

Operational Efficiency of Employment Schemes in Kashmir Division

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Abstract

With so much of technological change and an improvement in almost every sphere of life, there are certain spheres which are getting worse, one among them is the challenge of providing employment. The issue of unemployment has engulfed the whole world. India remains no exception to this challenge with the state of Jammu and Kashmir as one of the worst-hit places in the country. Although much has been done in many ways to provide employment the unemployment rate is still on the higher side. In India, there is a huge population of educated, skilled as well as the unskilled youth but many failed to capitalize in terms of jobs. The central government has initiated many such schemes to provide employment to the huge young population. These schemes, either have been operated from the centre or from the states and have been able to generate the employment to some extent. Most of the schemes have been successful, however many have failed while few have become the lifeline for a large population. This paper tries to understand the operational efficacy of three prominent employment schemes (NAREGA, SKEWPY, and HIMMAYAT) in the Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir. The results have shown some positives as well as some deficiencies at the operational level and needs a strategy to increase the operational efficacy of these schemes.

Keywords: Employment Schemes, Operational Efficiency, Youth, J&K

Introduction

The level of development in any country has a direct relationship with the range of employment that is

generated there. Any country that progresses, leads to a huge employment opportunity. In India, although the level of production and services is growing at a large rate, as it is among the fastest growing economies in the world but the rate of unemployment is still on a rise and doesn't seem to be slowing down. Despite the fact that every five-year plan, focuses on unemployment eradication, but still the results are abysmally poor. The issue of youth unemployment and underemployment is prevailing around the world, as the young people either lack skills, some lack work experience or opportunities and some may lack the financial resources which help them to find employment (Anonymous, 2011; Matsumoto, Hengge, & Islam, 2012). The reasons being many, like the lack of entrepreneurial culture or lack of the required skills miscalculation among the targeted growth rate and its required personnel with the actual growth rate or a mismatch between the present existing skills and required skilled persons. Most importantly, many times the schemes lack an efficient implementation system, where the schemes miss the importance of knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSA). These variables are most important and need to be implemented for a better operational efficiency of the schemes. The Operations and their efficiency are as important as the existence of a scheme. Operational efficiency tells us the nature of skills and the extent of success of any activity or any performance, after its implementation. Operational efficiency may be defined as the profitable and efficient use of available resources with a proper combination of the factors and policies related and their implementation (Singh & Hardik, 2012). Better operational efficiency leads to better implementation and results of the schemes, hence leading to the overall development, which includes the youth of a nation.

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The youth are an important asset, therefore its development becomes far more essential because the development of the youth itself leads to the social as well as economic development. Many studies (Henkel, 1987; Iversen & Sabroe, 1987; Kieselbach & Svensson, 1988; Kieselbach & Wacker, 1985; Rani, 1993; Singh, 1990; Singh, Kumari, & Singh, 1992; Verkleij, 1989; War, 1983; Winefield and Tiggemann, 1984) have indicated the impact of unemployment on Physical, psychological capacity of an individual. The proper development of youth becomes more important for those nations where youth are the major part of a demographic dividend. The unemployment can result in devastation, therefore needs to be taken up seriously. In order to prevent such devastations, the government of India is alarmed and has been ready to take up this challenge of unemployment (Mitra & Verick, 2013).

The situation of India in terms of unemployment becomes more distressing in some states, which include Kashmir, that has been among the worst cases in terms of unemployment. This state is well known for providing employment to the people from outside the state which usually comprise of skilled as well as unskilled labors. The situation in Kashmir division is worse because the addition to the educated lot is adding to the unemployed lot with a very weak private sector in existence and almost no jobs from the government sector (because of saturation), hence the number of registered unemployed persons in the employment exchanges has reached to a very high level. The Report given by the NSSO round 68th gives a detail of Unemployment rate in northern India according to which Jammu and Kashmir has the highest unemployment rate with almost 4.9 percent of the youth unemployed compared to Punjab with 2.8 percent, H.P with 2.0 percent, Delhi 4.7 percent, Haryana 3.2 percent. Whereas the unemployment rate at all India basis is reported to be 2.7 percent. Further, the situation of unemployment among the women in the state has a worse result, having 20.2 percent of unemployment among the females which is far from the national aggregate for females being 3.7 percent (NSSO, 68th Round, 2011). This is one of the major factors behind the rising conflict and frustrations among the youth in Kashmir. The tendency of unemployed is to become more susceptible to psychological problems and usually get very less adjusted than the employed ones (Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984; Webster, 1984). Many studies also reveal it as the reason behind a decline in the value system

of the societies. Unemployment is a serious concern in the Jammu & Kashmir and youth look forward towards better opportunities in government, semi-government and the corporate sector. Kashmir today is a sea of unemployed youth, a place where infrastructure is crippled and there has not been enough effort to encourage the private sector and entrepreneurship. The literacy rate of Kashmir valley is 74 percent for the people between the ages of 18-35 years (Anonymous, 2011) one of the highest in South Asia. Though there has been a rise in literacy rate that rise has only been adding to the unemployment rate in the state. This grave situation needs to be tackled by creating more employment generation policies for the state. It also has been revealed that the educated, who are unemployed face poor adjustment patterns the studies from various researchers Brenner and Starrin (1988), O'Brein and Kabanoff (1979), Singh (1990), Kieselbach and Svensson (1988), Kieselbach and Wacker (1985).

As a result of the existing situations, the Government is undertaking various initiatives in order to boost the youth employment scenario in the country. Some of them are the 'Start-up India', 'Make in India' and 'Skill India' initiatives. The main aim behind most of the initiatives is to unleash the entrepreneurial potential of young entrepreneurs and convert job seekers into job creators. Many such schemes have been introduced so far, but the results don't seem to be that good.

Research Methodology and Analysis

A study related to the operational efficiency of schemes for employment has been undertaken in the Kashmir division from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Three schemes have been chosen from central, south and north districts of the Kashmir division. The schemes undertaken for the study comprise of the most popular and influential ones from amongst the schemes that have been implemented in the state so far.

- 1) **HIMMAYAT** which is also known as Skill Empowerment and Employment in J&K (SEE). The main objective of the scheme is to provide the opportunities for self-employment or salaried jobs to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Its aim is to impart skills to the youth, ranging from school dropouts to educated ones.
- 2) **MNAREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural**

Employment Guarantee Act). The main objective of the scheme is to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to the unskilled individuals from each rural household, who opt for it. The scheme makes sure that the employment is provided within 15 days and in case the beneficiary does not get any work within 40 days, the remuneration for that particular period is still paid. There is also a provision for the female workforce in the form of one-third of reservation for them. It has a provision for other backward classes as well.

3) SKEWPY (Sher-I-Kashmir Employment & Welfare Programme for Youth). The objectives of this Scheme is the motivation as well as training of the educated youth so that they opt for the entrepreneurship as their career option. The scheme also aims to make the availability of funds for the beneficiaries, mainly through loans, that helps them to move ahead through entrepreneurship.

For the research purpose, three major districts from Kashmir division have been taken up. The reason for taking up these districts is to know the nature and implementation of these schemes in different areas, which are from different corners of the Kashmir division. One is the district Pulwama (South Kashmir), the other is district Srinagar (central Kashmir) and district Ganderbal (North Kashmir). A total number of beneficiaries is 456. In the sample frame, 20 percent of trainees (pass out) under the respective schemes and 20 percent beneficiaries have been taken as sample based on stratified random sampling (SRS). The respondents

have been identified from the centers, where they undergo these trainings, Block offices or panchayat offices. The study will show the operational efficiency of the schemes, NAREGA, HIMMAYAT and SKEWPY in the Kashmir division. In order to collect the data, a questionnaire was designed wherein the major variables included were the basic facilities, which include the selection of the right personnel, facilities provided during the association with the scheme, loan obtaining procedure, coordination with the other related institutes, ease in terms of getting associated with the scheme, proper information and timely updated. It was also supported by the interview and schedule method in order to increase the reliability of the data.

Research Objective

- To study the operational efficacy and identify the gaps in the employment generation schemes.

Research Analysis

The below table gives us the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with respect to the operational efficiency of the schemes. The key variables highlighted are the right selection, facilities provided, loan obtaining facilities, Institutional coordination, easy formalities, proper information, updated information. The beneficiaries has reported in terms of Highly satisfied; 2: satisfied: 3; Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 4; Dissatisfied: 5; Highly dissatisfied NA: Not Applicable.

Table 1: Satisfaction of Beneficiaries towards the Operational Efficiency of Schemes (in percent)

	HIMAYAT							NREGA							SKEWPY						
	NA	1	2	3	4	5	Total	NA	1	2	3	4	5	Total	NA	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Right selection	0	18.8	75.2	5.4	0.7	0	100	0	0	64.7	15.4	16	3.8	100	0	10.7	70.5	16.8	2	0	100
Facilities Provided	0	9.4	75.2	10.7	4.7	0	100	0	0.6	38.5	28.2	20.5	12.2	100	0	0	7.4	60.4	25.5	6.7	100
Loan facilities	51	0.7	0.7	19.5	24.2	4	100	64.1	0	0	10.9	23.7	1.3	100	0	0	6.7	28.9	51.7	12.8	100
Institutional co-ordination	6	1.3	39.6	43	0	10.1	100	69.2	0	5.1	13.5	3.8	8.3	100	0	0	19.5	43	37.6	0	100
Easy Formalities	0	15.4	67.8	16.8	0	0	100	0	0	71.2	14.1	9.6	5.1	100	0	0	37.6	38.9	23.5	0	100
Proper Information	0	2.7	71.1	22.8	3.4	0	100	0	4.5	54.5	32.7	6.4	1.9	100	0	0	49.7	33.6	16.8	0	100
Updated information	0	0.7	63.1	28.2	8.1	0	100	2.6	41.7	35.9	14.1	5.8	100	0.7	39.6	45.6	14.1	0	100	0.7	63.1

1: Highly satisfied; 2: satisfied; 3: Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 4: Dissatisfied; 5: Highly dissatisfied NA: Not Applicable

Right selection: In terms of the accuracy in the right selection of the beneficiaries of HIMMAYAT, 75.2 percent of the beneficiaries are satisfied and the level of satisfaction remains good in other schemes as well, where we find 64.7 percent satisfied in case of NAREGA and 70.5 percent are satisfied in SKEWPY. Therefore, it can be said that the scheme succeeds in reaching the proper people.

Facilities provided: In case of the facilities provided during the association of the beneficiary with the scheme 75.2 percent are satisfied in HIMMAYAT. In the case of NAREGA, only 38.5 percent are satisfied with the facilities provided. The major reason being the lack of equipment required to do the work. And in SKEWPY only 7.4 percent are satisfied, which is a major concern. The beneficiaries complaint is about the lack of proper materials that are required to get the proper training.

Loan Obtaining Procedure: This factor has been a failure in all the schemes with just a 0.7 percent beneficiaries satisfied in case of HIMMAYAT, where the complaint is that the banks don't give the loans easily and the scheme does not provide any special provision for the ease in getting a loan. In SKEWPY only 6.7 percent are satisfied. Despite being an employability scheme, where the objective is to come up with startups, the backbone of such schemes is loans from the banks, but the scheme fails to provide any such help. In NAREGA, although the scheme does not focus on employability, at times of an emergency or the lean period (usually during winter, when there is no work), NAREGA has no provision of providing assistance forgetting the loans. Therefore, loan providing procedure has been a major failure in all the schemes.

Co-Ordination among Different Institutes: There is no such programme or scheme that can work in isolation. A coordination with other institutes is a must. In the case of the schemes, there is also a need for coordination with the other institutes, especially in employability schemes. The understudy schemes also require a good association with other institutes so that they function more efficiently. In HIMMAYAT only 39.6 percent of the beneficiaries are satisfied. Despite having the employment as well as employability both as their major objectives, there is very less help or assistance from the other institutes. One factor, that becomes a hurdle in such situations is the help from

the institutes comes from outside the state and the people within the state don't prefer to move out, each having their own explanations. But the overall attitude remains the same. In NAREGA, the percentage is 13.5 percent only, as there is no help from any related job during their lean period, that comes generally in the winter season and also the major part of the year in which the work remains affected due to the existing conflict situations in the valley. Whereas for SKEWPY it doesn't show a different trend, it follows the same trend of non-satisfaction with just 19.5 percent satisfied. Although the scheme focuses on employability, therefore the help from other institutes becomes more important but the results are very poor.

Formalities to get associated with the Scheme: The formalities which are required to get attached to the scheme should not become the hindrance. In HIMMAYAT 67.8 percent are satisfied with the ease of getting attached to the scheme and for NAREGA, it is much easier with 71.2 percent satisfied but for SKEWPY, getting attached with the scheme is not that easy, it has a lot of formalities with only 37.6 percent of the beneficiaries satisfied.

The Information Regarding the Scheme: The scheme should reach the people and all the information should be given beforehand, otherwise there is no need of having the scheme. The above study shows that in case of reaching to the people the HIMMAYAT scheme has been very successful with 71.1 percent of the beneficiaries satisfied and 54.5 percent satisfied in NAREGA. but in SKEWPY only 49.7 percent are satisfied with the information provided to them. The schemes have still a scope of improvement and need to work on the process of reaching to the people with all the information regarding the schemes.

Updated Information: While working with any programme or scheme, there is always a scope of changes or improvements or any kind of update. The updates can be even in the form of time schedules or dates also just in order to remain meaningful to the beneficiaries. These kinds of updates or information need to reach to the beneficiaries. In case of HIMMAYAT, 63.1 percent of the beneficiaries are satisfied with the regular updates of the scheme whereas in NAREGA only 41.7 percent are highly satisfied with the updates and for SKEWPY 45.6 percent highly satisfied with the updates of the scheme

Gaps and Conclusion

The schemes, no doubt have been introduced as an action tool in order to reduce the unemployment in the state. They have been doing well, but the results have been still poor in some areas and the study reveals that there have been some shortcomings in terms of operationalization. The flaws that remain can be easily worked upon if corrected properly and the operational efficacy will improve, hence leading to successful outputs and would be helpful in obtaining the objectives of the schemes. A main Gap in the above study is that the major objectives of the schemes have not been covered at the time of functioning and the worst one is the financial help, either in terms of loans or some funding. As there is no proper funding institution in place and the existing ones have not been directed to help the beneficiaries, nor has there been any such strategy that could be helpful in achieving the objectives of the scheme.

Limitations of the Study

The study has been limited to only three districts of the Kashmir division. A selected number of variables have been studied, whereas there are other variables like the policies, the bureaucratic system, accessibility etc. which are also a must in operations of a scheme and can be taken up for the study.

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