

GAD POWER: ENCOURAGING MORE WOMEN IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL FIELDS

by:

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The times are changing and the gender tables are turning.

For a long time, technical and vocational fields have been seen as male-dominated industries. People often associate fields like construction, automotive, welding, and engineering technology with men, while women are expected to pursue careers in teaching, nursing, or office work.

However, due to the strong push on gender and development in the country, we realized that women have just as much potential to succeed in technical and vocational fields. Encouraging more women to enter these industries isn't just about gender equality – it's about tapping into a huge pool of talent that can drive progress.

Nevertheless, the main challenge still in getting more women into technical and vocational fields is the pre-existing stigma. Many still subscribe to the society-attributed gender roles which psychologically deters more women from actively pursuing technical-vocational education (Trasmonte & Teresa, 2023).

It also doesn't help that many vocational schools and training centers have more male students than female ones, making it harder for women to see themselves belonging in those spaces. The first step in changing this is to challenge these old beliefs. If people continue to say that women don't belong in these fields, then fewer women will even try. But if we show that women can excel in these areas, more will be inspired to follow the same path..

Employment opportunities also play a crucial role. While technical and vocational schools have long been available in the country, many employers and still seem to prefer baccalaureate degrees over skills certification (Edralin & Pastrana, 2023). This is exacerbated by the fact that in most tech-voc industries, employers seem to also prefer skilled men over skilled women workers. Even when women gain the necessary skills, they still face discrimination in the workplace. Some employers hesitate to hire women for technical roles simply because they are used to hiring men. Others assume that women won't be able to handle the physical demands of the job. But the truth is, many technical jobs require skill and precision more than physical strength.

Hence, aside from the educational institutions, companies and employers must also step up. Companies need to recognize that a person's ability to do a job well is not determined by gender but by training, experience, and dedication. More inclusive hiring practices and workplace policies would encourage more women to stay and thrive in these industries.

There is also the issue of career advancement. Women who enter technical fields often face more obstacles when it comes to promotions and leadership roles. Many industries still have a "boys' club" culture where men dominate managerial and supervisory positions. If we want more women to enter technical and vocational fields, we also need to ensure that they have a fair shot at career growth. Leadership training, equal opportunities for promotion, and fair workplace policies can help level the playing field.

Encouraging more women in technical and vocational fields isn't just about fairness—it's about making sure we don't waste talent. Many women have the skills, intelligence, and dedication to excel in these careers, but they are often held back by outdated beliefs and systemic barriers. If we remove these obstacles and create an environment where women feel encouraged and supported, more of them will step into these fields with confidence.

The world is changing, and so should our mindset. Women belong in technical and vocational fields just as much as men do. It's time to break the cycle of gender bias and open doors for a future where skills and abilities matter more than stereotypes. The more we encourage women to pursue these careers, the more we build a workforce that is diverse, innovative, and ready to take on the challenges of the modern world.

References:

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