

# Research Summary

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## NO MORE BOUNDARIES Baseline Livelihood Aspirations Study



## **Abstract**

India has the youngest people in the world who are being added in the working age population every year. It becomes imperative that they are absorbed by the job market.

Haryana is the fifth wealthiest state in India, but yet has second highest unemployment rate. The Government of Haryana has responded to this with massive Skill Development programmes targeted at endowing youth with relevant skill set to participate in the secondary and tertiary sector along with encouraging self-employment for youths. In this context, this study attempts to understand the aspirations of youth in Sonipat district, so to assess the linkage between the youth's vision for their own careers and the avenues available to them for livelihoods including various programmes by the state to facilitate the participation of youth within the workforce. The findings of this survey will be used by the No More Boundaries programme to inform its interventions.

The Livelihood Aspiration study was conducted in 10 schools near villages of Sonipat, Haryana where 944 students participated. A mixed methodology consisting of both Quantitative and Qualitative research methods was used while conducting this study. It was found that a large percentage of youths want to participate in government jobs and defence related jobs especially Boys with a significant representation of girls. When it comes to professional employment avenues, most of the boys want to be Engineers, while girls want to be teachers. Upon asking them about the challenges that the youth face in their pursuit of employment, a large percentage of youths said that there is a lot of competition that comes their way, a significant percentage of youth are not aware about the career opportunities available to them and neither about the government programmes that could aid them. A significant percentage of youth are available about the skill development programme (Industrial Training Institutes) but do not want join it.

While majority of these youths are aspiring for conventional career options such as government jobs, where there may not be enough number of jobs available simultaneously they lack information about other employment avenues. In this context, it is up for consideration how the government programmes focusing on skill development and participation of youth in workforce then see their uptake with the youths whose aspirations are drastically different than the career avenues and skill development alternatives available to them.

**KEY FINDINGS:****a) Livelihood Avenues youth want to avail**

- 1) Government and defence jobs
  - A significant percentage of girls (37%) and majority of boys (58%) want to take up government jobs. Out of youth who indicated their preference for government and defence jobs, a majority of boys have chosen to participate in defence jobs.
  - The primary reason seems to be that a government job carries a sense of security and stability associated with employment. Furthermore, it was stated that such jobs were preferred because the youth want to improve the financial condition of their family, further entrenching the popular notion that government jobs increase success.
- 2) Professional Career Avenues
  - Even though a majority of girls (41%) expressed a desire to participate in professional occupations, it was observed that both the girls and boys primarily want to be teachers and Engineers respectively.
  - Few girls also expressed their willingness to take up professions such as doctors, accountants, advocates etc.
- 3) Emerging Occupations
  - Less than 5% of boys and girls showed a willingness to take up new and emerging professions.
- 4) Business and Services
  - Only 5% young boys out of the sample expressed an interest in pursuing business as a career alternative.
  - However, when asked whether they wanted to pursue business at any point in their lives, 54% of youth in the overall sample said yes and also mentioned the preferred industries where they want to do this business. 52% of the respondents were girls.
  - A significant number of girls who responded expressed an interest in pursuing “Social Enterprises” which benefit their communities, leading to alleviation of poverty and upliftment of women.
  - On the other hand, boys wanted to take up business opportunities that seem to be readily available around them be it the hospitality or food-dairy industry or technical businesses.

**b) Avenues Youth avail immediately after completing school**

- A majority of youth, both girls (69%) and boys (41%) stated that they preferred to go to the university or college after completing school.

- A considerable percentage of boys chose to participate in the army and sports immediately after school. However, it must be mentioned that the number of boys who actually participate in this occupation is considerably less than the number of boys aspiring for it.

c) **Challenges experienced by the Youth in availing their career of choice**

1) External Challenges

- Both girls and boys agreed that competition was one of the major obstacles that they faced while availing employment avenues.
- Boys (11%) and girls (12%) agreed that there were not enough jobs if available in the market.

2) Individual Challenges

- Both boys (16%) and girls (15%) stated that one of the stifling pointers for them was that they were not aware of the career opportunities available to them. Some students also stated that they do have aspirations to achieve bigger goals in life but lacked the motivation to do hard work/study in a focused manner which in turn, limits their avenues in life and the perception that everyone holds about them.
- 20% of the boys and 26% of all girls stated that lack of financial resources deterred them from participating in the workforce.
- More girls (26%) than boys (20%) agreed on the above which showed that the problem may be worse in case of girls where parents do not want to invest the available financial resources in the education of girls as their participation in work opportunities accessing public spaces is discouraged in the society and parents may see no return upon investing in their daughter's education as she may have to be married till a certain age.

d) **Awareness of Youths about Local Livelihood Opportunities**

- 26% of the respondents stated that they are aware of the presence of government jobs around them, and a majority of boys and a considerable percentage of girls want to participate in these. But, as mentioned earlier, the youth are also aware that there was a major gap between the youth's aspirations of getting a government job majorly and the actual availability of these jobs around them.
- 29% of the youths stated that jobs are available in companies and factories around their local areas.

e) **Awareness about Government Schemes in Youths**

- Majority of the youths were not aware of any schemes related to employment or skill development, especially more girls (80% said that they were unaware) than boys (63%).

f) **Perception towards Skill Development programme (Industrial Training Institutions)**

- 57% of the total respondents ( 63% boys and 50% girls) expressed that they are aware of the it is. However, 62% of the respondents also stated that they were not interested in joining the ITIs.
- It was observed that a lot of the young girls believed that the Industrial Training Institutes did not meet their aspirations. These girls stated that they want to study further as it will help them in acquiring a good job as opposed to a diploma through ITIs. Furthermore, the boys felt that a person who was serious for their career would not go to ITI. According to them, the reason for this stance was because there was a lot of violence and the boys would engage in bad behaviour and loitering.

## **Conclusion**

Despite being one of the wealthiest states in the country, Haryana has one of the highest rates of inequality between its urban and rural regions. This puts the youth living in rural areas of Haryana at risk, due to the severely limited availability of employment opportunities, thus putting their futures in a sense of limbo. This explains why a lot of the respondents chose to apply for government jobs, citing stable income and job security to be the reasons. A significant percentage of boys also expressed their interest to participate in Defence-related jobs while few girls are also opening themselves up to the option of embracing professional jobs such as accountant, advocate, doctor etc. The major challenges experienced by youth according to them were lot of competition in the job market along with Lack of awareness on what career paths they may be pursuing. While lack of finances was a major deterrent in the process of availing gainful employment, more girls than boys experienced this challenge. A considerable number of girls also reported that their parents do not want them to work. This could be due to restrictions on women's limited mobility and presence in public spaces.

Taking these factors into consideration, the challenge at the hand for the government is to facilitate the participation and eventual absorption of these youth within the economy. The government has therefore, introduced vocational and skill development programmes in order to enable young people to develop skill-sets relevant to the demands in the local job market given the emergence of the secondary and tertiary sector. Yet, as evident by the findings, there remains a gap between youth's aspirations and the programmes provided by the government. It is therefore, a question on the very effectiveness and uptake of these programmes.

The findings in these study could be used by policy makers to inform and contextualize the schemes according to aspirations of the youth and explore ways in which these provisions and programmes for youth can become more accessible to them, as is evident, very few young people are aware of government laid out schemes and programmes.

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