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TRAINING NEEDS AND GENDER ISSUES – A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH IN CONFLICT HIT KASHMIR

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Abstract:

The youth in Kashmir today, albeit being well educated, find themselves unfit for the job market owing to lack of skills. The present study explores the training needs of 24-35 years old youth in central Kashmir, Jammu & Kashmir India and identifies the training needs of youth in Kashmir. A survey design was used to study the perceptions of 400 youth in 4 clusters drawn from 4 districts of central Kashmir using a structured questionnaire. The study used five parameters for training namely Communication Skills, IT Skills, Entrepreneurship, Governance and Theater. The study also examined the demographic characteristics and emphasized on the influence of gender on the training needs. The findings suggest an urgent and enormous need for skill training among the youth in Kashmir irrespective of the gender of the youth. Conclusions and policy recommendations are provided at the end.

KEYWORDS-

Youth, training needs, gender

INTRODUCTION

“We Cannot Always Build the Future for Our Youth, but We Can Build Our Youth for the Future”

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Former President, USA

Youth is a concept that is highly dependent on context, because the role youth has in a specific society is defined by the prevailing political, economic and social order and is highly influenced by social change. However youth is mostly equated to adolescence compromising the time between childhood and independence from the family as a grown up and is primarily related to status and behavior. It is the period of life between primary education and work that is characterized by different passages, like the end of compulsory education, marriage, or economic independence from the parents.

Today's Youth are Tomorrow's Leaders. Their education and participation is key to the world's future. Although young people comprise a majority of the world's population, their views and voices have few channels of expression. The role of youth is of most importance in today's time. Young participation is important because youth are the country's power. Youth recognize problems and can solve them. Youth are strong forces in social movements. They have immense influence on children and therefore can help them attain a higher level of intellectual ability and to become qualified adults. All cultures recognize youthful age as a highly significant period in which young people learn future roles and incorporate the values and

norms of their societies.

For this to occur it is important that the youth are brought up in an environment that leaves them in the best possible frame of mind so that they can leave a mark and contribute positively to the social fabric of the society. However the major cause of concern for the youth is the problem of unemployment. Studies reveal that unemployment has a direct impact on human behaviour and it often becomes so frustrated and makes it difficult for an unemployed man to distinguish between a right and a wrong. Further studies by (Henkel, 1997; Iversen and Sabroe, 1998; Kieselbach and Svensson, 1998; Kieselbach and Wacker, 1985; Rani, 1993; L.B. Singh, 1990; Singh, Kumari and Singh, 1992; Verkleij, 1989; Warr, 1985; Winefield and Tiggemann, 1985) have indicated that unemployment affects a man not only physically and psychologically, but also cause a sharp decline in him of human values. Researches into the adjustment patterns of unemployed, especially of educated ones have indicated them of having relatively poor adjustment patterns. For example, Dumont (1997) has reported that joblessness is sensitively related to mental illness, sexual importance, crime alcoholism and suicide. It is said to exert a damaging influence on human health by generating coronary artery disease, hypertension, peptic ulcer and infectious diseases. Further, migration, divorce, late marriage and child abuse, resulting in personal and financial pathology, are some other repercussions of unemployment. Platt (1985) Henkel (1985, 1987) has also arrived at a similar conclusion. However, Aho (1981) is of the view that unemployment as such does not directly lead to alcoholism or psychic illness. Yet, the findings of a good number of studies like that of Brenner and Starrin (1988), O'Brein and Kabanoff (1997), L.B Sing (1990), Kieselbach and Svensson (1988), Kieselbach and Wacker (1985), Tiggemann and Winefield (1984) and Webster (1984) have indicated that unemployed are relatively more vulnerable to psychological illness. Hagen (1983), Liem and Reymond (1984) and Oddy et al. (1984) have found that prolonged unemployment commonly generates a serious threat to the physical and emotional well-being of those who experience it.

Thus, it appears that unemployment is an obstacle for positive development of youth and poses a threat to the existing socio, economic and political fabric of the society, and makes it difficult for them to contribute passionately and positively.

The size of employment in any country depends considerably on the level of development. When a country makes progress and production expands, the employment opportunities often grow. In India, during the past three decades or so, production has expanded in all sectors of the economy. In response to these developments the absolute level of employment has also grown. However, the state of Jammu & Kashmir has remained an exception to these developments owing partly to the fact that situation has remained fragile due to the presence of conflict and partly to some other contributing factors. The state of Jammu & Kashmir today has a large junk of unemployed educated youth. These youth although may have a brilliant track record as far as education is concerned but find themselves unacceptable in the outside job market. Being unemployed is one thing but being unemployable is altogether a different thing and is of more concern and needs to be tackled more seriously. This directly leads us to the fact that some vibrant steps are required for “Positive Youth Development”.

Positive youth development calls for a coordinated effort to prepare young people to meet the challenges of modern times and make them socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. For this to achieve, it becomes imperative that the youth of today are imparted with the necessary skills so as to coup up with the modern challenges of the changing economic order. This indicates that in addition to the formal education youth of today have certain other needs to become job fit. This can be achieved by providing them proper training for the workplace. These training programmes can provide youth with general life skills that are important at the workplace and in most human interactions – leadership, communication and discipline etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In the backdrop of above discussion the study is being undertaken with the following objectives

- 1.Examine the training needs of youth in Kashmir
- 2.Examine the influence of gender on the training needs of youth in Kashmir

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study is a survey research. A survey research is a research that employs the study of large and small population by selecting and studying sample chosen from the population to discover the relative

incidence, which by impact can easily serve as a forecaster and predictor (Olaitan, Ali, Eyoh and Sowande, 2000). In this study, the training needs of youths were examined and described

Area of the Study/ Population/Sample and Sampling Technique

The area of the study was central Kashmir. The population of the study comprises of all youth aged between 15-35 years. A total of 400, youths in Srinagar participated in the study. In addition the study population frame did not exist; therefore, a cluster sampling method was employed. Cluster sampling involves first selecting large grouping (e.g. wards or units) and then selecting the sample of the study (i.e. elements) from each grouping (Olaitan et.al., 2000). The eight administrative wards of the metropolis constitute the clusters. He or she must have possessed at least a minimum qualification of graduation. Using simple random sampling technique, a total of 400 youths were sampled from the four clusters (wards).

Research Instrument

For the purpose of this research, one instrument was developed and used by the researchers. That is a structured questionnaire (SQ). The SQ sought demographic information on the participants such as sex, age, and agency where training was acquired, which describes the characteristics of the youths. It also sought other information such as preferred training needs and the problems usually faced when receiving training.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed using frequency and simple percentage to answer the research questions raised. The statistical tools used include mean scores, frequency analysis and Chi2 test. The study ends with suggestive recommendations which can be incorporated to make the intervention inclusive and sustained.

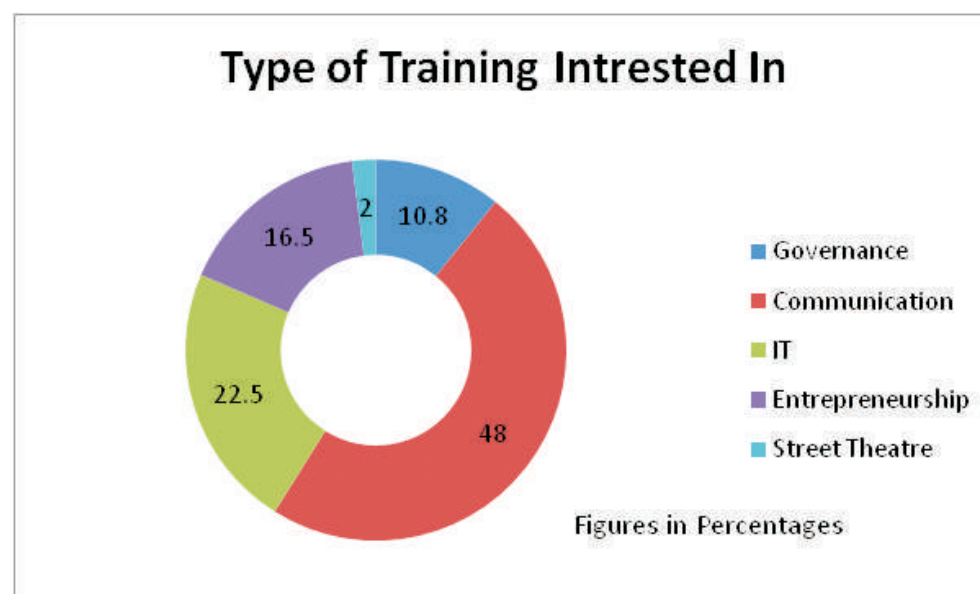
FINDINGS

More than half (52.3%) of the youth studied are seen to have attained some kind of technical training. Most of the respondents have attained technical training in computers. Rest i.e. 47.8% has not attained any type of technical training at all suggesting a huge scope for vocational training courses. This becomes even more important as the level of unemployment is reaching all time high in the state. We need to train the youth of the valley in order to facilitate them to earn their livelihoods and engage them in positive community building activities and subsequently to decrease their vulnerability towards violence.

When asked about the type of training they would like to have, 48.8% chose communication skill training suggesting that the current education system fails to provide the youth with communication, leadership, motivational and personality development skills. The present education system just aims at providing the academic degrees which hardly make the youth employable in current times. Academicians and policy makers in state need to address this issue at the earliest.

Table 1

Training			
Characteristic	Response	Frequency	%age
Training Attained	Yes	191	47.8
	No	209	52.3
Type of Training Interested in	Governance	43	10.8
	Communication	192	48.0
	IT	90	22.5
	Entrepreneurship	66	16.5
	Street Theatre	8	2.0



The next most sought after training by youth in Kashmir is IT skills as 22.5% of the youth prefer this skill. This suggests that youth in the valley are already aware of the need to have IT education, however they are lacking in the same.

After IT skills the next type of training chosen by most of the youth is entrepreneurship. This type of training was sought by 16.5% of the youth. Again this is indicative of the fact that there is wide spread unemployment and youth have very less hope of finding government or private jobs in the valley and therefore are trying to explore the avenues for entrepreneurship. Further it is seen that least number of youth are interested in street theatre indicating the conservative character of Kashmiri society. Only 2% youth showed interest in training in street theatre.

EFFECT OF GENDER ON TRAINING NEEDS

From the table 3 it is clear that there is significant difference ($\chi^2 = 5.75$, $p = 0.02$) in the proportion of youth who have attained training across gender wherein greater proportion of males have attained any kind of technical training. Females are seen lacking far behind in terms of technical training with only 73 females having any kind of technical training as against 105 males. Also it is clear from the table that there is no significant difference in the perception of youth regarding the preference for different types of skills. With $\chi^2 = 2.50$ & $p = 0.11$, both male and female respondents are equally desirous for undergoing training in governance skills. In case of communication skills ($\chi^2 = 2.25$ & $p = 0.13$, again there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female respondents regarding the need for this training. Also for the skills of entrepreneurship with $\chi^2 = 0.42$ & $p = 0.52$ and street theatre with $\chi^2 = 2.00$ & $p = 0.16$, both male and female respondents are equally interested in undergoing the training. Only in case of IT skills ($\chi^2 = 34.77$, $p < 0.01$), there is significant difference of interest and more males are interested than females.

Table 2**Training (Across Gender)**

Parameter	Response	Gender	Statistics		
			Frequency	Chi ²	Sig
Training Attained	Yes	Male	105	5.75	0.02
		Female	73		
	No	Male	129	20.35	0.00
		Female	66		
Type of Training Required	Governance	Male	25	2.50	0.11
		Female	15		
	Communication	Male	99	2.25	0.13
		Female	79		
	IT	Male	71	34.77	0.00
		Female	16		
	Entrepreneurship	Male	32	0.42	0.52
		Female	27		
	Street Theater	Male	6	2.00	0.16
		Female	2		

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

There is a huge population of youth in Kashmir who are educated but unemployed and therefore there is an urgent need to cater to the issues of youth, particularly the training needs of youth, as they will form the major part of our workforce in near future. Maximum number of youth is reported to be having college or university education but they lack technical training as reported by majority of youth. Majority of the youth, have no income at all or a very low income depicting high rate of unemployment. Further most of the youth chose communication skill training as their preferred vocational training course. The second proffered training by most of the youth is IT skill training. Very less percentage of youth showed interest in training in street theatre. Females are seen lacking far behind in terms of technical training however there is no significant difference in the perception of youth across gender towards the type of training required except for IT skills in which case more males than females are interested.

In the light of these conclusions, the immediate areas to be worked upon are unemployment and channelizing the talent/energy of youth through training, there need to take up the issue of unemployment as the most critical issue by both government and non-governmental organizations. And particularly the community based interventions to tackle this issue should be supplemented with school and institution based interventions.

Developing income generating programmes need to be started at the earliest. There is also a need

to link these programmes with government schemes for employment of youth. Institutions that provide technical and vocational training courses should be developed so that more number of youth is able to take the advantage of these courses and subsequently to decrease unemployment.

Further most of the youth are interested in communication, IT and entrepreneurship training. Therefore there is a need to offer communication, IT skill and entrepreneurship training programmes to youth and. Also the education institutions should conduct counseling and personality development programmes.

Greater percentage of males has attained any kind of skill training. Females are seen lacking far behind in terms of skill training, however females are equally interested to undergo skill training as shown by the data. Therefore there is a need to focus on females in different vocational trainings and other trainings provided by government and non-government organizations.

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