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Empowering Women through Macrame Craft Training

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Abstract

The empowerment of women through skill development is a crucial step towards sustainable economic development. The potential of macrame craft training as a means to financially empower women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Macrame, a form of textile produced using knotting techniques, offers a unique opportunity for women to engage in creative and profitable activities. This study aims to assess the impact of macrame training programs on women's financial independence, self-esteem, and community development.

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Keywords

Macrame, Women's Empowerment, Financial Independence.

Introduction

Macrame is an art of decorative knotting without using needles and hooks. Women's empowerment through skill development has emerged as a pivotal strategy for enhancing economic opportunities and fostering social change. Macrame craft, an ancient art form of knotting, has gained popularity as a sustainable and accessible skill that can significantly contribute to the financial empowerment of women. It can gain immense popularity by giving the opportunity to socially and economically under privileged women of semi-urban and rural sector for skill development. The developed skill will be helpful for empowering women by earning income to support their livelihood.

Women Empowerment Through Crafts

Crafts have historically played a significant role in women's economic activities. Studies have shown that engaging in crafts can lead to increased income,

enhanced social status, and improved self-esteem (Singh, 2020; Kumar & Pandey, 2019). For instance, a study highlights the role of traditional crafts in sustainable fashion and their potential to empower women.

Skill development is recognized as a critical pathway to economic empowerment for women. It enhances their ability to secure employment, start businesses, and contribute to household incomes (Kabeer, 2012).

Furthermore, skill development fosters self-confidence and social recognition, which are essential for overall empowerment (Nussbaum, 2000).

Organizations like SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) and other NGOs offer extensive training programs in knotting techniques. These initiatives not only focus on skill development but also provide support in terms of resources and market access.

Macrame Craft as a Livelihood Activity

Macrame, which involves knotting cords or strings into decorative patterns, is not only a creative outlet but also a potential source of income.

The craft's low entry barriers, such as minimal initial investment and easy-to-learn techniques, make it accessible to women with limited resources and education (Singh & Mishra, 2019).

The resurgence of interest in handmade and sustainable products provides a favourable market for macrame items (Bhattacharya, 2021). In regions like Rajasthan and Gujarat, women have formed cooperatives to produce and sell macramé products. These cooperatives have enabled them to access larger markets and secure better prices for their crafts.

Several initiatives worldwide have successfully integrated craft training into women's empowerment programs. For instance, the "Women Weave" project in India focuses on traditional weaving techniques, including macrame, to empower rural women (Sinha, 2018). Similarly, the "Crafts Council of India" has supported numerous craft-based enterprises that provide sustainable livelihoods to women (Chatterjee, 2015).

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data on the impact of macrame training programs. The study involved forty women aged between 18-40 years, from urban areas of Chandra Shekhar Azad University, Kanpur were selected. They participated in a twenty-one days macrame training program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted at the end of the training program. The interviews aimed provided deeper insights of the participants' experiences, challenges, and outcomes related to the macrame training. In surveys, structured questionnaires were used to assess the economic and social impact of macrame training on participants.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools to identify trends and correlations, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic coding to extract key themes and narratives.

Findings

Economic Impact

The surveys revealed a significant increase in participants' household incomes after undergoing macrame training. Approximately 75 per cent of respondents reported a 20-30 per cent rise in their monthly earnings. Many women started their own macrame businesses, selling products both locally and online, which contributed to their financial independence.

Social and Psychological Impact

Data highlights the positive effects of macrame training on women's self-esteem and social standing. Participants expressed a sense of pride and accomplishment in mastering a new skill and contributing to their families' incomes. Additionally, the communal nature of the training sessions fostered social bonds and mutual support among the women.

Macrame training programs have demonstrated significant potential in empowering women by providing them with valuable skills and economic opportunities. The craft's accessibility and low entry barriers make it an ideal livelihood activity for women in resource-constrained environments. The economic impact of macrame training on the financial status of women participants, showing significant improvements in various financial indicators.

Challenges Faced

Despite the positive outcomes, the study identified several challenges, including:

Market Access: Difficulty in accessing broader markets to sell macrame products.

Resource Constraints: Limited availability of high-quality materials and tools.

Sustainability: Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the training programs.

Table.1 Impact of Macrame Training on Women's Income

Indicator	Before Training (Average)	After Training (Average)	Percentage Change
Monthly Income (INR)	3,000	4,000	+33.3%
Women with Independent Income (%)	30	75	+150%
Household Contribution (INR)	2,000	3,500	+75%
Savings per Month (INR)	500	1,000	+100%
Women Starting Own Business (%)	10	40	+300%

Policy Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of macrame training programs, the following recommendations are proposed:

Market Linkages: Establishing networks and partnerships to help women access larger markets.

Resource Support: Providing subsidies or grants for materials and tools.

Sustainability Plans: Developing long-term strategies to ensure the continuity and growth of training programs.

Conclusion

Macrame craft training offers a viable pathway for financially empowering women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. By enhancing economic opportunities, fostering self-esteem, and promoting social cohesion, these programs contribute significantly to women's empowerment. Policymakers and practitioners should consider integrating macrame training into broader development initiatives to maximize its impact.

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