

Recent Policies for Skill Development among Rural Youth

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Abstract

India has the largest youth population in the world. About 87 per cent of young women and men living in developing countries face challenges. Youth are a major human resource for development, key agents for social change and driving force for economic growth. In many parts of the world, youth face poverty, hunger, barriers to education, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence, and limited opportunities for growth and employment prospects. Youth are often excluded from decision-making processes. The most common factors used to characterize youth relate to education and employment activity. This high percentage of youth can be utilized by channelizing the creative energies through development of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude. Many factors are responsible for the difficulties that youth experience in finding the job opportunities. Youth has always been of vital concern of the Government of India. The National Youth Policy (2012) emphasized youth empowerment in different spheres of national life. Recognizing the imperative need for skill development, National Skill Development Policy was formulated in 2009. Youth employment is now a top policy priority in most countries across all regions. Skills development is the shared responsibility of the key stakeholders viz. Government. The policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity. There is a need to develop and strengthen programmes targeted to the youth to enhance their economic, educational, social and cultural development. Various initiatives by the government play a pivotal role to skills development and employment generation which focused on education, health, skill development and self-employment, entrepreneurship development etc.

Keywords: Employment, Skill development, Unemployment and Youth

Introduction

Youth, defined by the United Nations as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, represents almost 18 per cent of the current global population. About 84 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries (UN, 2007). Youth are the most important segment of the population as they play quite a significant role in every country of the world. Youth population in India is 460 million, out of which 333 million (72 per cent) are literate. Youth unemployment has risen dramatically; around 40 per cent of youth population is vulnerable regarding employment. It includes 11 per cent of working poor, four per cent of unemployed and 25 per cent of not actively seeking jobs. Vulnerability increases even more in agriculture sector due to disguised employment and they have less skill for the prevailing opportunities.

The realistic causes of employment vulnerability may be social, economic, psychological, administrative etc. which needs to be identified to generate proper strategy of unemployment mitigation. Existing youth policies often do not cater for poor rural youth. Institutions and organizations that permit opportunities and possibilities of all kinds are not available to everyone. International Labour Organization (2014) is taking action to tackle the youth employment crisis through a multi-pronged approach for employment growth and decent job creation. Some of the major reasons behind the high youth unemployment rate are attributed to the fact that many youth lack employable skills, access to resources like land and capital. The youth also have a negative attitude towards certain types of work. Additionally, the overall existing policies also continue focusing on creating job seekers and not job creators.

Salient facts about youth employment in India

- The National Youth Policy (NYP-2014) launched in February 2014 proposes a holistic 'vision' for the youth of India, which is "To empower youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations". The NYP-2014 has defined 'youth' as persons in the age-group of 15-29 years.
- The World Bank estimated that India needs to create 8.1 million jobs per year to maintain its employment rate, which has been declining.

- The global youth unemployment rate is 13.0 per cent for the period 2012 to 2014. Youth unemployment rate in India refers to unemployment rate for the person ages 15 to 29 years.
- Youth unemployment rate in India increased about 23.70 per cent in the year 2018 and 23.34 per cent in 2019.
- Youth between 20 to 24 years of age, who constitute around 40 per cent of India's labour force, have an unemployment rate of 32 per cent.
- The unemployment rate among the educated youth is even worse. The rate among people with at least a graduate degree was 13.17 per cent in mid of 2018.
- The major causes of high unemployment rates in India is lack of skills required for that are available.

(Source: State of India's environment, 2019)

Skill development and entrepreneurship

Skills development is the shared responsibility of the key stakeholders. Government and entire spectrum of corporate sector, community-based organizations, highly qualified and dedicated individuals who have been working in the skilling and entrepreneurship space for many years, industry and trade organisations and other stakeholders. The policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity in paving the way forward for inclusive growth in the country. The skill strategy is complemented by specific efforts to promote entrepreneurship in order to create ample opportunities for the skilled workforce.

Strategies to skills employment among rural youth

The concept of employment strategies towards gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and moving to new employment by choice solely depends on the knowledge, skills and attitude possessed by the individual and also the labour market information. Butt *et al.* (2011) in their study found that young people were an important asset to the nation but was exploited by different agencies and their capabilities and competencies were not fully utilized by the Government. The author recommends that the government should take serious steps for developing rural NGOs in which rural youth can actively participate for the development of their villages. Further, government should establish technical and vocational institutes in villages for the training of rural youth. It is important to promote education and training to facilitate a match between the skills possessed by the youth



and market demands. DFID (2006) indicated that improvements in transport facilities foster economic growth, increase employment opportunities, reduce the cost of essential commodities, increase the accessibility of social services and reduce the vulnerability of the poor communities. Developing and strengthening programmes targeted to the youth in order to enhance their economic, educational, social and cultural opportunities, to promote constructive social relation among them and to provide linkages outside their communities to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty is required. Such policies aimed to enhance employment opportunities, increasing ways and means of helping youth to develop the skills they need and to enable them to find employment.

Government Programmes for Youth in India

1. National Young Leaders Programme

A new Central Sector Scheme, 'National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP)' was formulated by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2014-15 with a view to develop leadership skills among the youth. The main aim of this scheme was developing leadership qualities among the youth to enable them to realise their full potential and in the process, to contribute to the development of the nation. It also aims at motivating the youth to strive for excellence in their respective fields and to bring them to the forefront of the development process. It seeks to harness the immense youth energy for national-building. Programme has the several components includes Neighbourhood Youth Parliament, Youth for Development Programme, National Young Leaders Awards, National Youth Advisory Council and National Youth Development Fund.

2. Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), launched in 1972, is one of the largest youth organisations in the world. NYKS currently has about 8.5 million youth enrolled through 3.01 lakh Youth Clubs/ Mahila Mandals. The Objective of the Programme is to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth and to engage them in nation-building activities. The focus activities include literacy and education, health and family welfare, sanitation and cleanliness, environment conservation, awareness on social issues, women empowerment, rural development, skill development and self-employment, entrepreneurship development, civic education, disaster relief and rehabilitation, etc.

3. National Service Scheme



National Service Scheme (NSS) was introduced in 1969 with the primary objective of developing the personality and character of the student youth through voluntary community service. 'Education through Service' is the purpose of the NSS. The ideological orientation of the NSS is inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. The precise nature of activities continues to evolve in response to the needs of the community. Some areas in which NSS volunteers work are education, health, family welfare and sanitation, environment conservation, social service programmes, programmes for improving the status of women, production-oriented programmes, relief and rehabilitation during disasters/calamities, etc.

4. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development

Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, is an 'Institute of National Importance' under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. The RGNIYD set up in 1993 as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1975 was conferred the status of 'Deemed University' under 'De-novo' category in 2008. RGNIYD functions as a vital resource centre with its multi-faceted functions of offering academic programmes at Post Graduate level encompassing various dimensions of youth development, engaging in seminal research in the vital areas of youth development and conducting Training/ Capacity Building Programmes in the area of youth development, besides the extension and outreach initiatives across the country.

As the apex institute at the national level, it works in close cooperation with the NSS, NYKS and other youth organizations in the country. The Vision of RGNIYD is to be a globally recognized and acclaimed centre of academic excellence in the field of youth development.

5. National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development

National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD) is an "Umbrella Scheme" of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports under which financial assistance is provided to Government/ non-Government organisations for taking up activities for youth and adolescent development. The Scheme is operational since 1st April, 2008. The assistance under NPYAD is provided fewer than 5 major components, namely,

- a. Youth Leadership and Personality Development Training
- b. Promotion of National Integration (National Integration Camps, Inter-State Youth Exchange Programmes, Youth Festivals, multi-cultural activities, etc.)

- c. Promotion of Adventure
- d. Development and Empowerment of Adolescents (Life Skills Education, Counselling, Career Guidance, etc.)
- e. Technical and Resource Development (Research and Studies on Youth issues, Documentation, Seminars / Workshops)

6. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) launched on 15 July 2015, on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). PMKVY is implemented by National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) under the guidance of MSDE. With a vision of a Skilled India, MSDE aims to skill India on a large scale with speed and high standards. The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood. Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government. Government has now approved the Scheme for another four years (2016-2020) to impart skilling to 10 million youth of the country.

Consequences of youth unemployment

Unemployment has social as well as economic consequences for young people. Unemployed young people are forced to find alternatives to generate income, including activities in the survival-type informal sector and, in extreme cases, criminal activity. Rural migrants believe that more jobs and social opportunities are available in urban areas, but once in the cities they find themselves without a job and with limited social networks. Youth joblessness also implies missed opportunities in the human resources to produce goods and services. In addition, smaller tax revenues result from a smaller tax base for income tax and indirect taxes such as the value added tax. A further implication is related to security. An increase of one percentage point in the ratio of people ages 15-29 to people ages 30-54 increases the likelihood of conflict such as civil unrest or war by seven per cent. Higher crime rates also have a direct economic cost in terms of loss of foreign direct investment. Youth have limited access to health services, leadership and management skills they are prone to poverty because they are unable to engage in meaningful and gainful employment. The



youth have also lost faith in the capacity of their country to offer them the necessary protection against exploitative employers.

A lack of information, networks and connections among youth, especially youth from families lacks significant social capital. Many young people lack knowledge of what the world of work is actually like, and have not given careful thought to their own potential career choices. They have not used their time in school to prepare appropriately for realistic career paths. They lack informal networks and connections that are traditionally the major source of information about job opportunities. And they do not know how to navigate the labor market to identify and pursue available jobs or to find and use the most relevant training resources. A lack of experience and credentials that address employers' risk in making hiring commitments. Many employers are sceptical about young people's ability to apply the skills they learn in schools to the practical challenges of the workplace. They also question the social skills and work ethic of youth. They see these deficits as a significant barrier to the productivity of inexperienced young people, and at the same time they are reluctant to invest resources in training young people when more experienced adult workers may be unemployed and available for hire.

Conclusion

Youth unemployment and underemployment continue to impose social and economic development as a result loss of opportunities for economic growth in India. A lack of available jobs suited to entry - level skills. In some labour markets, especially in the developing world, there is simply a demographic mismatch between the number of young people seeking work and the level of local economic activity. Most available work may be in informal or underdeveloped industry sectors. There may be a severe shortage of locally-available jobs that are entry-level but that still lead to meaningful careers. Because of these factors, many young people face significant obstacles to obtaining decent work and thriving in their first jobs. In addition, in difficult economic times, young people are often the first to be laid off, making it still harder for them to consistently build their skills and experience. Consequently, many young people end up facing extended periods of unemployment, or significant under-employment in jobs that fail to offer career opportunities. Skills development is the shared responsibility of the key stakeholder's viz. Government. The policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity.

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