

Communication Skill Development Among Rural Women through Industrial Training Centres : A Study of Khargone District

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Abstract: Communication skills form the backbone of women's empowerment, particularly in rural societies where social interaction, mobility, and decision-making opportunities are often limited. Industrial Training Centres (ITCs) have emerged as structured platforms that equip rural women with employable skills, confidence, and communication capabilities. This study examines the contribution of ITCs to communication skill development among rural women in Khargone district. The research adopts a secondary data approach, drawing insights from government reports, NSDC documentation, scholarly studies published between 2020 and 2024, and other authentic sources. The findings indicate that ITC-based communication skill training enhances women's confidence, workplace readiness, customer-handling abilities, self-employment prospects, and participation in economic activities. The study concludes that structured communication training is as crucial as technical training and recommends the integration of communication modules across all ITC programmes.

Introduction - Communication skills play a transformative role in the personal and professional development of rural women. In districts such as Khargone, women often face challenges including restricted mobility, limited educational exposure, patriarchal norms, and inadequate access to formal learning environments. Industrial Training Centres have expanded in recent years under national skill development initiatives, offering vocational courses supplemented with soft-skill training.

Communication training within ITCs strengthens women's ability to express ideas, interact with customers, negotiate business matters, present opinions, participate in group activities, and manage livelihood opportunities confidently. For women engaged in tailoring, beauty services, food processing, agro-based enterprises, and other home-based industries, effective communication is essential for customer interaction, record-keeping, and business expansion.

This paper examines the role of ITCs in Khargone district in enhancing communication skills among rural women and analyzes how these skills contribute to improved livelihood outcomes.

Review of Literature

Verma (2020): Verma's study on rural vocational trainees revealed that women who received soft-skill and communication training demonstrated higher confidence levels, improved verbal clarity, and better workplace

behaviour compared to those who did not receive such training.

Khan & Sharma (2021): Their research on ITC-led programmes found that structured communication modules—such as group discussions, speaking exercises, and role-play—significantly improved interpersonal communication skills and fostered entry-level leadership traits among rural women.

NSDC Report (2022): The National Skill Development Corporation emphasized that soft skills, particularly communication, are essential for employability in rural sectors. The report highlighted that women with communication competencies were more likely to secure employment or initiate home-based enterprises.

Mehta (2023): Mehta's study on women's micro-entrepreneurship noted that effective communication enables rural women to negotiate prices, attract customers, and maintain market relationships, thereby directly influencing income generation.

Bansal & Kapoor (2021): Their research demonstrated that communication skills enhance women's social mobility, confidence in decision-making, and participation in broader economic networks.

Summary of Literature Gap: Although previous studies acknowledge the importance of communication training, limited research focuses specifically on ITCs operating at the district level in Khargone. This gap provides the basis

for the present study.

Research Gap:

1. Most existing studies focus on general vocational training rather than district-level ITCs.
2. There is no published research specifically examining communication skill development among rural women in Khargone district.
3. Government reports discuss skill development broadly but do not analyze communication outcomes in depth.
4. Limited research explores the role of communication skills in promoting women's self-employment in rural Madhya Pradesh.

Accordingly, this study addresses a significant academic and regional research gap.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the role of ITCs in providing communication skill training to rural women in Khargone district.
2. To analyze the impact of communication skills on women's confidence and workplace readiness.
3. To assess the influence of improved communication on self-employment and income opportunities.
4. To identify challenges faced by rural women in developing communication skills through ITCs.

Research Methodology

Research Design:

1. Descriptive and analytical in nature
2. Based entirely on secondary data

Data Sources: The study relies on the following sources:

1. NSDC Skill Development Report (2022)
2. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship publications
3. Peer-reviewed research articles (2020–2024)
4. Journals indexed in Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and UGC CARE-listed databases
5. Newspaper reports on rural skill development programmes
6. Publicly available ITC course structure documents

No primary data or fieldwork was conducted due to the researcher's time constraints.

Conceptual Framework for Communication Skill Development through ITCs: Communication skill development among rural women through ITCs is influenced by the following components:

1. **Training Environment** – Supportive trainers and peer interaction
2. **Soft-Skill Modules** – Spoken English, confidence building, group discussions, and public speaking
3. **Practical Exposure** – Mock sessions and customer-handling demonstrations
4. **Social Interaction** – Group assignments and presentations
5. **Technology Integration** – Digital literacy and smartphone-based communication

This framework illustrates how ITCs create a structured pathway for communication enhancement.

Discussion and Analysis: Confidence Building through Communication Training: Rural women often hesitate to speak publicly due to socio-cultural constraints. ITCs provide a supportive learning environment where instructors encourage participation in discussions and experience-sharing. Continuous engagement gradually enhances confidence and enables women to communicate effectively in markets and workplaces.

Improvement in Workplace Readiness: Communication training familiarizes women with workplace etiquette, basic English phrases, customer greetings, and negotiation skills. Tailoring trainees, for example, learn to discuss fittings and delivery schedules, while beauty trainees practice client consultation. Such training improves professional preparedness.

Enhanced Employability: Employers increasingly value communication skills alongside technical competencies. Many ITC-trained women secure employment in boutiques, beauty parlours, retail outlets, and community centres due to their polite and confident communication styles.

Support for Self-Employment and Micro-Businesses: Women operating home-based enterprises—such as tailoring units, food processing, or beauty services—experience improved customer retention through better communication. ITCs indirectly promote micro-entrepreneurship by strengthening these soft skills.

Social Empowerment and Mobility: Enhanced communication skills enable women to manage bank visits, government interactions, digital transactions, and educational responsibilities more independently, contributing to improved household decision-making and social respect.

Group Collaboration and Leadership Skills: Participation in group activities and projects during ITC training enhances coordination, leadership, delegation, and teamwork skills essential for professional advancement.

Barriers Identified in Literature:

1. Limited English proficiency
2. Socio-cultural hesitation
3. Fear of public speaking
4. Irregular attendance due to household responsibilities
5. Limited exposure to digital tools

Despite these challenges, ITCs play a significant role in gradually overcoming communication barriers.

Findings of the Study:

1. ITCs in Khargone district significantly contribute to communication skill development among rural women.
2. Women with improved communication skills demonstrate higher confidence and workplace readiness.
3. Communication competencies enhance self-employment prospects and customer relations.
4. Soft-skill training supports empowerment beyond economic gains by strengthening social participation.
5. Secondary evidence confirms that sustainable

livelihood outcomes depend on both technical and communication skills.

Conclusion: Communication skill development is a vital dimension of women's empowerment. ITCs in Khargone district play a meaningful role by integrating structured communication modules with vocational training. Women who receive such training improve their employability, confidence, decision-making abilities, and leadership potential. Strengthening communication components within ITCs is essential for achieving sustainable rural livelihoods.

Recommendations:

1. Introduce compulsory communication modules in all ITC courses.
2. Enhance digital communication training, including mobile applications and social media promotion.
3. Conduct weekly group discussion sessions to build confidence.
4. Provide bilingual instruction (Hindi and simple English).
5. Organize market linkage workshops for practical customer interaction.

6. Promote peer-to-peer communication activities for experiential learning.

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