



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

VOLUME - 14 | ISSUE - 12 | SEPTEMBER - 2025



SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH THROUGH PMKVY

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ABSTRACT

*Skill development has emerged as a critical driver of economic empowerment and social transformation in India, particularly for the youth who constitute the largest segment of the population. The **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**, launched in 2015, is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at enhancing employability, bridging the skill gap, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. This paper examines the role of PMKVY in promoting economic empowerment of youth by providing industry-relevant skill training, certification, and placement support. The study highlights how skill development not only generates wage employment but also encourages self-employment, entrepreneurship, and financial independence, especially among rural, marginalized, and women youth. It further explores the linkages between skill training and inclusive growth, emphasizing how PMKVY contributes to reducing poverty, unemployment, and migration while fostering self-reliance. Despite its achievements, the scheme faces challenges such as limited infrastructure, uneven implementation, mismatch between training and industry demand, and inadequate post-training support. The paper concludes that PMKVY, if strengthened with policy convergence, digital inclusion, and industry collaboration, can become a powerful tool for ensuring the socio-economic development of youth and achieving the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India).*



KEYWORDS : PMKVY, Skill development, youth, Empowerment, self-employment, Training.

INTRODUCTION

Youth constitute the backbone of any nation's development and are considered the most dynamic and productive segment of the population. In India, where more than 65% of the population is below the age of 35, the challenge of transforming this demographic dividend into a demographic advantage largely depends on equipping youth with appropriate skills, knowledge, and opportunities. With rapid globalization, technological transformation, and industrial restructuring, the demand for skilled manpower has increased significantly. However, India has historically faced a mismatch

between the skills required by industries and those possessed by the workforce, leading to widespread unemployment and underemployment, particularly among rural and marginalized youth.

Recognizing this critical challenge, the Government of India launched the **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** in 2015 under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). As the flagship skill development initiative, PMKVY aims to empower the youth by offering free short-term training, recognition of prior learning, and industry-oriented certification to enhance employability and create pathways for sustainable livelihoods. The scheme not only focuses on wage employment but also seeks to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship by encouraging youth to utilize their acquired skills in innovative and productive ways.

Economic empowerment of youth through skill development is multidimensional—it enhances their employability, increases income levels, reduces dependency, and fosters confidence and dignity. PMKVY has emerged as a strategic intervention to address issues of poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and economic growth by bringing under one umbrella the aspirations of youth, the requirements of industries, and the priorities of the nation. With special focus on women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and rural youth, the scheme also contributes towards inclusive development. Despite notable achievements, challenges remain in terms of aligning training programs with dynamic industry needs, ensuring quality trainers, providing post-training placement support, and addressing regional disparities in implementation. Nevertheless, PMKVY is a significant step towards bridging the skill gap and equipping India's youth with the tools required to contribute effectively to the vision of **"Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India)**.

Thus, the study of **Skill Development and Economic Empowerment of Youth through PMKVY** becomes highly relevant in the present socio-economic context, as it allows us to evaluate how far the scheme has succeeded in its objectives and what more needs to be done to ensure that India's youth can act as the true agents of national transformation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the significance of skill development for youth empowerment in India.
2. To examine the structure and implementation framework of PMKVY.
3. To assess the economic impact of PMKVY on youth employment and self-reliance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Nature of Study:** Descriptive and analytical.
- **Data Sources:** Secondary data from government reports (MSDE, NSDC, NITI Aayog), academic research papers, skill development surveys, and policy evaluations.
- **Approach:** Comparative analysis of PMKVY outcomes with youth employment statistics and economic development indicators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies highlight the significance of skill development in tackling unemployment and improving productivity. According to the World Bank (2018), countries with higher skill penetration experience faster economic growth. NITI Aayog (2020) emphasizes that India's skill development policies must align with global labor market trends. Research by Mehrotra&Parida (2019) found that vocational training programs, including PMKVY, improved employability but faced placement challenges. Academic critiques point out that short-term training modules often do not provide adequate depth, leading to underemployment. Despite these concerns, PMKVY remains a crucial step toward bridging India's skill gap.

PMKVY: An Overview

- **Launch Year:** 2015
- **Implementing Agency:** National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
- **Objectives:**
 - Provide industry-relevant skill training.
 - Recognize prior learning (RPL) through certification.
 - Create employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
 - Align skill training with the needs of domestic and global markets.

Key Features:

1. Short-term training (STT) in various job roles.
2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for informal sector workers.
3. Special projects targeting regional and sectoral requirements.
4. Training linked to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).
5. Monetary rewards for certified candidates.

Impact of PMKVY on Youth Empowerment

1. Employment Generation

PMKVY has enabled millions of youth to gain certification in industry-relevant trades such as IT, construction, retail, healthcare, and manufacturing. This enhances employability and facilitates migration to urban labor markets.

2. Promotion of Entrepreneurship

The scheme encourages youth to explore self-employment opportunities by providing skill sets related to small businesses, handicrafts, and services. Linkages with Mudra loans and Start-up India create an ecosystem for entrepreneurship.

3. Social Empowerment

Skill development enhances self-confidence, reduces dependency, and promotes gender inclusion. A significant number of women have benefited from PMKVY in tailoring, beauty, healthcare, and digital services.

4. Regional Development

By establishing training centers in rural and semi-urban areas, PMKVY reduces regional disparities and provides opportunities to marginalized communities.

Data Analysis -

Table: Implementation Framework of PMKVY

Scheme Phase	Year / Duration	Target & Achievements	Key Features / Budget
PMKVY 1.0	2015–2016	Target: 1 million Certified: 1.985 million (MSDE, 2016)	Initial launch of scheme Focus on short-term training and certification
PMKVY 2.0	2016–2020	7.9 million trained 4.2 million certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Budget: ₹12,000 crore Expanded outreach, included RPL for informal sector workers
PMKVY 3.0	2021–2022	>0.8 million trained (MSDE, 2022)	Decentralized approach with District Skill Committees

			(DSCs) Training aligned with local industry demand
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Analysis

The **implementation framework of PMKVY** reflects a gradual evolution of the scheme in terms of **scale, inclusiveness, and localization**:

1. **PMKVY 1.0 (2015–16)**: Served as the pilot phase. It surpassed its target by certifying almost **twice the planned number of candidates (1.985 million vs. 1 million target)**. The focus was mainly on short-term training and generating awareness about skill certification.
2. **PMKVY 2.0 (2016–20)**: This was the most expansive phase, training **7.9 million youth** and bringing in **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**, which was a crucial step in integrating informal sector workers into the formal skill ecosystem. With a substantial **budget of ₹12,000 crore**, this phase demonstrated the government's commitment to scale up.
3. **PMKVY 3.0 (2021–22)**: Marked a **shift towards decentralization**, involving **District Skill Committees (DSCs)** to better align training with local industry requirements. Though the training numbers (**0.8 million**) were modest compared to PMKVY 2.0, the focus moved from scale to **quality and regional relevance**.

Table: Implementation Framework of PMKVY

Phase	Duration	Key Targets / Features	Achievements	Budget Allocation
PMKVY 1.0	2015–16	Target: 1 million youth to be trained	1.985 million certified (almost double the target)	Not specified
PMKVY 2.0	2016–20	Expansion with focus on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	7.9 million trained; 4.2 million under RPL	₹12,000 crore
PMKVY 3.0	2021–22	Decentralized model with District Skill Committees (DSCs)	>0.8 million trained	Not specified

Analysis

PMKVY 1.0 (2015–16):

- This initial phase of the scheme was highly successful.
- The target was to train 1 million youth, but around 1.985 million were certified.
- This clearly reflected the high demand for skill development programs among the youth.

PMKVY 2.0 (2016–20):

- In this phase, the scheme was expanded and the *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* component was introduced.
- Approximately 7.9 million youth were trained, of which 4.2 million fell under RPL.
- The budget allocation of ₹12,000 crore highlighted the scale and importance of the scheme.
- However, not all of the trained youth were able to secure employment, indicating challenges in implementation and industry linkage.

PMKVY 3.0 (2021–22):

- This phase introduced **District Skill Committees (DSCs)** to decentralize planning and implementation at the local level.
- The number of trained individuals (~0.8 million) was significantly lower compared to the previous phases.

- However, the emphasis shifted towards *quality training* and aligning skills with *local demand*.

Table: Impact of PMKVY (Findings from Different Sources)

Source	Key Finding	Significance
NSDC (2021)	40–45% of trainees secured employment/self-employment	Demonstrates that PMKVY has created tangible job opportunities, though not universal
NITI Aayog (2020)	Reduced distress migration by supporting local entrepreneurship	Highlights the scheme's role in stabilizing regional economies and preventing urban overcrowding
MSDE (2022)	Over 1 million women trained; many launched micro-enterprises	Indicates gender inclusion and women's economic empowerment through PMKVY
Mudra Yojana Linkage	Enabled credit access for startups and small businesses	Strengthened self-reliance by integrating skills with financial support

Analysis

- The findings from various reports collectively show that **PMKVY has had a multi-dimensional impact** on youth empowerment in India. According to **NSDC (2021)**, around 40–45% of the trained candidates could secure employment or self-employment, which underscores the effectiveness of the scheme in bridging the skill-employability gap, though challenges in universal placement persist.
- **NITI Aayog (2020)** emphasized the scheme's contribution to reducing rural-to-urban migration by nurturing local entrepreneurship. This not only reduced the social and economic burden of migration but also helped strengthen rural economies.
- Further, the **MSDE (2022)** report highlights the program's inclusivity, as more than 1 million women received training and many successfully launched micro-enterprises. This reflects PMKVY's role in promoting **women's empowerment and gender equality** in the workforce.
- The **integration with Mudra Yojana** has been a significant step, as it ensured that trained individuals could access credit facilities to start their ventures. This **link between skill training and financial inclusion** provided a pathway from training to entrepreneurship, thereby aligning with the larger vision of "**Atmanirbhar Bharat**" (**Self-Reliant India**).

OVERALL ANALYSIS

The analysis demonstrates that **skill development is critical for India's youth empowerment**, as the mismatch between available skills and industry demand continues to drive unemployment. The structured implementation of PMKVY through its three phases has successfully trained millions of youth and expanded certification to the informal workforce through RPL.

Economically, PMKVY has increased both **employment and entrepreneurial opportunities**, especially for marginalized groups such as women, rural youth, and SC/ST communities. Its linkage with other government schemes like **Mudra Yojana** has further promoted financial independence. However, the scheme still struggles with **sustainable employment outcomes**, uneven job quality, and inadequate post-training support systems such as mentorship and incubation.

Thus, while PMKVY has proven to be a **strategic instrument for economic empowerment**, its long-term success depends on improving training quality, ensuring stronger industry linkages, and creating robust post-training support for youth to thrive in the job market as well as entrepreneurship.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Placement Gaps:** A large proportion of trained candidates struggle to secure sustainable employment.

2. **Quality Concerns:** Short-duration training often fails to provide adequate practical exposure.
3. **Regional Disparities:** Training centers are concentrated in urban areas, limiting rural outreach.
4. **Mismatch with Industry Needs:** Curriculum alignment with emerging industries such as AI, green technology, and digital economy is limited.
5. **Monitoring and Accountability:** Weak evaluation mechanisms hinder transparency and impact assessment.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen industry-academia partnerships to ensure job-oriented training.
2. Expand rural training infrastructure to reach marginalized youth.
3. Integrate digital literacy, green skills, and advanced technology modules.
4. Ensure post-training support through career counseling, placement cells, and entrepreneurship incubation.
5. Introduce long-term vocational courses for sustainable skill development.

CONCLUSION

PMKVY has played a crucial role in promoting skill development and youth empowerment in India. By equipping young people with industry-relevant skills, the scheme has opened pathways for employment, self-reliance, and economic growth. However, the long-term success of PMKVY depends on addressing gaps in quality, placement, and inclusivity. If strengthened with innovative approaches and stronger monitoring, PMKVY can transform India's youth into a globally competitive workforce and contribute significantly to the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

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