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## 70% Youth Unaware of Govt's Skill Development Programmes: WEF

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Seventy percent of youth are unaware of government-run skill development programmes in their area, yet more than seventy percent are very interested in pursuing skills training, according to a “Young India and Work” study by the Observer Research Foundation and World Economic Forum.

- The findings, released recently, sheds light on a disconnect between youth sentiments and government's skill development programme.
- The study surveyed a random sample of almost 6,000 youth between 15 and 30 about employment and aspirations.

### Context

- About 1.3 million people enter the working age population in India every month.
- The half of the country's population of 1.3 billion is below the age of 25, there is a demographic advantage to be realised.
- While it is clear that this will be realised in the context of technological disruption (emergence of Artificial Intelligence, Machine learning, Big data, etc.) and in the wake of dramatic changes in the economy and labour market, managing these transformations and truly leveraging the possibilities they present, will require an understanding of the expectations and aspirations of India's youth.

### Findings of the Report

- **Higher education degrees are highly valued, but youth also want new skills:** 96 percent of respondents hope to achieve a bachelor's degree or higher. 76 percent of respondents reported being very interested in pursuing skills development training.
- **Factors considered while looking for a job:** Good salaries, ample opportunities for promotion and career development, and job security.

- **While youth prefer public sector jobs, there is discernible interest in entrepreneurship:** 49 percent of youth prefer a job in the public sector. On the other hand, 38 percent of youth selected self-employment as an entrepreneur as their ideal type of job.
- **The IT Industry is the largest employer of youth:** 17 percent of employed respondents in this survey report working in information technology, communications and telecommunications making the IT industry the largest employer of surveyed youth.
- **More than a third of surveyed youth are neither employed nor in education:** 34 percent of all surveyed youth are neither employed, nor in education.
  - The majority of respondents in the 15-20 age bracket are in education.
  - However, over 30 percent of 21 to 25-year-olds reported being neither employed nor in education. Fifty percent of female respondents in the 26-30 age bracket reported being neither employed nor in education.
- **Women prefer full-time careers, have less paid work experience, and feel less prepared:** 82 percent of female youth prefer full-time employment as their ideal time commitment for work.
  - The survey also reveals that men have more paid work experience than women, with 28 percent of male respondents between the ages of 26-30 years having four or more years of paid work experience compared to 18 percent of female respondents.
  - Overall, men also report feeling more prepared for their ideal job than women.
- **Areas of Disconnect between policies and aspirations of youth:** Seventy percent of youth are unaware of government-run skill development programmes in their area. The low training participation — roughly three-fourths of the youth have never enrolled in a skills development programme — was mostly due to **financial barriers, time constraints and the delay between skills training and finding an appropriate job.**
  - Youth were willing to move for work, but companies emphasized recruiting locally.
  - **Job searches have gone digital but employers and recruiters have not:** 81 percent of respondents report relying on media and internet sources for information and updates on available employment opportunities. On the other hand, a mere 14 percent of companies are using online sources for recruitment.

- **Information asymmetry, lack of guidance and work experience are impeding Indian youth from meeting their career aspirations:** 51 percent of youth report that the **lack of guidance** in identifying jobs that match their skill sets is the main barrier they face when looking for a desirable job.
  - 41 percent of youth view their **lack of work experience** as the main barrier.
  - Further, 49 percent of youth feel that **interaction with industry professionals is the most valuable form of guidance**. This is closely followed by interaction with professional career counselors.
  - 81 percent of youth view internships or apprenticeships as important for getting hired.

## Way Forward

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- The key findings of the survey point to a high level of optimism and ambition among Indian youth with regard to their future.
- India has the opportunity to build a productive and inclusive future of work in the wake of technological disruption.
- However, meaningful strategies for managing these transformations cannot evolve in isolation; the expectations and aspirations of young India must be built into solutions for them to be successful.