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Skill Development and Employability among Scheduled Castes in Telangana: Policy Implications Emerging from An Empirical Assessment

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CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES

(Planning Dept, Govt. of Telangana & ICSSR - Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

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PREFACE

This publication is part of the Working Paper series in the CESS-DSSI Telangana Scheduled Castes Development Series. Over the past eight years, the Division for Studies in Social Inclusion (DSSI) of the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) has carried out a comprehensive range of studies focusing on the development of the Scheduled Castes in Telangana State, in addition to studies on other historically disadvantaged and marginalised social groups. Research aimed at identifying and quantifying the development disparities between the Scheduled Castes and other social groups is central to the DSSI's mandate. These empirical studies are designed to enable policymakers to formulate evidence-driven and implementable policies so that new policies can be formulated or necessary course corrections can be made in the existing schemes and interventions. The research and academic activities undertaken by the DSSI team in the domains of social exclusion and inclusive development encompass the following:

- Baseline surveys and impact evaluation studies (concurrent, formative, and endline)
- Empirical studies on priority themes and areas to address development gaps
- Dissemination of findings through publications such as research reports, working papers, monographs, policy briefs, and journal articles
- Organising seminars, workshops, and special lectures on emerging themes related to inclusive development

This Working Paper presents the findings of an empirical study on a critical area of inclusive development, focusing on skill development and employability among the Scheduled Castes in Telangana. This publication is the first in the series of working papers that draw on survey data from over 10,000 SC households. The survey, conducted by DSSI, was commissioned by the TGCOST (Telangana Council of Science and Technology). I am deeply grateful to TGCOST for providing us with the opportunity to undertake the study titled, "Comprehensive Survey of SC Community in Telangana State: Mapping Data and Resources on a Spatial Domain". This publication provides a holistic perspective on the subject and offers implementable recommendations. I am confident that policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders find it useful and relevant in addressing development disparities in Telangana and beyond.

E. Revathi
Director, CESS

Skill Development and Employability among Scheduled Castes in Telangana: Policy Implications Emerging from An Empirical Assessment

Laxman Rao Sankineni ¹

Abstract

Based on primary data collected from a sample of over 10,000 Scheduled Caste households of Telangana, this paper presents the survey findings related to the critical domain of skill development and the post-training employment status among the SCs. The study finds that the skilling ecosystem in the state is characterised by a multiplicity of schemes and stakeholders and low levels of awareness and participation on the part of the target group. Post-training placement rates are low, with relatively high levels of attrition owing to a variety of factors. This has led to a growing preference for self-employment. Nevertheless, most of the self-employed have not received any support from the government and other agencies. At the same time, the study finds a high level of unmet demand for skill development. The findings underscore the imperative of a holistic strategy integrating key components such as outreach, accessible skilling infrastructure, decent and sustainable salaried employment, and support for self-employment.

Key Words: Scheduled Castes, Telangana, Skill Development, Employability, Placement, Self-Employment, Skilling Ecosystem.

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1. Introduction and Methodology

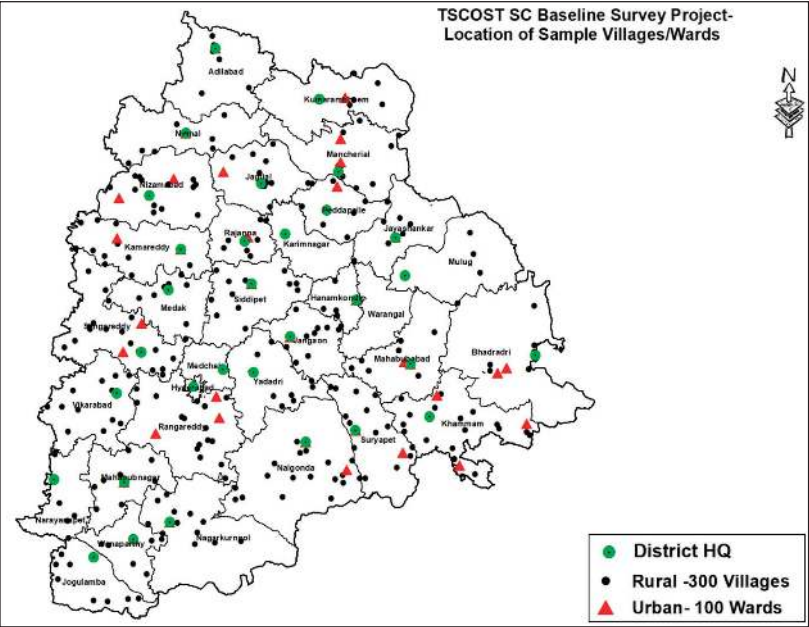
This working paper is based on primary data collected under a comprehensive (multi-subject) baseline survey of the Scheduled Castes in Telangana State. The survey—conducted in 2023—adopted the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) in mapping the livelihoods of the SCs in the state.² The SLF focuses on five capitals or assets—Human, Natural, Physical, Social, and Financial—that shape livelihoods. This working paper essentially draws on the data collected under the *Skill Development and Employability* module of the baseline survey. The analysis also incorporates relevant variables from other modules of the survey data, such as key social and economic characteristics and indicators.³

As for methodology, using a GIS app, the baseline survey captured data from over 10,000 Scheduled Caste households spread across Telangana state. A multi-stage stratified sampling design was adopted for the selection of the sample households. The sample households represent all 33 districts of Telangana and are spread over rural and urban areas in the ratio of 3:1. The sample households were selected from a total of 400 locations comprising 300 villages and 100 urban wards. The sample households represent a population of 37,312. The survey zeroed in on the sample units through the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) procedure on the basis of the 2011 Census data. The random selection of households was preceded by a houselisting exercise in the selected villages or hamlet groups of the respective primary sampling units (villages and urban wards). The quantitative methods were complemented with in-depth qualitative interactions that were conducted with a range of stakeholders. The qualitative tools included FGDs (Focus Group Discussions) and KIIs (Key Informant Interviews).

²The baseline survey titled, “Comprehensive Baseline Survey of SC Community in Telangana State: Mapping of Data and Resources on a Spatial Domain”, was commissioned by the TGCOST (Telangana Council of Science & Technology), Government of Telangana, in collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

³Hence this working paper is not based on an exhaustive and exclusive survey on skill development and employability.

Figure 1: Telangana Map Showing 400 Sample Locations of the SC Baseline Survey



2. Livelihoods Profile of the Scheduled Castes in Telangana

The social stratification of Telangana has undergone significant and visible shifts since its formation in 2014. The proportion of the disadvantaged social groups, namely, the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Backward Castes, and religious minorities, has topped 80% of the population. The current (projected) population of Telangana is close to 400 lakh as against the 2011 Census population of 350.04 lakh. The Scheduled Castes constitute 15.45% of the state's population (2011 Census);⁴ they are spread across all 33 districts; and they constitute a higher share of the population in rural Telangana. Disparities persist between the SCs and other social groups, particularly in the domains of education, health, income, and formal employment as a result of their historical marginalisation from the mainstream economic, social, and political systems.

⁴As per the 2024-25 caste survey carried out by the Telangana Government, the Scheduled Castes make up 17.4% of the state population. Their share in the state's rural population is higher at 20.4%.

The SC population in Telangana is predominantly rural as 75.3% of them live in rural areas (2011 Census). There are 59 sub-castes among the Scheduled Castes of the state. But the *Madigas* constitute the largest sub-caste among the SCs, followed by the *Malas*. The remaining 57 smaller sub-castes are spread sparsely across the state with each district representing only a few minor sub-castes. By contrast, the numerically leading sub-castes of *Madigas* and *Malas* are found across all districts of the state. Wage employment (farm and non-farm) and smallholder agriculture are the mainstay of SC livelihoods in the state. When it comes to the core or predominant livelihoods of the Scheduled Castes in the state, it is casual labour—in agriculture (31%) and in non-agriculture (10%)—that is the most important source of livelihood for 40% of the rural households. Agriculture is the main or primary source of income for less than a fifth (18%) of rural households. By contrast, the urban livelihoods pattern of SC households indicates that private employment with a monthly compensation is the most important income source, reported by 20% of the urban households. This is followed by 17% of the households whose chief source of livelihood is wage work of different kinds. Self-employment and business activities of various types were reported by 15% of the urban households.

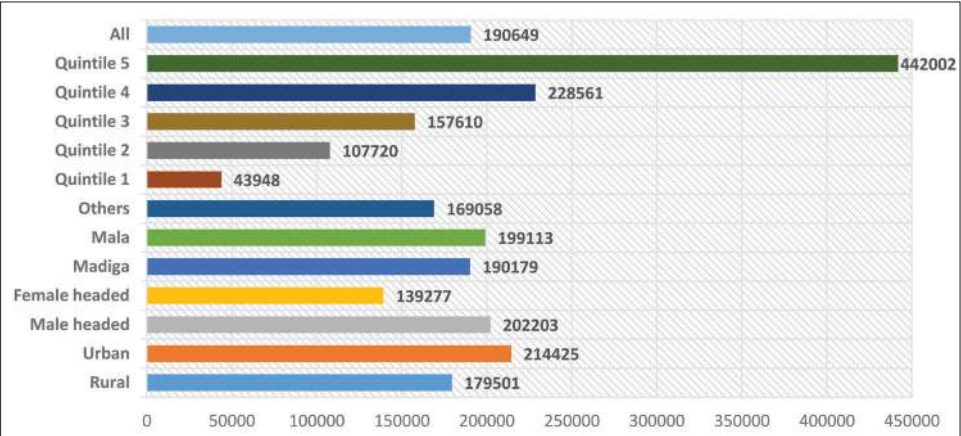
Landlessness is relatively high among the Scheduled Castes, as 61% of the SC households are landless in Telangana (rural and urban combined). Additionally, 81% of SC farmers are marginal holders, possessing up to 2.5 acres. This spotlights the policy imperative of creating non-farm opportunities for the SC community in the state.

It goes without saying that education is critical for a decent and sustainable livelihood. Nearly two-fifths (36.7%) of the Scheduled Castes in the state are non-literate, according to the baseline survey findings, despite the improvements over the past couple of decades in this regard. Literacy levels, however, vary by household and individual characteristics. To illustrate, literacy levels are higher in urban areas than in rural areas and significantly lower among females than males. Among the sub-castes, the literacy level is lower among the *Madigas* than the *Malas*. And literacy levels rise with household incomes, with the top quintile representing the highest level and the bottom quintile reporting the lowest level. Similarly, the proportion of literate persons steadily falls with age, with the 40-60 years age group consisting of almost 70% non-literates; and the corresponding share among those aged 60 and above is 86.4%.

As the chart (Figure 2) illustrates, the mean annual household income of the Scheduled Castes in the state is close to 2 lakh – Rs 1,90,649 to be precise. The minimum and

maximum mean household incomes are Rs 80,375 and Rs 36,90,000 respectively. However, household incomes vary when the data is disaggregated by certain key household characteristics. There are income disparities between rural and urban households. The mean household income in rural areas is Rs 1,79,500, while the corresponding figure for urban households is Rs 2,14,425. With respect to the two numerically dominant communities, the *Madigas* and the *Malas*, the latter have a marginally higher income than the former. However, the income disparity between the two large sub-castes (*Madigas* and *Malas*) and the numerically minor SC communities is considerable, with the latter earning some Rs 25,000 less than the former.

Figure 2: Average annual income of SC households from all sources by location, gender of head of household, sub-castes and income quintiles (in Rs)



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

3. The Backdrop

With close to a 7% average growth rate over the past decade, India is currently the fastest-growing large economy in the world. It is officially acknowledged that employment is the crucial link between growth and prosperity. Furthermore, its quantity and quality influence the extent to which economic output translates into a better quality of life for the population. It is also officially stated that the private sector would play a greater role in creating employment opportunities to sustain decent livelihoods that align with the legitimate aspirations of India’s youth. This is also a prerequisite for reaping the benefits of the country’s demographic dividend. At the same time, high and sustained growth rates and rising per capita incomes over the years, however, have not resulted in commensurate and decent employment avenues for some 8 million persons joining the labour force each year.

The sectoral distribution of the workforce in India indicates that the high-productivity services sector is the source of employment for 30% of the workforce. Because India's services sector contributes (Gross Value Added at current prices) 55% to the economy. Low-productivity agriculture still represents 46% of the employment. And the manufacturing sector employs only 11.4% of the workforce (PLFS 2023-24). Therefore, in light of the stagnating employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector and the low-income and informal agriculture sector, the shift from agriculture to services requires a decent level of education and skills.

Employment in India is of poor quality and is predominantly self-employment and casual in nature. Close to 90% of the workforce is informally employed. The earnings are either stagnant or on a downward trend. The real wages of regular workers have either remained stagnant or declined. Youth unemployment increased from 5.7% in 2000 to 17.3% in 2019 but declined to 10.2% in 2023 (see the following section for a detailed presentation of related parameters). The youth unemployment rate increases with the level of education, with the highest rate among those with a graduate or higher qualification. In other words, the youth account for over 80% of the unemployed in the country.

In this section, data on certain key labour market indicators is laid out, mostly drawing on the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports. The Labour Force Participation Rate (usual status) at the all-India level for persons aged 15 and above has increased over the years; from 49.8% in 2017-18 to 60.1% in 2023-24. Similarly, the Labour Force Participation Rate among youth (aged 15-29) has also risen from 38.2% in 2017-18 to 46.5% in 2023-24. However, gender-based variations can be found among youth in this respect. In rural areas, the LFPR for females has increased from a low base of 15.9% to 30.8% during the reference period; and the corresponding figures for males in rural areas are 58.9% and 65.1% respectively. Urban areas also exhibit a similar trend; the data indicates the need for raising the participation levels of females in both rural and urban areas to address the disparities between genders (see Annexures I and II).

From a skill development perspective, the unemployment rate is an important labour market indicator. Data pertaining to unemployment rates among youth (15-29 years) is presented in Table 1. Over the years, the unemployment rate shows a declining trend for both males and females at the all-India level. But the decline is higher for females; nevertheless, the rate remains marginally higher (11%) than that of males (9.7%).

By stark contrast, unemployment rates in Telangana for both males and females are higher than the corresponding rates at the all-India level. The overall unemployment rate of almost 17% is notable. What is more concerning is the female unemployment rate of 22% in the state, which is double that of the all-India rate for young females. Additionally, 14% of young males in Telangana are out of work.

Table 1: Unemployment rates according to usual status for persons aged 15-29 years for India and Telangana

Year	India (in%)			Telangana (in%)		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
2017-18	16.6	20.6	17.8	20.8	27.0	23.3
2018-19	16.0	20.2	17.3	25.9	29.4	27.4
2019-20	12.9	19.9	15.0	22.4	26.6	24.2
2020-21	13.0	12.5	12.9	13.1	20.7	16.1
2021-22	12.6	11.8	12.4	13.1	20.7	16.1
2022-23	9.7	10.6	10.0	9.7	25.4	15.1
2023-24	9.8	11.0	10.2	13.9	22.1	16.6

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) - 2023-24

Data related to the proportions of self-employed among workers (usual status) for India and Telangana is laid out in Annexure III. Over the years for which data is presented (2017-18 to 2023-24), the share of self-employed among females in rural areas has risen from 57.7% to 73.5%; and among males, the proportion increased marginally from 57.8% to 59.4%. This suggests that agriculture has absorbed a large part of the female labour force, but it appears to have reached a saturation point for males. The corresponding figures for Telangana are: 59.9% and 67.6% for males and 54.7% and 61.9% for females. This shows that the increases from the base year (2017-18) for both males and females are higher in Telangana. In urban areas, the increase in the share of self-employed persons is also significantly greater than the national level rise during the reference period.

Salaried or regular wage workers earn relatively stable incomes and steady livelihoods. This segment of the workforce largely represents educated and skilled persons. The findings of the PLFS are presented in this regard in Table 2. At the all-India level, the proportion of salaried workers in rural areas has seen only a marginal rise during the data reference period (2017-18 to 2023-24). By contrast, it has not increased in urban areas over the reference period, with the share stagnating at 47%. Even the gender-wise shares of regular workers have not seen any dramatic improvements over the years.

As for Telangana, in rural areas, the shares of male salaried workforce have been consistently higher than those of females during the reference period covered. The proportion of male regular workers in rural areas has largely remained unchanged over the reported period: 14.2% in 2017-18 to 15% in 2023-24; whereas for females, the proportion increased from 5.8% to 7.5% over the stated period. As far as urban areas are concerned, the female share has marginally risen from 50.8% in 2017-18 to 52.7% in 2023-24. The corresponding data for males in urban areas shows that the proportion has, in fact, fallen from 57.7% to 53% during the reference period 2017-18 to 2023-24. The PLFS findings highlight the imperative of raising the share of salaried workers in both rural and urban areas. It is in this context that skill development and the employability of labourforce come into play.

**Table 2: Share of Regular Wage/Salaried Employees among Workers
(Usual Status) in India and Telangana**

Year	India (%)			Telangana (%)		
	Category	Rural	Urban	Category	Rural	Urban
2023-24	Male	15.8	46.8	Male	15	53
	Female	7.8	49.4	Female	7.5	52.7
	Person	12.7	47.5	Person	11.7	52.9
2022-23	Male	14.3	47.1	Male	13.1	53.2
	Female	8	50.8	Female	5.2	50.4
	Person	12.2	48	Person	9.8	52.5
2021-22	Male	14.7	46.2	Male	22.1	51.7
	Female	8.1	50.3	Female	3.8	53
	Person	12.5	47.1	Person	8.1	52
2020-21	Male	13.6	45.3	Male	13.2	51.7
	Female	9.1	50.1	Female	7.7	48.9
	Person	12.1	46.4	Person	10.8	48
2019-20	Male	13.8	47.2	Male	11.9	55.2
	Female	9.5	54.2	Female	8.4	54.9
	Person	12.5	48.8	Person	10.4	55.1
2018-19	Male	14.2	47.2	Male	26.8	54.6
	Female	11	54.7	Female	7.1	54.3
	Person	13.4	48.7	Person	11.3	54.5
2017-18	Male	14	45.7	Male	14.2	57.7
	Female	10.5	52.1	Female	5.8	50.8
	Person	13.1	47	Person	11.3	56.2

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) - 2023-24

Although India's Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) has largely converged with the global mean, employment is characterised by informality, low wages, and insecurity. One in every three young Indians (aged 15–29 years) is not engaged in either education, employment, or training (NEET). Such proportion is considerably higher among females in both rural and urban areas. Two-thirds of males in the NEET category are seeking/available for work, while most females in the category are engaged in domestic work (NSSO 2023). In contrast to the headline results of the PLFS, the unemployment situation and the labour force participation rate have not improved much over the years due to two factors: a steady increase in the participation of workers in agriculture and the rise in unpaid family labour. Furthermore, the share of manufacturing in providing employment has not risen (*The Hindu*, 2024).

Youth (aged 15-29 years) constitute 27% of the population and 26.9% of the labour force in India. The unemployment rate among the youth is considerably higher than that of the older cohort. Furthermore, the unemployment rate among the educated youth is phenomenally high. The crux of the issue of open unemployment in India is that of educated youth unemployment. Although the rate of unemployment has declined since 2018, the quality of jobs accessed by the educated youth has declined. The employment status of highly educated youth indicates that the constraints related to the growth of non-agricultural employment in general, and skilled employment in particular, have worsened since 2018, forcing these youth to take greater recourse to agriculture and low-remuneration jobs (Srivastava and Dhote, 2024).

Social group disparities: Social identity significantly influences labour market outcomes, with differences in employment quality across social groups. The Scheduled Tribes (STs) exhibit the highest WPR (Work Participation Rate) at 72.7%. However, they are concentrated in agriculture (67.0%), reflecting barriers to accessing formal and organised sector jobs due to geographical and educational constraints. The Scheduled Castes (SCs), with a WPR of 59.6%, show some improvement in organised sector representation, probably due to the implementation of affirmative action policies. Meanwhile, workers from the general category show a relatively low WPR (52.7%), but they benefit from the highest rates of regular (31.5%), organised (23.7%), and formal employment (16.5%), reflecting their greater access to higher education and higher-quality jobs (IHD-ILO 2024).

4. Skill Development: An Overview

The origins of skill development can be traced to the pre-Independence initiatives for launching vocational education at secondary and higher levels. During the post-Independence period, in light of the priority accorded to rapid industrialisation, the imperative of creating a skilled workforce led to the establishment of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), while the priority of vocational education remained at the top of the policy agenda. In the reform era, however, the first comprehensive national policy on skill development was unveiled in 2009, with a target of skilling 500 million people by 2022.

The establishment of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2014 provided an impetus to the skilling interventions. In 2015, the MSDE unveiled the national policy for skill development and entrepreneurship and launched the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM). The NSDM brought into being a three-tier structure comprising a governing council and mission directorate at the apex level, state skill development missions (SSDM) at the state level, and district skill committees (DSC) at the district level. The MSDE seeks to bring standardisation and uniformity to the training through the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY). However, the courses identified at the national level present a disconnect with the local socio-economic opportunities and aspirations in the districts (Gidwani & Chourdiya, 2024).

Additionally, the focus of the skilling programs largely remained on the target-driven approach of the number of applicants trained. This holds true for the placement-oriented flagship programme of the PMKVY. Reports on the program related to rozgaar and apprenticeship melas report only the number of candidates shortlisted by industries. In contrast, the number of candidates who actually accept the offered employment opportunities is far lower and goes unreported.

Skill development interventions largely remain disconnected from education, entrepreneurship, employment, and innovation. They do not receive the priority they merit on the development agenda of most districts in the country. The mismatch between demand and supply is reflected in the widespread inconsistency between the local employment prospects and the courses offered by the government-funded skilling schemes, with a disproportionate number of training programmes conducted in a few select areas such as tailoring, beautician, and customer care executive. The training providers, who are mostly alien to the district, lack a mediated connection with local industry players for assured placements.

Additionally, the training course and curriculum under the PMKVY have not been aligned with the actual industry requirements, and the practical skills imparted under the PMKVY training are not in accordance with the industry's needs. Out of 37 sector skill councils, only 18 have conducted any skill gap analysis (Parliamentary Standing Committee 2022). Studies have found low levels of awareness about the importance of skilling, entrepreneurship, apprenticeship, and placement linkage promotion schemes. As per the Young India and Work survey of 2018, over 70% of youth aged 15–30 years are unaware of government skilling interventions (Mishra *et al* 2018). Training providers find it difficult to onboard the target group candidates for training, which results in uninterested candidates being enrolled, leading to high dropout rates.

When it comes to gender inclusion, except in tailoring and beauty parlour courses, female participation in skilling is low in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related domains. This is worrisome, especially given the already low female labour force participation rate in India, which was pegged at 24% in 2022 (World Bank 2023). Moreover, while about half of the trained candidates are female, their participation in training and placements is significantly skewed towards sectors such as apparel, beauty and wellness, healthcare, media and entertainment, and gems and jewellery.

A number of self-employment-oriented training programmes are run by government institutions, such as the Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) and state-level centres for entrepreneurship development. However, there is no provision for institutionalised incubation support for aspiring local entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, there is a lack of interdepartmental convergence and coordination in planning and implementing skilling initiatives, particularly at the district level. To illustrate, some courses such as beautician and tailoring are being offered by multiple departmental schemes. As a result, the need for synergy becomes all the more apparent. Coordination between the Ministries at the Centre and Departments at the state level is a precondition for district-level interdepartmental coordination. Currently, around 16 ministries are running skill development programmes (Mehrotra 2021).

The merging of all skilling interventions under the MSDE should be deliberated, unless the training is for a niche programme, to enhance training quality, avoid duplication of efforts, reduce wasteful expenditure, and consolidate resources for greater efficiency in outcomes.

5. The Telangana Context

Telangana is among the fastest-growing states in the country, largely driven by a rapid expansion of the services sector, which contributes 62.81% to the GSDP of the state. Telangana is among the richest states in the country, topping the ranking of large states on the basis of per capita incomes. As a result, Telangana has witnessed rapid reductions in poverty levels. As per the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) prepared by the NITI Aayog (2023), in Telangana, the proportion of the population who are multidimensionally poor declined from 13.18% to 5.88% between 2015–16 and 2019–20. At the same time, rising education levels mean more and more youth enter the labour force seeking employment. Furthermore, the popular priorities have shifted as living standards improved, with decent employment emerging as a priority, particularly among the youth. Therefore, unemployment remains a major challenge confronting the state government.

Data on unemployment among social groups in Telangana indicates that the unemployment rate among the Scheduled Castes is highest at 10.9%, higher than the state average (8.7%) and those of other social groups. Unemployment levels rise with age and educational level, with educated youth exhibiting the highest rate of unemployment (Sharma, 2021). Unemployment among youth (aged 15-29 years) is relatively high at 16.6% (as against 10.2% at the national level), with male and female unemployment rates at 13.9% and 22.1% respectively (PLFS 2023-24). Among youth, rural unemployment stood at 9.7% and urban unemployment at 25.4%. Among the working-age population (15-59 years), the unemployment rate is 4.6% (PLFS 2023-24; RGICS 2024; Rao & Silveru 2024).

Despite its rapid expansion, the state economy is unable to generate adequate employment. Consequently, skilling millions of youths and matching their skills with those that are in demand in the labour market has emerged as an intractable challenge. This imperative acquires added significance in view of the limited opportunities in the government sector in the state—even if recruitments are conducted regularly—estimated at just 2,50,000. At the same time, public employment continues to be the preferred choice. The private sector essentially provides employment to those at the higher levels of the pyramid with higher-level technical skills.

Gender disparities in LFPR can be clearly seen in Telangana as well; 57.5% and 34.7% for males and females respectively. This trend is similar to that at the national level. The high differential in LFPR between males and females, despite rising female education

levels, indicates a low level of absorption of women into the economy. At 48.5%, the LFPR of youth (aged 15-29 years) is below the rate of 68.7% for the general population (aged 15-59 years), indicating lower youth absorption in the labour force in Telangana, leading to a relatively high level of joblessness among youth.

It has been well documented that there has been a steady rise in educational participation rates over the years, resulting in higher levels of educational attainment for those seeking employment (IHD and ILO 2024). With increasing levels of educational attainment among a larger proportion of youth, the issue of (open) youth unemployment will become more and more a problem of educated youth. Among those educated to secondary level and above, female unemployment is 12.6% and male unemployment is 8.1%. This demonstrates that unemployment rises with educational level, as the educated prefer jobs that match their qualifications and aspirations. In Telangana, 20% of graduates and 20% of diploma/certificate holders are unemployed.

Youth unemployment is a growing concern in Telangana. According to some estimates (NSDC, 2018), there are around 37 lakh unemployed youth in Telangana, which is higher than the number estimated by the PLFS. As per the estimates based on the Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CMIE, 2018), 1.23 lakh persons (0.4% of the population aged 15 years and above) have received or are undergoing formal vocational training, of whom 40% belong to the 15-30 years age group; and 24% of them are females. The CMIE findings also reveal that 47.63% of the population aged 15 years and above in the state do not possess any skills; and the proportion of females is considerably higher in this segment. Within the above segment, only 2.6% are aware of formal skill development initiatives. Close to 13% of the unskilled persons are willing to enrol in formal training programmes.

For a majority of the working-age population in the state, employment—similar to the status at the national level—is characterised by informality. At the national level, 62% of wage/salaried workers do not have written contracts; 49.2% are not eligible for paid leave; and 53% do not have any social security. The equivalent figures for Telangana are 54.9%, 40.3%, and 46.7% respectively. Furthermore, joblessness increases with educational level. As for Telangana, 20% of graduates and 19.7% of diploma/certificate holders are unemployed.

In addition to the schemes introduced by the Government of India (Centrally Sponsored Schemes) and the state government (state sector schemes), the skills ecosystem of Telangana consists of a wide range of skilling initiatives. These initiatives impart

skills mostly focusing on vocational training blended with soft skills. The training interventions can be grouped into three categories: specialised training institutions or agencies attached to the respective parent Ministries/Departments of the Central and State Governments; foundations established by corporate entities, typically as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives; and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). They typically conduct short-term training programmes ranging from one week to a maximum of three months. However, data related to the post-training employment status of the beneficiaries is difficult to access. Additionally, the placement numbers that are disclosed are often inflated.

The existing literature on the subject of skill development and employment promotion interventions spotlights certain areas that have policy implications; these include: (1) Misalignment between skills and market needs; (2) The level of skill development is not sufficient to meet industry standards or requirements; (3) Lack of industry involvement in designing skilling programmes; (4) Excessive focus on supply-driven rather than demand-driven skill development interventions; (5) Weak industry-academia linkage and collaboration; (6) Inadequate infrastructure at training institutes and a shortage of qualified trainers; (7) Access and awareness barriers among target groups—which are reinforced by ineffective and grossly inadequate outreach interventions—particularly among women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities; (8) High turnover among those placed in employment; and (9) Placements are mostly in informal employment with low pay and low social security.

In the context of inclusive development, the skilling and employment needs of the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes merit concerted policy interventions, as the SCs constitute 17.4% of the state population (2024 Telangana caste survey) and are spread across all districts of the state.

6. Empirical Evidence: Findings from the Baseline Survey

This section focuses on: (1) The reach of—and coverage under—the existing skill development interventions and arrangements among the SC community in Telangana. (2) The employability of those who participated in skill development schemes or completed their training courses. (3) Major factors contributing to voluntary attrition on the part of those who secured salaried employment (4) Barriers encountered by the beneficiaries/students at different levels (5) Disparities, if any, based on gender, location (rural/urban), and sub-caste. (6) Policy implications emerging from the empirical evidence and some evidence-based and actionable policy recommendations.

7. Key Skilling Interventions

The skilling ecosystem of Telangana state is composed of a range of interventions, stakeholders, and implementation arrangements. Based on the responses from the sample respondents and the interactions with youth, the skilling interventions and arrangements can be grouped into the following categories: (1) Two flagship skilling initiatives launched by the Government of India, namely, the Centrally-Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY); and the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY). (2) Schemes implemented by the Government of Telangana, such as the TASK (Telangana Academy of Skills and Knowledge); and skill development and placement initiatives that are implemented by the SC Corporation.⁵ (3) Skilling interventions implemented by civil society organisations, which include NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) arms of the corporate sector. (4) Coaching classes and training sessions offered by private institutes and online ed-tech entities. (5) Coaching or training imparted by the educational institutions (both private and government) where the respondent student was studying; most of them reported such training under the “others” category in the survey.

The DDU-GKY is a key component of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). The scheme targets rural youth aged 15–35 years from poor households. It has a social inclusion component under which specific targets are fixed for beneficiary groups; 50% of the funds are earmarked for the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). It is implemented through the respective State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), in partnership with private Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). Soft skills (including English communication) and IT literacy are integral components of most training domains under the scheme, with a mandatory placement rate of 70% of trained youth.⁶ Additionally, the scheme offers financial incentives for post-placement retention.

⁵ The Telangana Scheduled Castes Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd under the Scheduled Castes Development Department (SCDD).

⁶ Self-employment is included in placements under skilling schemes such as the DDU-GKY.

As of November 2024, the DDU-GKY has achieved an overall placement rate of 65% since its inception in 2014, according to official statistics. The scheme mandates that at least 70% of the trained candidates be placed in employment. However, even the official placement rate falls short of the mandated target. Post-placement retention is defined as continued employment for 3 months (recently, this was extended to 6 months). Core sectors that provided jobs under the DDU-GKY include: textiles, IT-ITES, apparel, made-ups and home furnishings, retail, tourism, and hospitality. To achieve higher “placement” rates, the scheme also introduced incentives for the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) and started including self-employment and gig work in placement calculations.

Official data shows that 40% of the placed candidates leave their jobs even before the completion of the three-month period. Data on the long-term retention of the placed candidates (beyond three months) is not available or is patchy. A major factor contributing to post-placement dropouts is the mismatch between expectations and reality with respect to job roles, wages, and locations. Trainees with higher education levels are more likely to drop out upon learning job specifics. Women tend to have higher retention rates compared to men, possibly due to fewer alternative employment opportunities.

With respect to the PMKVY, at the state level, the scheme is implemented through the state-level nodal agency, that is, the State Skill Development Mission or Corporation). Skill development training is provided through Training Providers (TPs) and Training Centres (TCs) which are empanelled by the NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) to offer short-term skill training. The courses under the scheme are aligned to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF). The scheme’s core target group is composed of unemployed youth aged 15–45 years from both urban and rural areas. Successful candidates receive government-recognized certification and placement support is facilitated but not mandatory. Payouts are outcome-based, depending on training completion and certification. The Scheduled Caste trainees compose 15% of all trainees in the state, which is largely proportional to their share in the population. However, the corresponding SC share at the national level is 18%.

The state government prepares state-level skill development plans that are aligned with local needs and allocates targets to training partners (such as the PMKVY centres and government and private ITIs) based on the demand. Its role also encompasses monitoring training partners and helping trained candidates in securing jobs or internships. When it

comes to placements, official data shows a relatively high level of placement rate of 42% under the scheme (average rate for phases 1-3 of the PMKVY); and the corresponding figure for Telangana is 25%. Independent studies, however, show much lower rates, averaging 13%. As per official statistics, the overall retention rate under the scheme is 50%-60% after three months and 35% after six months. But according to independent evaluations, the short-term retention (3–6 months) rate varies between 40–60%, depending on the region and sector. Key factors affecting the scheme's performance related to placement and retention include: mismatch between training domains and the job market requirements; lack of alignment between aspirations and actual job roles; low wages; and the absence of post-placement monitoring and the lack of retention-related data.

The Telangana Academy of Skills and Knowledge (TASK)—set up by the Government of Telangana in 2014 to realise the synergy between government, academia, and industry—is aimed at improving the employability of the state's youth. The skill enhancement initiatives of TASK encompass both hard technical skills (particularly in STEM domains) and soft skills. As per official data, since its inception 10,42,553 students—representing 764 educational institutions—have participated in training and collaborative interventions of TASK, which include e-learning, soft skills, and internships. But the data also shows that only 3.5% of the trained students have been placed so far through facilitation from TASK.

8. Access to Skilling Interventions

The baseline survey found that, overall, 4.9% of the SC households have members (at least one) who have undergone some form of skilling or upskilling program in a range of institutions under a variety of schemes and arrangements. The findings clearly indicate a rural-urban divide, with urban areas reporting a higher level of participation (7.13%) than rural areas where only 4% of the households have skill development participants. Slicing of the data by sub-castes indicates a pattern where a marginally higher proportion of the *Malas* (6.54%) participated in skilling programs as against the *Madigas* and the other minor sub-castes (around 4%). The survey did not find any notable variation in the participation rates across income groupings such as income quintiles. The households with trained member(s) predominantly have only one trained member – 90% of them, while the remaining 10% of households have two such members.

Figure 3: Percentage of Households with Members (at least one) Who Attended Skill Development Programs



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey)

In terms of the educational level of those who attended skilling programs, undergraduates constitute the largest cohort (40%). This indicates that undergraduate education is the critical stage at which the youth choose either to learn new skills or enhance their skills. This is followed by those who completed higher secondary (intermediate or +2) and those pursuing technical or vocational courses such as diploma, polytechnic, and ITI courses, representing 14.5% and 13.5% of the trainees respectively. Those who completed masters' degree account for 10% of the trained persons, indicating that the enrolment levels in skilling programs sharply decline after the undergraduate stage. Those who studied up to tenth standard represent close to 20% of the trainees. The pattern emerging from primary data shows that the participation in skilling schemes and programs picks up momentum after the completion of 10th class, peaks after the undergraduate level, then experiences a sharp decline after the master's degree.

The primary data was also analysed to see what proportion of persons from each level of education were able to access skilling opportunities. The highest share (12.5%) of those who completed early vocational and technical education, that is, the broad category of those who have completed diplomas, polytechnic, and ITI courses, participated in skilling programs. This is followed by post-graduates, 5.7% of whom accessed skill development opportunities. Similarly, 5.2% of undergraduates reported having accessed skilling programs. Contrastingly, less than 2% of those with lower educational attainments—higher secondary (+2) and lower—have done so. The findings, therefore,

indicate relatively low levels of coverage under skilling interventions and the vast scope for expanding the coverage, particularly among undergraduates and post-graduates. In terms of the medium of instruction, only 7% of the skill development participants are from a Telugu-medium background, indicating an underrepresentation of Telugu-medium and rural area participants in skilling interventions.

As reported earlier, overall (across the sample households), 4.9% of the households reported at least one member who has undergone skill development program. To get more relevant and accurate results, the survey data was refined on the basis of the study findings related to the educational status of skill development participants. This was done by controlling for the households with members who are either non-literate or have primary education. The analysis revealed a higher proportion of households (7.8%) with members who attended skilling programs. Additionally, the largest share of the trained persons (35.5%) represent the households with members who have completed diplomas, polytechnic, and ITI courses. By contrast, only 15% of the households with postgraduates are represented in skilling programs. The corresponding representations from households with members with other educational levels are: Undergraduate (12.6%), intermediate (5%), secondary education (3.2%), and upper primary (3.7%).

When it comes to the age profile of the skill development trainees, they are mostly young, with those falling under the age range of 15-29 making up almost 75% of them. And 30-40 years age group represents close to 20% of those who accessed training initiatives, with those older than 40 years accounting for less than a tenth of them. This trend is consistent with the age profile of the trainees reported above. With respect to the marital status of the skill development participants, 40% of them are married; this proportion is higher among females at 44%, indicating a widespread trend in which marriage is not a barrier to skill development. It also reflects the economic imperative of more than one source of income for families. A look at the occupational profile of the skill development participants from rural areas shows that 50% of them are from households whose primary source of income is agriculture and casual labour in agriculture; and for another 15% of the households, non-farm casual wage employment is the main source of income. By contrast, urban households are much more diversified, with non-farm wage employment and salaried jobs in the private sector representing the primary source of income for close to 75% of urban households.

The SC youth have accessed skill development opportunities in a variety of ways. However, the largest proportion of them (71%) participated in skilling programs

offered by educational institutions (government and private) where they were enrolled; empanelled public sector institutions; coaching and training offered by private agencies; and a fraction of this cohort also reported self-training and *pro bono* coaching offered by friends and relatives. In other words, this category comprises two broad sub-sets: those who attended private training agencies (40%) and those who participated in training events conducted by educational institutions and public training facilities (60%).

In relative terms, government skilling interventions have a limited reach among the SC youth, as the findings show that less than 5% of the trained persons accessed the DDU-GKY; close to 6% of them attended the skilling programs offered by the SC Corporation; 4% of them reported participation in skill development initiatives in collaboration with the TASK (Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge); a sizeable segment of SC youth (6%) have benefited from the training programs conducted by civil society organisations (including those offered under Corporate Social Responsibility); and interestingly, nearly 9% of them were not cognisant of the scheme or the intervention under which they attended skill development sessions. Awareness levels about the PMKVY are extremely low; as a result, skill development under the scheme was not reported by the respondents. However, interactions with participants show that those enrolled under the PMKVY reported their respective educational institution as their skill development agency or scheme rather than the PMKVY (hence they were captured under “others”; this category also includes some students who attended skilling programs under the TASK).

Table 3: Scheme-wise coverage under skill development by location, gender, sub-caste and income quintiles (all figures are column percentages)

	Rural	Urban	M	F	Madiga	Mala	Other castes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	All
DDU-GKY	5.6	3.2	5.8	3.2	5.8	2.8	0	4.4	9.74	0.93	0.92	9.74	4.4
Edu institutions & pvt agencies	69.0	73.8	75.9	65.8	67.3	81.0	58.1	60.75	80.1	80.8	70.2	57.5	71.2
NGO	6.4	5.5	6.8	5.3	7.2	4.4	3.1	7.0	3.8	1.7	7.3	13.0	6.0
SC Corporation	7.5	3.2	4.2	6.9	3.8	7.4	11.0	2.0	3.0	7.5	6.1	5.7	5.5
TASK	1.3	7.4	1.0	7.4	6.2	1.2	0	21.3	1.7	0.6	0	1.6	4.1
Don't Know	10.0	6.7	6.1	11.1	9.4	3.0	27.6	3.9	1.3	8.2	15.2	12.3	8.5

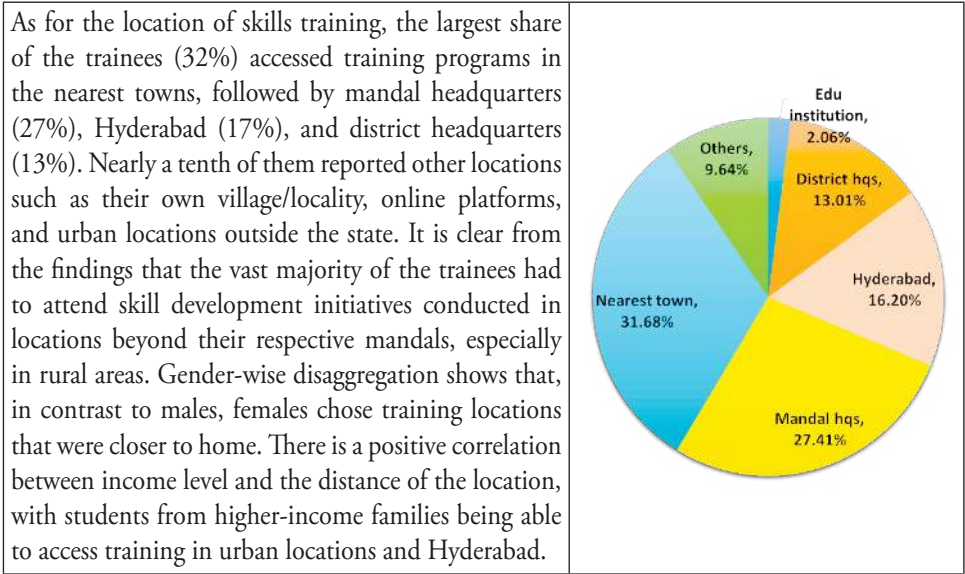
Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey). M=Male; F=Female; Q1=Quintile 1; Q5=Quintile 5. Household income quintiles are used. Q1 represents the bottom 20% and Q5 represents the top 20%; other quintiles fall in-between in that order.

The pattern that emerges from a comparison between the type of training attended and the level of education shows that the trainees with secondary and higher education attended private institutes and educational institutions such as ITIs. Considerable shares of undergraduates and postgraduates accessed skilling programs conducted under government initiatives such as the TASK and the DDU-GKY. Interestingly, nearly a tenth of the trained are not aware of the scheme or the initiative through which the training program was conducted (a sizeable segment of this category includes those who attended training centres/partners under the PMKVY, the DDU-GKY and TASK).

With respect to the medium of instruction of skill development participants, they predominantly come from English-medium education (95%). This clearly shows that those who study in Telugu medium are disproportionately underrepresented in skilling programs. Some of the trained youth (1% of them), who were unsuccessful in gaining employment, had chosen international migration to the Gulf countries.

As far as the temporal dimensions are concerned, only 15% of the trained youth participated in skill development activities prior to 2014 (before Telangana State formation); 34% of them underwent training programs between 2015 and 2019; and the remaining 51% attended skilling initiatives between 2020 and 2023. This clearly shows that most of the SC youth have accessed government-sponsored and self-supported skilling programs over the past 10 years.

Figure 4: Place of Training



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

Higher shares of undergraduates and postgraduates were able to access training programs conducted in Hyderabad, at educational institutions and at the district headquarters. Conversely, training participants with lower educational levels (up to secondary level) disproportionately attended training sessions closer to home, such as in the nearest town or the mandal headquarters. The vast majority of young trainees (15-29 years)—who make up the bulk of the participants—accessed skill development opportunities at the mandal headquarters and the nearest urban location. Nearly 20% of them attended skilling initiatives in Hyderabad, and a tenth of them did so at the respective district headquarters.

9. Domains of Skill Training

As evidenced by the survey results laid out in Table 4, basic computer skills are the most preferred domain of skill development, opted for by close to 40% of the trained SC youth. Gender-based differences are sharper than rural-urban variations in this regard, since a significantly higher proportion of girls (46%) attended training programs in this domain than boys (30%). Among the sub-castes, “other castes” have the lowest proportion of trainees (23%) compared to the *Malas* and the *Madigas* who reported 46% participation in computer skills.

After computer skills, the study found three areas of training that were preferred by a large proportion of SC youth; these are: home services (such as electrician, plumber, painter and interior designer); construction-related (such as centring, bricklaying, concrete mixing, plastering and flooring); and readymade garments. Nearly a tenth of the trainees had received training under each of the above domains. Mostly urban residents accessed construction-related skills as compared to their rural counterparts as just 1% of the trained persons from rural areas reported having attended training in construction skills. Additionally, the construction field is essentially a male domain since females had virtually no representation in it. Relatively, there is a higher level of diversity in the home services domain because there is no rural-urban disparity in the training participation levels, but gender disparity can be seen as only 3% of females reported the domain as against 16% by males. A slightly different pattern emerges in the case of readymade garments domain in that females reported a considerably higher participation (16%) as against just 2% of the male trainees. Moreover, training participation levels are significantly higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

In addition to tailoring, health and beauty care are among the areas preferred by females who reported higher levels of training participation. The areas with very

low levels of participation include agriculture, automobiles, culinary skills, leather products, marketing and media. However, soft skills are also among the sought-after areas, particularly for males. The “others” category predominantly consists of those preparing—or attending coaching classes—for competitive examinations.

Table 4: Skill development domains reported by the trained persons
(all figures are column percentages)

	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Madiga	Mala	Other castes	All
Accounting related	3.37	1.29	3.58	1.26	3.34	1.19	0	2.4
Agriculture related	1.8	0	1.93	0	1.19	0.75	0	0.96
Automobiles	2.75	0.14	3.07	0	1.59	1.73	0	1.53
Basic computer skills	36.06	39.96	29.84	45.74	46.69	24.78	22.91	37.87
Beautician	1.54	4.94	0	6.37	2.88	2.94	6.23	3.12
Coding	7.37	1.61	5.39	3.82	2.13	5.75	22.56	4.69
Construction related	0.77	17.6	16.82	0.46	0.54	25.12	0	8.61
Emerging Technologies	0.95	0.33	1.1	0.23	0.25	1.54	0	0.66
Food related	0.16	0	0.18	0	0	0.27	0	0.09
Hardware	1.13	2.17	3.24	0	1.16	0.6	10.74	1.62
Health related	3.46	2.08	1.04	4.69	3.03	1.56	7.1	2.82
Home services	9.66	8.96	16.14	2.63	9.61	10.08	3.15	9.33
Leather related	0	0.07	0.07	0	0	0	0.49	0.03
Marketing	1.45	0.7	1.64	0.57	1.29	0.34	3.15	1.1
Media	0.09	0	0.09	0	0	0	0.69	0.05
Readymade garments	11.42	4.85	1.67	15.34	8.55	8.25	7.18	8.36
Soft skills	5.83	5.48	9.67	0.89	6.67	4.54	2.19	5.67
Others	12.2	9.82	4.54	18	11.09	10.58	13.62	11.09

Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

The survey results related to the training domains of the participants in skilling initiatives, disaggregated by educational levels, are presented in Table 5. The priority accorded to the domains related to information technology (including coding) and soft skills rises with educational attainment, with a majority of undergraduates and postgraduates choosing these fields. The skill development options of those studied up to the intermediate level (+2) are more diverse, including (in addition to the basic computer or IT skills) “traditional” domains such as automobiles, beautician, agriculture-related, tailoring and readymade garments, and home services. There is a positive correlation between areas such as accounting and soft skills and educational level, with larger shares of trainees with higher education preferring these domains. Those with primary schooling have shown greater inclination towards traditional fields such as home services and readymade garments.

Table 5: Skill Development Domains by Educational Level of Trained Persons (all figures are column percentages) *

	Secondary (up to 10th)	Inter (+2)	Diploma, polytechnic, ITI, etc	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	All
Accounting and related	0	0	1.2%	3.1%	10.1%	2.4%
Agriculture related	3.3%	1.5%	1.4%	0	0	1.0%
Automobiles	5.6%	0	2.1%	0.4%	0	1.5%
Basic computer skills	15.3%	50.3%	4.0%	53.0%	59.0%	37.6%
Beautician	8.0%	7.6%	3.3%	1.7%	0	3.1%
Coding	0	0	0.3%	9.6%	8.4%	4.7%
Construction related	1.6%	0	61.7%	0.2%	0	8.6%
Emerging Technologies	0	0	4.1%	0	0	0.7%
Food related	0	0.6%	0	0	0	0.1%
Hardware	0	4.7%	1.5%	0.6%	5.3%	1.6%
Health related	0	4.2%	0	5.1%	0	2.8%
Home services	14.6%	4.3%	12.0%	3.8%	0	9.3%
Leather related	0.1%	0	0	0.05%	0	0.03%
Marketing	0	1.1%	0.8%	2.1%	0	1.1%
Media	0	0.3%	0	0	0	0.05%
Readymade garments	24.5%	10.2%	1.2%	2.6%	3.3%	8.4%
Soft skills	1.0%	3.6%	5.6%	6.8%	12.4%	5.7%
Others	26.0%	11.5%	0.8%	11.0%	1.6%	11.3%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Data related to the other educational categories is not presented in the table as these categories—“non-literate”, “primary”, “upper primary” and “others”—together constitute less than 10% of the training participants. Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

When it comes to the crucial dimension of the duration of the training period, the participants attended skill development courses for a mean duration of nearly five months (140 days). The minimum number of days of training reported was 10 days and the maximum reported duration was almost a year. More than half (56%) of the trainees incurred expenses during the training period related to course fees, transport, accommodation, and other incidental expenses. The mean expenditure incurred works out to Rs 11,300 and the maximum reported expenditure was Rs 2 lakh. These findings amply indicate that a majority of SC youth do not have access to free or low-cost skilling and coaching opportunities. This is largely due to the incidental expenses incurred by them.

10. Employability, Compensation, and Attrition

The concept of employability, as used in this paper, refers to a combination of skills or abilities that increase a person's likelihood of obtaining and retaining employment. It encompasses two complementary sets of skills. The first set consists of hard skills, which are teachable abilities or knowledge specific to a job or task; these are often acquired through education and experience. The other set encompasses soft skills, that is, interpersonal and behavioural attributes that affect how one interacts and works with others, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

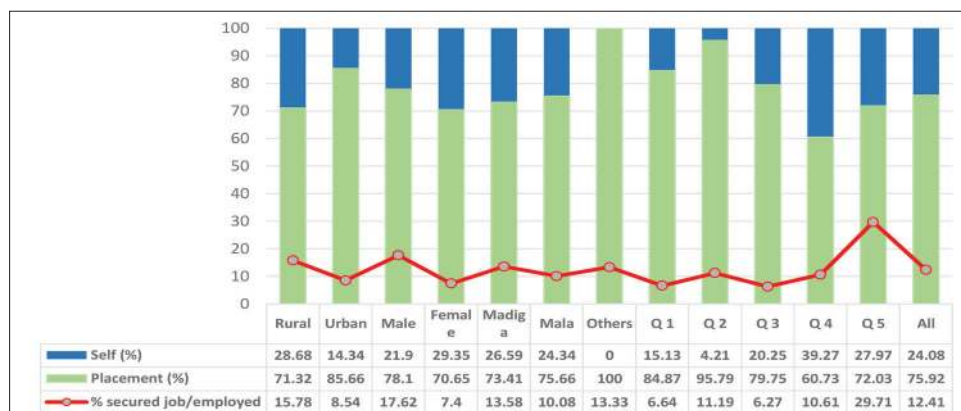
Skill development is expected to improve the employability of those who participate in skilling and upskilling interventions. This is typically achieved by matching the supply of skills with the demand for employment, thereby contributing to the broader goal of inclusive growth and development. Therefore, placement and post-placement retention rates are considered key performance metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of skill development initiatives. The baseline survey results with respect to the rate of post-training placements or employability indicate that it is relatively low, with only 12.5% of the trainees/students able to secure employment after the completion of their training or course (employment here refers to regular salaried jobs). Nevertheless, it needs to be added here that, in addition to the 12.5% reported here, another 32% of the trained persons became self-employed by starting a range of economic activities. Therefore, the overall “placement rate” rises to 44.5% if self-employment is considered under the placement rate. Because in some skilling schemes—the DDU-GKY and the PMKVY in particular—self-employment is also counted under placement, but it is subject to certain verification requirements.

But the salaried employment rate varies when this finding is disaggregated by gender, location, and other socio-economic characteristics. Rural areas reported higher levels of post-training employment than urban locations. Males have a higher proportion of employability (18%) compared to females (7%). The survey found a positive correlation between household income and the rate of post-training employment, with the employment level steadily rising along the income ladder. The top income quintile reported the highest placement rate of 30%. The share of trained persons launching self-employment ventures started rising from 2016 and reached its peak prior to the Covid pandemic. The proportion has witnessed a steady decline since the pandemic and has not yet reached the pre-pandemic level.

When it comes to the mode of securing jobs, overall, 76% of the trained youth were able to secure employment through placement facilitation provided by their respective institution or facility. The remaining quarter of them managed to get employment through their own efforts.⁷ Rural youth reported lower levels of placement support (71%) compared to their urban counterparts (86%). Similarly, males reported higher employment prospects (78%) through facilitation by their training institutions and agencies than females (71%). There is no strong association between household income status and access to employment by means of placement support. In stark contrast to the numerically large sub-castes (the *Madigas* and the *Malas*), minor and scattered sub-castes had to depend completely on placement services, as they were unable to gain employment on their own.

⁷ This shows that the placement targets set for the training partners are unrealistic and that the placement numbers provided by them are not entirely reliable.

Figure 5: Post-Training Salaried Employment Status and Mode of Placement



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey). The chart does not include data related to self-employment.

The educational level of the trainees and their post-training employment are closely associated. Broadly, the rate of post-training employment rises with the level of educational attainment. The rates of post-training employment at different levels of education are as follows (as against the overall rate of 12.4%): Primary (3.3%); upper primary (3.8%); secondary (7.7%); intermediate or +2 (12.2%); diploma, polytechnic, and ITI (17.1%); undergraduate (13.7%); postgraduate (11.2%); and other qualifications (19.2%). The trend shows that among undergraduates—who constitute the largest segment of trainees at 42%—the employment rate is relatively low, and among postgraduates, it is lower than the overall average. When it comes to gaining access to post-training employment through institutional facilitation, the shares of those with relatively higher educational attainments—intermediate, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels—are higher than the overall average of 76%, that is, 93.4%, 83.7%, and 87.8% respectively. Conversely, all trainees with basic education (up to the secondary level) accessed employment on their own, mostly semi-skilled work in the informal sector.

Close to a fifth (18.5%) of those who were unsuccessful in securing employment in the first instance made fresh attempts to gain employment. The proportion of youth making further attempts for a job is marginally higher in rural areas (22%) than in urban locations (15%). Similarly, trained youth from relatively poorer households and “other sub-castes” are more likely to make follow-up attempts to gain employment. With regard to the year of placement or employment, only 13% of the trained youth were able to get employment prior to 2014. Therefore (as shown below), most of them have secured employment after 2014, that is, between 2015 and 2023.

- <=2014 (13%)
- 2015-20 (34%)
- 2021-23 (53%)

The place of employment also matters in that the job locations show the spread of opportunities for those attending skill development programs. As evidenced by the findings reported in Table 6, the vast majority of the trained youth found employment outside—and away from—their native location or district. The capital Hyderabad is the most important destination for jobs as it accounts for more than half (52%) of the opportunities accessed by SC youth. The native district of the applicants accounts for only a third of the openings accessed by the trained persons. Nearly a tenth of them had to relocate to other districts to gain access to employment avenues. Close to 7% of the successful applicants secured jobs in other places, which include cities such as Bangalore and Chennai and home-based jobs. In terms of the level of education, a higher share of postgraduates were able to find jobs outside the state. The younger age group (15-29 years) is the most diverse category of the trained as far as the place of employment is concerned; a majority of them (55%) were placed in Hyderabad, followed by their home district (26%) and other districts of the state (12%). The rest found jobs in other locations, including those outside the state.

Table 6: Place of Work by Location, Gender, and Sub-Caste

	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Madiga	Mala	Other castes	All
Place of work (all figures are %)								
Hyderabad	50.37	53.79	55.59	41.5	48.66	45.4	100	51.47
Native district	33.52	32.71	27.31	47.67	34.27	39.69	0	33.26
Other district(s)	7.2	12.04	12.37	0	10.1	7.79	0	8.75
Other places	8.9	1.46	4.73	10.84	6.98	7.11	0	6.51
% of placed youth continuing in the job								
	54.06	69.66	61.79	52.47	58.28	56.36	76.37	59.06

Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

The successful youth accessed jobs in different domains with a range of roles or designations. The job roles reported by them are as follows:

1. Accounting (and related)
2. Health worker/nurse (including ASHA)
3. Hardware (including computer operator)
4. Customer service/relations

5. Data entry operator
6. Driver
7. Electrician
8. Lab technician
9. Marketing/sales executive
10. Photographer
11. Teacher
12. Tailor/designer
13. Mechanic or machine operator
14. Casual/contract worker
15. Receptionist
16. Police constable
17. Tele-caller

The level of education is also a key determinant of the type of employment accessed by the trained individuals – higher educational attainment means a higher proportion of them gaining access to white-collar and skilled jobs. As a result, those who studied up to the 10th standard ended up finding entry-level and even unskilled employment, with the reported roles including ASHA worker, mechanic, tailor and casual worker. Those with intermediate (+2) education reported the following jobs (in descending order of shares): hardware assistant, office trainee, sales executive, computer operator and data entry, driver, and assistant nutritionist. Jobs secured by those with diploma, polytechnic, and ITI qualifications are as follows (in descending order of importance): photographer, electrician, motor mechanic, fitter, receptionist, computer operator, manufacturing assistant, and shop owner (self-employed).

Postgraduates—who make up 10% of those who reported having undergone skills training—mostly secured jobs related to information technology and accounting; 45% of them were placed in the latter domain. The remainder could secure placements in the IT sector with the following roles (with respective percentages in brackets): BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) jobs (23%); data entry and enrolment roles (20%); and computer operator roles (12%). Undergraduates—who account for 40% of all persons who received training/coaching—represent not only the largest proportion of the trained individuals but also the most diverse category in terms of the range of

jobs secured by them. The job roles that they accessed are presented below, with the respective proportions in brackets:

1.	Computer operator	12.3%
2.	Constable (police)	12.1%
3.	Team member/trainee	11.4%
4.	Data Entry Operator	8.3%
5.	Salesperson/Supervisor	7.0%
6.	Customer service	5.9%
7.	Marketing/Sales executive	5.5%
8.	Telecalling	5.3%
9.	Private teacher	5.3%
10.	Computer trainer	4.4%
11.	Blouse designing	4.3%
12.	Welder specialist	3.2%
13.	Ward boy	3.1%
14.	Manufacturing executive	3.1%
15.	Mobile technician	2.6%
16.	Staff nurse and midwife	2.5%
17.	Photographer	1.3%
18.	Associate engineer	1.3%
19.	HR executive	1.1%

It is evident from the diversity of opportunities accessed by the trained graduates that they were absorbed primarily into the services sector, representing predominantly urban locations. The diversity also reflects the wide range of undergraduate courses pursued by respondents. It is also evident that a fraction of them succeeded in securing government jobs, taking advantage of the skill development programs and special coaching that they had undergone.

When it comes to compensation, the study found that the average starting salary per month across the roles was Rs 11,260. It is interesting to note that the mean remuneration levels do not vary much even when the data is disaggregated by individual and household characteristics such as gender, location (rural/urban), sub-caste status, and household income levels. And the maximum starting salary is Rs 40,000. When the findings are disaggregated by educational attainments, the resultant trend indicates that the monthly salary level rises with the educational level, with undergraduates

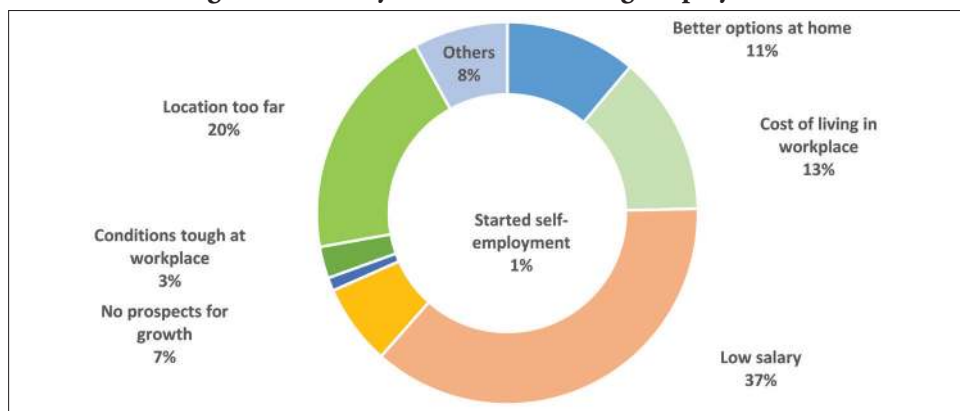
earning the highest average monthly remuneration of Rs 13,800. At the same time, the mean monthly compensation of post-graduates is lower than that of undergraduates. This indicates that additional qualifications after the first college degree, in general, does not result in higher compensation levels because most postgraduates, along with undergraduates, compete for and succeed in landing the same entry-level positions in the private sector.

It is clear from the survey results that the respondent youth, in general, were able to disproportionately access entry-level and low-paying positions. The findings also reflect relatively lower educational levels among the SC youth, particularly at higher education levels. However, the salary levels seem to be low in absolute terms but relative to the average household incomes of the Scheduled Castes in the state, the compensation levels do not seem to be that low (see Figure 1 for the mean household incomes of the SCs for both rural and urban areas).

Furthermore, as reported in Table 6, the study found high levels of voluntary attrition on the part of the employed youth, that is, 40% of them quit their jobs on account of a variety of factors. Females and those from rural areas reported slightly higher levels of job attrition. A more concerning finding of the survey is that there is a strong correlation between the level of education and the rate of attrition, that is, the higher the qualification, the higher the share of job leavers. The share of those leaving their job is 11% up to the intermediate (+2) level; and it sharply rises from the diploma level onwards, peaking at the postgraduate level. The reported attrition levels are 27%, 53% and 74% at diploma/polytechnic or ITI, undergraduate and postgraduate levels respectively.

The study also sought to account for the core factors contributing to the relatively high rate of attrition. The pattern emerging from the responses of those who left their jobs is presented in Figure 6. It shows that the main drivers of voluntary attrition include: low compensation (37%); tough working conditions (3%); high cost of living in the work location (14%); limited or no prospects for progression in the job (7%); and employment location being too far from home or native place (20%). Some workers (1%) preferred self-employment to salaried job. Other factors include – health issues and preparation for a better or government job.

Figure 6: Primary Reasons for Leaving Employment



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

In addition to the shared factors reported by others (such as low compensation and cost of living at the work location), the largest share of postgraduates (35%) reported the availability of better opportunities for leaving their job; the corresponding rate among undergraduates is 15%. The baseline survey also ascertained the status of those who had undergone training or coaching but were unsuccessful in securing a job. The findings reveal that 40% of them remained unemployed and 32% of them chose self-employment, mostly in activities that are unrelated to their skill domains (see below). Additionally, 3% of them (from rural areas) were engaged in agriculture. Almost a quarter of them reported other options such as: continuing their studies; preparing for a government job; being a home maker in the case of women; and still undergoing training or upskilling.

Self-employment emerged as the most favoured livelihood option for the unsuccessful youth. But almost every one of them (98%) launched their ventures without government financial assistance or support under any government scheme. They basically started a wide range of enterprises in the services sector, with trade and retailing being the most widespread activities; common types of activities include retail shops such as grocery stores, passenger and goods transport (such as autorickshaws/cars and vans), restaurants, beauticians, and vehicle servicing. This finding underscores the policy imperative of creating an ecosystem that is conducive to promoting entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Castes, particularly in light of the low employability and relatively high attrition rates among them.

When we look at the educational levels of those who remained unemployed, the survey findings reveal that the highest proportion of postgraduates (72%) reported that they

were out of a regular job. The corresponding share among undergraduates is 41%. Almost half (47%) of those who studied up to 10th and 12th standard (intermediate) were also out of regular work post-training. The shares of those who chose self-employment are higher than the overall average among those who studied up to 10th standard. Conversely, self-employment levels are much lower among undergraduates and postgraduates, that is, 21.2% and 6.1% respectively. The proportion of those who were either pursuing higher studies or preparing for competitive examinations is highest (35%) among undergraduates, compared to 14% among postgraduates. A tiny fraction (1%) of the unemployed have chosen international migration, mostly to the Gulf countries. By contrast, internal migration in general is not undertaken by those who are unsuccessful in gaining employment.

Service Sector Jobs in Hyderabad: A Distant Dream for SC Youth?

As a booming hub of the services sector—riding the wave of the IT sector—Hyderabad has been the engine of the state’s growth. The fast-growing city, with business-friendly policies and a large talent pool, attracts large-scale investments from both domestic and foreign investors. In addition to the well-paid core IT domain jobs, Hyderabad also generates entry-level openings in a broad range of services. The gig economy is thriving with ever-rising demand for gig workers. But these opportunities are mostly accessed by local youth and those from peri-urban areas. Due to a shortage of skilled local talent, many business entities hire youth from other states. Interactions with educated Scheduled Caste youth—who predominantly live in rural areas of Telangana—reveal that they encounter several barriers in accessing entry-level jobs in Hyderabad and other urban locations (such as district headquarters); these include: a lack of the required job-specific hard or technical skills and soft skills—communication skills in English/Hindi in particular—high cost of living, long and odd working hours, and no or limited scope for making a career. They are also of the view that the jobs are okay for bachelors, but they cannot support their families with such meagre earnings (unless the spouse also works to chip in). Government jobs and self-employment still remain preferred options for the SC youth.

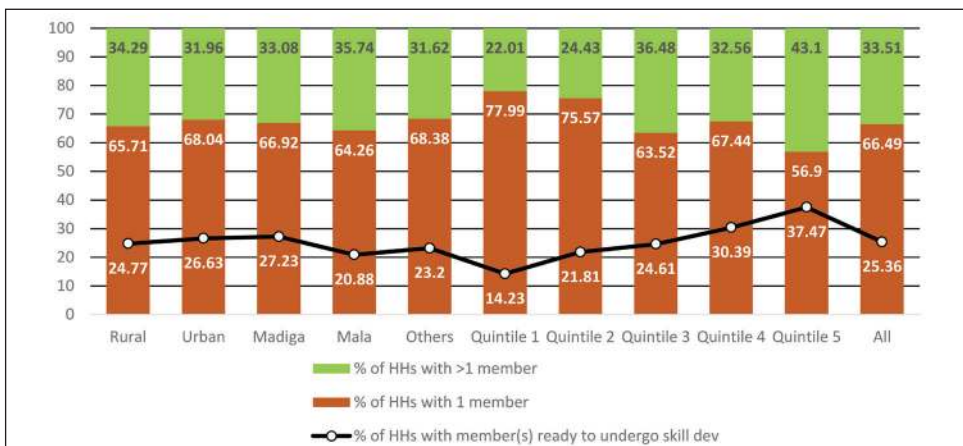


11. Unmet Demand for Skill Development and Support Required

The survey also ascertained the level of unmet demand for skilling opportunities among the SC households. The findings show that across the state, 25% of the SC households stated that they have members (at least one) who are willing to participate in skill development initiatives (see the following section for more refined findings). Among the sub-castes, a higher share of the *Madiga* households (27%) have members who are ready to attend skilling programs. The corresponding figures for the *Mala* and the other sub-castes are 21% and 23% respectively. The pattern also indicates that the demand (in terms of the proportion of the households) for skills acquisition steadily rises as one goes up the income ladder, with the fifth income quintile reporting the highest proportion of nearly 38%, as against 14% in the first income quintile.

Additionally, 66% of the households with skills-seeking members reported only one such member while the remaining 34% reported two such members. The percentage of households with two willing members for skill development increases with the income level of the household with the bottom quintile showing the lowest proportion of 22% while the top quintile representing the highest share of 43%.

Figure 7: Level of Fresh Demand for Skill Development by Key Household Characteristics



Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

The proportion of households who conveyed their readiness to participate in skill development programs rises to 33% (from the overall raw level of 25%) when the data is refined by controlling for households that are unlikely to participate in such programs (households with non-literates and those studied up to primary level). The level and the

spread of fresh demand from the SC households for skill development by educational level is presented in Table 7. Households with postgraduates reported the highest level of willingness (41.3%) for skill development, closely followed by households with undergraduates. Over 30% of the households with educational levels of intermediate and vocational education conveyed their readiness for skill development. The trend shows a positive correlation between educational level and demand for skill development, with the level of willingness rising with the educational level of households.

Table 7: Fresh demand for skill development by educational levels of household members

Households with members (at least one) with respective level of education	% of households ready to attend skilling programs
Postgraduate	41.3%
Undergraduate	40.5%
Intermediate (+2)	35.5%
Diploma/Polytechnic/ITI	33.1%
Secondary (8th to 10th)	25.6%
Upper primary (6th and 7th)	23.1%
All	32.7%

Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey).

The survey also captured feedback from the trained youth who were unsuccessful in securing employment post-training (87% of the trained cohort); they were asked what type of support they required. The response pattern is laid out in Table 8. It shows that skills enhancement is the most important form of support reported by the largest share of them (42%). This mode of support consists of two types – upgradation of core skills related to their respective fields or domains and acquisition of new skills that are in demand in the labour market. Nearly a third of the aspiring youth stated that they need financial support to launch an enterprise or become self-employed. This trend is more pronounced among relatively poorer households. The corresponding proportion is highest among females at 52%, as against 26% among males— indicating a high level of preference for self-employment among educated females. Regarding the sub-castes, the *Madigas* have the lowest share of youth (27%) preferring entrepreneurship and self-employment, in comparison with 43% and 36% among the *Malas* and the other sub-castes respectively.

Soft skills, particularly interpersonal and communication skills—reported by 10% of the aspiring youth representing the entire socio-economic spectrum of the SC community— emerged as one of the most preferred domains of skills training which

is complementary to the hard skills mentioned above. Another noteworthy and widespread type of support is related to the lack of access to equipment, devices, and tools related to their field, reported by more than 7% of the youth. Close to 5% of the trained youth conveyed the imperative of providing apprenticeship opportunities for the unemployed. The need for apprenticeship is more pronounced in rural areas (6%) in contrast with urban areas (2%); and it is higher among males (5%) than females (2%), and it is also higher in the top income quintile (6%) than in the bottom income quintile (2%).

Table 8: Support Needed for Those Who Were Unsuccessful in Getting a Job by Location, Gender, Sub-Caste and Income Quintiles (all figures are percentages)

	Rural	Urban	M	F	Madiga	Mala	Other castes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	All
Apprenticeship or experience	5.9	2.0	4.9	1.9	4.0	3.5	8.8	2.2	9.6	2.1	3.3	5.7	4.2
Soft skills	10.1	9.9	9.5	11.7	12.2	7.8	0.8	9.8	10.6	9.4	10.4	10.7	10.1
Study equipment	6.8	7.6	8.4	3.6	8.3	5.6	4.9	9.6	6.5	3.6	10.6	9.0	7.3
Financial support for business or self-employment	28.7	36.9	25.8	52.3	26.7	42.6	35.5	38.8	30.6	36.3	27.0	26.7	32.3
Core skill upgradation	23.5	17.8	24.1	11.6	22.8	18.4	16.5	20.3	18.0	25.3	19.4	18.2	21.0
Skill upgradation	19.1	23.9	22.	17.26	21.2	18.8	33.	18.0	22.7	19.9	25.2	21.5	21.2
Others	3.1	1.0	2.7	0.6	2.8	1.5	0	0	1.6	2.	2.1	4.2	2.2
No support needed	2.3	0.6	1.8	0.8	1.7	1.6	0	1.0	0	0.9	1.8	3.7	1.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary data (SC baseline survey). M=Male; F=Female; Q1=Quintile 1; Q5=Quintile 5

Broadly, there is a negative correlation between educational level and the propensity for self-employment, with the proportion of the training participants who want to launch their own ventures declining as the educational level rises – this proportion being the lowest among post-graduates. Other forms of intervention reported by a tiny segment of the aspiring youth include: accommodation and financial support when they attend training programs or coaching sessions in Hyderabad, district headquarters and other urban locations; placement guarantees after the completion of training or coaching; and visa facilitation to access economic opportunities in other countries, particularly in the Gulf countries.

12. Conclusion and Policy Implications

High and sustained growth rates—which are reflected in the rising per capita incomes—at the national level as well as in Telangana, have not resulted in a commensurate level of employment generation. The services sector has emerged as the leading sector in creating quality employment. Youth unemployment, in particular, has emerged as a significant challenge for governments. Paradoxically, the youth unemployment rate rises with the level of education. As a result, skill development has been prioritised since the early 2000s with a view to bridging the skill gap and equipping the youth to access jobs that are in demand. The establishment of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2014 signifies a watershed in the skill development landscape. The launch of two flagship initiatives—the PMKVY and the DDU-GKY—has set the national agenda in this domain and led to the standardisation of skilling interventions across the country.

Against this background, this working paper presents the findings of a comprehensive survey of the Scheduled Castes in Telangana in terms of the reach of the skill development initiatives; the trades or domains in which the SC youth underwent skill development programs; the employability of the trained; key factors contributing to attrition among the employed; fresh demand for skilling; stakeholder feedback; and policy implications.

The study found that so far only 7.8% of the SC households with educated working-age members have attended skilling programs (the corresponding figure is 5% when the data is unadjusted for educated members). The factors contributing to this are not far to seek. The skilling ecosystem is characterised by a multiplicity of schemes, partners, and stakeholders, leading to implementation bottlenecks and confusion among the aspiring youth. This is particularly so at the implementation interface between the implementing agencies and the target group. There is a lack of interdepartmental convergence for skill planning and implementation. For instance, some courses are offered under multiple schemes. The need for synergy becomes all the more apparent. Coordination between the Ministries at the Centre and Departments at the state level is critical for more effective implementation.⁸

⁸Apart from the MSDE, over 20 Central Ministries are implementing skilling or upskilling programmes through a range of schemes.

Interactions with SC youth reveal that there is a widespread lack of awareness among the prospective youth about skill development and training interventions and their implementation arrangements. Most educated youth are willing to participate in skilling and upskilling schemes, but they say that they are unaware of how such programs are implemented on the ground. Moreover, the baseline survey uncovered that some of the skill development participants themselves (nearly 10% of them) were unaware of the scheme or initiative under which they had been trained.

Skill development interventions have limited outreach, particularly in rural areas. The extremely low level of internet access among the SC community has also contributed to low levels of registration for skilling programs. Although most households do have access to mobile data, a lack of awareness about the schemes acts as a barrier to downloading the mobile apps for online enrolment (such as the apps to access the DDU-GKY and the PMKVY). Interactions with youth across the sample locations reveal that they prefer WhatsApp messages and SMS alerts about skill development and employment opportunities. The survey found that 95% of the SC households in the state use a mobile phone and 74% of them use a smartphone. In fact, 91% of the skill development participants covered by the survey use smartphones. These findings underscore the need for a decentralised awareness drive that takes local partners on board (such as NGOs, Panchayats, Municipalities, and community representatives) in implementing strategies such as enrolment camps, mobile kiosks, and offline registration facilitation.

The participation of youth in the existing skill development interventions and avenues (government schemes as well as self-supported) is low and the access is much lower for rural youth. When participation levels are correlated with educational attainment, the results indicate relatively low coverage of skilling interventions among undergraduates and postgraduates (only 5.2% of the former and 5.7% of the latter accessed skilling programs). This finding underscores the need to enhance the coverage of skilling initiatives for undergraduates and postgraduates.

In contrast to this, the survey found a relatively high level of unmet demand for skilling, as 25% of the surveyed households have at least one member willing to participate in skill development programs. This proportion rises with household income, with 37% of the top quintile households reporting at least one member ready to undergo training. A higher share of *Madiga* households (27%)—compared to 21% of *Mala* households—reported such willing members. This indicates that the existing skilling initiatives have not reached the vast majority of prospective candidates eligible for skill development

schemes. This finding highlights the imperative of launching targeted campaigns to enroll SC youth in skill development interventions.

With respect to training or skilling facilities, the SC youth reported the inaccessibility of training facilities which are mostly located in Hyderabad, district headquarters and other urban areas. Nearly 60% of the trained youth incurred expenses to participate in training programs. Mandal headquarters and nearby towns or urban locations are preferred for skill development so that they can attend training programs by commuting.

The low level of access to government skilling initiatives is also reflected in the survey finding that a sizeable proportion of trained youth had undergone coaching or training programs offered by private entities. The study found that the employability of the trained individuals is low. Overall, only 12.5% of them were able to secure jobs post-skilling or training. Female employability is significantly lower (7.4%) compared to that of males (18%). The highest rate of placements (30%) was reported by the top income quintile, indicating that the interventions need to prioritise poorer SC households. In addition to the 12.5% placement rate in salaried employment, another 32% of trained individuals became self-employed by starting a range of economic activities. However, most of them launched self-employment ventures in areas unrelated to their training. Therefore, the study found a positive correlation between skill development and self-employment. What is more noteworthy is that they ventured into self-employment without government support or facilitation.

There is a mismatch between the training domains accessed by the participants and employment opportunities in the labour market. An analysis of the job roles reported by skill development participants—excluding those with high qualifications—shows that a majority of them were able to access entry-level jobs with relatively low compensation. The average starting compensation is Rs 11,260 across the job roles and the maximum starting salary is Rs 40,000. Undergraduates reported a mean starting salary of almost Rs 14,000. These compensation levels are low relative to the cost of living in urban areas—such as Hyderabad and district headquarters—where placements are secured. Paradoxically, the survey found a significant positive correlation between educational level and unemployment rate post-training, with postgraduates reporting the highest level (72%) of unemployment, followed by undergraduates at 41%.

Additionally, as many as 40% of those who secured employment quit their jobs. The relatively high voluntary attrition rate among the employed is a cause for concern. The following factors or challenges reported by the respondents need to be addressed: low compensation levels relative to the high cost of living in urban locations; tough working conditions; lack of prospects for growth or career advancement; and working location being too far from home or native place. Focus Group Discussions conducted with educated youth also provide useful insights. They state that it is very difficult to establish families in urban areas and make a decent living with a single source of income. Post-placement monitoring of the trained individuals remains a persistent weakness in the skilling ecosystem, making the goal of decent and sustainable employment largely unattainable. Additionally, any post-training tracking mechanism covering both placement and retention needs to include disaggregated data—such as district-wise data—so that targeted interventions can be initiated. For instance, the survey found that candidates from urban areas—and those from more urbanised districts—are overrepresented in skilling initiatives.

The baseline survey also captured the unmet demand for skill development, as 25% of SC households have at least one member willing to participate in such programs. This finding further corroborates the limited reach of the existing skilling interventions among the SCs. The level of unmet demand for skilling climbs to 33% (of households) when the data is refined by excluding the households that are unlikely to participate in such programs. Additionally, households with postgraduates reported the highest level of willingness (41.3%) for skill development, closely followed by households with undergraduates (40%).

Feedback collected from the aspiring youth who were unsuccessful in securing employment or launching self-employment ventures indicates the following modes of support: the need to enhance core in-demand academic skills, as well as soft skills and relevant skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship; opportunities for apprenticeships; financial support for launching their own enterprises; and the need to supply or provide access to devices, equipment, and tools related to their respective fields.

Skill development facilities and training centres should be accessible to rural youth so that they can reach them by commuting. Alternatively, training needs to be imparted through a fully residential mode. Since affirmative action policies are inapplicable to the

private sector, it is imperative to extend preferential treatment to SC applicants under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirements.

Self-employment has emerged as the preferred livelihood option for the largest proportion (32%) of those who were unsuccessful in securing salaried employment. But nearly all of them (98%) launched their ventures without government financial assistance or support. They primarily started a diverse range of enterprises in the services sector, with trade and retailing being the most widespread activities. This underscores the policy imperative of creating an ecosystem that is conducive to promoting entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Castes, particularly in light of their low employability and relatively high attrition rates.

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**Annexure I: Labour Force Participation Rates (%) in Usual
Status (ps+ss) for Age Group 15-29 Years (All India)**

Year	Rural			Urban			Rural + Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
2023-24	65.1	30.8	48.1	59.9	23.8	42.6	63.5	28.8	46.5
2022-23	65.5	25.8	45.9	58.4	20.8	40.7	63.5	24.5	44.5
2021-22	62.1	22.3	42.6	58.9	20.2	40.6	61.2	21.7	42.0
2020-21	60.6	22	42	59	19	39.9	60.1	21.1	41.4
2019-20	60.8	20.7	41.3	58.3	20.3	40	60	20.6	40.9
2018-19	58.8	15.8	37.8	58.6	17.1	38.7	58.8	16.2	38.1
2017-18	58.9	15.9	38.1	58.5	17.5	38.5	58.8	16.4	38.2

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (2023-24), NSSO, GoI

**Annexure II: Labour Force Participation Rates (%) in Usual
Status (ps+ss) for Age Group 15-29 Years (Telangana)**

Year	Rural			Urban			Rural + Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
2023-24	67.7	35.5	51.7	61.9	27.4	45	65.2	32.1	48.8
2022-23	59.9	30.7	46.4	52.8	20.5	37.4	57.1	26.6	42.8
2021-22	61.5	31.7	46.8	56.6	23.3	40.5	59.7	28.6	44.5
2020-21	57.7	28	44.2	56.1	20.7	39	57.1	24.8	42
2019-20	57.5	32.7	44.9	60.5	25.1	44.4	58.8	29.7	44.7
2018-19	54.2	28.3	40.9	59.1	21	40.4	56.5	25.1	40.7
2017-18	59.3	24.5	42.8	60	22	40.2	59.6	23.4	41.7

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (2023-24), NSSO, GoI

**Annexure III: Share (%) of Self-Employed among Workers in
Usual Status (ps+ss) - India and Telangana**

Year	India			Telangana		
	Category	Rural	Urban	Category	Rural	Urban
2023-24	Male	59.4	39.8	Male	67.6	37
	Female	73.5	42.3	Female	61.9	38.8
	Person	64.7	40.4	Person	65.1	37.5
2022-23	Male	58.8	39.4	Male	73.2	37.7
	Female	71	40.4	Female	65.4	36.4
	Person	63	39.6	Person	69.9	37.3
2021-22	Male	58.6	39.5	Male	39.1	40.2
	Female	67.8	39.4	Female	69.7	34.5
	Person	61.5	39.5	Person	74	38.8
2020-21	Male	59.7	39.9	Male	68.6	33
	Female	64.8	38.4	Female	61.3	34.8
	Person	61.3	39.5	Person	65.5	30.7
2019-20	Male	58.4	38.7	Male	59.5	33
	Female	63	34.6	Female	48.5	32.3
	Person	59.8	37.8	Person	54.7	32.8
2018-19	Male	57.4	38.7	Male	37.6	30.1
	Female	59.6	34.5	Female	43.9	33.1
	Person	58	37.8	Person	54.1	30.8
2017-18	Male	57.8	39.2	Male	59.9	30
	Female	57.7	34.7	Female	54.7	31.4
	Person	57.8	38.3	Person	58.1	30.3

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (2023-24), NSSO, GoI

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