Role of Social and Training partners in Skill development of Youth- How did it work?

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Abstract

It is a Programme conceived and funded by the government of Andhra Pradesh designed to help the unemployed youth between the age group of 15 to 35 through skill development programme. The programme not only aims at training the educated unemployed youth by providing technical skills but also links it with placement in private sector. Technical knowledge and training in a variety of courses   like data entry, animation, web designing, multi-media and computer hardware were offered to the treatment group. For the present study five training centers who were offering these courses under the scheme were selected. The main objective of the study was to estimate the employability and dropout rate of the target group who were placed under this programme. After completion of the training the success and the lacunae of the scheme was analysed. Results reveal that the government scheme had 62% impact on the group. Several suggestions and implications for overall improvement of this programme have been highlighted with particular focus on skill development and to improve the employee retention rate. Suggestions include changes at policy level, societal level, changes at training level and evaluation.

Key words: Unemployed youth, Skill training, Social partners, Training partners, Service provider

1. Introduction

Provision of employment for the youth has been and remains to be a key challenge in India. For young people job is not only a source of income, but gives them dignity and self respect. Unemployment among the youth is creating many social and economic problems. Unemployment can lead to marginalization, frustration, street crime, low self-esteem, social exclusion and is a burden for the society**,** Commission for Social Development (2007)**.** It has been estimated that every year more than one *crore* youth in the age group of 15-35 will enter the job market, REEMAP (2012). Most vulnerable groups are school dropouts, matriculates, graduates and post graduates. Their employability is low due to lack of technical skills and soft skills. Inadequate education and underdeveloped skills among the youth leads to under employment and face highest risk of long term unemployment. Such a large chunk of unemployed youth with poor employability skills will have a long term negative impact on development of the country and contributes to high levels of poverty. Focusing on job-creation in youth can help to reverse this trend.

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National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) in 2009 announced to improve skills of 50 *crore* people by 2022, REEMAP (2012). To translate this objective into action, new schemes have been launched and existing schemes are been re-vamped by several ministries, central and state government for appropriate skill development programme. To handle this problem, the government of India has taken up many schemes that aim at skill building so that young adults can become self-reliant and enter job market.

In this context the government of Andhra Pradesh has launched an innovative public private partnership programme for the skill development, training and job placement for the youth between the age group of 15-35 years. This paper evaluates Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu (RYK) a government programme under the umbrella of Rajiv Education and Employment Mission in Andhra Pradesh (REEMAP) for skill development of youth. The key component of REEMAP is RYK which was initiated in 2011 and would continue till 2015. REEMAP is fully empowered and funded to ensure that RYK performs at expected level.

Under this programme the state government (social partner) works in partnership with training partners (TPs) to provide free training to unemployed youth and later place the trained candidates with private employers. This programme aims to improve the quality of labour through skill development and eventually bridge the demand-supply in the job market by involving TPs. Two steps were merged in one programme i.e. providing training and then employment. The programme does not end in skill building but also links it with placement. This programme aims to train the youth in eight different Sub missions. Each sub mission caters to a specific geographical area with specified category of youth without any overlap, REEM (2012). Sectors of training include Hospitality, Textiles, Electronics, Finance, Pharmacy, Transportation and logistics, Fabrication, Technical education, Production and manufacturing, Government of AP (2012). For the present study Sub mission for training and placements in Technical education which include Data entry, 3D animation, Web designing, Multimedia and Computer hardware were taken up.

2. Role of social partners (SPs) and TPs in the scheme

The scheme starts with the bidding process wherein the TPs bid by quoting per trainee fee the SPs have to pay that varies across courses. TPs are expected to produce their tie-ups with the employers for placement. After the technical and commercial evaluation by SPs, successful TPs are given a contract for three years with the targets to be achieved. The district level functionaries in association with self help groups motivated the youth for this training programme. The youth are enrolled for the training, with minimum qualification for each training programme. Education qualification for this programme was under graduation. Residential training was given to the trainees with free accommodation and food. After rigorous training and certification the department of Technical education and TPs were responsible for further placement of the trained youth. Trainee fee was paid by the STs to the TPs in four installments at different stages i.e. during commencement of training, during training, placement and updating in the database. For this scheme 1/3 rd of the total funds were tapped from government of India and 2/3 rd of the funds were provided by the state government, REEMAP (2011).

3. Method

This paper focuses on three aspects of study

1. Meta-analytic review of the programme — For meta-analytic review studies, reports of RYK programme were reviewed after obtaining from different sources (interview, telephone conversations, annual reports, related websites). In addition to this field visits, interactions with TPs, trainees and employers were a part of the study.
2. Based on the feedback obtained the success and dropout rate of the employed candidates were analyzed under this programme.
3. Key issues were discussed highlighting future recommendations to improve the retention rate of employees.

For Meta-analytic study, five training partners were selected through purposive sampling. TPs were imparting training to treatment group in the areas of data entry, 3D animation, Web designing, Multimedia and Computer hardware. Similar courses which were offered at selected training centers were scanned for the present study. The duration of training of these courses were from 30 days to 90 days depending on the type of the course. The age group of the trainees was between the ages of 25-32 years. The trainees completed their graduation long before they could do training to find a job.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

The profile of the training partners with treatment group is shown in table number 1 below.

Table 1: Profile of training partners with treatment group

S. No.	Training partner	Number of Batches completed (2012-2013)	Total number of candidates enrolled	Percentage of candidates who completed the training
1	Orient Technology	3	127	83%
2	InfoTech IT solutions	2	89	96%
3	Magnum Tech Ltd.	3	103	98%
4	R.K. Private Ltd.	2	92	100%
5	Radar Edutech	3	98	92%
	Total	13	509	93%

Good number of candidates applied for different courses of the training programme in technical education. The credit goes to the self help groups who motivated the candidates and brought awareness among the youth of the local area regarding the importance of the training programme. The enrollment of the youth in the training programme was in accordance with the target given by the SPs, as majority of them were in need of some source of income and showed

enthusiasm to train them to get decent and gainful work. Not much difference was observed between the number of candidates enrolled for the training programme and the dropout rate. Within the training centers candidates who completed the training ranged from 83% to 100% of the applied candidates. When all the training centres were taken into account ninety three percent of the total enrolled candidates attended, completed the training and was placed in suitable jobs. TPs who were having acquaintance with the service providers could find the trainees job easily.

Although enrolled, 7% of the trainees did not attend the programme as some of them were unaware of the schedule of the programme, some of them were of the view that this type of training would not fetch a decent job and others changed their opinion of doing the training. As it was a public-private partnership programme some of them were of the view that this programme would benefit SPs and TPs and not them. Few trainees did not continue the training, saying that the trainers were not efficient for training them. If the beneficiaries would have been followed up and guided properly by the TPs then all the enrolled candidates would have attended the programme.

Table 2: Course-wise placement of the trainees

S. No	Course	Trainees who completed training	Trainees who continued to work	Dropped out within three months	Shifted to some other job	Trainees who did not opt for any job	Trainees who were Retrenched	Trainees who didn't get any job
1	Data entry	126	93	8	8	6	2	9
2	3 D animation	85	51	14	8	8	-	4
3	Web designing	94	71	8	7	7	1	-
4	Multimedia	64	27	18	10	3	-	6
5	Computer Hardware	105	52	8	10	20	5	10
	Total percentage		62%	12%	9%	9%	2%	6%

In the area of web designing majority of the trainees continued to work followed by data entry operators as these areas of work were in more demand. Only 27 trainees settled in the area of multimedia. Half the total number of trainees worked in the field of 3D animation and computer hardware. Maximum number of trainees dropped within three months in the area of multimedia as the demands from the employer was higher than their performance. Only 8 trainees dropped in the field of data entry and web designing as the service providers provided a healthy work place environment. This shows that they were placed at comfortable level by the employers and enjoyed doing their work. Multimedia and computer hardware were two areas were 10 trainees shifted their job because of better job prospects i.e. attractive salaries and perks. Around 20 trainees from computer hardware did not opt for any job because they wanted to start their own service centre. Equal number of trainees from data entry and computer hardware did not get suitable jobs due to lack of soft skills. From the above table the impact of the scheme i.e. success and failure of the scheme on the youth can also be analyzed.

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5. How successful was the scheme?

Requirement of the treatment group was forecasted through systematic surveys of SPs and TPs with stakeholders. The total cost of the training was borne by the SPs so the youth didn't face any financial burden. The trainees were in need of a decent job, enthusiastic, wanted to work and prove themselves. SPs initiated the scheme. TPs were responsible for skill development of youth. TPs contributed for providing the physical infrastructure, curriculum development of course, materials and training, certification of training programme and placement of trainees after the completion of course in collaboration with service providers. Starting from enrollment in the training programme till the placement entire process was carried out by the social partners, training partners and service providers and there were fewer burdens on the trainees. The key factor for the success of this scheme was well paid salaries by the service providers to the trainees (Kondepati, 2013). On an average the trainees were paid Rs. 8000-8550/month. Other factors include placement within the local area and better opportunities for a stable future. All these factors contributed to 62% success of the RYK programme.

6. The scheme partially failed, why?

Although the success of scheme was average there were some drawbacks as 38% of the youth failed to settle in their jobs. Within 3 months of the trainees placement 12% of them quit their jobs. This was due to low paid salaries which was insufficient to meet their requirements. On an average Rs. 5200 was earned by them and much of it was spent on travelling long distances, food and accommodation. Due to which they were left with limited finances. So they had to leave their jobs in search of new jobs. 9% of the trainees shifted to other jobs due to better payment. 9% of the trainees did not opt for any job as some them wanted to start their own service centers in computer hardware and multimedia. Others wanted to pursue their higher studies. As the employers were not satisfied with the trainees 2% of them were retrenched. 6% of the trainees did not get any job due to lack of soft skills. Some of the TPs were making profits by cutting down the training cost by employing low cost trainers. As a consequence the trainees were placed in low quality jobs due to which dropout rate was higher. The scheme was widely publicized as though the state government is providing government jobs Rao (2012). But in reality, the skill development programme was facilitating jobs in private sector.

Other than the above factors some of the other reasons for the average success could be as follows:

- **Varied needs of the industry**-Some of the trainees were not offered any placement because the needs of the industry were different from learners training. Due to speed of change within the industry, mismatch of skills and lack of relevance of training some of the youth could not find a suitable job. TPs were ignorant of the competitive strategies of the industries.
- **Lack of efficient coordination between social partners, private partners and service providers**- There was limited linkage or gap between the government, TPs and the employers.

- **Out dated training/curriculum**- Training partners were offering training that was outdated and was not relevant to the modern day employment. Rigidity was observed in the provision of training. Training partners need to identify the technological changes with the service providers for the skill development and provide training accordingly.
- **Job insecurity**- As the placement was only in private sector and not with government; trainees were not ready to join the job. Trainees were not ready to stick on to one enterprise, but were in search of job that was safe and secure.
- **Work place behavior**- Work place was not congenial for the trainee's growth, so that had to quit the jobs.
- **Lack of emphasis on performance**- It is just the training which was given to the treatment group but the performance of quality of work in which they were placed was ignored.
- **Better salaries and perks**- Attraction towards increased salaries and additional perks the trainees did not want to stick on to one job, so they opted to shift to the other where they could be paid better.

Other lacunae in the training were: inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained staff, poor quality training etc.

7. Suggestions and Implications

Looking into the above analysis there are several suggestions and implications that need to be discussed for overall skill development programmes/schemes in India with special concern for youth. They are grouped under the following heads:

7.1 Changes at Government level/Policy level

- **Skill development schemes/programme should be run by separate ministry** - There should be one umbrella under which varied skill requirements of different categories of population can be met. This will help in better coordination and success of any development programme.
- **Predicting the demand accurately -** It is not always possible to predict the demand for skill training just by surveys, analysis, interview and questionnaires. Other then these industry based, area based, and sector based surveys need to be carried out for better employability of youth.
- **Youth sensitive policy** - Youth also forms one of the most vulnerable groups of society so policies should be framed which are youth sensitive, NSDC (2012). If youth sensitive programmes are implemented they would get an opportunity to become more active and productive participants in the workforce and enjoy a greater degree of social integration.
- **Provision of technical education and training for school dropouts** - Most often the dropouts from schools and colleges have very little or no technical training. This group can be targeted and training in skill development can be given to provide better livelihood. One need not wait for schemes to start to meet their needs.
- **Financing by private sectors** - For any developmental programme finances are provided by the social partners to the training partners. The government should involve private sectors and link with the skill development programmes of the youth (Sandra, 2010). Finances from top most industries must be tapped and reinvested in skill development.

- **Involvement of youth and local industries in governing bodies** - For majority of development schemes politicians and government representatives are the members of the governing bodies. Instead local industry members can be members so that emerging needs of the industry can be updated from time to time. Youth would be aware of the requirements of the workforce which in turn would provide gainful and productive employment. Transparency would be maintained at every level.
- **Performance based funding** - Depending on the performance of the TPs funding has to be provided. Performance depends upon placement of the target group in high salary jobs that would result in lower dropout rate.
- **Finishing school** - After the completion of the training school and before placement the trainees should be placed in the Finishing School. The youth is given industry specific training so that their chances of clearing the interviews will be higher.
- **Complaint and Grievance cell** - Complaint and Grievance cell for every scheme should be set up so that any flaws in the existing scheme would be rectified for the schemes to come later.

7.2 Training and skill development

a. Employer's role

- **High quality training according to the needs of the market** - As there is demand for skilled labour the training partners should meet the requirement of labour market and upgrade it. Employers should continuously upgrade the skills of the workforce. They should actively be involved in on job skill training. Based on need assessment capacity building programmes should be provided. Right type of skill, making training effective for employability has to be provided by the employer.
- **Providing additional services** - Additional basic services and facilities need to be provided with added incentives, so that they feel their job is secure. Monetary award can be given to boost employability and increased productivity.
- **Concentrate on employees personality development** - Determining how much the worker would learn, the trainee's ability, their soft skills, problem solving, behavioral skills and managerial skills should be taken care of.
- **Industries themselves should be centers of learning -** Due to competitive market and emphasis is on productivity industries themselves should be centers of learning. This would ensure uniformity and quality in training due to well structured programme. Work diligently with the trainer and employees so that work environment can be created to utilize the developed skills.

b. Employee's role
- **Ready to learn**- Employees need to be motivated and remain enthusiastic to learn.
- **Adaptable to any learning situation**- The trainee should be able to put into practice the knowledge they have gained in training.
- **Need to be multi-skilled**- The trainee should not just concentrate on his training but should have knowledge and skill related to allied fields of study related to job.

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7.3 Changes at societal level

Aspiration of youth for government jobs - Instead of taking private jobs youth prefer to work in government sector due to less work load, job security, pension, etc. Youth has to be made aware of greater scope of growth, enhancing income and skilled jobs in private sector and should be encouraged to work.

Involvement of youth in decision making - Youth are the change agents. Youth has to be mobilized and empowered so that they have greater control in community decision making, co-operative planning and in preparing strategies, UNDP (2012). This would benefit the community and in turn contribute towards country's development.

7.4 Guidance, Monitoring and Evaluation

The goal of training programme is to improve the performance of enterprise. But after few months of training, employees go back to do the same things as before. For sustainable development of the country any scheme or programme needs to be guided, monitored and evaluated. Emphasis should be laid on Independent evaluation of the programme. Quality of the training programme in terms of technical skills and readiness need to be assessed. Post placement follow up has to be regularly conducted. Quality inspection should be carried out if the training programme is not successful.

Counseling-cum-call center. This center provides information and counseling at all stages of the programme. The center gives information on skill development programme, counseling and post placement counseling. This would improve the beneficiaries' retention rate in job. Job *mela* has to be carried out after completion of the programme and the TPs should accompany them. All process should be automated which gives updated status.

8. Way out

Integration should be maintained between the development plan/policy, Implementation, Quality control and Monitoring. All these should be conceptually linked. It is not just promoting skills and providing placements but a holistic approach of development need to be adopted for further course of action. More learning opportunities such as on job training need to be provided to the workers to develop their skills in work place. Effective and tight linkages should be maintained between SPs, TPs and service providers for future skill development. Social partners should promote and incentivize TPs for their efforts. Training needs should be effective for better employability. Placements should not just be based on the outcome of training programme, but previous learning and work experience should be considered. In developing schemes for youth, government concentrates to reduce unemployment by addressing the lack of skills rather than concentrating on job creation. Presently linkage is established between skill development, training and placement. However skill development should be a part of lifelong learning (Rupert et al., 2013). That has to be adopted at various levels-during formal education, before employment, while employed which is relevant to the industry needs. Lifelong training can be acquired through education, employment, training and work experience.

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