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Analysis of Skill  
Development Policy in  
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# **Making Youth Employable: Analysis of Skill Development Policy in India**

## **With Special Reference to Karnataka**

**Zeena Husain<sup>1</sup>**

### ***Abstract***

*India is a country that has a good number of youths who, when employed, can be a dividend for the country. Initiatives such as the Skill Development and Training Programme (SDTP) were introduced to make the youth more employable. This paper explores with the help of secondary and primary data how far the programme has succeeded. It further examines the factors which led to the success or failure of the programme. The data analysis has been done for the state of Karnataka to understand the outcome of SDTP. Finally, concluding observations are made and suggestions are given to further improve the programme.*

**Keywords:** Skill Development Programme, youth, Employability

### **Introduction**

In low-income countries, a majority of the population consists of young people between the age group of 15 and 25 years. The youth of these countries are considered to be a demographic dividend indicating that those of working age in these countries are more than the dependent population (King, 2012). To take advantage of this, the countries need to make their youth employable. One of the ways through which this can be achieved is through the Skill Development Training Programme (SDTP) also referred to as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This is one of the main reasons why the Skill Development Programme (SDP) is given priority by countries in the Asia Pacific (Maclean *et al*, 2013).

In addition to this, other factors that are cited for giving skill training to the youth are that firms across the globe are constantly under pressure to keep innovating and improving the service and quality of their goods. In other words, capital and skilled labour are interrelated. Having said that, Mustafa *et al* (2005) illustrate that when the capital invested increases, the demand for a skilled labour force will also increase. To achieve this, there is a need for a skilled workforce competent enough to do the required job. Moreover, Okada (2012), supporting this adds that for the growth of the economy and to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), most of the countries need skilled workers. This helps in bringing the latest technology into their country, helping in the development of the country. Also, for multinational companies to invest in a particular country, a skilled workforce is the key factor. This in turn makes the developing countries realize that focus on skill development is an important drive to address poverty reduction. The youth after acquiring skills will not only be able to find employment but will be part of a more productive labour force benefiting not only the worker but also the country (Sanghi and Srija, 2015).

In light of the above, there is a need to understand whether the SDTP can impart training to the youth to make them suitable for employment. This paper thus attempts to review whether the SDTP,

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which is the flagship programme of the government of India and is more than a decade old after its inception in 2009, can achieve its goal of making youth more productive and able to join the labour market. It also looks at the reasons for the success or failure of the programme.

## **Objectives and Methodology**

In the above background, this paper has the following specific objectives:

1. To understand and review the position of the Skill Development Programme in India;
2. To examine the factors that are responsible for the failure or success of SDP in India, and
3. To bring out the reality of SDP in the state of Karnataka.

The analysis is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data is collected from government documents and reports and primary data from a field study conducted among 171 women, who were purposively selected from Bengaluru city.<sup>2</sup> Simple statistical tools like percentages are used to analyse the data. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

## **Understanding Skill Development Policy in India**

India at present has a "demographic advantage" with a large pool of young population. This puts the country in an advantageous position as the majority of the population falls in the working age group of 15 years to 59 years as compared to many other countries. Adding to this, the continuous "decline in the dependency ratio estimated over the next 30 years" (Okada, 2012) further works in favour of the country.

Therefore, if India succeeds in skilling its people with the necessary skills in adherence to the labour market needs, then the demographic advantage that the country currently has will be converted into a demographic dividend. This would be beneficial for both those who are joining the labour market and those who are already part of the labour market to be more productive at work in India as well as when they go to other countries.

It is not an easy task for India to meet the above requirements of skilling its youth. The country has a large youth population which are poorly educated and unskilled. Okada (2012) confirms this and points out that though rapid growth has been seen after the economic reforms from the year 1991, job opportunities were less throughout the 1990s and 2000s. It was also observed that there was a growth in the numbers of jobless youth in the private sector which needs highly skilled workers as the sector is profit driven. As a result, youth ended up seeking employment in the informal sector with no job security, low wages/earnings and no social security benefits.

This is elaborated on by Sanghi and Srija (2015) who emphasized how the structural transition from agriculture to other sectors of production has resulted in the decline of the agriculture sector to the GDP. The area where jobs were created was unfortunately the informal sector which is said to employ 91 per cent of the total labour force. It is well known that there is no job security or social security benefits in the informal sector. In addition to this, mostly in the informal sector, the status of

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<sup>2</sup> The primary data is restricted only to females as this data is collected related to the objective of the author's PhD thesis.

employment is categorised as self-employed. Also, a large number of youths are found unemployed. The reason behind this is the aspirational mismatch or skill mismatch. Where on the one side the organizations harp about the scarcity of skilled labour, on the other side the youth are not able to find jobs.

In the year 2009, India introduced its first skill development policy. The National Policy on Skill Development aims to train about 104.62 million people afresh and an additional 460 million people are to be reskilled, upskilled, and skilled by 2022 (Sanghi and Srija 2015). At the central level, this brought together the government, industry, and training institutes and established a link among them. This was achieved by the setting up of a body known as the National Skill Development Council (NSDC). Additionally, the National Skill Development Board (NSDB) was created to form a link among 17 different ministries. To increase support and delivery of VET (Vocational Education and Training) programmes, private players from the industries were roped in and NSDC was formed as a public-private partnership. To improve the programme further, Sector Skill Councils were established and industrial associations were formed to identify the skill gaps which are present in each sector and also to improve the training programme. The Skill Council is also responsible for maintaining the standard for the skills implemented and assessing the performance of the trainees undergoing the programme.

The NSDC is directly controlled by the Prime Minister's office, indicating the keen interest in the government to promote SDTP. This also led to an increase in awareness among different groups such as training providers, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and general people at large. This was further improved by increasing coordination with related ministries and similar agencies. This finally changed the way TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) was earlier implemented in India and brought everything under one umbrella (Okada, 2012).

To make it more integrated, the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) was created by consulting education ministers from 12 states in the country. The purpose was to standardize the whole training programme. This was done by providing a qualification system that was nationally recognized and led to the standardization of the training module. The effort was to give value to the skills learned at the school level, VET, and while pursuing higher education. This was considered an effective measure to bridge the gap between the government, industry, and other stakeholders (Okada, 2012).

In this broad skill development policy and agencies in place, the following paragraphs discuss the present position of three important programmes namely the Apprenticeship Training Scheme, Modular Employable Skills and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

### **Apprenticeship Training Scheme (ATS)**

Apart from Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), India has also institutionalized the Apprenticeship Training Scheme (ATS) since 1961 based on the German/Swiss dual model. The Apprentices Act of 1961 makes it compulsory for large firms in both public and private sectors to take apprentices every year. The size of the firm and the workforce decides the number of apprentices taken by them. Those students who have completed the ITI training, get an opportunity to do one year of on-the-job training in a big firm. The students get a stipend of around one thousand rupees per month during the period.

However, not all students can avail the apprenticeship benefits. To do this, the student should also undergo formal vocational training under the Craftsmen Training Scheme, the duration for which in ITIs is from one year to three years. After completion of formal education of eight to ten years, only this training has to be done. However, the harsh reality is that very few firms take apprentices under ATS. Adding to this, the number of students who manage to get pass marks under ATS is low, which has made the government remodel the whole apprenticeship scheme (Okada, 2012).

The new scheme launched in the year 2016 is known as the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS). The objective of this scheme is to bridge the gap between students, businesses, and schools. It offers skills training and practical experience in various industries to students. Over 7,400 students are chosen each year. The training will help students gain valuable work experience, businesses to find skilled workers and schools to help launch students' careers. Apprenticeships might even lead to full-time jobs. The government has decided to train over 900,000 apprentices in the next five years and provide ₹3.054 crore in financial support. The recent approval covers apprentices' training between 2021 and 2026 (PIB, 2021).

### **Modular Employable Skills (MES)**

An initiative was made to help workers in the informal sector who had very little educational qualification. To support the manufacturing sector and help the workers, a policy was introduced in the year 2010. In the Modular Employable Skills (MES) scheme, for joining the course, the educational qualification requirement was reduced to five years of schooling with related experience. The courses were designed as short-term courses, mostly consisting of two weeks to reduce the opportunity cost of the enrolled students of being away from work. The Regional Director of Apprenticeship Training was to award a certificate to the trainees after successful completion of the course. This was done to make the trainees' skills acquired recognized in India as well as outside the country. However, MES training is not widely recognized and is offered on a limited scale (Okada, 2012).

### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY)**

The reason for SDP not becoming as great a success as it was expected needs to be examined. To begin with, one needs to understand what is the skill gap and how the Government of India is tackling this issue.

In the year 2015, a flagship programme known as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) was introduced under the Skill India campaign by NSDC. The motive was to establish coordination among all skill development campaigns nationwide. In this programme, there were short-term courses designed to benefit the youth who were unemployed or those who were dropping out of schools and colleges. The training also acknowledges the prior learnings of the trainees. There is no financial burden on trainees as their complete training and assessment fees are taken care of by the government.

PMKVY 1.0 aimed to equip young people with skills that are desired in the labour market. In its initial run, it provided training to nearly 20 lakh candidates in 375 different occupations. However, it only

has data on the employment outcomes for a small portion of those trained, with around 2.53 lakh finding jobs (MSDE, 2019).

There seems to be a disconnect between Skill India and PMKVY training programmes and actual job placement. While the number of people getting trained has increased significantly, from 3.5 lakh in 2016-17 to 10.6 lakh in 2017-18, the chance of finding a job after training has dropped dramatically, from over 50 per cent to just 30 per cent for Skill India. PMKVY faces an even starker challenge, with only 15 per cent of graduates finding employment.

India's Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched an improved version of its major skill training programme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0), in January 2021. This initiative aims to address the challenges of the post-pandemic era by providing training programmes that are aligned with current industry needs and the new jobs that are emerging. By the end of 2022, though PMKVY 3.0 had trained 737,000 candidates, only around 41,000 were placed in jobs (Committee Report, 2022).

A report by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in India suggests that getting a certificate does not guarantee a job. Fewer than half of the people who complete these programmes can find work in their field.

Additionally, involving the private sector through the National Skill Development Mission was a positive move, but the programme's results haven't met expectations. There is room for improvement.

## **Skill Gap**

As analysed by Sanghi and Srijia (2015), there are two types of skill gaps. There exists one type of labour force which enters the labour market but does not have the required technical or soft skills and is unable to find any relevant jobs. This is regarded as one of the main reasons for the growing high rate of educated unemployed youth in the country. The other type of skill gap is the skills needed in the long-term market and those possessed by the job-seeking youth. These two types of skill gaps explain the complete mismatch of skill supply and skill demand in the job market. Hence, the challenge that India faces in terms of its labour force is that it has to provide the skills which are in current demand by giving youth appropriate skill training, re-skilling, and enhancing their skills to make them suitable for the jobs.

The concern here is that the majority of the workers who need skill training belong to the category of self-employed or temporary workers. The task faced here is how to impart the skill training and improve the skills for this section of workers. The other task is to have the long-term perspective to analyse, anticipate, and develop the skills that will be useful and more in demand in the future.

Mishra (2014) asserts that India is a country that has an old civilization with a rich cultural background. This aspect makes many people of the country rich in traditional art and craft skills which have been passed down from one generation to another. This type of skill attainment is considered to be an informal skill and employment exists in the unorganised sector with low wages.

King (2012) contradicts the statement given by the Task Force of Skill Development of the Planning Commission which recommended that "there has to be a paradigm shift in the national policy on skill development with the private sector playing a lead role instead of the government, as they are

the job providers.” He states that they fail to acknowledge that the private sector has been playing a dominant role and the market is demand-driven. He further adds that the demand here is to exploit the labour force who need jobs and are ready to work for any wage offered to them. They are unskilled and cannot demand much and are finally those who can be given on-the-job training. He asserts that second thought should be given before saying that India’s skill system should be more demand-driven.

### **Addressing the Skill Gap**

There is a need to focus on reducing the skill gap. Some programmes address prior learning that cater to the unorganized sectors who get the knowledge, for example, in handicrafts, from the elders in the family generation after generation. This needs to be acknowledged and preserved. With the advent of the opening up of the economy, there has become stiff competition for the small handicraft owners in the market. The policy needs to be developed to protect their needs. The entrepreneurs need to be given training on the latest techniques which can be used to enhance their production and also marketing and selling of their products. For example, Banarsi silk sarees from the city of Banaras in Uttar Pradesh need a market where they can sell their products at a reasonable rate without incurring any losses.

The second aspect, for example, is taking care of future needs. It has been seen that the countries in the West are investing a huge amount from their budget in Artificial Intelligence (AI). India, if it does not want to be left behind in the race, needs to invest in the same and impart skills to the youngsters to make the best use of AI tools. These are a few domains where substantial progress needs to be made to address some of the skill gap issues.

### **Funding for the Skill Development Programme**

The most crucial aspect of skill development is to understand how the funding pattern works in SDP. This aspect determines who makes decisions and drives the Skill Development Programme in India.

The outlook towards skill development programmes changed after the massive funding mainly from the private sector in India. It may also be noted that there was some monetary assistance received from other countries. For example, even before India started the National Skill Mission, the World Bank helped with financial support for upgrading 100 Industrial Training Institutes. The European Union also supported monetarily India’s skill initiative with Rs.6.5 million euros.

With the formation of NSDC and the promotion of public-private partnerships, many corporates took an interest in skill development training deals made by NSDC. According to the NIIT Yuva Jyoti (2017) report, “the plan by the government was to train/skilled 500 million people by the year 2022. For this, the private players were roped in. The Indian Institute of Job Training (IIJT) partnered to train 150 million youth by 2022. The Future Group and NIIT both partnered with NSDC to train 7 million youth each over a period of ten years. Bharti Group’s Centum Work Skills agreed to train 12 million people in 11 years. Everon’s International Skills School decided to train 15 million people over 10 years. IIJT agreed to set up 1349 multi-skill development centres across the country and also made a deal of a soft loan of Rs. 62 crore. In the Public Private Partnership model, it was decided that upgrading 1396 ITIs



would bring in from the government some 400 million US dollars each year. Each ITI would require over half a million dollars for upgradation in PPP mode.

Not surprisingly, the skill sector has become heavily corporatized. The government's decision to skill from a mere 2 per cent to 50 per cent by the year 2022 and create a skill pool of 500 million people has made the corporate giants enter the sector. It was seen that in the year 2011-12, only 2.2 per cent of the youth received formal skill development training. Thus, it can be understood that the skill training programmes are not undertaken with a social mindset either with the corporate or the industry.

It has been observed that the trainees who go for VET courses generally belong to poor and marginalized communities. They do not have exposure to quality education or training and hardly any job experience. On the other side, corporate stakeholders generally do not come from a background of poverty or living in difficult and inaccessible areas. It is observed that there is no compassion shown to the trainees even in terms of giving valuable time to their training. Other agencies such as the United Nations, World Bank, etc. have shown keen interest in VET training but no substantial work has been done so far. Mishra (2014), concludes "The skill sector is passing through a phase of irrational exuberance by involving players who treat skill development and VET as a part of their business model instead of aiming to create a business model."

### **Status of SDTP in the States of India**

An impact study conducted by the NHPC skill development project for five states Himachal Pradesh (HP), Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Manipur, Sikkim, and West Bengal (WB) highlights the importance of skill training in terms of securing jobs. Finding employment is a key factor in measuring the success of these programmes. The information on the status of employment after obtaining training in these states is presented in Table 1.

It can be seen from Table 1 that in five states an average of a quarter (24%) of trained people are in wage/salary employment, while a third (33%) are in self-employment activities/business. A large share of trainees (43.5%) found no jobs and remained unemployed. The highest number of trainees who got wage/salary employment is found in WB (31%) followed by J&K (19%), HP (16%), and Sikkim (11%). In Manipur state, none of the trainees got wage/salary employment. In contrast to this, in Manipur (100%) and Sikkim (76%) the trainees took up self-employment/ business (handloom weaving in Manipur) activities. In HP also, the share of self-employed trainees is quite high at 50%. The important reason cited for taking up self-employment is the easy way to conduct work near their places. This also throws light on the benefit of skill training as it fosters entrepreneurship. The report acknowledges that the trends are not uniform across all states. Places like J&K and West Bengal show less self-employment growth. Keeping all these trends in consideration, the programme needs to be improved further in terms of getting employment for the trainees.

**Table 1: Status of Employment of Candidates who Received Skill Training in the selected States**

Status	Status after Receiving Training (%)											
	HP		J&K		Manipur		Sikkim		WB		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Wage/salary employment	4	15.9	17	19.1	0	0.0	7	11.2	63	31.1	92	23.5
Self-employment	9	50.0	16	19.5	10	100.0	45	76.3	32	18.8	112	33.0
No	16	34.1	57	61.4	0	0.0	11	12.5	123	50.1	206	43.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Extracted from NHPC Report, 2018

## Learning for India in SDP from other Countries

“The key role of skills in fostering prosperity is evident worldwide: countries that have invested wisely in skill training have made considerable progress in equitable development” (King, 2012).

Investment in youth in terms of giving skill training has been acknowledged for the phenomenal growth in the economy and development of China, South Korea, and Singapore. These three countries are discussed below to know their success stories of how they benefitted from SDP. The first country for discussion is China. Mehrotra *et al*, (2015) explain that the initial movement of the workers out of agriculture to industry was crafted well by the Chinese government. Reforms were brought in to integrate the workers. Importance was given to educational reforms, including vocational and technical training. Fiscal decentralization in China holds importance for the participation of government and industry in imparting vocational training. The Chinese students were first exposed to technical training at the junior secondary level. Students take the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework at the senior high school level. The children who generally score lower marks are taken for vocational training. The curriculum is generally divided into two parts. The first part of this curriculum is general academic training designed at the national level. The rest half is designed taking into consideration the local trade of the area in school. Not only do the trainees enhance knowledge of general academic skills but also vocational education is in sync with the local industry needs. The selection of trainers, who impart training, is also carefully crafted in vocational training.

The other aspect to learn from China is the way it prioritizes state spending in the courses. For example, for the courses that were high in economic demand, the amount required to pursue the course was also high and the state paid the tuition fees. On the other hand, subjects such as accounting and business studies where the demand was high for the course but were not expensive to pursue, the state withdrew from paying tuition fees. This also impacted the students to go for particular courses. With this strategy, the state invested in areas in which the private sector was not willing to invest (Powell and Lindsay, 2010).

Thus, India needs to learn lessons from China which has become the world's factory with a skilled workforce.

The next country for discussion is South Korea. The success story of the growth of the economy of South Korea can be attributed to its impressive skill development programmes. The country made a drastic shift in its policy to concentrate on goods and services from an earlier stage of

industrialization. The state understood the need for development and displayed a proactive role in addressing the issue of skill supply and the relative demand in the labour market. It is asserted by King (2012) that "foundation skills in the early years of education, then technical and vocational in secondary education and the flexibility between general and TVET have been the deciding factors for the country's success." It can be said that South Korea made wise investments in skills considering the future needs of the economy.

The third country in the discussion, Singapore, can be a learning for the rest of the world as it strategically designed its skill development training. This is well explained by Powell and Lindsay (2010) who elaborated on how the effective utilization of skill development programmes by the government of Singapore became a success. It can be ascertained that Singapore took TVET as an opportunity and ascertained in which sectors they wanted the skill training programme to be conducted and what resources they had as a nation. The country exploited it for their skill development and made industrial promotion policies and adopted them at the national level to rapidly grow and reach near the developed countries.

The discussion will now focus on other countries that could not benefit as per their expectations from the SDP. For example, a comparative study on skill training programmes done by Engel (2012) for the countries Bangladesh, Jordan, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopia found that some amount of work has been done by all these countries to connect the amount of work experience with skill training. The outcome was futile. The reason for this was that cash-for-work programmes in these countries lead the youth to unemployment since there is no future growth in this type of employment. When the time frame for that work is over or the project is completed, the youth will again become unemployed with no certainty of future employment. On the other side, it was also observed that the skill training that the youth underwent in these countries did not translate to employment and was also not sustainable (Engel, 2012).

Another country that did not succeed with SDP was South Africa which followed its own NSDP (National Skill Development Programme). It mainly focused on the supply side by training youth through TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training). This training was given in vocational training institutes, at the workplace be it formal or informal, schools, and colleges (Engel, 2012). As emphasized by King (2012), these initiatives do not pay much attention to basic or transferable skills acquired during school education at primary and secondary school education. Lacking these factors contributes to SDP not being successful in this country.

Furthermore, King (2012) illustrates that across South Asia, giving training to workers on the job is widespread as opposed to institutional-based training. This is considered to be the heart of the problem. In many organizations, workers are taken on a contractual basis who are mostly unskilled. During the beginning few years, the trainees are paid very little or even no remuneration for the work they did. After working for a long period only a few amongst them are usually selected for permanent positions. There is no social benefit for them that is provided to the permanent workers. The reason for such treatment is said to be stringent labour laws that provide social security and benefits to permanent employees which employers do not want to adhere to. This leads to many workers working as

permanent casuals meaning that they sign contracts in agreement to be sacked before the deadline which will make them permanent on the pretext of being rehired.

## **Skill Development Training Programmes: Initiatives in Karnataka State**

The discussion now will narrow down to some of the aspects of SDP in the state of Karnataka. The following information unfolds the innovative methods taken up by the state of Karnataka in terms of skill training and development.

Karnataka is considered to be one of the most advanced states in the country in terms of its educational status and industrial development. To make skill development reach the less advantaged social groups, an ambitious plan has been introduced in the state. Okada (2012) suggests that "in Karnataka, the distribution of the percentage of students is as follows: 50 per cent of the students are selected based on general merit, the other 50 per cent belong to reserved categories comprising 15 per cent Scheduled Castes (SCs), 3 per cent for Scheduled Tribes (STs) and 32 per cent for Other Backward Classes (OBCs). One-third of the seats are reserved for women and 3 per cent for differently-abled persons. The fee for general merit candidates charged is Rs.1,200 per year and for SCs/STs is fully reimbursed. However, because of budget constraints, ITIs are always short of qualified instructors."

On the progressive front, the Karnataka Government in the year 2012 made an innovative change by introducing online registration for skill development courses across the state. This enabled applicants to take admission online and get an opportunity to choose amongst the courses offered at ITIs in all the locations in the state. This was also seen as beneficial in understanding the demand for the skill development courses and the training given in those courses. In addition to this, the advanced module training was implemented with the World Bank for 500 ITIs as a Centre of Excellence. Okada (2012) gives the example of four ITIs in Karnataka that went ahead with a specific course.

These ITIs collaborated with Toyota Centre in Bengaluru and gave training in Motor Mechanic Tool and Maintenance course. Toyota, to enable itself to recruit the trainees, decided to take topics in the sessions which were needed in the firm and gave specific skill sets for the same. The company takes trainees as apprentices in the second year and also goes ahead by recruiting them after completion of the course. This kind of partnership with firms made the training more relevant and caused improvement in placement rates.

Another aspect is elaborated by Maclean *et al* (2013): "Karnataka has over 34 Employment Exchanges, which cater to the employment needs of the job seekers and the employee needs of the organizations." The Karnataka state employment exchange is mainly accessed by students who want jobs and students pursuing ITI training. Most of the time, the students faced hurdles and after the registration, the message they received was- they were in the queue. Adding to this, no counselling was initiated either for those who needed a job or for recruiters from the industry. To change the situation and better placement, Karnataka Vocational Skills and Training Development Corporation (KVTSDC) and the Department of Employment and Training (DET) have introduced a PPP model with Team Lease Services. This led to the upgradation of the Employment Exchange Centres.

## Lessons for Karnataka State from Central SDP Policy

Karnataka's Skill Development Policy is in alignment with the country's skill development policy in terms of running the programmes. The state is encouraged to invest in skill training programmes to make youth employable. The state can implement programmes to address the issue related to informal employment. The state can monitor the particular need for skills in their region and design the programme accordingly. As per the national policy, the state can also keep updating its curriculum to match the changing knowledge market. As the Centre has provided an option to decentralize the skill development programmes, the states can further do that and decentralize the programmes at the local governments to meet the locality needs and reduce the mismatch between the skills demand and supply in the labour market.

### Status of SDTP in Karnataka State

To examine the progress of skill training, the following analysis is done for the females who have undergone SDTP in Bengaluru, Karnataka, which is considered to be a progressive city with job opportunities. The foremost aspect of the trainees is the extent of completion of the courses in which they have been enrolled. The year-wise information such as the number enrolled, passed and dropped out from the training is provided in Table 2 for SDTP trainees in Bengaluru city. Table 2 shows that the trainees who have completed the courses and were given certificates were maximum during the year 2021-22 which is around 88.2 per cent and for the year 2022-23, it was 81.6 per cent. It is also seen that except for the year 2019-2020, the percentage of trainees who have received certificates is gradually increasing. The confirmed status of trainees implying those who have completed the training courses but did not go for assessment to get the certificate varies over the period of five years with 88.1 per cent in the year 2019-20. When drop-outs are taken into consideration for the trainees who due to various reasons could not continue their courses, it is observed to be at a maximum for the year 2018-19 at 8.8 per cent, and the least in the year 2022-23 at 0.1 per cent.

**Table 2: Year-wise Status of Trainees Course Completion, Confirmed and Dropped out of Training**

Year	Certified*		Confirmed**		Dropped out***		Total
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
2018-19	30	17.5	126	73.7	15	8.8	171
2019-20	15	9.9	133	88.1	3	2.0	151
2020-21	453	66.3	222	32.5	8	1.2	683
2021-22	1052	88.2	135	11.3	6	0.5	1193
2022-23	1137	81.6	254	18.2	2	0.1	1393

**Note:** \*Certified: completed the course and received a Certificate; \*\*Confirmed: did not undergo assessment; \*\*\*Dropped out: discontinued the course.

**Source:** Karnataka Skill Development Corporation, 2023, Government of Karnataka.

This issue is further examined through primary data and the reasons for dropping out of the course by the trainees. The information points out that there was a demand for SDP and many students joined the training programme which is ascertained by the certified and confirmed trainees. The

information such as completion of the course, dropped out of the course, and employment status of the sample women trainees is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Course Completion and Employment Status of Sample Trainees in Bangalore City**

Particulars	Number	Per cent
Course Completed	122	71.3
Dropped out of course	49	28.65
Total Trainees	171	100.0
Trainees Employed	20	16.4
Trainees Unemployed*	102	83.6
Total Trainees**	122	100.0

**Note:** \*Trainees who did not get employment till 1 year after passing SDTP

\*\* relates to those trainees who have completed the training courses

**Source:** Primary Data, Author's computation 2023

It can be seen from Table 3 that out of a total of 171 women trainees, 122 (71.3 per cent) have completed their respective courses and the remaining 49 (28.65 per cent) dropped out of the training.

For those students who dropped out of the course, the reasons cited are that they had enrolled in computer courses. There were around 10 computers, but five of them were not working. One of the respondents said:

No system was given during the practical, initially, I went in the morning with my friend to the training centre but the computers were engaged by other students. They said to come around 1 pm, but even then, they were occupied, so we left the course out of frustration.

Others said that they have to earn to sustain themselves and their families. They did not have time to attend the course as earning became more necessary and all their time was occupied with work and hence they discontinued the training. Further, many got married during the course of training and could not continue. Some got pregnant or had small children, there was nobody to take care of them and so had to leave the course in the middle and take care of the family. In this regard, one of the respondents said:

The reason for leaving is, I have two small children 4 years and 1 year old. Have to drop the eldest child at school in the early morning. The whole day I am busy with kids.

Some left and pursued their education in Pre-University or Degree.

Another respondent said:

I was a dropout from the course because I joined the course during my holidays and now, I want to finish my education.

Other reasons given include the poverty of the family (father has a small shop in the market and mother works as a housemaid), family problems, joining the course along with friends but many of them have left and had to leave, hectic course schedule such as those of aviation courses from morning till evening, many of their friends dropped so they also dropped out as it was difficult to travel alone to the training institute which was too far.

Further, it may be observed from Table 3 that out of a total of 122 trainees who have completed the training programme, 20 (16.4%) are employed and the remaining 102 (83.6%) remained unemployed. Of those employed, some are working as receptionists in schools or as nurses in Muslim-run minority hospitals, beauty parlours, garment units, etc. Those who remained unemployed after completion of the SDTP went back to work in the informal sector where they were working earlier as domestic help or in the garment units. And yet, most of them are still looking for jobs. Thus, this clearly shows that a majority of the women who had undergone training are unemployed.

The reasons cited for unemployment vary from personal, and family members to the labour market. The personal factors include marriage, small children, and pregnancy. It is also said that the job offered was far from their residence. Some women trainees mentioned that it was their father, and those married pointed out their husbands, father-in-law, or mother-in-law who are the decision-makers in the family and did not support the trainees to go for jobs; they are now housewives. A respondent's father said in conversation:

I have got my daughter married after the course, now it is her in-laws' responsibility to make her work or sit at home. I have handed her to them.

Yet others said that the jobs they were offered were not relevant to the training programme they received, and hence they did not join them. The most crucial issue relating to trainees is the skills/courses obtained and the type of jobs secured in the post-training period. In other words, whether the job which the trainees got after the completion of the training programme is relevant to their trade/course. The information on this aspect is presented in Table 4. It may be noted that of the total 122 trainees who have passed out from the courses, 20 got jobs. Of the total 20 employed trainees 14 (70.0%) concurred that the job was related to their skill/course undergone and the remaining 6 (30.0%) opined the opposite i.e., the work they were doing is not related to the training they received in the institutes (Table 4).

**Table 4: Relation between the Skill Course Undergone and the Jobs Obtained by Sample Trainees**

Course and Nature of Job	Number	Per cent
Job related to the training received	14	70.0
Job unrelated to the training received	6	30.0
Total	20	100.0

**Source:** Primary Data, Author's computation 2023

One trainee was interviewed who was still doing the training programme and would complete it in a month. She was very excited about the course and went every day to the training centre and did the course in digital marketing. Later on, after her course completion, when she was contacted to know her job status, she said she passed with distinction but does not have a job. On enquiring the reason behind it, she said that though she did a course in digital marketing she was offered jobs in call centres. Her family did not want her to work night shifts so she was again jobless. In another instance, a woman said that she did an aviation course and was promised a job cleaning aeroplanes after the course. Instead, she was offered a job in the cargo area which meant carrying the luggage. She did not take the job as she could not lift heavy things due to her poor health.

Another woman said that she eagerly went for the tailoring course. She wanted to start her venture. But when the training course was over, the training institute denied her the sewing machine which they had initially promised to give her. She says that after she completed the course in 2021, she went every few months to the training institute requesting for the sewing machine. She got the following response:

Why do you come and call all the time, others don't?

To this, she replied:

I need it so I come, I don't know about others.

Now, the officials of the institute said that the programme is scrapped and no one will get any sewing machine. When questioned about the role of the placement cell in getting the trainees employed, most of the respondents said that there was no proper placement cell. What the institute did was to form a WhatsApp group for the trainees. There they kept posting about vacancies and asked the trainees who had completed the course to go for the interview. There was no proper setup where some recruiters were called for recruiting purposes. Nor was there any meaningful collaboration with the industry. Some of the trainees did say that "Job Melas" (jobfairs) did happen. Some of them attended the job fairs but again hardly anyone got placed through them. Most of the trainees felt that there should be more job melas with a focus on meaningful interaction between recruiters and job seekers so that they get to know more about the job opportunities available in the market and can apply accordingly.

### **The Outcome of the SDTP in Getting Trainees Employed**

Most of those trainees who passed have done it on the first attempt and except a few, all have scored above 60% and have got the certificates. They have done well in the courses. Most of the trainees said that they were taught well. But still, they are unemployed. They have either gone to do their previous menial and laborious jobs mainly in the unorganized sector or things not related to the field. Those who joined the courses said that they wanted a decent job with a better salary, but it had not happened. There were no proper jobs in the market. Some were doing jobs not related to the field as noted earlier.

There are a few who after doing the course, for example, a beautician course, are working in beauty parlours. Some after doing computer courses are working in data entry jobs or as receptionists. Some, with tailoring courses, are working in the garment units. But these are very few.

As brought out in Table 2, out of 171 trainees on the rolls, 122 were able to complete the training course. This shows that the trainees could understand the course curriculum and could do better in terms of passing the examination. The other 49 respondents enrolled in the training programme could not continue due to various reasons and were dropouts. This further indicates that the programmes should be more inclusive and work to decrease the number of dropouts from the courses. Table 3 indicates that out of 122 respondents who completed the course only 20 were able to get any employment after completion of the course. This is an indicator that can be used to measure the success of the SDTP. The training is specifically designed for employment but it has failed to achieve its mission of getting youth employed. In Table 4, out of the 20 trainees who got the job after completion of the course, only 14 found that their job was in tandem with the skill training that they underwent.



This illustrates that it is difficult to find jobs relevant to the training received by the respondents in the labour market. There is a bigger question that needs reflection on the fact that though the training in terms of capital investment is done to develop the skills of the youth, the output in getting youth employable is comparatively very low.

## **Conclusion and Way Forward**

Thus, from the field data, it can be understood that although the government is spending huge budgetary resources to get the youth employed, the outcome is not very favourable. There are only a few who can benefit from the skill training programmes but the rest even after doing the training courses are struggling.

It is also observed from various government reports that skill development is one of the key focuses of government policy. The emphasis is to make the formal sector more accessible by imparting specific skills in the sector. In addition, this increases the productivity of the informal sector and further reduces poverty and unemployment. Throughout the analysis, it has been observed that lack of good education and access to training programmes have kept youth in a vicious cycle of poor education and low level of skills which does not fetch them employment and poverty remains the biggest concern.

It can be understood that the national skill plans for the upliftment of youth of developing countries pay little attention to the informal sector even though these are in large numbers in many developing countries. The big query that needs to be answered is: Why are most of the new jobs which are around 90 per cent in India and other such developing countries in the informal sector?

Thus, it can be said that countries that could leverage skill development for their youth's employability and growth of the country have emphasized three main objectives: the first, by matching the skill provision to the demands and relevance of the labour market; the second is adopting change by learning new skills, and upgrading existing skills which help workers to maintain employability; and finally, it helps enterprises to adapt to change and remain competitive.

In addition to this, for any country to grow economically, the youth need to enter the labour market with a good education and the right skills. King (2012) suggests that this can be done by understanding the fact that the country wants to benefit from its demographic dividend. The need is to give good primary and secondary education.

Hence, when we come down to India, the country also needs to make efforts to integrate dropouts into white-collar jobs as it is a very difficult domain to enter, no matter how skilled he or she is (Mishra, 2014).

For India to benefit from the demographic dividend, the right investment in human capital is needed to make the youth employable and benefit from initiatives such as SDTP. India first needs to do the groundwork by making education compulsory and enabling children to get a good education, which is the foundation stone. Children who receive good education will develop into well-educated individuals who are qualified enough to take up challenges in their lives and move forward in their career growth. These are the individuals who, when they receive skill training, will be able to use it optimally in getting jobs. On the other hand, placement cells and industry collaboration should be taken up on a serious note as this is the bridge where trainees will be able to get jobs.

The programme needs to be more inclusive when it comes to women. Women should be encouraged to join the programme by giving them some facilities such as child care and transportation which would be a step forward to join the training.

More funds should be allocated for updating the courses, giving high-quality training, and assessing the market needs where there is more demand for labour and a shortage of skills. Proper evaluation of the training should be done to know the impact in terms of getting knowledge, skills, employment, increase in wages, and industry satisfaction. Hence, for the SDTP to be successful, proper monitoring of the funds and programmes needs to be addressed.

India has now started to help out other countries by giving them technical support and providing funds in South Asia and African countries. India's approach to helping other countries in SDP has raised many questions. For example, King (2012) asks a question "What models of TVET, if any, is it drawing upon from its own experience to offer Africa?"

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