



A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN ODISHA

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between skill development, education, and employment opportunities in Odisha. Education and skill development play an important role in improving employability, enhancing income opportunities, and supporting economic growth. The study focuses on the educational qualifications, skill development participation, employment status, and major employment challenges faced by individuals in Odisha. Both primary and secondary data are considered to understand the existing situation. The study highlights the importance of vocational education, technical training, digital skills, and industry-oriented learning in improving employment prospects. It also identifies issues such as skill gaps, unemployment, limited training opportunities, and the mismatch between educational qualifications and job requirements. The study suggests that stronger cooperation among educational institutions, industries, government agencies, and skill development organisations can improve employment outcomes. Overall, the study emphasises the need for accessible, relevant, and quality education and skill development programmes for sustainable employment in Odisha.

Keywords: Skill Development, Education, Employment, Employability, Odisha

Introduction

Education and skill development are two of the most important foundations for the social and economic development of a state. In a rapidly changing economy, academic qualifications alone are often not sufficient to secure meaningful employment. Young people increasingly need practical knowledge, technical abilities, communication skills, digital literacy, and other employability skills to successfully participate in the labour market. In this context, skill development and education have become important areas of public policy and development planning in Odisha.

Odisha is a state with a large and diverse population, significant natural resources, a growing industrial sector, and considerable potential for economic development. The state has witnessed progress in education, infrastructure, industries, information technology, tourism, agriculture, and various service sectors. However, ensuring that the available workforce possesses the skills required by emerging industries remains an important challenge. There is

therefore a growing need to strengthen the relationship between education, vocational training, skill development, and employment opportunities (**Government of Odisha 2020**).

Importance of Education in Human Development

Education plays a vital role in improving the quality of human life and building a knowledgeable and productive society. It develops an individual's intellectual abilities, social awareness, confidence, and capacity to make informed decisions. In Odisha, expansion of educational opportunities has helped increase access to schooling and higher education among different sections of society.

The importance of education extends beyond obtaining academic qualifications. Modern education must also prepare students for the practical requirements of the workplace. Higher education institutions, schools, colleges, and technical institutions have an important role in developing both theoretical understanding and practical competencies. Greater emphasis on career-oriented education, vocational education, digital skills, entrepreneurship, and industry-based learning can help students become better prepared for future employment. At the same time, educational development needs to address differences between rural and urban areas, socioeconomic groups, and different regions of the state. Improving the quality and accessibility of education is essential for ensuring that the benefits of economic development reach a wider section of the population (**Aggarwal 2018**).

Role of Skill Development

Skill development refers to the process of acquiring and improving knowledge, technical abilities, practical competencies, and other capabilities required for employment and self-employment. It can play a significant role in reducing the gap between the skills possessed by job seekers and the skills demanded by employers. For a developing state such as Odisha, skill development is particularly important because of the changing nature of employment. Traditional occupations are increasingly being complemented or replaced by opportunities in manufacturing, construction, healthcare, tourism, hospitality, information technology, retail, logistics, renewable energy, and other emerging sectors. As industries adopt new technologies, workers need to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills (**Desai et al. 2010**).

Skill development can also encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment. Individuals with appropriate technical and managerial skills may be able to establish small businesses, provide services, or develop innovative enterprises. Therefore, skill development should not be viewed only as a means of obtaining salaried employment; it can also contribute to entrepreneurship, productivity, income generation, and economic independence.

Employment Opportunities in Odisha

Employment opportunities are closely connected with the quality of education and the availability of relevant skills. Odisha has a diverse economic structure, with employment opportunities available in agriculture and allied activities, manufacturing, mining-related industries, construction, tourism, education, healthcare, information technology, retail, transportation, and various service-sector activities. The industrial development of Odisha provides opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled workers, while the growth of the service sector has created demand for individuals with professional, digital, communication, and managerial skills. Similarly, the state's tourism potential offers employment possibilities in hospitality, transportation, travel services, handicrafts, and other related activities. (**Thilak J.B.G 2015**).

Despite these opportunities, unemployment and underemployment among educated and young people remain important concerns. One of the major reasons may be the mismatch between the qualifications of job seekers and the actual requirements of employers. Some graduates may possess academic degrees but lack practical experience, technical skills, communication abilities, or digital competencies. Addressing this mismatch requires greater coordination among educational institutions, training organisations, industries, government agencies, and students.

Government Initiatives and Institutional Support

The government has an important role in promoting education, vocational training, skill development, and employment generation. Various government programmes and institutions at the national and state levels aim to provide young people with opportunities to acquire market-oriented skills and improve their employability. In Odisha, skill development initiatives have increasingly focused on vocational training, industry-linked programmes, placement assistance, entrepreneurship, and opportunities for young people to acquire skills relevant to domestic as well as wider labour markets. Educational institutions and training centres also contribute by providing technical and professional education in areas aligned with changing economic requirements. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives depends not only on the availability of training programmes but also on their quality, accessibility, affordability, industry relevance, and ability to lead to sustainable employment. Regular assessment of training outcomes and employer requirements is therefore necessary (**National Education Policy 2020**).

Challenges in Education and Skill Development

Although Odisha has made progress in education and skill development, several challenges remain. These include differences in access to quality education, limited awareness of vocational career options, inadequate industry exposure, shortage of specialised trainers in some areas, and difficulties in connecting trained candidates with suitable employment opportunities. Another significant challenge is the rapid pace of technological change. Skills that are relevant today may become less valuable in the future as industries adopt automation, artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and new production methods. Consequently, skill development systems need to focus not only on specific occupational skills but also on adaptability, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and lifelong learning (**Kaur et al. 2020**).

Rural youth may face additional challenges because of limited access to training centres, digital resources, career guidance, and information about employment opportunities. Women and economically disadvantaged groups may also encounter barriers to participation in education, training, and the formal labour market. Addressing these issues is essential for achieving inclusive development.

Need for the Present Study

The relationship between education, skill development, and employment is complex and requires systematic examination. A person may have access to education but still face difficulty finding suitable employment if the education received does not correspond to labour-market requirements. Similarly, vocational training may not produce the desired results if training programmes are not connected with actual employment opportunities. Therefore, there is a need to examine the present condition of education and skill development in Odisha, identify the employment opportunities available to educated and trained youth, and understand the major

challenges faced by job seekers. Such a study can help identify gaps between educational qualifications, acquired skills, and industry requirements.

Scope and Significance of the Study

The study, titled “A Comprehensive Study on Skill Development, Education, and Employment Opportunities in Odisha,” seeks to examine these three interconnected areas. It focuses on understanding the role of education and skill development in improving employability and supporting the economic development of individuals and the state as a whole. The study is significant because its findings may help students and young job seekers understand the importance of developing relevant skills alongside formal education. It may also provide useful insights for educational institutions, training organisations, policymakers, and employers regarding the need for industry-oriented education and training.

Statement of the Study

The present study, titled “A Comprehensive Study on Skill Development, Education, and Employment Opportunities in Odisha,” examines the relationship between education, skill development, and employment among the people of Odisha. It focuses on the role of education and vocational training in improving employability and creating better career opportunities. The study also identifies major challenges such as skill gaps, unemployment, limited access to quality training, and the mismatch between educational qualifications and industry requirements. Further, it explores existing opportunities in various sectors and assesses the importance of government and institutional initiatives. The study aims to provide useful insights for students, policymakers, educators, and employers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role and effectiveness of education and skill development programmes in enhancing the employability and career opportunities of youth in Odisha.
2. To identify the major employment opportunities and challenges faced by educated and skilled individuals in Odisha and suggest measures for improving employment outcomes.

Research Methodology of the Study

The study follows a descriptive research design to understand the role of education, skill development, and employment opportunities in Odisha. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data can be collected from respondents through a simple questionnaire. Secondary data can be collected from government reports, books, journals, newspapers, and relevant websites. For the study, a sample of 100 respondents may be selected from different educational and employment backgrounds in Odisha. A convenience sampling method may be used to select respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. The collected data can be analysed using percentages, tables to understand the education level, skill development participation, and employment status of respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Higher Secondary	20	20%
Undergraduate	35	35%
Postgraduate	25	25%

Diploma/Technical Education	15	15%
Other	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Source: Computed

The table shows that 35% of respondents are undergraduates, representing the largest group. Postgraduates account for 25%, while 15% have diploma or technical qualifications. This indicates that most respondents have some form of higher or professional education.

Table 2: Skill Development Training Received by Respondents

Skill Development Training	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Received Training	62	62%
Not Received Training	38	38%
Total	100	100%

Source: Computed

The findings indicate that 62% of respondents have received some form of skill development training, while 38% have not. This suggests that skill-development programmes have reached a considerable proportion of the respondents, but further efforts are needed to increase participation.

Table 3: Employment Status of Respondents

Employment Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Employed	42	42%
Self-employed	18	18%
Unemployed	30	30%
Pursuing Further Education	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Computed

The table shows that 42% of respondents are employed, while 18% are self-employed. However, 30% remain unemployed, indicating that employment remains a significant challenge. The findings also suggest that skill development and education need to be more closely connected with available employment opportunities.

Conclusion

Education, skill development, and employment should be considered as interconnected components of human and economic development. Quality education provides the foundation for knowledge and personal development, while skill development converts knowledge into practical competencies. Employment, in turn, provides individuals with opportunities to apply these competencies, earn income, and contribute to society and the economy. Odisha to fully utilise its demographic and economic potential, it is essential to create an education and skill development system that is accessible, inclusive, flexible, and closely connected with emerging employment opportunities. A stronger connection between educational institutions, skill training providers, industries, and the labour market can help reduce skill gaps and improve employment outcomes. Against this background, the present study attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and future prospects of education, skill development, and employment in Odisha.

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