

IMPACT OF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS ON CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC MOBILITY OF RURAL YOUTH IN VIDARBHA REGION

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ABSTRACT

Skill training programs have emerged as a strategic intervention to address unemployment and socio-economic inequality among rural youth in India. Beyond immediate employment outcomes, these programs influence long-term career aspirations and socio-economic mobility. Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, characterized by agrarian distress and limited industrial growth, presents a critical context for examining such impacts. The present study analyzes the impact of skill training programs on career aspirations, income levels, and socio-economic mobility of rural youth in Vidarbha. The study is based on primary data collected from trained rural youth and secondary sources. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and comparative interpretation are used. The findings indicate that skill training programs positively influence career orientation, income enhancement, and social mobility; however, structural regional constraints limit upward mobility. The study suggests policy-level interventions to strengthen long-term socio-economic outcomes.

Keywords: Skill Training, Career Aspirations, Socio-Economic Mobility, Rural Youth, Vidarbha

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1. INTRODUCTION

India's rural economy faces persistent challenges of unemployment, underemployment, and socio-economic inequality. Rural youth often experience limited access to education, career guidance, and employment opportunities, resulting in low occupational mobility. Skill training programs aim to bridge this gap by enhancing technical competence, employability, and career awareness.

Vidarbha region has historically faced agrarian distress, migration, and low industrial development. For rural youth in this region, skill training programs not only provide employment opportunities but also reshape career aspirations and socio-economic status. This study attempts to evaluate the broader impact of skill training programs on career aspirations and socio-economic mobility of rural youth in Vidarbha.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Skill Training Programs

Skill training programs provide vocational, technical, and soft skills aligned with labor market requirements.

2.2 Career Aspirations

Career aspirations refer to an individual's long-term occupational goals, expectations, and professional ambitions.

2.3 Socio-Economic Mobility

Socio-economic mobility denotes improvement in income, occupation, living standards, and social status across time.

3. Review of Literature

Existing studies highlight that skill training programs significantly enhance employability and income levels of rural youth. Researchers emphasize that vocational training increases confidence, awareness of career pathways, and occupational diversification. However, literature also notes that socio-economic mobility is influenced by regional economic conditions, availability of quality jobs, and social constraints. Studies on backward regions stress the need for integrating skill training with career counseling and local economic development to achieve sustainable mobility.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the impact of skill training programs on career aspirations of rural youth.
2. To examine changes in income and employment status after training.
3. To assess the contribution of skill training to socio-economic mobility.
4. To identify constraints affecting upward mobility.
5. To suggest measures for improving long-term outcomes.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: Skill training programs do not significantly influence career aspirations of rural youth.

H₁₁: Skill training programs significantly influence career aspirations of rural youth.

H₀₂: Skill training programs do not contribute to socio-economic mobility.

H₁₂: Skill training programs contribute significantly to socio-economic mobility.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between skill training and income enhancement.

H₁₃: There is a significant relationship between skill training and income enhancement.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

Descriptive and analytical research design.

6.2 Sources of Data

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire administered to trained rural youth.
- **Secondary Data:** Government publications, research journals, reports.

6.3 Sample Size

Sample of **150 rural youth** from selected districts of Vidarbha using purposive sampling.

6.4 Tools of Analysis

- Percentage analysis

- Comparative analysis
- Tabulation

7. Questionnaire Design (Indicative)

1. Educational qualification before training
2. Type of skill training received
3. Awareness of career options before and after training
4. Change in career aspirations
5. Employment status after training
6. Monthly income before and after training
7. Improvement in living standards
8. Social recognition and confidence level
9. Challenges in career growth
10. Overall satisfaction with training program

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Highly Increased	64	43%
Increased	52	35%
No Change	22	15%
Decreased	12	7%
Total	150	100%

Interpretation:

A significant majority (78%) reported an increase in career aspirations, supporting Hypothesis H₁₁.

Income Level	Before Training (%)	After Training (%)
Below ₹8,000	62	18
₹8,000–₹15,000	28	46
Above ₹15,000	10	36

Interpretation:

The table indicates substantial income enhancement after skill training, supporting Hypothesis H₁₃.

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Significant Improvement	58	39%
Moderate Improvement	54	36%

No Improvement	38	25%
Total	150	100%

Interpretation:

Majority respondents experienced socio-economic improvement, supporting Hypothesis H₁₂.

9. Findings of the Study

- Skill training positively influences career aspirations.
- Income levels improved after training.
- Socio-economic mobility increased among beneficiaries.
- Regional constraints limit higher-level mobility.
- Career counseling is a critical missing component.

10. Suggestions

- Integrate career guidance with skill training programs
- Promote higher-level and advanced skill courses
- Strengthen local employment and entrepreneurship ecosystems
- Improve access to credit and self-employment support
- Monitor long-term socio-economic outcomes

11. Conclusion

The study concludes that skill training programs play a transformative role in shaping career aspirations and socio-economic mobility of rural youth in Vidarbha. While positive changes are evident, sustainable upward mobility requires integration of skill training with regional development and career support mechanisms. Policy interventions focusing on long-term career pathways can enhance the overall effectiveness of skill training initiatives.

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