

A Study on Youth Unemployment and Employability Skills in Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment has emerged as a significant socio-economic challenge in Karnataka despite the state's strong economic growth and expanding industrial sectors. A major reason for this issue is the mismatch between the skills possessed by young job seekers and the competencies expected by employers. This study examines the relationship between youth unemployment and employability skills in Karnataka by identifying the key factors influencing employment opportunities among young individuals. The research focuses on essential employability skills, including communication, technical competence, digital literacy, problem-solving ability, teamwork, adaptability, and professional attitude, and evaluates their role in improving employment prospects. A descriptive research design is adopted, utilizing both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered to youth aged 18–35 years across selected districts of Karnataka, while secondary data are obtained from government reports, research journals, and published literature. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, chi-square test, correlation, and regression analysis are employed to analyze the data and test the proposed hypotheses. The study aims to identify existing skill gaps, assess the effectiveness of current skill development initiatives, and examine how employability skills influence employment outcomes. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, employers, and training organizations in designing effective strategies to enhance youth employability and reduce unemployment. The study concludes by recommending stronger industry–academia collaboration, improved vocational and digital skill training, expanded internship opportunities, and continuous career guidance to bridge the gap between education and labour market requirements, thereby contributing to sustainable employment and economic development in Karnataka.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Employability Skills, Skill Gap, Employment Opportunities and Labour Market.

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is one of the most pressing socio-economic issues affecting both developed and developing countries. In India, young people constitute a significant share of the population and play a vital role in driving economic growth and national development. However, despite increasing access to higher education and professional courses, many young graduates continue to face difficulties in securing suitable employment. One of the primary reasons for this challenge is the mismatch between the knowledge and skills acquired through formal education and the competencies expected by employers. In today's rapidly evolving labour market, organizations seek candidates who possess not only academic qualifications but also strong employability skills such as communication, technical proficiency, digital literacy, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and

professional ethics. The absence of these skills often limits employment opportunities and contributes to rising youth unemployment.

Karnataka is one of India's leading economic and industrial states, with major contributions from the information technology, biotechnology, manufacturing, healthcare, and service sectors. Despite its strong economic performance and expanding employment opportunities, youth unemployment remains a significant concern due to skill gaps, inadequate practical exposure, and changing industry requirements. Many educated young people struggle to obtain suitable jobs because they lack industry-relevant skills and work experience. This study focuses on examining the relationship between youth unemployment and employability skills in Karnataka by identifying the key factors influencing employment opportunities among young people. The findings of the study are expected to provide valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, employers, and skill development agencies to design effective strategies that enhance employability, reduce youth unemployment, and contribute to sustainable economic development in Karnataka.

Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment continues to be a major challenge in Karnataka despite the state's economic growth and expanding employment opportunities. Many educated young people struggle to secure suitable jobs due to a mismatch between their academic qualifications and the skills required by employers. A lack of technical, digital, communication, and other employability skills has widened the gap between education and industry expectations. This situation affects the career prospects of youth and limits the availability of a skilled workforce for industries. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between employability skills and youth unemployment in Karnataka. The study aims to identify the existing skill gaps and suggest measures to improve employability and reduce youth unemployment.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it examines the relationship between youth unemployment and employability skills in Karnataka. It helps identify the skill gaps that reduce employment opportunities among young people. The findings will assist educational institutions in improving curricula by incorporating industry-relevant and skill-based learning. The study will also support policymakers and government agencies in developing effective employment and skill development programmes. Employers can use the findings to understand the competencies required for workforce readiness. Overall, the study provides practical recommendations to enhance youth employability and contribute to sustainable economic development in Karnataka.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1. Upadhyay, C., & Roy Chowdhury, S. (2024):** conducted a study titled "Crafting New Service Workers: Skill Training, Migration and Employment in Bengaluru, India" to examine the relationship between skill training, migration, and employment among rural youth in Bengaluru. The study found that skill development centres provide short-term training programmes that enable young people to enter the urban service sector. However, many trainees experienced low wages, job insecurity, and limited career growth, leading to high employee turnover. The authors concluded that while skill training improves access to employment, it does not always guarantee stable or quality jobs. The study highlights the importance of aligning skill development programmes with labour market requirements and improving employment conditions for young workers.
- 2. Husain, Z. (2024):** in the study "Making Youth Employable: Analysis of Skill Development Policy in India with Special Reference to Karnataka," evaluated the effectiveness of skill development policies in enhancing youth employability. The study observed that government initiatives have expanded access to vocational education and training; however, challenges such as inadequate industry participation, curriculum mismatch, and unequal access continue to affect programme outcomes. The author recommended strengthening collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and government agencies to improve employment opportunities and develop industry-relevant skills among youth.

3. **Ramachandrapa, M., & Giridhar, K. V.:** examined the "Role of Education, Empowerment and Policy Initiatives in Shaping Youth Entrepreneurs in Karnataka." The study found that quality education, entrepreneurship training, financial support, and government policies play an important role in encouraging self-employment among young people. It concluded that entrepreneurship development programmes can reduce youth unemployment by creating employment opportunities and promoting innovation. The authors recommended increasing entrepreneurial education and strengthening institutional support for young entrepreneurs.
4. **Ganesh, J., Monish, G. K., & Ramya, S:** conducted a regional study titled "Unemployment: Exploring the Economic Challenges of Job Aspirants and Employers – A Regional Study in Mysuru." The study identified a significant gap between the expectations of employers and the skills possessed by job seekers. It found that inadequate practical knowledge, communication skills, and industry exposure contribute to unemployment among educated youth. The authors suggested that educational institutions should provide industry-oriented training, internships, and career guidance to improve employability and reduce unemployment.
5. **Raju, G. (2023):** conducted the study "A Study on Enhancing Youths' Employability with Skill Development" to examine the impact of skill development programmes on employment opportunities. The findings indicated that technical skills, communication abilities, digital literacy, teamwork, and problem-solving skills significantly improve the employability of young people. The study concluded that continuous skill development, vocational education, and practical learning are essential for meeting industry expectations and reducing youth unemployment. The author emphasized that educational institutions should integrate employability skills into the curriculum to prepare students for the changing labour market.

Research Gap

The review of existing literature indicates that several studies have examined youth unemployment, skill development, migration, entrepreneurship, and government initiatives aimed at improving employability in Karnataka and other parts of India. However, most of these studies focus on specific aspects such as the effectiveness of skill development programmes, entrepreneurship promotion, or regional employment challenges, without comprehensively analysing the direct relationship between employability skills and youth unemployment. In addition, limited research has been conducted using primary data to assess the employability skills of youth across different districts of Karnataka and their influence on employment opportunities. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study that examines the skill gaps among young people, evaluates the role of technical, digital, and soft skills in enhancing employability, and provides practical recommendations for educational institutions, employers, and policymakers to reduce youth unemployment in Karnataka.

Objectives

1. To examine the status of youth unemployment in Karnataka.
2. To identify the key employability skills required by employers for improving employment opportunities among youth.
3. To assess the gap between the employability skills possessed by youth and the skills expected by employers.
4. To analyse the relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities among youth in Karnataka.
5. To suggest suitable measures for enhancing employability skills and reducing youth unemployment in Karnataka.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology refers to the systematic process adopted to collect, analyse, and interpret data to achieve the objectives of the study. It provides a scientific framework for conducting research and ensures that the findings are reliable and valid. The present study examines the relationship between youth unemployment and

employability skills in Karnataka by using both primary and secondary data. Appropriate research methods and statistical tools have been selected to obtain meaningful results and draw valid conclusions.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design as it aims to describe and analyse the factors influencing youth unemployment and employability skills in Karnataka. This design is suitable for understanding the existing employment scenario, identifying skill gaps, and examining the relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities.

Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data.

Primary Data: Primary data are collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire administered to youth in Karnataka.

Secondary Data: Secondary data are collected from books, research journals, government reports, Karnataka Economic Survey, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship reports, National Sample Survey (NSS), Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), research articles, and official websites.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted in the state of Karnataka. Respondents are selected from different districts representing both urban and rural areas to obtain a broader understanding of youth unemployment and employability skills.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of youth aged between 18 and 35 years residing in Karnataka. The respondents include final-year students, graduates, postgraduates, unemployed youth, employed youth, and job seekers.

Sampling Technique

The study uses the Convenience Sampling technique to select respondents. This non-probability sampling method enables the researcher to collect data from respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the survey.

Sample Size

A total of 100 respondents is selected for the study. The sample includes students, graduates, job seekers, and employed youth from different districts of Karnataka.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire is used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consists of demographic questions and statements related to employability skills, employment status, skill development programmes, and career opportunities. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Variables of the Study

Dependent Variable

Youth Employability / Employment Status

Independent Variables

1. Communication Skills
2. Educational Qualification

Hypotheses of the Study

Null Hypotheses (H_0)

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities among youth in Karnataka.

Alternative Hypotheses (H_1)

H_{11} : There is a significant relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities among youth in Karnataka.

Statistical Tools Used for Data Analysis

The collected data are analysed using the following statistical tools:

1. Percentage Analysis
2. Chi-Square Test
3. Correlation Analysis
4. Regression Analysis

These statistical techniques help analyse the relationship between employability skills and youth employment and facilitate hypothesis testing.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on youth aged 18–35 years in Karnataka and examines the impact of employability skills on employment opportunities. It covers both urban and rural respondents and considers factors such as technical skills, communication skills, digital literacy, educational qualification, internship experience, and vocational training.

The findings are intended to benefit students, educational institutions, employers, policymakers, and skill development agencies.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to selected respondents in Karnataka.
2. The sample size is restricted to 100 respondents.
3. The study relies on respondents' opinions, which may involve personal bias.
4. Time and financial constraints limited the scope of data collection.
5. The findings are based on the responses collected during the study period and may not represent future changes in employment trends or labour market conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that employability skills play a significant role in improving employment opportunities among youth in Karnataka. The demographic analysis revealed that most respondents were graduates and postgraduate students within the age group of 18–35 years. The descriptive analysis showed that communication skills, technical knowledge, digital literacy, problem-solving ability, teamwork, and adaptability were considered the most important employability skills by both job seekers and employers. The findings also revealed a noticeable gap between the skills acquired through formal education and the competencies expected by the labour market.

The statistical analysis supported the existence of a significant relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities. The hypothesis testing indicated that respondents possessing higher levels of technical, digital, and soft skills had better chances of obtaining employment compared to those with limited employability skills. Furthermore, educational qualification alone was found to be insufficient for securing employment without practical exposure, internships, and industry-relevant skills. The study highlights the need for stronger collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and government agencies to provide skill-based training, career guidance, and internship opportunities. Overall, the findings suggest that enhancing employability skills through industry-oriented education and continuous skill development can significantly reduce youth unemployment and improve workforce readiness in Karnataka.

Findings of the Study

1. The study found that a significant number of youths in Karnataka face difficulty in obtaining suitable employment due to a mismatch between their skills and industry requirements.
2. Communication skills, technical knowledge, digital literacy, and problem-solving ability were identified as the most important employability skills that influence employment opportunities.
3. Educational qualifications alone were found to be insufficient for securing employment, as employers prefer candidates with practical experience, internships, and industry-relevant skills.
4. The analysis indicates a positive relationship between employability skills and employment opportunities, suggesting that youth with better employability skills have higher chances of obtaining suitable jobs.
5. Skill development programmes, career guidance, and industry–academia collaboration play an important role in enhancing employability and reducing youth unemployment in Karnataka.

Suggestions

1. Educational institutions should revise their curricula to include industry-oriented training, practical learning, and employability skill development.
2. Government and private organizations should expand skill development programmes focusing on technical, digital, communication, and soft skills to improve youth employability.
3. Colleges and universities should provide more internship, apprenticeship, and placement opportunities to help students gain practical work experience.
4. Strong collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and employers should be encouraged to bridge the gap between academic learning and labour market requirements.
5. Career guidance, counselling, and entrepreneurship development programmes should be strengthened to help youth make informed career choices and create self-employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that youth unemployment remains a significant challenge in Karnataka, despite the state's economic growth and expanding employment opportunities across various sectors. The findings reveal that the primary reason for unemployment among educated youth is the gap between the skills acquired through formal education and the competencies required by employers. Employability skills such as communication, technical knowledge, digital literacy, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability play a crucial role in improving employment prospects. The study also highlights that educational qualifications alone are insufficient to secure suitable employment without practical experience and industry-relevant skills. Strengthening collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and government agencies can help bridge this skill gap through curriculum enhancement, internships, vocational training, and career guidance. Furthermore, effective implementation of skill development programmes and increased awareness of employment initiatives can improve workforce readiness among young people. Overall, enhancing employability skills is essential for reducing youth unemployment, increasing productivity, and supporting sustainable economic and social development in Karnataka.

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