

AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES: A STUDY OF MYSORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

India's youth population represents a critical demographic advantage, yet the gap between education and employability remains a significant challenge. The Government of India, under the Skill India Mission (2015), has launched multiple initiatives such as PMKVY, DDU-GKY, NAPS, and Kaushalya Karnataka to equip youth with market-relevant skills. Despite the availability of these programmes, their effectiveness is contingent upon the awareness and active involvement of the target beneficiaries. This study examines the level of awareness and involvement of youth in Mysore district, Karnataka, regarding government skill development initiatives and evaluates the influence of demographic factors such as gender, educational qualification, employment status, and geographical location on awareness levels. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 190 youth aged 15–29 through a structured questionnaire measuring demographic characteristics, awareness, and involvement in various skill programmes. Reliability of the awareness scale was confirmed via Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, One-Sample t-tests, Levene's Test, and one-way ANOVA to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that youth in Mysore district demonstrate a high level of awareness of government skill development initiatives, with a mean score of 4.14 on a 5-point Likert scale. Analysis across demographic factors shows no statistically significant differences in awareness based on educational qualification, employment status, or location, indicating effective outreach and equitable access to information. Rural respondents exhibited slightly higher awareness than urban counterparts, although the difference was not significant. These results suggest that government communication strategies, training centres, digital platforms, and institutional interventions are largely effective in disseminating information. The study highlights the importance of translating awareness into active participation by addressing barriers such as financial constraints, digital literacy, and perceptions of vocational training. Strengthening youth engagement in skill development initiatives is crucial to enhancing employability, promoting economic growth, and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Keywords: Skill India Mission, Youth Awareness, Government Skill Development Initiatives, Employability, Mysore District, PMKVY, Kaushalya Karnataka

INTRODUCTION

India is home to the world's largest youth population, presenting both a demographic advantage and a development challenge. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), nearly 65% of India's population is below the age of 35, and more than 27% falls

within the youth category of 15–29 years. This demographic dividend has the potential to significantly contribute to national growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. However, this potential can only be realized when youth are equipped with the right skills to meet the dynamic demands of the labour market. Despite rising literacy levels and expanding access to higher education, a significant gap remains between education and employability, as many graduates lack the practical, technical, and soft skills required by employers. This skill mismatch has contributed to high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, posing a critical challenge for policymakers, educators, and industries.

To address this issue, the Government of India launched a series of skill development initiatives under the umbrella of the Skill India Mission (2015). The mission aims to train over 400 million individuals in market-relevant skills through various schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and various state-level programmes implemented through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Sector Skill Councils. These programmes focus on providing short-term training, recognition of prior learning, vocational education, industry partnerships, and placement assistance in both rural and urban areas. While the government has made substantial investments in creating institutional frameworks, training centres, sector-specific courses, and digital platforms, the effectiveness of these programmes depends largely on the level of awareness and involvement of the target beneficiaries - especially youth. Awareness is the first step towards participation; without knowledge of these schemes, their benefits, eligibility criteria, courses offered, or training centres available locally, young people may not take advantage of the opportunities created for them. In many cases, programmes fail to achieve their intended outcomes not due to poor design, but due to poor communication, lack of outreach, and inadequate community engagement.

Youth in semi-urban and rural regions often have limited access to information due to socio-economic constraints, lack of career guidance, poor digital access, or absence of institutional support. Additionally, cultural attitudes toward vocational training and social preference for traditional degrees can discourage youth from enrolling in skill-based programmes. As a result, even though skill development initiatives are available, they might remain underutilized by the very population they are meant to serve.

In this context, Mysore district in Karnataka represents a relevant and significant area of study. Mysore is known for its educational institutions, tourism, manufacturing zones, and emerging service sector opportunities. The Karnataka government, in collaboration with the central government, has established several skill training centres, ITIs, Kaushalya Karnataka centres, and PMKVY centres in the district. Despite this infrastructure, the critical question remains: Are the youth of Mysore district truly aware of these opportunities, and are they actively participating in them?

Existing literature on skill development in India has largely focused on measuring training outcomes, placement rates, programme evaluation, policy analysis, and challenges in implementation. Very few studies have emphasized awareness levels and participation behaviour, especially at the district level. Most national-level assessments indicate that a gap exists between the availability of skill programmes and youth enrolment. However, awareness and perception vary widely across regions depending on educational background, gender, socio-economic status, urban-rural location, and access to information. Therefore, there is a clear need to study awareness and involvement at the grassroots level.

Understanding youth awareness and involvement is vital for several reasons. Firstly, it helps identify whether the government's communication strategies and outreach campaigns are effective. Secondly, it reveals barriers that prevent youth from enrolling, such as lack of information, mistrust in the quality of training, financial constraints, transportation issues, or lack of industry linkage. Thirdly, it highlights the role of schools, colleges, career counselling, digital platforms, and community institutions in disseminating information. Finally, by assessing both awareness and involvement, stakeholders can design more inclusive, targeted, and impactful interventions.

This research becomes especially significant in the era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) emphasize the need for skill-based education, lifelong learning, employability, and productive youth engagement. Skill development programmes act as a bridge between education and employment, thereby supporting both human capital development and economic growth. For India to achieve these global goals, ensuring that youth are aware, willing, and empowered to participate in skill initiatives is crucial.

Therefore, this study titled "Awareness and Involvement of Youth in Government Skill Development Initiatives: A Study of Mysore District" aims to examine the extent to which young individuals in Mysore district are aware of various government skill development schemes, the sources from which they receive information, their perception of such programmes, and the factors influencing their participation. It also seeks to understand demographic variations in awareness levels and evaluate the effectiveness of outreach mechanisms. The findings of this study will not only fill a research gap but will also provide valuable insights to policymakers, training providers, educational institutions, and stakeholders to improve programme visibility, accessibility, and youth engagement. Ultimately, strengthening awareness and involvement among youth is the key to transforming skill initiatives into meaningful employment and economic progress.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Globally employability skills have evolved beyond technical expertise to encompass soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and problem-solving. A comprehensive analysis identifies a set of global employability skills, highlighting the importance of both hard and soft skills in the 21st-century workplace (Tushar, 2023). Similarly, a systematic review emphasizes the need for aligning educational outcomes with employer expectations to bridge the skills gap (Sarfraz et al., 2018). India's skill development landscape has undergone significant transformation since 2015. The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) laid the foundation, aiming to train 400 million people by 2022 (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship -MSDE, 2015). Subsequent initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) focused on short-term training and recognition of prior learning. Recent evaluations indicate that approximately 70.5% of PMKVY beneficiaries secured employment in their desired skill sector, with 52% reporting higher salaries compared to their un-certified peers (Press Information Bureau -PIB, 2023). Despite the proliferation of skill development programs, awareness and participation remain challenges. In Karnataka, for instance, the Yuva Nidhi scheme, launched in December 2023 to provide financial assistance to unemployed youth, saw a sharp decline in beneficiaries as its two-year stipend period approached the end. Out of over 200,000 recipients, only 1,500 had undergone skill training (Times of India, 2024). Several studies have assessed the impact of PMKVY and other government schemes. An impact evaluation by the Indian Institute of Public Administration revealed that 70.5% of surveyed candidates

received placement in their desired skill sector (PIB, 2023). Another study in Uttarakhand identified five key factors—employment outcomes, economic impact, training quality, policy environment, and program innovation—as critical to PMKVY's effectiveness (Sharma & Singh, 2023). At the regional level, Karnataka's initiatives have been noteworthy. The Karnataka Skill Development Policy 2025–2032 aims to transform the state into a leading skilled talent hub, aligning skilling with education, employment, and industry requirements (Economic Times, 2024). In Mysuru, the government's emphasis on integrating skill-based academic programs in higher education reflects a commitment to youth development through skill-oriented and technology-driven education (Times of India, 2024).

Despite the extensive literature, several gaps remain. First, most studies provide short-term evaluations; longitudinal studies are needed to assess the sustained impact of skill development programs on employment and income levels (Sarfraz et al., 2018). Second, there is a lack of in-depth studies focusing on specific sectors, such as agriculture or manufacturing, to understand nuanced skill requirements and challenges (Tushar, 2023). Third, with the advent of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, research is needed to explore how these can be leveraged in skill development programs to enhance employability (Economic Times, 2024).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the level of awareness regarding government skill development programmes among youth in Mysore district on the basis of gender.
2. To evaluate the level of awareness regarding government skill development programmes among youth in Mysore district on the basis of educational qualification.
3. To evaluate the level of awareness regarding government skill development programmes among youth in Mysore district on the basis of employment status.
4. To evaluate the level of awareness regarding government skill development programmes among youth in Mysore district on the basis of location

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the awareness and involvement of youth in government skill development initiatives in the Mysore district. The target population of the study comprises youth aged 15–29 years residing in both rural and urban areas of Mysore district. A total of 190 respondents were surveyed, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis in social science research. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section captured demographic characteristics, while the second measured awareness and involvement in various government skill development schemes such as PMKVY, DDU-GKY, NAPS, and Kaushalya Karnataka. Awareness was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The reliability of the awareness scale was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring internal consistency. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize demographic information and awareness levels. To test the hypotheses, One-Sample t-test, ANOVA, and Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances were employed to examine significant differences in awareness based on gender, educational qualification, employment status, and location. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

HYPOTHESES TESTING:

Gender is an important demographic factor that often influences access to information, participation in government programmes, and decision-making related to education and employment. In the context of skill development initiatives, previous studies have shown mixed results—some suggest that males are more likely to receive information and participate in training programmes due to higher mobility and social exposure, while others report that government schemes are increasingly targeting and benefiting women through reserved seats, stipends, and women-centric outreach strategies. Therefore, examining whether awareness levels differ between male and female youth is essential to understand the inclusiveness and equity of these government initiatives. To investigate this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H0: There is no significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of gender.

H1: There is a significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of gender.

Table 1: Classification of Respondents by Gender for Awareness Analysis

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	133	70.0	70.0	70.0
Female	57	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	190	100.0	100.0	

(Source: Primary data)

Table 2: One-Sample t-test Results for Gender Representation and Awareness Levels of Youth Regarding Government Skill Development Initiatives

	Test Value=0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	9.000	189	.000	.30000	.2342	.3658
AWARENESS	94.106	189	.000	4.13860	4.0518	4.2253

(Source: Primary data)

The analysis of the gender composition of respondents shows that 70% of the participants are male and 30% are female, indicating a significant male predominance in the sample. The One-Sample t-test confirms this observation, with a mean difference of 0.30 and a highly significant t-value ($t = 9.000$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the sample is not evenly distributed across genders. This imbalance should be considered when interpreting gender-related findings in the study. The assessment of awareness regarding government skill development initiatives reveals that the overall mean awareness score is 4.14 on a 5-point Likert scale, which is significantly greater than the test value of 0 ($t = 94.106$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that, overall, the youth in Mysore district demonstrate a high level of awareness of various government skill development programs, including central and state schemes. The 95% confidence interval [4.05, 4.23] further supports that the true population mean of awareness is consistently high. These results suggest that the government's efforts to disseminate information about skill development initiatives are effective among the youth population in Mysore district.

Hypotheses 2

Educational qualification is often considered a key factor that shapes an individual's access to information, cognitive ability, and exposure to government initiatives. In the context of skill development programs introduced by the Government of India, it becomes important to examine whether youth with different educational backgrounds differ in their awareness levels. Some studies have suggested that higher education leads to better understanding and participation in such initiatives, while others argue that widespread media outreach ensures equal dissemination of information irrespective of qualification. Therefore, to empirically investigate this relationship, the present study formulates Hypothesis 2 to test whether there exists a significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth based on their educational qualification (SSLC, PUC, Diploma, and Degree).

H0: There is no significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of educational qualification

H1: There is a significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of educational qualification

Descriptive

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives among Youth based on Educational Qualifications

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
SSLC	736	4.146	0.61626	0.07213	4.0028	4.2904	2.83	4.67
PUC	389	4.128	0.58808	0.0954	3.9357	4.3222	2.83	4.67
DIMPLOMA	433	4.185	0.60959	0.09296	3.9977	4.3729	2.83	4.67
DEGREE	369	4.076	0.62028	0.10338	3.867	4.2867	2.83	4.67
Total	190	4.1386	0.60628	0.04398	4.0518	4.2253	2.83	4.67

Table 4: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Awareness

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.227	3	186	.877

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances and One-Way ANOVA for Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives Based on Educational Qualification

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combine d)		.239	3	.080	.214	.886
	Linear Term	Unweighted	.055	1	.055	.148	.700
		Weighted	.036	1	.036	.098	.755
		Deviation	.203	2	.101	.272	.762
Within Groups			69.213	186	.372		
Total			69.453	189			

The analysis shows that the overall awareness of government skill development initiatives among youth in Mysore district is high, with a mean score of 4.1386 on a 5-point scale. Across different educational qualifications—SSLC, PUC, Diploma, and Degree—the mean awareness scores are consistently above 4.0, indicating that youth from all educational backgrounds are fairly well-informed about these programs. Levene's test confirmed the assumption of homogeneity of variances($p = 0.877$), allowing for a valid ANOVA comparison. The one-way ANOVA results reveal no significant differences in awareness based on educational qualification ($F = 0.214$, $p = 0.886$). This implies that awareness of government skill development initiatives is largely independent of the education level of youth. The findings suggest that information about these programs is effectively reaching youth across all educational strata, reflecting the success of government outreach efforts.

Hypotheses 3

Employment status is an important socio-economic factor that may influence an individual's exposure to information and access to government initiatives. Students may receive information through educational institutions, employed individuals through workplace networks or training programs, and unemployed youth through public employment offices or community outreach. Therefore, it becomes relevant to examine whether awareness of government skill development initiatives differs across these categories. While some studies suggest that employed individuals are more likely to be informed due to organizational training opportunities, others highlight that students are more exposed to career guidance and institutional campaigns. In order to empirically assess this relationship, Hypothesis 3 is formulated to test whether employment status (student, employed, unemployed) significantly affects the awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth.

H0: There is no significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of employment status

H1: There is a significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of employment status

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives among Youth Based on Employment Status:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	92	4.2091	0.5798	0.06045	4.089	4.3291	2.83	4.67
Employed	12	4.1167	0.63158	0.18232	3.7154	4.518	2.87	4.63
Unemployed	86	4.0663	0.62836	0.06776	3.9316	4.201	2.83	4.67
Total	190	4.1386	0.6062	0.04398	4.0518	4.2253	2.83	4.67

Awareness

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.766	2	187	.065

Table 7: Test of Homogeneity of Variances and One-Way ANOVA for Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives Based on Employment Status

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		.912	2	.456	1.245	.290
	Linear Term	Unweighted	.906	1	.906	2.472	.118
		Weighted	.907	1	.907	2.476	.117
		Deviation	.005	1	.005	.014	.908
Within Groups			68.540	187	.367		
Total			69.453	189			

The descriptive analysis indicates that overall awareness of government skill development initiatives among youth in Mysore district is high, with a mean score of 4.1386 on a 5-point scale. Among different employment groups, students report the highest awareness (Mean = 4.2091), followed by employed (Mean = 4.1167) and unemployed youth (Mean = 4.0663). Levene's test for homogeneity of variances confirms that the variances among these groups are equal ($p = 0.065$), validating the use of one-way ANOVA.

The ANOVA results show significant no difference in awareness among students, employed, and unemployed youth ($F = 1.245$, $p = 0.290$). This indicates that employment status does not significantly influence awareness levels, suggesting that information about government skill development initiatives is effectively reaching youth irrespective of their employment condition.

Hypotheses 4

Geographical location, such as rural or urban residence, often influences access to information, exposure to government programmes, and participation in skill development initiatives. Urban youth may have better access to digital platforms, training centres, and awareness campaigns, while rural youth might face limitations due to infrastructure, connectivity, or socio-economic constraints. However, government efforts through schemes like PMKVY, DDU-GKY, and Kaushalya Karnataka aim to bridge these gaps by establishing training centres, outreach programs, and digital awareness campaigns across both rural and urban areas. In this context, it is important to empirically assess whether awareness levels of government skill development initiatives differ based on location. Hypothesis 4 is therefore formulated to test whether there is a significant difference in awareness levels of youth in Mysore district based on their rural or urban residence, providing insight into the effectiveness and equity of outreach and information dissemination strategies.

H0: There is no significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of location.

H1: There is a significant difference in awareness levels of government skill development initiatives among youth on the basis of location.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives Among Youth Based on Location (Rural and Urban)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
RURAL	132	4.1909	.571161	.04971	4.0926	4.2893	2.83	4.67
URBAN	585	4.0198	.669298	.08788	3.8436	4.1955	2.83	4.67
Total	1906	4.1388	.606208	.04398	4.0518	4.2253	2.83	4.67

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Awareness

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
9.021	1	188	.003

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA Results for Awareness of Government Skill Development Initiatives Based on Location (Rural and Urban) Awareness

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		.239	3	.080	.214	.886
	Linear Term	Unweighted	.055	1	.055	.148	.700
		Weighted	.036	1	.036	.098	.755
		Deviation	.203	2	.101	.272	.762

Within Groups			69.213	186	.372		
Total			69.453	189			

The descriptive analysis shows that overall awareness of government skill development initiatives among youth in Mysore district is high, with a mean score of 4.1386. Rural respondents report a slightly higher awareness (Mean = 4.1909) compared to urban respondents (Mean = 4.0195), though both groups have high awareness overall. Levene's test indicates unequal variances ($p = 0.003$) between rural and urban groups, suggesting that variability in awareness is greater among urban youth. Despite this, the one-way ANOVA results show no statistically significant difference in awareness based on location ($F = 0.214$, $p = 0.886$), implying that both rural and urban youth are similarly informed about government skill development programs. This finding suggests that information dissemination and outreach efforts have been effective across geographic locations, ensuring that both rural and urban youth have access to information about skill development initiatives.

CONCLUSION:

The present study on the awareness and involvement of youth in government skill development initiatives in Mysore district reveals several important insights. Overall, youth in the district demonstrate a high level of awareness of various government programmes, including PMKVY, DDU-GKY, NAPS, and Kaushalya Karnataka, with a mean awareness score of 4.14 on a 5-point scale. This suggests that government efforts to disseminate information through training centres, educational institutions, digital platforms, and outreach campaigns are largely effective. The analysis of demographic factors—gender, educational qualification, employment status, and location—shows that awareness levels are consistently high across all categories. Specifically, no statistically significant differences were observed based on education, employment, or location, indicating that information is reaching youth irrespective of these variables. Although a higher mean awareness was noted among rural respondents compared to urban counterparts, the difference was not significant, reflecting equitable access to programme information. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining and strengthening outreach strategies to ensure sustained engagement. While high awareness is encouraging, translating awareness into active participation and skill acquisition remains a critical next step. Policymakers and programme implementers should focus on addressing barriers such as digital literacy, transportation, financial constraints, and perception of vocational training. By doing so, skill development initiatives can better equip youth with employable skills, enhance participation in economic activities, and contribute meaningfully to national growth, SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

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