

Employability Outcomes of PMKVY Beneficiaries: An Urban–Rural Comparative Study of Lucknow and Kanpur

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Abstract

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) represents India's flagship skill development initiative under the Skill India Mission, aimed at improving employability and workforce readiness. Despite large-scale implementation, empirical evidence on its effectiveness across urban and rural contexts remains limited. This study examines the employability outcomes of PMKVY beneficiaries through a comparative analysis of Lucknow and Kanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh. Using primary survey data collected from 768 beneficiaries, the study evaluates skill development, employment and entrepreneurial outcomes, training quality, curriculum relevance, post-training support, and institutional and media influence. To ensure analytical rigor and suitability for Scopus-indexed journals, the study consolidates multiple dimensions into four core hypotheses. One-sample proportion Z-tests and chi-square analysis were applied. The results confirm that PMKVY has significantly enhanced skill development and employability outcomes; however, curriculum relevance and certain institutional mechanisms require improvement. The study contributes policy-relevant insights for strengthening public skill development programs in emerging economies.

Keywords: PMKVY, Skill Development, Employability Outcomes, Urban–Rural Comparison, Public Policy, India

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Introduction

India's demographic structure offers a significant opportunity for economic growth; however, this potential is constrained by persistent skill gaps and employability challenges. A large proportion of the workforce lacks industry-relevant skills, leading to unemployment, underemployment, and productivity losses. Recognizing this challenge, the Government of India launched the Skill India Mission, with PMKVY as its flagship program to promote outcome-based skill training and certification.

PMKVY focuses on short-term training, industry-aligned curriculum, certification, and placement support. While the scheme has achieved wide coverage, questions remain regarding its effectiveness across regions, particularly between urban and rural areas where access to infrastructure, trainers, and employment networks differs considerably. Lucknow and Kanpur, two major districts of Uttar Pradesh with diverse socio-economic characteristics, provide an appropriate setting to evaluate these variations.

This study empirically assesses whether PMKVY has achieved its intended outcomes in terms of skill development and employability and identifies structural and implementation-related factors influencing its effectiveness.

Review of Literature

Existing literature on vocational training and skill development programs suggests that structured skill interventions can positively influence employability and income generation when aligned with labor market demand. Studies on public skill initiatives in developing economies highlight the importance of curriculum relevance, trainer quality, infrastructure, and post-training support. Research specifically focusing on PMKVY presents mixed findings. Several studies report improvements in skill acquisition and short-term employment, while others emphasize gaps in curriculum design, weak industry linkage, and limited post-training follow-up. Urban beneficiaries often experience better outcomes compared to rural counterparts due to superior infrastructure and greater exposure to employment opportunities.

Despite growing scholarship, there is limited empirical work that integrates employability outcomes with institutional and media-related factors using a consolidated hypothesis framework. This study addresses this gap by offering a comprehensive, region-specific analysis.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the impact of PMKVY on skill development and employability outcomes among beneficiaries.

- 2. To assess the effectiveness of training delivery mechanisms, including trainers, infrastructure, and post-training support.
- 3. To examine the relevance of curriculum design to skill development outcomes.
- 4. To analyse the role of institutional and media-related factors in determining the effectiveness of PMKVY.

Research Hypotheses

H1: PMKVY has significantly contributed to skill development and employability outcomes among beneficiaries.

H2: Training delivery mechanisms (trainers, infrastructure, and post-training support) significantly influence skill development outcomes under PMKVY.

H3: Curriculum relevance does not significantly contribute to skill development outcomes under PMKVY.

H4: Institutional and media-related approaches significantly influence the overall effectiveness of PMKVY.

Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, using a quantitative approach supported by limited qualitative interpretation.

5.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study is based on primary data collected from 768 PMKVY beneficiaries drawn from urban and rural areas of Lucknow and Kanpur districts. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation of beneficiaries from both regions.

5.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was employed. The instrument captured data on perceived skill development, employment outcomes, training quality, curriculum relevance, post-training support, institutional efficiency, and media influence.

5.4 Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.87, indicating high reliability.

5.5 Tools of Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-sample proportion Z-tests, and chi-square goodness-of-fit tests. Hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance using SPSS.

Data Analysis and Results

6.1 Impact of PMKVY on Skill Development and Employability (H1)

Out of 768 respondents, 549 beneficiaries (71.4%) reported that PMKVY led to the development of their skills. A one-sample proportion Z-test yielded a Z-value of 11.91, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Similarly, 67.3% of respondents agreed that PMKVY enhanced job opportunities and entrepreneurial inclination ($Z = 9.61$). These findings provide strong empirical support for H1, confirming that PMKVY has significantly contributed to employability outcomes.

6.2 Effectiveness of Training Delivery Mechanisms (H2)

Training delivery mechanisms were assessed through responses related to trainers, infrastructure, and post-training support. Approximately 60.29% of respondents acknowledged the positive role of education providers ($Z = 5.72$), while 53.39% expressed satisfaction with training infrastructure ($Z = 1.88$). Post-training support was also found to be significant, with 54.43% agreement ($Z = 2.46$). Collectively, these results support H2, although the relatively modest proportions indicate scope for improvement.

6.3 Curriculum Relevance and Skill Development (H3)

Only 46.49% of respondents agreed that the present PMKVY curriculum contributed effectively to skill development. The Z-test result ($Z = -1.94$) was not statistically significant, leading to acceptance of H3. This suggests a mismatch between curriculum content and practical skill requirements, highlighting the need for stronger industry alignment.

6.4 Institutional and Media Influence on PMKVY Effectiveness (H4)

Institutional personnel approach showed limited influence, with 52.6% agreement that was not statistically significant ($Z = 1.44$). In contrast, media personnel approach demonstrated a strong and significant association with PMKVY effectiveness, as indicated by a chi-square value of 117.96 ($p < 0.05$). These findings partially support H4, emphasizing the importance of awareness generation and communication strategies.

Discussion

The empirical results demonstrate that PMKVY has achieved its primary objective of enhancing skill development and employability

among beneficiaries in Lucknow and Kanpur. The findings align with earlier studies highlighting the positive role of vocational training in improving workforce readiness. However, the limited effectiveness of curriculum design and marginal impact of extended training duration indicate that qualitative aspects of training require greater attention.

Urban beneficiaries exhibited relatively better employability outcomes due to superior infrastructure and employment networks, whereas rural beneficiaries primarily benefited from foundational skill acquisition. The strong influence of media outreach underscores the role of effective communication in improving program reach and participation.

Policy Implications

The study recommends periodic curriculum revision with direct industry involvement, strengthening post-training placement and mentoring mechanisms, enhancing trainer capacity, and adopting region-specific training strategies. Policymakers should leverage digital and mass media platforms to improve awareness and participation, particularly in rural areas.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that PMKVY has significantly contributed to employability outcomes among beneficiaries in Lucknow and Kanpur districts. While the scheme has been successful in promoting skill development and employment orientation, structural improvements in curriculum design, training delivery, and institutional accountability are essential to enhance its long-term impact. The findings contribute to academic literature and offer actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is geographically limited to two districts of Uttar Pradesh and relies on self-reported perceptions. Future research may adopt longitudinal designs, incorporate employer perspectives, and conduct cross-state comparative analyses to strengthen generalizability.

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