

# Effectiveness of Vocational and Skill training program among the rag pickers: A systematic review

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## Abstract

Rag picker, is a term for someone who makes a living by rummaging through refuse in the streets to collect material for salvage. Scraps of cloth and paper could be turned into cardboard, broken glass could be melted down and reused, and even dead cats and dogs could be skinned to make clothes. In India alone, there are approximately 4 million women in this profession. However, this huge number in no way implies that it is a comfortable profession in any way. Some common problems faced by the rag pickers are, Poor and marginalized, Unhealthy environment, Poor living condition and Victims of abuse. The main purpose of this paper is to find out the extent of population engaged in rag picking world wide and the nature of social, health problems they face. The paper also reflects on the interventions tried out to uplift the rag pickers in different parts of the world. This study aims to hold out a systematic scientific review of national and international literature reporting different skill and vocational training programmes and elucidate their effectiveness in improving the job opportunities and living conditions of various marginalized, vulnerable and underprivileged people group.

**Keywords:** Rag pickers, Skill training, Vocational training, Mental pain, IQ.

## INTRODUCTION

Rag picking is still widespread in Third World countries today, such as in Mumbai, India, where it offers the poorest in society around the rubbish and recycling areas a chance to earn a hand-to-mouth supply of money.<sup>1</sup>

The saddest and possibly the most ironic part of their story is that even after rendering this phenomenal service, these women are denied both their dignity and fair remuneration by our society. Worse still, their job is considered menial and they themselves are treated as untouchables by a large section of our society. Consider a simple aspect of their livelihood to understand the exploitation that these women undergo every day. Taking advantage of their illiteracy and poverty, a majority of middlemen dealers purchasing the recyclables exploit these women through rigged scales and lower-than-fair prices.<sup>2</sup>

Rag pickers come across difficult situations of discrimination, stigmatization, lack of sleep, lack of nutrition and a feeling of shame, embarrassment and guilty as they are exposed to the harsh realities of life. A common job that they can be easily cheated is exposed to street and many fall prey to child labour, domestic labour, prostitution and other illegal activities. These rag pickers are denied of their rights of education, survival and vocational training that could enable them to escape any kind of discrimination. Besides these they prone to various illness that can hamper their growth and development.<sup>3</sup>

Many rag pickers start at 4-5 years. In a recent study, in Patna and Raipur 20% of total rag pickers were between of 5-14 years, and 40% of the total dump site waste pickers were children. New Delhi and Mumbai have about 300,000 rag pickers and around 120,000 are under the age of 14. Children as young as 5, work from morning to evening to collect enough trash for sustaining themselves. Many rag pickers come from rural areas into huge cities for better living and are unable to find opportunities and end up collecting trash. Many rag pickers live on the street, are homeless and have no access to education or healthcare. Rag pickers mostly work barefoot in the Indian heat, get exposed to chemicals and hazardous substances and often suffer from life threatening diseases as a result.<sup>4</sup>

There are many research studies have been conducted to assess the living condition as well as health status of the rag pickers. But there is no research conducted to assess the effectiveness of skill and vocational training programmes and to plan interventions to improve the quality of life of this population. It is very important to explore the effectiveness of these vocational training programmes on other vulnerable people groups so as to plan the suitable interventions to help waste collectors to come out of their plight.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The electronic databases searched included Medline Embase and CINAHL. The search terms relating to HRQoL included 'vocational training programme', 'skill training programme', 'vocational and skill training programmes', 'social status' and 'underprivileged', 'down rodent', 'marginalized' and 'neglected'. These terms were each combined with a further search term relating specifically to vocational and skill training programmes. These consisted effectiveness of vocational and skill training programmes among various marginalised people groups. Following this, two reviewers independently evaluated an assigned subset of articles using previously developed data extraction forms and quality appraisal tools. Each specific item on the quality appraisal tool was openly discussed to reach consensus.

### INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Article reported assessment of skill and effectiveness of vocational training programmes
2. Full Text articles
3. Articles of any design written in English

### Exclusion Criteria

1. Non peer reviewed articles

### QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Two reviewers evaluated methodological quality independently using SEO, which provides information on observational studies such as cohort studies, survey and cross-sectional studies. After the independent evaluation, two reviewers met to discuss the article. Each specific item on the quality appraisal tool was openly discussed to reach consensus. This process identified whether disagreements were related to facts or adherence to the defined standards. Then, two investigators independently extracted the data from each selected study using a structured data extraction form.

<b>Sample</b>	Underprivileged, poor, deprived, disadvantaged, indigent
<b>Exposure</b>	Vocational and skill training programme
<b>Outcome</b>	Results obtained after exposure to vocational and skill training programmes

## RESULTS

Figure 1 Prisma Flow diagram depicted the inclusion of the articles. The total 406 articles were identified from the search databases, 311 duplicates were removed. 95 articles screened for the eligibility against the criteria. Out of the 20 eligible articles, 10 studies matched with the criteria. The characteristics of the 10 articles for the review are explained in the table no 2.

Table No. 1: PRISMA Flow Chart

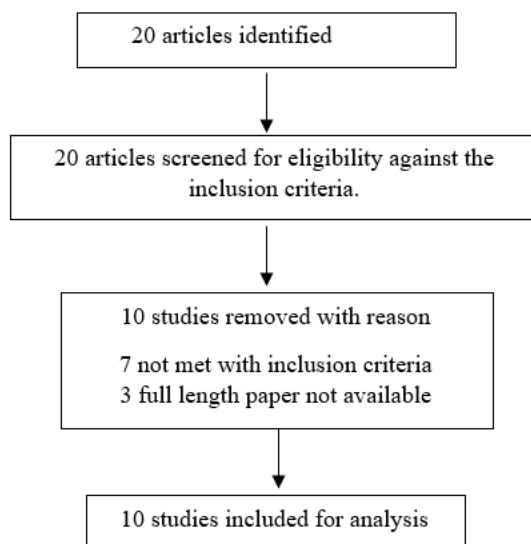


Table No. 2: Characteristics of the studies

Author	Study Type	Setting	Sample Size	Outcome
Indrajit Bairagya et al (5)	Empirical analytical study	India	200	Vocational training has a positive impact on female labour force participation across all specifications of the regression models.
Muthuveenan Rmasamy et al (6)	Explorative research study	Germany	60	Vocational training is viewed as a significant tool that increases employment outcomes and provides potential career advancement opportunities for individuals
Dr. Nalini Gangadharan (7)	Explorative research study	India	15610	Vocational training for vulnerable and marginalized youth in India” provides access to market-oriented employability training to the most deprived youth, effectively addressing the disconnect between the skills acquired through the education system.
Theresa Chinyere et al (8)	Survey research design	Nigeria	72	Study exploring and highlighting necessity for enhanced vocational education training (VET) and the development of work-readiness skills or employability skills in a vocational school in Vietnam.
Muafi et al (9)	Experimental research Study	Indonesia	73	The result of hypothesis examining explains that there are differences of self-efficacy, self-esteem, life interest and role behaviour before and after skill training
Anders Nilsson (10)	Mixed Method	Sweden	198	Vocational education and training (VET) provide Firstly, it is regarded as a suitable means of promoting economic growth. Secondly, it is seen as a potentially powerful tool for fostering social inclusion.
Kumar et al(11)	Survey research design	India	456999	The paper reveals that formal vocational training is associated with higher wages with the effect being the highest in the primary sector. Being male and urban dweller improved the odds of participating in formal vocational training.
Shanti Sahyog (12)	Project report	India	2000	A record is maintained of the placements. More than 2000 Students have successfully completed this program and most of them have secured jobs.
Tanima Banerjee (15)	Cross-sectional survey	India	537	The study reveals that VET significantly enhances participation in the manufacturing sector of India across all social groups. VET is found

				to be also helpful in enhancing wages of workers in the manufacturing sector at aggregate level.
Dr. Ashlesha Sharma (14)	Interventional research design	Nepal	26	Skill training programmes are an important endeavour to generate suitable employment for poor and school dropout girls.

Indrajit Bairagya et al Analysed that the impact of formal and informal vocational training on female labour force participation, based on the regression model, shows that both formal and informal vocational training have positive and statistically significant impacts on female labour force participation across all specifications, thus indicating the robustness of the relationship between the two. In addition, the coefficient of ‘participation in informal vocational training’ is much higher than that of ‘participation in formal vocational training’, indicating a higher significance of the positive impact of informal vocational training on female labour force participation. Therefore, policy makers need to pay special attention to enhancing the provision of vocational training for females on a larger scale. More specifically, as the supply-side variables like ‘the number of skill providers in the district’ is positive and statistically significantly related with formal vocational training, the number of formal vocational training institutes needs to be increased, especially in rural areas, in order to encourage more females to take part in vocational training. Most importantly, as our study shows that young women (15–29 years) are less likely to participate in formal and informal vocational training compared to older women (30–44 years), so it is important to ensure that younger females are better informed about and motivated to participate in vocational training programmes.(5)

Muthuveenan Rmasamy et al The results show clearly that the demands of the rural population varied, and their participation in the training course was highly influenced by access to a training centre, the duration of the training, economic returns and socio-cultural factors. The demand-driven approach works best in vocational training when it involves the relevant stakeholders and the target groups in the planning and designing process. The main reason is that traditionally women in rural areas are responsible for domestic work and receive very little support and motivation from their families, which impedes their participation and employment opportunities. It is important, therefore, that training providers consider social dynamics, history and traditional norms of the people they target for their courses. Another advantage of Vocational Training is that it has the potential in supporting human resource development, economic growth and social development processes in the country to also improve the quality of life. (6)

Dr. Nalini Gangadharan Observations on the performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact in relation to specific and overall objectives, and whether the action has had any unforeseen positive or negative results. The impact of the programme on the students is as follows: 1. Financial - Assured income - Cleared debts, saved money - Educated siblings - Built assets 2. Social - Gained respect - Interpersonal skills improved 3. Personal - Gained confidence - Feel empowered - Imbided greater discipline - Can plan ahead & take decisions 4. Parental satisfaction & pride 5. Community is aware of opportunities and greater hope for the future 6. Corporates become sensitive to the needs of the community. (7)

Theresa Chinyere et al Solid waste picking is a job which majority of people used to sustain themselves. The solid waste pickers, according to the study lack skills which are needed for the execution of the job. The facilities which are also required for their job are not in adequate. However, solid waste pickers are required to enroll in schools such as vocational centers where the adequate knowledge, skills and attitude regarding their career choice can be improved. Thus, solid waste pickers need to be motivated for this enrolment. This is because education is an instrument for career, personal and economic development in all nations of the world. (8)

Muafi et al This research affirms that the measurement of literacy and life skills can do by arising competency so someone may have success in his life and useful for his community. The unemployed youth who got the training if they have worked be expected they get earnings to meet their needs. The definition of earning here is not only for comply their daily needs but also, they can be more survive for better life quality. The ideal is respondent with skills and knowledge able to work autonomy and open field of endeavour for others. The developing program of life skills can help respondents having prestigious and confidence in earning in the opportunity context in their social environment. It affirms once more that training for unemployed youth has close relation to self-esteem and self-efficacy in a long-term period. (9)

Anders Nilsson Youth unemployment has become a major social and economic problem in the industrialized countries, with consequences such as underutilization of human capital, possible skill shortages in various sectors of the economy, low income among young people, and potentially increasing drug abuse and criminality. Vocational training enhances the possibilities of getting access to the labour market in several, though not mutually exclusive, ways. Vocational Training increases skills and competencies in young people, which make them more competitive in the labour market. (10)

Kumar et al They found that being an urban dweller increases the odds of participating in formal vocational training. It may be indicative of lack of proper vocational training facilities in the rural areas. Further, being male increases the odds of receiving

vocational training, implying that certain special interventions are required to encourage the girls to enrol in formal vocational training programmes. They noticed the impact of vocational training on the wages of an individual at an overall level and at the sectoral level. They also found that having formal training increases the wage by 4.7% in the overall economy as compared to a person without any training. The effect is highest in the primary sector, where the individuals with vocational training had a wage increase of 36.9%. Workers with formal vocational training in the secondary sector had an increase in wages by 17.6%. (11)

Shanti Sahyog As per the report 50 women, drawn from the 16 slums near our Centre, were trained, examined and awarded Certificates. They followed syllabus approved by SINGER, designed to create employment opportunities for them. Besides the prescribed syllabus, the women are also taught to make wall hangings, fancy bags, purses, files & folders. The aim was to provide Cutting & Tailoring Skills to underprivileged girls /women with a view to help them earn a living by stitching clothes from their homes (self-employment) or get a job at a boutique export house and supplement the family income, to improve their quality of life. Trainees were also taken for exposure visits and counselled on the marketing aspects of a tailoring unit; sampling and quality control; Self Help Groups as Tailoring Unit Co-operatives. They are also encouraged to setting up shop, with an interest free loan from the Government or Self-Help Group. 19 girls and women from the slums completed their 6-month basic Beauty Culture Training from our Skill Development Centre, and were awarded Certificates. They learnt: Threading, Bleaching, Waxing, Facials, Manicure, Pedicure, Head & Body Massage, Bridal Make-up, Hair Cutting/Styling and Henna Application. More than 500 Women have successfully completed this program. A large number earn around Rs. 10,000/- by providing door to door services. While many are employed in Beauty Parlours, a few have set up their own. (12)

Tanima Banerjee The findings of the paper with respect to the research question clearly show that VET (inclusive of VET of any form) significantly enhances participation in the manufacturing sector of India. Findings are same for formal VET as well. However, the impacts on the probability of participation as wage labourers vary across industries in case of VET as well as formal VET to some extent and this may be happening due to the differences in the level of requirement of skilled workers in manufacturing industries. As far as the impact of VET on wage/salary earning is concerned, both VET and formal VET appear to be capable of significantly increasing wages of workers in the manufacturing sector at aggregate level. (15)

Dr. Ashlesha Sharma The report of the project has created remarkable achievements in market oriented and gender responsive technical and vocational skills to school dropout girls and young women who have no access to vocational and skill training programmes and to the higher education. The project was successful in overcoming the gender stereotype in the male dominating society. The project had prepared impending female role model in male oriented technical areas. The project was successful in changing the attitude and behaviour towards gender and was useful in improving the economic independence of girls and women in the nation of Nepal. (14)

## DISCUSSION

In this systematic review, we comprehensively evaluated the feasibility and effectiveness of vocational and skill training programmes. Rag pickers come across many challenging situations due to poverty, less or very few opportunities of education, demand of the family and also because of addiction. This review targets to understand the effectiveness of various skill and vocational training programmes on many poor and needy people groups. Indrajit Bairagya et al reported that both formal and informal vocational training have positive and statistically significant impacts on female labour force participation across all specifications, thus indicating the robustness of the relationship between the two. Furthermore, younger girls should be encouraged to take some skill training programmes for their better future (5). The results of Muthuveenan Rmasamy et al indicates that there is a great need of vocational training programmes in Rural areas. Another advantage of Vocational Training is that it has the potential in supporting human resource development, economic growth and social development processes in the country to also improve the quality of life. (6) Report of Shanti Sahyog working in Delhi among women living in slums explains Self Help Groups as Tailoring Unit Co-operatives. They are also encouraged to setting up shop, with an interest free loan from the Government or Self-Help Group. The women benefitted with stitching classes and Beautician courses are earning good and are able to help our families. They are also able to pay off all year loans.(12) Dr. Ashlesha Sharma in her project report while working with UNESCO among the marginalised girls in Nepal reported that vocational and skill training classes are very useful in the upliftment of school dropout and poor girls. Specially it was very useful in breaking the gender bias in the society. According to her report young girls should be encouraged more to take benefits from these training programmes. (14). Through the reviews available related to effectiveness of Vocational and skill training programmes across the world, it is evident that these skills are proved to be very useful for the betterment of the lives of many poor, down casted, neglected, marginalised, and underprivileged group of people.

## BIAS ASSESSMENT

A systematic review of published studies is limited by the fact that it excludes unpublished data and this may result in publication bias.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Individual interest and financial constrains bias may be a limitation of this type of study although some observations suggest that this was not substantial. Subjective measurements by an individual of their own interests cannot be standardised by any

yardstick other than the individual themselves.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this systematic review indicate that findings of this study will have implications on NGOs and government agencies working among rag pickers. These interventions will ensure the transformation in the lives of these migrated people who live life compromising their dignity and respect. As in other marginalised communities, skill and vocational training programmes have shown promising results. Similarly, if these interventions if used for the young rag pickers, will not only increase their income but also will be an aid to provide them better, respectful, dignified and promising future.

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