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DDU-GKY 2.0 Strengthens Rural Youth Skilling by Linking Industry-Aligned Training with Employment, Retention and Sustainable Livelihoods

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Recent Developments:

The **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** completed its **12th anniversary in September 2026**, having been launched on **25 September 2014** under the Ministry of Rural Development as a placement-linked skill development programme for poor rural youth.

Under **DDU-GKY 2.0**, implemented from **FY 2025–26**, the focus has shifted from training as an end in itself towards **industry-led training, sustainable employment, post-placement support, upskilling and reskilling**.

As of September 2026, the scheme operates across **31 States and Union Territories**, with **749 approved projects, 760 active training centres and more than 455 Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs)**. Since 2014–15, more than **18.47 lakh candidates** have been trained and over **12.43 lakh candidates** have been placed across **36 sectors and more than 800 job roles**.

The **Union Budget 2026–27** provides a **Central Share of ₹750 crore** for DDU-GKY.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana: Key Features

Objectives and Target Group:

DDU-GKY is a **placement-linked skill development programme** under the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** that seeks to improve the employability and livelihood opportunities of poor rural youth.

The principal target group comprises **rural youth aged 15–35 years** from poor households, with emphasis on connecting training with regular employment and sustainable income opportunities.

The programme adopts a **market-led approach**, linking training content and delivery with industry requirements rather than treating skill certification as the final outcome.

The scheme also gives priority to disadvantaged groups, including **Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women and persons with disabilities**, thereby incorporating social inclusion into rural skilling.

Institutional and Implementation Structure:

DDU-GKY follows a **multi-level implementation architecture** involving the Ministry of Rural Development at the national level, State Rural Livelihood Missions or State-level implementation structures, and **Project**

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Implementing Agencies responsible for training and placement delivery.

PIAs are expected to maintain employer linkages, provide industry-relevant training and support candidates after placement rather than limiting their role to classroom-based skill delivery.

DDU-GKY 2.0: From Skill Training to Employment Sustainability

End-to-End Employment Cycle:

DDU-GKY 2.0 covers the broader employment cycle of **training, assessment, certification, placement, employment retention and career progression**.

The revised framework places greater emphasis on **long-term employment outcomes**, post-placement counselling, migration support, grievance redressal and opportunities for further upskilling or reskilling.

The scheme requires PIAs to achieve **at least 70% placement**, with **at least 50% of placements in wage employment**; the revised framework also recognises self-employment and gig employment within specified limits.

Training Design and Industry Alignment:

The scheme retains a minimum **576-hour training framework**, combining **domain-specific technical skills** with mandatory non-domain components such as soft skills, English and Information Technology.

DDU-GKY 2.0 expands training towards emerging employment opportunities, including **electric vehicle maintenance, renewable energy, logistics, healthcare, care economy, retail, hospitality and media and entertainment**.

The broader sectoral portfolio includes **aerospace and aviation, agriculture, automotive, construction, electronics, food processing, healthcare, IT-ITES, textiles, tourism and hospitality, telecom and green jobs**.

Greater industry participation is promoted through **employer tie-ups, job fairs, campus placements, industry consultations and engagement with Sector Skill Councils**.

Placement and Retention Mechanism:

DDU-GKY 2.0 has increased the minimum placement period from **three months to six months**, strengthening the distinction between short-term placement and sustainable employment.

Government funding to PIAs is linked to measurable employment outcomes, with official implementation provisions linking payments to successful completion of the mandatory employment period.

Post-Placement Support and tracking are intended to help workers address problems associated with migration, workplace adjustment and early employment discontinuation.

Special Initiatives under DDU-GKY 2.0

Roshni Initiative:

The **Roshni initiative** focuses on skill development among youth in **Left-Wing Extremism-affected districts**, with residential training designed to overcome barriers related to accessibility and local socioeconomic conditions.

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The initiative also supports selected **Aspirational Districts**, allowing training interventions to respond more closely to local resources, traditional skills and regional employment opportunities.

Himayat Initiative:

Himayat is a special DDU-GKY intervention for **Jamm& Kashmir and Ladakh**, covering both rural and urban youth and providing pathways to wage employment, self-employment and gig employment.

Its broader design seeks to address region-specific barriers to labour-market participation through dedicated implementation and support mechanisms.

North-Eastern and Difficult Areas Support:

A dedicated allocation for the **North-Eastern Region** helps address geographical, connectivity and socioeconomic constraints affecting access to skill-development infrastructure.

Special Area Allowance for difficult and hard-to-reach locations provides additional financial support to PIAs, reducing the cost disadvantage of delivering residential and placement-linked training in challenging areas.

Technology-Enabled Implementation and Transparency

Digital Programme Management:

DDU-GKY 2.0 uses an **end-to-end digital system** covering PIA onboarding, project management, candidate and training-centre management, assessment, certification, financial management and employment tracking.

The system incorporates **real-time monitoring, digital assessments, face-authenticated attendance and automated processes**, strengthening transparency and reducing scope for manual reporting.

A **public candidate portal** enables prospective beneficiaries to identify training opportunities and access information on PIA performance.

Integration with the **Skill India Digital Hub** supports course validation and interoperability with the wider national skilling ecosystem.

Job Melas and Migration Support:

Job Melas organised through State Rural Livelihood Missions create direct employer–candidate linkages at block and Gram Panchayat levels.

Migration Support Centres (MSCs) address the practical challenges faced by rural workers migrating to employment destinations by providing information, facilitation and post-placement support.

Performance and Outcomes

Scale of Implementation:

Since 2014–15, DDU-GKY has trained more than **18.47 lakh rural youth** and placed more than **12.43 lakh candidates**, demonstrating its emphasis on measurable employment outcomes.

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More than **9.71 lakh women** have received training and over **6.34 lakh women** have secured placements, highlighting the scheme's role in increasing women's participation in the rural workforce.

The programme currently covers **36 sectors and more than 800 job roles**, allowing rural youth to access opportunities beyond traditional agricultural employment.

State-Level Rollout of DDU-GKY 2.0:

Goa became the first State to create batches under DDU-GKY 2.0.

Andhra Pradesh initiated training for more than **12,000 candidates** within three months.

Jamm& Kashmir allocated 100% of its targets and commenced training for **91% of the allocated candidates**.

RSETIs: Complementary Pathway for Rural Entrepreneurship

Role of Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes:

Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) complement DDU-GKY by focusing on **self-employment and entrepreneurship**, whereas DDU-GKY primarily emphasises placement-linked skilling.

RSETIs provide **free residential training and handholding support** to rural unemployed youth, particularly those from **Below Poverty Line households and DAY-NRLM-linked families**.

The programme targets rural youth in the **18–50 years** age group and seeks to create district-level infrastructure for sustainable self-employment.

Current RSETI Outcomes:

As of September 2026, **647 RSETIs** have trained **63.47 lakh candidates**, of whom **45.60 lakh candidates have been settled** through livelihood opportunities.

Together, DDU-GKY and RSETIs create complementary livelihood pathways: **wage employment through placement-linked skilling and self-employment through entrepreneurship training**.

Significance for Rural Transformation

From Skill Acquisition to Livelihood Security:

DDU-GKY 2.0 addresses a major weakness of conventional skilling programmes: **training without sustained employment**.

Linking training with employers, minimum placement outcomes, retention tracking and post-placement support can improve the conversion of **human capital into stable income**.

The scheme also supports **rural poverty reduction**, occupational diversification and migration management by improving access to non-farm employment.

Women and Social Inclusion:

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Mandatory inclusion of disadvantaged groups and substantial participation of women strengthens the social-development dimension of rural skilling.

Employment-linked skill development can increase **female labour-force participation, household income and economic agency**, particularly where rural women face restricted access to formal employment.

Structural Link with India's Development Strategy:

DDU-GKY contributes to the broader objectives of **demographic dividend utilisation, rural non-farm employment, poverty reduction, human-capital formation and inclusive growth**.

Its industry-linked approach is also relevant to India's transition towards a more diversified workforce capable of participating in **manufacturing, services, green jobs and emerging technology-enabled occupations**.

Key Challenges

Quality and Placement versus Quantity:

Training numbers alone cannot establish programme effectiveness; outcomes must be assessed through **job quality, wages, retention, career progression and productivity**.

Rural youth may continue to face barriers related to education, digital literacy, mobility, language, social constraints and access to formal employers.

Migration and Employment Retention:

Rural-to-urban migration can create problems involving accommodation, workplace adaptation, social security and continuity of employment, making **post-placement support and migration facilitation** essential.

Industry–Skill Mismatch:

Rapid technological change can make occupational curricula outdated, requiring continuous **industry consultation, curriculum revision, reskilling and recognition of emerging occupations**.

Way Forward

Outcome-Based Skilling:

Shift evaluation from the number of candidates trained towards **retention, wages, productivity, career progression and long-term livelihood outcomes**.

Strengthen independent outcome evaluation and employer feedback to identify courses that produce weak employment outcomes.

Stronger Industry Partnerships:

Expand employer-led curricula, apprenticeships, on-the-job training and captive employment models to reduce the gap between **training institutions and actual workplace requirements**.

Inclusive and Localised Skill Planning:

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Align training with **district-level skill-gap assessments**, local industrial clusters, traditional occupations, emerging green jobs and regional labour demand.

Strengthen support for women, persons with disabilities, tribal communities and youth from geographically difficult areas.

Digital Governance and Portability:

Use integrated digital records to track a beneficiary across **training, certification, placement, retention and subsequent skilling**, while maintaining data protection and grievance-redressal safeguards.

Value Addition for UPSC

GS-II: Rural development, social-sector schemes, women's empowerment, vulnerable sections and cooperative federalism through Centre–State implementation.

GS-III: Skill development, employment generation, human capital, rural economy, entrepreneurship, demographic dividend and inclusive growth.

Essay: *“The demographic dividend becomes an economic dividend only when education, skills and employment converge.”*

Prelims Facts: DDU-GKY was launched on **25 September 2014**; it operates under **DAY-NRLM**; the target age group is **15–35 years**; DDU-GKY 2.0 was rolled out from **FY 2025–26**; the **2026–27 Central Share is ₹750 crore**; the scheme currently spans **31 States/UTs**, with more than **18.47 lakh trained** and **12.43 lakh placed** since inception.

Conceptual Link: DDU-GKY represents a policy shift from **“training as an input”** to **“sustainable employment as an outcome”**, making it relevant to India's strategy for converting its large working-age population into productive human capital.