

# Strategy and Policy in Mobilizing Resources for Employability Enhancement (West Bengal, India)

Nibedita Saha, Beatrice I.J.M. Van der Heijden, and Aleš Gregar

**Abstract**— Employability enhancement is a burning topic in present world. To sustain in this competitive world every human needs the capacity to adopt themselves through their own skills, efficiency and knowledge. This paper tries to investigate the prominence of employability and its current practices in that are undertaken to mobilize resources i.e. human resources and to stimulate employability of the country. The prime goal of this paper focuses on how the current trends of transformation put more stress on intellectual capital, i.e. knowledge, skills and abilities of an individual so as to be employable. This research tries to demonstrate us how career potentiality, occupational expertise and organizational factors are the key essential elements for enhancing employability through a case of West Bengal (WB), India. The investigation has been done by sample interview protocols including questionnaire survey. The outcome of this study discloses the existences of a well-trained and adaptable work force in an organization not only enhance its competitiveness, but it also enable a country to meet the global challenges along with enhancement of employability.

**Keywords**— Economic development, employability enhancement, globalization, human resources (HR).

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE theoretical meaning of employability has been in the literature for many years, but nowadays the recent trends and interest has been driven to uphold the economic condition of a nation. Earlier there was a notion that someone who works hard can bring success in the organization but globalization changes the traditional activities of the organizations as well as the internal transformation of the enterprises. Since then, the employability concept has been attracting the attention of several policy makers, academics and researchers from developing and developed countries. Therefore, the idea of employability enhancement has increasingly been recognized as an important approach, to build up a nation, to improve one's learning capability, power

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of knowledge skills and education which are the most vital part of every country.

Economic development of a country comes through proper education. Education or learning does not mean that one has to be a good scholar. "Education" is a power at work that moulds people. They are being moulded to rely on 'higher critical thinking'. Similarly, learning is also very essential. It takes place as an active, cognitive, constructive, significant, mediated and self-regulated process within an individual as well as in an organization [1], [2].

In order to increase the level of one's knowledge the use of technology in the teaching process is required which is not so common. Thus, the practice of technology in teaching should be implemented to enhance one's skills and abilities. So, it can be said that both education and learning plays an important role in enabling a country to withstand challenges brought by globalization. Therefore, it is crucial to identify what are the trends in demand for higher education in the era of globalization. As result of it learners rely on industry for employment opportunities and educational institutions need to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to maintain their employability [2], [3].

On the other hand, the theoretical framework shows that in the era of globalization, human resources are now viewed as a source of competitive advantage. The values of people management are based on the beliefs that an organization gains competitive advantage by using its people effectively and efficiently [4]. Due to this one of the main aims of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is to enhance education as, one of the major alarming conditions of developing countries is their poor condition of employment opportunity. Thus, to accelerate the economic growth of a country, employability enhancement is urgently necessary.

It is necessary to mention that since the mid of 1990s the concept of employability has been increasingly appearing in policy documents, in research and in management literature. This development has resulted in a wide range of approaches to the phenomenon. The number of different approaches to and meanings of employability has made it quite difficult to comprehend [5]. Lately, the idea of employability (the capability of being employed in a job) has received a lot attention both in organizations and in the media. It has been observed that employability or functional flexibility allows employers to achieve a more effective internal allocation of

labour through improved deployment [6]. Additionally, concerning the perception of employability numerous researchers have viewed in several ways. According to Hillage and Pollard [7], "Employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment."

Concurrently, Forrier, and Sels [8] stated that employability can be said as an individual's chance of a job in the internal and/or external labour market. In addition Claudia and Beatrice [9] highlighted that employability is the continuous fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competences. These competences refer to an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to adequately perform various tasks and carry responsibilities within a job and to their adaptability to changes in the internal and external labour market [10].

Similarly, Rothwell and Arnold [11] expressed their opinion about employability as an individual's ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires. This concept emphasize that workers' employability is obtained through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that are valued by current and prospective employers and thus encompasses an individual's career potential [12],[9],[13],[14].

For the individual, employability is therefore the capacity to find, keep and change employment, including the ability to generate self-employment. The combined forces of globalization and rapid technological change drive this transformation. That is the personal circumstances and labour market environment within which they seek to work.

Alternatively, for the organization, employability means the potential of organization's to perform optimally in global markets which depend on their employees' capabilities to maintain, develop, and cultivate fundamental qualifications, as job qualifications are continuously changing at an ever-increasing rate [15]. More specifically, it can be said that employability means being capable of getting and keeping satisfaction of work. It is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize the potentiality through sustainable employment.

On the other hand, Dagaar [16] mentioned that employability of an organization can be accelerated through (a) training alliances between the private and public sectors; (bi) improving the skills of the workforce; (c) attracting workers for better performance;(d) strengthening, enterprises competitiveness and national growth; (e) motivating the individuals to explore their knowledge for the enhancement of career development.

Hence, in order to improve the scope of internationalization of labour markets and flexibility of labour relations this paper develops a conceptual and a practical framework that classify and analyze the awareness of current initiatives on employability enhancement in India (West Bengal). As, nowadays many avenues are open for youth, which gives various patterns of employment opportunities.

While analyzing the strategy and policy of mobilizing human resources in India for enhancing employability this paper tries to identify and clarify the answers of following questions. Is it possible to enhance employability in India, W.B. through mobilizing human resources? What strategy and policy are required to overcome the major gaps that obstruct the prospect of employability? How the Government should formulate proper strategy and policy to mobilize the available human resources for the enhancement of employability?

Accordingly, this paper seeks to give an overview of the aforesaid research questions on how the potential sources of West Bengal (WB), India develop and boost its competences through multidimensional ways in order to facilitate and enhance the employment opportunity as a whole.

## II. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This study is principally based on a consolidation of both empirical and inductive reasoning. Empirical argument illustrates method of gaining the knowledge, whereas, the inductive argument shows some degree of support in the form of probabilistic reasoning.

### A. Definition of employability used in this research

The definition of "employability" has been modified for the purpose of this research. In order to achieve the objective of this research the meaning of employability has been considered as the individual's career potential, which is determined by the professional's knowledge and skills base, their adaptability to adjacent with new professional domains, their ability to manage a further career development that enable them to convince their social community based on their own qualifications.

### B. Methods of data acquisition

The data were accumulated by sample interview protocols with questionnaire survey. This data acquisition had been done through sample interview protocol which was prepared based on the below mentioned Fig.1 model entitle: "The Research Model for the indic@tor study" developed by B.I.J.M. Van der Heijden [17].

This model (Fig.1) consists of three elements such as: (a) predictor variables, (b) mediators, (c) dependents that measure and critically analyze the concept of employability or career potential in an organizational context.

Where, Fig.1 shows that under predictor variables

➤ *Individual factors* dealing with the human capital, i.e. knowledge, training and development, career involvement. All these factors enhance an individual's capability to be employed.

➤ *Job- related factors* deals with the leaning skill and career history of an individual as well as the organization that will initiate and inspire an individual to be competitive.

➤ *Organizational factors* deal with the organization's structure, design, culture, policy, monitoring system, aging and networking. This study has been done mainly on two major sectors of enterprises: profit sectors and non-profit sectors in

India, WB in order to identify the requirement and significance of employability enhancement.

### C. Characteristics of the research sample

This study presents the results of a survey of 45 respondents' of different sectors obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The interviews have been conducted among the following different age groups such as: Senior level Management having age group (50-and above), Middle level Management, age group (35-49) and General staff members, age group (20-35). Where, 23 numbers of respondents were from profit sector and 22 numbers of respondents were from non-profit sector. The interview protocol was divided in to three thematic areas: (a) employability, (b) ageing, (c) future developments and requirements for enhancement of employment.

According to the above mentioned model, the results of this study or survey demonstrates that for enhancing employability the three main factors under predictor variables (*individual factors, job-related factors and organizational factors*) plays an eminent role.

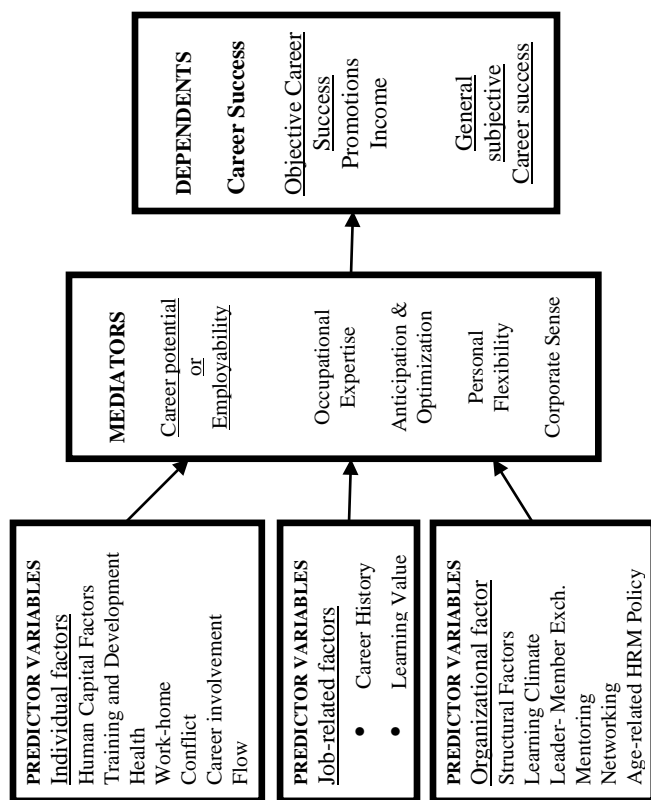


Fig. 1 The Research Model for the indic@tor study [17]

### III. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF EMPLOYABILITY ENHANCEMENT IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA – A CASE STUDY

India is the seventh largest and second most populous country in the world. It is also the largest democracy in the world and Indian economy is yielded a growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by more than 8 percent, which is accelerated by the growth in agriculture, infrastructure,

manufacturing and services. It is to be noted that though Indian economy is moving very fast to keep pace with the globalization but the national policies of education have always underscored due to the lack of proper strategy and policy, allocation of resources, adequate employment opportunities and absence of proper education in vocational training which had been observed as a predominant issue in the Indian labour market for several years owing to the country's slothful growth rate.

Then, in the industry there soars a crunch for finding 'employable' work force. The term employability is now doing rounds in policy and industry circles more than ever. There are plenty of people in the job market but their skills are not meeting the requirements of the present market. As a result of it, in the labour market there arise mainly two different problems, such as: (a) *Low percentage of people registering in government employment exchanges and possibly a mismatch in the vocational training imparted that can meet the organizational needs.* (b) *Large percentage of job seekers has no information about vocational training institutes and the potential of these institutes to improve their employability* [18].

Accordingly, the prevailing labour market in India, mostly affected the three main stakeholders namely the *job seekers, job providers and the training institutes* due to lack of reliable and up to date information in the local labour market. On the other hand, it also affected owing to lack of (a) proper education and training system that compatible to the organizational needs; (b) interest of the employees to develop their knowledge and skills; (c) proper participation of labour force; (d) proper strategy and policy for mobilizing resources. In India, the enhancement of employability practices for helping the individuals to '*learn how to learn*'. Thus, viewed the prominence of employability with lifelong education as an alternative strategy where, individuals, corporate businesses, education system and government of India need to abide intense effort [18], [19].

In this point therefore it is necessary to present the importance of education in a more or less concrete way, in order to enhance the capabilities of target audiences at the different levels through improving formal education system. As, education is regarded as the key "to sustainable development, peace and stability", It stimulate the social cohesion that enabling persons to be actively involved in social changes [20].

On the other hand, to address this discussion, it is important to reference that India as a country has two main segments of labour which are the organized and the unorganized sector. These two sectors are starkly different from each other in terms of their functioning and working conditions of the labourers. The most important factor which gives the organized sector an advantage over the unorganized sector is the level of skill development [21],[22].

Concerning this it is required to highlight that employability enhancement should be an integrated activity that is undertaken in close collaboration between different parties,

and to eliminate recruitment bottlenecks, policies that affect both graduates' suitability and labour requirements [23].

Similarly, the importance of reinforcing human resources has been raised by the Prime Minister of India and the Planning Commission, also highlighted especially to take the advantage of its demographic profile, industry, workers and stakeholders from across the spectrum [24].

In this research, the purpose of this study is to identify and investigate the current practices, i.e. strategies and policies which are undertaken to mobilize human resources as well as to stimulate the employability in WB, India. Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize that the state WB is one of the richest state in India in terms of physical as well as human resources. Physical resources mean land, water, minerals and industries whereas; human resources consider the availability of plenty educated and skilled manpower that can be employed for proper utilization of the aforesaid physical resources. It has been observed and reported that in India, WB is producing the best quality human resource, the basic input for Information Technology (IT) Industry [25].

Likewise, Kolkata, the capital city of WB today is one of the most credible IT locations in India that offers a very stable business environment. But, the existence of enough educated human resources in the state does not really satisfy the organizational requirements. To promote as well as to enhance employability, The West Bengal Forum aimed to take the three-fold initiatives in following ways in order to: [26].

- (a) raise awareness of current initiatives regarding business and sustainable development;
- (b) promote information exchange, networking and mutual learning for greater impact;
- (c) provide a lasting forum for co-ordination, partnership development and promotion of best practice in WB to facilitate and enhance the employment opportunity as a whole.

In brief it can be assumed that this case study enables us to see the opportunities of enhancing employability in WB, India that facilitate through mobilizing human resources.

#### A. Analysis and Results Based on Research Model

The investigation of this research has been represented in the below mentioned Fig.2 (details summary of data analysis available in appendix) In this research the predictor variables comprises of three factors: individual factors, job-related factors and organizational factors. The outcome of data analysis under each factor have been considered as a tool to measure the opportunity of getting employed..

On the other hand, *mediators* have been used as an intermediary to link between each predictor variables to observe the scope of career potentiality. The outcomes of both elements show the results whether there is a scope of enhancing employability is exist or not.

Under Predictor variables *individual Factors* comprise of six sub-factors: *human capital factors, training and development, health, work-home conflict, career involvement and flow*. In Fig. 2, it has been clearly observed that 88.9 % of respondent have a positive reply to human capital factors, 60 % of respondent have a positive reply to training and

development, 80 % of respondent have a positive reply to health, 84.4 % of respondent have a positive reply to work home conflict. 60 % of respondent have a positive reply to career involvement and 64.4 % of respondent have a positive reply to flow. It is to be noted that even though the outcomes of other individual factor like: flow, training and development and career involvement in Fig. 2 indicate the lower share respectively. But on an average 73.0 % of the respondents have a positive response and it seems that the positive outcome outweigh the negative one.

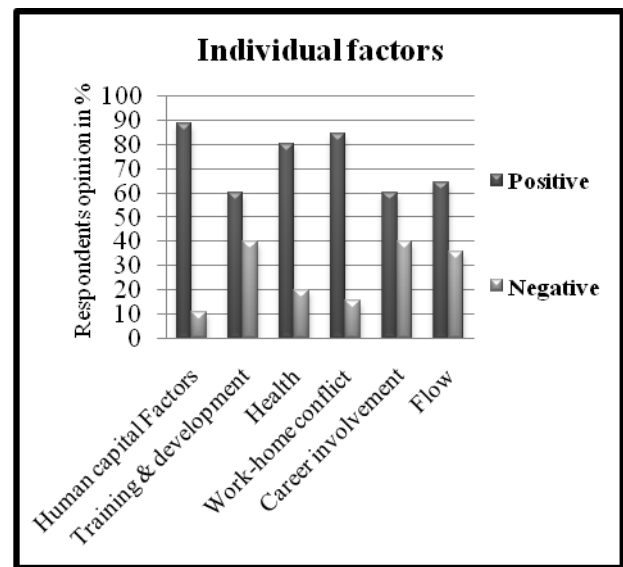


Fig. 2 Respondent's opinion on different Individual factors (Own interpretation)

Similarly, the *Job-related Factors* consist of: *career history and learning value*. Where, Fig. 3 illustrates that only 40 % of respondent's have a positive reply and 60 % of respondent's have a negative reply to career history sub factor. So, on an average the positive response is only 36.7 % lower than negative response. Here the negative outcome outweighs the positive one.

Correspondingly, the *Organizational Factors* comprise of six sub-factors: *structural factors, learning climate, leader member exch, mentoring, networking and age-related HRM Policy*. In Fig. 4 the data analysis revealed that, from all sub-factors, the respondent's give the highest positive response to organizational structure, which is 73.3 %. But the age-related HRM Policy, which is one of the important sub factors receive only 33.3 % of positive reply.

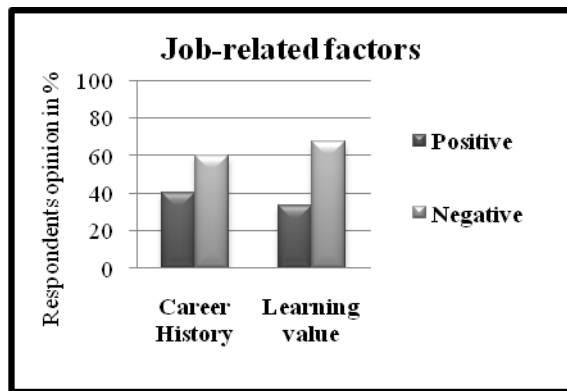


Fig. 3 Respondent's opinion on different Job-related factors (Own interpretation)

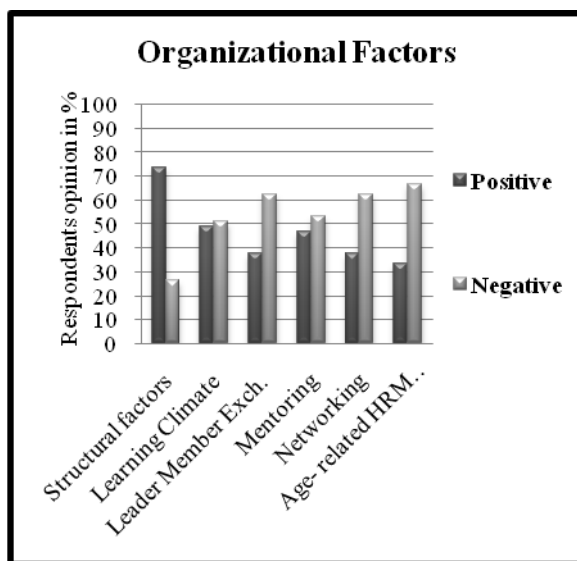


Fig. 4 Respondent's opinion on different Organizational factors (Own interpretation)

From Fig. 4 it has been observed that organizational factors outcome is negative as, on an average only 46.3 % of the respondent's have a positive response.

Whereas, the *Mediators* deals with *career* potential or employability comprises of five dimensions namely: *occupational expertise, anticipation and optimization, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance*. From the data analysis summary table, it has been revealed that the total greater part respondent's gives a positive reply to occupational expertise i.e. 73.1 %.

On the other hand, *anticipation and optimization* exposed the lowest positive reply i.e. 36.7 % from the total respondent's. The *personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance dimension* represented 46.2 % positive reply from the total respondent as a whole. From individual factors, although all factors contribute positively, human capital factors, work home conflict and health take the major share to contribute positively to occupational expertise in their respective order.

From organizational factors, only structural factors of contributes positively to personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance dimension. The remaining sub factors contribute negatively.

Therefore, from this analysis, it has been examined that *occupational expertise* contribute more positively to employability where as both *personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance* as well as anticipation and optimization contribute more negatively to employability.

Accordingly *Dependents* comprise one of the most important variables, i.e. *career success*. The main indicator of career success is *promotion and income*. The outcome of this analysis shows that the overall positive response is 52 % whereas, the overall negative responses is 48 %. As per the data analysis, it demonstrates that even though the overall positive outcome a bit outweigh the overall negative outcome, this positive outcome is not as such significant to enhance employability.

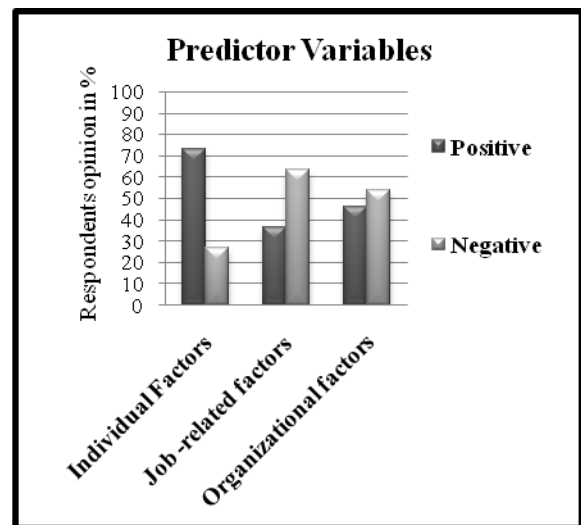


Fig. 5 Comparison of different Predictor Variables (Own interpretation)

In addition to this among all *predictor variables*, only individual factors contribute positively. As, discussed earlier the human capital factors contribute more to such positive percentage which is off course the potential source of West Bengal. The remaining predictor variables, i.e. *job related factors and organizational factors* contribute the lowest share to positive percentage to enhance employability.

Therefore, based on the above mentioned Fig. 5 it can be said that only *individual factors* contribute more positively. This is off course the potential source of WB to enhance its competences through multidimensional ways.

This indicates that when individual factors, job-related factors and the organizational factors contribute positively, then there is a chance of high promotion and high income to employee's career success. This implies that the opportunity for employability will be high.

On the other hand, when there is low promotion and low income then there is no opportunity of being employed. However, in case of West Bengal, the chance of employability

is very low as the job-related factors and the organizational factors contribute more negatively.

From the analysis of the model mentioned above, it shows that in West Bengal there is a low job promotion and low income. So it makes clear that in West Bengal there is serious problem of employability. Though the rate of educated personnel is high than uneducated but it does not help to increase the level employment.

### B. Main Findings

The main findings of this research are as follows:

#### (i) *Employability Enhancement-*

Most of the interviewed organizations take in to consideration about the enhancement of the employability in their organization to maintain the competitive advantage.

#### (ii) *Lack of individual's interest to develop skills, knowledge and abilities-*

While doing this research the investigation shows that there is a serious lacking of interest to develop their knowledge and skills. One of the major reason is people are not enough motivated to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

It has been viewed that though they are well educated but still they are not much capable to satisfy the organizational needs to get employment.

#### (iii) *Lack of proper enterprise based education system –*

From this study it has been observed that though West Bengal in one of the major pool of skilled manpower but still there is a gap between the demand and supply of labour force. The decreases in appropriate labour supply create a lack of employment and simultaneously decrease the chance of employability enhancement.

#### (iv) *Lack of proper compatibility with organizational needs-*

This study shows us that in India especially in West Bengal there is a huge mismatch between the education system and the organizations requirement.

Thus, even though there is the existence of large number of skilled manpower but they are not valuable for the organization's to make the organization competitive and productive to keep pace with the globalization.

#### (v) *Lack of reliability and integrity –*

It has been examined that reliability and integrity among the individual is also less, due to this people are not getting appropriate job and better job. Unless there is an integration and devotion nothing can bring success.

#### (vi) *Lack of communication and self –efficiency-*

Lack of communication and lack of self –efficiency also reduce the scope of employability. Communication is an important aspect and an important tool for an organization. Nowadays organizations need more interactive people so that they can be easily pliable with any environment.

#### (vii) *Lack of adequate training and development-*

At the same time this research shows that there is deficiency of appropriate 'On-job training system' for the development of the existing employees within the organization.

#### (viii) *Lack of proper care about employees' personal life*

In regard to this, the research indicates that organizations not provided that much attention to the employees, especially about their personal life like healthcare and work home conflict.

#### (ix) *Lack of career involvement-*

Through this research investigation it has been studied that the interest of the employees to upgrade their career potentiality is also low due, to low relationship between their current position and educational background.

#### (x) *Lack of job related factors*

This study shows that in the organizations there is deficiency of appropriate system which can track the performance of employees, monitor and evaluate and give feed back to improve their efficiency and skills.

Therefore, from Fig. 3 and from the summary of data analysis in appendix it explains that the job related factors contribute more negative results.

#### (xi) *Lack of organizations initiativeness-*

Under organizations initiativeness it has been observed that the structure of most organizations do not have a well designed structure which facilitate the flow of information from top management to middle level and to general staff level and vice versa, as well as within horizontal level.

This indicates that there is a lack of transparency to monitor and evaluate the performance of each employee in the organization and to mentor their daily activities.

In addition to this it has been also identified that within the organization there is a gap between the *demand of organizations work experience*, *age group* and *supply of labour forces* in the labour market. The same type of findings has also been observed in the work done by Beatrice I.J.M Van der Heijden [27].

## IV. CONCLUSION

In an nut shell, it can be said that to mobilize the resources for the employability enhancement in India as well as in any developing country have to be keep in mind the following sectors: such as

- *specific policy promoting public/private training alliances,*
- *participative approach to the governance of training,*
- *partnership mechanisms and*
- *culture of learning and participation for the sustainable and stable economic growth.*

Beside, this study also suggests some recommendations for the public sector and private sector organization in order to take the preventive measures as well as to overcome the following hazards such as:

From the *organizational development point of view:*

(1) organizations must increase the level of employability enhancement by providing proper career development program and training to the existing employees.

And recent study shows that organic structure of the organization brings better result in compare to the traditional structure of the organization.

(2) organizations must provide proper career development program and training to the existing employees;

(3) organizations must create a flexible working environment for their employees to enhance organization's productivity and competitiveness;

(4) organizations need transformation to keep the flow of information smooth and transparent at all level;

(5) organizations need appropriate monitoring system to motivate the existing employees and attract young employees.

From the *individual's career development point of view*:

(a) individuals have to be more accommodative, adaptable and well trained.

(b) individuals need to develop their career through continuous learning and education.

Finally, on account of the findings of this study, it is necessary to state that there are some particular drawbacks in India, especially in West Bengal, that hinder the scope of employability though the resources are available.

So, Govt should restore the education system to reduce the gap of incompatibility between skilled manpower and organizations need. Additionally, Govt should formulate proper strategy and policy to mobilize the available human resources for the following reasons:

(a) To redesign the organizational structure.

(b) To provide friendly working environment for upgrading the employee efficiency by cultivating their knowledge to the requirement of the organization.

(c) To implement appropriate strategies, plans and programs for the betterment of next generation.







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#### DEDICATION

The first author dedicated this paper to her only beloved son "Kanishka Binayak Saha".

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