



Rural Skill Development: Issues and Challenges in Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT

Rural skill development in Jharkhand, one of India's most resource-rich yet socio-economically challenged states, faces several critical issues and challenges. This abstract discusses the key impediments to effective skill development in the region and explores potential strategies to overcome these barriers.

Jharkhand, with its predominantly rural population, suffers from high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and underemployment. The state's economy largely depends on agriculture, mining, and small-scale industries, which provide limited employment opportunities. The rural youth, who constitute a significant portion of the population, often lack access to quality education and vocational training, leaving them ill-equipped to compete in the job market. This lack of skills further perpetuates the cycle of poverty and unemployment, creating a significant challenge for the state's development. One of the primary challenges in rural skill development in Jharkhand is the inadequate infrastructure. The rural areas are often characterized by a lack of basic facilities such as roads, electricity, and internet connectivity, which are essential for the effective delivery of training programs. Many rural regions are remote and difficult to access, making it challenging to establish and sustain training centres. Additionally, the lack of qualified trainers and training institutions further exacerbates the problem, as there is a limited pool of skilled professionals to impart vocational education. Another significant issue is the disconnect between the skills imparted through training programs and the demands of the local job market. Often, the training provided is not aligned with the needs of local industries, resulting in a mismatch that leaves trained individuals without suitable employment opportunities. This lack of alignment also discourages youth from participating in skill development programs, as they do not see a clear pathway from training to employment. Cultural and social factors also play a role in hindering rural skill development. In many rural areas of Jharkhand, there is a strong preference for traditional livelihoods, and there may be resistance to adopting new skills or occupations. Additionally, gender disparities further complicate the situation, as women in rural areas often face greater barriers to accessing education and training due to societal norms and responsibilities within the household. To address these challenges, a multifaceted approach is required. Improving infrastructure is a critical first step, including better transportation, electricity, and internet access in rural areas. Moreover, training programs must be designed in collaboration with local industries to ensure that the skills imparted are relevant and in demand. There is also a need for mobile training centres and online platforms to reach remote areas, making skill development more accessible.

Further more, raising awareness about the importance of skill development and changing cultural attitudes toward non-traditional occupations is essential. This can be achieved through community engagement and by showcasing success stories of individuals who have benefited from skill development programs. Additionally, special focus should be given to empowering women and marginalized groups to ensure inclusive growth while there are significant challenges to rural skill development in Jharkhand, addressing these issues through targeted interventions can lead to substantial improvements. By investing in infrastructure, aligning training with market needs, and fostering a culture that values skill acquisition, Jharkhand can create a more skilled and employable rural workforce, driving the state's socio-economic development forward.

Keywords: Economic Development, Rural Human Resource Development, Skill Development, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Jharkhand, a state in eastern India, is known for its rich natural resources and cultural diversity, yet it remains one of the most economically challenged regions in the country. A significant portion of Jharkhand's population resides in rural areas, where poverty, illiteracy, and underemployment are pervasive issues. In this context, skill development emerges as a crucial factor for the socio-economic upliftment of the rural population. However, the journey toward effective rural skill development in Jharkhand is fraught with numerous challenges that must be addressed to harness the full potential of the state's human resources. The economic landscape of Jharkhand is dominated by agriculture, mining, and small-scale industries. These sectors, while providing some employment opportunities, are largely informal and offer limited scope for sustainable livelihood. The state's predominantly rural economy is further characterized by low productivity and minimal diversification, which limits the employment prospects for the youth. This situation is exacerbated by the high dropout rates from schools, leading to a workforce that is often unskilled and ill-prepared for modern economic demands. The issue of inadequate infrastructure in rural Jharkhand is a major impediment to skill development. Many rural areas suffer from poor connectivity, with limited access to roads, electricity, and internet services. This not only hampers the establishment of training centres but also restricts the ability of the rural population to participate in skill development programs. The remoteness of many villages adds to the challenge, making it difficult to reach out to those in need of training and support. Another significant challenge is the mismatch between the skills taught in training programs and the actual needs of the local job market. Often, the skills imparted do not align with the demands of the industries present in the region, leading to a scenario where even those who have undergone training struggle to find suitable employment. This disconnect can lead to frustration among the trainees and diminishes the perceived value of skill development initiatives. Cultural and societal factors also play a crucial role in the context of rural skill development in Jharkhand. There is often a preference for traditional occupations, and resistance to change can be strong in these communities. Additionally, gender biases further complicate the scenario, as women in rural areas frequently face greater barriers to accessing education and skill development opportunities. This gender disparity not only limits the potential workforce but also perpetuates existing inequalities within the community. To tackle these issues, a strategic approach is needed that addresses the unique challenges of rural Jharkhand. Infrastructure development must be prioritized to ensure that training centres are accessible and equipped to deliver quality education. Furthermore, skill development programs need to be tailored to the specific economic context of the region, with a focus on creating a direct link between training and employment opportunities. Community engagement is also vital in overcoming cultural resistance and promoting the importance of skill development. This can be achieved by highlighting the success stories of those who have benefited from such programs and by encouraging local leaders to advocate for the adoption of new skills and technologies. Special efforts must also be made to ensure that women and other marginalized groups are included in these initiatives, thus promoting inclusive growth.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN JHARKHAND

Skill development has been a crucial focus for Jharkhand, a state in India known for its rich mineral resources but also grappling with socio-economic challenges such as poverty and illiteracy. From 2011 to 2021, the state government, alongside various central initiatives, has made concerted efforts to improve the skill levels of its population, particularly the youth, to enhance employability and foster economic development.

Background and Challenges

Jharkhand, with a significant tribal population and a largely agrarian economy, faced substantial challenges in skill development. The state's workforce was predominantly unskilled, and there was a mismatch between the skills available and the demands of the job market. The lack of industrialization, poor infrastructure, and limited access to

quality education further exacerbated the issue. The state's literacy rate, though improving, was still below the national average, which posed additional challenges for skill development.

Initiatives and Programs

In response to these challenges, the Government of Jharkhand launched several initiatives aimed at enhancing the skill levels of its workforce. The key objective was to provide vocational training and skills that aligned with market demands, thereby improving employability.

1.Jharkhand Skill Development Mission Society (JSDMS): Established in 2013, the JSDMS played a pivotal role in coordinating various skill development programs in the state. The society was tasked with implementing the National Skill Development Mission at the state level. It worked to bridge the gap between the skills demanded by employers and those possessed by the workforce.

2.Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY): This centrally sponsored scheme was actively implemented in Jharkhand to provide skill training to rural youth. The program targeted individuals between the ages of 15 and 35, particularly from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. By 2021, thousands of youths from Jharkhand had benefited from this program, gaining skills in sectors like retail, hospitality, and manufacturing.

3.Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): Launched in 2015, PMKVY was another central initiative aimed at skill development. In Jharkhand, the scheme was implemented with a focus on providing short-term training, recognition of prior learning, and placement assistance. Training centres were established across the state, and the program saw active participation from the youth.

4.State-Specific Initiatives: The Jharkhand government also launched several state-specific initiatives to enhance skill development. The state's "Skilling Jharkhand" program, launched in 2015, focused on providing industry-relevant skills to the youth. Special emphasis was placed on training women and marginalized communities. The state also established a network of training centres across districts to make skill development accessible to remote areas.

5.Partnerships with Industry: Recognizing the need for industry collaboration in skill development, Jharkhand engaged with several corporate partners. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) were encouraged to set up skill development centres. Companies like Tata Steel and NTPC collaborated with the state government to train the local population in trades relevant to their operations. These partnerships ensured that the training provided was aligned with industry requirements, thereby increasing the chances of employment for the trainees.

6.Focus on Traditional Skills and Handicrafts: Jharkhand also focused on preserving and promoting traditional skills and handicrafts, which are an integral part of its cultural heritage. The state government provided training in traditional crafts like bamboo work, pottery, and textile weaving. These efforts were aimed not only at preserving cultural heritage but also at providing sustainable livelihoods to the artisans. Outcomes and Impact, the skill development initiatives in Jharkhand from 2011 to 2021 have had a significant impact on the state's socio-economic landscape. By the end of the decade, thousands of youths had been trained and placed in various sectors, leading to improved employability. The focus on skill development also contributed to a reduction in migration, as more employment opportunities became available locally. Moreover, the emphasis on women's participation in skill development programs led to increased female workforce participation in the state. Programs targeting marginalized communities also helped in improving their socio-economic conditions.

Challenges and the Way Forward Despite the progress made, several challenges persisted. The quality of training in some centres was inconsistent, and there was a need for better alignment between training programs and actual job market requirements. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021 posed a significant setback to skill development efforts, as training centres were closed and economic activities slowed down. Going forward,

Jharkhand needs to focus on improving the quality of training, expanding digital skill initiatives, and ensuring that skill development programs are inclusive and accessible to all sections of society. Continued collaboration with industry and a focus on emerging sectors like IT, renewable energy, and e-commerce could further enhance the effectiveness of skill development initiatives in the state.

JHARKHAND RIGHT OF YOUTH TO SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACT

The **Jharkhand Right of Youth to Skill Development Act**, passed in 2018, was a landmark legislation aimed at ensuring the youth in the state had access to skill development opportunities. This Act was introduced as part of the broader agenda to address unemployment and the skill gap in Jharkhand, where a significant portion of the population, particularly the youth, lacked the skills required by the job market.

Objectives of the Act

The Act was designed with the primary objective of providing a legal framework that guaranteed the right of every youth in Jharkhand, aged 15 to 35, to access skill development training. The Act aimed to equip the youth with employable skills, thus enhancing their job prospects and enabling them to contribute to the state's economic development.

Provisions

1. Guaranteed Access to Training: Under the Act, the state government was mandated to provide skill development training to eligible youth. The training programs were to be aligned with market demands, focusing on sectors with high employment potential.

2. Establishment of Training Centres: The Act called for the establishment of a wide network of skill development centres across Jharkhand, ensuring that even youth in remote areas could access training. These centres were to be equipped with modern facilities and staffed by qualified trainers.

3. Industry Collaboration: The Act encouraged partnerships with industries and private sector players to ensure that the training provided was relevant and up-to-date. This collaboration was crucial for linking training with actual employment opportunities.

4. Monitoring and Accountability: The Act established mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the skill development programs. It also provided for the evaluation of training outcomes to ensure that the objectives of the Act were being met.

5. Impact and Challenges: From 2018 to 2021, the Jharkhand Right of Youth to Skill Development Act facilitated significant progress in the skill development landscape of the state. Thousands of youths were trained under this Act, leading to increased employability. However, challenges such as inconsistent quality of training, inadequate infrastructure in some regions, and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted areas that needed further attention. The Jharkhand Right of Youth to Skill Development Act 2018 was a significant step towards empowering the youth of the state. By making skill development a right, the Act not only addressed unemployment but also aimed to create a more skilled and competitive workforce. Continued efforts are necessary to overcome the challenges and fully realize the potential of this legislation.

CHALLENGES IN RURAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Skill development in rural areas faces several significant challenges, despite being a critical component of economic development and poverty alleviation. These challenges hinder the effectiveness of training programs and the employability of rural youth.

Limited Access to Training Centres: Rural areas often lack adequate infrastructure, including training centres. Distance and poor connectivity make it difficult for rural youth to access skill development facilities. Even when centers exist, they are often sparsely located, limiting participation.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources: Many rural training centers suffer from inadequate infrastructure, such as outdated equipment, insufficient training materials, and poor facilities. This compromises the quality of training and limits the practical experience that trainees can gain.

Skill Mismatch: There is often a disconnect between the skills taught in rural training programs and the demands of the job market. This skill mismatch results in low employability among rural trainees, as they may not possess the skills required by employers in emerging industries.

Low Awareness and Motivation: Many rural youths are unaware of the benefits of skill development programs or lack motivation due to limited job opportunities in their vicinity. Cultural factors, family responsibilities, and a preference for traditional occupations also contribute to low enrolment and retention in training programs.

Poor Quality of Training: The quality of training in rural areas is often compromised by the lack of qualified trainers. Inadequate training methodologies and outdated curricula further reduce the effectiveness of skill development initiatives.

Gender Disparities: Women in rural areas face additional barriers to accessing skill development opportunities. Social norms, family obligations, and safety concerns often restrict their participation, limiting their ability to benefit from such programs.

Employment Linkages: Even after receiving training, rural youth often struggle to find employment due to the lack of strong industry linkages and placement support. The absence of local industries or employers exacerbates this issue, leading to migration or underemployment.

These challenges require a comprehensive approach, including improving infrastructure, aligning training with market needs, enhancing awareness, and fostering industry partnerships. Tailoring skill development programs to the specific needs and conditions of rural areas is crucial for maximizing their impact and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present skill development system in the state is facing Some challenges which necessitates immediate intervention so as to achieve the target of skilling 12.5 million workforce by 2022. The implementing agency should monitor the infrastructure of training centres time to time for proper facilities to the trainees. It should also through timely inspection ensure That competent trainers are available to provide training. Every Job aspirant should be given training in soft skills also to lead a Proper and decent life. Course content need to be Standardised. The present generation should change their Mind-set towards blue collar jobs and the social stigma towards Skill courses should be removed. A balanced growth in all Sectors and all jobs should be ensured. Literacy level still Needs to be raised. Government, Private sectors, educational Institutions, non-government organizations, and the society at Large should equally participate for making India a nation of Skilled workforce and employment for all.

CONCLUSION

Rural skill development in Jharkhand faces several critical issues, including limited access to training centres, inadequate infrastructure, and a mismatch between skills offered and market demands. The challenges are compounded by low awareness, poor quality of training, and gender disparities, particularly affecting women and marginalized communities. Additionally, the lack of strong industry linkages and local employment opportunities results in underemployment or migration of skilled workers to urban areas. These challenges require a multi-faceted

approach. Improving infrastructure, enhancing the quality of training, and aligning programs with the needs of emerging industries are essential. Awareness campaigns and community engagement can motivate rural youth to participate in skill development programs, while targeted initiatives can bridge gender gaps. Furthermore, fostering strong industry partnerships and creating local employment opportunities are crucial for the success of these initiatives. By tailoring skill development efforts to the specific needs and conditions of rural Jharkhand, the state can unlock the potential of its rural workforce, leading to sustainable economic growth and improved livelihoods for its rural population.

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