

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
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**Policy Options for Scaling up  
Apprenticeship Programme  
The Case of Karnataka**

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## Foreword

India is poised for a demographic dividend in the next few decades, due to an increase in the proportion of the young and working age group in the total population. Such a rise in the youth population is a window of opportunity as it reduces the ratio of dependents to total workers, leading to higher rates of savings, investment and growth. This change in the age structure, if properly utilised, will result in a demographic dividend, which provides immense growth opportunities to the nation. The provision of employable skills to youth remains an important challenge on the path to reap the opportunities of the demographic dividend.

Despite the policy focus on skill development from the 11th Five-Year Plan onwards, India still faces the dual challenges of paucity of a skilled workforce as well as non-employability of large sections of the educated youth for not having employable skills. Data provided by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) shows that only 2.4% of the Indian workforce has undergone formal skill training and another 8.6% has received non-formal vocational training. This indicates that only a fraction of the youth will be entering the labour force with vocational training.

Against this background, apprenticeship programmes become important as these will not only accelerate skill development, but also help to tackle the low employability of youth. Apprenticeship programmes all over the world have gained from increased productivity and higher incomes for those completing an apprenticeship. Despite this, the apprenticeship programmes in India as well as in Karnataka are still at the nascent stage. In 2016-17, the total number of apprentices gaining admission in Karnataka was only 3,039. This is tiny compared to a large number of youth obtaining skills and the large number of industries present in the state.

Against this background, this monograph on “Policy options for scaling up apprenticeship programme: The case of Karnataka” seeks to analyse the potential for apprenticeship in Karnataka by broad divisions and factories. Readers of this monograph will find that Bangalore and Mysore divisions have the highest gap between the potential in terms of establishments and the actual number of apprentices engaged by industrial establishments. The study also identifies the factories that have a large potential to engage apprentices for skill development and better employability. The garments and engineering industries have considerable potential to engage apprentices.

Readers will learn from a historical overview of the apprenticeship policy in India in this monograph that the policy, although expanded in the scope, coverage and its functionalities, has fallen short of expectations in terms of improving the employability of skilled workers. The monograph therefore provides lessons from the experience of apprenticeship from countries such as Germany, Australia and Switzerland, specifically, in terms of developing a systematic apprentice curriculum, greater involvement of stakeholders, reduction in the regulatory burden on the enterprises, apprentice payment, etc. An important lesson is that there is a need for the inclusion of apprentice training at the school level in a bid to mitigate the widespread problem of informal employment in the country.

Karnataka government formulated a policy to expand the apprenticeship programmes in a phased manner and facilitate the provision of training to 3.5 lakh people from 2020 onwards. In this context, the monograph reveals that the trades, in which apprenticeship is to be provided, should reflect the changing requirements of the economy in terms of work participation, GDP, the changing technology and trade opportunities. The policy makers will benefit from the challenges identified and policy suggestions made in this monograph in scaling up the apprenticeship programmes in India in general and in Karnataka in particular.

While the apprenticeship programmes are yet to scale greater heights in Karnataka, efforts should be made not only to increase their coverage and scope but also to ensure effective implementation of the same so that it enables individuals from different strata of society and from different regions to access and benefit from the apprenticeship schemes implemented. The authors of the monograph need to be commended for coming up with a timely and policy oriented research study on scaling up of the apprenticeship programmes that is very much needed for improving the employability among youth, providing decent work and livelihoods and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that call upon the governments to substantially increase the number of youth and adults having relevant technical and vocational skills by 2030.

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