

Equity Assurance Plan for the Disadvantaged Groups in Vocational Education and Training in India

Project Report Submitted

To

**Directorate General of Employment and Training
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Govt. of India**

By



Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

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P. Vigneswara Ilavarasan
(Principal Consultant)
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

Executive Summary

Background of the Study

The Directorate General of Education and Training (DGE&T), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India commissioned the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi to submit a consultancy research report to the World Bank on the status of disadvantaged groups in the vocational education and training system (VET) in India, and to propose an equity assurance plan. The equity assurance plan will be implemented as a part of the up gradation of four hundred industrial training institutes (ITIs) into *Centers of Excellence* through the World Bank funding.

Though Indian vocational education training system is growing rapidly, from 56 ITIs in 1959 to five thousand in 2006 with 1 million seats capacity in more than 150 trades, overall status of the system is not encouraging. Earlier research points out declining seat utilization rates, poor retention rates, lower percentage of graduation, poor linkage with industry demands, and outdated machinery. These problems are attributed to all the categories of people in ITIs, and specific information on the status of the disadvantaged groups is not available. Extant research on disadvantaged groups in VET is inadequate, except one, 1981-1982, which also focused only on two of the disadvantaged groups, scheduled castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in ITIs. Also, lack of national level data does not provide the required insights on the status of the disadvantaged in ITIs. The present study is important as it provides current knowledge on the disadvantaged, in addition to formulating a plan to ensure the social equity.

Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted among purposively selected 15 ITIs spread across four states, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Assam and Chattisgarh during October 2006 – January, 2007. It focused on three of the disadvantaged groups: SC, ST and women.

The study examined the following questions:

1. Why do disadvantaged groups join ITIs?
2. What is the internal efficiency among them?
3. How is the learning environment for them?
4. What are their career plans and actions?
5. How is the work environment for the trainers from the disadvantaged groups?
6. What are the variations within different disadvantaged groups?

Findings

Determinants of ITI enrolment

ITIs are last resort for the disadvantaged groups in their educational preference. After their failed attempts to enter and pass the other streams like college, standard 12, and polytechnics, they join ITIs. Parents force them which they follow unwillingly without much awareness about the system. There is a common perception that ITI graduation would fetch them public employment.

Internal efficiency

Internal efficiency, measured in terms of enrolment, retention and graduation, is low among the disadvantaged when compared to general population. Majority of the dropouts happen in the period of first three to six months, and major causes are: Alien pedagogy and curriculum; weaker economic status, and non supportive home environment. Private ITIs have better internal efficiency than public ones.

Learning environment

Trainees feel that mode of teaching and curriculum is completely different and difficult from their previous one, school education. They are satisfied with the trainers and do not face discrimination because of their lower social status. Trainers feel that there is no difference between the general category and the disadvantaged trainees after the initial phase (six months to one year). In few cases, trainers observe that there exists small

degree of indifference (indulging in bad habits like smoking, and unruly behavior in the classrooms) among the men disadvantaged trainees when compared to the general ones.

Trainers from the disadvantaged groups are relatively less in number than others, which in turn does not offer enough role models for the disadvantaged trainees. In one case, trainers are irregular in teaching classes and have poor understanding of the subject

Career

Excepting few rare cases, all trainees are interested in public employment. Private employment is preferred next, and will be taken up as a temporary arrangement till they receive the public employment. Self employment is least preferred. In many cases, they do not find employment anywhere, and go back to their native places to work in unrelated fields. Their awareness about the employment opportunities is inadequate, and they do not have any clear career plans. Career guidance to the trainees is near absent.

Work environment of the trainers

Trainers from the disadvantaged groups are smaller in number and do not experience any discrimination in their work places. Their reasons for the job dissatisfaction are same as other trainers who belong to the general category: slow promotion, low salary, insufficient raw materials to run the machinery, inapplicability of the refresher courses, and additional responsibilities.

Variations within disadvantaged groups

Women exhibit similar behavior in opting for VET career like men. They are not discriminated on the basis of gender. There is high degree of married women opting for trades like tailoring, and computer operator assistant to become economically self dependent. Nature of marital home determines the dropouts, continuation in ITIs, and participation in the labour market. Also, women join ITIs to raise their value at the marriage market. Physical infrastructure is friendly enough for women in the mixed ITIs.

The differences between SCs and STs groups reflect the general educational achievement trends in India, where SCs are doing better than STs. Size of STs coming from rural background is greater than SCs. Internal efficiency is comparatively lower for STs overall.

The differences between poor and non-poor disadvantaged groups is clearly visible. Majority of the non-poor are located in urban localities, and hail from household, whose father or parents are doing non agricultural work. Trainees from this particular background, have greater awareness about the VET system and choose the trade by choice. They have a better supporting home environment. Whereas, trainees from rural and poor background are at a disadvantageous position, and experience most of the problems that affect the internal efficiency.

Equity Assurance Plan

Based on the empirical research, the study proposes the following suggestions:

(1) *Enhance overall efficiency of the ITIs:* An efficient VET system for the general population will lead to a higher participation of the disadvantaged groups in the long term. Training at ITIs should be linked to the local and industry demands on a continuous basis. ITIs should be transformed into autonomous and self-sustainable institutions.

However, this should be accompanied by the mandatory implementation of other suggestions mentioned below;

(2) *Establish computerized national level quantitative database on the disadvantaged groups in ITIs:* Lack of national level quantitative data hinders a deeper analysis of the status of the disadvantaged groups. A centralized computerized quantitative data base of trainees on enrolment, test appearance, graduation, trades of all trainees, especially of the disadvantaged groups, should be established, and maintained on a continuous basis. A

secondary analysis should be done to strengthen the existing reform implementation process or introduce required corrective measures;

(3) Stipend: Timely disbursement & Introduction in private ITIs: Most of the disadvantaged trainees are from poor economic background. Central government provides Rs.100 per month to each SC/ST trainee in addition to the other stipends given by the state government. The stipend is rarely disbursed in time. A timely disbursement system should be developed. Cost of private ITIs is high due to no stipends and paid education, which act as barriers for the disadvantaged. Accessibility to private ITIs can be extended by providing stipend to the enrolled disadvantaged trainees;

(4) Reduction of cost burden of the disadvantaged groups: Due to limited or absence of hostel facilities, the disadvantaged trainees commute long distances using unreliable public transport services. Private transport services are not preferred because of higher costs. Purchase of books and stationeries required for the training is also expensive. There are no institutional loan facilities available for the ITI education. All these factors result in higher cost of training for the disadvantaged. Efforts should be made to reduce the cost;

(5) Increase intake of trainers from the disadvantaged groups: Number of trainers from the disadvantaged groups is less, which in turn does not offer enough role models for the trainees. Existing research shows that trainers from the same group enhance learning environment of the trainees. Most of the trainers, including disadvantaged, are dissatisfied with the job due to lack of promotion, low pay, inadequate raw materials, and additional responsibilities due to staff shortage. Attempts should be made to recruit more number of disadvantaged trainers. Also, improvement in the work environment will attract potential trainers;

(6) Career guidance: Career orientation of the disadvantaged trainees is not clear. Even though the size of public employment is declining steadily, it is preferred most by the

disadvantaged. Efforts made by the Career-cum-Guidance Center of the central government are not effective. Career counseling should be given on a continuous basis;

(7) Introduction of self employment and women centered trades in all ITIs: Present study observed that women utilized ‘no maximum age limit for enrolment’ rule effectively. Number of married women enrolled in self employment oriented trades is quite significant which needs to be encouraged. Introduction of such trades in all ITIs will provide opportunities to attain economic independence by women, especially in the less developed regions; and

(8) Introduction of remedial teaching to the weaker trainees: Number of trainees who drop out during the first six months of the training is high among the disadvantaged groups, due to heavy work load, and incapability to cope with the alien curriculum and pedagogy. Introduction of remedial teaching will help to control the dropouts among the weaker students.

Acronyms

CGC	Coaching-cum-guidance center
DGET	Directorate General of Education and Training
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
ITI	Industrial Training Institutes
ILO	International Labour Organization
M & E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NIEPA	National Institute for Educational Planning & Administration
NpU	Non-poor Urban
RP	Rural Poor
SC	Scheduled Castes
ST	Scheduled Tribes
VET	Vocational Education and Training