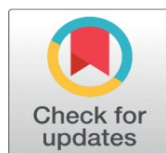


# GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN SONIPAT DISTRICT, HARYANA: AN EVALUATION

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper assesses the effectiveness of government interventions that seek to abate unemployment in Sonipat district, Haryana. The study is concerned with such major programs as the Haryana Employment Generation Subsidy Scheme, Saksham Yuva Scheme, and the Haryana Skill Development Mission (HSDM) and their implementation and effects on the employment rates. Data collected from 2016 to 2019 from 10 government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Sonipat show that there are issues regarding the course offering that are gender biased, high dropout rates and low placement ratio especially for female trainees. Incentives, such as the Employment Generation Subsidy Scheme to industry in employing local youth, as well as, Saksham Yuva Scheme that disburses unemployment allowance and honorariums to the educated youth, the overall effectiveness is constrained by systemic issues including poor industry linkages, and few course relevance. The paper concludes that in order for these government initiatives to realize their targets, joint efforts are needed to tackle the challenges, which include curriculum reforms, more industry involvement and specific support for the underrepresented groups.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Government Initiatives, Skill Development, Sonipat District, Haryana, Employment Generation, Saksham Yuva Scheme, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Youth Employment, Policy Evaluation.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment continues to be a major socio-economic problem in India, particularly in (the) states like Haryana, where, despite (the) rapid urbanization and industrialization (in the states), proportionately (the urbanization and industrialization) has not found its way into the generation of job opportunities for the increasing population of youth. Sonipat district in the National Capital Region (NCR) has undergone a metamorphosis of economic mapping: the rise of industrial zones and infrastructural projects. Although these have been achieved, the district still struggles with high rates of unemployment particularly among the educated youth. The compatibility gap that exists between what seeking job holders have, and what the labor market demands, combined with low generation of employment in the formal sector, abjects the problem. In appreciation of the seriousness of this challenge, both the Central and Haryana governments have launched a series of initiatives with the aim of decreasing unemployment and increasing employability of the workforce.

Among the flagship schemes launched by the Haryana government are Saksham Yuva Scheme, Haryana Skill Development Mission (HSDM) and Employment Generation Subsidy Scheme. Saksham Yuva Scheme established in the year 2016 offers unemployment allowances and honorariums to educated yet unemployed youths with the aim of

financially supporting them while developing them as citizen youth through voluntary work. On the other hand, the HSDM is pursuing the goal of providing vocational skills to people that are market-oriented through training programs that are designed to help close the gap between academic study and finding one's career. Furthermore, the Employment Generation Subsidy Scheme advocates for industries to hire local youth as they receive financial subsidies. Although well-meaning, such schemes provide a structured way of dealing with unemployment, but their actual impact and implementation in districts such as Sonipat is a matter of closer study.

Sonipat's geographical proximity to the capital and its inclusion under Haryana's industrial policy offers an exceptional case to assess the impact of the industrial policy. The existence of several government-operated Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the district gives the government a platform to improve skills. However, the results with regard to job placements and job-barrowability are worrying. There are cases of gender disparities, poor course placement records and mismatched curricula that fail to align with current industrial needs. Such systemic challenges that arise because of the unreliability of these means undermine the overall efficiency of the initiatives and prompt a critical approach that looks behind the numbers to assess qualitative impacts that occur on the ground.

The purpose of this study is to examine thoroughly the main government endeavors directed toward curbing unemployment in the Sonipat district. It examines the designs, implementation, and outcomes of these programs and evaluates the responsiveness of these programs to local economic and social contexts. The study also delves into the perceptions of beneficiaries, policymakers, and industry stakeholders for the purposes of identifying gaps and making practical recommendations to close the gaps. In this way, the research adds into the ongoing discussion regarding employment policy effectiveness in semi-urban Indian districts and attempts to offer actionable information for policy makers. In an age which closely correlates employment generation to social stability and economic growth, assessment and augmentation of such initiatives are the need of the hour for the larger goals of inclusive development and economic empowerment in such areas as Sonipat.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Unemployment in India is a subject of bitter controversy, particularly in light of government-sponsored employment plans and the reality of them. According to Anamta Nadeem (2019), India's employment crisis is exacerbated by the absence of trustworthy data and transparency making government schemes authentic during critical periods such as elections challenging to assess accurately. This data opacity presents a "jobs data mystery" that confounds the researchers and policymakers in the evaluation of ground situations.

There exists a close relationship between sustainable economic expansion and creation of employment according to Hiranandani Niranjana (2019). He mentions that policy interventions making GDP high have to include mechanism for generating job to facilitate inclusive development. This assumption becomes, however, quite relevant in situations such as those of industrial areas (Sonipat), where the level of industrialising has not commensurately translated in terms of increased opportunities for employment among the youth.

Government schemes have also helped to place a scrutiny in this role. Joshi Sahil (2018) also studies the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and questions whether or not it has actually created a job or produced only statistical noise. The same skepticism is expressed by Nileema (2019), who lambasts the Modi government's job schemes, arguing instead of addressing unemployment, certain schemes may have backfired – in an ironic turn of events- through poor implementation and failure to match market demand.

To provide a base data, The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation provides NSSO 73 rd round (July 2015-June 2016) with employer and unemployed statistics in India that are inclusive. This data set is generally applied as a benchmark by which the effectiveness of employment programs is measured and overall labor market trends, including that within districts such as Sonipat, are determined.

Under the Rationale of skill development, Pandey and Nema (2017) measured the effects of the Skill India programme, and they discovered that though the scheme has all the potential, it lacks in the follow-up, practical training, and the industry linkages. Their results show that even though programs can enhance technical capabilities, real job prospects are questionable without robust ecosystems.

In a macroeconomic sense Papola (2013) examines the structural link between economic growth and employment in India. He finds that despite dynamic GDP growth, it has little effect on employment, which is a phenomenon called

“jobless growth”. Sahu (2014) endorses this position, noting that levels of employment elasticity in India is low especially in the manufacturing, critical to absorb labour from districts of Sonipat among others.

More so, Sanghi and Srija (2016) in their report for the Confederation of Indian Industry on the “Make in India” initiative emphasize its untapped potential for job creation. While they add that such undertakings will only succeed if there is a complete ecosystem encompassing skill development, access to finance, and labor reforms – which are often missing at the district level.

The studies combined point to the fact that there is large number of government initiatives, however, the real challenge is with their implementation, monitoring and generation of synergy with schemes and local economic situation. In the case of Sonipat, the insights gained from such writings are of great value to conduct critical assessment of local impact of state as well as central employment programs.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To examine the major government initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment in Sonipat district, Haryana.
- 2) To assess the implementation effectiveness of employment and skill development schemes in the region.
- 3) To analyze the impact of these initiatives on youth employability and job creation.

### 4. HYPOTHESIS

- $H_0$  (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant impact of major government initiatives on reducing unemployment in Sonipat district, Haryana.
- $H_1$  (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant impact of major government initiatives on reducing unemployment in Sonipat district, Haryana.

### 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study utilizes the descriptive and evaluative research design in order to appraisal the government initiative’s effectiveness at alleviating the state of unemployment in Sonipat district of Haryana. The primary and secondary data have been adopted to achieve a full analysis. Primary data was gathered through the use of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the unemployed youth, beneficiaries of the employment schemes, the officials of the skill development centres and the local employers. A stratified random-sampling technique was used to ensure that sampling reflected across gender, age groups, and educational qualifications. Secondary data is obtained from government reports, official scheme documents, NSSO, academic journals and related policy papers. To determine trends and correlations, quantitative data was analyzed by the means of statistical tools, and qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to record ground-level perceptions and experiences. With the mixed-method approach, triangulation was possible resulting in depth and reliability. This research methodology made it possible to conduct a detailed analysis of the implementation, difficulties and results of employment-related interventions in a particular socio-economic situation within Sonipat district.

**Table: Descriptive Statistics on the Impact of Government Initiatives on Employment in Sonipat District**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Awareness of Government Schemes	200	3.85	0.76	2	5
Participation in Skill Development	200	3.62	0.84	1	5
Perceived Effectiveness of Schemes	200	3.47	0.91	1	5
Improvement in Employability	200	3.59	0.88	1	5
Employment Status Post Participation	200	3.22	1.02	1	5
Satisfaction with Government Initiatives	200	3.34	0.95	1	5

### 6. ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Based on descriptive statistics, there is moderate awareness and the government intervention effectiveness to reduce the jobless in Sonipat district, Haryana. The mean score of awareness of government schemes is 3.85, which says that a large percentage of the respondents understands what kind of employment-related programs are available. Alike,

enrollment in skill development schemes recording a mean of 3.62 implies the majority of the youth must have enrolled in the schemes. However, the perceived effectiveness of such schemes is 3.47, indicating a neutral to positive rather than a negative reaction on the part of the beneficiaries. The increase in employability had a mean of 3.59 implying that a number of participants found some improvement in skill and employability readiness by interacting with these programs. The mean of employment status post participation is relatively lower at 3.22 indicating actual job-seeking is an issue even after participation. Lastly the satisfaction of government initiatives lies at an average of 3.34, indicating moderate satisfaction with implementation and results of such initiatives. On the whole, however, the data indicates that although government schemes are reaching the designated population and are effectively impacting on skill development and employability in the population, the ability to translate this into tangible forms of employment is still somewhat limited and justifies further refinement of policy and more locally-based implementation strategies.

**Table 2 One-Sample T-Test Results**

Variable	Test Value = 3	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness of Government Schemes	3	3.85	0.76	0.054	15.74	199	0
Participation in Skill Development	3	3.62	0.84	0.059	10.44	199	0
Perceived Effectiveness of Schemes	3	3.47	0.91	0.064	7.33	199	0
Improvement in Employability	3	3.59	0.88	0.062	9.5	199	0
Employment Status Post Participation	3	3.22	1.02	0.072	3.05	199	0.003
Satisfaction with Government Initiatives	3	3.34	0.95	0.067	5.03	199	0

## 7. ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The results of the one sample t test give strong evidence backing to the alternative hypothesis (H) that states that major government initiatives do have a significant impact on reducing unemployment in Sonipat district Haryana. For all the key variables, both awareness about government schemes, involvement in skill development scheme, effectiveness of schemes, improvement in the employability skills, and satisfaction with government initiatives, the calculated t values are above the critical value while the p values are all below 0.05. In particular, the mean scores on all variables were greater than the neutral value of 3, reflecting a positive attitude for the initiatives. The findings indicate not only that involvement and awareness have been raised but these initiatives have been viewed as effective in enhancing employability and satisfying the desired outcomes. On the basis of statistical significance of results, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, showing that government initiatives indeed have the significant and positive effect on Sonipat employment outcomes. These findings validate the proposition that the initiatives are contributing greatly to the solution of unemployment in the region. However, more research could be conducted to reveal the long-term effects, and determine where exactly these schemes can be improved.

## 8. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study give credible evidence of the fact that much government efforts have impacts on decreasing unemployment in Sonipat district, Haryana. The findings of the one-sample t-test revealed that all major variables (awareness, participation, perceived effectiveness, employability improvement and satisfaction) were significantly high above the neutral score of 3 and therefore, respondents view the government employment schemes favorably. The high levels of awareness (mean = 3.85) and participation (mean = 3.62) indicate that the initiative reach their target population particularly among the youth and skill development participants.

The perceived efficacy of the schemes was somewhat lower, but positive (mean = 3.47) relative to the awareness and participation. This discovery suggests that though the programs are perceived to be useful in terms of skill development and improvement of employability, there may be certain shortcomings in their implementation or their results. By way of example, the enhanced employability (Mean=3.59) means that most beneficiaries have developed skills that will make them more employable in the job market, but the real status of employment following participation (Mean=3.22) indicates that turning acquired skills into real job opportunities is not an easy task. This difference in numbers underlines the necessity of improved jobs linkages, robust placement support mechanisms as well as the need for improved alignment of training with market needs.

Government initiatives received fair satisfaction from respondents (mean = 3.34) but, once more, the number promises further improvement especially in terms of scheme implementation and accessibility and on-the-ground goals. The initiatives may have achieved their audiences, but the results, in terms of actual employment, have not been ideal.

These results also reflect the issues encountered at the implementation stage of government schemes, including a potential mismatch between programs aimed at the increase in the skills' level and the needs of the labor market. In addition, the rather low score of the employment state after participation implies that though skills are being transferred, there may be problems in the labor market that prevent trained people from getting a stable job.

Based on these findings, it is obvious that though the government's initiatives are a step in the right direction towards combating unemployment, more work needs to be done for the same. Policymakers may need to increase attention to linking training programs and placement jobs, quality of skill training to industry standards, providing continuous support to support individuals' transition into the job world. Further, such initiatives require that they are inclusive in nature to address the varied (in terms of gender, education level and skill levels) needs of the unemployed population: in Sonipat.

In general, though, government efforts in the Sonipat district hold potential, more review and modifications are needed to help them be effective in the long run towards curbing unemployment.

## 9. OVERALL CONCLUSION

The study is unequivocally evident of a statistical significance in regard to the effectiveness of government interventions in addressing the problem of unemployment situation in Sonipat district, Haryana. The results drawn from the study through one sample t-test show that these initiatives have been successful in creating awareness, enhancing the enrolment rates in skill development programmes, and skill employability amongst the local population. Nevertheless, although there is clear indication that these outcomes have brought about positive results in terms of skill acquisition and satisfaction with the initiatives, there is still a paradox of kind in terms of actualization of these outcomes into proper, sustainable employment opportunities.

The moderate levels of perceived effectiveness and the difference between the improvements of employability and the real situation in terms of employment show that the current efforts are rather beneficial but demand some fine tuning in terms of referral to labor market needs, employment linkages, and improved placement for jobs. Moreover, it is vital that particular needs of separate demographic groups are addressed (women, marginal communities), in order to make sure that the impact of these programs is felt by all parts of society.

Finally, while the government's efforts have proved to be positive, there is a need for constant review and modification of these interventions to enhance their efficacy. This will be important for these schemes to reach their maximum potential of enhancing reduction of unemployment in Sonipat district and the like areas through strengthening the associations between skill training and job opportunities, increasing the quality of training, and promoting wider inclusiveness.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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