



No longer a man's monopoly

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Poor Best

Plumbing was a job which was restricted to men. But now women have also ventured in this territory. SALONI BHATIA brings you a report.

Even though India might have made giant strides in several fields of education, vocational education is an area which remains largely neglected. Bearing this in mind, Amrita University started a unique programme titled Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education (SAVE) to train people in areas like fabric painting and plumbing.

What makes the concept of SAVE more interesting is the fact that the plumbing course has women enrolling for it. Started in August 2011, the MES Assistant Plumbing course, the programme has all women participants. Prompted by a need to bring in a positive change in their lives as well as their families, they decided to join the three-month course.

Forty eight-year-old Usha B is one such woman. A resident of Karunapally district in Kerala, she was previously working as a lab technician in a hospital. But certain circumstances prompted her to leave the job. However, she felt that she should try to help her husband. "This desire to help my husband prompted me to join the Amrita self-help group. From there, I came to know about the plumbing course and found it interesting," she tells you.

Hers is not an isolated case. "In the last few years, it has been seen that the number of people taking up menial jobs has declined. It is increasingly becoming difficult for people to find plumbers for fixing the various things," Prof Akshay Nagarajan, technical manager, R&D, Amrita University tells you.

Vasanth Kumari opted for the plumbing course because her husband has not been keeping well and is unable to go out and earn. Though her son is working, it is difficult for her to sustain her family and also meet her husband's medical expenses. "Living in a small village, it was difficult to find other job. When I came to know about this, I joined it. Also, the duration of the course was not long and we were getting to work in groups which was good," the 49-year-old tells you.

The course which is free of cost for the participants uses cutting-edge technology to extend training facilities to people who have long been on the sidelines. The application of haptic technology and multimedia enhances the importance of course. Apart from minimising the need for costly tools and materials, the students gain experience by working on equipment without risking damage or wear and tear. It becomes all the more easier for women since they have to work with light-weight Haptic technology instead of heavy-duty tools and machinery.

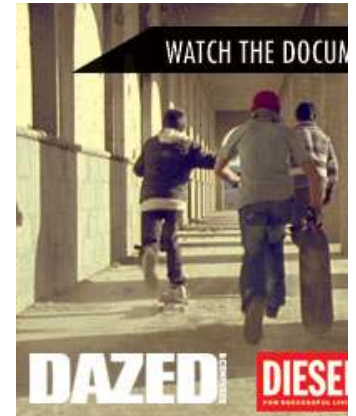
At the end of the three-month course, participants will receive apprenticeships through Amrita University and Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences.

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