women's Participation in the Skill India Program in Meghalaya**' under my guidance and supervision. The dissertation is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh, for the purpose of Master of Arts in Public Administration and Public Policy in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA) of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.

I recommend that the dissertation of **Brigadier Pranaya Dangwal** is worthy of the award of Master of Arts degree of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Date: March 2025

Place: New Delhi

(Dr Gadadhara Mohapatra)

Assistant Professor

Indian Institute of Public Administration

New Delhi-110002

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Date: March 2025

Place: New Delhi

(Pranaya Dangwal)

Brigadier

Roll Number: 5002

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Acronyms/ Abbreviation</u>	<u>Full Form</u>
<i>CPR</i>	Centre for Policy Research
<i>DDU-GKY</i>	Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
<i>FICCI</i>	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
<i>FGDs</i>	Focus Group Discussions
<i>ILO</i>	International Labour Organisation
<i>MIE</i>	Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship
<i>MSSDS</i>	Meghalaya State Skill Development Society
<i>MSDE</i>	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
<i>NSSO</i>	National Sample Survey Office
<i>NSDC</i>	National Skill Development Corporation
<i>NESC</i>	North East Skill Centre
<i>PMKYV</i>	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
<i>PIAs</i>	Project Implementation Agencies
<i>RSETIs</i>	Rural Self Employment Training Institutes
<i>SMEs</i>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<i>SDGs</i>	Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment through skill development is a vital pillar in fostering economic independence, social progress and gender equity. This dissertation explores the impact of the **Skill India initiative** on the empowerment of women in **Meghalaya**, a state that follows a unique **matrilineal system** yet faces persistent challenges in economic participation, employment generation and access to quality skill development programmes. The study critically examines the role of **vocational training, technical education and government-led interventions** in enhancing women's employment prospects and overall socio-economic status. Given Meghalaya's predominantly rural and agrarian structure, the research focuses on how skill development initiatives cater to the needs of women across diverse backgrounds, particularly in tribal communities and the effectiveness of these programmes in fostering sustainable livelihoods.

The study employs a **mixed-methods research approach**, incorporating both **quantitative and qualitative data analysis** to assess the effectiveness of skill development programmes. **Primary data** was collected through **surveys and interviews** with programme beneficiaries, skill trainers, policymakers and key stakeholders involved in vocational training initiatives across Meghalaya. The study also utilises **secondary data** from government reports, census records and research studies to understand broader trends in women's employment and economic participation. By examining **enrolment rates, completion rates, job placements and entrepreneurial ventures**, the research evaluates the success of these initiatives and identifies barriers that hinder women's participation.

Findings from the study indicate that while the Skill India Mission has made substantial efforts to increase accessibility to vocational training in Meghalaya, several **socio-cultural, infrastructural and economic constraints** continue to limit women's participation and long-term success in the workforce. A significant proportion of women remain unaware of the opportunities available under various skill development schemes. Moreover, **traditional gender roles, lack of mobility and limited support from family structures** often restrict women's ability to complete training programmes and transition into formal employment or self-employment. Additionally, the study reveals disparities in access to training programmes across different districts, with urban areas benefiting more from such initiatives compared to rural and remote regions.

A major challenge highlighted in the research is the **mismatch between training and employment opportunities**, where many women receive training in skills that do not align with local labour market demands. For instance, while courses in tailoring, handicrafts and beauty services are widely available, there is a lack of emphasis on **STEM-based skills, digital literacy and emerging sectors** that offer higher economic returns. Furthermore, limited industry linkages and inadequate post-training support in terms of job placements and business incubation pose additional hurdles for women who complete these programmes.

Despite these challenges, the study identifies several **best practices** where targeted interventions have significantly improved women's economic participation. Moreover, the research highlights the role of **self-help groups (SHGs), microfinance institutions and government-NGO collaborations** in facilitating better skill development outcomes. Programmes that integrate **financial literacy, digital**



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Empowering women through budgetary measures is not just a matter of equality but a strategic imperative for economic growth. The inclusion and upliftment of women in the workforce contribute significantly to a nation's economic development. Women bring diverse perspectives, skills and innovation to the table, fostering a more robust and dynamic economy.”(The Economic Times, 2024)

~ Vaishali Gupta, Co-founder & Chief Growth Officer, mCaffeine

Skill development is a crucial driver of economic growth and social equity, particularly in a country like India, where a significant portion of the population relies on informal employment. The Skill India initiative, launched by the Government of India, aims to equip individuals with industry-relevant skills to enhance employability. However, despite various policy interventions, the participation of women in skill development programmes remains disproportionately low.

The Skill India programme faces numerous challenges, particularly in reaching out to women in rural areas like Meghalaya and several barriers continue to hinder their full participation. Meghalaya, known for its matrilineal structure, should logically be the best placed as regards women empowerment, however and strangely, it still exhibits gender disparities in economic participation. Women in rural areas often face systemic challenges that limit their engagement in formal skill training programmes. While existing research highlights some of these barriers, there remains a gap in understanding the interplay between cultural norms, policy effectiveness and localised solutions tailored to women's needs in Meghalaya. This study seeks to fill these gaps by critically analysing existing policies, assessing the barriers women face and identifying best practices that can be adapted in the regional context.



This research focuses on understanding these obstacles, analysing the root causes and proposing effective interventions to enhance women's engagement and outcomes in the Skill India programme in Meghalaya. There are multifarious challenges in the scheme reaching out to the beneficiaries, key challenges are :-

- (a) **Cultural and Social Norms.** In Meghalaya, traditional societal norms often dictate gender roles which can restrict women's mobility, limit their access to education and ultimately, reduce their participation in skill development programmes. Social expectations that prioritise domestic responsibilities over professional development can discourage women from enrolling in training courses.
- (b) **Limited Access to Information and Resources.** One of the primary barriers is the lack of awareness among women about the opportunities available through the Skill India programme. They are not aware of the various courses, training centres or the benefits of acquiring new skills. Additionally, access to resources like internet connectivity, transportation and financial support further limits their ability to participate.
- (c) **Geographical Barriers and Infrastructural Challenges.** Hilly terrain and remoteness of rural villages make it difficult for women to access training centres. Inadequate infrastructure, such as poor road connectivity and the absence of safe and reliable transportation, poses significant logistical challenges, preventing women from attending the skill programme regularly.
- (d) **Gender Bias in Skill Training Programmes.** The design of many skill development courses under the Skill India initiative often reflects a gender bias, with a focus on skills traditionally deemed suitable for men, such as construction, automotive and industrial trades. This bias discourages



women from enrolling, as the courses available do not align with their interests or are perceived as male-dominated fields.

(e) **Economic Constraint.** Many women in rural Meghalaya come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The costs associated with attending training, such as transportation, childcare or even the loss of daily wages, can be prohibitive. Economic dependency on male family members can further restrict their ability to pursue skill development opportunities.

(f) **Safety and Security Concerns.** Safety concerns, especially regarding travel to and from training centres, also impact women's participation. The lack of safe and women-friendly training environments can deter them from engaging in skill development programmes.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the Skill India programme's potential, women in rural Meghalaya encounter numerous barriers that limit their access to skill development opportunities. These barriers arise from socio-cultural norms, safety concerns and economic pressures, disproportionately affecting women's ability to participate in and benefit from the programme.

Research Objectives

The research objective is to identify key challenges hindering empowerment of women in Meghalaya and propose strategies to address the same. It will have the following objectives: -

(a) To identify and analyse the specific barriers limiting women's participation in the Skill India programme in rural Meghalaya.



- (b) To assess the influence of socio-cultural norms, safety concerns and economic factors on women's access to skill training.
- (c) To develop targeted interventions to improve women's participation and outcomes in the Skill India programme.

Research Design

This study has adopted a mixed-methods research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods provides in-depth insights into organisational culture, policy impacts and collaboration dynamics, while quantitative methods helps in analysing trends and correlations in the data collected through primary source.

The study relies on both primary and secondary sources. In the primary survey a semi-structured tool has been employed to gather detailed insights from women in rural areas about their experiences, perceptions and specific challenges. Interviews have been conducted to explore broader socio-economic influences and potential solutions from the perspectives of community leaders, trainers and government officials. Secondary data includes an exhaustive analysis of various articles, research papers, books and relevant Government policies.

Rationale/ Justification

The Skill India programme has been instrumental in boosting the employability of the Indian workforce by offering training and skill development. However, it faces significant barriers in achieving equal participation, particularly for women in rural areas like Meghalaya. This research proposal is driven by several key rationales:-

- (a) **Gender Inequality in Skill Development.** The first rationale stems from the pervasive gender inequality in accessing the skill development



framework for training programmes, tailored to the unique needs, concerns and aspirations of women in rural Meghalaya, is urgently required. This research aims to gather insights from the ground and propose modifications to the existing curriculum, facilities and outreach strategies to ensure that they are more inclusive and accessible to women.

(e) **Potential for Economic and Social Empowerment.** This research seeks to investigate how enhancing women's participation in Skill India can drive their economic and social empowerment. Women's empowerment is a cornerstone of achieving gender equality and is a catalyst for sustainable development. By expanding women's access to skills, this research envisions a future where women can contribute more meaningfully to the economy, fostering social upliftment and reducing poverty in rural Meghalaya.

(f) **Policy Implications.** Given Meghalaya's unique socio-cultural characteristics, there is a pressing need for policies that address the specific challenges faced by women in rural areas. This proposal aims to inform policy-making by recommending targeted interventions that align with the cultural context of Meghalaya while addressing economic and safety concerns. These policy recommendations seek to create an enabling environment for women to participate in skill development, thereby ensuring greater gender inclusivity in state and national programmes.

(g) **Contribution to the National Skill Development Mission.** This research aligns with the broader objectives of the National Skill Development Mission by aiming to enhance women's participation in India's workforce. The findings and recommendations from this research can serve as a model for other states with



similar challenges, contributing to the overall success of the Skill India programme on a national scale by bridging the gender gap in skill training.

(h) **Supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The research proposal aligns with the SDGs, specifically Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By focusing on women's participation in skills training, the research contributes to the global effort to promote gender equality and create more inclusive labour markets. Enhanced participation of women in skill development will also contribute to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and improved livelihoods.

The rationale for this research proposal lies in its potential to overcome barriers to women's participation in the Skill India programme in Meghalaya. By focusing on the unique socio-cultural, economic and safety challenges faced by women in rural areas, the research will provide actionable insights to improve both gender equality and economic empowerment. Furthermore, the findings can contribute to broader policy frameworks and sustainable development efforts, making this research a significant step toward inclusive growth in India's skill development landscape.

Research Questions

The following questions would merit consideration: -

- (a) What are the primary socio-cultural barriers that limit women's participation in the Skill India programme in rural Meghalaya?
- (b) What safety concerns do women in rural Meghalaya face when accessing Skill India programme training?
- (c) What economic pressures and challenges affect women's ability to participate in skill development programmes?



- (d) To what extent do existing government and non-government skill development initiatives address gender disparities?
- (e) What specific policy changes are needed to improve women's access to the Skill India programme and to create a more inclusive and effective skill development ecosystem?
- (f) What role can local organisations and community leaders play in supporting women's engagement?

Limitations of Study

The study is restricted in its outreach and sample size due to lack of resources and time. Since only four districts of the State have been visited for obtaining the primary data, the sample is not as diverse as is desirable. However, it has been insured that the three main tribes of the State viz Khasi, Garo and Jaintia, have been covered by careful selection of the districts visited.

Chapterisation Scheme

The chapterisation of the dissertation has been designed to maintain an easy and logical flow of information for better assimilation and is as enumerated below : -

- (a) **Chapter 1 : Introduction.** This chapter gives an overview of the subject, highlighting all the important aspects. It covers the Problem Statement, Research Objectives, Research Design, Rationale, Research Questions and Limitations of the Study.
- (b) **Chapter 2 : Review of Literature.** The chapter explores various publications on the subject matter with focus on identifying and undertaking the key themes, principles, concepts and gaps within the topic. It summarises the research gaps from the review of literature.



Safety and Security Concerns

Safety concerns significantly influence women's decision to enrol in skill development programmes. Sen & Banerjee (2020) found that fear of harassment and lack of secure accommodation near training centres deter many women from pursuing vocational education. These challenges are exacerbated in Meghalaya, where villages are often situated far from urban hubs (Sharma, 2021).

Mukherjee (2022) suggests that policy interventions such as subsidised transport, hostel facilities and female-only training centres can improve women's participation rates. However, there is a lack of region-specific research on the effectiveness of such interventions in Meghalaya.

Policy Interventions and Best Practices

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) has integrated gender-responsive strategies, but implementation challenges persist (GoI, 2021). Best practices from Kerala's community-led training initiatives and Rajasthan's self-help groups demonstrate that localised, grassroots-level interventions yield better outcomes (Basu, 2020).

International models such as Germany's dual vocational training system and Bangladesh's microfinance-linked skill training programmes have demonstrated success in promoting women's participation in skill-based employment (Müller & Gangl, 2019; Hossain, 2021). However, there is limited comparative research assessing how these models could be adapted to Meghalaya's socio-economic context.



Identification of Research Gaps

- (a) **Limited Region-Specific Analysis.** While national-level studies provide broad insights, there is insufficient research on Meghalaya's unique socio-cultural and economic barriers that preclude skill development for women.
- (b) **Lack of Empirical Data on Socio-Cultural Barriers.** Existing studies highlight traditional gender roles but do not quantitatively assess how these roles affect enrolment and completion rates in skill training programmes in Meghalaya.
- (c) **Limited Assessment of Financial Incentives.** There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of financial aid, stipends and microfinance-linked training in enhancing women's participation.
- (d) **Inadequate Research on Digital Skill Training.** With technological advancements, digital and mobile-based learning can potentially mitigate infrastructure challenges, but research on their applicability in Meghalaya is lacking.
- (e) **Safety and Mobility Concerns.** While studies recognise safety as a barrier, region-specific policy interventions addressing women's safety in skill training programmes remain underexplored.
- (f) **Adaptability of International Best Practices.** There is limited research on how successful skill development models from other regions and countries in the world can be adapted to Meghalaya's peculiar socio-economic landscape.



Conclusion

The reviewed literature underscores the complex interplay of socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, safety concerns and infrastructural limitations in shaping women's access to Skill India programmes in Meghalaya. While national policies like PMKVY aim to bridge gender gaps, region-specific interventions tailored to Meghalaya's geographic, cultural and economic realities are urgently needed.

By addressing these research gaps, this study aims to contribute to the development of more inclusive, context-sensitive skill development policies, ensuring that vocational training translates into real empowerment for women in Meghalaya.



(c) **Policy Relevance.** A blended approach ensures findings are empirically robust and contextually grounded, making them valuable for policymakers.

Data Sources

The study relies on both primary and secondary data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by women in Meghalaya.

Primary Data Collection

Primary data has been collected through multiple tools as enumerated below:-

(a) **Surveys.** A structured questionnaire was designed to gather responses from women who had enrolled or were interested in enrolling and also from women who had not enrolled in skill development programmes. Key focus areas included the following:-

- (i) Awareness levels about Skill India programmes.
- (ii) Socio-cultural constraints restricting participation.
- (iii) Economic and safety-related challenges.
- (iv) Preferences for skill training courses and employment sectors.
- (v) Perceptions of programme quality and effectiveness.

(b) **Interviews with Key Stakeholders.**

- (i) Community leaders and influencers to assess social perceptions.
- (ii) Skill India trainers and programme coordinators to evaluate implementation challenges.
- (iii) Government officials involved in vocational training policy.



- (c) **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**. FGDs were carried out with women at A.bani Farms, NGO to provide an interactive platform to discuss their shared experiences, perceptions of training programmes and specific socio-cultural challenges.

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data sources included the following:-

- (a) **Government Reports & Policies**. Skill India Mission documents, Meghalaya state skill development policies and NSDC reports.
- (b) **Academic Research**. Studies on gender and vocational training in India, with a focus on tribal and rural communities.
- (c) **Industry & Economic Data**. Reports from MSDE, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) to evaluate trends and gaps.

Sampling Strategy

To ensure diversity in representation, a purposive sampling technique was used to capture data from women of different socio-economic backgrounds and four different districts across Meghalaya.

Sample Size

- (a) 62 women (enrolled and non-enrolled in Skill India programmes).
- (b) 6 trainers and coordinators from Skill India centres.
- (c) 6 government officials overseeing vocational training.



(d) 10 community leaders advocating women's education and employment.

Sampling Locations

- (a) Selected districts across Meghalaya to ensure representation from both remote and semi-urban areas.
- (b) Inclusion of all the major tribes of Meghalaya for comparative analysis.

State	District	Village	Tribe(s)	Sample Size
Meghalaya	Ribhoi	Sarikushi, Mawthlen, Borkhorshori, Purangang	Marngar, Jaintia, Khasi	22
	East Khasi Hills	Myllem, Laitkor, Umphrynai	Khasi	15
	South Garo Hills	Tainang, Siju Nengru Gittim, Adapgre	Garo	10
	West Jaintia Hills		Jaintia	15

Table 3.1: Demographic Distribution of Sample

Data Collection Tools

A variety of tools were employed to capture diverse perspectives and ensure data validity:-

- (a) Structured and semi-structured questionnaires for surveys.
- (b) Interview guides featuring open-ended questions for in-depth discussions.

Data Analysis

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used to analyse the collected data.



Qualitative Data Analysis

(a) **Thematic Analysis.**

- (i) Identification of recurring patterns in socio-cultural and economic barriers.
- (ii) Coding and categorisation of responses to understand core themes emerging from interviews and FGDs.

(b) **Content Analysis.**

- (i) Evaluation of government policies and training programme materials for gender responsiveness.
- (ii) Analysis of historical trends in skill development policies.

Quantitative Data Analysis

(a) **Descriptive Statistics.**

- (i) Enrolment trends, dropout rates and financial constraints will be analysed using mean values, percentages and frequency distributions.
- (ii) Cross-tabulations to compare data across different demographic groups.

Ethical Considerations

(a) **Informed Consent.** All participants were briefed about the study's objectives before data collection.

(b) **Voluntary Participation.** Respondents could withdraw at any stage without repercussions.

(c) **Cultural Sensitivity.** The study has been conducted in a manner respectful of tribal customs and local traditions.



Economic Landscape

The economy of Meghalaya is largely agrarian, with a significant portion of the population engaged in agriculture, forestry and allied activities. However, due to limited industrialisation and employment opportunities, the state faces high unemployment, particularly among women.

Key Economic Sectors

(a) **Agriculture and Allied Activities.**

- (i) Over 80% of the population depends on agriculture.
- (ii) They predominantly resort to subsistence farming, with crops like rice, maize and potatoes.
- (iii) Women are actively involved in agricultural labour.

(b) **Handloom and Handicrafts.**

- (i) Meghalaya has a rich tradition of weaving and handicrafts.
- (ii) Women dominate this sector, however, lack of formal training and limited market access restricts the economic gains.

(c) **Service and Informal Sector.**

- (i) Women contribute significantly to small-scale entrepreneurship, self-help groups and unorganised labour.
- (ii) The informal sector remains a major employer but offers low wages and has the inherent disadvantage of job insecurity.

(d) **Industrial and Skill-Based Employment.**

- (i) Industrialisation is limited, with small-scale industries in mining, cement and agro-processing.
- (ii) Limited exposure to technical and vocational training restricts women's participation in these higher-paying jobs.



Challenges in Skill Development

- (a) **Limited Awareness**. Many women are unaware of available skill training programmes.
- (b) **Geographical Barriers**. The hilly terrain and poor connectivity hinders access to training centres.
- (c) **Economic Constraints**. High dropout rates due to financial pressures.
- (d) **Gender Bias in Training Programmes**. Predominantly male-focused courses discourage female participation.

Barriers to Women's Economic Participation

- (a) **Household Responsibilities**. Women are expected to prioritise domestic duties over employment.
- (b) **Safety and Mobility Issues**. Concerns over safety and transport availability limit participation in training.
- (c) **Social Perceptions**. Certain trades are perceived as male-dominated, discouraging women from enrolling in technical courses.

Policy Landscape and Government Initiatives

The State government, in collaboration with central initiatives like Skill India, has introduced several policies to boost women's participation in vocational training.

Key initiatives include the following:-

- (a) **Meghalaya State Skill Development Society (MSSDS)**. It focuses on training the youth in employable skills.
- (b) **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)**.

This scheme provides vocational training for the rural youth.



(b) **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).**

Targeting the youth, DDU-GKY aims to provide sustainable employment opportunities. Meghalaya has several Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) working to train and place youth in various sectors, including tourism and agriculture

Findings & Observations.

- (i) Stronger implementation in urban as compared to rural areas.
- (ii) Limited monitoring of post-placement retention rates.
- (iii) Lack of alignment between training modules and emerging job market trends.

(c) **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).** NAPS

incentivises industries to engage apprentices by sharing training costs and providing stipends. Meghalaya's industries, particularly in the mining and agro-processing sectors, have been slow in adopting this initiative due to regulatory and infrastructural barriers.

Findings & Observations.

- (i) Minimal industry participation due to lack of awareness.
- (ii) Compliance burdens discourage Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from participation.
- (iii) Absence of high-tech training centres limits apprenticeship opportunities in advanced sectors.

State-Specific Skill Development Initiatives

- (a) **Meghalaya State Skill Development Society (MSSDS).** The MSSDS, under the Department of Labour, coordinates skill training programmes to



enhance employability across sectors such as agriculture, construction and hospitality. Key initiatives include the following:-

- (i) Skill Meghalaya Programme. Focused on empowering youth with market-driven skills.
- (ii) Livelihood & Entrepreneurship Promotion. Encouraging self-employment in rural communities.

Findings & Observations

- (i) Significant efforts in tailoring programmes to local needs, but gaps remain in technological adoption.
 - (ii) Insufficient digital infrastructure in training centres.
 - (iii) Limited collaborations with industry and private sector organisations.
- (b) North East Skill Centre (NESC). NESC, established in Shillong with support from the central government, provides high-end skill training in beauty & wellness, retail management and hospitality.

Findings & Observations

- (i) High-quality training programmes, but affordability remains a concern for marginalised groups.
- (ii) Greater emphasis needed on digital and IT-based skills.
- (iii) Need for expansion beyond Shillong to other districts.

Challenges in Adoption and Assimilation of New Technologies

- (a) Digital Divide and Technological Infrastructure. Despite efforts to integrate digital training in all skill development programmes, the progress is hindered due to the lack of high-speed internet, IT-enabled learning centres and power supply issues in rural areas.



- (b) **Industry-Academia Mismatch**. Skill development programmes often do not align with industry requirements, leading to skill redundancy. Sectors like renewable energy, fintech and e-commerce remain underrepresented in training curricula.
- (c) **Limited Private Sector Engagement**. Most programmes remain government-driven with minimal participation from private industries. Incentives for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) need to be strengthened to encourage investments in skill training.
- (d) **Socio-Cultural Constraints**. Traditional socio-cultural structures in Meghalaya, including gender roles, influence participation in skill development. Women often face mobility constraints in remote locations limiting their access to training centres.
- (e) **Resistance to New Technologies**. Many local enterprises and traditional artisans resist transitioning to modern methods due to fears of job loss or high investment costs in new technology.

Impact of the Skill India Initiatives

As is evident from above MSSDS has been instrumental in implementing various government initiatives under the Skill India Mission, aiming to improve employability and entrepreneurship among women (MSSDS Annual Report, 2024). However, the impact of these initiatives needs to be critically examined in the context of women's empowerment, economic participation and long-term sustainability.

This section examines the role of skill development initiatives in transforming the lives of women in Meghalaya, highlighting key areas such as economic



empowerment, social transformation, challenges faced in accessibility and recommendations for improvement.

Economic Empowerment and Employment Generation

(a) **Increased Workforce Participation.** Government-led skill development programmes such as DDU-GKY and PMKVY have significantly contributed to improving women's workforce participation in Meghalaya (MSDE, 2023). These programmes have enabled women to acquire industry-relevant skills, leading to greater employability in both traditional and emerging sectors such as handicrafts, IT, hospitality and healthcare.

Key Findings.

- (i) According to the NSDC Report, 2023, Meghalaya has witnessed a 17% increase in female workforce participation post-skill training.
- (ii) Women engaged in the hospitality and tourism sectors reported higher job retention rates compared to those in traditional handloom and agriculture.
- (iii) The agriculture and agro-processing industries have absorbed a significant proportion of skilled women, particularly in organic farming and food processing enterprises.
- (iv) Private sector involvement, though limited, has shown a growing interest in recruiting skilled women, particularly in urban centres like Shillong and Tura.

(b) **Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment.** Many women who have undergone skill training have opted for self-employment, particularly in handloom, food processing and beauty and wellness industries. Government-



backed initiatives such as Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) and SHGs have facilitated this entrepreneurial shift by providing financial support and mentorship (World Bank Report, 2022).

Notable Trends.

- (i) Women entrepreneurs trained under these schemes have successfully set up micro-businesses in tailoring, weaving and handicrafts, contributing to rural economic growth.
 - (ii) Access to microfinance, particularly through schemes like MUDRA loans, has enabled women to launch small-scale businesses without reliance on traditional bank loans (Government of India, Economic Survey 2024-25).
 - (iii) Despite positive outcomes, supply chain bottlenecks and limited market access remain significant hurdles for women entrepreneurs, restricting their ability to scale businesses beyond local markets.
- (c) **Increase in Income Levels.** A survey conducted by the Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE, 2022) indicated that women who completed vocational training saw an average income increase of 35%. Those engaged in formal employment reported higher wages than their unskilled counterparts, while entrepreneurs benefited from market linkages and improved financial literacy facilitated by government schemes.

Economic Benefit.

- (i) Wage improvements were most significant in skill-intensive jobs such as healthcare, IT and digital marketing.



(ii) Women-led businesses that had access to online marketplaces reported higher revenue generation compared to those relying on local offline sales.

(iii) Financial literacy training, often overlooked in traditional vocational courses, has become a key determinant of entrepreneurial success among trained women.

Social Transformation and Gender Equality

(a) **Enhanced Social Status.** Skill development has played a pivotal role in breaking gender stereotypes by equipping women with skills previously dominated by men. The ILO Report on Women's Economic Participation (2023) highlights how access to training programmes has increased women's confidence and self-reliance, leading to greater social acceptance.

Evidence of Social Change.

(i) Women trained in non-traditional trades such as electrical work and construction have gained community recognition for their expertise.

(ii) Families of skilled women report higher social standing, particularly when women contribute financially to household expenses.

(b) **Improved Decision-Making Power.** Financial independence has significantly enhanced women's decision-making power within households. A study by UN Women (2023) found that women with vocational training contributed more to family welfare, children's education and healthcare.

Notable Shifts.

(i) Women-led households report higher investments in children's education.



- (ii) Greater awareness of legal rights and financial management among skilled women
- (c) **Challenges in Social Acceptance.** Despite progress, societal norms and cultural constraints continue to hinder women's complete participation in skill-based employment. The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) Study (2023) found that 57% of women in Meghalaya still face resistance from family members when choosing to enter the workforce.

Challenges in Skill Development for Women

- (a) **Accessibility and Infrastructure Issues.**
 - (i) Lack of training centres in rural areas restricts participation (Meghalaya Skill Gap Analysis Report, 2023).
 - (ii) Poor transportation facilities deter women from attending regular training sessions (ILO, 2023).
- (b) **Digital Divide and Technological Barriers.**
 - (i) Only 39% of women in rural Meghalaya have access to smart phones, limiting digital learning opportunities.
 - (ii) Limited awareness of e-learning platforms has resulted in lower enrolment in online skill courses.
- (c) **Lack of Industry Linkages and Job Placement Support.**
 - (i) Only 42% of trained women found employment within six months of course completion (Meghalaya Livelihood Survey, 2023).
 - (ii) Internships and apprenticeships remain scarce, reducing women's practical experience in skilled sectors (NSDC Report, 2023).



Conclusion

The government's skill development initiatives in Meghalaya have laid a strong foundation for enhancing employability and entrepreneurship. However, addressing technological adoption challenges requires a multi-pronged approach as enumerated below:-

- (a) Strengthening digital infrastructure and expanding online learning platforms.
- (b) Aligning skill programmes with future job market trends, particularly in IT, renewable energy and emerging industries.
- (c) Encouraging private sector participation through incentives and policy support.
- (d) Conducting awareness campaigns to address socio-cultural barriers to skill training.

By tackling these challenges, Meghalaya can bridge the skill gap, facilitate the adoption of new technologies and create a more resilient and competitive gender equal workforce. Addressing these issues through targeted policy interventions, infrastructure investments and community engagement can enhance the effectiveness of skill development programmes and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable economic ecosystem in Meghalaya.



(d) **Appendix 'D'**. The questionnaire for Government officials responsible for the Skill development Programme contained 15 questions.

Secondary Data

Has been analysed and placed at the relevant places in the report.

Questionnaire for the Beneficiaries (Appendix A)

The beneficiaries comprise the women who had participated and completed the programme or had dropped out or did not enrol in any skill development programme. A total of 61 individuals took part in the survey comprising 31 questions.

The demography profile of the beneficiaries is given below:-

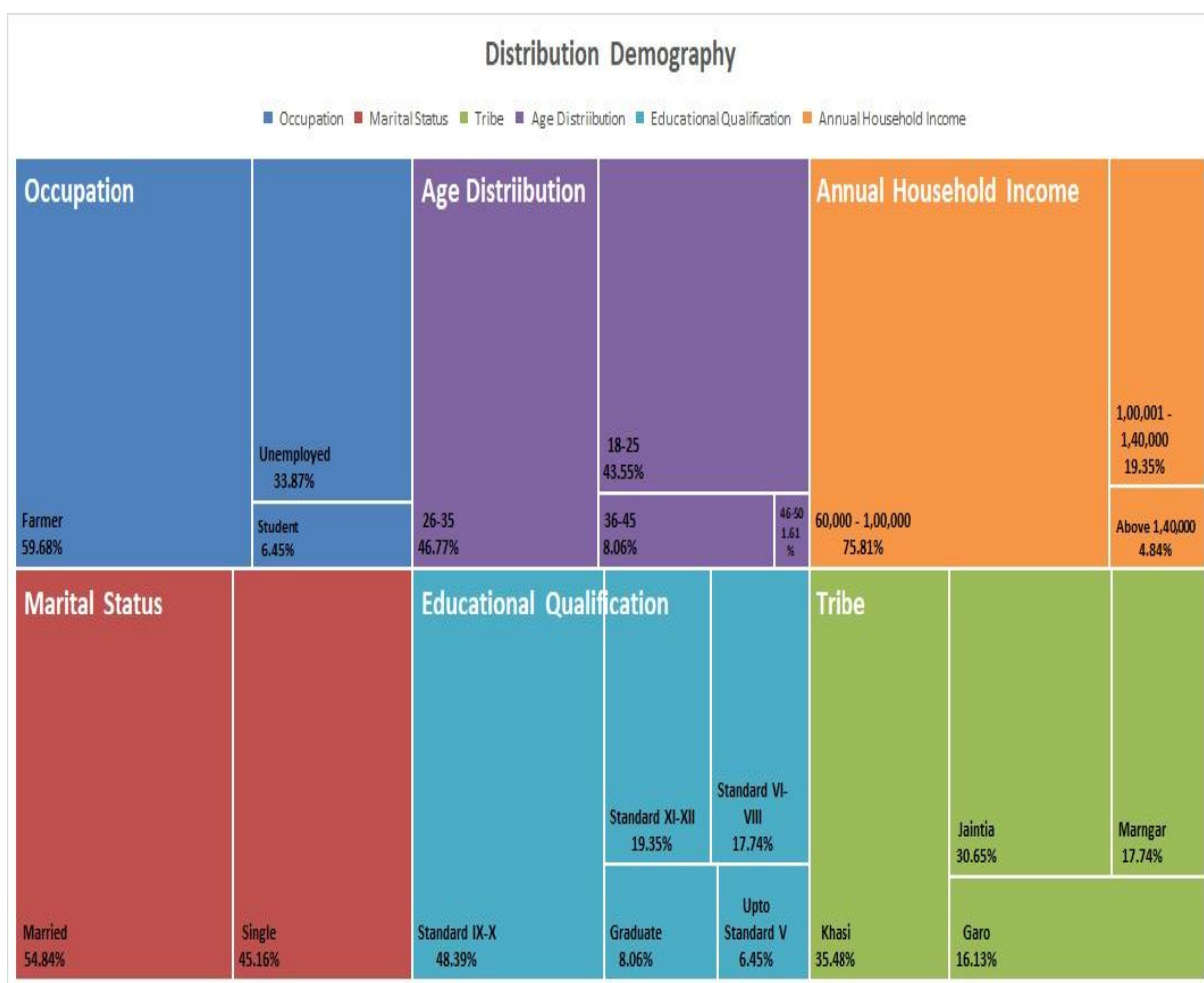


Table 5.1: Distribution of Demography of Meghalaya



Cross Tabulations

Cross tabulation was undertaken using SPSS tool and a few revealing findings were arrived upon as discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Awareness About the Programme Under Different Age Group

The data in the table below highlights the level of awareness about a particular programme among different age groups. It is evident that the younger age group (18-25 years) has a higher percentage of awareness compared to the middle age group (26-35 years). Specifically, 48% of individuals aged 18-25 are aware of the programme, whereas only 45% of those in the 26-35 age bracket have knowledge about it. Interestingly, the percentage of awareness significantly drops among individuals aged 36 and above, with only 7% being aware. This indicates that younger individuals are more informed about the programme, possibly due to their higher engagement with digital media, social networks and educational institutions that might promote such initiatives.

Age	18-25	%	26-35	%	36 and above	%	Total	%
Awareness								
No	8	36	11	50	3	14	22	100
Yes	19	48	18	45	3	7	40	100
Total	27	44	29	47	6	9	62	100

Table 5.2: Awareness about the Programme under Different Age Groups

The findings suggest a gap in awareness among older individuals, which may stem from a lack of exposure to promotional efforts or limited access to communication channels used by the programme organisers. This emphasises the need for targeted awareness campaigns to reach older demographics. Additionally, factors such as education level, occupation and social engagement could be



influencing the awareness levels, making it imperative to explore other demographic correlations.

Social Group-wise Educational Qualification of the Respondents in Meghalaya

This table examines the educational qualifications among various tribal groups in Meghalaya. Khasi and Jaintia groups have more representation in higher education and may therefore have higher awareness. An indirect link between formal education and awareness about the programme is well established and could be extrapolated in the educational qualification levels of various tribes.

Educational Qualification	Garo	%	Jaintia	%	Khasi	%	Marngar	%	Total	%
3	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
4	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100
5	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100
6	2	40	0	0	2	40	1	20	5	100
7	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100
8	2	40	1	20	0	0	2	40	5	100
9	1	20	3	60	1	20	0	0	5	100
10	1	4	12	48	9	36	3	12	25	100
11	0	0	0	0	2	67	1	33	3	100
12	1	11	2	22	4	44	2	22	9	100
Graduate	0	0	1	20	2	40	2	40	5	100
Total	10	16	19	31	22	35	11	18	62	100

Table 5.3: Social Group-wise Educational Qualification of the Respondents in Meghalaya

Interestingly, tribal groups such as Garo and Marngar show a lower representation at higher education levels, which may correlate with lower awareness.



The data underscores disparities in educational access across tribal groups, possibly due to socio-economic or infrastructural challenges. Policymakers should consider these findings while designing interventions to enhance programme outreach.

Distribution of Respondents as per the Level of Income Among Tribal Groups in Meghalaya

The income distribution across different tribal groups in Meghalaya reveals that a significant proportion of the population falls within the lowest income bracket (Rs 60,000-100,000). The Jaintia tribe has the highest concentration in this bracket (90%), followed by the Garo (80%), Khasi (68%), and Marngar (64%). The middle-income bracket (Rs 100,001-140,000) is occupied by a smaller percentage, with Jaintia and Khasi tribes showing slightly better representation in this range. Only a minimal percentage of individuals, across all tribal groups, report incomes above Rs 140,000, highlighting prevalent economic limitations in these communities.

Tribe	Rs 60000 -100000	%	Rs 100001 -140000	%	Rs 1400001 and above	%	Total	%
Garo	8	80	2	20	0	0	10	100
Jaintia	17	90	1	5	1	5	19	100
Khasi	15	68	6	28	1	4	22	100
Marngar	7	64	3	27	1	9	11	100
Total	47	76	12	20	3	4	62	100

Table 5.4: Distribution of Respondents as per the Level of Income Among Tribal Groups in Meghalaya

These findings emphasise the need for economic upliftment initiatives targeting marginalised tribal groups. The data suggests that most individuals rely on low-income jobs, possibly in agriculture or informal labour, which restricts their



Social Group-wise Occupational Classification of Respondents in Meghalaya

The data presents an occupation-wise distribution among different tribes. A significant portion of individuals, particularly from the Garo (80%) and Jaintia (79%) tribes, are engaged in farming. This aligns with the agrarian nature of the region. However, the Khasi tribe shows a comparatively lower dependency on farming (59%), with a higher percentage (36%) being unemployed. The Marngar tribe stands out with a relatively high unemployment rate (73%), which could indicate fewer employment opportunities or a lack of relevant skills for available jobs.

Occupation Tribes	Student	%	Farmer	%	Unemployed	%	Total	%
Garo	0	0	8	80	2	20	10	100
Jaintia	1	5	15	79	3	16	19	100
Khasi	1	5	13	59	8	36	22	100
Marngar	2	18	1	9	8	73	11	100
Total	4	6	37	60	21	34	62	100

Table 5.6: Social Group-wise Occupational Classification of Respondents in Meghalaya

These statistics highlight an urgent need for employment generation initiatives, particularly among the Khasi and Marngar communities. The high unemployment rates indicate gaps in skill acquisition and economic opportunities, which need to be addressed through targeted government programmes, job creation strategies and enhanced access to vocational training. Additionally, integrating modern agricultural techniques and market linkages for farming communities could enhance income stability.

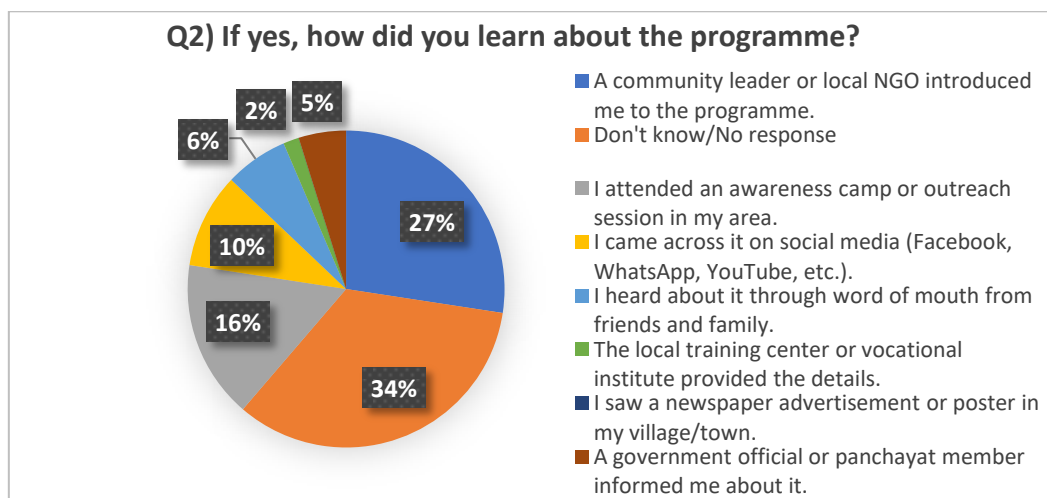


Question-wise response of individuals who participated in the survey along with the analysis in listed below:-



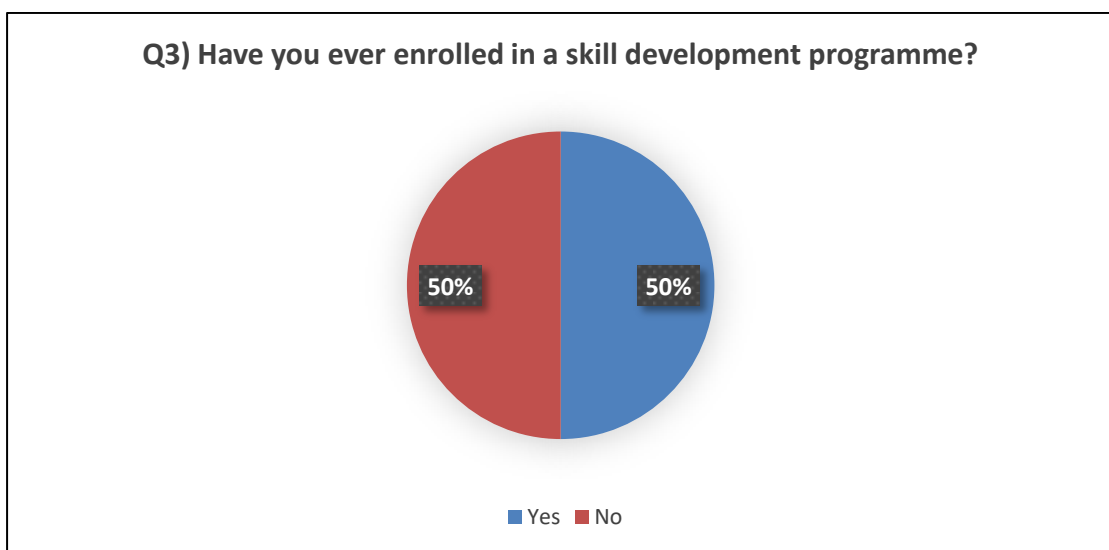
Analysis of Response

65% respondents were aware if Skill India programmes and its training initiatives while 35% were unaware. It is evident that Government's efforts have not reaped the desired results yet and a lot needs to be done with respect to spreading awareness to start with.



Analysis of Response

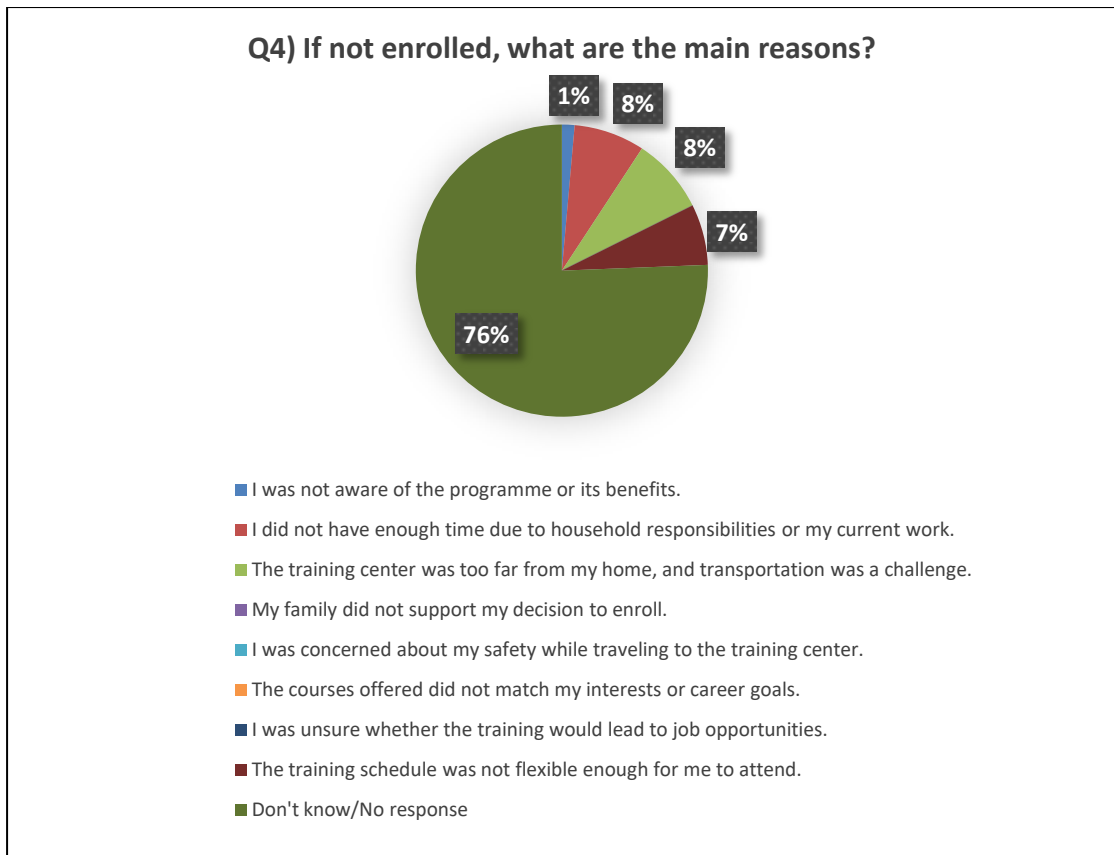
27% respondents mentioned that they learnt about the programme through community leader or NGO. 16% stated that they got to know through an awareness camp. 10% and 6% respondents learnt it via social media and through word of mouth respectively. 5% respondents learnt about the programme through government officials or panchayat member. A meagre 2% mentioned that they heard about the programme through local training centres. It brings out that community leaders and NGOs are pivotal in spreading the awareness and must be harnessed adequately while all other means like camps, social media, proactive government officials etc must also be adopted so that the outreach is optimised.



Analysis of Response

The response was also perfectly divided with 50% respondents having enrolled in the skill development and same number who have not enrolled. A large number of women are not enrolling in the Skill India programmes either due to ignorance or due to other limiting factors being discussed.



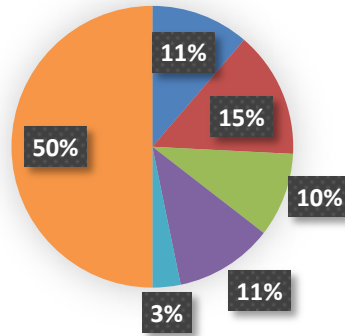


Analysis of Response

8% respondents mentioned that they could not enrol in the skill programme due to large distances and lack of adequate transportation. 8% stated that they were handicapped due to household responsibilities. 7% respondents felt that inflexible training schedule was the reason while 1% said that safety concerns while travelling to the centre was the deterrent. It brings out that travel concerns and household responsibilities were the prime impediments which need to be addressed.



Q5) Can you share your experience with the Skill India programme? What motivated you to join?

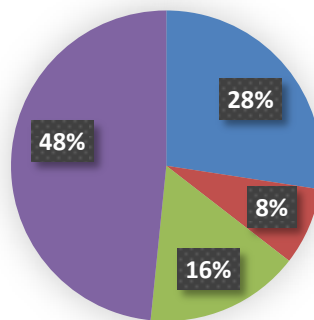


- I joined because I wanted to improve my skills and find better job opportunities.
- I wanted to gain financial independence and support my family.
- I was encouraged by a community leader who explained the benefits of the programme.
- My friends joined, and I saw their progress, so I decided to enroll.
- I wanted to switch careers and this program seemed like a good opportunity.
- Don't know/No response

Analysis of Response

15% respondents mentioned that they wanted to gain financial independence and support their family. 11% wanted to improve their skills and find better job opportunities. 11% respondents were motivated by seeing the progress of their friends. It brings out that travel concerns and household responsibilities were the prime impediments which need to be addressed.

Q6) Does your family support your participation in skill training programmes?

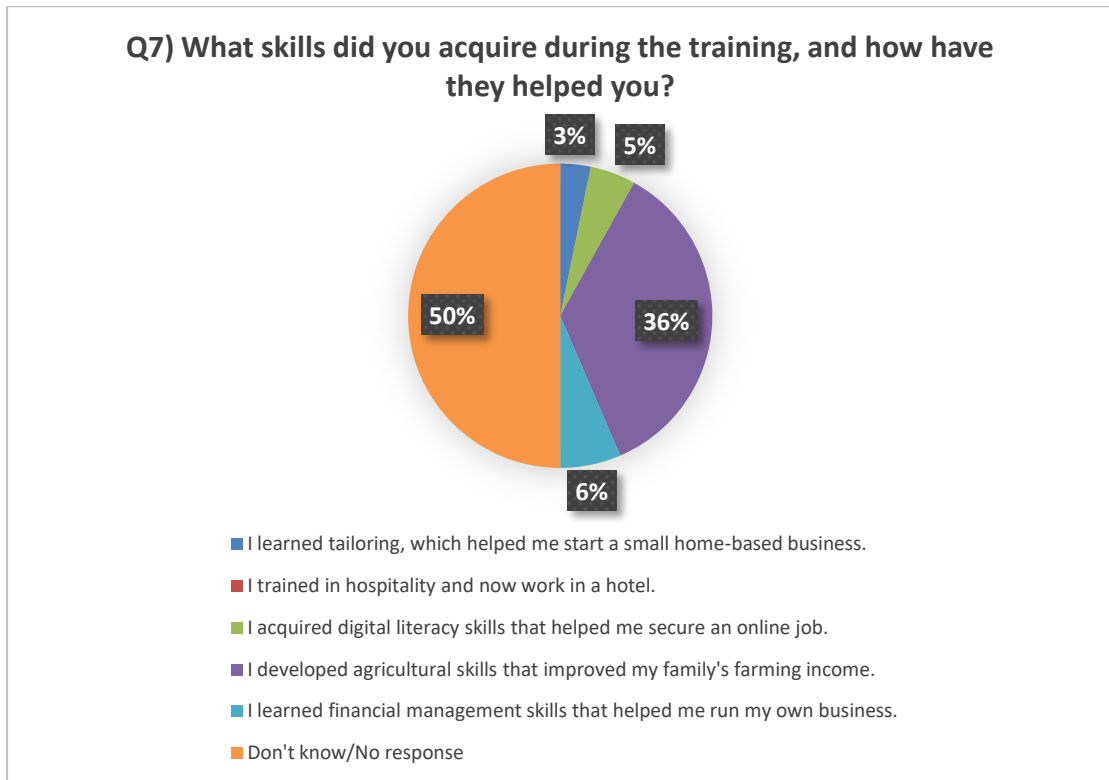


- Yes
- No
- Somewhat
- Don't know/No response



Analysis of Response

28% respondents mentioned Yes, 8% said No and 16% respondents felt that they somewhat received support of their family. It brings out that spreading awareness and educating the parents is paramount for the success of the programme.

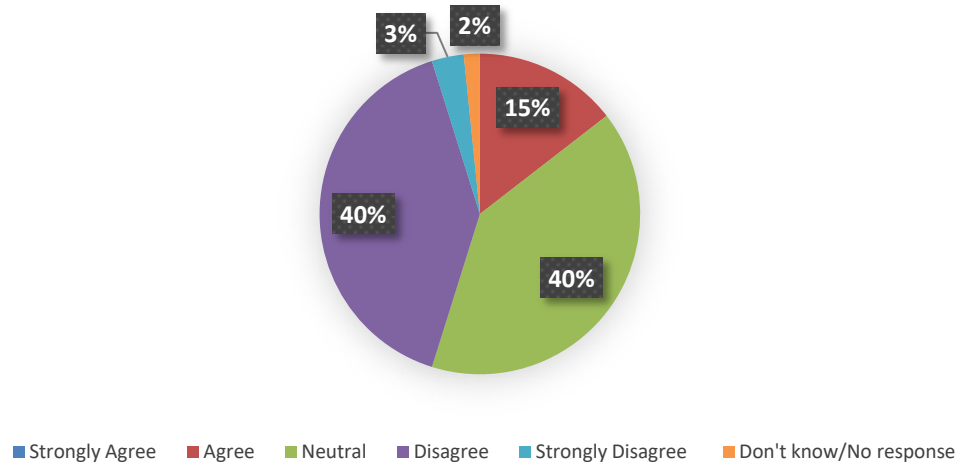


Analysis of Response

36% respondents mentioned that they developed agricultural skills by participating in Skill India programme which improved farming income. 6% mentioned that they learnt financial management skills to run own business. 5% stated that they acquired digital skills to secure online jobs while 3% respondents said that they learnt tailoring. It brings out that agricultural skill is most popular due to the agrarian nature of society.



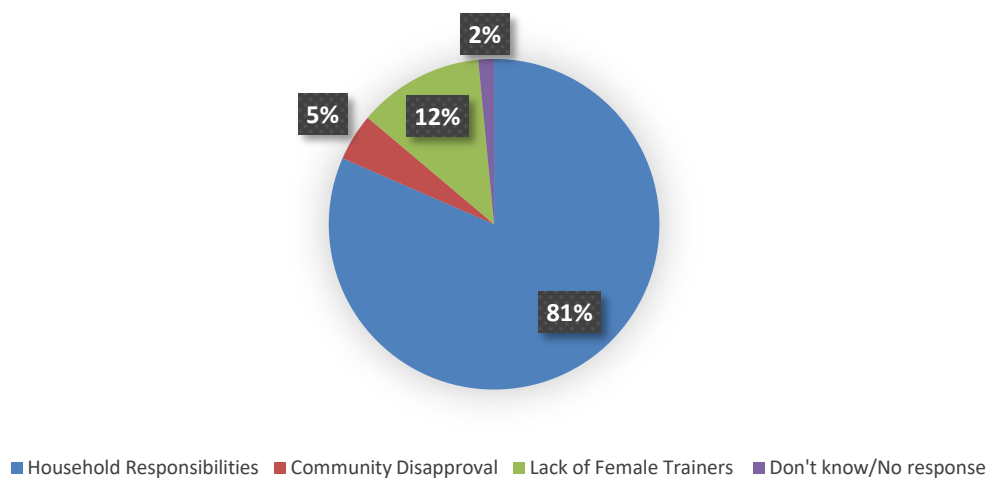
Q8) Do social norms in your community discourage women from joining skill development programmes?



Analysis of Response

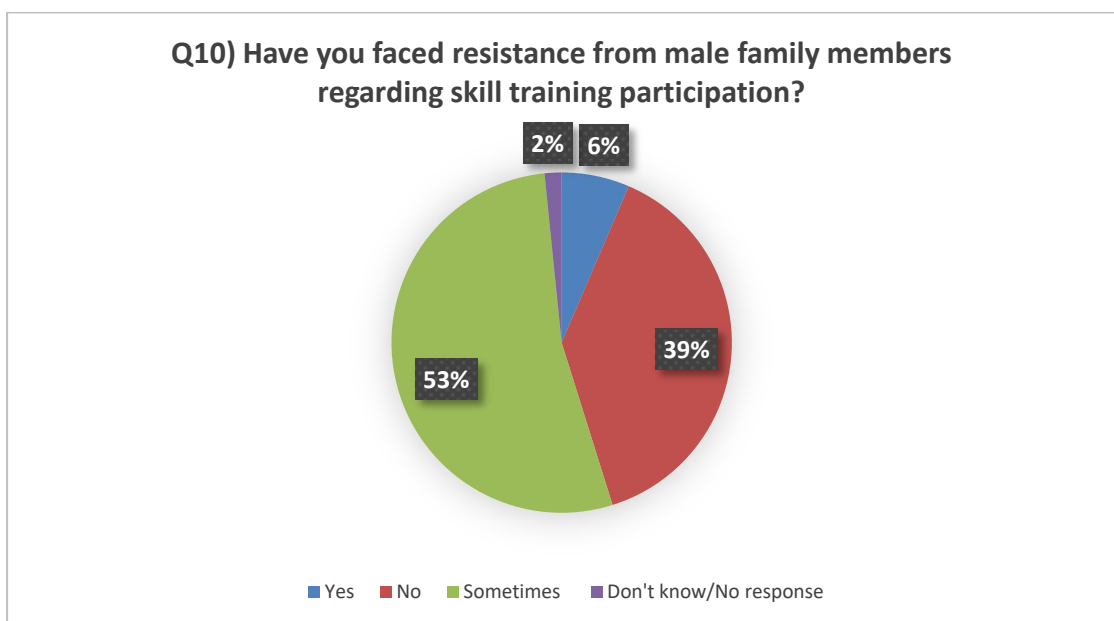
Only 15% respondents agreed that social norms in the community discourage women from joining skill development programmes. 43% respondents disagreed with the above statement and 40% were neutral in their stance. It brings out that social norms in the State of Meghalaya do not discourage women participation in Skill India; a good norm that must be exploited by the government and boosted even more to make the programme a success.

Q9) What are the cultural or societal factors preventing women from participating?



Analysis of Response

A whopping 81% respondents felt that household responsibilities prevented women from participating in Skill India. 12% felt that it was the lack of female trainers while 5% mentioned that it was due to lack of community approval. It brings out that household responsibility is the biggest stumbling block and hence adequate measures must be put in place to overcome this.



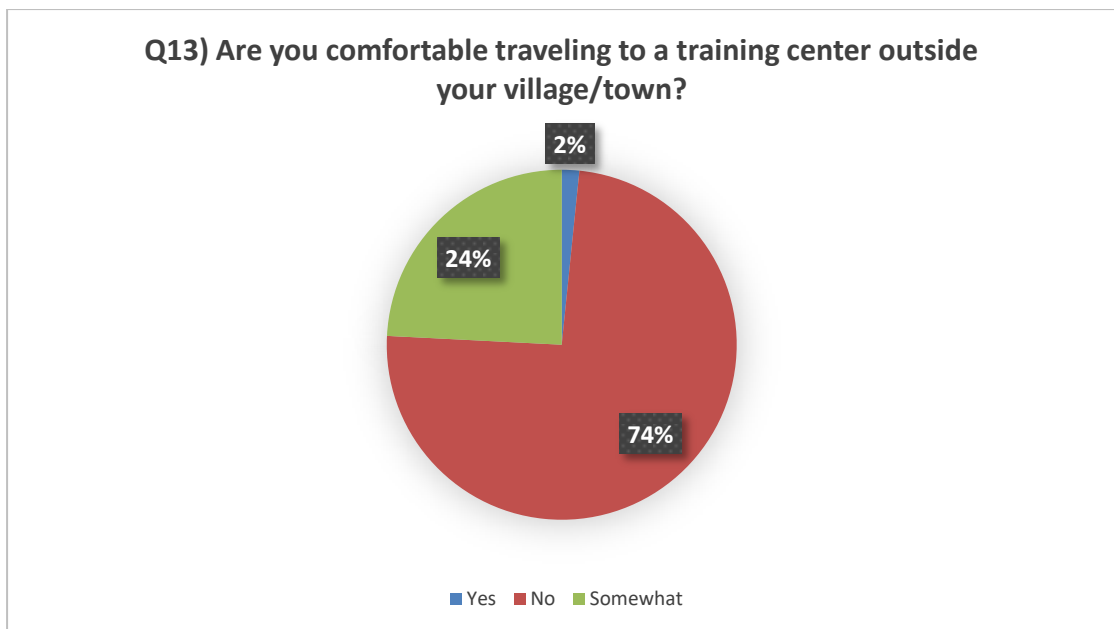
Analysis of Response

39% respondents mentioned that they have not faced resistance from family members. 53% stated somewhat and only 6% respondents said 'Yes'. The families of eligible women are largely supportive for the skill development programmes. This aspect must be exploited further by creating congenial training environment and good placements post training.



Analysis of Response

49% respondents mentioned that transportation cost was their biggest financial challenge. 41% felt that loss of wages was their concern while 3% stated that high course fee was the major deterrent which kept them away from the Skill India programme. It brings out that there is a requirement to ensure better outreach of the courses to reduce travel and financial incentive for the participants of Skill India programme.

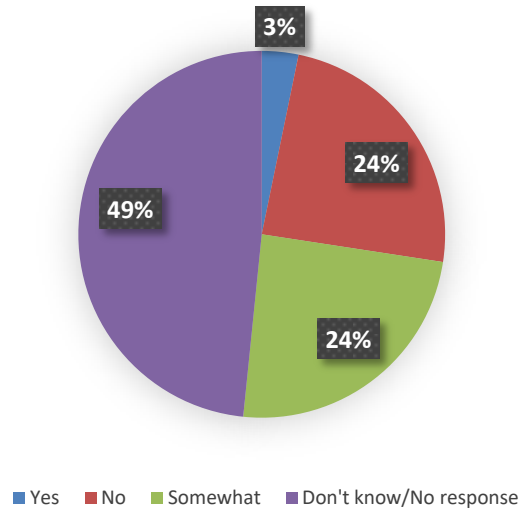


Analysis of Response

74% respondents mentioned that they are not comfortable travelling outside their village. 24% were somewhat comfortable and only 2% said that they were comfortable. While it is not feasible to have training centres in each village and there will be a requirement of travelling outside, however effort should be put in to make the travel safe, comfortable and affordable.



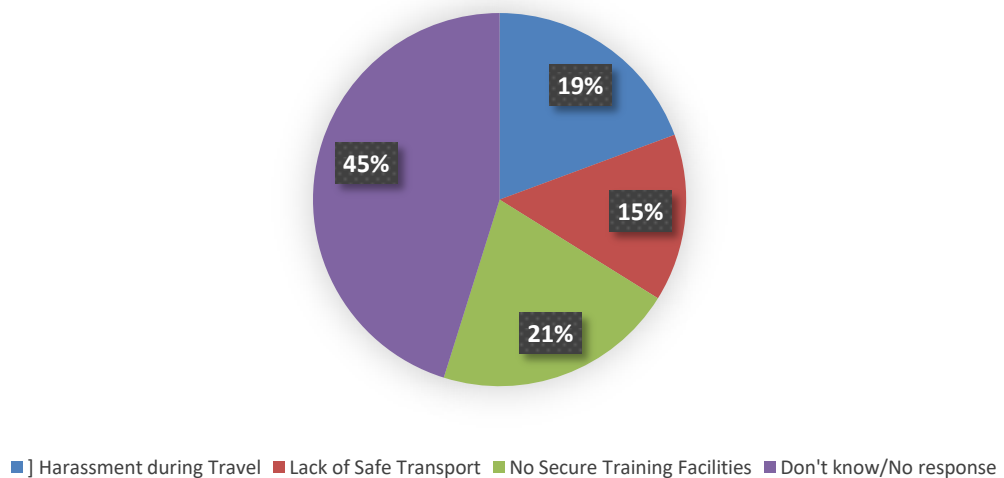
Q14) Do you feel safe traveling to and from training centers?



Analysis of Response

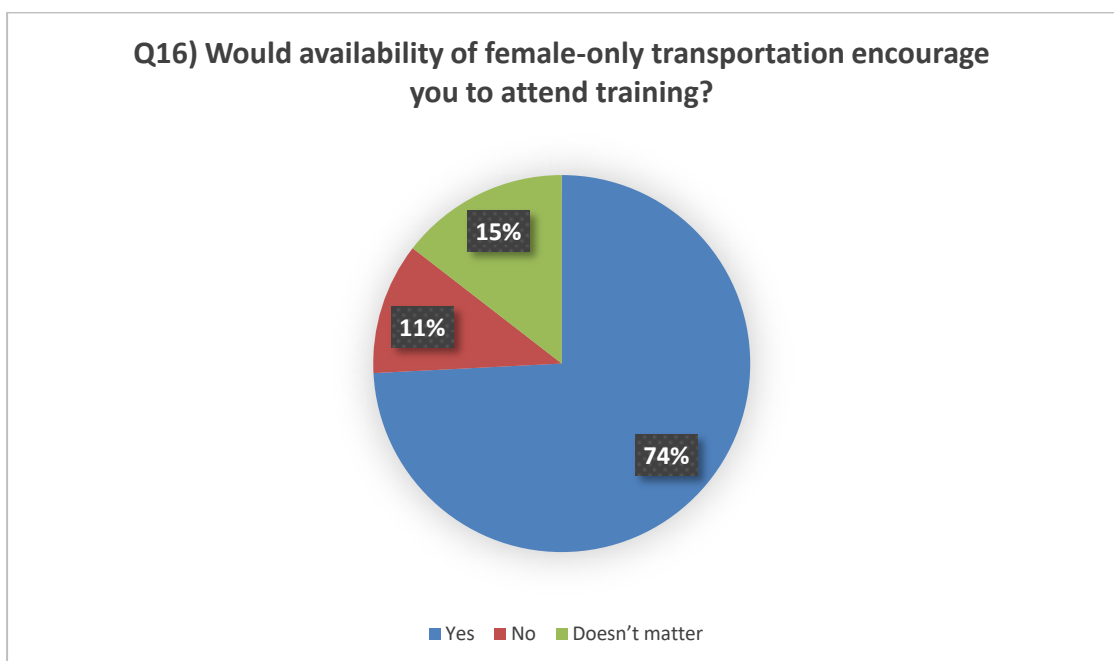
24% respondents mentioned that they do not feel safe travelling to and from training centres. 24% were somewhat safe and only 3% respondents stated that they felt safe. It is evident that safety of women participation has to be of paramount concern and improved to result in increased participation

Q15) What safety concerns do you face regarding skill training programmes?



Analysis of Response

21% respondents mentioned that their biggest safety concern was unsecure training facilities. 19% were of the opinion that harassment during travel was their concern. 15% identified lack of safe transport as their biggest concern. The overall safety concern weighs heavily with respect to participation of women in any sponsored programme.

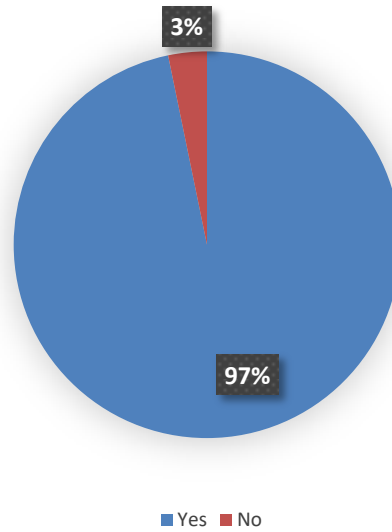


Analysis of Response

74% respondents mentioned that availability of female only transportation will encourage participation of women. 11% respondents were of the opinion that it will not encourage participation while 15% felt that it doesn't matter whether the transportation is female only or not. The government can consider, as a trial, to organise an all female transportation setup and check its efficacy as well as the difference it makes, if any.



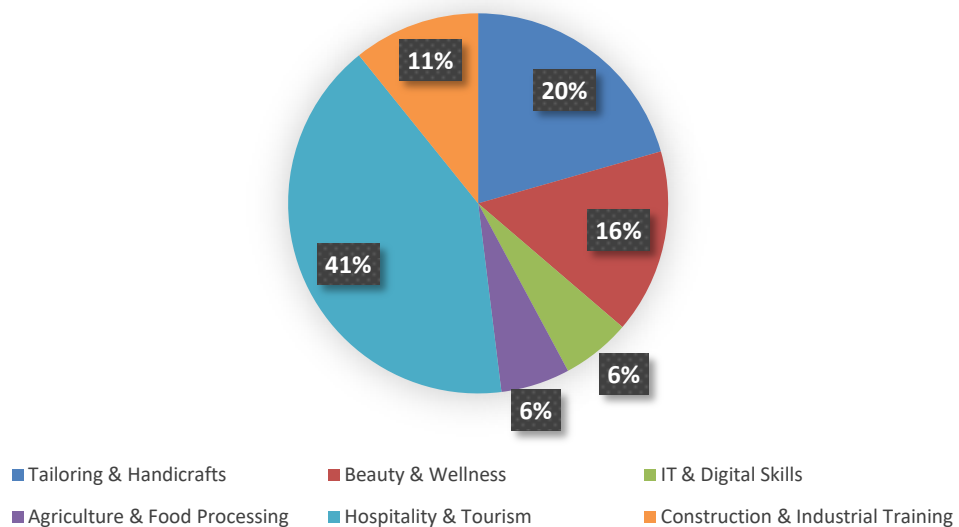
Q17) Does the availability of financial aid influence your decision to enroll in a programme?



Analysis of Response

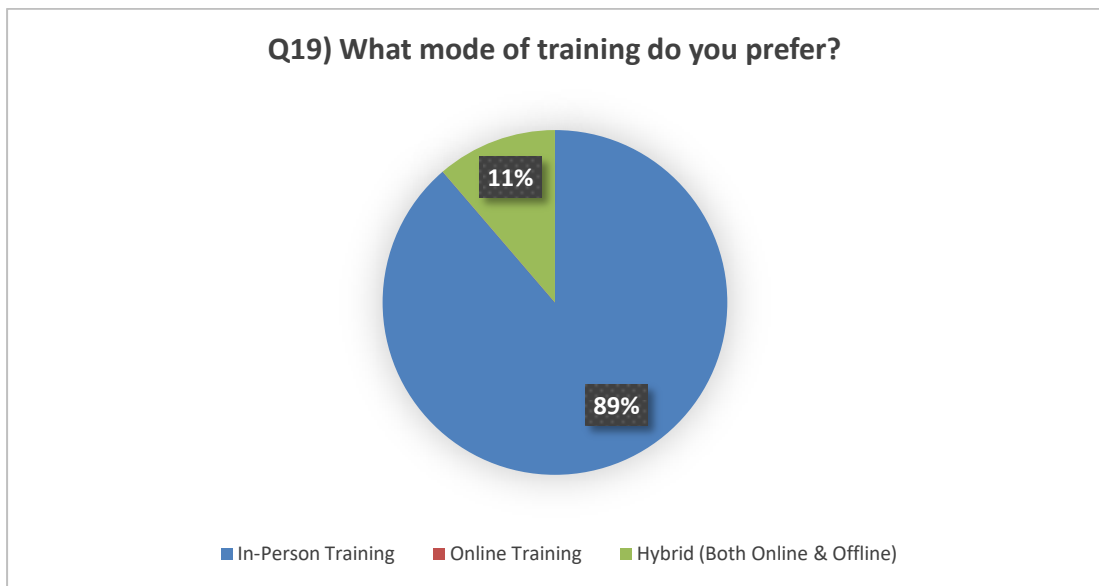
97% respondents mentioned that availability of financial aid influences their decision to enrol in the programme. Only 3% were of the opinion that financial aid does not have any effect. The government must incorporate financial incentive in the skill development programmes.

Q18) Which skill training programmes interest you the most?



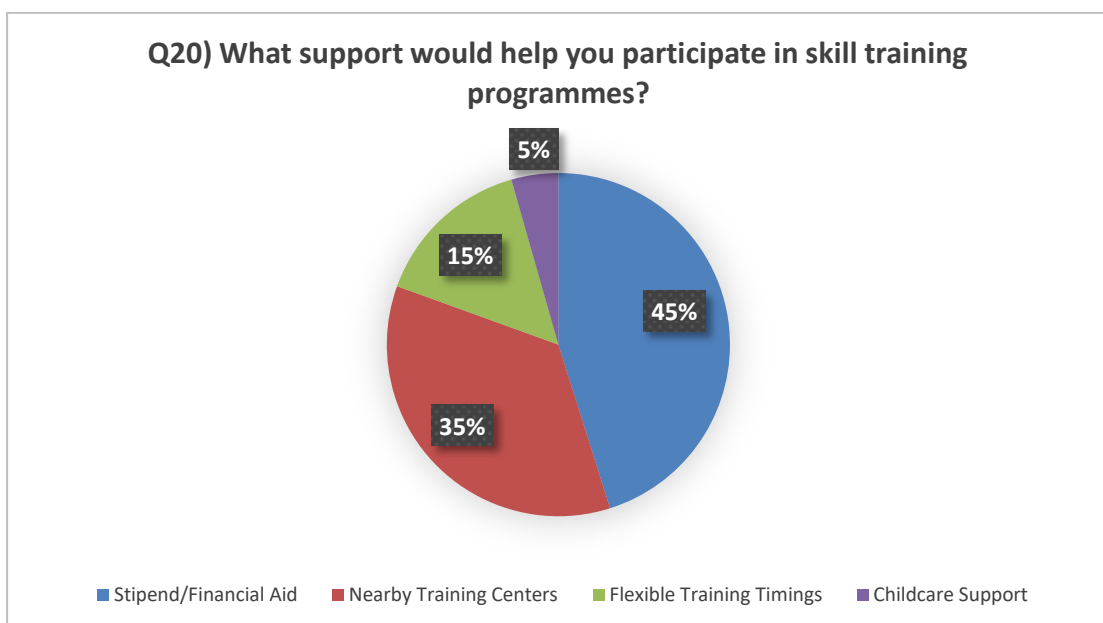
Analysis of Response

41% respondents mentioned that hospitality and tourism interested them the most. 20% preferred tailoring and handicraft. 16% stated beauty and wellness as their preference. 11% opted for construction and industrial training. 6% each chose agriculture and food processing and IT and digital skills. It brings out that the government must formalise the programme as per the preference of the participants.



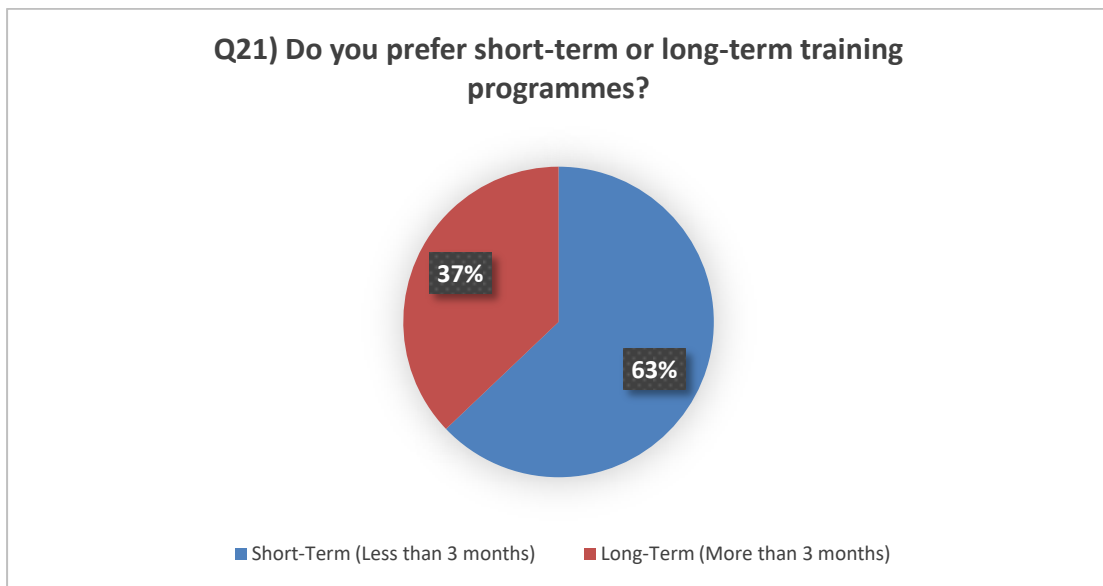
Analysis of Response

89% respondents preferred in-person training while 11% opted for hybrid model.



Analysis of Response

45% respondents felt that financial aid would help in attending the programme. 35% stated that proximity of training centres was the key. 15% stated that flexible training timings will assist in participation while only 5% opted for childcare support as the assistance for better participation. It is evident that most people want financial aid and proximity of training centres to enhance the level of participation.



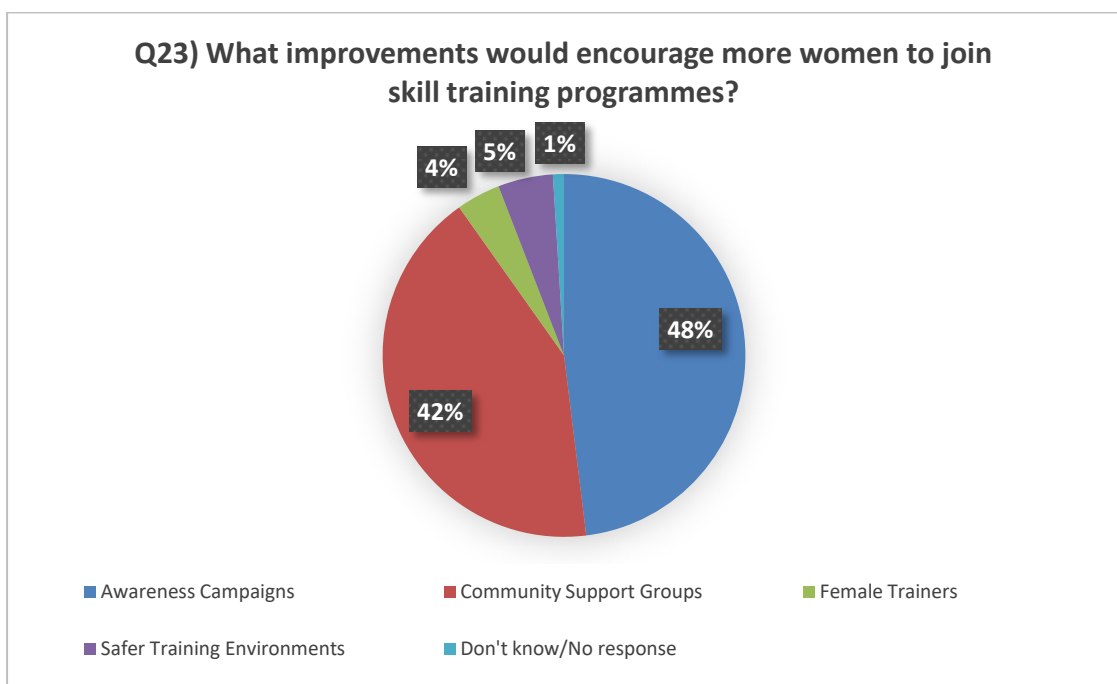
Analysis of Response

63% respondents mentioned that they prefer short term training programme while 37% preferred long term training.



Analysis of Response

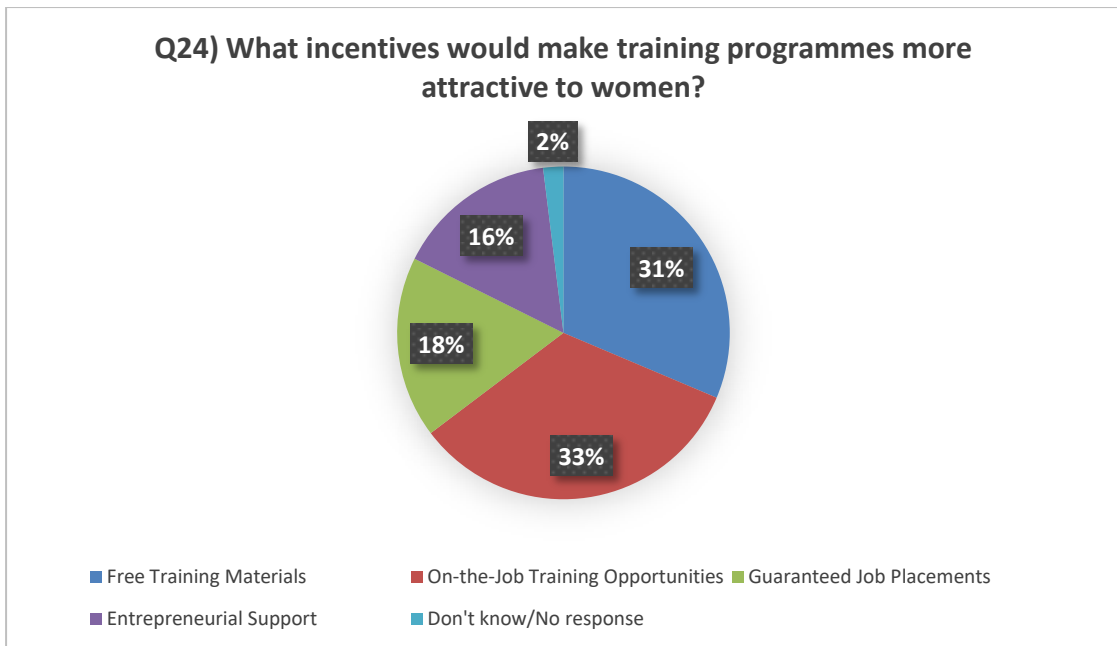
52% respondents felt that technical skills would help in earning a better living. 38% respondents stated that financial management skills were best for better earnings. 10% mentioned that business and marketing skills were their preferred option. It is evident that the preferred skills are technical and financial which should be incorporated.



Analysis of Response

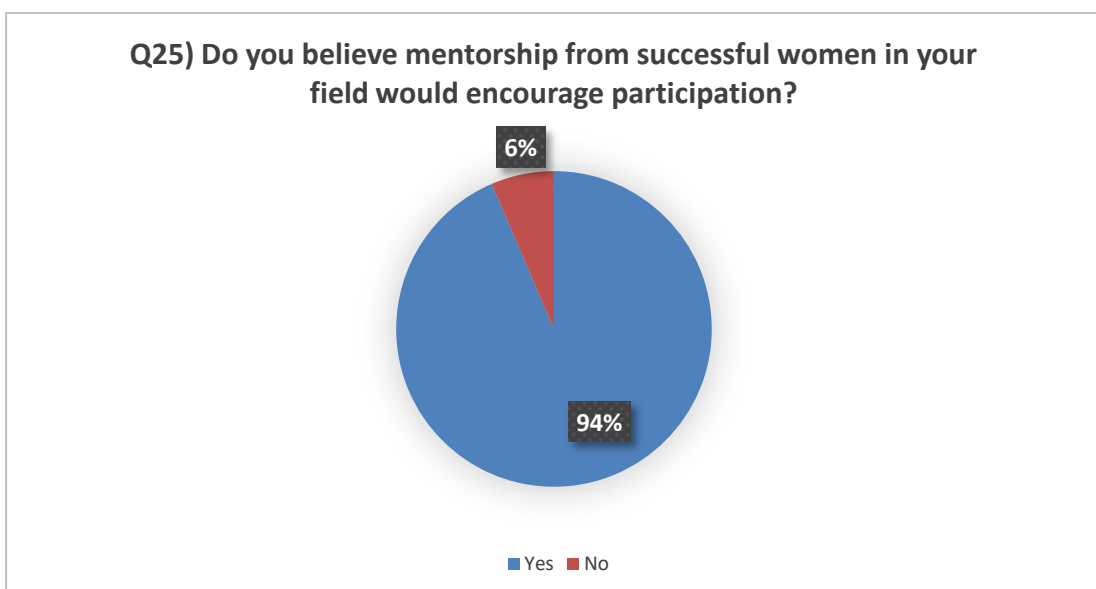
48% respondents felt that awareness campaigns will encourage more women to join skill training programmes. 42% respondents stated that community support groups would be more effective in encouraging more participation. 5% felt that safer training environment will propel more participation. 4% said that having female trainers will encourage more women to join. It is evident that awareness campaign along with community support will enhance the level of women participation in Skill India programmes.





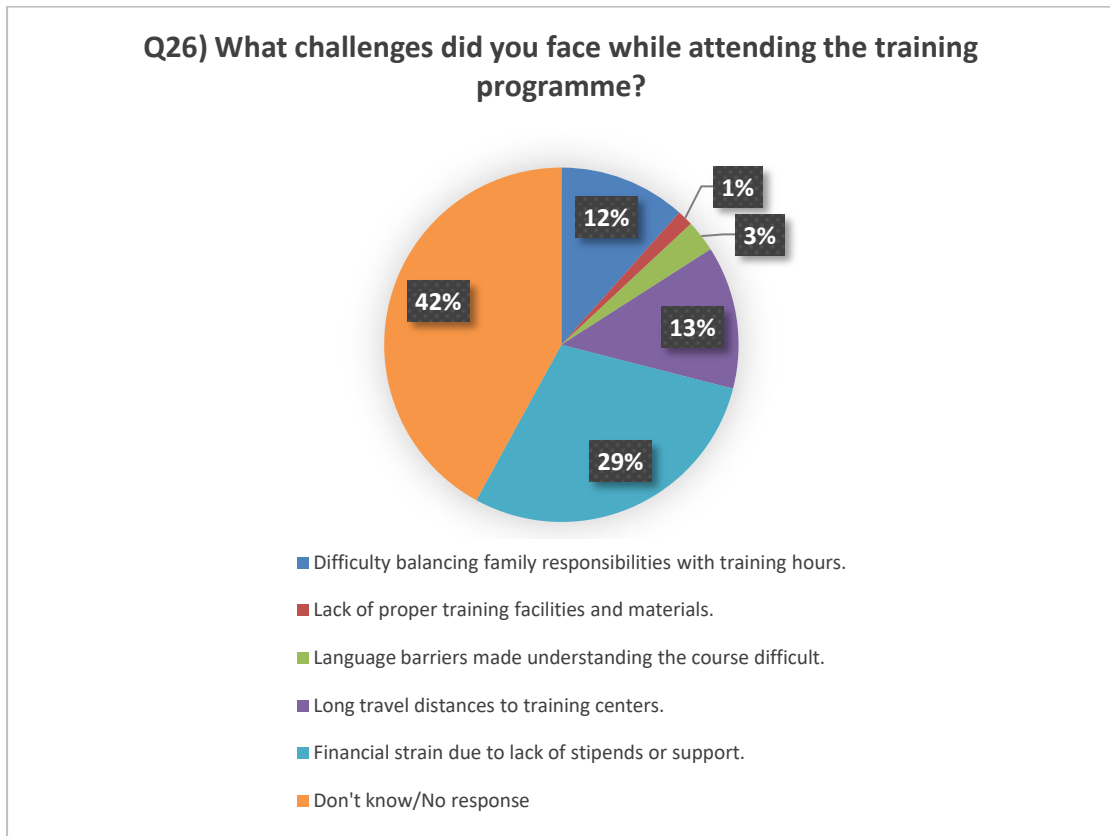
Analysis of Response

33% respondents felt that on the job training opportunities will make the programmes more attractive. 31% respondents stated that free training material will be more effective in encouraging more participation. 18% felt that guaranteed job placement will propel more participation. 16% said that entrepreneurial support will make the programmes more attractive. It brings out that on the job training and free training material were do major incentives, while job placement and entrepreneurial support were also preferred.



Analysis of Response

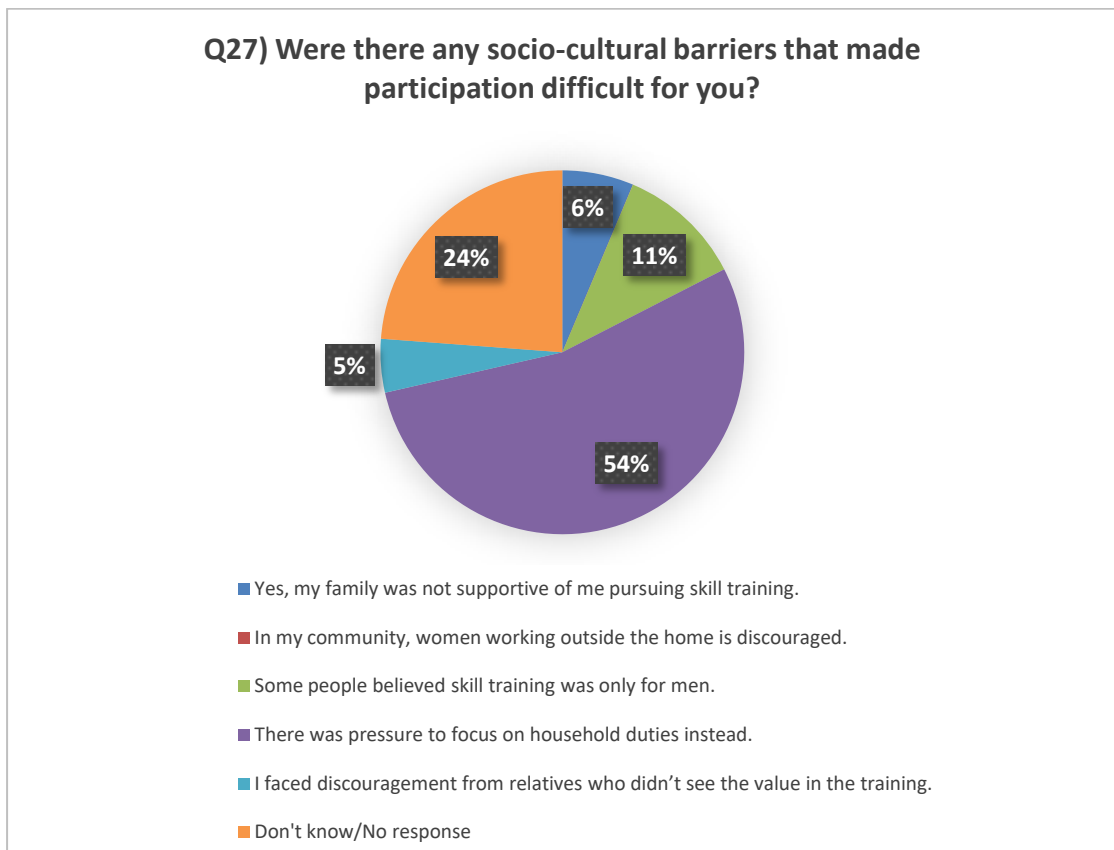
94% respondents felt that mentorship from successful women will encourage participation while 6% did not agree to this. It is evident that organising mentors for the participants will encourage participation.



Analysis of Response

29% respondents stated that financial strain due to lack of stipends was the biggest challenge. 13% respondents identified long travel distances to the training centres as the challenge. 12% felt that they found it difficult to balance family responsibility with training hours. 3% said that language barrier made understanding the course difficult and a mere 1% felt that the lack of proper training facilities and material was the biggest challenge. It brings out that the participants are looking for financial aid and training centres which are close by without entailing long travels. Flexibility in working hours is also appreciated by the participants.

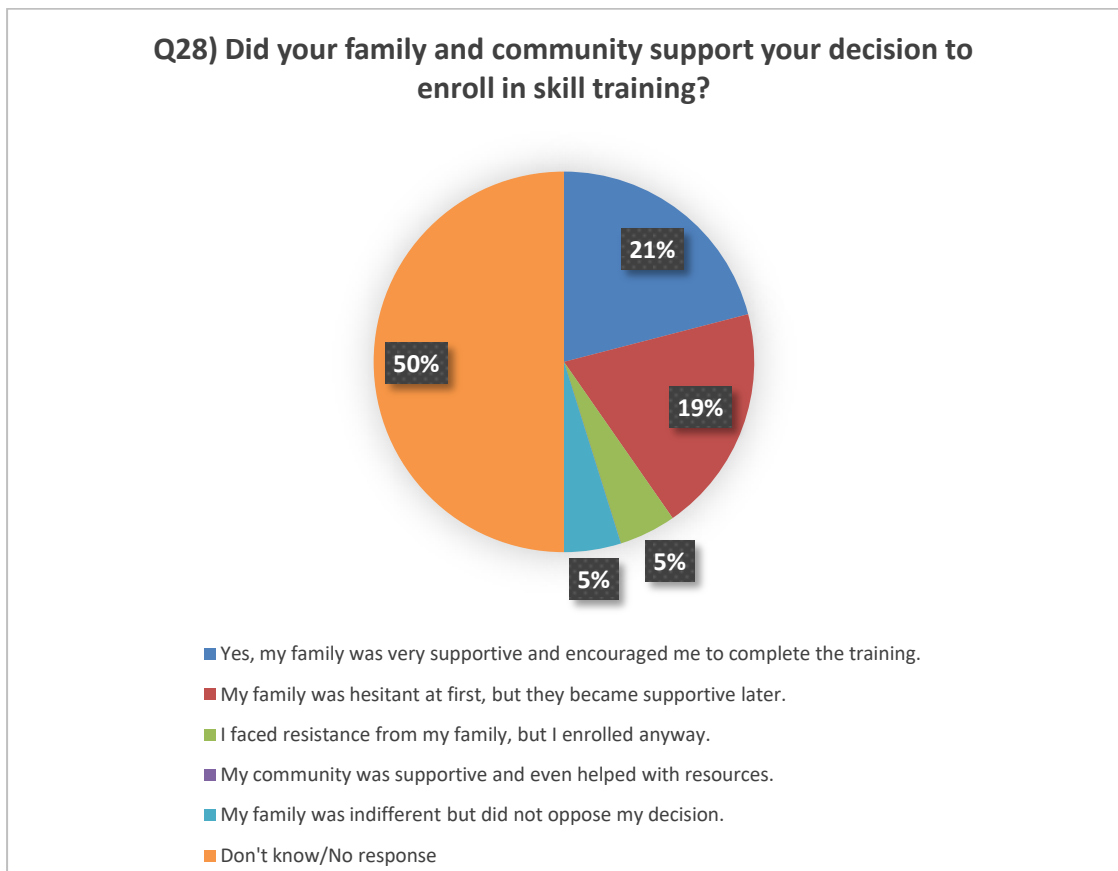




Analysis of Response

54% respondents felt that there was pressure to focus on household duties instead of participating in skill development programmes. 11% respondents stated that society felt that skill development was only meant for men. 6% said that their family was not supportive. 5% said that they faced discouragement from their relatives. It is evident that pressure of household duties is the biggest socio-cultural barrier that makes participation of women difficult in skill development programmes. Social biases regarding women working and discouragement from family and relatives also preclude participation.



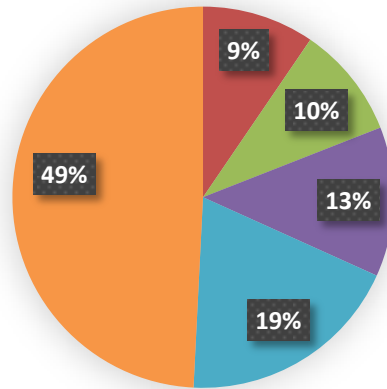


Analysis of Response

21% respondents said that their family was supportive and encourages them to complete the training. 19% respondents stated that their family was hesitant first but later became supportive. 5% each said that their family opposed but they enrolled anyways and although indifferent, their family did not oppose. It is evident that pressure of household duties is the biggest socio-cultural barrier that makes family support for women is not the reason dissuading women from participating.



Q29) Have you been able to secure employment or start a business after the training?



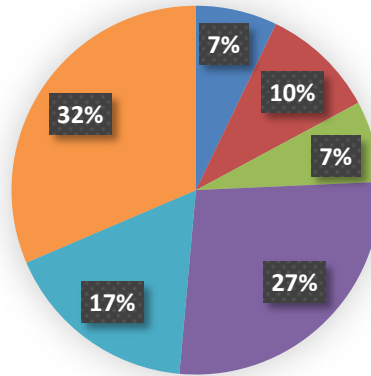
- Yes, I found a job in my trained field.
- I started a small business and it has been successful so far.
- I am still looking for employment opportunities.
- I am using my skills but in a different way than expected.
- I have not yet found a job, but I am hopeful.
- Don't know/No response

Analysis of Response

19% respondents said that they found a job in their trained field. 13% respondents stated that they were using their skills in a different way than expected. 10% each said that they were still looking for a job. 9% said that they have started a small business. It is evident that all participant who completed the training benefited from it in form of a job or own business.



Q30) What improvements would you suggest to make the training more effective and accessible?

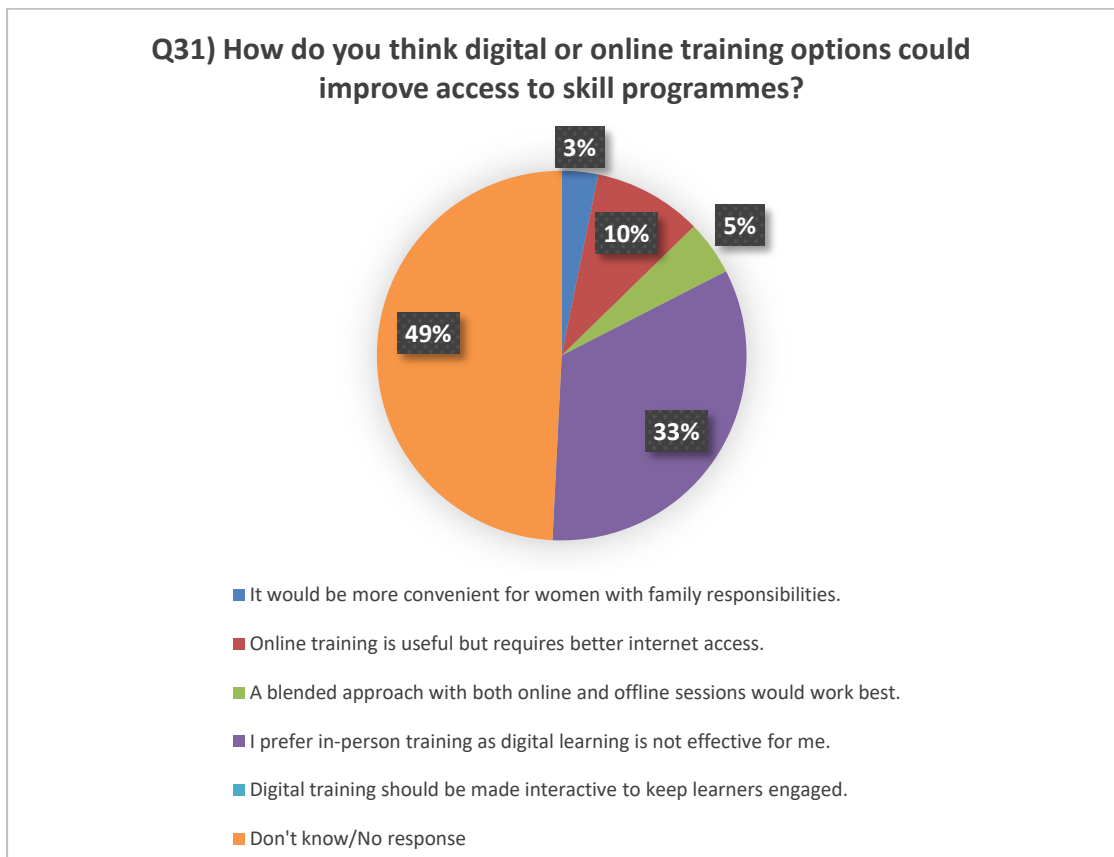


- More hands-on practical sessions.
- Better job placement support after training.
- More awareness campaigns to encourage women to join.
- Training centers should be closer to rural areas.
- More flexible schedules for working women.
- Don't know/No response

Analysis of Response

27% respondents felt that proximity of training centres would make training more effective. 17% respondents voted for that flexible training schedule. 10% said that better job placement support post training will make the difference. 7% each felt that increased awareness campaigns and hands on practical training will enrich the training programme. It brings out that distance of training programme is the biggest concern followed by inflexible training hours. Job placement, practical training and awareness campaigns will collectively increase participation of women in Skill India.





Analysis of Response

33% respondents preferred in person training over digital learning. 10% respondents felt that online training was useful but required better internet. 5% said that a blended approach would work the best. 3% felt that digital would be more beneficial for women with household responsibilities. It brings out that while in person physical training is the preferred mode however women are ok with a blended approach with improved internet facilities.

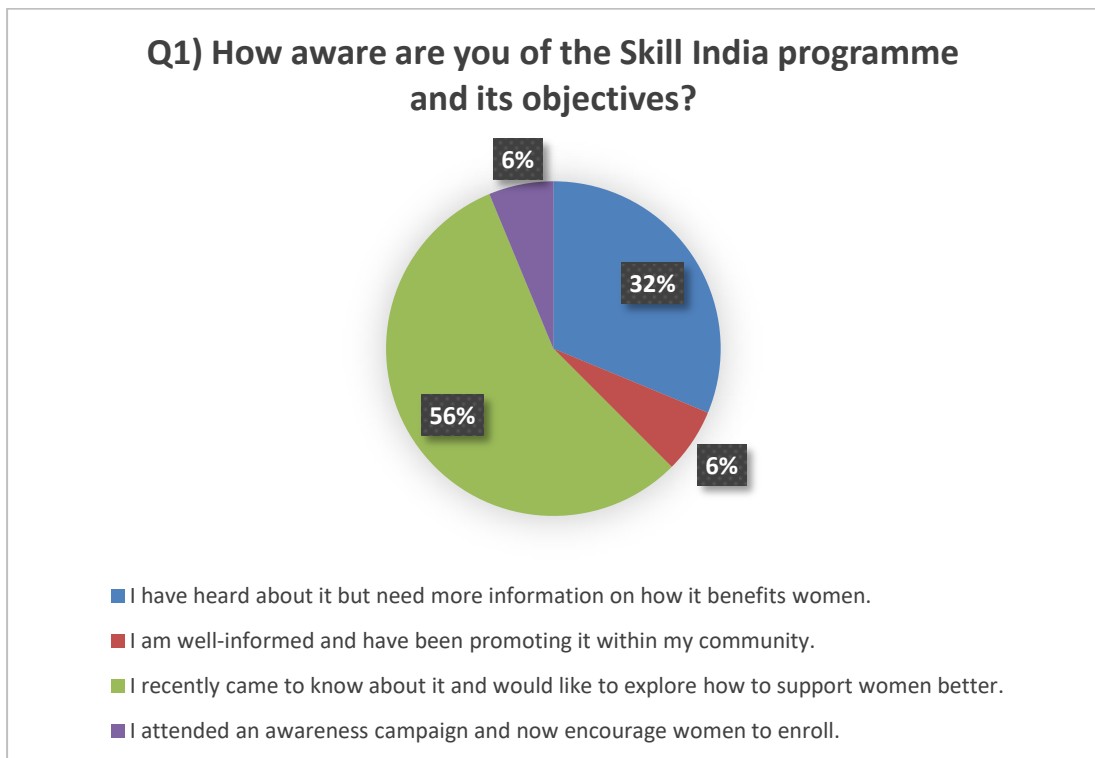


Questionnaire for the Local Community Leaders and Influencers

Individuals who are influential and can make a difference in the society, specially with respect to women. The complete questionnaire comprising 15 questions is attached as Appendix B.

A total of 16 individuals took part in the survey. The survey group consisted of primarily Village Headman and Teachers.

The question-wise response of individuals who participated in the survey along with the analysis is listed below:-

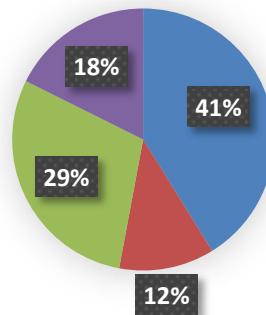


Analysis of Response

88 % respondents had heard about the programme however they were not sure of its benefits. 12% respondents knew about the programme and were actively promoting it in their community. This clearly brings out the lack of awareness and need for widespread campaigns to educate this group of people influencers.



Q2) Do you think the programme is effectively reaching women in your community?

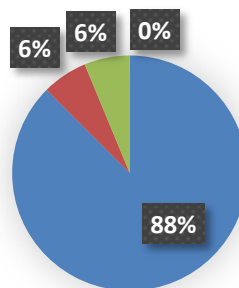


- Not entirely, as awareness is still low in some areas.
- Yes, but many women hesitate to join due to family restrictions.
- The outreach has improved, but more targeted campaigns are needed.
- More language-specific and culturally adapted information would help reach more women.

Analysis of Response

70 % respondents believed that the awareness is low in some areas and has improved a bit in other areas. 18% respondents felt the need for language and cultural specific programmes and 12% were of the opinion that it is the family restrictions that preclude the women from joining these programmes. This brings out the lack of awareness and need for more targeted awareness campaign in local languages which are more focussed and aligned culturally to educate the women in remote areas.

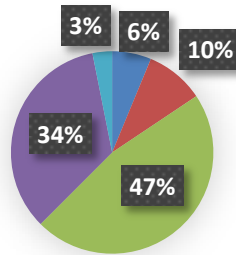
Q3) What are the biggest socio-cultural barriers preventing women from enrolling in these programmes?



- Household responsibilities limit their ability to attend training.
- Traditional gender roles discourage women from pursuing skill-based education.
- Lack of acceptance from family members hinders participation.
- Social stigma around working women in certain fields remains an issue.



Q5) Are there specific skills that you believe would be more beneficial for women in your community?

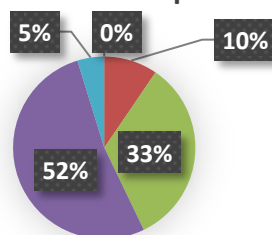


- Tailoring and handicrafts for self-employment.
- Digital skills to access online job opportunities.
- Agriculture and food processing to enhance traditional livelihoods.
- Entrepreneurial training to start and manage small businesses.
- Any Other

Analysis of Response

47 % respondents believed that agriculture and food processing is most beneficial as a skill for the women of Meghalaya. 34% respondents stated that entrepreneurial training to start a small business is the best choice. 10% voted for Digital skills while 6% said tailoring and handicraft was most suited. This brings out that there is a bias towards agriculture which is the main stay of the State and to go with it is the training on entrepreneurial skills.

Q6) Have you noticed any economic or social impact of skill training on women who have completed the programme?

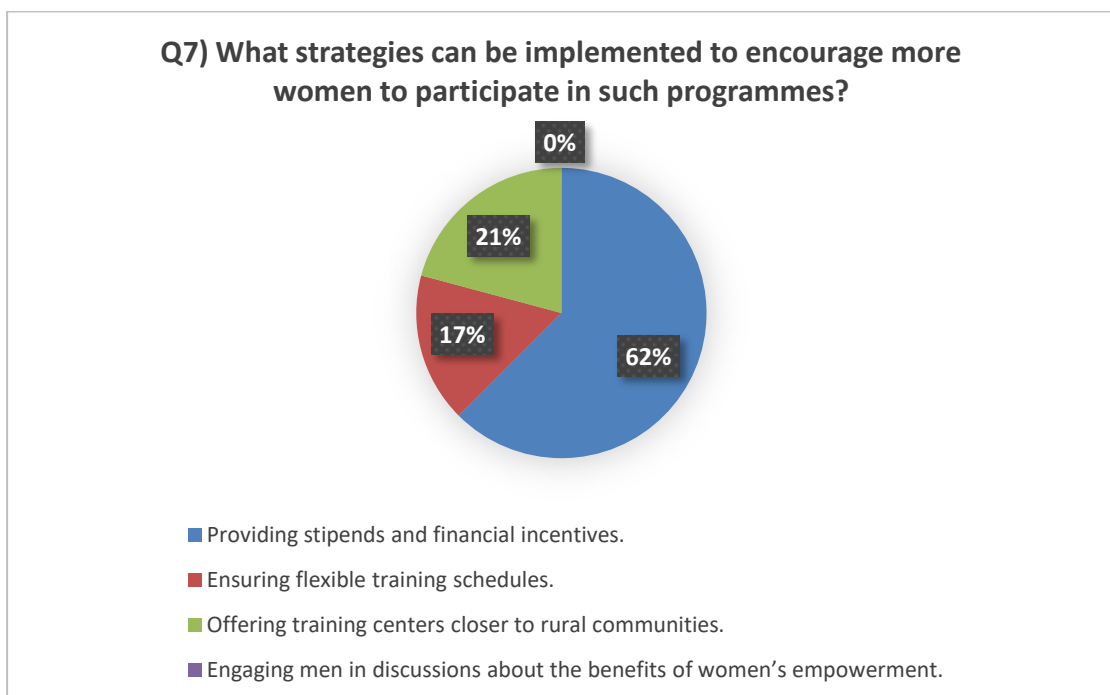


- Yes, many women have gained financial independence.
- Some have started small businesses and are supporting their families.
- Women's confidence and decision-making power have improved.
- Somewhat, however there are still challenges in job placement and income stability.
- Don't know/No response.



Analysis of Response

52% respondents believe that though there is a slight enhancement in the social and economic status of women however, challenges in job placement still exists. 43% respondents felt that the confidence and decision making ability of women has increased along with financial independence. This brings out that there is a positive effect of the skill development programmes, however there is a requirement of ensuring post training utilisation.

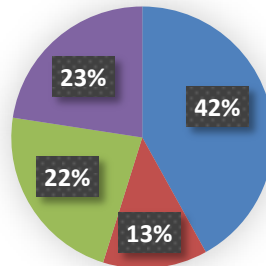


Analysis of Response

62% respondents were of the opinion that providing financial assistance would be the best strategy to encourage women participation. 21% believed that proximity of training centres was the key while 17% felt that flexible training schedule would provide the necessary impetus. This brings out that there is need to monetarily incentivise the skill development programmes and bring them closer to the target audience.



Q8) Do you believe that family and societal support play a crucial role in the success of these initiatives?

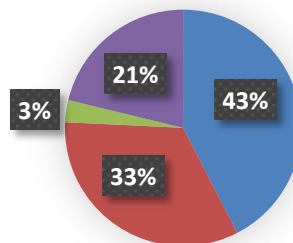


- Yes, without family support, many women cannot participate.
- Community acceptance makes a big difference in enrollment rates.
- Government schemes should also focus on educating families about the benefits.
- Involving local leaders in advocacy efforts can create more acceptance.

Analysis of Response

42% respondents believe that family support is essential for a woman to participate in the programmes. 23% felt that local leaders and influencers can create more awareness and acceptance. 22% respondents said that the Government should focus on the families and educate them regarding the benefits while 13% felt community acceptance was the biggest factor. It has been unanimously established that family and societal support plays a crucial role in women participation.

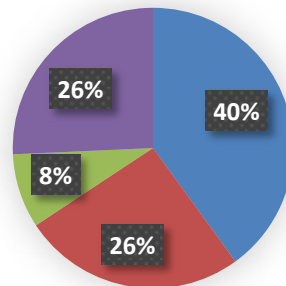
Q9) How can government and NGOs work together to enhance skill development efforts?



- By collaborating on outreach and awareness programs.
- Providing financial aid and scholarships for women.
- Ensuring more female trainers and mentors in skill programs.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for better job placements.



Q11) How can traditional knowledge and local crafts be integrated into skill training?

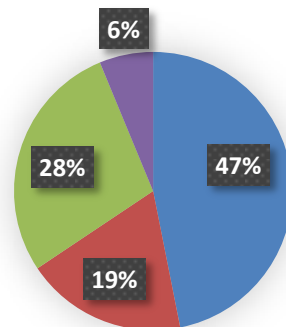


- Including local art and handicrafts in the curriculum.
- Connecting women with larger markets to sell their handmade products.
- Collaborating with cultural organizations to preserve traditional skills.
- Providing modern business and marketing skills alongside traditional training.

Analysis of Response

52% respondents believed that women should be imparted modern marketing skills alongside traditional training to connect women with markets to sell their handicraft. 40% respondents felt that including local art and handicraft in the curriculum was the way forward. It is evident that the locals value their traditional craft and this need to be kept in mind while planning the curriculum.

Q12) What role do you think local businesses and entrepreneurs can play in supporting women's skill development?



- Offering apprenticeships and real-world work experience.
- Sponsoring training programs for women.
- Providing mentorship and funding opportunities for startups.
- Hiring trained women in local businesses.



Analysis of Response

47% respondents opined that local businesses and entrepreneurs should support the skill development programme by offering apprenticeship and hands-on experience. 28% feel that they should provide mentorship and funding opportunities. 19% believe that they should sponsor the training programmes. It can be seen that local business have a pivotal role and should be exploited by the government make the skilling programmes a wholesome exercise.

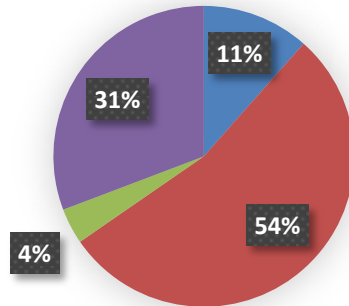


Analysis of Response

63% respondents opined that successful examples of women benefitting from skill development programmes exist but at a very low scale. 26% respondents feel that many women have benefitted through agriculture training, while 11% stated that a few have secured jobs in hospitality industry. It is evident that Government's effort have not reaped the desired results yet and a lot needs to be done specially as hand holding post termination of the skill training.



Q14) What specific outreach methods would be effective in promoting skill development among women?



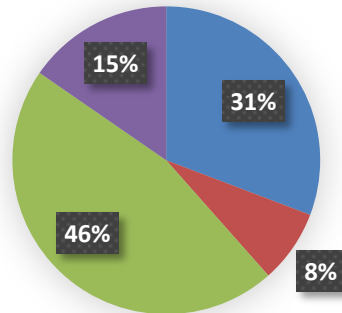
- Door-to-door awareness campaigns.
- Community meetings and success story sharing.
- Using local media and radio for wider outreach.
- Leveraging digital platforms to reach younger women.

Analysis of Response

54% respondents felt that community meeting and sharing success stories is the best outreach programme for promoting skill development among women. 31% respondents believed leveraging digital platforms, is the way to go forward specially with respect to younger women. 11% were of the opinion that door to door campaigning is the best way to achieve wider women population. Only 4% respondents felt that the use of local media and radio would widen the outreach. It can be seen that the best way forward would be a combination of all tools available with major focus on community meetings and social media platforms.



Q15) Do you see any generational shifts in attitudes towards women's participation in skill programmes?



- Yes, younger women are more open to vocational training.
- Older generations still resist change, but it is improving.
- Parents today are more supportive than before.
- Women are increasingly seeking financial independence and career growth.

Analysis of Response

46% respondents felt that present day parents are more supportive as compared to past. 31% felt that younger women are more amenable to skill development training. 15% respondents were of the opinion that women are now increasingly seeking financial independence and career growth. Lastly, 8% respondents believed that the older generation is also changing and opening up to the idea of women empowerment. All the responses point towards the fact that outlook of the society is changing for the better and now it is up to the government and its machinery to ensure that the desired training is imparted for the benefit of women in particular and society in general.

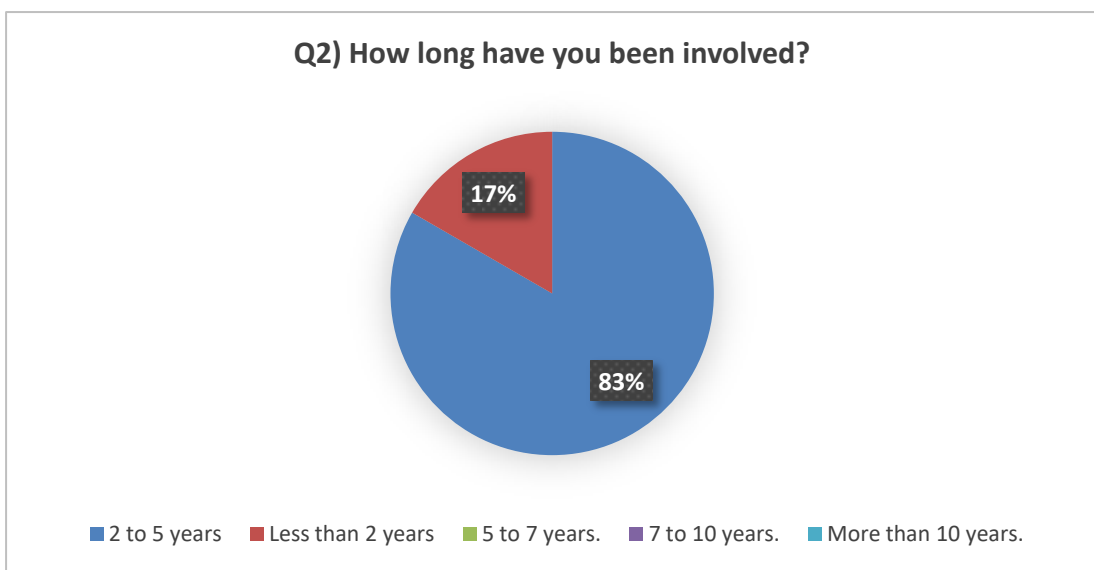


Questionnaire for the Skill India Programme Trainers and Coordinators.

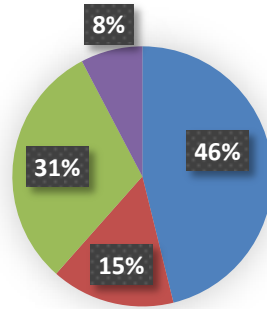
Individuals who are in the Skill India Programmes as trainers/ coordinators were interviewed to obtain their perspective of the issues at hand. The complete questionnaire comprising 17 questions is attached as Appendix C.

A total of 6 individuals took part in the survey out of which 3 were males and 3 females. The age varied from 27 to 36 years.

The question-wise response of individuals who participated in the survey along with the analysis is listed below:-



Q3) What are the key challenges you face in delivering training to women participants?

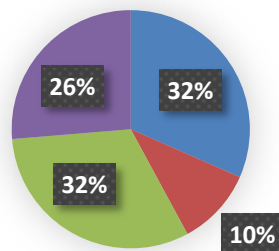


- Low attendance due to family responsibilities and transport issues.
- Many women lack confidence and hesitate to participate actively.
- We need better resources and updated training materials.
- Language barriers and lack of digital access hinder learning.

Analysis of Response

46% respondents stated low attendance was the biggest hindrance while delivering training. 31% respondents said that better training resources were needed for imparting training. 15% stated that women hesitated in participating actively. 8% felt that language barrier was the biggest challenge. It can be seen that low attendance due to family responsibilities and transport issues and lack of training resources and updated training material were the biggest challenges while delivering training.

Q4) Have you observed any common difficulties faced by women trainees during the programme?

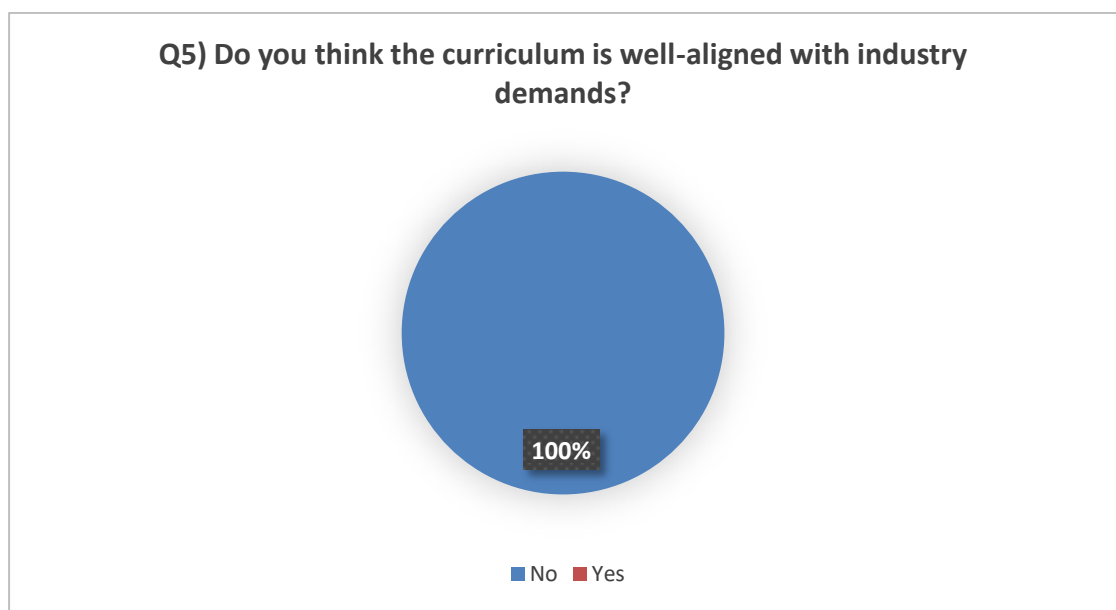


- Balancing household duties with training schedules.
- Limited mobility due to societal restrictions.
- Financial constraints making it difficult to continue training.
- Limited exposure to employment opportunities post-training.



Analysis of Response

32% respondents stated that balancing household responsibilities with training schedule was the most common difficulty faced by women participants during the training. 32 % felt that financial constraints make it difficult to continue training. 26% mentioned that it is the limited exposure to employment opportunities post training that was the problem. 10% felt that limited mobility due to societal restrictions was the major impediment. It can be seen that household duties and financial constraints have been identified as the biggest challenges while delivering training to women participants. Lack of networking opportunities for post training employment is also a prime reason for low attendance.

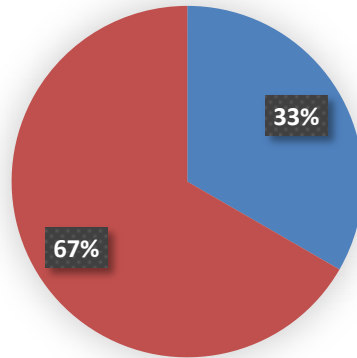


Analysis of Response

100% respondents unanimously stated that the curriculum is not aligned with industry demands. Drastic steps need to be taken by the authorities to make necessary amendments.



Q6) Can you give suggestions for making the programme more meaningful.

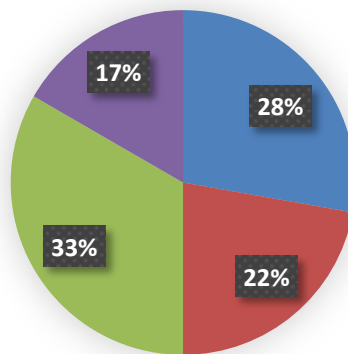


- Focus on Entrepreneurship.
- Focus on Post Training Jobs.
- Focus on over all Empowerment.
- Focus on enhancing of Self Esteem.

Analysis of Response

67% respondents stated that more focus is required on post training jobs to make it more meaningful. 33% felt that the focus should be on facilitating entrepreneurship. There is a requirement of amending the matrix of skill development to ensure job placement and facilitate entrepreneurship post training.

Q7) How do you ensure that training is accessible and inclusive for women from different backgrounds?

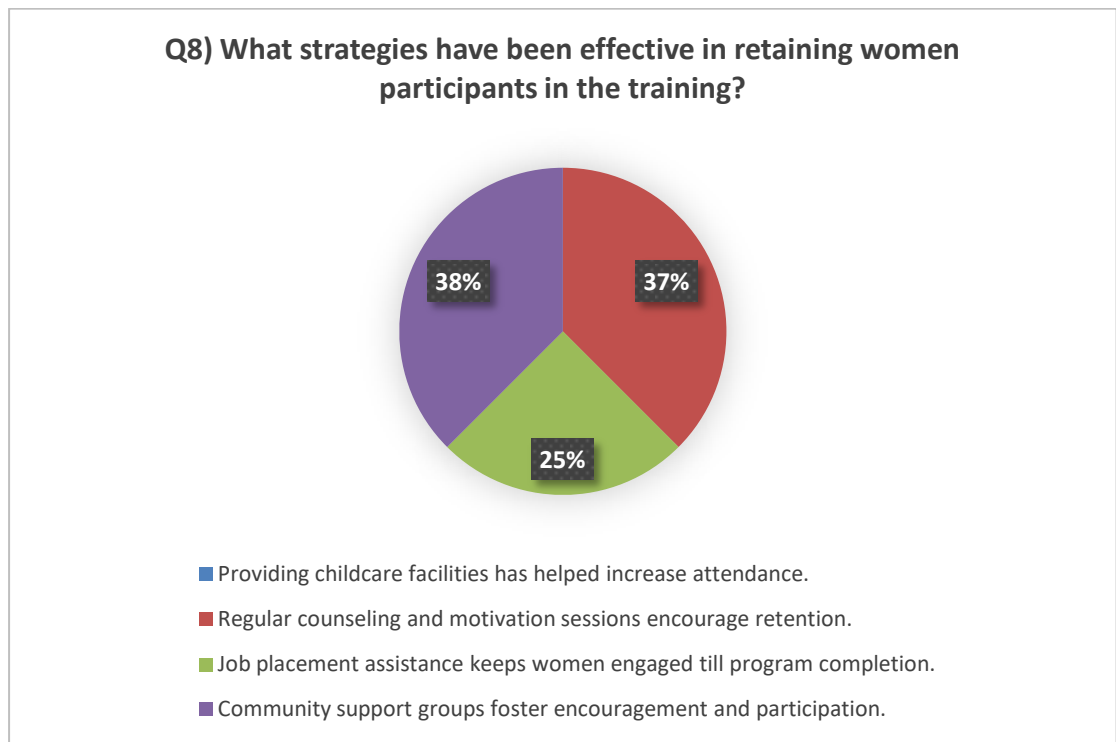


- We offer flexible training schedules to accommodate household duties.
- We provide local language training to address literacy barriers.
- We partner with NGOs to extend outreach in rural areas.
- Financial aid and scholarships help economically disadvantaged women participate.



Analysis of Response

33% respondents stated that they partner with NGOs to extend outreach in rural areas. 28% mentioned that flexible training schedule is resorted to accommodate household duties. 22% stated that local language training is adopted to address literacy barrier. 17% respondents felt that financial aid helps economically disadvantaged women to participate. This brings out that the role of NGOs and flexible training hours are very important and needs to be legitimised in the Skill India campaign.

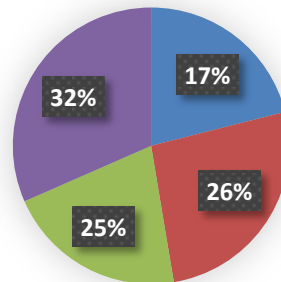


Analysis of Response

38% respondents felt that community support fosters encouragement. 37% stated that regular counselling and motivation encourages retention. 25% respondents mentioned that job placement assistance keeps women engaged in the programme. This brings out that community support is essential and hence their involvement along with regular motivation has to be ensured.



Q9) Are there any additional resources or facilities you believe would enhance the training experience?

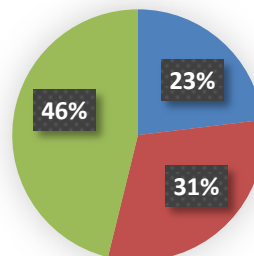


- Better digital learning infrastructure would improve accessibility.
- More mentorship and networking opportunities for trainees.
- Hands-on workshops with industry professionals.
- Incorporating life skills and financial literacy into the curriculum.

Analysis of Response

32% respondents stated that incorporating life skills and financial literacy into the curriculum will enhance the training experience. 26% believed mentorship and networking opportunity was the key. 25% stated that hands on workshops with industry will be beneficial while 17% felt that better digital learning infrastructure would improve training experience. This brings out that life skills, mentorship and workshops are the key to ensuring better training experience.

Q10) How do you assess the impact of training on women's employment and entrepreneurship outcomes?

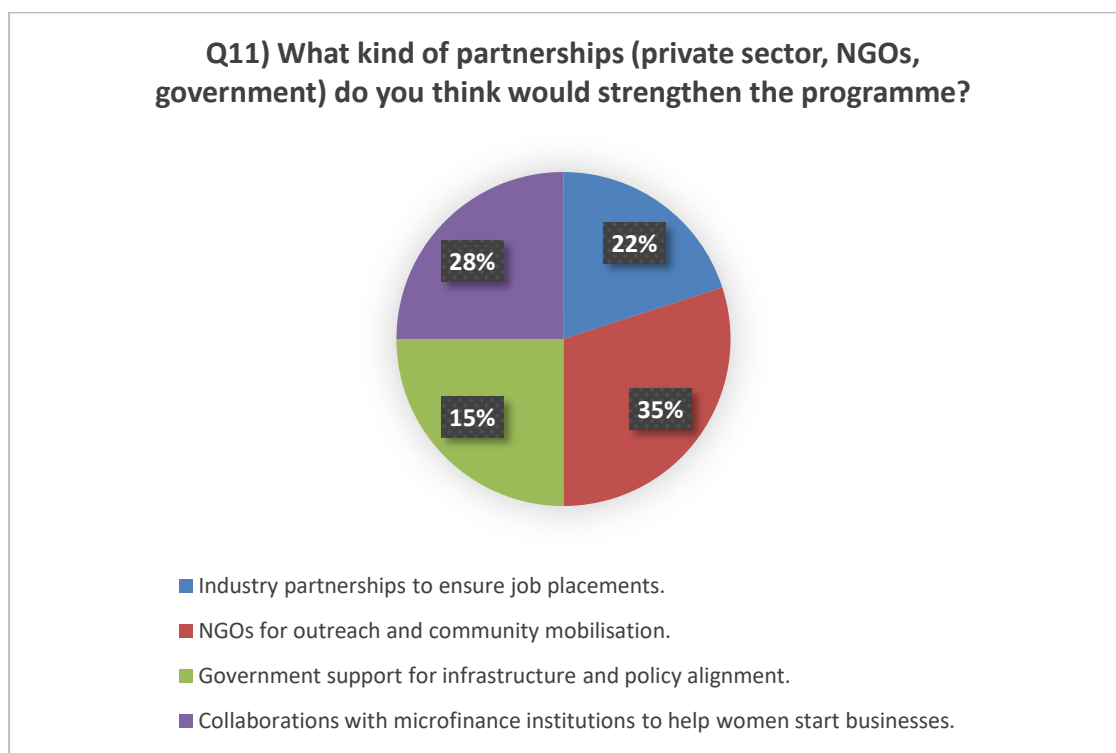


- We track employment rates and income growth post-training.
- Entrepreneurship success is measured by the number of new businesses launched.
- Follow-up surveys and interviews help us understand long-term impact.
- Partnerships with employers provide insight into hiring trends.



Analysis of Response

46% respondents mentioned that follow-up surveys and interviews are used to assess the impact of training. 31% stated that the impact is measured by the number of new businesses launched. 23% respondents mentioned that employment rates and income growth are tracked for training to analyse the impact. This brings out that although there is a method to assess the impact however it needs to be stream lined and standardised uniformly.

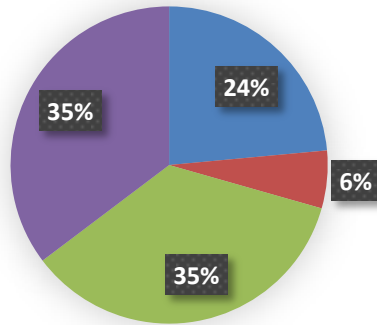


Analysis of Response

35% respondents felt that partnership with NGOs would strengthen the programme. 28% stated that collaboration with microfinance institutions will help the women start business. 22% respondents mentioned that industry partnership was essential for job placement while 15% felt that government support for infrastructure and policy alignment was the key. This brings out that the trainers and coordinators feel that NGO, micro financiers and industry will be in a better position to deliver than the government.



Q12) What changes would you suggest to improve the effectiveness of Skill India training for women?

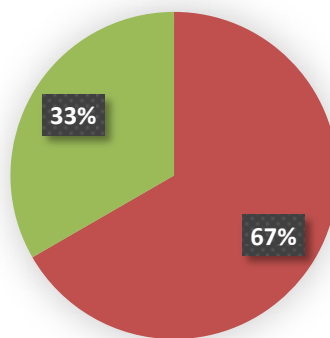


- More industry-specific courses and certifications.
- Greater emphasis on digital skills and online work.
- Stronger post-training support and mentorship.
- Expansion of training centers to remote areas.

Analysis of Response

35% respondents felt that expanding the training centres to remote areas will improve the effectiveness of Skill India. 35% stated that post training support and mentorship was the key. 24% respondents mentioned that industry specific courses and certifications will enhance the effectiveness. This brings out the requirement of reaching out to remote areas and backing it up with post training support is required.

Q13) Are there mentorship or networking opportunities available for trained women?

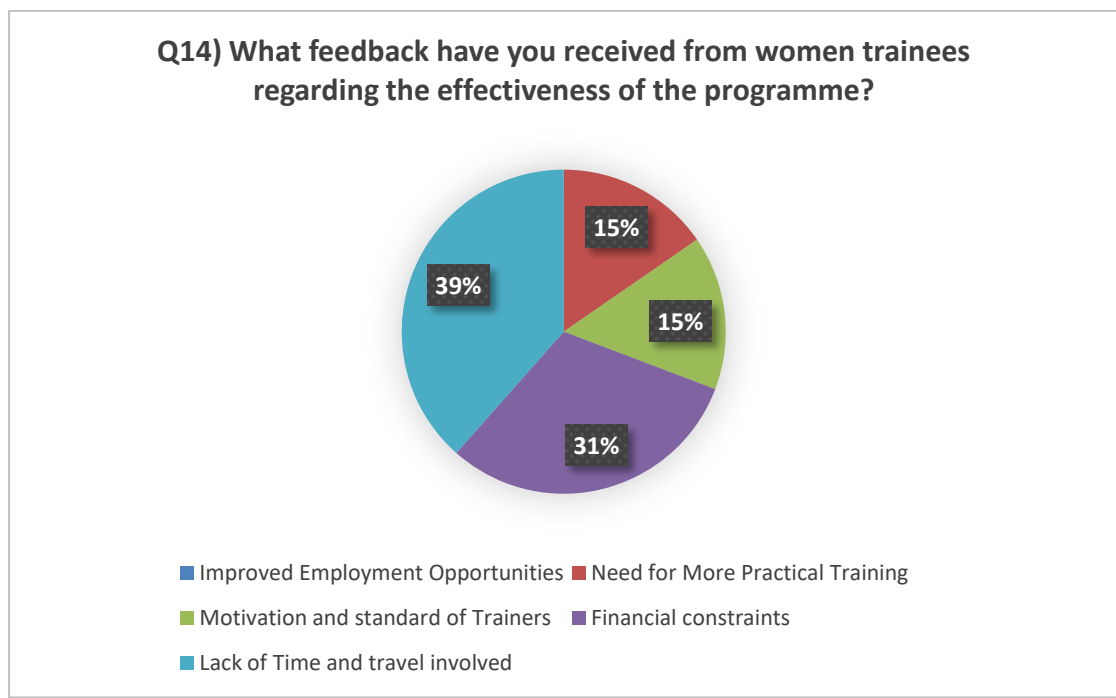


- Yes
- No
- Limited



Analysis of Response

67% respondents felt that there are no mentorship or networking opportunities available for trained women while 33% believed that it exists. This brings out that there is a requirement of ensuring proper mentorship and adequate networking opportunities for women after they have completed their training to benefit from the acquired knowledge.

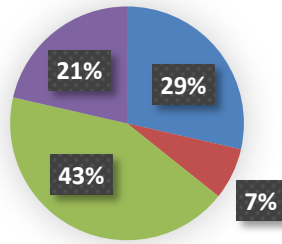


Analysis of Response

39% respondents felt that lack of time and travel involved was impeding the effectiveness of the programme. 31% stated that financial constraints were the biggest impediment. 15% respondents mentioned that the motivation and standard of trainers was below par and another 15% felt that there was a need for more practical training to ensure effectiveness. This brings out that the outreach of these programmes needs to be increased to reach remote places and adequate financial incentive must be incorporated in the programme.



Q15) How do you address language and literacy barriers in training?

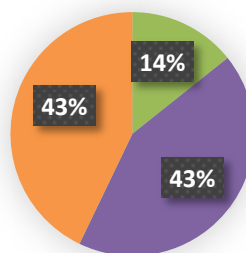


- Using regional languages and visual aids in training.
- Providing literacy support classes alongside technical training.
- Encouraging peer learning among trainees.
- Developing easy-to-understand training materials.

Analysis of Response

43% respondents mentioned that they encourage peer learning among trainees. 29% stated that they use regional language and visual aids for training. 21% respondents mentioned there is a requirement of developing easy to understand training material. This brings the requirement of reaching out to remote areas and backing it up with post training support.

Q16) What measures are in place to support women facing financial constraints?

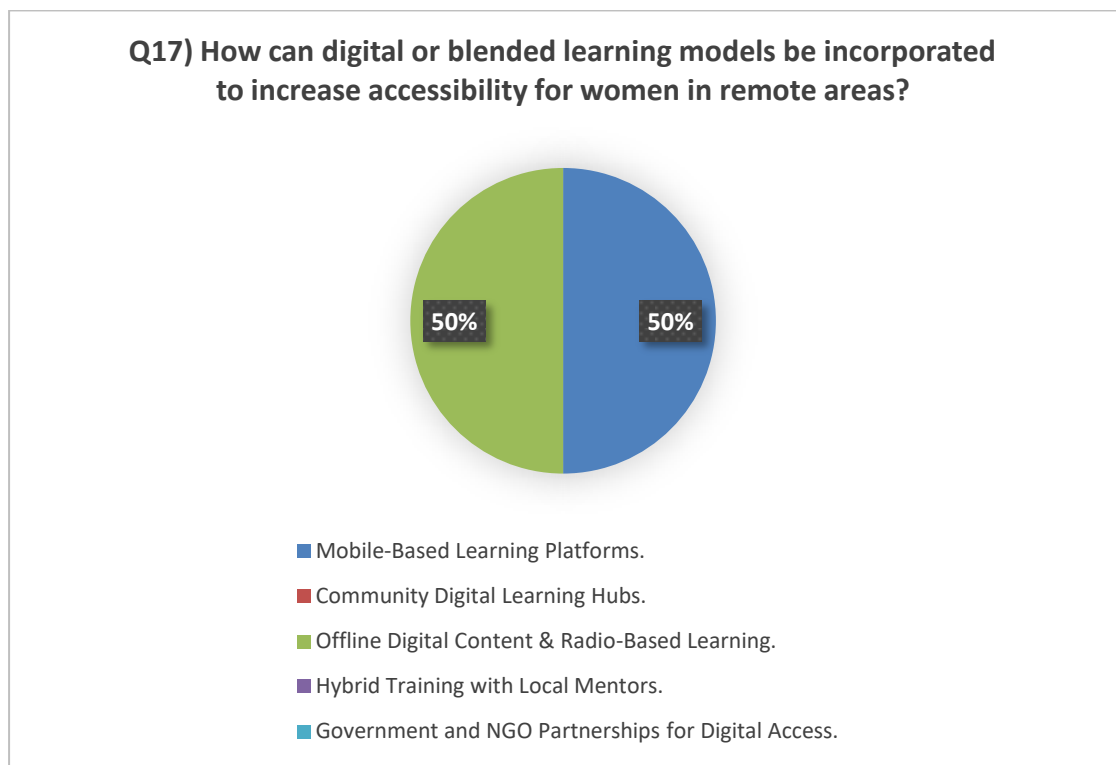


- Scholarships and Fee Waivers.
- Stipends and Monetary Support.
- Microfinance and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- Free Training and Toolkits.
- Employment-Linked Training with Assured Placement.
- Don't know/No response.



Analysis of Response

43% respondents stated that free training and toolkits are in place for women facing financial constraints. 14% mentioned that microfinance and SHGs are available for providing the requisite support. 43% respondents either did not respond or weren't sure of the answer. This brings out that a more robust mechanism is needed in order to support the women in financial distress.



Analysis of Response

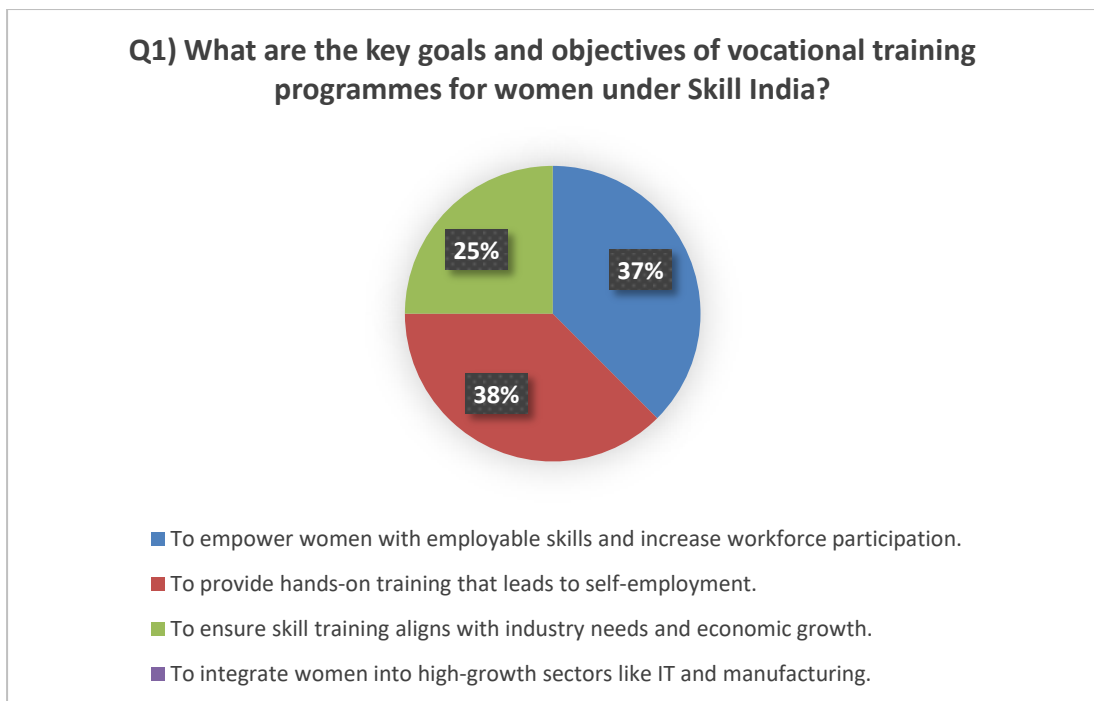
50% respondents felt that offline digital content and radio based learning will help in increasing the accessibility for women in remote areas. 50% stated that government and NGO partnership was required for better digital access across the State. The house was divided between increasing the access and going offline.



Questionnaire for the Government Officials Responsible for the Skill Development Programme.

Individuals who are part of the Skill India Programme in the official capacity were interviewed to obtain their perspective of the issues at hand. The complete questionnaire comprising 15 questions is attached as Appendix D.

A total of 6 individuals took part in the survey out of which 3 were males and 3 females. Their age varied from 28 to 40 years. The question-wise response of individuals who participated in the survey along with the analysis is listed below:-

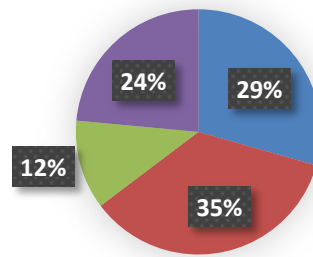


Analysis of Response

38% respondents mentioned that the key goals and objective of vocational training programme was to provide hands on training that leads to self employment. 37% stated that it was to empower women with employable skills and increase the workforce participation. 25% opined that the key objective was to ensure skill training aligns with industry needs.



Q2) How does the government ensure inclusivity and equal access for women in these programmes?

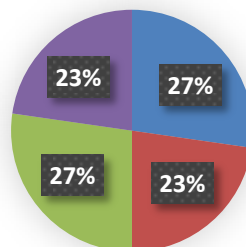


- By offering targeted outreach and financial incentives for participation.
- We collaborate with local NGOs to encourage women's enrollment.
- We provide flexible training schedules to accommodate women's responsibilities.
- Special focus is given to marginalised communities and remote regions.

Analysis of Response

35% respondents stated that the government ensures inclusivity and equal access for women by collaborating with local NGOs to encourage women's enrolment. 29% stated targeted outreach and financial incentives for participation. 24% mentioned special focus being given to marginalised communities and remote regions as the tool. 12% stated that flexible training schedule is utilised to accommodate women's responsibilities. The approach is well balanced.

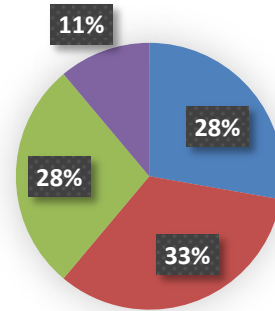
Q3) What challenges have been identified in implementing skill development initiatives for women in Meghalaya?



- Remote locations and socio-cultural barriers hinder widespread adoption.
- Lack of infrastructure and trained female instructors is a challenge.
- Financial constraints prevent many women from completing the programme.
- Job placement and post-training support need to be strengthened.



Q8) Are there any new policy initiatives or upcoming changes to improve vocational training for women?

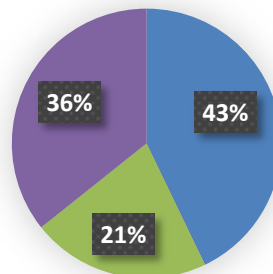


- Expansion of digital and hybrid learning models.
- New funding schemes for women entrepreneurs.
- More vocational training centers in rural and tribal areas.
- Increased collaboration with industries for job-oriented courses.

Analysis of Response

33% respondents stated that new funding scheme for women entrepreneurs is underway. 28% each stated that expansion of digital and hybrid learning models and more vocational training centres in rural and tribal areas is being planned. 11% respondents stated that increased collaboration with industries for job oriented courses is being worked upon.

Q9) How does the government track employment outcomes and entrepreneurial success of trained women?

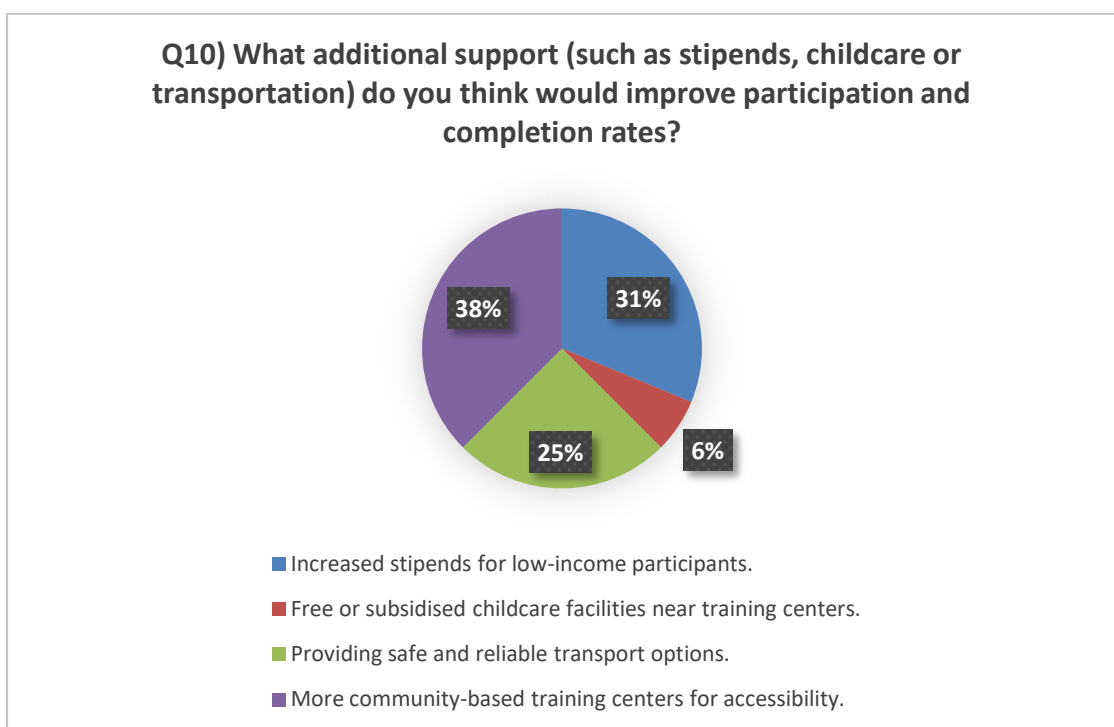


- Regular follow-ups and alumni tracking programmes.
- Partnerships with job portals and recruitment agencies.
- Annual impact assessment studies.
- Encouraging women to report success stories and challenges faced.



Analysis of Response

43% respondents stated that employment outcomes and entrepreneurial success are tracked by regular follow-ups and alumni tracking. 36% stated that encouraging women to report success stories and challenges faced was the preferred tracking mechanism. 21% respondents stated that annual impact assessment studies are used to track the outcomes. It is evident that there is a requirement for streamlining the tracking process.

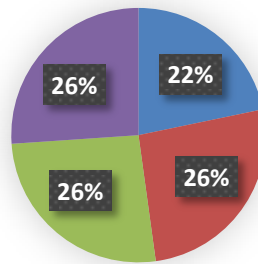


Analysis of Response

38% respondents felt that community based training centres to ensure better accessibility would improve participation. 31% stated that provision of stipend to low income participants would do the trick. 25% respondents mentioned that providing safe and reliable transport options Only 6% felt that free or subsidised childcare facilities near training centres will enhance participation. Due cognisance must be taken of the needs of the participants and assistance on need based must be incorporated in the structure of the programme.



Q11) What role do state-level policies play in ensuring the sustainability of skill development programmes?

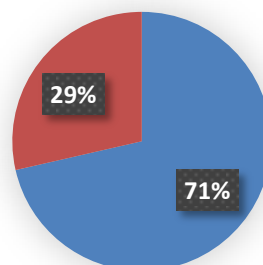


- State policies help align training with regional industry needs.
- Funding from state governments ensures continuity and scalability.
- Local governance plays a role in promoting women's participation.
- State-led initiatives bridge gaps in national programs.

Analysis of Response

26% respondents felt that the major role of state-level policies was funding ensure continuity and scalability. 26% stated that local governance plays a key role in promoting women's participation. 26% respondents mentioned that the key was state led initiatives bridge gaps in national programme. 22% felt that it is the state policies that help align training with regional industry needs. It is evident that the role of state as well as local government is very important for success of these programmes.

Q12) Are there any success stories or case studies of women who have significantly benefited from Skill India programmes?

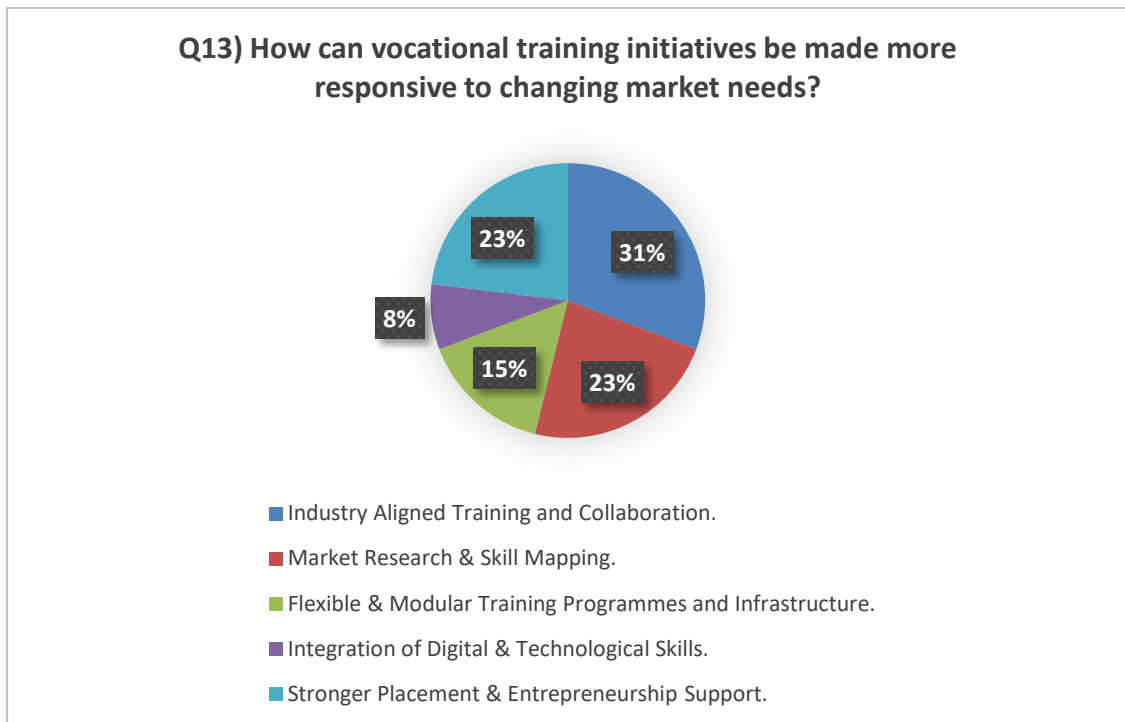


- Yes, several women have started their own businesses post-training.
- Many have secured stable jobs in hospitality and IT sectors.
- Entrepreneurial training has led to thriving micro-enterprises.
- Women have become role models and mentors in their communities.



Analysis of Response

71% respondents felt that several women have started their own businesses post training, thereby benefitting from the Skill India programme. 29% stated that many participants have secured stable jobs in hospitality and IT sectors. It is evident that most women who have completed the training have benefitted the programme.

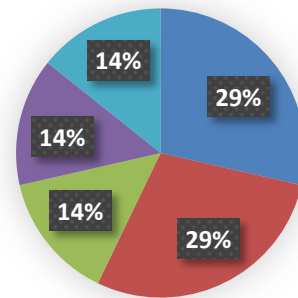


Analysis of Response

31% respondents felt that the training can be made more responsive if it is aligned to the industry needs. 23% stated that market research and skill mapping will make it more responsive. 23% respondents mentioned that it is stronger placement and entrepreneurship support which will make the programme more responsive. 15% felt that it is flexible and modular training programme and infrastructure will be the key. Only 8% felt that integration of digital and technological skills will make the training more responsive. It is evident that it has to be combined advantage of all the methods which should be harnessed for making the programme more responsive to the changing needs of the markets.



Q14) What steps are being taken to improve awareness and outreach efforts for women in remote and rural areas?



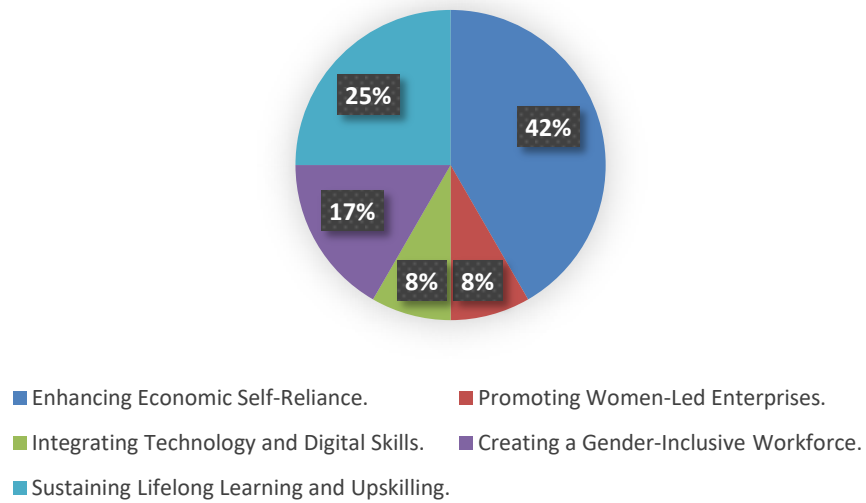
- Community Mobilisation through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and NGOs.
- Use of Digital/ Social Media and Traditional Communication Channels.
- Door-to-Door Awareness Campaigns.
- Engaging the Community Leaders.
- Mobile Training & Information Units.

Analysis of Response

29% respondents each mentioned community mobilisation through SHGs/ NGOs and use of digital/ social media and traditional communication channel. 14% stated that door-to-door awareness campaigns are being used. Another 14% respondents mentioned that it is engagement with community leaders is the key. The last 14% felt that it is mobile training and information units are used to spread the awareness. It is evident that government is employing all means to spread the awareness regarding Skill India programme.



Q15) What are the long-term goals for women's skill development in Meghalaya?



Analysis of Response

42% respondents mentioned promoting women led enterprises in Meghalaya as the long term goal of the government. 25% stated that the goal was to sustain lifelong learning and upskilling. 17% respondents mentioned that creating a gender inclusive workforce was the aim. 8% believed that it was integrating technology and digital skills. 8% identified enhancing economic self-reliance as the long term goal of the government. All the goals are inter related and inter twined and the government will do well to achieve any or all of them.

Interview with Subject Expert

In addition to the questionnaire a number of formal and informal interactions were undertaken with subject experts in fields related to the research topic. The valuable inputs obtained through these interactions have been factored into the recommendations in appropriate form. One interview was conducted with the Maj Ajit



Singh (Retired), founder of A.bani Farms, an NGO headquartered in Marngar, Ri Bhoi district in Meghalaya.

Maj Ajit Singh was commissioned into 16th Battalion of Grenadiers (Infantry) and has served extensively in counter insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir. He is also a Kargil war veteran and took active part as a company commander in many operations along the Line of Control. He opted for premature voluntary retirement in 2006. Maj Ajit Singh has dedicated his post retirement years to uplifting marginalised communities in Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland. In 2012, he founded Anant Learning & Development and Anant Foundation, impacting over 200,000 people through skill development and entrepreneurship training, particularly for women. He also created tech platforms like Rozgarmela and Mazdoor Adda to enhance opportunities. He also mentors Northeast youth for careers in the Armed Forces. In 2021, Maj Ajit founded A.bani Farms, a venture aimed at providing livelihood to women in remote villages of Meghalaya. He has since then established a network of over 20,000 farmers, improving their income and facilitated 150 livelihoods in food processing.



FINDINGS

In spite of Meghalaya's matrilineal societal framework, wherein women possess the rights to inherit property and exercise decision-making authority within familial units, their economic engagement remains constrained owing to entrenched socio-cultural, economic and logistical impediments. These challenges adversely affect both participation in skill training initiatives and the attainment of favorable employment outcomes.

Socio-Cultural Constraints

Although women in Meghalaya experience a higher degree of autonomy relative to their counterparts in other Indian states, prevailing cultural attitudes concerning gender roles continue to obstruct their professional progress.

- (a) **Household Responsibilities & Family Expectations.** Women, much like in numerous other regions, shoulder the predominant burden of household responsibilities, childcare and elder care, consequently affording minimal opportunity for participation in vocational training. An overwhelming 81% of respondents indicated that domestic obligations constituted the principal barrier to enrolment. A considerable number of women express reluctance to engage in training programmes due to apprehensions regarding the potential neglect of familial duties. The stereotype of the 'ideal woman' persists, characterised by a prioritisation of home management with financial contributions deemed supplementary.
- (b) **Family Influence & Decision-Making Power.** While the matrilineal ethos of Meghalaya confers inheritance rights upon women, this does not



invariably equate to comprehensive economic autonomy. Rural families frequently exhibit either supportive or neutral stances towards women's skill enhancement. A noteworthy 53% of surveyed women reported that their families 'somewhat' supported their endeavours, albeit not with proactive encouragement. Traditional familial structures continue to uphold men as the principal earners, despite women's significant contributions to informal economic sectors. Young women encounter resistance from older relatives who perceive skill development as either superfluous or as a diversion from familial responsibilities.

(c) **Perceptions of Female Employment.** Community perceptions regarding women's pursuit of skill training, particularly in non-traditional roles, are not particularly supportive. Although only 15% of respondents acknowledged that societal norms actively dissuaded engagement in skill training however, latent biases persist; numerous families fail to recognise formal employment as a necessity for women. Women aspiring to enter non-traditional careers, such as information technology, construction and technical trades, frequently confront scepticism from their communities. The prevailing social stigma confines women to occupations regarded as male-oriented, thereby limiting their career options and financial autonomy.

Parents and spouses often exhibit a preference for women to undertake home-based labour, such as weaving, tailoring or farming, which provides minimal economic advancement. Women who attempt to participate in skill training frequently encounter resistance from relatives and community members who question the relevance of such training for women. A lack of awareness pertaining to success narratives and role models within local



communities contributes to diminished aspiration levels among women regarding vocational training.

Economic Constraints

The financial implications associated with training, commuting and the requisite sacrifices create significant barriers to participation for numerous women. The insufficient support networks diminish women's self-efficacy in pursuing training programmes necessitating extensive travel or relocation.

(e) **Transportation Costs & Accessibility Issues.** 49% of female respondents identified travel expenditures as a primary obstacle hindering their enrolment in training programmes. The challenging topography of Meghalaya, coupled with inadequate road infrastructure, renders long-distance commuting particularly arduous. Training facilities are frequently situated in district headquarters or urban locales, which are distanced from rural populations. Public transportation is characterised by unreliability, high costs and often poses safety risks for women traveling unaccompanied.

(f) **Loss of Income and Opportunity Costs.** 41% of participants indicated that the forfeiture of daily wages constituted a significant disincentive to joining training programmes. A considerable number of women are engaged in informal, low-wage agricultural employment and attending a full-time skill development programme necessitates the loss of daily earnings. In numerous instances, families are unable to sustain even minimal income loss for the sake of training.

(g) **Lack of Financial Aid & Incentives.** 91% of respondents asserted that financial assistance would markedly influence their decision to enroll. Although certain programmes proffer stipends, these are frequently insufficient



women frequently must traverse considerable distances to reach training centres, thereby elevating costs and deterring participation. The lack of mobile training units or community-centric skill centres restricts outreach to isolated regions. Many extant training facilities are devoid of essential amenities such as childcare services, which could facilitate mothers' attendance at training sessions.

(c) **Safety Concerns**. A significant 24% of women articulated apprehensions regarding safety while commuting to training centres. The extensive distances to training facilities coupled with insufficient public transportation engender safety hazards, thereby dissuading participation. Numerous women exhibit a preference for group travel or dependence on male relatives, which constrains their capacity for independent participation. The anxiety surrounding potential harassment during transit further curtails women's mobility and their access to educational opportunities.

Suboptimal hostel and accommodation provisions for female trainees obstruct participation in residential training initiatives. The deficiency of adequate security protocols at training centres deters women from enrolling in evening or extended-duration training programmes.

(d) **Limited Digital Learning Opportunities**. Merely 39% of rural women possess access to smartphones, thereby limiting their capacity to engage in online educational courses. Even those equipped with mobile devices encounter significant challenges due to inadequate internet connectivity in remote regions. The low level of digital literacy signifies that a considerable number of women lack the requisite confidence to navigate online learning platforms.



Gender Bias in Training Programmes

Notwithstanding the inherent potential of skill development initiatives, numerous programmes fail to effectively address the needs and aspirations of women.

(a) **Skewed Course Offerings.** The majority of these programmes are concentrated on traditionally female-oriented sectors, such as tailoring, beauty and handicrafts. Conversely, more technical and lucrative fields (such as IT, construction and electrical work) remain predominantly male-dominated. A notable 42% of surveyed women posited that an exclusively female training environment would enhance participation, reflecting discomfort with mixed-gender settings.

(b) **Lack of Female Trainers/ Mentors.** The dearth of female trainers culminates in the absence of role models, thus discouraging women's involvement. The absence of mentorship and peer support initiatives constrains knowledge sharing and career guidance for female trainees. The incorporation of female mentors could augment comfort and engagement, especially in male-centric industries and has been correlated with elevated participation rates; however, the majority of training centres are devoid of dedicated female instructors. Women trainees convey that the presence of female trainers would enhance their comfort within training environments. The establishment of mentorship networks connecting trained women with new trainees could facilitate knowledge exchange and skill enhancement.

Gaps in Government & NGO Efforts

(a) **Awareness and Outreach.** Women exhibit a deficiency in awareness regarding the Skill India initiative, a situation exacerbated by cultural



constraints that limit their mobility and exposure to the external environment. A striking 35% of women remained uninformed about Skill India programmes. Non-governmental organisations and community leaders emerged as the predominant sources of information, overshadowing government efforts. Only 2% of women acquired knowledge about programmes through government sources, indicating a lack of effective government-led outreach. Although government outreach initiatives exist, they remain inadequate, particularly in remote regions where women encounter the most significant barriers. The absence of community-centric mobilisation strategies further diminishes women's participation in skill development initiatives. Digital platforms and social media remain underutilised in disseminating information regarding skill development opportunities for women. Language barriers during training sessions further hinder awareness and accessibility for women.

(b) **Industry Linkages & Job Placement.** Opportunities for entrepreneurship post training are constrained by a lack of access to financial support or microcredit. Weak industry affiliations have resulted in low job placements. Only 19% of trained women succeeded in securing employment within their respective fields. Post-training mentorship is notably absent; 67% of trainers affirmed that no formal follow-up mechanisms are in place.

(c) **Quality and Relevance of Training.** Numerous skill development courses fail to align with local economic requirements or emerging industry trends, thereby compromising their overall effectiveness. Practical, hands-on training opportunities are frequently scarce, which limits the applicability of skills in real-world contexts. A disjunction between industry demand and the curricula of skill training results in fewer employment opportunities following



training completion. Moreover, the integration of essential soft skills such as communication, leadership and negotiation is often inadequately addressed, further diminishing women's employability.

(d) **Gaps in Government Initiatives**. Current government programmes exhibit a lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ascertain their effectiveness and impact. Inadequate coordination between central and state-level initiatives contributes to fragmented policy implementation. There exists a near-complete absence of gender-sensitive policies, resulting in a deficiency of targeted support for female participants. Several government-operated training centres are equipped with outdated facilities and limited resources, which undermines their overall efficacy.

Economic Impact

Notwithstanding the aforementioned barriers, several encouraging trends have surfaced, signifying the potential inherent in well-conceived skill training initiatives. There has been a 17% increase in female workforce participation subsequent to training. Women engaged in the hospitality and tourism sectors demonstrated the highest rates of job retention. Women-led enterprises experienced an average income augmentation of 35%.

Social Impact

Financial autonomy has engendered enhanced decision-making authority within families. Women involved in technical trades have garnered newfound respect within their communities. However, it is noteworthy that 57% of women continue to encounter opposition from family members when pursuing employment opportunities.



(g) **Women-Centric Training Environments.** Many women exhibit reluctance to enroll in training programmes due to safety concerns and discomfort within mixed-gender training settings.

(h) **Offer Modular and Part-Time Courses.** In lieu of protracted, inflexible courses, introduce short-term modular training that women can complete incrementally. Provide weekend and evening classes to facilitate participation by working women and homemakers.

Economic Support and Financial Incentives

(a) **Financial Assistance.** Women residing in rural Meghalaya frequently identify financial limitations as a predominant factor contributing to their non-participation in skill training initiatives.

(b) **Stipend and Scholarship Programmes.** Implement monthly stipends for women who enroll in skill training programmes, encompassing costs associated with tuition, transportation and educational materials. Formulate specialised scholarship opportunities for single mothers and economically disadvantaged women, thereby ensuring financial accessibility.

(c) **Free Transportation Services.** Establish government-subsidised transportation services for women travelling to training centres. Initiate community transport networks that enable women to share rides at reduced fares.

(d) **Income Protection Measures.**

(i) **Skill Development Wage Compensation Scheme.** Allocate a daily wage allowance to women from low-income households as compensation for lost income during their training period.



- (ii) **Home-Based Earning Opportunities.** Promote remote work and digital freelancing avenues, including online content creation, e-commerce and information technology-related employment. Introduce home-based skill development programmes that allow women to earn income while acquiring new skills.
- (e) **Access to Credit for Women Entrepreneurs.** Post-training support is essential for ensuring sustained employment or entrepreneurial endeavours. Provide zero-interest loans to women seeking to establish businesses in sectors such as handicrafts, organic agriculture or food processing. Reinforce the connections between microfinance institutions, self-help groups and trained women entrepreneurs.
- (f) **Market Access & Business Support Services.** Establish Women Entrepreneurship Incubation Centres that offer training in financial management, digital marketing and product branding assistance. Facilitate direct market connections between trained women and larger retailers, e-commerce entities and local enterprises.

Infrastructure and Accessibility Improvements

- (a) **Establishing Community-Based Training Centres.** There is a need for create decentralised Skill Hubs. Deploy mobile training units that traverse remote villages to deliver on-site skill development opportunities. Set up mini-skill centres within local panchayats to enhance accessibility.
- (b) **Enhancing Transportation and Safety.**
- (i) **Women-Only Transport Services.** Introduce designated seating or women-only vehicles for trainees. Ensure secure and subsidised



- (g) **Childcare Support at Training Centres.** Implement onsite childcare services at training centres to facilitate mothers' participation in courses without childcare apprehensions. Allocate stipends for childcare assistance to women attending training programmes.

Improving Employment Linkages and Market Access

Enhancing Collaboration within Industries and Providing Placement Support.

- (a) **Facilitating Public-Private Partnerships to Enhance Placement Opportunities.** Forge corporate alliances aimed at facilitating direct employment opportunities subsequent to training completion. Offer remunerated apprenticeships and experiential training opportunities in professional settings. Encouraging employers to recruit and provide support for female employees.
- (b) **Advancing Enterprises Led by Women.** Specialised Programmes for Business Development. Initiate 'Skill to Startup' incubation centres that provide financial resources, mentorship, and access to markets. Equip women with competencies in digital commerce, enabling them to retail products via Amazon, Flipkart, and regional e-commerce platforms.

Policy Interventions for Government Action

- (a) **Gender-Informed Skill Development Policies.**
- (i) **Women-Focused Skill Development Policy for Meghalaya.** Formulate a distinct policy framework dedicated to women's skill enhancement, ensuring substantial budgetary provisions.



- (ii) **Implement Gender-Responsive Budgeting within the Skill India initiative.** Designate a minimum of 50% of skill development financial resources specifically for women's training programmes.
- (b) **Framework for Impact Assessment.** There is a need to fortify monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Monitor employment statistics, wage advancements and business viability rates among women who have undergone training. Conduct bi-annual assessments of skill development impacts to refine programme methodologies.
- (c) **Enhancing Public-Private Collaborative Efforts.** A whole of government kind of approach will be needed to make Skill India a successful venture.
- (d) **Incentivisation for Private Sector Engagement.** Provide tax incentives to enterprises employing women from skill development initiatives.
- (e) **Industry-Academia Nexus.** Establish partnerships between industry and academia to develop pertinent skill curricula.
- (f) **Central-State Coordination.** There is a need to reinforce coordination between State and Central Entities.
- (g) **Comprehensive Digital Skill Portal for Meghalaya.** Launch a centralised digital skill platform that offers real-time information regarding available courses, financial assistance and employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The analysis indicates that while Meghalaya has made strides in enhancing women's involvement in skill development, substantial challenges remain. It is imperative to



address socio-cultural hurdles, economic limitations, institutional deficiencies and discrepancies in employment to empower women through skill advancement. The implementation of targeted recommendations has the potential to improve participation, efficacy and sustainability of skill training programmes, ultimately facilitating women's socio-economic advancement in Meghalaya.

By executing the proposed recommendations, Meghalaya can establish a more inclusive and effective skill development framework. This strategy will not only augment women's participation in the workforce but also contribute to sustained economic growth and societal transformation.



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3. Have you ever enrolled in a skill development programme?

[1] Yes [2] No

4. If not enrolled, what are the main reasons?

[1] I was not aware of the programme or its benefits.

[2] I did not have enough time due to household responsibilities or my current work.

[3] The training centre was too far from my home, and transportation was a challenge.

[4] My family did not support my decision to enrol.

[5] I was concerned about my safety while travelling to the training centre.

[6] The courses offered did not match my interests or career goals.

[7] I was unsure whether the training would lead to job opportunities.

[8] The training schedule was not flexible enough for me to attend.

5. Can you share your experience with the Skill India programme? What motivated you to join?

[1] I joined because I wanted to improve my skills and find better job opportunities.

[2] I wanted to gain financial independence and support my family.

[3] I was encouraged by a community leader who explained the benefits of the programme.

[4] My friends joined, and I saw their progress, so I decided to enroll.

[5] I wanted to switch careers and this programme seemed like a good opportunity.



6. Does your family support your participation in skill training programmes?
[1] Yes [2] No [3] Somewhat
7. What skills did you acquire during the training, and how have they helped you?
[1] I learned tailoring, which helped me start a small home-based business.
[2] I trained in hospitality and now work in a hotel.
[3] I acquired digital literacy skills that helped me secure an online job.
[4] I developed agricultural skills that improved my family's farming income.
[5] I learned financial management skills that helped me run my own business.
8. Do social norms in your community discourage women from joining skill development programmes?
[1] Strongly Agree
[2] Agree
[3] Neutral
[4] Disagree
[5] Strongly Disagree
9. What are the cultural or societal factors preventing women from participating?
[1] Household Responsibilities
[2] Community Disapproval
[3] Lack of Female Trainers
[4] Other (please specify): ____



16. Would availability of female-only transportation encourage you to attend training?

[1] Yes

[2] No

[3] Doesn't matter

17. Does the availability of financial aid influence your decision to enroll in a programme?

[1] Yes

[2] No

18. Which skill training programmes interest you the most? (Select all that apply)

[1] Tailoring & Handicrafts

[2] Beauty & Wellness

[3] IT & Digital Skills

[4] Agriculture & Food Processing

[5] Hospitality & Tourism

[6] Construction & Industrial Training

[7] Other (please specify): ____

19. What mode of training do you prefer?

[1] In-Person Training

[2] Online Training

[3] Hybrid (Both Online & Offline)

20. What support would help you participate in skill training programmes?

[1] Stipend/Financial Aid

[2] Nearby Training Centers

[3] Flexible Training Timings



28. Did your family and community support your decision to enroll in skill training?

[1] Yes, my family was very supportive and encouraged me to complete the training.

[2] My family was hesitant at first, but they became supportive later.

[3] I faced resistance from my family, but I enrolled anyway.

[4] My community was supportive and even helped with resources.

[5] My family was indifferent but did not oppose my decision.

29. Have you been able to secure employment or start a business after the training?

[1] Yes, I found a job in my trained field.

[2] I started a small business and it has been successful so far.

[3] I am still looking for employment opportunities.

[4] I am using my skills but in a different way than expected.

[5] I have not yet found a job, but I am hopeful.

30. What improvements would you suggest to make the training more effective and accessible?

[1] More hands-on practical sessions.

[2] Better job placement support after training.

[3] More awareness campaigns to encourage women to join.

[4] Training centres should be closer to rural areas.

[5] More flexible schedules for working women.



6. Have you noticed any economic or social impact of skill training on women who have completed the programme?

[1] Yes, many women have gained financial independence.

[2] Some have started small businesses and are supporting their families.

[3] Women's confidence and decision-making power have improved.

[4] However, there are still challenges in job placement and income stability.

[5] Any Other _____

7. What strategies can be implemented to encourage more women to participate in such programmes?

[1] Providing stipends and financial incentives.

[2] Ensuring flexible training schedules.

[3] Offering training centres closer to rural communities.

[4] Engaging men in discussions about the benefits of women's empowerment.

[5] Any Other _____

8. Do you believe that family and societal support play a crucial role in the success of these initiatives?

[1] Yes, without family support, many women cannot participate.

[2] Community acceptance makes a big difference in enrollment rates.

[3] Government schemes should also focus on educating families about the benefits.

[4] Involving local leaders in advocacy efforts can create more acceptance.

[5] Any Other _____



12. What role do you think local businesses and entrepreneurs can play in supporting women's skill development?

- [1] Offering apprenticeships and real-world work experience.
- [2] Sponsoring training programmes for women.
- [3] Providing mentorship and funding opportunities for startups.
- [4] Hiring trained women in local businesses.
- [5] Any Other _____

13. Are there successful examples in your community of women benefiting from skill programmes?

- [1] Yes, some women have started successful tailoring businesses.
- [2] Many have become self-sufficient through agricultural training.
- [3] A few have secured stable jobs in the hospitality sector.
- [4] Success stories exist, but scaling them up remains a challenge.
- [5] Any Other _____

14. What specific outreach methods would be effective in promoting skill development among women?

- [1] Door-to-door awareness campaigns.
- [2] Community meetings and success story sharing.
- [3] Using local media and radio for wider outreach.
- [4] Leveraging digital platforms to reach younger women.
- [5] Any Other _____



15. Do you see any generational shifts in attitudes towards women's participation in skill programmes?

[1] Yes, younger women are more open to vocational training.

[2] Older generations still resist change, but it is improving.

[3] Parents today are more supportive than before.

[4] Women are increasingly seeking financial independence and career growth.

[5] Any Other _____



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINERS AND COORDINATORS
OF SKILL INDIA PROGRAMME

Name :

Age/ Sex :

Designation :

Level :

1. What is your role in the Skill India programme?
 - [1] Trainer.
 - [2] Coordinator
 - [3] Administrator
 - [4] Any other_____

2. How long have you been involved in the programme?
 - [1] Less than 2 years.
 - [2] 2 to 5 years.
 - [3] 5 to 7 years.
 - [4] 7 to 10 years.
 - [5] More than 10 years.

3. What are the key challenges you face in delivering training to women participants?
 - [1] Low attendance due to family responsibilities and transport issues.
 - [2] Many women lack confidence and hesitate to participate actively.
 - [3] We need better resources and updated training materials.



[4] Financial aid and scholarships help economically disadvantaged women participate.

[5] Any Other _____

8. What strategies have been effective in retaining women participants in the training?

[1] Providing childcare facilities has helped increase attendance.

[2] Regular counseling and motivation sessions encourage retention.

[3] Job placement assistance keeps women engaged till programme completion.

[4] Community support groups foster encouragement and participation.

[5] Any Other _____

9. Are there any additional resources or facilities you believe would enhance the training experience?

[1] Better digital learning infrastructure would improve accessibility.

[2] More mentorship and networking opportunities for trainees.

[3] Hands-on workshops with industry professionals.

[4] Incorporating life skills and financial literacy into the curriculum.

[5] Any Other _____

10. How do you assess the impact of training on women's employment and entrepreneurship outcomes?

[1] We track employment rates and income growth post-training.



[2] Entrepreneurship success is measured by the number of new businesses launched.

[3] Follow-up surveys and interviews help us understand long-term impact.

[4] Partnerships with employers provide insight into hiring trends.

[5] Any Other _____

11. What kind of partnerships (private sector, NGOs, government) do you think would strengthen the programme?

[1] Industry partnerships to ensure job placements.

[2] NGOs for outreach and community mobilisation.

[3] Government support for infrastructure and policy alignment.

[4] Collaborations with microfinance institutions to help women start businesses.

[5] Any Other _____

12. What changes would you suggest to improve the effectiveness of Skill India training for women?

[1] More industry-specific courses and certifications.

[2] Greater emphasis on digital skills and online work.

[3] Stronger post-training support and mentorship.

[4] Expansion of training centres to remote areas.

[5] Any Other _____

13. Are there mentorship or networking opportunities available for trained women?

[1] Yes

[2] No

[3] Limited



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EXPERTS
(GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR VOCATIONAL
TRAINING INITIATIVES)

Name : _____ **Age/ Sex :** _____
Village : _____ **District :** _____
Designation : _____ **Tribe :** _____

1. What are the key goals and objectives of vocational training programmes for women under Skill India?

- [1] To empower women with employable skills and increase workforce participation.
- [2] To provide hands-on training that leads to self-employment.
- [3] To ensure skill training aligns with industry needs and economic growth.
- [4] To integrate women into high-growth sectors like IT and manufacturing.
- [5] Any Other _____

2. How does the government ensure inclusivity and equal access for women in these programmes?

- [1] By offering targeted outreach and financial incentives for participation.
- [2] We collaborate with local NGOs to encourage women's enrollment.
- [3] We provide flexible training schedules to accommodate women's responsibilities.
- [4] Special focus is given to marginalised communities and remote regions.



9. How does the government track employment outcomes and entrepreneurial success of trained women?

- [1] Regular follow-ups and alumni tracking programmes.
- [2] Partnerships with job portals and recruitment agencies.
- [3] Annual impact assessment studies.
- [4] Encouraging women to report success stories and challenges faced.
- [5] Any Other _____

10. What additional support (such as stipends, childcare or transportation) do you think would improve participation and completion rates?

- [1] Increased stipends for low-income participants.
- [2] Free or subsidised childcare facilities near training centres.
- [3] Providing safe and reliable transport options.
- [4] More community-based training centres for accessibility.
- [5] Any Other _____

11. What role do state-level policies play in ensuring the sustainability of skill development programmes?

- [1] State policies help align training with regional industry needs.
- [2] Funding from state governments ensures continuity and scalability.
- [3] Local governance plays a role in promoting women's participation.
- [4] State-led initiatives bridge gaps in national programmes.



12. Are there any success stories or case studies of women who have significantly benefited from Skill India programmes?

[1] Yes, several women have started their own businesses post-training.

[2] Many have secured stable jobs in hospitality and IT sectors.

[3] Entrepreneurial training has led to thriving micro-enterprises.

[4] Women have become role models and mentors in their communities.

[5] Any Other _____

13. How can vocational training initiatives be made more responsive to changing market needs?

[1] Industry Aligned Training and Collaboration.

[2] Market Research & Skill Mapping.

[3] Flexible & Modular Training Programmes and Infrastructure.

[4] Integration of Digital & Technological Skills.

[5] Stronger Placement & Entrepreneurship Support.

14. What steps are being taken to improve awareness and outreach efforts for women in remote and rural areas?

[1] Community Mobilisation through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and NGOs.

[2] Use of Digital/ Social Media and Traditional Communication Channels.

[3] Door-to-Door Awareness Campaigns.

[4] Engaging the Community Leaders.

[5] Mobile Training & Information Units.



develop skills that meet industry standards, making them less competitive in the workforce.

Ques 6: What steps should be taken to modernise these centres and make them more relevant to today's job market?

Ans 6: Modernisation requires investment in updated technology, digital learning platforms and industry partnerships. Training centres should integrate market-driven courses, ensuring trainees develop practical and employable skills. Regular curriculum updates, instructor training and private-sector involvement can make a significant difference.

Ques 7: Limited coordination between central and state-level initiatives often results in fragmented policy execution. From your experience, what are the key challenges in policy implementation, and how can they be addressed?

Ans 7: One of the biggest challenges is the lack of uniformity in policy execution. Central schemes often do not align with the ground realities of individual states. There is also a major disconnect within the government bodies, leading to delays and inefficiencies. To address this, we need a centralised monitoring mechanism, clear accountability structures and direct engagement between state and local-level authorities.

Ques 8: Have you observed any successful models of coordination between central and state authorities that could be replicated in Meghalaya?

Ans 8: Some states like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have successfully implemented Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models, where NGOs and private players are



actively involved in policy execution. If Meghalaya can adopt a similar approach, leveraging local expertise and decentralising decision-making, it could significantly improve outcomes.

Ques 9: A significant challenge is the lack of hostel and accommodation facilities for women trainees. How does this impact their participation and what solutions do you propose?

Ans 9: Many women, especially from remote villages, cannot enroll in training programmes because they have nowhere to stay. A simple yet effective solution is to establish women-only hostels within or near training centres. Government and private organisations should allocate funds for safe, subsidised accommodation, which will encourage more women to participate.

Ques 10: Security concerns at training centres discourage women from attending evening or extended-duration sessions. What security measures do you believe should be implemented to ensure a safe learning environment?

Ans 10: Training centres must have proper lighting, CCTV surveillance, security personnel and transportation facilities for women trainees. Additionally, there should be female mentors or supervisors present at all times. A safer environment will automatically lead to higher participation.

Ques 11: Since most training centres are located in urban areas, women in remote villages often struggle with access. What initiatives can be undertaken to bring skill development opportunities closer to rural communities?



apprenticeships and job placements, while government agencies should provide financial incentives for NGOs to expand their reach.

Ques 15: How can public-private partnerships help in strengthening vocational training in Meghalaya?

Ans 15: PPP models allow for better funding, infrastructure and curriculum development. Collaboration with industry leaders can ensure that the training provided is relevant, updated and job-oriented.

Ques 16: What are your future goals for A.bani, and how do you see its role evolving in the coming years?

Ans 16: Our vision is to expand our reach to all the districts of Meghalaya and create more women-led entrepreneurial ventures in Meghalaya. We want A.bani to be a model for sustainable, community-driven entrepreneurship in the Northeast.

