

Challenges and Opportunities for Youths in Employment – A Study in Dakshina Kannada District

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the challenges and opportunities for youths in employment, with reference to Dakshina Kannada district. Youth face several challenges in securing employment, such as a mismatch between education and industry needs, limited job opportunities, and a lack of practical experience. So, the main purpose of this study is to critically examine these issues and advise strategies to improve youth employability.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice question from youths of Dakshina Kannada and secondary data was collected from academic literature, scholarly journals, research articles, and government reports, to support the findings.

Findings: The paper reveals that although a large number of respondents are highly educated, they still face barriers to employment, including economic limitations, limited job opportunities, lack of experience, and skills mismatch. The findings indicate a growing awareness and participation in skill development programs, preference for government jobs. Despite education being foundation for employment, there is still a gap between the academic education and job market demand.

Originality or Value: This paper provides a contribution in analyzing youth employment challenges and opportunities with main focus to Dakshina Kannada district. This research suggests valuable insights into youth employment dynamics and offers strategic guidance for development stakeholders, educators, and policy-makers in the region.

Keywords: Employment Challenges, Employment Opportunities, Education-Employment Mismatch, Unemployment, Government Initiatives.

I. Introduction of the Study

Youth employment is a major developmental challenge in India and across the world (Sharma, 2022). Regardless of increased educational attainment, many young people face barriers in finding meaningful jobs due to skill mismatches, economic shifts, and rapid technological changes (Pasha, 2023; Sharma et al., 2024). The gap between academic knowledge and industry needs, along with increasing competition and limited experience among fresh graduates, makes it difficult to secure employment. Socio-economic factors like income inequality, lack of access to quality education, and discrimination worsen the situation, mainly in rural areas (Wasimi & Manas, 2024).

Even though initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana aim to improve employability, challenges remain in training quality, outreach, and alignment with market demands (Bhosale, 2022). To address youth unemployment effectively, a combined approach is needed—focusing on education reform, practical skill training, entrepreneurship, and inclusive policies (Sharma, 2022; Holidi & Seman, 2023). By bridging the skill gap and removing socio-economic barriers, young people can be empowered to find meaningful employment and contribute to economic growth (Samuel & Moagi, 2022).

This study seeks to investigate the multifaceted challenges faced by youth in securing employment in Dakshina Kannada district. It further explores the relationship between education levels and job opportunities, evaluates the impact of skill development programs, and identifies practical strategies to enhance youth employability. Through a comprehensive analysis, the study aims to contribute valuable insights toward informed policymaking and youth empowerment in the region.

Objectives of the Study

- To critically analyses the challenges faced by youths in securing employment.
- To examine the relationship between education levels and employment opportunities among youth.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of skill development programs in enhancing youth employability in the region.
- To propose actionable strategies to address the employment challenges faced by youth.

Statement of the Problem

Many youths faced challenges in securing employment due to socio-economic hurdles, limited job opportunities, and skill mismatches, even though there are many initiatives. Many graduate youths are underprepared due to a frequent gap between labour

market demands and educational outcomes. These challenges hinder economic growth and social stability. So, the main purpose of this study is to critically examine these issues and advise strategies to improve youth employability.

II. Research Methodology

Research Design: To examine the challenges and opportunities faced by youth in securing employment this study uses a descriptive research design. It focuses on examining the impact of education on employment opportunities, finding social-economic and structural obstacles, and suggesting practical solutions, assessing skill development initiatives for youth employment.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect participants' experiences related to job-seeking, educational background, skill development efforts, and perceived effectiveness of government or institutional initiatives.

Secondary data was also referred to from academic literature, scholarly journals, research articles, and government reports, to support the findings.

Sampling Method and Respondents: To gain a broad understanding of employment issues convenience sampling technique was used to collect data. The survey was distributed among individuals across different age categories. The age group between 18–29 years was considered as the main focus for youth-related analysis, based on definitions used by national and international agencies.

Data Analysis: The collected responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

Timing of data collection: Data were collected from 100 respondents via Google Forms between 29th December 2024 and 29th March 2025.

Limitations of the Study

The use of convenience sampling may not provide a fully representative sample of the broader youth population, especially in terms of geographic, educational, or socio-economic diversity. While some location-based data was captured, the study does not explore deeply into rural versus urban employment challenges. Based on participants' perceptions, skill development programs are assessed, rather than empirical performance metrics.

III. Review of Literature

Mohan A.K. (2016), examines the issues related to employment faced by unemployed urban youth. Perceiving that different stakeholder, like employers, economists, and policymakers, view employment challenges differently, the study focuses on job seekers' perspectives, data were collected from 583 unemployed individuals through a structured interview schedule. The tool was pre-tested with 5% of respondents to ensure its effectiveness. Percentages and frequencies were used for present data for better interpretation. The key challenges faced by urban youth, which include inadequate training and mismatched skills is presented in the study. The need for adapt skill development programs based on youth feedback is also highlighted in this study. Its findings are limited to Mysore city and may not represent broader urban trends. However, it serves as a useful reference for designing youth-focused employment policies and training programs.

Sharma, A. N. (2022), explores the complicated nature of youth engagement in the Indian labour market, using secondary data from employment and unemployment surveys and other relative sources. The study highlights how demographic transitions, regional variations, and changing labour market trends have affected the current employment scenario. A key finding is that although an increasing number of young individuals are pursuing higher education, their representation in the labour force remains disproportionately low compared to their share in the total population. This occurrence is not only due to educational involvement, but also due to the deceleration in the growth of the youth population relative to older age groups. Moreover, the paper brings out a major gender disparity, pointing out that India has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world, and that even among those women who do seek employment, particularly among educated young women, unemployment rates are critically high. The study provides critical insights into the structural challenges of youth employment and calls for comprehensive policy interventions to address both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the problem.

Abdullah, B., & Mansoor, K. (2023), explores the structure and nature of youth employment and also challenges connected to employment generation and the quality of work. The study focuses on acknowledging how the slow pace of employment creation, especially in the productive non-primary and labour-intensive sector, has disproportionately affected youth compared to adults. Studying employment surveys that provide comprehensive information on wages, employment conditions, and socio-demographic characteristics, the authors define youth as individuals aged between 15 and 29 years. Over the last two decades, their research shows that, the number of young people entering the labour market continues to grow, but job creation has not kept pace with this expansion. Hence, the youth employment crisis is marked not only by a lack of opportunities but also by a shortfall in the quality of available work, hindering the goal of achieving decent work for all. Thus the urgent need for policies that promote faster and more inclusive job creation to effectively integrating the expanding youth population into the labour market is highlighted in this paper. Goel, K., & Kundu, S. S. (2022), analyzes the effectiveness of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) in confronting the skills gap and creating employment among Indian youth. The study explores several government initiatives which are mainly focused at decreasing unemployment in India and emphasizes how these initiatives, though initially successful, have become less effective over time. Consequently, the PMKVY was introduced as a skill-based program designed to empower youth

with employable skills. The findings of the study indicate that PMKVY has had a positive impact, with nearly 50% of trained individuals securing placements through the program's training centers. Despite of this success, the authors proclaim that the government needs to intensify its efforts in upgrading skills among youth, particularly given the huge number of skill development programs initiated since independence. The study emphasizes that PMKVY, as a flagship program of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), act as an important role in generating employment and reducing unemployment by promoting skill development. The paper also shows that a major proportion of trained candidates, especially women, have not only found employment, but some have also pursued self-employment. The authors suggest that increasing the scope of skill development programs and expanding the number of training centers and placements to further increase the program's impact.

Sharma, A. N. (2022), evaluates the constant challenge of youth unemployment in India, regardless of the country's demographic advantage of having the world's largest young population. The study highlights a substantial mismatch between job creation and the rapidly expanding workforce, mainly affecting rural areas due to restricted educational opportunities and limited employable skills. The study finds crucial reasons behind unemployment, including inadequate entrepreneurial capabilities, gaps in education, and a lack of vocational skills. It estimates several government initiatives, like various self-employment programs, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aimed at promoting skill development and entrepreneurship. The findings emphasises the need for raising awareness of employment-supporting schemes, enhancing vocational training, and aligning education systems with industry demands. The paper concludes that to promote sustainable employment, bridge the skill gap, and effectively supports India's demographic dividend for inclusive economic growth there must be a collaborative effort between the educational institutions, government, and private sectors.

Major findings of the study

- The majority of 64 per cent of the respondents, find some difficulty in finding a job.
- In this study, the majority of 67 per cent respondents say that limited job opportunities are one of the challenges in securing employment.
- It is found that 49 per cent of respondents agree and 24 percent of respondents strongly agree that they are faced with significant challenges in finding a suitable job.
- In this survey, 80 per cent of respondents feel that their education has prepared them for employment.
- The majority of the respondents, that is, 61 per cent of respondents taken skill development programs to improve employability; this shows that most are aware of skill development programs.
- The majority of the respondents, that is, 38 per cent of respondents were agreed that there is a mismatch between education and job opportunities.
- In this survey, 94 per cent of respondents were aware of the skill development programs among 100 respondents.
- 68 per cent of respondents agreed that Skill development programs are effective in enhancing employability among youth
- It is found that, the majority of the respondents, that is, 55 per cent of respondents, agree that there is a gap between the skills taught in programs and job market expectations.
- The majority of 34 per cent respondents believe that there are not sufficient job opportunities for youth in Dakshina Kannada.
- As per the findings the majority, 77 per cent of the respondents, think that More job fairs and career guidance programs will encourage more youth employment in Dakshina Kannada.
- In this survey, the majority, 88 per cent of respondents think that Job fairs would be the most helpful government initiatives in getting employment.
- In this survey, the majority of 63 per cent of the respondents, think that Networking opportunities for youth strategies can improve employment in the Dakshina Kannada District.
- The majority, 63 per cent of the respondents, agree that government initiatives can effectively address the employment challenges faced by youth in Dakshina Kannada.
- The majority, 62 per cent of the respondents, agree that promoting entrepreneurship is a viable solution to youth unemployment in Dakshina Kannada.

IV. Recommendations

- There should be a collaboration between educational institutions with industries to design programs that replicate current job market demands. This will help reduce the mismatch between skills taught and those required by employers.
- While awareness is high, more accessible and flexible skill development programs are needed to accommodate youths' schedules and interests, mainly those from economically weaker sections.

- Specifically in remote areas, to connect with potential employers and training opportunities, youth should use digital platforms for networking, job matching, and skill training.
- Especially in rural and semi-urban areas, there should be an increase in the availability and accessibility of internships and apprenticeships, to make available to youth practical work experience.
- There should be the establishment of job fairs, regular career counselling, and mentorship programs in community centers and educational institutions to support youth in making informed career choices.
- Promote and develop local industries and sectors with employment potential in Dakshina Kannada to hold talent within the district and decrease migration to urban centers.

V. Conclusion

The study is mainly conducted in the Dakshina Kannada district and presents several critical perceptions of the current employment state among youth. This study gives a strong representation of young individuals actively seeking employment opportunities. The findings highlight that while the majority of respondents have higher educational qualifications, such as postgraduate degrees, many still face difficulties in securing suitable employment. This is featured to factors such as limited job opportunities, lack of practical experience, skills mismatch, and economic conditions.

While many numbers of respondents admit that their education has somewhat prepared them for the job market, there remains concern over the alignment between academic qualifications and the skills required in the current job market. The awareness and participation of the respondents in skill development programs are high, yet challenges such as limited time and the perceived gap between training content and market expectations persist. The study also shows the preference for IT and the technological sector and government jobs sector, along with a strong belief in the effectiveness of networking opportunities, career guidance, and job fairs as strategies for improving youth employment. Hence, the research highlights both the aspirations and problems faced by youth in Dakshina Kannada and calls for targeted involvement to bridge the education-employment gap.

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