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Transition to work roles among youth in Jharkhand

Enabling young people to make a successful transition to work roles is one of the thrust areas of the Jharkhand Youth Policy.^a Indeed, two of the six objectives delineated in the Policy are directed towards achieving this goal: (1) promoting education, vocational education and training opportunities for youth and facilitating access to information, guidance and employment; and (2) creating an enabling environment for sustainable and gainful livelihood, employment, financial credit and other services.

This policy brief documents the extent to which youth in the state are equipped to make a successful transition to work roles and the extent to which they are indeed making that transition. Specifically, are they transitioning into work roles at appropriate ages and with adequate skills? Are opportunities available that enable youth to overcome skill mismatches through vocational skills training? Are youth succeeding in finding productive employment and becoming integrated into the labour market? Looking at the current employment situation of youth in Jharkhand, this policy brief argues that significant investment in terms of appropriate policies and programmes are required to improve the employability of youth in the state and thereby enable them to find full and productive employment.

The study

Data are drawn from the *Youth in India: Situation and Needs* study, a sub-nationally representative study undertaken for the first time in India of key transitions experienced by young people in six states of India, including Jharkhand. The study included a representative survey of youth in both rural and urban settings. Respondents included unmarried women and men and married women aged

15–24 and, in view of the paucity of married men in these ages, married men aged 15–29.

In Jharkhand, the survey was conducted in 2006. A total of 8,814 married and unmarried young women and men were interviewed in the survey. These included 2,684 married young women, 2,730 unmarried young women, 1,259 married young men and 2,141 unmarried young men. This brief is based on data obtained from 2,637 young men and 5,414 women aged 15–24.

The majority of youth were poorly equipped for employment

Findings from the Youth Study indicate that the majority of youth in the state were poorly equipped for employment for which there is a market demand. Most youth were neither adequately educated nor equipped with vocational skills.

Few had completed secondary education

Just one in three young men (32%) and one in six young women (16%) had completed secondary education, increasingly a prerequisite to participate in the labour market in the context of globalisation.^{b c} Indeed, as many as one in seven young men and two in five young women had never been to school at all in the state.

Few had acquired vocational skills

A number of vocational training programmes are available to youth through government, non-government and private organisations. However, findings indicate that just 18% of young men and 14% of young women had ever attended a vocational training programme.

Moreover, findings show that the kind of training received varied by the sex of the

^a Department of Art, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Jharkhand. 2007. *Jharkhand Youth Policy 2007*. Accessed 1 November 2008 at <www.jharkhandonline.gov.in/depts/culsp/Revised_Final_Jharkhand_Youth_Policy.pdf>.

^b United Nations. 2007. Goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy: Report of the Secretary

^c National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. 2005. *Growing up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries*, Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press

respondent. Most young women who had received vocational training had typically acquired traditional skills. For example, almost two in three (64%) reported training in tailoring and almost two in five in handicrafts, painting or embroidery, compared to less than one in five (18%) who reported training in computer skills. Young men were far less likely to report training in traditional skills (just 4% and 13% reported training in tailoring and crafts, for example). Indeed, among young men, leading training programmes reported included computer skills (32%), auto mechanics or electrical work (24%), driving (12%) and English language, typing or shorthand (11%).

Findings also show that large proportions of youth—66% of young men and 74% of young women—were interested in acquiring vocational skills. While young men’s preferences were focused on computer training, auto mechanics or electrical work, and driving, the majority of young women continued to opt for relatively traditional vocational skills, indicating a considerable disconnect between young women’s preferences and market needs.

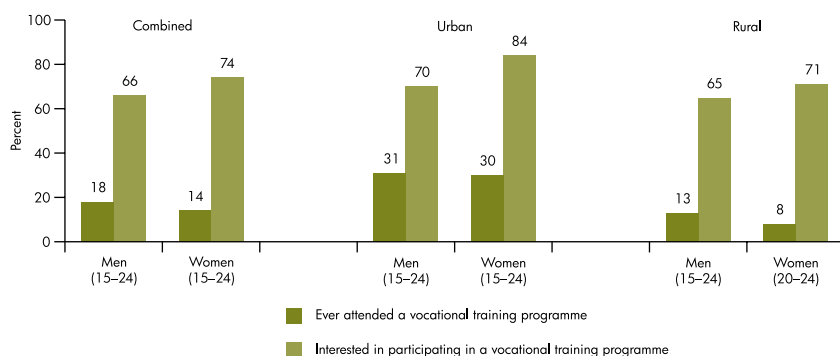
Sizeable numbers transitioned to work roles at young ages

Despite the global recognition that entry into the labour market at young ages competes with young people’s schooling opportunities and experiences directly or indirectly, and compromises their productive potential and health^c, and despite significant policy and programme attention to the prevention of early entry into the labour market in India,^d findings indicate that sizeable proportions of youth had transitioned to work roles at young ages. Indeed, over one in four (29%) young men and one in three young women (35%) reported that they had initiated either paid or unpaid work as children or young adolescents, that is, before age 15.

Many could not find full time employment

Findings indicate that among those who had engaged in paid work in the 12 months preceding the survey, many could not find full time employment, and young women were particularly disadvantaged in doing so; over one in three young men (37%) and almost two in three young women (65%) had worked for less than six months. Rural youth were more disadvantaged than urban youth in

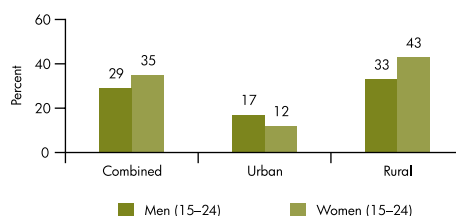
Percentage of youth who had ever attended a vocational training programme and who were interested in participating in such programmes



Transition to work roles was not easy or successful for many

Work profiles suggest that the majority of young men (57% of the unmarried and 96% of the married) and a substantial proportion of young women (42% and 47%, respectively) had been engaged in paid or unpaid work at some point in the 12 months preceding the survey. Findings, however, highlight that the transition to work roles is fraught with challenges.

Percentage of youth who had initiated work in childhood or early adolescence (before age 15)



^d Ministry of Labour and Employment. 1986. *The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986*, New Delhi: Government of India.



POLICY BRIEF Transition to work roles among youth in Jharkhand

finding full time employment; 40% of rural young men compared to 25% of their urban counterparts, and 68% of rural young women compared to 46% of their urban counterparts had worked for less than six months.

Youth were largely engaged in agricultural and unskilled non-agricultural activities

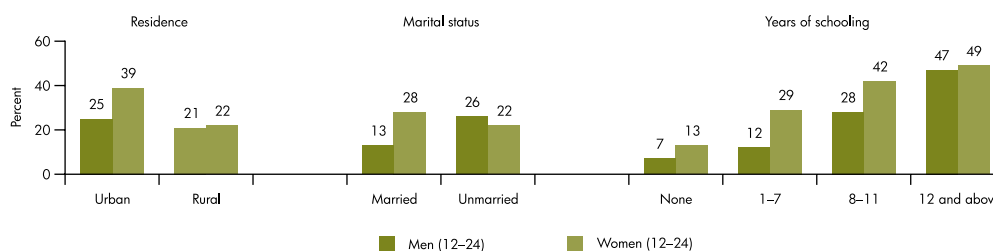
The occupational profile of those engaged in remunerated work in the 12 months preceding the survey indicates that youth were largely engaged in agricultural and unskilled non-agricultural activities. Among working young men, 46% reported unskilled non-agricultural labour. In contrast, skilled manual labour was reported by 27%. Among working young women, three in five (61%) were engaged

Notably, better educated youth were more likely to report unemployment than other youth, possibly because of the disconnect between youth skills and market needs. Young men and women who had completed Class 12 reported exceptionally high rates of unemployment (47–49%), suggesting that the paucity of opportunities limits the ability of even better qualified youth to obtain employment.

Many young women were neither in school nor working

Findings suggest that large proportions of young men and women were either in school or working at the time of the interview and a few were both working and studying.

Unemployment rate among youth, according to selected characteristics



in agricultural labour. Just 5–6% of both young men and women were employed in administrative, executive, managerial or clerical occupations.

Considerable proportions of young people were unemployed

Over one in five young men (22%) and one in four young women (26%) reported unemployment.¹ While unemployment rates were similar among both urban and rural young men, the rate among urban young women was almost twice as high as that observed among their rural counterparts. While unmarried young men were twice as likely as married young men to report unemployment, among young women, the married were somewhat more likely than the unmarried to report unemployment.

However, findings also show that the labour potential of young women was considerably under-utilised. For example, 39% young women were neither in school nor working, compared to just 6% of young men.

Programme recommendations

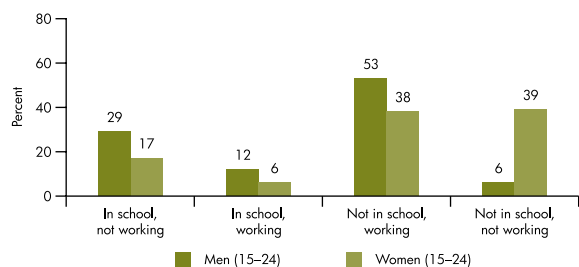
Findings indicate that several challenges remain in absorbing an increasingly youthful labour force and thereby both meeting the objectives delineated in the Jharkhand Youth Policy and harnessing the state's demographic dividend. A number of policies and programmes are needed to overcome these challenges.

Increase investment in education

Enhancing employability of youth would depend to a considerable extent on improvements in young people's educational

¹ To measure unemployment rates among respondents, the Youth Study assessed (a) whether youth had worked in the 12 months preceding the interview and if so, the number of months worked; and (b) whether youth were seeking work and if so, the number of months during which they had been searching for work. The unemployment rate is calculated as those seeking employment for the major part of the year preceding the interview as a fraction of those who were working or seeking work for the major part of the year, i.e., those in the labour force.

Economic activity and schooling status among youth



attainment. Multiple activities are needed to achieve improvement in educational attainment. Efforts must be made, for example, to address the economic pressures that may discourage parents from enrolling or retaining their children in school in favour of work. Conditional grants and targeted subsidies that encourage schooling, and particularly school completion among disadvantaged groups also need to be considered. At the same time, activities are needed that are directed at parents that promote positive attitudes towards education and school completion, raise parents' aspirations for the education of their children and encourage greater parental involvement in their children's education.

Activities must also address school-level barriers, notably, poor infrastructure, quality of education and academic failure. There is a need to incorporate livelihood skills building models within the school setting and provide opportunities for those in school to gain market-driven job skills that will expand the aspirations of youth regarding their education and careers. Moreover, investments in improving the quality of the schooling experience are needed that focus on providing better training of teachers and ensuring greater accountability among teachers.

Large numbers of youth have been left behind. There is a need to offer these youth a second chance at education, by way of evening schools and linking them with open schools.

Enable youth to acquire vocational skills

Findings have suggested that while programmes do exist, gaining access to these programmes is a significant obstacle for both young men and women; among those who obtained training, moreover, young women were particularly unlikely to obtain training in marketable skills. Formal mechanisms must be developed, therefore, that enable youth to access available training opportunities. At the same time, opportunities must be provided to youth that enable them to acquire skills for which there is an established demand, and that link eligible youth to market opportunities. These efforts need to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship through various livelihood schemes, for example, providing soft loans to youth to enable them to set up their own business enterprises.

Ensure that existing programmes aimed at job creation reach youth

While several programmes aimed at job creation are currently underway, the findings that considerable proportions of youth were unemployed at the time of interview and among those who were engaged in work for remuneration, many were not able to find full time employment suggest that these programmes fail to reach youth. Clearly, efforts are needed to ensure that existing programmes aimed at job creations do indeed reach youth. These programmes need to specially target young women.

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