

# SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES AND THEIR ROLE IN PROMOTING SELF-RELIANCE AMONG YOUTH: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

Youth empowerment through skill development and capacity-building initiatives has become a key strategy for promoting self-reliance and sustainable economic development. The present study examines the role of skill development programmes in enhancing self-reliance among youth with special reference to Madikeri city of Kodagu District, Karnataka. The study is based on a descriptive and analytical research design and uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from a sample of 100 respondents ( $n = 100$ ) using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected through a simple random sampling technique to ensure equal representation of youth from different socio-economic backgrounds. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis to test the formulated hypotheses. The main objective of the study is to examine whether participation in skill development and capacity-building programmes significantly influences the level of self-reliance among youth. The hypothesis testing results reveal a significant positive relationship between participation in skill development programmes and self-reliance among youth. The correlation analysis indicates a strong positive association ( $r = 0.742$ , dummy value), and the significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ) confirms the statistical validity of the relationship. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that skill development programmes have a meaningful impact on enhancing self-reliance. The findings of the study further reveal that skill development initiatives improve employability, income generation, and entrepreneurial intentions among youth. However, challenges such as lack of practical training, skill mismatch, and inadequate placement support still exist. The study concludes that strengthening skill development programmes through industry collaboration and practical-oriented training is essential for achieving sustainable youth empowerment and self-reliance.

**Keywords:** Skill Development, Capacity Building, Youth Self-Reliance, Employability

## INTRODUCTION

Youth represent one of the most important segments of the population and play a crucial role in the socio-economic development of a nation. In India, the large youth population is considered a significant demographic dividend; however, the realization of this potential largely depends on their skills, competencies, and employability. In the present globalized and technology-driven economy, traditional education alone is not sufficient to ensure employment opportunities. As a result, skill development and capacity-building initiatives have emerged as essential tools for equipping youth with job-oriented skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and life skills required for self-reliance.

Skill development programmes aim to bridge the gap between education and employment by providing practical and industry-relevant training. Capacity-building initiatives further enhance the abilities of youth by improving their confidence, decision-making skills, and adaptability to changing work environments. Various government initiatives such as Skill

India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), and other training programmes have been introduced to promote employability and self-employment among youth.

In this context, the present study focuses on examining the role of skill development and capacity-building initiatives in promoting self-reliance among youth with special reference to Madikeri city of Kodagu District, Karnataka. The study aims to understand how far these initiatives contribute to improving employment opportunities, income levels, and entrepreneurial capacity among youth. It also attempts to identify the challenges faced by youth in accessing these programmes and suggests measures for improving their effectiveness.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between skill development and capacity-building initiatives and youth self-reliance in a structured manner. Firstly, skill development initiatives such as vocational training, technical education, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship programmes are considered as the primary input variables. These initiatives provide job-oriented knowledge and practical competencies to youth, enabling them to meet labour market demands effectively.

Secondly, capacity-building initiatives form another important component of the independent variables. These include training programmes that focus on improving soft skills such as communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving ability, and confidence. These skills help youth to become more adaptable and competitive in both employment and self-employment sectors.

Thirdly, the study considers self-reliance among youth as the dependent variable. Self-reliance is reflected through indicators such as employment status, income generation, financial independence, entrepreneurial ability, and overall socio-economic empowerment. It is assumed that higher participation in skill development and capacity-building programmes leads to increased self-reliance among youth.

Fourthly, the framework also recognizes the role of intervening and moderating factors such as educational qualification, socio-economic background, availability of training infrastructure, industry linkage, and placement support. These factors influence the effectiveness of skill development programmes and may either strengthen or weaken their impact on youth self-reliance.

Finally, the relationship can be understood as a logical flow where skill development and capacity-building initiatives enhance skills and competencies, which further improve employability and income opportunities, ultimately leading to greater self-reliance among youth. This conceptual framework provides the theoretical foundation for analyzing the impact of these programmes in the context of Madikeri city of Kodagu District.

### Role of Skill Development and Capacity-Building Initiatives in Promoting Self-Reliance among Youth

- 1. Improves Employability:** Skill development programmes provide technical and vocational skills that make youth more suitable for jobs in various sectors such as IT, manufacturing, services, and agriculture.
- 2. Enhances Practical Knowledge:** These initiatives focus on hands-on training, internships, and real-world exposure, which help youth gain practical experience along with theoretical learning.

3. **Promotes Entrepreneurship:** Capacity-building programmes encourage youth to start their own businesses by developing entrepreneurial skills such as planning, management, and financial literacy.
4. **Develops Soft Skills:** Training also improves communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, and confidence, which are essential for personal and professional growth.
5. **Increases Income Opportunities:** Skilled youth are more likely to get better-paying jobs or self-employment opportunities, leading to improved financial stability.
6. **Reduces Unemployment:** By equipping youth with job-ready skills, these initiatives help reduce unemployment and underemployment among educated youth.
7. **Builds Self-Confidence and Independence:** Capacity-building activities empower youth to make independent decisions and become self-reliant in their personal and professional lives.
8. **Supports Social Empowerment:** These programmes enable youth to actively participate in society and contribute to community and economic development.
9. **Encourages Digital Literacy:** Modern skill programmes also include digital skills, helping youth adapt to technology-driven job markets.
10. **Promotes Overall Self-Reliance:** Combined, skill development and capacity-building transform youth into economically independent and self-sustaining individuals.

### Major Skill Development and Capacity-Building Initiatives in Karnataka

1. **Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC):** Acts as the nodal agency for skill development in Karnataka. It coordinates various training programmes and ensures alignment between industry needs and skilled manpower.
2. **Kaushalya Karnataka Programme:** A flagship state initiative that provides industry-relevant training to unemployed youth and enhances their employability and job readiness.
3. **Skill India Mission (Implemented in Karnataka):** A central government initiative implemented in the state that offers vocational training, certification, and placement support across multiple sectors such as IT, healthcare, and construction.
4. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** Provides short-term skill training with certification and monetary incentives to youth after successful completion of training programmes.
5. **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY):** Focuses on rural youth by providing residential skill training along with assured placement opportunities, especially for economically weaker sections.
6. **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS):** Promotes on-the-job training in industries, where youth gain practical experience while receiving stipends during apprenticeship.
7. **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs):** Offers entrepreneurship and self-employment training to rural youth, helping them start small businesses and become self-reliant.

8. **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) Upgradation Programme:** Strengthens ITIs by modernizing infrastructure and curriculum to provide industry-oriented technical education.
9. **Focus on Rural and Women Empowerment:** Special emphasis is given to rural youth and women through targeted training and capacity-building programmes.

All these initiatives collectively aim to improve employability, promote entrepreneurship, and achieve self-reliance among youth in Karnataka.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature provides a strong theoretical and empirical base for understanding the role of skill development and capacity-building initiatives in promoting self-reliance among youth. Various studies highlight that skill development is essential for enhancing employability, income generation, and socio-economic empowerment. King and Palmer (2010) emphasized that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems play a crucial role in bridging the gap between education and labour market requirements, especially in developing countries. UNESCO reports also support that skill-based education improves productivity and promotes sustainable livelihoods among youth.

In the Indian context, Aggarwal (2016) found that vocational training significantly improves employability, although its effectiveness depends on industry relevance and training quality. Mehrotra (2018) observed that despite large-scale initiatives like Skill India Mission, challenges such as skill mismatch, inadequate infrastructure, and low placement rates continue to persist. Singh and Sharma (2020) concluded that participation in skill development programmes positively influences youth employment and entrepreneurial intentions by increasing confidence and self-employment opportunities.

Further, Kumar and Rani (2022) highlighted the growing importance of digital skills in the era of Industry 4.0, stating that digital literacy enhances job opportunities and economic independence. Government reports from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE, 2024) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) reveal that millions of youths have been trained under schemes such as PMKVY and DDU-GKY, though issues like low placement conversion and limited rural outreach remain significant concerns.

Overall, the literature clearly indicates that skill development and capacity-building initiatives play a vital role in enhancing youth self-reliance. However, gaps in quality, accessibility, and industry linkage still exist, particularly in semi-urban regions like Kodagu District, justifying the need for the present study.

## RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature clearly establishes that skill development and capacity-building initiatives play a significant role in improving employability, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic empowerment of youth. Studies by Aggarwal (2016), Mehrotra (2018), and Singh and Sharma (2020) have highlighted the positive impact of vocational training and government skill development programmes in India. However, most of these studies are broad in scope and focus mainly on national-level or urban-centric analysis. Limited attention has been given to micro-level or district-specific studies, particularly in semi-urban and hilly regions like Kodagu District.

Furthermore, previous research primarily emphasizes employability outcomes, while less focus has been given to the holistic concept of self-reliance, which includes financial

independence, entrepreneurial capability, decision-making power, and social empowerment. Another gap identified is the lack of integrated analysis combining both skill development and capacity-building initiatives together, as most studies treat them separately. In addition, empirical evidence based on primary data from youth in regions like Madikeri is limited. Therefore, there is a need for a focused study to assess how these initiatives collectively influence self-reliance among youth at the local level, which this research aims to address.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Unemployment and lack of adequate skills among youth have become major socio-economic challenges in developing regions like India. Despite the implementation of various skill development and capacity-building initiatives by the government and other agencies, a large section of youth still struggles to achieve stable employment, adequate income, and self-reliance. In Kodagu District, particularly Madikeri city, many educated youths face difficulties in accessing quality training, industry-relevant skills, and appropriate job opportunities. There is also a concern regarding the mismatch between training provided and market requirements, which reduces the effectiveness of existing programmes. Although several initiatives such as Skill India Mission and PMKVY have been introduced, their actual impact at the grassroots level remains uncertain. Therefore, it becomes important to examine whether these skill development and capacity-building initiatives are truly effective in promoting self-reliance among youth. This study attempts to analyse the relationship between participation in such programmes and the level of self-reliance among youth in Madikeri.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of skill development and capacity-building initiatives in enhancing employability and self-reliance among youth in Madikeri city of Kodagu District.
2. To analyze the challenges faced by youth in accessing skill development programmes and to provide suitable suggestions for improving their effectiveness.

## Hypothesis

- ❖ There is a significant positive relationship between participation in skill development programmes and the level of self-reliance among youth.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the role of skill development and capacity-building initiatives in promoting self-reliance among youth. The research was conducted in Madikeri city of Kodagu District, Karnataka, which was selected as the study area due to the growing presence of educated unemployed youth and increasing participation in government and non-government skill development programmes. The study is based on a primary data source, collected from a sample of 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected through a simple random sampling technique to ensure equal representation of youth from different socio-economic backgrounds. The questionnaire included questions related to socio-economic profile, participation in skill development programmes, level of self-reliance, challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement. In addition, secondary data were collected from books, journals, government reports, and official websites such as the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and NSDC. The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and t-test techniques to test hypotheses and draw meaningful conclusions. The study focuses on understanding how skill development

initiatives influence employability, income generation, and entrepreneurial capacity among youth in the selected region.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 100 youth respondents in Madikeri city of Kodagu District. The collected data were systematically processed and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and correlation. The primary focus of the analysis is to examine the relationship between participation in skill development and capacity-building initiatives and the level of self-reliance among youth. The interpretation of results helps in understanding key patterns, testing the hypothesis, and deriving meaningful findings related to employability, income generation, and empowerment of youth.

**Table 1: Socio-Economic Background of Respondents (n = 100)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age (Years)</b>	18–22	28	28
	23–27	34	34
	28–32	22	22
	33–35	16	16
<b>Gender</b>	Male	56	56
	Female	44	44
<b>Education</b>	SSLC / 10th	18	18
	PUC / 12th	26	26
	Diploma	20	20
	Degree	28	28
	Postgraduate	8	8
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	40	40
	Employed (Private)	25	25
	Self-Employed	15	15
	Unemployed	20	20
<b>Monthly Income (₹)</b>	Below 10,000	32	32
	10,001 – 20,000	38	38
	20,001 – 30,000	18	18
	Above 30,000	12	12
<b>Nature of Work</b>	Skilled	30	30
	Semi-Skilled	28	28
	Unskilled	22	22
	Professional/Technical	20	20

The consolidated socio-economic profile indicates that the majority of respondents are youth aged 23–27 years (34%), with a slightly higher proportion of males (56%). Educational distribution shows that most respondents have completed PUC or degree-level education (54%), reflecting moderate educational attainment. In terms of occupation, a significant share are students (40%) and unemployed youth (20%), highlighting the importance of skill development programmes for employability. Income levels suggest that most respondents belong to the low to middle-income group, while the nature of work is distributed across skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled categories.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant positive relationship between participation in skill development programmes and the level of self-reliance among youth.

### Variables

- Independent Variable (X): Participation in Skill Development Programmes
- Dependent Variable (Y): Self-Reliance Score

Both variables are measured using a Likert scale / index score (0–100).

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Category	N	Mean Participation Score (X)	Mean Self-Reliance Score (Y)	Std. Deviation (Y)
High Participation	40	82.5	78.6	7.8
Moderate Participation	35	55.4	66.2	8.9
Low Participation	25	28.7	52.1	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>11.4</b>

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis**

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Result
Participation in Skill Development vs Self-Reliance	<b>0.742</b>	0.000	Significant

The Pearson correlation coefficient between participation in skill development programmes and self-reliance among youth is  $r = 0.742$ , which indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

This finding clearly suggests that:

- Youth who have higher participation in skill development programmes tend to show higher levels of self-reliance.
- Skill development improves employability, confidence, income-generating ability, and decision-making capacity.
- Capacity-building initiatives play a key role in transforming youth into economically independent individuals.

**Table 4: Challenges Faced in Skill Development Programmes (n = 100)**

No.	Challenges Identified	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Lack of practical training exposure	4.38	0.74	1
2	Skill mismatch with job market	4.25	0.80	2
3	Inadequate placement opportunities	4.18	0.83	3
4	Poor training infrastructure	4.05	0.88	4
5	Limited rural training centres	3.98	0.91	5
6	Lack of awareness about schemes	3.90	0.92	6
7	Insufficient industry linkage	3.86	0.89	7
8	Financial constraints of youth	3.78	0.94	8
9	Lack of soft skills training	3.72	0.90	9
10	Low motivation among youth	3.65	0.95	10

The analysis shows that the most critical challenge is the lack of practical training exposure (Mean = 4.38), indicating that training programmes are often theoretical rather than industry-oriented. The second major issue is skill mismatch with job requirements (Mean = 4.25), which reduces employability outcomes. Other significant challenges include inadequate placement support, weak infrastructure, and limited rural accessibility.

The relatively lower-ranked issues such as financial constraints and low motivation still indicate moderate concern. Overall, all mean values above 3.5 suggest that respondents perceive these challenges as significant barriers affecting the effectiveness of skill development programmes and ultimately limiting youth self-reliance.

**Table 5: Suggestions for Improving Skill Development and Self-Reliance (n = 100)**

No.	Suggestions	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Strengthen practical/industry-based training	4.45	0.70	1
2	Improve placement and job linkage support	4.32	0.76	2
3	Update training based on market demand	4.28	0.78	3
4	Increase rural training centres	4.20	0.82	4
5	Enhance entrepreneurship training	4.12	0.84	5
6	Improve awareness about government schemes	4.05	0.87	6
7	Strengthen industry-institution collaboration	4.00	0.88	7
8	Provide financial support/loans for youth	3.95	0.90	8
9	Focus on soft skills development	3.88	0.91	9
10	Promote digital skill training	3.85	0.93	10

The findings indicate that respondents strongly support the need for industry-based practical training (Mean = 4.45) as the most important improvement area. This is followed by better placement support (4.32) and updating training according to market demand (4.28), highlighting the need for demand-driven skill development.

Other important suggestions include expanding rural training centres, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving awareness of government schemes. Although digital skills and financial support are slightly lower in rank, they still remain important for improving youth self-reliance.

Overall, the high mean scores (above 3.8 for all items) indicate that respondents expect significant reforms in skill development programmes to enhance employability, income generation, and self-reliance among youth.

### Major Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between participation in skill development programmes and self-reliance among youth, indicating that trained youth are more economically independent and confident compared to non-participants.
2. It is found that most respondents belong to low and middle-income groups and are either students or unemployed youth, highlighting the urgent need for effective skill development interventions to improve employability and income generation.
3. The analysis shows that the major challenges faced by youth include lack of practical training, skill mismatch with industry requirements, and inadequate placement opportunities, which reduce the effectiveness of existing programmes.
4. The study also finds that respondents strongly prefer industry-based practical training, improved placement support, and better rural training facilities, indicating that demand-driven skill development is essential for improving self-reliance outcomes.

### Policy Implications

1. **Strengthening Industry–Institution Linkage:** Policymakers should promote stronger collaboration between training institutions and industries to ensure that skill development programmes are aligned with current market demands and employment opportunities.
2. **Enhancing Practical and Digital Training:** Government and training agencies should focus on improving hands-on training, internships, and digital skill development to make youth more job-ready in the competitive labour market.
3. **Expanding Rural Skill Development Infrastructure:** Special attention should be given to rural and semi-urban areas like Kodagu District by establishing more training centres and improving accessibility for marginalized youth.
4. **Improving Placement and Entrepreneurship Support:** Policy frameworks should include strong placement assistance, career guidance, and entrepreneurship support systems to enhance self-employment and long-term self-reliance among youth.

### CONCLUSION

The present study examined the role of skill development and capacity-building initiatives in promoting self-reliance among youth in Madikeri city of Kodagu District. The findings clearly establish that skill development programmes play a vital role in enhancing the employability, income-generating capacity, and entrepreneurial orientation of youth. The analysis reveals that youth who participate in such programmes demonstrate higher levels of self-reliance compared to those who do not, indicating the effectiveness of these initiatives in empowering young people economically and socially.

However, the study also highlights certain challenges such as lack of practical training, skill mismatch with industry requirements, inadequate placement support, and limited awareness of available schemes, which reduce the overall effectiveness of these programmes. Despite these constraints, respondents expressed strong support for improving industry-based

training, strengthening infrastructure, and expanding opportunities in both rural and urban areas.

The hypothesis testing results confirmed a significant positive relationship between participation in skill development programmes and self-reliance among youth, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, it can be concluded that skill development and capacity-building initiatives are essential tools for fostering self-reliance and sustainable youth empowerment. Strengthening these programmes through better policy implementation, industry collaboration, and practical orientation will further enhance their impact on inclusive economic development.

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