



Inclusiveness: A pave the Way to Sustainable Livelihoods for Marginalized Communities with reference to the case study of VIVEC

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Abstract- In today's fast-paced world, skill enhancement is vital, particularly for marginalized communities. It's the bridge for transitioning individuals from mere survival to carving out sustainable livelihoods. This process isn't merely about financial self-reliance. It's about the transformational journey from skill acquisition to micro-entrepreneurship, empowering individuals to pave the way for the betterment of their communities. These efforts lead to tangible impact, empowering these groups to craft new stories for themselves. Marginalized groups face a multitude of interconnected challenges, including poverty, discrimination, limited access to resources, and inadequate healthcare and education, often leading to social exclusion and poor health outcomes. These challenges are exacerbated by systemic barriers and can result in a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break. Thus this paper attempt to highlights the challenges which these marginalized communities faces with reference to the case study of VIVEC hoping this insights in the paper will initiate a series of serious and productive deliberation on the topic.

Keywords- Marginalized group , Inclusiveness, skill enhancement, Sustainable Livelihoods.

I. Introduction

Marginalization is defined as a process in which a group of people is driven to the outside of society. It is defined as a social process in which individuals are systematically denied access to rights, opportunities, and resources, preventing them from fully participating in the economic, social, and, most crucially, political life of the society in which they reside. The process prevents an individual, a group, a region, or a community from taking use of the benefits and possibilities that come with being a member of a society. As a result of their lack of engagement in the social, economic, and political arenas, where they are expected to contribute according to specific predetermined standards, they are forced into a complex state of disadvantage and impotence.

The term 'marginalised group' refers to a group of people who have been pushed to the edge of society. As a result, the process entails a polar connection between two groups of people: the marginalised and the dominating. And it's often used interchangeably with terms like oppressed, vulnerable, discriminated, disadvantaged,



subjugated, socially excluded, alienated, or downtrodden, as coined by Paolo Freire, 'proletariat' as coined by Karl Marx, 'subaltern,' as coined by Gramsci, powerless, as elaborated by Michel Foucault, or exploited, vulnerable, discriminated, disadvantaged. To be clear, marginalised refers to people who have limited or no access to social, economic, or political opportunities, not only cultural ones. Social marginality, according to Peter Leonard (1984), is defined as "being outside the mainstream of productive activity or social reproductive activity."

Marginalized groups often face significant livelihood challenges stemming from limited access to education, resources, and opportunities, as well as social and technological barriers. These challenges include financial instability, lack of skills and training, and social exclusion, which can lead to poverty, poor health, and limited social mobility. Addressing these issues requires tailored interventions that focus on skill development, access to resources, and social inclusion.

These communities are given very low position in social strata and are subjected to all types of exploitation, discrimination, disparities, oppression, violence, civil rights violation, ill-treatment and deprivations. It's important to understand the journey of marginalised communities. It can be traced back through history, revealing deep-rooted systemic inequalities and biases. Historically, various societal structures and practices have placed certain groups at the periphery, often based on race, caste, gender, economic status, or other societal parameters.

Issues and Challenges :

Financial Barriers:

- Limited access to employment, fair wages, and financial services perpetuates economic disparities.
- Educational Challenges:
- Lack of quality education hinders skill development and access to better-paying jobs.
- Social Barriers:
- Social biases and prejudices lead to exclusion and limit opportunities.
- Technological Barriers:
- Limited access to technology and digital literacy restricts access to information, training, and market opportunities.
- Limited Access to Resources:
- Marginalized communities may lack access to land, water, and other essential resources, impacting their ability to generate income.

Lack of Market Access:

- Difficulty accessing markets and services hinders their ability to sell products and services.
- Dependence on Wage Labor:
- Many marginalized individuals rely on low-paying wage labor, making them vulnerable to economic shocks.
- Health Issues:



- Poor living conditions and lack of access to healthcare can lead to health problems, further impacting their ability to work.
- Displacement and Migration:
- Environmental degradation, displacement, and lack of opportunities can force marginalized communities to migrate, leading to further challenges in new environments.
- Gender Inequality:
- Women from marginalized communities often face additional challenges, including gender-based violence and limited access to resources.

Defining Skill Enhancement: The Bridge to Empowerment

Skill enhancement is more than just acquiring new abilities or honing existing ones; it's about amplifying the potential of an individual to meet evolving demands. For marginalized communities, this means breaking the barriers that have historically held them back. It's the bridge that takes them from vulnerability to strength, from uncertainty to assurance. A properly structured skill enhancement course doesn't just teach a trade; it builds confidence, broadens horizons, and equips individuals with the tools they need for long-term success.

From Skills to Micro-Entrepreneurship: The Transformation Journey

A pivotal benefit of skill enhancement is the creation of pathways to micro-entrepreneurship. Marginalised communities often possess a wealth of traditional knowledge and skills. However, they may lack the modern nuances or market strategies to monetize them. Through skill enhancement, these communities can upgrade their skills to meet contemporary market needs. It's not just about starting businesses; it's about fostering self-reliance, dignity, and financial independence. This entrepreneurial spirit drives innovation, taps into untapped markets, and weaves stories of transformation, all rooted in the essence of community values and strengths.

The ripple effect of skill enhancement reaches far beyond individual growth; it fosters community building. When one member rises, they pull others up with them, leading to collective upliftment. Skill enhancement courses act as beginning in this process. They bring together individuals, forge bonds over shared learning experiences, and cultivate a sense of unity and purpose. This not only empowers individuals but also strengthens the community fabric. As more and more members get skilled, the community becomes a hub of knowledge, expertise, and shared growth, driving a deep tangible impact on their collective futures.

In essence, skill enhancement is the lighthouse guiding marginalised communities towards brighter shores. It's an investment in human capital, ensuring sustainable growth, empowerment, and a reinforced sense of community. The real power lies not just in individual upliftment but in the collective rise, where every success story contributes to the broader narrative of resilience, growth, and lasting change.



Pathways to Sustainable Livelihoods

Sustainable livelihoods go beyond mere jobs; they entail a means of living that can be maintained over the long-term, providing stability, dignity, and a sense of purpose. Numerous pathways can facilitate this for marginalised communities. By leveraging skill enhancement and micro-entrepreneurship, they can move towards a promising and stable future. Here's a closer look at some of these pathways and the inspiring tales of those who have walked them. with reference to the case Study of VIVEC: VIVEC—Vivekanand Institute of Vocational & Entrepreneurial Competence—is one of the flagship programme of Shroffs Foundation Trust located in Vadodara, Gujarat. This vocational education hub is working in and around offered across Paldi (Vadodara) with outreach in Chhotaudepur, Dediapada (Narmada), and Hodko (Kutch). In collaboration with Government of Gujarat, VIVEC was established in 2011 under one of the highly anticipated programme known as Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana. Over a decade around 8000+ youth have been trained on large scale basis with the purpose of employment. Though VIVEC broadly serves youth, this case study explores the work carried out by them for older children/adolescents in upper secondary. The core focus on this age is because there are high risk of drop-out and getting into low-paid informal work. Therefore VIVEC's training programmes on life-skill modules such as NACHIKETA and industry exposure are mechanism through which these adolescents are make skilled.

The Child/Adolescent Problem VIVEC Addresses

The organization operates in tribal and rural belts with controlled schooling, thin labor markets, and gendered occupational segregation. VIVEC's campuses anchor access for first-generation learners. Distance, cost and social norms are enough to end the journey of these adolescents prematurely. But their residential campus lower these barriers with safety and supervised environment. Some of their efforts are mentioned below. Filling a gap between school to work transition : It is establish fact that today secondary school education does not always guarantee any job or employment. Hence the adolescents need applied and recognized competencies with local and regional industries where they can work with potential skills. Here trades covering engineering, manufacturing, chemical, IT, health and services allow these adolescents to choose technical trajectories. Placement with employers like Gunnebo, a formal manufacturer; Lepro Care Surgical Hospital straight after grade XII helped in avoiding drop-out into low return informal workforce.

Highlights placement linkages with formal firms; success stories list employers (e.g., Gunnebo, a formal manufacturer; Lepro Care Surgical Hospital). Adolescents transitioning straight after grade XII (or equivalent) can thus avoid drop-out into low-return informal labor Breaking Gender Stereotypes : Gender Norms: Girls in this area are carried away from "male" trades, early marriage or unpaid care burdens often derail further study. Their specialized training mainly emphasized on breaking these stereotypes by providing training to women adolescents in welding, sewing and other male dominated trades. Life Skills and Agency: Adolescents require communication, problem-solving, health and safety, and digital readiness to navigate modern workplaces. NACHIKETA (named after a curious boy from the Upanishads) is a program by SFT that helps tribal and rural youth build important life skills. These



include learning how to talk clearly, feel confident, work well with others, and make good choices. These skills are especially important for older children as they grow.

Impact and Outcome

The program begins with outreach and counseling in schools and communities, using VIVEC's model to connect with young people. Participants are then introduced to different trades and safety rules, along with life-skills sessions through the NACHIKETA stream. Trade training includes both classroom learning and hands-on practice in labs, as well as exposure to real industry settings through visits and guest demonstrations. After training, students are assessed and certified in line with industry standards. Finally, they receive support to find jobs, including help with interviews, paperwork, and guidance for adjusting to their first workplace. In the early stages of the program, participants—especially those from tribal and rural backgrounds—experience a noticeable boost in self-confidence. Through life-skills sessions and exposure to new environments, they begin to see themselves as capable and employable. The training also prepares them for the workplace by teaching communication, teamwork, and basic professional behavior. A particularly powerful shift occurs in gender norms: girls who join technical trades challenge long-standing stereotypes, showing that these roles are not just for boys. This change often inspires others in their communities to rethink what girls can achieve.

Once training is complete, many participants secure jobs in entry-level roles across various sectors. These include shop-floor positions in manufacturing, support roles in hospitals, and IT helpdesk jobs. As they begin earning a steady income, their financial independence grows. This not only improves their personal situation but also elevates their status within their families. Parents and relatives start to see them as contributors, which can lead to greater respect and influence at home. For many, this is the first time someone in their household has entered formal employment, making it a significant milestone.

Over time, the impact of the program extends beyond individual participants. Younger siblings often stay in school longer, inspired by the success of their older brother or sister. Families begin to value education and skill development more deeply. In communities where girls working in technical or non-traditional fields was once rare, it gradually becomes accepted—even expected. These changes reflect patterns seen in global research on vocational education and training (TVET), which shows that such programs can lead to intergenerational transformation. SFT's own data—over 8,000 youth trained and placed—strongly suggests that these ripple effects are already taking root in the areas they serve.

II. Conclusion

What sets VIVEC apart especially children and adolescents is its thoughtful and community-rooted programme design. Their presence across these tribal blocks makes it easier for families to actively participate. The proximity reduces the travel and logistic burdens too. VIVEC's bold stance on gender equality, using gender-transformative messaging to challenge stereotypes and create a sense of psychological safety for girls considering technical trades. The inclusion of the NACHIKETA life-



skills stream reflects a deep understanding that soft skills—like confidence, communication, and teamwork—are not optional extras but essential tools for adolescent employability.

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