

Vikalp Skill Voucher in Maharashtra

Summary:

The Vikalp Skill Voucher programme, launched in 2013, was piloted in Mumbai and Pune with support from the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute (BART) Maharashtra, Centre for Civil Society (CCS), and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. The Vikalp Voucher enables an individual to obtain training from any training institute accredited with the Voucher provider. It offers students the right to choose from skill development programmes based on their aptitude and not on the availability of schemes, courses.

Objectives:

- To obtain training from any training institute accredited with the provider of the voucher, and offer students the right to choose from skill development programmes based on their aptitude

Key Stakeholders:

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
- Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute (BART) Maharashtra
- Centre for Civil Society (CCS)
- Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
- Students

Implementation strategy:

The students can select training courses offered by any of the accredited training institutes based on their aptitude and interest. The voucher also encourages competition among training providers as the students can select the institutes based on the quality of the courses and training outcomes (e.g., placement outcomes). The institutes accredited for the programme had strong track records in terms of performance in placements and certification, reliable infrastructure, and full-time and qualified trainers. Awareness regarding the voucher programme was generated through career *mela*.

Resource Utilisation:

Institutes funded their vouchers in three outcomes-based intervals: upon completion of 10 per cent of the course, upon certification, and upon job placement. Centre for Civil Society was responsible for the enrolment of the student in the elected institute, payment of the Vikalp Voucher, payment of each student's 10 per cent contribution to the training, monitoring of students' progress, graduation and employment placement.

Impact/ Outcomes: (Anticipated)

The programme evaluation points towards the following benefits of the voucher programmes (NITI Aayog):

- Cost efficiency: With CCS responsible for mobilising the students for a wide range of courses and vocational institutes, it resulted in saving up to 50 per cent of the costs incurred by singular skill training institutes focused solely on recruiting their students;
- Improved labour market outcomes: Students who leveraged the voucher model had twice the chance of getting a job compared to their peers; and
- Improved quality of skill training: Evaluation also reported that students made more thoughtful training decisions

Challenges/ Lessons Learnt:

- Students built their economic capacity to pay for the courses using vouchers while also being able to choose the course/ institute of their choice. Therefore, here competition facilitated improved infrastructure while maintaining the quality of training. This also helped students make informed decisions to access and apply for their choice of employment opportunities. The institutes also maintained the quality of the performance since they were required to earn their vouchers.

Replicability & Sustainability:

The evidence presented in the outcomes demonstrates the success of a voucher program in boosting the demand for vocational training, increasing competition in the training market, translating to a better quality of the training institutes, and improving labour market returns for the students.

Fact Sheet:

Thematic area	Skill Development
First-year of the program	2013
Responsible institutions	NSDC
Target audience	Skill development trainees
Coverage	Mumbai and Pune