

ARTICLE

Perception of Women Trainees' Regarding Skill Development Initiatives of Kudumbashree for Employability

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Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals are the main aim of India, to be achieved by 2030. Poverty alleviation and gender equality are two important Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve these two goals, the Indian government launched a slew of initiatives. One such initiative is the skill development programme. Education-related unemployment is the main problem faced by Kerala. The Kerala government, in collaboration with Neighborhood Group Kudumbashree, launched a lot of skill development programmes not only for women but also for youth, rural, and minority groups. The present study focuses on the effectiveness of skill development initiatives in generating employment from the perspective of women trainees. A questionnaire was conveniently administered among 60 women trainees of various skill development programmes conducted by Kudumbashree in Palakkad district. Percentage, mean value, Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA, Chi-square test, and independent sample t-test are used for analysing the collected data. The results of a one-way ANOVA test show the influence of age and education qualification on trainees' perceptions of skill development initiatives. According to the findings of the study, the need for skill affects overall satisfaction with the program. The study concludes that programmes are effective in imparting skills and knowledge. However, to study the course thoroughly, the syllabus should be expanded and the number of practical training hours increased.

Keywords: Skill development programmes, trainees, Kudumbashree, perception, and employment.

1 Introduction

Skill means the application of one's knowledge, which is necessary to perform a job effectively. A person can act according to different situations on basis of his capability. To perform a job, an individual needs to be proficient enough in different types of skills, right from planning to execution. An individual may not have sufficient skills to get or perform a job. Therefore, sufficient skills need to be developed to make them competent to perform a job. Skill development not only helps an individual get a better job but also improves their productivity in their present job. It improves the existing skills of an individual. Basic skill training is inevitable for individuals to undertake employment that aids in preparing them for a

better work life. To eradicate poverty in India through entrepreneurship development, the Government of India launched several skill development programs. Increased youth unemployment compelled the Indian government to launch many skill development initiatives. These initiatives determine the skill gap and provide skill training in various industry-related jobs. It involves the provision of skill training to different categories of individuals, such as youth, women, and minority groups. Skill development programmes are initiated through various institutions like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is in charge of organizing all national skill development initiatives, bridging the gap between the demand and supply for skilled labour, developing the framework for technical and vocational education, skill up-skilling, developing new skills, and encouraging creative thinking for both existing and future job opportunities. To realize its vision of a “Skilled India”, the Ministry strives to skill people quickly and to high standards. The task of educating youngsters by equipping them with skills through AICTE-approved colleges or registered facilitators has been given to the Skill Development Cell to improve their employment or self-employment chances. To achieve its goals, the cell is operating several initiatives. Educated unemployment in Kerala is higher than the national average. To provide employment, the Kerala government launched a lot of skill development programmes. It includes the Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP), Naipunya Sammunathi, Kerala Academy of Skills Excellence, etc. Kudumbashree, an organisation of Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala, was formed to improve the standard of living and empower women in both rural and urban areas of the state. Through Kudumbashree, the Kerala government launched several programmes aimed at women’s empowerment, gender equality, poverty eradication, and so on. Kudumbashree initiated skill development programmes for women that help them undertake entrepreneurial activities. It makes women self-sufficient to capture self-employment opportunities around them. They provide skill training under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Aajeevika Skill Programmes, ARISE Skill Campaign, Employment Through Skill Training and Placement (EST & P), etc. Skill development initiatives of Kudumbashree differ from one another in terms of their purpose, target group, activities, etc. Skill development activities consist of workshops, training courses, and providing skill development tools. They also organize career guidance programmes for the trainees. It includes skill development initiatives for the well-being of children and adolescents. The main aim of this is to develop their life skills. It includes decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, self-confidence, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, coping with stress, creative thinking, critical thinking, emotional stability, and empathy. The present study focuses on the various skill development initiatives of Kudumbashree. It examines the effectiveness of the programmes in creating employment opportunities for women in Kerala’s Palakkad district from the perspective of the women trainees. A lot of women may attend the skill training activities, but not all the women who attend may be successful in their employment. The study focuses on the trainee’s perception of skill training and its effectiveness in building the necessary skills required for employment.

2 Review of Literature

Puad (2020) in their study aimed to examine the trainee’s perception towards the skill development programme in Malaysia named Skim Latihan 1 Malaysia (SL1M). The study used a descriptive research design to collect data from 108 new graduates participating in skill training in Malaysia via a questionnaire. The study found that work orientation and self-confidence were high among the respondents. The SL1M trainees have learned to perform work in the manner that the job requires. This helped the present study consider factors affecting trainees’ perceptions of employability skills from skill development initiatives. Yao (2019) study conveys graduate students’ perceptions of soft skills developed at a transnational university in Vietnam and their contribution to employability. The study followed a qualitative case study approach. Data was gathered through interviews with 24 graduate students at the Vietnamese–German University. Skills such as independent work, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and critical thinking. Cultural competence and the ability to work in a global scenario are developed. The study focuses on skill development, which helped the present study focus on the contribution of these skills to their employability. Alam (2022), in their study, present the state of skill development initiatives in Bangladesh and the perceptions of university graduates about the importance of skill development for their future employability. Their study adopted mixed-methods research. Surveys and in-depth interviews were used to collect data. The study’s sample size was 437 respondents. The study found that university graduates are well aware of the skill development requirements for their future employability. However, university graduates face many hindrances in acquiring these necessary skill-development opportunities. Therefore, the government and relevant authorities must work together cooperatively to eradicate these obstacles. Furthermore, this study includes recommendations that help in efficiently designing skill development programmes to ensure employability. The study helps in understanding the necessity of designing skill programmes as per the requirements of beneficiaries. Behera (2022) focus their study on the role of skill development training in employment generation in India. They point out that skill development training is required in addition to education for a proper job. It leads to more efficient job performance. The study is conceptual and utilizes secondary sources of data collected from journals, websites, etc. Technical skills alone are insufficient; transferable skills also need to be developed. It requires persistent commitment. The study provides a theoretical foundation for the present study. Tiwari (2022) book aims to study the types of soft skills necessary from the perspective of a business and how soft skills help students get better jobs. The study was conceptual and relied on secondary data. The study found that skill-based education is required to make them employable. Communication skills such as attentive listening, fluent speaking, excellent writing, reading comprehension, and presentation skills are the most required soft skills in an organization. Graduates with soft skills have better job opportunities in both public and private firms than those without soft skills. Soft

skills enhance the confidence of an individual and provide them with better career opportunities. Satinder (2021) aims to study the role of vocational training in youth employability in Punjab and Haryana. A primary survey was conducted using the purposive sampling method among vocational training institutes, establishments, and pass-out trainees. The study found that the workforce participation rate of the vocationally trained youth in both Punjab and Haryana is very low. Lack of sufficient government sector jobs along with skill constraints is among the major factors determining the employability of vocationally trained youth. The quality of training was also found to be very poor. The study suggests the introduction of vocational training at the school level and the implementation of “the minimum wage act” for vocationally skilled workers would improve employability and reduce wage discrimination significantly. Ajay (2019) analyzed the effectiveness of the Additional Skill Acquisition Program (ASAP) from the perspective of skill development executives. They also focus on the various benefits and problems of the ASAP programme. Primary data was collected from 50 Skill Development Executives of seven Skill Development Centers in Kottayam District, Kerala. Several tests including the Chi-square test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis H test have been employed for analyzing the data. Their study found that the ASAP programme is quite effective in enhancing necessary skills among the students. Delayed payment of adequate remuneration, insufficient infrastructural facilities, and clashes with regular academic classes was identified as some major constraints in the effective execution of the ASAP programme. Srivathsani (2018) aim to study the need for skill gap analysis in their study. They focus on an in-depth study of the NSDC, NSDA, SSC, and DGT bodies. The study is conceptual and collected data using secondary sources such as online news reports, government websites like msde.gov.in and vikaspedia.in, and government publications related to policy to make an in-depth analysis. The study examines the current skill gap scenario in India, as well as various schemes and programmes launched by the Government of India to close the gap. The paper also discusses the 2015 National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The study concludes that skill development and formal education should be done simultaneously. It leads to economic growth for the country.

2.1 Research Gap

All the above studies only give an overall view of skill development programmes. The literature revealed the perceptions of new graduates and trainees and whether skill development programmes helped them to gain employability skills (Puad, 2020). They already gained theoretical knowledge from the institutions and underwent skill training. So their perceptions are different from those of the female trainees, who might include trainees without institutional knowledge. A qualitative case study approach was conducted to study the effectiveness of soft skills among graduates of a Vietnamese-German university Yao (2019). The study was also focused only on the graduates of that particular institution. The importance of skill development for employability among graduates was studied in Bangladesh (Alam, 2022). A conceptual study on the role of skill development training in employment generation in India points out various national skill development initiatives (Behera, 2022). It uses only secondary sources of data and helps to understand the nation’s steps towards skill development. A conceptual study on the types of soft skills necessary from the perspective of a business and how soft skills help students get better jobs helps to understand the employer’s perception of the necessary skills required for their employees (Tiwari, 2022). The role of vocational training in youth employability in Punjab and Haryana focuses on the importance of skill development in schools themselves (Satinder, 2021). The effectiveness of the Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) from the perspective of skill development executives assisted the researcher in knowing the implementation of skill development programmes in Kerala (Ajay, 2019). But the study did not focus on the trainee’s perspectives. Before designing skill development initiatives, it is necessary to conduct a skill gap analysis. The literature revealed the theoretical aspects of various skill development programmes in India and the need for skill gap analysis (Srivathsani, 2018). The majority of the studies focused on the perception of youth towards skill development programmes. No research studies have been conducted regarding the skill initiatives of Kudumbashree in Kerala. No studies conducted on the perception of women trainees. The role of Kudumbashree in skill development in Kerala is huge. The study focuses on the perception of women trainees towards the skill initiatives of Kudumbashree. It finds answers to questions about whether their initiatives are effective in generating employment for the trainees.

2.2 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to examine the perception of women trainees about skill development initiatives of Kudumbashree for employability in the Palakkad district in Kerala.

The hypothesis of the study:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment.

Hypothesis 3: There is no association between age and the need for a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 4: There is an association between age and the need for a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between age and perception regarding skill development programmes.

Hypothesis 6: There is a significant difference between age and perception regarding skill development programmes.

Hypothesis 7: There is no significant difference between educational qualification and perception regarding skill development programmes.

Hypothesis 8: There is a significant difference between educational qualification and perception regarding skill development programmes.

Hypothesis 9: There is no significant difference between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 10: There is a significant difference between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 11: There is no significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 12: There is a significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 13: There is no association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 14: There is an association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 15: There is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of employed and employed trainees.

Hypothesis 16: There is a significant difference between the satisfaction levels of employed and employed trainees.

2.3 Scope and Significance of the Study

Kudumbashree plays a vital role in Kerala in ensuring gender equality. It also helps to reduce poverty through job creation. For this purpose, they initiated several programmes and also provided funds to implement the ideas of women entrepreneurs. It is necessary to bridge the skill gap to pursue successful employment. With this aim, Kudumbashree launched skill development training for women, youth, and other beneficiaries in collaboration with various agencies. Several studies have been conducted on women's empowerment through the entrepreneurial activities of the Kudumbashree. The present study is relevant as skill training is inevitable for the successful conduct of these entrepreneurial activities. It is evident from the collected literature reviews that no studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of Kudumbashree's skill development initiatives for employability in Kerala's Palakkad district. Also, a lot of studies have been conducted about the effectiveness of various national skill development programmes from the perspective of youth, trainers, etc. No studies have been conducted among the women trainees who attended Kudumbashree's skill development programmes. The study aims to know whether the skill development initiatives of Kudumbashree are successful in generating employment for women or not.

3 Research Methodology

An analytical research design is adopted in the study. A questionnaire was conveniently administered among the sample size of 60 women trainees of Kudumbashree's skill development initiatives in Kerala's Palakkad district. For this purpose, the programme manager of the Aajeevika Skill Programme in the district, five city mission managers of employment through skill training and placement (EST & P), and ASAP executives of the district, were contacted over the telephone. Based on the information given by them, women trainees were selected from different regions of the district and of different age groups who participated in various skill development programmes of Kudumbashree in the district during 2022. 60 female trainees responded. To develop a questionnaire, questionnaires from previous studies were considered (Muthuramalingam, 2022; Vikas, 2018) and designed after making necessary modifications to collect data relevant to the study. The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of 20 women trainees from various skill development programmes in the Palakkad district. Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha score is 0.714126, which shows the questionnaire is reliable. A five-point Rensis Likert scale was used for measuring the qualitative data in the study. A questionnaire was administered to the female trainees through email and postal mail. For statistical analysis and percentage analysis, the chi-square test, one-way ANOVA, and independent sample t-test have been used. Microsoft Excel is used for analysing the data.

4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. About 35% of respondents are between the ages of 26 and 35, 27% are between the ages of 36 and 45, and 25% are under the age of 25. 62% of the respondents are married. 32% of the respondents have the educational qualification of graduation, and 26% have a higher secondary educational qualification. 22% of the respondents have the educational qualification of SSLC. The remaining 20% have post-graduate degrees and other educational credentials. Table 2 shows that 33% of respondents joined a skill development programme for job employment and 25% for self-employment. 20% joined as they consider it part of their higher education, and 5% joined due to their parents' pressure. 17% joined for other reasons. Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents have a positive opinion about the quality of trainers, as indicated by the highest mean value of 2.50. Also, training aids are considered good by the respondents. Classroom instruction, practical training, and the syllabus of the skill development course need to be improved. According to Table 4, Kudumbashree's skill development initiatives improved job skills and knowledge

Demographics		No. of respondents	Percentage
Age (in years)	Below 25	15	25
	26 -35	21	35
	36 - 45	16	27
	Above 46	8	13
Marital status	Married	37	62
	Unmarried	23	38
Level of Education	SSLC	13	22
	Higher Secondary	16	26
	Graduation	19	32
	Post Graduation & others	12	20

Table 1. Demographic Profile (Source: Author's Calculation)
Total number of respondents =60.

Reason	Number of respondents	Percentage
Self-employment	15	25
	20	33
	12	20
	3	5
Others	10	17
	60	100

Table 2. Reason for Joining the Skill Development Programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Quality factors	Number of respondents			Total	Mean Value	Rank
	Good	Average	Poor			
Classroom	35	5	20	60	2.25	3
Trainer	43	7	10	60	2.55	1
Training aids	36	18	6	60	2.50	2
Practical training	29	15	16	60	2.22	4
	25	4	31	60	1.90	5

Table 3. Perception of trainees towards the quality of the skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

while also increasing respondents' self-confidence, as their mean score was the highest at 2.20. Then the mean score of entrepreneurial abilities is 2.17, as the majority of respondents perceived that skill development initiatives developed their entrepreneurial abilities. Better job opportunities received the lowest mean value of 2.15.

Benefits	Number of respondents			Total	Mean Value
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Improved job skills and knowledge	30	12	18	60	2.20
Better Career Opportunities	28	13	19	60	2.15
Self-confidence	27	18	15	60	2.20
Entrepreneurial abilities	28	14	18	60	2.17

Table 4. Mean value analysis for the perception of trainees towards benefits of a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Table 5 shows that the communication skills of the trainees have improved a lot, as it scores the highest mean value of 2.63. Then the emotional stability of the trainees improved, with a mean score of 2.50. The interpersonal skills and leadership skills of the trainees also improved, with a mean score of 2.40 and 2.32, respectively. The decision-making and managerial skills of the trainees have improved to an extent, with a mean score of 2.30 and 2.28, respectively. Trainees are unable to manage stress after attaining the skill development programme as it has a mean score of 2.23. The critical and creative thinking of the trainees has not improved, as they have only a mean score of 1.83 and 1.80, respectively.

4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment.

Skills	Number of respondents			Total	Mean Value
	Improved	Improved to some extent	Not Improved		
Decision-making skills	34	10	16	60	2.30
Communication skills	47	4	9	60	2.63
Interpersonal skills	28	28	4	60	2.40
Creative thinking	15	18	27	60	1.80
Managerial skills	31	15	14	60	2.28
Critical thinking	20	10	30	60	1.83
Emotional stability	35	20	5	60	2.50
Stress management	26	22	12	60	2.23
Leadership skills	29	21	10	60	2.32

Table 5. Mean value analysis for improvement in types of skills among the trainees (Source: Author's Calculation).

At the 0.05 level of significance, the p-value for $r=0.417271$ and the degree of freedom = $n-1 = 59$ is 0.00091. As the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment.

Age (in years)	Skill requirement			Total
	Highly required	Required to some extent	Not required	
Below 25	5	6	4	15
26 -35	9	10	2	21
36 - 45	7	4	5	16
Above 46	3	2	3	8
Total	24	22	14	60
p-value				0.593499

Table 7. Chi-square test results for hypothesis testing of the impact of age on the need for a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 3: There is no association between age and the need for a skill development program.

Hypothesis 4: There is an association between age and the need for a skill development program. The null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected because the p-value at the 5% level of significance is greater than (0.05). Therefore, there is no association between age and the need for a skill development programme.

Perception regarding the skill development programme	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
The content of the course is sufficient	Between Groups	6.327	3	2.238	0.942	0.426
	Within Groups	125.323	56			
	Total	131.650	59			
Adequate Training hours	Between Groups	6.218	3	2.073	0.981	0.408
	Within Groups	118.365	56			
	Total	124.583	59			
Adequate practical training	Between Groups	4.128	3	1.376	0.573	0.635
	Within Groups	134.455	56			
	Total	138.583	59			
Imparts necessary knowledge and skill to perform the job	Between Groups	27.520	3	9.173	5.535	0.002
	Within Groups	92.814	56			
	Total	120.333	59			
Skill development programmes enhance confidence in getting the job	Between Groups	21.737	3	7.246	3.955	0.013
	Within Groups	102.596	56			
	Total	124.333	59			

Table 8. One-way ANOVA for testing the significance of the difference between age and perception regarding the skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference between age and perception regarding the skill development programme.

Hypothesis 6. There is a significant difference between age and perception regarding the skill development programme.

There is a significant difference between age and perception that Skill development programmes enhance confidence in getting the job. Also, there is a significant difference between age and perception that imparts the necessary knowledge and skill to perform the job, as the p-value is less than 0.05. There is no significant difference between age and other perceptions, as the value is greater than 0.05 (see Table 9).

Perception regarding the skill development programme		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Improved job skills and knowledge	Between Groups	3.264	3	0.756	1.439	0.241
	Within Groups	42.336	56			
	Total	45.6	59			
Better Career Opportunities	Between Groups	7.171	3	2.390	3.479	0.022
	Within Groups	38.479	56	0.687		
	Total	45.65	59			
Self-confidence	Between Groups	0.580	3	0.193	0.278	0.841
	Within Groups	39.020	56	0.697		
	Total	39.6	59			
Entrepreneurial Abilities	Between Groups	12.744	3	4.248	7.531	0.00025
	Within Groups	31.589	56	0.564		
	Total	44.333	59			

Table 9. One-way ANOVA for testing the significant difference between educational qualification and perception regarding a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Skill requirement	Level of Satisfaction			Total	F	Sig.
	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied			
Highly required	18	2	4	24	1.439	0.241
Required to some extent	8	10	4	22		
Not required	4	2	8	14		
Total	30	14	16	60	3.479	0.022
p-value				0.000825		
Self-confidence	Between Groups	0.580	3	0.193	0.278	0.841
	Within Groups	39.020	56	0.697		
	Total	39.6	59			
Entrepreneurial Abilities	Between Groups	12.744	3	4.248	7.531	0.00025
	Within Groups	31.589	56	0.564		
	Total	44.333	59			

Table 10. Chi-square test results for hypothesis testing of the association between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 7. There is no significant difference between educational qualification and perception regarding the skill development programme.

Hypothesis 8. There is a significant difference between educational qualification and perception regarding skill development programme.

There is a significant difference between educational qualifications and the perception that skill development programmes lead to better career opportunities. Also, there is a significant difference between educational qualifications and entrepreneurial abilities, as the p-value is less than 0.05. There is no significant difference between educational qualification and improved job skills, knowledge, and self-confidence, as the p-value is greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis 9. There is no association between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 10. There is an association between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value at the 5% level of significance is less than (0.05), and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is an association between the need for a skill development programme and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

Source of Variation	SS			F	P-value	F crit
	0.730719	3	0.243573			
Within Groups	36.91928	56	0.659273	0.369457	0.775323	2.769431
Total	37.65	59				

Table 11. One-way ANOVA for testing the significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 11. There is no significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme.

Hypothesis 12. There is a significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme.

As the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between educational qualification and overall improvement after attaining a skill development programme.

Marital Status	Level of Satisfaction			Total	P-value	F crit
	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied			
Married	18.5	8.63	9.87	37	0.775323	2.769431
Unmarried	11.5	5.37	6.13	23		
Total	30	14	16	60		
p-value				0.6709167		

Table 12. Chi-square test results for hypothesis testing of the association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 13: There is no association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development program.

Hypothesis 14: There is an association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development program.

The null hypothesis is accepted because the p-value at the 5% level of significance is greater than 0.05, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no association between marital status and overall satisfaction with a skill development programme.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	Employed	Unemployed
Mean	1.794117647	1.730769231
Variance	0.713903743	0.764615385
Observations	34	26
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	53	
t Stat	0.28216101	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.389459491	
t Critical one-tail	1.674116237	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.778918983	
t Critical two-tail	2.005745949	

Table 13. t-test for testing the significant difference between the satisfaction levels of employed and employed trainees (Source: Author's Calculation).

Hypothesis 15. There is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of employed and employed trainees.

Hypothesis 16. There is a significant difference between the satisfaction levels of employed and employed trainees.

The null hypothesis is accepted because the p-value is greater than 0.05. There is no significant difference between satisfaction levels among employed and unemployed trainees. The mean value of employed trainees is slightly higher than that of unemployed ones.

5 Results and Discussion

To attain sustainable development goals, necessary steps need to be taken in various areas over time. Kerala was ranked first in India's SDG index. In Kerala, Kudumbashree plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development goals. The Kerala government launched numerous programmes to combat poverty and unemployment through Kudumbashree. Kudumbashree also ensures gender quality in the state. The study focuses on skill development programmes at Kudumbashree in Palakkad District, Kerala. The trainees' perceptions of the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at increasing female employment were investigated. The results of the present study reveal that the majority (35%) of respondents are between the ages of 26 and 35 years. More than half of the respondents (62%) are married, and 32% of the respondents have the educational qualification of graduation. Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents have a positive opinion about the quality of trainers, as indicated by the highest mean value of 2.50. Also, training aids are considered good by the respondents. Classroom instruction, practical training, and the syllabus of the skill development course need to be improved. Kudumbashree's skill development initiatives improved job skills and knowledge while also increasing respondents' self-confidence, as their mean score was the highest at 2.20. The communication skills of the trainees have improved a lot, as they scored the highest mean value of 2.63. Then the emotional stability of the trainees improved, with a mean score of 2.50. The interpersonal skills and leadership skills of the trainees also improved, with a mean score of 2.40 and 2.32, respectively.

Women trainees are aware of Kudumbashree's various skill development initiatives. They joined the programme to get employment. The trainers' quality, according to the trainees, is good. They are experienced and successful at imparting necessary skills and knowledge to the trainees, but practical training and the syllabus need improvement and should include more content. In addition to skill development programmes, an employment campaign has to be arranged for trainees to ensure better career opportunities. The communication skills of the trainees improved a lot after attaining the skill development programme. But the creative and critical thinking of trainees has not improved. As per the results of Karl Pearson's Correlation coefficient, there is a significant relationship between the need for a skill development programme and the need for employment. All of the trainees who required skills do not require employment because the majority of them are already employed in areas of interest. Chi-square test results show that age has no impact on the need for skill requirements. Trainees joined the programme irrespective of their age to acquire and improve their employability skills. The results of a one-way ANOVA test show the influence of age and education qualification on trainees' perceptions of skill development initiatives. According to the findings of the study, the need for skill affects overall satisfaction with the programme. This means that trainees who needed the skills attended the programme deeply, and their overall satisfaction matters for the effectiveness of the initiative. The chi-square test results show that the overall satisfaction of the trainees is not associated with their marital status. Results of the t-test indicate that trainees' overall satisfaction does not vary much with their employment status. An employed trainee's mean value is slightly higher than that of an unemployed trainee. The study was conducted after the pandemic period, especially among the women trainees who lacked the necessary skills before attending the programme. Their perspectives on the efficacy of skill development programmes must be understood.

6 Implications of the study

The study focuses on trainees' perceptions of Kudumbashree skill development initiatives for employability. Employment leads to economic and social empowerment for women. The study has some necessary implications for the skill initiatives of Kudumbashree. Most of the trainees joined the programme for their career growth. Therefore, the quality of practical training needs to be improved by using modern technologies, and the syllabus also has to be improved. Age and education have an impact on perceptions of entrepreneurial abilities, self-confidence, better career opportunities, and skills and knowledge. Life skills development is to be focused on by all the programmes as it is a common requirement. It includes decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, creative thinking, stress management, leadership skills, communication skills, managerial skills etc. Their demographic factor also needs to be considered while planning the programme. The need for skill has an impact on the need for employment. Different areas of employment require a different set of skills. Therefore, need skills of beneficiaries are required to be analysed. Kudumbashree needs to take sufficient steps to ensure the employability of trainees.

Based on the present study, it can be implied that better management of skill development programmes can attract more women participants to the programmes, especially from minority groups and backward regions. This ensures a better standard of living and gender equality. This also helps them gain confidence in setting up their entrepreneurial ventures. Skill training also needs to focus on creative thinking abilities as they lead to the generation of fresh ideas. Society will be benefited if the skills of women improve after attending the programmes, as it leads to their empowerment and reduces the problems faced by society like poverty, unemployment, and gender inequity. Skill-development programmes need to be designed for different needs and different skills in depth. It should confirm the standards of society and ensure the improvement of skills among women.

7 Conclusion

Kudumbashree is an important organisation in Kerala that has launched a lot of programmes for the upliftment of women from rural and minority groups. Women's empowerment and gender equality are their prime motives. Earlier women faced a lot of constraints in respect of undertaking employment from family as well as from society as a whole. Lack of family support, lack of financial support, lack of adequate skills and lack of self-confidence are the main constraints faced by them. Now a day, both government and non-government organizations are taking sincere efforts to ensure their social well-being. Employability skills are inevitable for better employment opportunities. With this motive, Kudumbashree undertook a lot of skill-development initiatives. The present study aims at evaluating the effectiveness of these programmes in imparting necessary employability skills from the trainees' perspective. Age and educational qualification are two demographic variables that have an impact on perception. The study concludes that programmes are effective in imparting skills and knowledge. Still, some types of skills like decision-making and managerial skills of the trainees have improved to an extent only. Trainees are unable to manage stress after attaining the skill development programme as it has a low mean score. The critical and creative thinking of the trainees has not improved. However, to study the course thoroughly, the syllabus should be expanded and the number of practical training hours increased. Skill development initiatives should continuously evaluate the performance of trainees to identify skill gaps and understand the skill needs of the trainees before designing the programmes. Constant monitoring of the functioning of programmes improves their quality. Trainer training also enhances the efficiency of the initiatives.

8 Scope for Future Research

Future research can be extended to other districts of Kerala, as the present study is limited to the Palakkad district of Kerala. The sample size of the study was small. The present study focuses on the overall perception of trainees regarding overall skill development initiatives. Future research can be conducted to study the effectiveness of individual skill development programmes. The study can also focus on the perceptions of trainers and employers regarding skill enhancement. The present study is limited to female trainees. Future research can be conducted among youth, rural people, minority groups, etc. More advanced research tools can be carried out in further research studies. Further research studies can be conducted on other dimensions like employment factors, skill gaps, types of skills acquired, and other factors.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that no financial interest has been derived from this empirical research.

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