TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN SYSTEM'S ANALYSIS

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SYNOPSIS

The focus of this paper is to have the analytical view of the two major sub-components of the women polytechnic education system i.e.students and faculty. The paper highlights as how the existing rigid admission process of students and recruitment of faculty makes the system ineffective in achieving the desired targets of technical education for women. The paper further details out remedial measures to be adopted to make the system beneficial for promoting technical and vocational education for women.

1. WHY TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN?

Women Education in India has been given lot of importance in all Five Year Plans with special emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education with a view to enable the women to be economically independent, better housewives, mothers and citizens with tremendous impact on the quality of life of women folk. Therefore, polytechnic education for women is very important part of education.

A report on Women Education-1937 expressed the view that women can definitely contribute to the growth and development of a country. Therefore, it is essential to take suitable measures for expansion of Vocational and Technical Education among Women. Though the then Government did not take many steps to implement this report, it was only after independence that the National Government took steps to uplift the social status of Indian Women by establishing, **National Women Council**, which gave its report in 1956-57. According to this report, **only 4 % girls were receiving Education** that too only in general education. This report laid emphasis on enhancing the facilities of Vocational and Technical Education for Women. During Second Five Year Plan, Women Tech-

nical Education got a modest beginning by establishing **Women Polytechnics**. On the recommendations of National Council for Women Education, it was started as part of Women's Welfare Program. The main purpose of such education for women was merely a social welfare activity but definitely central to any **"Development Activity"**. It was observed that Economic Growth form the nucleus of all Developmental Activities. Social change is a function of Economic Development and Cultural Tansformation which automatically follows the development of a Nation. One may further say that **Social Change and Cultural Transformation** are the by-products of Economic Developments. In view of this fact, the policy makers realized that women must have their equal share of contribution in the economic growth and development of the country. This has been recognized by the constitution which also provides not only equal rights and privileges to women but also special provisions to women and same is evident from the provision made in all the Five Year Plans of the Country for development of women **It has been experienced that general higher education like BA/MA etc.** finds little relevance to the **world of work** for fetching/enhancing employment opportunities to the women. Hence, there is need to promote Technical and Vocational skills in the women for the economic independence at any period of time.

Inspite of all the efforts, the demography features of female participation indicates a low rate of women Literacy, a low economic status and overall lagging behind men in almost all sectors, specially in the field of technical education whereas women constitute nearly 50% of the total population of our country.

One of the reasons may be that total expansion of opportunities for women have been limited to General Education leaving the field of Technical & Vocation Education more or less for male students due to various factors.For example, even the present enrollment figures of female in Technical and Vocational Education at different levels indicated in the Table is not more than 13.11%.

Engineering College Level	10.62
Polytechnic Level	13.11
I.T.I Level	12.50

SOURCE: Educational Statistical Report 1992-HRD(India)

Further, it has been experienced that one of the major reasons is that avenues for pursuing Technical Education for women as compared to Boys are very limited. In the year 1991, the total number of polytechnics in the Country were 879, out of which only 120 were women polytechnics. **Inspite of co-education in polytechnics, Socio-Cultural norms and unfavorable parental attitudes towards co-education are respon-**

sible to prevent majority of girls to enroll in co-education polytechnics.

It has been experienced that since independence, considerable infrastructure have been created in India for promoting vocational education amongst women. Increasing more number of women polytechnics cannot be done overnight.

Further, establishing new polytechnics involves not only huge amount of financial resources but require considerable time to generate employable human resources. To achieve maximum output, making optimal use of existing resources should be aimed at.

2. CONSIDERING POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION A SYSTEM.

To explain the view point of the author, let us consider polytechnic education a system. A system comprises INPUTS, PROCESS and OUTPUT model.

Polytechnic education system INPUT will be: students, curriculum, teaching staff, technical support staff, administrative staff, buildings, equipment and appropriate instructional resources.

PROCESS will include teaching-learning strategies or learning experiences given to students to shape them to possess desired competencies for gainful employment.

OUTPUT of the system are trained students possessing desired competencies matching the requirement of World of Work for gainful employment.

There is FEEDBACK mechanism to see whether desired objectives are being achieved and if not, what is the problem and where for taking corrective measures. This system's view is explained in Fig.1.

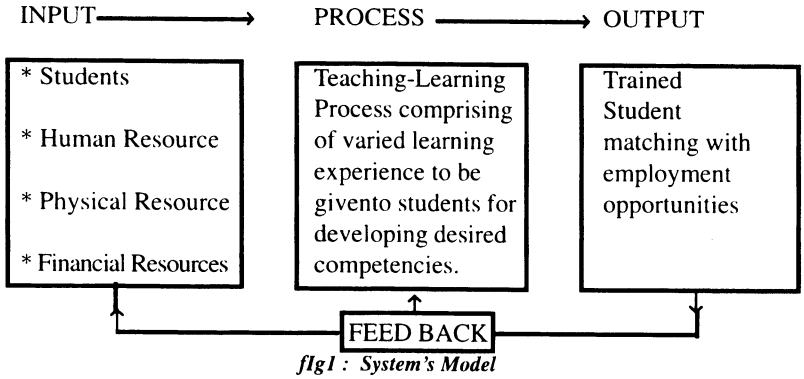

fIg1 : System's Model

In this paper, following aspects of the system are being touched:

(i) Norms and standards for Women Polytechnics
(ii) Students
(iii) Faculty for women polytechnics
(iv) Management of women Polytechnics

Next Section deals with problems of women polytechnics on the above aspects.

3. PROBLEMS OR WOMEN POLYTECHNICS:

3.1 Norms and Standards for Women Polytechnics:

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in India is the APEX BODY to formulate norms and standards for polytechnic education (both for male and female polytechnics). While formulating norms and standards in respect of physical, human, informational and financial resources, major focus is generally on **diploma programs** in Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Electronics Engineering and related engineering disciplines. Building spaces, qualification and recruitment of faculty and other support staff and informational resources are generally worked out keep in view the above engineering disciplines. These norms, by and large ,does not take care of type of programs/disciplines offered by the Women Polytechnics in Vocational fields like: Commercial Art,Textile Design, Textile Printing, Interior Design, Beauty Culture, Fashion Design,Garment Fabrication, Food Processing etc. Absence of precise norms and standards, affect the functioning of Women Polytechnics, particularly in recruitment of faculty and rigidity in admission procedures.

3.2 Students.

Admission in the polytechnics is also governed by the rules and regulation formulated by the AICTE. There is stipulation of fixed age i.e. between 16-20 years, fixed eligibility/entry qualification, fixed percentage of minimum qualifying marks, written/entrance tests etc.

The above RIGID STIPULATIONS **discourages some of women target groups**, who otherwise keen to undergo technical and vocational education programs.

These women who wish to under-go the programs in engineering and technology being offered by co-educational polytechnics can derive benefits from the existing system but polytechnics exclusively for women will have to offer variety of programs

(formal and non-formal) for various target groups to promote technical and vocational skills and enhance the economic status/employment of this group.

3.3 **Faculty**

AICTE norms again recommends minimum qualifications as Graduation in the respective disciplines for various faculty positions. Though these qualification may suit majority of polytechnics offering diploma programs in engineering and Technology but these qualifications do not suit majority of women polytechnics offering programs in vocational fields. Also, **many male teachers are holding the position of Head of Institutions in the Women polytechnics,** which to some extent is another point of concern. For upgrading the knowledge and skills of the faculty of women polytechnics, limited opportunities are available and hence effect the teaching learning process in these polytechnics.

3.4 **Management of Women Polytechnics.**

The management of women polytechnics, may it be at the National Level or State Level is common for male and female polytechnics. This results in **Luke warm treatment to the problems being faced by women polytechnics.** Problem may be of fixing qualifications for recruitment of teachers, salary structure, leave regulations and special infrastructure required for women folk.

4. REMEDIAL MEASURES:

Keeping in view the problems of women polytechnics briefly discussed in Section 3 of the paper, following remedial measures are suggested to promote Technical and Vocational Education for different target groups of women:

- There should be **separate cell/wing** at the AICTE & in the state Directorates of Technical Education which deals with **Women Technical Education** and responsible to prepare norms and standards exclusively for women polytechnics.

- The staff structure and their qualification for polytechnics offering vocation-Art based programs needs to be formulated. There are number of disciplines like Beauty Culture, Fashion Design, Costume Design etc. where Graduates are not available. Diploma holders in such disciplines may be recruited as Assistant Lecturers and after 8 years of teaching/industrial experience should be considered at par with graduates.

- Vocational/Art based courses are dominated by skills. The institutions offering such programs should have the flexibility to recruit **Master Craftsmen as Teachers** in the respective discipline.

- Women polytechnics, besides offering formal programs, should offering various types of **Non-formal Programs** to enhance **participation of women** in the field of **Technical and Vocational Education.**

- Some selected institutions /organizations in specific disciplines be identified which can act as **Resource Centers** for upgrading the knowledge and skills of the faculty of women polytechnics.

- As far as possible, women polytechnics may be **headed by a women principal** in order to lay special emphasis and consideration to the **problems associated with women folk.**

CONCLUSIONS

Women constitute about half of our population. The development of the country in the Economic and Social spheres is only possible if the women folk is Technical Trained and shoulder dual responsibility of being a good house wife and supplement the income of the family even practicing the profession at home . Technical and Vocational Education is one such field which meet both the objectives. It is, therefore, essential to provide **Flexibility in Programs Offering** and some amount of **Autonomy in Functioning** to the women polytechnics. The above is possible by providing separate wing/cell at the national and state levels to formulate norms and standards keeping in view special requirements of disciplines offered by women polytechnics as also their management.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The help rendered by Dr. L.N.Mittal, Professor & Head, Curriculum Development Center at TTTI,Chandigarh (India) in preparing this paper is gratefully acknowledged.