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MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: EMPOWERING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

India is one of the most populated countries, where not all people can access education. However, a portion of people lag behind due to proper education and training. This article aims to discuss marginalized groups who face limited access to opportunities, disadvantages, and unequal treatment in various aspects of life, such as education, employment and explore empowering and skill development programmes launched by the government of India. The study reviews scholarly and governmental articles to fulfil the aims of this article. It can be seen in a developing country, where some peoples access to all opportunities, and some peoples face difficulties accessing opportunities, particularly in education, so dropout rates are gradually increasing. Knowledge and skills are essential elements of the socio-economic development of a nation. At the same time, the Indian government launched various vocational training and empowerment schemes through the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) to support the marginalized people.

Keywords: Marginalization, Empowerment, Skill development, and Government scheme



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INTRODUCTION

The youth not only contributed to the development of their own society and family but also helped increase the nation's productivity. The most populous country, like India, has a large section of marginalised youth who are lagging due to a lack of proper education and training (Mahapatra, 2020). In the Indian context, the most common causes of these issues are socioeconomic disparities and structural problems. It can be seen that one part of the population facilitates access to all opportunities, while another falls victim to discrimination and gradually lags behind the mainstream. Individuals who belong to marginalized groups face significant barriers, particularly in the education sector; members of this group often cannot enjoy all the benefits in education, because they drop out of school before completing their studies. This is deeply disheartening for a Nation (Chaurasia & Veeriah, 2023). The nation's future depends on the development of education and youth. It can be seen that a developing country places importance on education. Over the past few years, the Government of India has launched various schemes to support youth, particularly those who have fallen outside the mainstream and are unable to access vocational training. As India progresses towards development, the needed skill becomes relevant to economic development. Knowledge and skills are the socio-economic impetus for any nation and society (Chaurasia & Veeriah, 2023). After completing their studies, graduates face challenges when seeking employment.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment categorised the people as socially, educationally and economically marginalised sections, including SCs, OBCs, EBCs, Safai Karamcharies, Sr. Citizens, victims of alcoholism substances

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abuse, transgender persons, De-notified Tribes (DNTs), Waste Pickers and Manual Scavengers. The MoSJ&E provides an essential training programme and tries to enhance their competencies to economically uplift the marginalised groups.

Bashir, A., Bashir, U., Lone, A., and Tariq, A. (2021) conducted a study on understanding the role of skill development and its impact on unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir. The researchers adopted a descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary data, reports, and policy documents to examine the relationship between skill development initiatives and unemployment among youth in the region. The study highlighted the socio-economic background of Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the high rate of youth unemployment and the structural challenges such as lack of industrial development, inadequate infrastructure, and limited private sector participation. It analysed various national and state-level skill development programs, including initiatives like SEE J&K, Himayat, and Udaan, aimed at enhancing employability through vocational training, technical education, and placement-linked programs. The findings revealed that lack of relevant skills, mismatch between education and job requirements, and insufficient access to training opportunities are major contributors to unemployment. The researchers concluded that effective implementation of skill development programs, along with greater industry participation and policy support, is essential for reducing unemployment and fostering sustainable socio-economic development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Chaurasia, D. and Veeriah, P. (2023) conducted a study on “Skill Development Opportunities and its Influence on Employability of Students.” The researchers adopted a descriptive and analytical research design to explore the relationship between skill development programmes and students’ employability. A sample of students enrolled in skill development programmes and administrators/teachers from skilling centres was selected using stratified random sampling, and data were collected through structured questionnaires from both students and teachers. The findings of the study revealed that a majority of students perceived vocational training as the most effective way to acquire employable skills, with subject-related vocational skills being considered essential for securing jobs. From the perspective of teachers and administrators, most respondents reported that students showed seriousness towards vocational courses and were motivated by factors such as financial benefits, self-employment opportunities, and wage employment. The study also highlighted that government initiatives and entrepreneurship-related schemes play a significant role in promoting skill development. The study concluded that skill development opportunities have a significant positive influence on students’ employability by equipping them with practical and job-oriented competencies. It emphasized the need for aligning educational curricula with industry demands, enhancing the quality of training, and increasing awareness about skill development programmes to improve employment outcomes and foster economic growth.

Sharma, R. and Ali, S. (2022) conducted a study on the concept and conditions of marginalized communities in India. The researchers adopted a descriptive and analytical research design based on secondary sources such as books, government reports, and scholarly articles to examine the socio-economic and educational status of marginalized groups. The study focused on communities such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and minorities, highlighting their historical disadvantages and social exclusion. The findings of the study revealed that marginalized communities continue to face multiple forms of deprivation, including limited access to education, poverty, unemployment, and social discrimination. The study emphasized that lack of educational opportunities and inadequate institutional support significantly hinder their socio-economic mobility. It was also found that factors such as caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and regional disparities further intensify marginalization. The study highlighted the role of government policies and welfare schemes aimed at improving the conditions of these communities, such as reservation policies, scholarships, and skill development programmes. However, the researchers pointed out that despite these efforts, gaps remain in implementation, awareness, and accessibility, which limit their effectiveness. The study concluded that education plays a crucial role in empowering marginalized communities and improving their overall quality of life. It emphasized the need for inclusive policies, effective implementation of welfare programmes, and equal access to educational opportunities to ensure social justice and reduce inequality in society.

OBJECTIVES

- i. To explore the concept of a marginalised community
- ii. To find out the governmental schemes for creating employment opportunities for the marginalised community
- iii. To find out the role of empowerment and skill development programme

MARGINALIZATION

A marginalised community is a group of people who face limited access to opportunities, disadvantages, and unequal treatment in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, healthcare, and housing. They experience social, economic, and political exclusion based on characteristics such as caste, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and



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religion. Marginalised groups can lead to access inequalities to rights and services. In a modern society developing with technological advancement and globalisation, every sphere of life has been transformed, such as communication, education, healthcare, and socio-economic opportunity. These present both opportunities and challenges for the people. It's basically provided technological participation in the field. But it has not benefited all communities equally. The process of globalisation generated unprecedented levels of wealth, technological advancement, and cross-cultural interaction. Simultaneously creating opportunities and exacerbating existing inequalities, particularly for marginalised communities. At the same time, an interconnected world offers opportunities to access broader markets, increase employment, and discover new ideas and technologies. In this competitive context, rapidly changing demands in the global labour market and the influence of global value chains compel everyone to consider how to leverage global employment opportunities effectively. But, at the same time, marginalised communities face systemic disadvantages and historical marginalisation, and are particularly vulnerable to the disruptive forces of globalisation. In the global marketplace, they lack sufficient knowledge or education, have limited access to quality education, lack technological knowledge, and face economic barriers. This chapter focused on the contribution of the skill development programme to meeting the needs of marginalised groups. In completing a certain level of education, the youth from lower caste communities struggle to find jobs in the government or private sector. They face many problems, such as limited language fluency, low confidence, limited knowledge of professional etiquette, and limited job awareness in the job market (Farkhari, 2020). In India, three types of marginalised communities face social, economic, and educational disadvantages.

Social marginalisation: Socially marginalised people do not have the same social opportunities as others enjoy the same. Peoples are live a segregated life and sociely excluded, it has lifelong effects that affect generations of the same family. A person can't participate in social organisations or clubs with other people.

Economic marginalisation: People may struggle to earn enough money to live a decent life. They do not have the same chance to contribute to and benefited to himself or society.

Political marginalisation: The group of people does not have the chance to participate democratically in decision-making. The politicians or authorities are continuing to ignore their needs and focus all their attention on the majority group.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowering marginalised communities is a strategic effort to promote marginalised people in the mainstream. In Indian society, the marginalised peoples, including SC, ST, OBC, peasants, minority, women, LGBTQ+ people, the disabled, and senior citizens, come under the marginalised community. This community is going through so many periods to attain the primary requirement. It is very important to provide all people with good employment opportunities to develop a strong society or nation in the global market. They desire literacy skills, educational qualifications, and improved living conditions. In the 21st century, the Government initiated numerous vulnerable programmes to empower marginalised people. In a developing country like India, the participation of every person is very important. At the same time, it should be remembered that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. But not everyone has the same opportunities, potential, or performance. So, they go to the backward class and suffer from economic, social, educational and political backwardness. In these circumstances, the Government and many organisations provide support to help people return to mainstream society.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development trains and prepares individuals for employment so that they can willingly participate in various social activities and become self-reliant. In the modern scenario, with the extensive development of science and technology, in the field of education, there is a need for various vocational training. For this reason, vocational education and training are being included in the early level of education. But at the same time, everyone cannot take these advantages specifically, marginalised people (SC, ST, Women, Minority, etc.) drop out before completing their education and fall behind the mainstream. To bring these backwards people, who have fallen behind the mainstream, various programmes have been launched to bring them mainstream and make them self-reliant. The MoSJ&E categorised skilling programmes in four sub-categories to train the youth over the period of 2020-21 to 2023-24. Sub-categories are here

1. Up-skilling/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

The RPL will be *in situ* and provide low cost (as per Common Cost Norms). The trainees practice their vocation at their work location, like pottery, weaving, clay & bamboo, carpentry, for up to 32 to 80 hours per month.

2. Short-term courses (focus on self-employment):

Provide training Marginalized groups like SC, OBC, EBC, and DNT, also Sanitation Workers, Manual Scavengers, Waste Pickers members who are illiterate or semi-literate or unemployed. Training is provided up to 5 months, or



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normally 200 to 600 hours. Focused on self-employment opportunities like tailoring, food processing, beautician, furniture making and carpet weaving.

3. Entrepreneurial Development Programmes (EDP):

Training is provided under the PMKVY for SC and OBC youth. The duration of the training programme is 80 hours (10 days), and the programmes include Effective Communication Skills, Risk Taking Behaviour, Market Survey, Systematic Planning, Time Management, Working Capital and its Management.

4. Long-term courses (for global class skills):

SC, OBC, EBC, Sanitation Workers, Manual Scavengers, Waste Pickers and transgender individuals who have received education up to 10th class. Training provided by the concerned board/regulatory body of the centre, and the training duration will be six months to one year.

Here, different types of schemes are discussed-

EDUCATIONAL SCHEME -

- **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY)** – to improve employment opportunities, enhance socio-economic status, and encourage SCs to enrol in schools, the Government provides skill development, infrastructure development, and grants-in-aid under the PM-AJAY programme.
- **Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SRESHTA)** – under this scheme, provide seats for meritorious SC students in residential schools.
- **Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS)** – the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment provides scholarships to SC, OBC, and EBC students to pursue higher education in India and abroad.
- **Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP)** - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has recently launched the SANKALP programme, which aims to improve short-term skill development training. Its focus on 5 goals-
 - i. Improve the quality of short-term skill training
 - ii. Increase access to market-relevant training
 - iii. Improve inclusiveness for marginalized groups, such as women
 - iv. Strengthen institutional mechanisms for skill development
 - v. Enhance the capacity of skilling programs through public-private partnerships (PPPs)
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** - provides skill development training to youth across the country through Short-Term Training (STT) and Up-Skilling and Re-Skilling programme under the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)** - JSS is working to empower the vocational skills of non-literate, neo-literate, and persons with an elementary level of education, and dropouts up to 12th standard. Main target groups are women, SC, ST, OBC, and Minorities in both rural and urban areas.
- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)** - Under the Apprentices Act, 1961, the main focus is to promote apprenticeship training and provide financial support to increase apprenticeship enrolment. Provides basic training and on-the-job/practical training at the workplace.
- **Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS)** - Under the Industrial Training Institutes (ITI), CTS provides long-term training on a CTS basis. ITI also provides vocational skill training to the skilled workforce and supports youth self-employment.

Training details, according to MSDE, responded to RAJYA SABHA questions

Answered on 18.12.2024

Sl, no	Scheme	Women	OBC	SC	ST	PWD
1.	PMKVY (since 2015-16 up to 31.10.2024)	7096724	5233540	2079796	777462	51742
2.	JSS (since 2018-19 up to 10.11.2024)	2255304	980953	701544	369933	9125
3.	NAPS (since 2018-19 up to 31.10.2024)	695873	978113	406631	152609	8038
4.	CTS/ITI (since 2018-19 up to 2023-24)	1056752	3682771	1765275	640810	5067

SOCIAL SCHEME –

- **Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for the Scheduled Castes (CEGSSC)** – helps Scheduled Caste entrepreneurs promote financial inclusion and economic development, and create employment for Scheduled Caste students.



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- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSAKFDC)** – providing financial assistance through loan-based schemes and education loans for promoting the socio-economic development of safai karamcharis, rakers, and their dependency. It also provides skill development training to help them pursue higher education in India and abroad and enhance their employability.
- **National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC)** – is a non-profit company under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, providing financial support, facilitating and mobilising funds for the economic empowerment of SC families below the poverty line.
- **Scheme of Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs)** – for reducing poverty and improving the socio-economic status of SC communities, the centrally sponsored SCDC scheme aims to improve infrastructure and services in SC-dominated villages, provide more employment opportunities, and promote literacy and the enrolment of SC students in higher education.
- **Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)** – is an umbrella scheme under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment that covers comprehensive measures for transgender persons and persons who engage in begging. This scheme focuses on rehabilitation, provides medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development and economic linkages.

Role of empowerment and skill development programme

1. **Literacy and Education** – a person who belongs to the backward class does not have access to basic educational qualifications, and does not provide education for their children. Empowerment is a very important process for educating the marginalised people. For example, there are so many training centres and institutions, and some have important empowerment schemes. A person belongs to the agricultural field or is a household worker; he has acquired knowledge and training through this training centre or institution.
2. **Economic development** – Marginalised people suffer from economic backwardness. They struggle to fulfil their basic needs and do not have sufficient wealth. Through the empowerment process, economically backward students received their training (through SANKALP, PMKVY). The Government of India provides loans to promote the voluntary activity of marginalized people.
3. **Employment** – Marginalised people suffer from a critical fact that unemployment is due to their lack of training and low educational qualifications. A person will be able to get a job when he or she has sufficient qualifications, training, and awareness of the job market, such as a woman who received beautician or tailoring training through PMKVY under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to become self-sufficient and effectively contribute to the welfare of his family.
4. **Change living conditions** – a marginalised person's lifestyle is not the same as that of other persons in society when a person receives minimal qualifications and training to fulfil their needs.

CONCLUSION

The marginalized groups are equally important for the development of the country. Therefore, it is the government's responsibility to bring about their uplift. In the Indian context, in the last few years Indian Government has taken some necessary initiatives to help the marginalised people. The initiatives like PMKVY, SANKALP and SMILE, etc., are preparing individuals for employment, productivity and improving living conditions. Also, those scheme helps to overcome barriers such as low confidence and limited job awareness. The vocational training that helps marginalized groups by providing necessary education, financial assistance, and professional training, to become self-sufficient, fulfil their basic needs and contribute effectively to the economic development of the nation.

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