



## Empowering Women: Enhancing Employability Skills in Higher Education

RABAB BADR, *Research Scholar, MANUU, HYDERABAD*

ADAM PAUL PATTEI, *Research supervisor, MANUU, HYDERABAD*

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### Abstract

This study explores how women students might improve their employability skills in the twenty-first century, taking into account the changing nature of the modern workforce and the critical role that higher education plays in enabling women to succeed in the workforce. The study investigates the status of necessary employability skills and the degree of employability skills among female undergraduates at central and state institutions in Bihar state, India, using a thorough literature review and empirical analysis. Using a descriptive survey approach, 800 individuals had their employability skills including technical, transferable, interpersonal, negotiating, leadership, and networking skills assessed. The results show that among female undergraduates, personal skills were the most sought-after quality, highlighting the significance of communication, flexibility, and time management in determining their employability profile.

**Keywords:** Employability skills, Women Undergraduates, Higher Education, Career readiness, Curriculum Development.

### I. Introduction

The effort to improve skills for employment among female undergraduates has taken on new importance in the twenty-first century, as the dynamics of the modern workforce and the shifting socioeconomic landscape reflect these changes. Higher education is providing women with the information, abilities, and self-assurance necessary to succeed in a cutthroat workplace.

The understanding that traditional academic ability alone is no longer adequate to earn meaningful job and career advancement is at the core of this attempt. Rather, a wide range of employability abilities that cut across discipline boundaries and include both technical proficiency

and interpersonal competencies are being sought of female undergraduates.

Women are encouraged to gain experience in new technical disciplines like artificial intelligence, data analytics, digital marketing, and information technology. In an increasingly digital economy, these talents not only make individuals more marketable but also allow them to use technology as a tool for innovation, problem-solving, and professional development. The focus on transferable skills, which include critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and adaptability, highlights how important flexibility and agility are in the fast-paced workplaces of today. Through experiential learning opportunities, internships, and cooperative projects that promote creativity, teamwork, and resilience in the face of change, women students are encouraged to develop these talents. Building personal competencies such as emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and cultural competence is crucial to creating inclusive workplaces and developing capable leaders. In order to help build inclusive, equitable, and socially conscious firms, women are urged to embrace diversity, empathy, and moral decision-making as fundamental components of their professional identities.

Furthermore, relationship-building and negotiating abilities become crucial instruments for boosting one's career trajectory and grasping chances for growth in the workplace. In industries and leadership positions where men predominate, women are urged to stand up for themselves, negotiate just compensation, and form strategic partnerships that support professional development through sponsorship, mentoring, and career development.

Accessing higher education in today's quickly changing labor market isn't only about earning a degree; it's also about preparing oneself with the abilities and know-how required to succeed in a cutthroat workplace. Beyond traditional academic limits, the pursuit of



improving employability skills has become a top priority for undergraduates. As a result, research into how to improve these abilities has gained attention from academics, decision-makers, and students alike.

### Significance of the Study:

In the symphony of education, the melody of employability skills harmonizes with the aspirations of tomorrow's workforce. This study, poised at the nexus of academia and industry, carries profound significance. It unveils the transformative potential embedded within the educational journey of undergraduates, offering a roadmap towards professional empowerment and fulfillment. By delving into the enhancement of employability skills, this study transcends the conventional confines of education, ushering in a new era of strategic competence-building and holistic development.

In an era marked by digital disruption and dynamic economic landscapes, the ability to adapt, innovate, and communicate effectively has become indispensable. Hence, the study of employability skills serves as a beacon of enlightenment, illuminating the path towards academic excellence and career readiness. This study not only highlights the intricacies of skill development, but also emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between education and employment, reaffirming the notion that learning goes well beyond the classroom. The importance of this research resonates with wider societal imperatives and goes beyond personal goals. With talent transcending national boundaries and the globe becoming more interconnected, developing employability skills becomes essential to maintaining global competitiveness and advancing socioeconomically. This study accelerates the development of undergraduates into change agents who are equipped to confidently and resiliently negotiate the difficulties of the modern workforce by promoting a culture of lifelong learning and skill acquisition. The process of improving undergraduates' employability skills is more than just academic talk; it is an endeavor for quality, creativity, and social change. This study illuminates a beacon of hope and possibility for future generations, so attesting to the transformational power of education.

## II. Review of related literature

The reviewed literature offers insights into the multifaceted landscape of graduate employability and the role of skills development programs in shaping students' readiness for the workforce. Ilyas and Ali's (2023) study underscores the importance of implementing mechanisms in higher education institutions to track graduates' skill development during their academic journey. Lavanam Amballa's (2022) research emphasizes the significance of competency mapping and course content in enhancing employability skills among arts and science college students in Tamil Nadu. Conversely, Qhatrunnada Suyansah et al.'s (2023) findings reveal no significant relationships between academic factors and students' employability post-graduation. Senthil Kumar V's (2018) study highlights the need for higher education institutions to equip students with aptitude and employability skills for entry-level job readiness. Suruchi Sahoo et al.'s (2022) investigation into employability skills among university graduate students discerns differences between science and arts graduates, with science students demonstrating more practical-oriented skills while arts graduates excel in communication and social aptitudes. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to skills development and the need for tailored interventions to enhance graduate employability in diverse academic contexts

### Objectives of the study

1. To study the status on Required Employability skills for women under graduates i.e. Technical, transferable ,personal ,negotiation, leadership and networking
2. To study the level of Employability Skills Among Women Under Graduates Of Central And State Universities

**Methodology:** A descriptive survey method was adopted to investigate the employability skills among women undergraduates of both central and state universities in Bihar state. The researcher employed a stratified random sampling technique to select the sample, with a total sample size of 800 participants. Specifically, 400 women undergraduates from state universities and an equivalent number from central universities were included in the study. To gather the necessary data, an employability skill checklist developed by the researcher was utilized as the primary instrument for data collection.



**Analysis of Data**

**TOOL -2 REQUIRED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR WOMEN**

Dimensions	N	Percentage of Employability Skills of Undergraduate Women	Rank
Technical skill	800	280(35%)	II
Transferable skill	800	186(23.25%)	IV
Personal skill	800	394(49.25%)	I
Negotiation skill	800	164(20.5%)	V
Leadership skill	800	197(24.62%)	III
Networking skill	800	142(17.75%)	VI

Employability skills for women undergraduates, Personal Skill emerges as the most prominently sought-after attribute, with 394 participants, constituting 49.25% of the sample, ranking first in importance. Technical Skill occupies the second position in terms of importance, with 280 participants (35%) recognizing its significance, Leadership Skill ranks third, with 197 participants (24.62%) recognizing its importance, Transferable Skill and Negotiation Skill occupy the fourth and fifth positions respectively, Networking Skill emerges as the skill with the lowest rank. This underscores the significance of personal attributes such as

communication, adaptability, and time management in shaping a woman's employability profile.

Nonetheless, the ability to network and forge meaningful connections remains a valuable asset in navigating the complexities of today's interconnected professional landscape.

The study elucidates the nuanced landscape of required employability skills for women undergraduates, shedding light on the diverse attributes valued by employers and stakeholders in the pursuit of professional success and career advancement

**Table -2 EEZmployability Skills Among Under Graduates of Central And State Universities.**

Variable	N	Low	Average	High	X <sup>2</sup>	Result
Central University	400	153	166	81	9.556	Significant @0.05 level
State University	400	179	124	97		

From the above table that the sample of 400 undergraduate women from central universities, the distribution of employability skills reveals a notable proportion of individuals categorized as "Average," with 166 students falling into this group. The "Low" category comprises 153 individuals, while the "High" category consists of 81 individuals. Contrasting the findings from central universities, the data from state universities also encompasses a sample of 400 undergraduates. Notably, the distribution of employability skills among students from state universities demonstrates a different pattern. Specifically, the "Low" category includes 179 individuals, representing a higher count compared to central universities. Conversely, the "Average" category consists of 124 individuals, while the "High" category comprises 97 individuals. Chi-square test value of 9.556, indicating a significant difference in employability skills among undergraduates of central universities at the 0.05 significance level.

**Results**

- The sample of 49.25% women undergraduates possess Personal Skill emerges as the ranking first in importance and Networking Skill emerges as the skill with the lowest rank with 17.75%.
- It is found that there is a significant difference in employability skills among undergraduates of central and state universities .

**Educational Implications:**

- Educational institutions should revise their curriculum to incorporate courses or modules focused on enhancing employability skills among women undergraduates.
- Emphasis should be placed on developing personal skills, technical skills, leadership qualities, and transferable skills through experiential learning and practical training.
- Universities and colleges can organize workshops, seminars, and training sessions aimed



at improving employability skills among women undergraduates. These sessions can focus on communication skills, leadership development, networking strategies, and negotiation tactics to better prepare students for the professional world.

- Individualized support can assist students in aligning their skill development efforts with their desired career paths, thereby enhancing their employability prospects. Collaborations with industries and organizations can facilitate internship opportunities and real-world experiences for women undergraduates.

- Exposure to industry environments can help students apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills, and cultivate professional networks essential for career success.

#### Suggestions for Further Study:

- Conducting a longitudinal study to track the progression of employability skills among women undergraduates over time can provide insights into skill development trajectories and factors influencing skill acquisition.

- Comparing employability skills among women undergraduates across different regions, educational systems.

- Employing qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies can offer deeper insights into the subjective experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by women undergraduates in developing and leveraging employability skills.

### III. Conclusion:

This study emphasizes how important it is for female undergraduates to improve their employability skills in order to fulfill the demands of the job market in the twenty-first century. In order to equip women with the abilities necessary to succeed in a variety of professional settings, educators, legislators, and stakeholders must acknowledge the complex nature of employability skills and pinpoint important areas for intervention. The importance of technical competency, interpersonal competencies, and personal traits in determining women's employability highlights the necessity of focused initiatives and deliberate interventions in higher education institutions. We can create a workforce that is more diverse, dynamic, and egalitarian by working together and committing to lifelong learning. This will allow women to fully utilize their abilities and make valuable contributions to society.

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